CHORAL REPERTOIRE SELECTION EXPERIENCES REQUIRED OF
UNDERGRADUATE CHORAL MUSIC EDUCATION MAJORS AT SELECTED
INDIANA UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

THESIS: Choral Repertoire Experiences Required of Undergraduate Choral Music Education Majors at Selected Indiana Universities.

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This study investigated the repertoire selection experiences that undergraduate choral music education majors are given at two different universities in Indiana. The lives of the instructors who teach undergraduate choral music majors how to select repertoire were examined with the goal of getting a better understanding of what life experiences may have influenced their decisions about the types of repertoire selection activities they would require of their students. Both instructors give their students repertoire selection experiences; however, their life experiences and current teaching situations have influenced the types of repertoire selection experiences they choose to offer to their students. The type of education the professors had influences the types of repertoire selection assignments they give. The size and design of the music curriculum affects the amount of time professors can devote to teaching repertoire selection.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Repertoire selection for school music ensembles has been a subject of much discussion within the last fifty years. This is a result of a changing culture as well as increased understanding of what students should be learning and what literature is most appropriate for achieving those goals. Educators’ concerns about staying relevant in a changing society resulted in the 1967 Tanglewood Symposium and a call for programming more diverse styles, including popular styles of music and music of other cultures. The shift toward the acceptance of teaching popular forms of music forced educators who questioned the educational value and quality of the popular forms to reconsider what makes a piece of music worth learning. More recently, increased understandings of the adolescent voice have affected how educated choral directors choose appropriate repertoire to match the vocal abilities of their students. Music educators such as Bennett Reimer have challenged the way we believe music can be understood, and have implored music educators to teach music that will not only educate the mind, but also help students learn through their feelings, or “know within” (Reimer, 2003, p. 95). The Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance movement and the implementation of national standards have also added to the push for more diversity in repertoire and have resulted in heightened awareness of the importance of choosing
repertoire that can be used as an educational means of reaching desired goals and outcomes.

Regardless of whether the choral music educator is choosing music based on an established curriculum, or whether the music is chosen to be the inspiration for the curriculum, the choral repertoire will most likely be one of the main tools the educator will use to teach the desired concepts and skills. That is why it is imperative for music educators to choose music that is of high quality and addresses the goals and objectives of what they hope to teach in the choral classroom. Certainly warm-ups, sight reading, theory lessons, listening activities, and various other activities are often used to musically educate students in the choral classroom, but students in choral music classrooms will undoubtedly spend much of their time singing choral music. Consequently, the breadth and depth of the students’ music education in the choral music classroom is largely dependent upon the breadth and depth of the repertoire they are experiencing. Repertoire selection will also ultimately affect how rehearsals are planned. If this repertoire is not carefully selected, the rest of the process will not be as successful as it could have been (Hylton, 1997).

The importance of selecting quality choral literature has implications beyond teaching musical concepts. Quality repertoire also impacts students’ lives, their drive to achieve, their creativity, their imaginations, and their appreciations (Brunner, 1995). The appropriateness of the repertoire for the ensemble can affect the discipline and morale of the choir. It may also affect the overall quality of the musical performance. “Considered in this light, choice of literature may be the most significant contributor to the finished product of any choral organization” (Collins, 1999, p. 359).
What makes a piece of music something of quality? This is one of the important questions that must be asked in a study of how repertoire selection is being taught. There are textbooks that offer criteria for selecting quality choral music repertoire. Numerous experts in the field of choral music have also been willing to intimate their beliefs on what comprises a quality piece of choral music. The decision of what music constitutes the “best” choice for a given classroom is still ultimately the teacher’s personal decision (Hylton, 1997).

Although a comparison between what most directors believe are important criteria for selecting repertoire and what most experts and textbooks would recommend as important criteria would reveal a similar list, there are some differences in repertoire selection practices between beginning teachers and experienced teachers (Diddle, 2005; Reames, 2001) as well as between teachers identified as “outstanding” and those identified as “not outstanding” (Forbes, 1998). Only those beginning teachers who have a high level of confidence in their ability to select repertoire will consider the quality of the music when selecting it (Diddle, 2005), even though studies show that the majority of music educators list quality as being one of the most important considerations in selecting repertoire (Dahlman, 1992; Davis, 1970; Diddle, 2005; Forbes, 1998). Some teachers identified as “not outstanding” were found to either believe quality of music to be unimportant, or to not consider quality at all (Forbes, 1998). Forbes also concluded that those teachers who were identified as “outstanding” differed from those identified as “not outstanding” in the frequency with which they drew from specific sources. Outstanding teachers turned to choral reading sessions, choral workshops, live performances of choral music, and materials from the American Choral Directors Association more often than
those teachers identified as “not outstanding” (Forbes, 1998). Conversely, those teachers identified as “not outstanding” use publisher catalogues, recordings, and sample scores more frequently than those teachers identified as outstanding (Forbes, 1998). The styles of repertoire that experienced and “outstanding” teachers select also differ from the styles that novice and “not outstanding” teachers choose. Experienced teachers program more Baroque music for their beginning high school choirs than those of lesser experience (Reames, 2001), and those teachers identified as “outstanding” tend to select more classical music, large choral works, and multicultural music for advanced students than those who were identified as “not outstanding,” who tend to select more popular styles of music (Forbes, 1998).

Statement of the Problem

The discrepancies in repertoire selection behaviors between novice and experienced teachers as well as “outstanding” and “not outstanding” teachers may be traced back to their experiences in repertoire selection. Studies of repertoire selection and interviews with beginning teachers conclude that choral methods classes need to provide students with more opportunities in selecting quality repertoire for the ages and abilities for which they are being prepared to teach (Davis, 1970; Diddle, 2005; Dorsey, 1997; Forbes, 1998;). In a study on the repertoire selection practices of beginning choral educators, Diddle (2005) found that undergraduate music majors were seldom given repertoire selection experiences, and that those types of experiences are important to the novice music teacher’s perception of their ability to select repertoire. If repertoire selection is one of the most critical decisions that choral music educators make before entering the classroom (Apfelstadt, 2000), and if there is evidence that music educators tend to choose
music that they have experienced over music recommended to them (Devore, 1989; Diddle, 2005; Forbes, 1998), then the experiences in selecting quality repertoire offered to undergraduate students in their music education classes are of great importance. The purpose of this study was to investigate what concepts of choral repertoire selection are emphasized by selected choral methods instructors in Indiana and why these concepts are emphasized.

Research Questions

The following questions were investigated at a small, private, Christian university, and a large, public university in Indiana.

1. What philosophical or musical concepts are emphasized through assignments that require undergraduate choral music students to select age- and ability-appropriate repertoire?

2. What life experiences or philosophies have influenced the professors to provide these experiences in repertoire selection?

Definition of Terms

1. Choral Methods Class: any undergraduate music education class that teaches students how to teach or select choral music.

2. Quality Music: repertoire that provides the opportunity for an aesthetic experience, thereby broadening musical appreciation and cultural understanding (Brunner, 1995), while maintaining the following qualities: uniqueness, form, design, unpredictability, depth, consistency, text, transcendence, and orchestration/voicing (http://www.wmea.com/CMP/reertoire/choral_treasures.pdf).
Significance of the Study

This study could impact the profession by providing information about what concepts of choral repertoire selection are being emphasized by selected choral methods instructors in Indiana. Choral methods instructors could discover different ways of teaching repertoire as they compare their own techniques to the ones highlighted in the study. The study may also shed light on reasons for the discrepancy between repertoire selection behaviors of novice and experienced teachers as well as “outstanding” and “not outstanding” teachers. Several studies have recommended that undergraduate music education students should be given more opportunities to experience age- and ability-appropriate repertoire; however, there have been no studies conducted that investigate what experiences in repertoire selection are currently being offered in Indiana. This study may provide new information about why some beginning music educators feel unprepared to select certain types of repertoire. Ideally, the study will also either demonstrate that choral methods instructors in Indiana are doing everything they can to prepare their students to select a variety of repertoire with competence, or it will highlight some areas where students who complete the course may feel unprepared or unconfident to select repertoire.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

In the effort to fully explore the literature pertaining to repertoire selection, this review will begin by surveying why experts in the field of choral music education believe junior/senior high school choral music educators need to have an understanding of the repertoire. Once the importance of repertoire selection understanding has been established, the criteria for selecting choral repertoire for the junior/senior high school choir will be reviewed. These criteria will be divided into two parts. The first part will survey what researchers and experts in choral music education purport should be criteria used in selecting repertoire. The second part will describe what criteria for selecting choral repertoire are important to junior/senior high choral music educators. The criteria will be ascertained by surveys of choral music educators and research on the implications of what is important to choral music educators based on the repertoire they choose. Finally, the experiences in choosing choral music repertoire that are being offered in undergraduate choral music education classes will be surveyed. This final section will elaborate on the concerns about choral repertoire selection instruction at the undergraduate level.
Experts in the field of choral music education agree that thoughtful repertoire selection is an extremely important part of the preparation process choral music teachers go through as they consider how they might best teach their students. The music that is chosen will affect what philosophies of music are being advocated as well as how instructional outcomes are reached. According to Hillary Apfelstadt (2000):

The selection of repertoire is the single most important task that music educators face before entering the classroom or rehearsal room. Through the repertoire we choose, we not only teach curricular content to our students, but we also convey our philosophy in terms of what we believe students need to learn to achieve musical growth. Lofty goals are not met through second-rate repertoire. (p. 19)

Hylton (1997) agrees, writing, “The importance of literature selection is rooted in the fact that the whole process of rehearsal planning is initiated with a choice of repertoire. If this initial step is not carefully made, the rest of the process cannot succeed” (p. 9).

Elaborating on some of the important specifics that need to be considered when selecting repertoire as well as pointing out the connections that repertoire selection has with other parts of the instructional process, Ester (1997) writes:

The selection of quality choral literature is an absolutely critical step in the rehearsal planning process. Issues such as voicing, ranges, difficulty, and appropriateness of text must obviously be considered. No less important, however, is the educational potential of the literature. It is at this point that the web-like aspect of the CMP model becomes apparent. Music analysis and the
identification of instructional outcomes become inextricably linked with the selection process. (p. 27)

Understanding of repertoire also gives teachers a better sense of competence. Numerous accounts exist of young teachers feeling as if they have been prepared musically in their undergraduate music teacher education, but do not know the repertoire that is appropriate for the ages and abilities of the students they will be teaching (Bolt, 1983; Diddle, 2005; Dorsey, 1997; Spurgeon, 2002). There is a correlation between teachers’ perceptions of their own competence and their ability to select quality repertoire that has educational content (Diddle, 2005). In an article interviewing teachers who had just completed their first year of teaching, Hyman and Smallwood both agreed that they had a good knowledge of repertoire suitable for college ensembles, but felt deficient in their knowledge of repertoire appropriate for less advanced ensembles or ensembles of varying voicings (Dorsey, 1997).

Student discipline and attitudes may also be affected by the types of repertoire chosen. Collins (1999) believes students often form opinions about the repertoire based on its difficulty. If the repertoire is too easy, they may be insulted. Conversely, if the music is judged to be too hard, they may become frustrated and want to give up. If the difficulty of the selected repertoire matches the capability of the singers, and if the singers like the repertoire that is chosen, then the students’ attitudes will likely be more positive, resulting in better behavior (Collins, 1999). Consequently, the choice of repertoire may not only affect educational and musical outcomes, but also extra-musical conditions.
What Criteria Should Be Considered When Selecting Choral Repertoire for a High School Choir?

Although the researcher began by categorizing repertoire criteria into numerous subsections, four salient categories eventually became apparent from the research literature on repertoire selection criteria: (1) Aesthetics, (2) Appropriateness, (3) Diverse Styles, and (4) Educational Considerations.

Aesthetics

One of the criteria that most experts agree is important to consider when choosing repertoire for any ensemble is whether or not the music can provide an aesthetic experience. This goes beyond the entertainment value of music to a level of aesthetic understanding that makes a difference in the lives of those who experience it (Brunner, 1995). Bennett Reimer (2003) gives the following description of aesthetic education:

Aesthetic education in music attempts to enhance learnings related to the distinctive capacity of musical sounds (as various cultures construe what these consist of) to create and share meanings only sounds structured to do so can yield. Creating such meanings, and partaking of them, requires an amalgam of mind, body, and feeling. Musical meanings incorporate within them a variety of individual/cultural meanings transformed by musical sounds. Gaining its special meanings requires direct experience with music in any of the ways cultures provide, supported by skills, knowledge, understandings, and sensitivities education can cultivate. (p. 11)

Brunner’s (1995) description of quality repertoire emphasizes the motivational effects that may result from an aesthetic experience, saying quality repertoire is music that
“encourages young singers to become better at what they do” (p. 31). He believes it “refines their musical skills” and “whets their appetite for further challenge” (p. 31). Beyond its potential to motivate young singers and refine their skills, quality repertoire also may stimulate imaginations and creativity. It is humanizing and gives students “cultural perspectives” (Brunner, 1995, p. 31). Bennett Reimer (2003), a proponent of aesthetic education, believes that music educates feelings. He writes the following in his influential book *A Philosophy of Music Education: Advancing the Vision*:

> When we are musically involved, in any of the many ways various cultures make available, our felt awarenesses are inevitably enhanced. That enhancement of the extent and depth of what we feel, as musical experience uniquely provides and as music education attempts to cultivate, can be called an “education of feelings.” (p. 89)

Reimer believes that the musical sounds should remind us of something extra-musical.

“To the degree that the music is successful in referring you to a non-musical experience it is a successful piece of music. To the degree that the experience is an important or valuable one the music is itself important or valuable” (Reimer, 1989, p. 15).

*Appropriateness*

Another criterion that should be carefully considered when choosing repertoire for junior/senior high school choir is whether or not it is appropriate for the students who will be singing it. Range, tessitura, difficulty, and appropriateness of text are all factors that relate to the category of appropriateness. Directors should avoid selecting pieces for young choirs that have large ranges. A tessitura that is too low may be just as harmful as one that is too high (Apfelstadt, 2000). Crocker agrees that range and tessitura are
important considerations when selecting music for a young adolescent choir. She believes that choosing the right repertoire to fit the ranges and tessituras of the group will provide the setting for a much more successful performance than if those factors were not considered (Crocker, 2000). Spurgeon (2002) believes that “too often, conductors choose music they’ve heard performed by older choirs and try to make it fit their younger choir” (2002, p. 37). John Cooksey and Anthony Barresi have done studies on the mutation of the adolescent male voice. Lynne Gackle has also outlined the stages of the adolescent female voice mutation. Although the specifics of their findings are beyond the scope of this literature review, their studies provide choral directors with vocal range categories and descriptions that can be helpful in choosing repertoire to fit the vocal maturity of the singers for whom they will be selecting the repertoire.

When considering the appropriateness of the repertoire for junior/senior high choirs, difficulty should also be considered. Collins (1999) lists the following subcategories under the category of difficulty: “rhythmic complexities, key changes, harmonic complexities, melodic features, texture, and text” (pp. 359-360). Apfelstadt (2000) warns that choosing music that is too easy may result in students becoming bored, and music that is too hard may be frustrating to the students. Music that is too easy may also be perceived by students as being “baby stuff” according to Crocker (2000, p. 36). She elaborates on what appropriately difficult pieces of choral music often have in common: “Successful beginning pieces often give a prominent melodic line to the male voices. The treble lines might have a bit more complexity, such as occasional divisi and optional descant harmonies” (p. 36). Crocker also recommends selecting repertoire that has “good voice leading, well-prepared leaps, and interesting vocal lines” (p. 36).
When selecting repertoire for adolescents in public school, appropriate texts must also be considered. Collins (1999) lists several sociological and cultural considerations of which choral music educators should be aware when selecting music for their students: “location, socioeconomic level, race, religion, musical background, and educational level” (p. 360). Writing of the importance of selecting repertoire with a good text, Crocker (2000) suggests “Young adolescent singers like to feel grown-up, so pieces chosen should have a certain level of sophistication or intellectual challenge. Poetic texts, texts in languages other than English, pieces from diverse cultures, and many folksongs settings are good choices” (p. 36).

**Educational Considerations**

Educational considerations should also be weighed heavily when choral directors search for repertoire to teach their students. The Wisconsin Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance (CMP) project beginning in 1977, and The National Standards (1994) are both constructed around the philosophy that learning in a school choral program should go beyond the preparation of notes for a concert. The Wisconsin Music Educators Association website recognizes the following antecedents to the Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance project: The Young Composer’s Project (1959), The Yale Seminar (1963), The Contemporary Musicianship Project (1963-1969), The Tanglewood Symposium (1967), The Youth Music Project (1969), The Manhattanville Project (1965-1970), and The Hawaii Comprehensive Musicianship Program (1967-1972) ([www.wmea.com/CMP/about/background.html](http://www.wmea.com/CMP/about/background.html)). Each of these emphasized various aspects of music beyond the performance, such as composition, history, theory, and the need for a more diverse repertoire.
There has also been a shift in thinking in the past 50 years from advocacy of programming classic Western literature that has stood the test of time toward the necessity of programming music of diverse styles and cultures in the public school. At the Seminar on Music Education in 1963 at Yale University, the following conclusion was reported: “A balance within a wide variety of musical fare is desirable. The objective is to enable the student to understand and evaluate in his own terms all kinds of musical experience” (Palisca, 1963, p. 20). At the Tanglewood Symposium, educators grappled with how music education could do a better job of keeping up with a changing society. The participants at the symposium recognized the need to expand curriculum to include more diverse repertoire that was culturally relevant, agreeing that

Music of all periods, styles, forms, and cultures belongs in the curriculum. The musical repertory should be expanded to include music of our time in its rich variety, including currently popular teenage music, avant-garde music, American folk music, and the music of other cultures. (Murphy, 1968, p. 56)

More recently, these changing attitudes toward exposing the students to a more eclectic repertoire were validated when the National Standards for Music Education were published. The National Standards speak to the necessity of programming music of “diverse genres and cultures” (National Standards for Arts Education, 1994, p. 44).

If the Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance model is used, repertoire selection is webbed together with each of the other parts of the model: analysis, selection, assessment, strategies, and outcomes (www.wmea.com/CMP/index.html). The Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance Project maintains that repertoire should not be chosen without considering all of the other parts of the model.
Consequently, the music educator who strives to teach comprehensively has multiple aspects to consider when selecting repertoire. Hylton (1997) writes of the extra planning that is necessary for the comprehensive music educator:

It is not enough for students to be able to sing their part with accuracy.

Comprehensive choral music education provides a vehicle for students to learn about all aspects of music, including styles, periods, and the melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and expressive aspects of the pieces that are studied. This kind of teaching requires an additional layer of preparation and planning by a comprehensive choral music educator. (p. 9)

Richmond (1990) also agrees that curriculum should be considered when selecting repertoire: “The adoption of some curricular criteria by which to choose repertoire can set the stage for the ‘serendipitous’ teaching and learning of the major features of choral music” (1990, p. 24). He suggests three models for choosing repertoire based on specific criteria. The exemplar model holds to the belief that “certain choral works are so important as to be basic to any program which claims to be replete” (p. 24). The percepts model aligns more with the idea that choral music education should attempt to comprehensively teach about all aspects of music. Those using the percepts model would choose repertoire based on the musical percepts to be studied during a given unit. Finally, those teachers using the forms model would decide on a form of music that they wish to teach and then search for repertoire that would best illustrate that form.

In 1994, the National Standards for Arts Education were published, further emphasizing the importance of comprehensive music education. Apfelstadt (2000) acknowledges the importance of both comprehensive teaching and the selection of
quality repertoire: “Whether learning musical elements of duration, pitch, form, 
dynamics, and texture or exploring how phrase shape can heighten expression in a 
performance, students need adequate musical content to accomplish these things” (p.20). 
Reynolds (2000) agrees, admitting, “While it may be an overstatement to say that 
repertoire is the curriculum, we can all agree that a well-planned repertoire creates the 
framework for an excellent music curriculum that fosters the musical growth of our 
students” (p. 31).

What Is Being Considered by Junior/Senior High School Teachers as They Select 
Repertoire for Their Choirs?

It became apparent to the researcher that “what should be” and “what is” could be 
two different things. Consequently it is not only necessary to survey the research 
literature about what should be important considerations in selecting repertoire, but it is 
also important to survey what repertoire selection criteria are important to Junior/Senior 
High School choir directors. Like the previous section, this section can also be divided 
into four categories: (1) aesthetics, (2) appropriateness, (3) diverse styles, and (4) 
educational considerations.

Aesthetics

Most of the research reviewed on the repertoire selection practices of Jr./Sr. High 
music educators does not mention aesthetics specifically. Terms such as “quality,” 
however, are often discussed. Quality is an important consideration of public school 
Davis (1970) found that the two primary factors high school choral educators consider 
when choosing repertoire are: “music that will raise the standards of musical taste of the
performer” and “music worthy of required rehearsal time” (pg. 3). Both of these factors allude to the importance of quality repertoire. Diddle (2005) found quality to rank third in importance for beginning choral music educators, preceded by the number of voice parts and range/tessitura respectively. In a study by Forbes (1998), quality was often listed as one of the most important criteria the high school choral directors surveyed considered when selecting repertoire. In this survey of high school choral directors from Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia, respondents were classified into two categories: “outstanding,” and “not outstanding.” Those choral directors identified as “not outstanding” either did not consider quality in their repertoire selection processes, or they considered quality to be of lesser importance than other criteria. He also found that respondents from this same group of directors identified as “not outstanding” had difficulty in explaining what quality repertoire is, and suggests that “the ability to determine quality may be a function of experience” (p. 154). Similarly, in her study of beginning choral educators, Diddle (2005) found that “only those having a self-efficacy of competency will consider using quality as a predictor for selection of repertoire” (p.111). Forbes (1998) does make a distinction between quality and aesthetics, noting that both are important considerations of directors in his survey.

*Appropriateness*

Not only do music education experts agree that the vocal range of repertoire should be an important consideration when choosing appropriate literature, but studies show it is an important consideration of choral music educators in the public school (Davis, 1970; Diddle, 2005). Vocal maturity was also found by Forbes (1998) to be a technical consideration of secondary choral music educators. Not surprisingly, range was
discussed more in repertoire selection criteria studies that focused on junior high choir directors than those that focused on high school choir directors. Directors were found to weigh technical and aesthetic criteria similarly when selecting repertoire for advanced and beginning ensembles, however, Forbes (1998) discovered that directors are inclined to select repertoire for their beginning choirs that can be used to teach fundamental performance skills and concepts as well as have the potential to offer students quick success.

Difficulty is also a factor considered by junior/senior high school choir directors when selecting repertoire. According to Diddle (2005), the number one criterion beginning choral directors consider when choosing repertoire for their ensembles is the number of voice parts. Amount of rehearsal time needed also made the top ten. Both of these criteria could be related to difficulty. Teachers of beginning choirs tend to select music that will provide the choir with successful experiences with the music more quickly (Forbes, 1998). Directors consider the technical abilities of their choirs as well as the vocal maturity of the singers when choosing music (Forbes, 1998). The research of Ogdin (1981) supports this, finding that student skill level at entrance into the choral class was the second most important consideration of secondary choral teachers when considering course content, preceded by variety of musical styles. Ogdin (1981) also found student growth and difficulty level to be the third and fourth most important criteria for selecting music, respectively. These findings suggest that music educators consider whether or not the repertoire they are choosing will be challenging, yet not too difficult for their students.
Although the appropriateness of text is also a consideration of choral directors in secondary schools, studies reveal that text generally falls well below other criteria on lists of criteria music educators use to select repertoire. Diddle (2005) found that among beginning teachers, text was the seventh most important criteria for choosing music, and that the language of the text was also a consideration; however, Dahlman (1992) found text to only be a moderate consideration of secondary choral teachers. English pieces comprised almost 70% of the total in the Dahlman (1992) study, but there was a significant correlation between the size of school and the amount of pieces chosen in English. Smaller schools performed significantly more music in English. Choral music educators may be also be choosing a greater percentage of secular music than was chosen 40 years ago. In 1970, Davis found sacred choral music to be used more frequently than secular music, however sacred and secular texts were found by Dahlman in 1992 to be almost equally chosen. Teachers with graduate degrees, however, were found to program significantly more sacred music (Dahlman, 1992).

**Diverse Styles**

Although the category of diverse styles could be encompassed by the category of educational considerations, it seems appropriate to address this category separately due to its apparent emphasis on the subjectivity of personal tastes. Junior/senior high school choral directors tend to select more music of the twentieth century than music of other periods (Davis, 1970; Dahlman, 1992, Reames, 2001). Diddle’s (2005) list of important criteria that beginning choral directors use to select music might also support this claim. Standard choral repertoire and historical periods ranked number eleven and twelve on the list behind such selection criteria as appeal to the teacher, appeal to the student, language,
and rehearsal time needed. If twentieth century music not only includes serious music of
the twentieth century, but also a variety of popular styles, this could also affect the survey
results, due to the number of twentieth century styles to cover.

The level of the choir, experience and education of the teacher, and other social
factors may have an effect on the diversity of music programmed for choirs. In a study of
repertoire selection for Ohio music contests, Devore (1989) notes that there is an
imbalance of twentieth century music on the list and suggests that more music of
established composers should be offered. Successful teachers and teachers with more
experience tend to favor a balance of musical styles, while less successful or
inexperienced teachers tend to choose more music from popular genres (Dahlman, 1992;
Dunaway, 1986; Forbes, 1998). Forbes (1998) found that teachers identified as
outstanding tend to choose more classical music for their advanced students, and
considerably more folk and multicultural music than those teachers not identified as
outstanding. Advanced students are exposed to more classical music than to folk and
popular music by both outstanding and not-outstanding teachers. Some not-outstanding
teachers, however, choose popular music almost to the exclusion of other styles (Forbes,
1998). Outstanding directors of beginning choirs tend to select more folk and
multicultural music for their choirs than those teachers not identified as outstanding,
while directors not identified as outstanding tend to select more popular music for their
beginning choirs than outstanding teachers (Forbes, 1998). Data also suggests that
“directors who teach in schools in which students come from less affluent homes tend to
select more pop/rock music than directors who teach students from more affluent homes”
(Forbes, 1998, p. 155). Directors of beginning choirs who have more years of teaching
experience tend to select more Baroque music than those teachers of lesser experience (Reames 2001). Specifically in Indiana, several schools appear to offer little diversity in terms of musical style. Of the Indiana schools surveyed by Turley (1989), two performed almost exclusively traditional music, while six schools performed mostly popular styles of music. This research might suggest that the teacher’s experience, education, and attitude toward various styles of music may be the most influential factors in what styles of music ultimately get chosen for their students.

*Educational Considerations*

Music that is of quality will also be educational (Apfelstadt, 2000; Brunner 1995). Consequently, research that speaks to the quality of literature may be referring to how well it educates in a cognitive, psychomotor, or affective way. It is evident in the findings of Forbes (1998) when he states:

Criteria related to the educational value of a work that directors deem most important are the quality of a composition, the vocal performance skills that could be taught through a composition, and the potential of a composition to provide for an aesthetic experience. (p. 153)

Musical quality and educational value also rank high on the list of most important criteria directors use in selecting repertoire (Devore, 1989; Diddle, 2005; Forbes, 1998). Student growth was listed as the third most important criteria by which secondary choral teachers select course content (Ogdin, 1981). It is apparent, then, that secondary choral directors at least believe they are selecting music based on its quality and its educational potential.
Non-musical Considerations

Beyond the musical considerations advocated by respected music educators, choral directors must consider non-musical criteria when selecting repertoire. The three most important extra-musical factors that high school directors consider when selecting repertoire are the ability of the students to learn and perform the music, the number of programs, and the amount of rehearsal time (Davis, 1970). Student interest is also a consideration (Dahlman, 1992; Forbes, 1998). Although it is necessary for teachers to consider these non-musical factors when selecting repertoire, musical factors still play a much more important role in the selection of music (Davis, 1970).

Sources for Finding Repertoire

Choral directors tend to rely on sources that provide them with personal experience with the music (Davis, 1970; Devore, 1989; Diddle, 2005; Forbes, 1998; Reames, 2001). Davis (1970) lists attendance at choral concerts, participation in choral workshops, and publisher’s condensed scores as the most important sources high school directors use to find repertoire. He notes that materials of professional organizations are infrequently used (Davis, 1970). Diddle (2005) found that beginning choral directors turn to the following sources when searching for repertoire: live performances, director recommendations, choral reading sessions, choral workshops or clinics, and publisher catalogues. Those same respondents sometimes used the following: CD recordings, music from All State/Honor Choir, music performed with other groups such as church, community, or professional, music performed in high school, and internet sources (Diddle, 2005). Choral workshops, live performances of choral music, choral reading sessions, music recommended by other directors, and recordings were identified as the
top five sources of repertoire for high school in a study by Forbes (1998). Choral directors rarely use material from college methods courses (Forbes, 1998; Reames, 2001) or lists in textbooks (Forbes, 1998). They may use material from organizations such as the American Choral Directors Association or Music Educators National Conference, but rarely use materials from other choral music organizations (Forbes, 1998). Live performances, choral reading sessions, personal libraries, and recordings were ranked as the most important sources used to find repertoire by those who teach beginning choir (Reames, 2001). There are some differences in the way directors identified as outstanding and those who were not identified as outstanding selected repertoire.

While high school directors tend to use many of the same sources for repertoire, outstanding directors indicated they use choral reading sessions, choral workshops, live performances of choral music, and material from the American Choral Directors Association more frequently than directors not identified as outstanding. Conversely, directors not identified as outstanding use music publisher catalogues, recordings, and sample scores more often than outstanding directors. (Forbes, 1998, p. 155-156)

It stands to reason, then, that outstanding directors may seek out opportunities to experience music, while those who are not outstanding may often find other less experiential means of selecting repertoire. If this is true, it supports the claim that choral directors need to be provided with more opportunities to experience music.

What Experiences with Repertoire Are Being Offered In Undergraduate Choral Music Education Classes?
MENC has suggested activities in *Strategies for Teaching: Guide for Music Methods Classes* (1997) that provide methods students with experience in selecting repertoire based on specific criteria. For standard 1B, the following is suggested:

Create a genre or style-based ‘concert’ of four-part music, with and without accompaniment, based on specific music selection criteria (e.g., appropriate ranges, tessitura, difficulty, suitability of text, suitability to teach music concepts).

(p. 141)

It is then suggested that students analyze the repertoire that is chosen, specifically discussing how the repertoire might be most appropriately used to teach high school singers. Standard 3B is addressed with the following recommended activity: “list five easy, unison songs (including pentatonic, major, and minor melodies) that can be used with high school singers for melodic and rhythmic improvisation” (p. 146). The following is designed to satisfy Standard 3D:

[Students] identify criteria for model songs to use as resources for early harmonizing experience; for example, familiarity of the song, simple harmonic vocabulary, slow harmonic rhythm, and repetitiveness of melody. Students then suggest songs that meet these criteria. Finally students develop a list of songs that fit their criteria and that are in a variety of styles, including folk songs, art songs, hymns and carols, patriotic songs, and songs from diverse cultures. (p. 148)

Standard 6E is addressed by requiring students to bring recorded examples of Renaissance and Baroque music that use melismas (p. 156), and Standard 9A requires students to:
Present reports on works they have researched, discussing the style, genre, historical background, and use in the culture in which the works originated. They highlight the vocal and musical requirements of each piece in relation to the capabilities of high school singers. (p. 163)

Recognizing the importance of preparing future teachers to implement the standards as well as the importance of providing future teachers the opportunity to experience repertoire that is appropriate for high school choirs, Stamer (2000) developed a course that is called National Standards Choir. It is a conducting course that also requires students to select choral repertoire, develop curriculum projects that are designed with the National Standards for Music Education in mind, and implement the instructional strategies in a lab rehearsal. Students are encouraged to select repertoire that is appropriate for the various ages they are preparing to teach. Choral Literature is also required, and students are encouraged to select from the repertoire they learned in that class when considering what choral music they will conduct.

Ester (1997) also encourages experience with repertoire and understanding of the CMP model through the following lab experience:

In an effort to emphasize the importance of this selection-analysis-outcomes process, I require my students to complete twenty-five entries for a “choral library” (this is a semester-long assignment that requires the use of database software). For each entry, the student is expected to provide basic catalog information and identify specific knowledge and skills that are salient in the work. The students select one of these pieces to serve as their focus choral work for the
remainder of the term. This single composition provides a practical focus for completing the remaining steps in the CMP model. (p. 27)

Although it is beyond the scope of this research to provide examples of all of the repertoire selection experiences that every choral methods instructor provides, this is a small sampling to show that the professional organization of MENC as well as choral methods instructors recognize the need to provide opportunities for their students to select repertoire and, in the process, experience some of the repertoire that might be useful in the grades in which they are preparing to teach.

**What Are the Concerns about Repertoire Selection Instruction?**

Collegiate instructors are not offering enough experiences to their students in selecting quality repertoire that is of varying styles and voicings and is age appropriate for young choirs (Bolt, 1983; Davis, 1970; Diddle, 2005; Forbes, 1998). In a dissertation entitled *The Repertoire Practices and Skills of Beginning Choral Music Educators*, Diddle (2005) reported that “Sixty-two percent of the respondents indicated that they received repertoire selection instruction in only one, two, or three class periods. Thirteen percent reported receiving no repertoire selection instruction from their choral methods course” (p. 102). Diddle also found that beginning choral music educators perceived that their music education training did not effectively prepare them to select repertoire for SSA, TTBB, madrigal, pop/show, and jazz groups. In an article in which Dorsey (1997) interviewed high school choral teachers who recently completed their first year, Hyman admitted “A big mistake I made in my first year was to over program. The repertoire bank of many first-year teachers consists largely of many good quality but difficult pieces that they have heard or sung” (p. 17). In the same article, Smallwood specifies that he 
was well prepared to select repertoire for SATB and SSA, but felt deficient when it came
to selecting music for non-auditioned SAB ensembles (Dorsey, 1997). This is a concern
because Diddle concludes “Teachers who believe they can select repertoire, and those
that were properly prepared to select repertoire will select music of quality and
containing educational content for their high school choirs” (p. 107-108). “Respondents
[in the Diddle survey] reported that their choral conducting courses and their student
teaching experiences provided the most instruction in repertoire selection” (Diddle, 2005,
p. 79-80). She concludes that “The experiential techniques used in the active choral
conducting course and the student teaching experience offer more evidence that ‘hands-
on’ experience is incredibly valuable and helpful to the novice educator” (p. 103).

Summary
Secondary choral music educators must carefully and thoughtfully select the
repertoire that they will teach their choirs. Repertoire selection is important because
choral directors convey their philosophy of what they believe students need to learn
through the repertoire they choose (Apfelstadt, 2000). The selection of repertoire is also
closely tied to the learning outcomes and teaching strategies the choral music educator
will use (www.wmea.com/CMP/index.html). A variety of quality repertoire should be
chosen for its potential to educate the student aesthetically (Reimer, 2003), while also
expanding appreciation, imagination, and musical skill (Brunner, 1995). Musical
understanding should be fostered through repertoire that is challenging, but not
frustrating (Apfelstadt, 2000). Choral music educators should take into consideration the
voicing, range, and tessitura of the music they choose to teach their students (Apfelstadt,
2000; Cooksey, 1999) as well as be sensitive to whether or not the text is appropriate (Collins 1999; Crocker, 2000).

Although surveys reveal that secondary choral music educators consider many of the same criteria for selecting repertoire to be important as music education scholars, studies of repertoire selection practice of secondary choral music educators expose correlations between the education level of the choral music educator and the styles of repertoire that the teacher chooses to teach (Forbes, 1998). Successful and experienced teachers tend to favor a balance of musical styles for their advanced choirs and tend to choose more classical music than inexperienced teachers or teachers identified as not outstanding (Dahlman, 1992; Dunaway, 1986; Forbes, 1998). Experienced teachers also choose more Baroque music for their beginning choirs than teachers of lesser experience (Reames 2001).

Choral directors tend to rely on sources that provide them with personal experience with the music (Davis, 1970; Devore, 1989; Diddle, 2005; Forbes, 1998; Reames, 2001); however, a study by Forbes (1998) reveals a discrepancy between where outstanding teachers find the repertoire they use in the classroom and where not-outstanding teachers go to select repertoire. Directors in general tend to rely on a lot of the same sources for finding repertoire; however, directors labeled as outstanding often tend to find repertoire at choral reading sessions, choral workshops, live performances of choral music, and in material from the American Choral Directors Association more frequently than those directors labeled not outstanding. The directors labeled as not outstanding use more publisher catalogues, recordings and sample scores than directors labeled as outstanding.
There is evidence that there are college choral methods instructors who are not only providing their students with instruction on what criteria should be used to select repertoire, but they are also providing experiences in choosing relevant music (Ester, 1997; Stamer 2000). Unfortunately there is also evidence that many beginning teachers feel unprepared to select suitable repertoire for the ages and abilities in which they will be teaching (Diddle, 2005; Dorsey, 1997). Teachers who feel more prepared to select repertoire are more likely to select music of quality and educational content (Diddle, 2005). Consequently, it is imperative that college choral methods teachers provide opportunities for their undergraduate students to select and learn repertoire that is appropriate for the ages and abilities in which they plan to teach.
CHAPTER III

METHOD

The purpose of this study was to investigate what concepts of choral repertoire selection are emphasized by selected choral methods instructors in Indiana and why these concepts are emphasized. This study was based on the premise that undergraduate music education majors need opportunities in their methods classes to select repertoire so that they will be encouraged to consider what makes a piece of music worth studying (Diddle, 2005; Forbes, 1998), and they will gain confidence in selecting quality, age-appropriate music in a variety of styles for a variety of ensembles (Diddle, 2005). It was assumed that anytime an assignment is given requiring students to select repertoire with a specific purpose in mind, that the assignment will likely place emphasis on that purpose. A qualitative design not only allowed the researcher to discover what concepts of choral repertoire selection are being emphasized through assignments requiring undergraduate students to select repertoire, but also allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of why methods instructors chose these assignments.

Role of Researcher

My role as a researcher was predominantly one of a distant observer. Data were collected from syllabi, interviews with participants, and through analysis of assignment descriptions. My personal experiences with the subjects of the study and the material they
teach caused me to have preconceived impressions of what they teach. Although I tried to stay objective, it is possible that my impressions may have influenced my role and relationship to the study during the interview process. I am acquainted with both of the subjects. In one case, I was a student of the instructor, and in the other case I have been a colleague of the instructor.

**Ethical Considerations**

Before any of the interviews took place, each participant was given an introductory letter explaining the purpose and importance of the study. It disclosed to the participants the topic of the research and made the subjects aware of the extent of their involvement in the study. Assurance of anonymity and confidentiality were also given. Pseudonyms were used when necessary to help insure the anonymity of the participants. These include: the names of the two participants, the places of their employment, universities where they studied, people that have influenced them, and places that they have been. Contact information was provided for subjects who may have had questions about their participation in the study. The participants were provided with the option to consent to be involved in the study with the understanding that they may choose not to participate at any time (see Appendix A).

**Research Design**

This study consisted of qualitative case studies in which data were gathered through interviews with two choral methods instructors at two different universities in Indiana. The universities were selected to represent one small and one large music education program based on the number of undergraduate music majors. The interviews were semi-structured, with one initial interview question and several follow-up questions
designed to keep the interview from straying too far from the topic. The researcher ultimately kept the research questions in mind, seeking to answer these before the interview was completed. The interviews were recorded with an audio tape recorder.

Research Questions

This research focused on discovering experiences in repertoire selection being offered to undergraduate choral music education majors in methods classes and why instructors chose to require these experiences. Consequently, the following questions were investigated at a small, private, Christian university; and a large, public university.

1. What philosophical or musical concepts are emphasized through assignments requiring undergraduate choral music students to select age- and ability-appropriate repertoire based on given criteria?

This question was in reaction to the tenet that choral music educators do not merely teach songs, but also promote their own understanding of what quality repertoire is, as well as what musical concepts are important to learn by the repertoire they choose to teach (Apfelstadt, 2000). The question sought to find out whether or not undergraduate choral music education majors are encouraged to seek out and experience repertoire that serves a specific educational purpose. It was also designed to ascertain whether or not choral methods instructors are encouraging their students to select music of quality as is evident in the assignments they give their students.

2. What life experiences or philosophies have influenced the professors to provide these experiences in repertoire selection?

As certain repertoire selection criteria experiences became salient answers to the first research question, this question sought to discover why the selected instructors have
chosen to require these specific experiences of their students. If music education professors are promoting a certain philosophy by the types of assignments they give (Apfelstadt, 2000), this question sought to discern what life experiences may have shaped those philosophies.

Subject Selection

It was determined that two institutions should be studied, representing a small and a large choral music education program. Both programs offer an undergraduate degree in choral music education. Institutions were also chosen for their proximity to the researcher and for the high level of respect the researcher has for both of the music education programs.

Methods

Data were collected and triangulated through interviews with choral methods instructors, analysis of syllabi from the choral methods courses they teach, as well as assignment descriptions. Interviews were semi-structured, with four interview questions as well as potential follow-up questions designed to keep each interview from straying too far from the topic. Other questions were generated as the interview progressed. The researcher ultimately kept the research questions in mind, seeking to answer these before the interview was completed. The interviews was audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

Interview questions:

1) Describe your background in choral music, beginning with some of your earliest experiences with being in choral music ensembles, to your college education in choral music, through what you teach now.
Can you help me better understand…
what genres of repertoire you experienced in that ensemble?
how you were taught about repertoire selection?
what types of ensembles you directed?

2) Describe the classes at this institution that give undergraduate choral music majors opportunities to learn choral music.

3) Describe the assignments that you give your students that require them to select repertoire, including such things as objectives, procedures, assessment techniques, etc.

4) Is there anything that would be important for me to know that I haven’t asked?

Syllabi and assignment descriptions were obtained from the choral methods instructors to provide a better understanding of what concepts of repertoire selection are being emphasized. Choral methods classes that either provide experiences with repertoire selection or attempt to teach repertoire selection criteria were considered. Comparisons were made between the data from the interview, the syllabi, and the assignment descriptions to analyze whether or not the method courses are effectively providing experiences in repertoire selection that will provide the students with a better knowledge of appropriate repertoire for various ensembles as well as encourage the students to consider what they want to teach with the repertoire they choose.

Data Analysis

Transcripts were made of the audio-recorded interviews. The researcher searched for salient internal and external codes from the interviews. Internal codes are strands of themes that become evident from the data collected. External codes are themes for which the researcher is deliberately searching. External codes were examined in search of concepts that are being emphasized by choral methods instructors. Specifically, the researcher searched for codes relating to the criteria used for headings in chapter 2
(aesthetics, appropriateness, diverse styles, educational considerations, and non-music considerations).

Observational, theoretical, and methodological memo writing was used to find relationships between codes that became salient in each interview. Memo writing was also used to connect themes in the interviews with codes found in syllabi and assignment descriptions. Finally, descriptions were made about what concepts of repertoire selection each choral methods instructor emphasized through assignments he/she chose to require. Results were also compared and contrasted, searching for similarities and differences in the concepts each of the schools emphasized in required repertoire selection assignments.

*Validity*

*Transferability and Trustworthiness*

Due to the specific nature of this research, transferability was not a consideration. The researcher was interested in investigating how repertoire selection is being taught in two schools of music in Indiana. The data gleaned from interviews, syllabi, and assignment descriptions was not generalized to a broader population of schools. Rather, it concentrated specifically on each program being studied.

The trustworthiness of outcomes was increased through triangulating the data. Interviews, the analysis of syllabi, and the analysis of assignment descriptions strengthened the trustworthiness of the research. Each of these methods of data collection was also performed over the course of a few months. Consequently, history, maturation of the subjects, and attrition were not issues.
Methodological Validity

The sound and relevant methods of data collection previously described added to the methodological validity of the research. Through triangulation, the possibility of one of the sources of data collection skewing the results was diminished. Interview questions and coding techniques that focused on answering the research questions also added to the methodological validity.

Interpretive Validity

In order to establish interpretive validity, it was crucial that the data supported the findings. No less importantly, there had to be enough data supporting the findings to make the findings plausible. The process of triangulating the data added to the plausibility of the findings by providing evidence of the findings from multiple sources.

Praxis-Oriented Validity

The findings from this research should be helpful to the choral methods instructors who participated as subjects. Subjects will be able to compare the motivations for selecting repertoire they deem most important with the motivations they are emphasizing through repertoire selection assignments they give their students. They will also be able to see what some of their colleagues emphasize. This could be used to evaluate whether or not they need to reconsider what repertoire selection experiences they offer their students.
CHAPTER IV
DR. GREEN AND JEFFERSON UNIVERSITY

Dr. Green’s Background

Dr. Green recalls her high school choir experience as being her first significant experience in a choir. Growing up in an area influenced by the Lutheran church, she feels like she had “that Lutheran sound” in her ear. She believes her high school choir director “chose high quality repertoire,” illustrating that with the fact that her director took her choir to contests. In her opinion, her director chose a wide variety of music, ranging from “heavier” repertoire to popular selections like “Charade” by Henry Mancini.

She received her bachelor’s degree in music education from a small Christian liberal arts school and her Masters in Music Education from a larger Christian school. Organ was her major instrument, so instrumental music was her focus, with choral music “off to the side.” Although she participated in choirs in undergraduate school, it was often as the accompanist.

Dr. Green got a job as a full-time church musician and was planning on getting a doctorate in organ performance. Desiring to improve her conducting skills, she called Dr. Darwin Arnold of Charles State University. He not only gave her lessons in conducting but also helped her find repertoire for her church choir. Over the course of time, Dr. Arnold saw potential in Dr. Green and encouraged her to pursue choral conducting rather
than organ performance. Although she had limited experience in choral conducting at that point, Dr. Green took Dr. Arnold’s advice and switched her emphasis to choral conducting.

Dr. Green began getting more experience in conducting choirs of all ages through her work at the church and in the community. As a church musician, she was the director of a graded program of choirs ranging from an elementary choir through adults. She also directed the bell choir and played the organ at this position. Dr. Green also had the experience of directing an auditioned community children’s choir.

Currently Dr. Green conducts a 65-voice auditioned mixed choir at Jefferson University, as well as a select chamber group of about 18 mixed voices. These two ensembles sing for different functions, so their repertoire is geared toward the types of singing engagements they will have. Dr. Green goes to great lengths to find repertoire for these choirs, beginning with a trip to her favorite music store. She spends two days weeding through octavos trying to find music she can use at Jefferson University. Criteria of repertoire selection for her include: music that other colleges are singing, music that is of good quality and “worthy” of her singers, selections that will be appropriate for the specific singing engagements she will be asked to do, and texts that are uplifting and not trite.

Since she feels that doing new music keeps her excited and since she has a decent choral music budget, Dr. Green only occasionally repeats selections that she has performed in previous years. Much of the music she performs with her choirs is new. Consequently she has hundreds if not thousands of octavos that she has performed or that
she has collected to perform at a later date. She also keeps a notebook of past selections she has performed with her choirs.

Although she doesn’t recall ever being instructed on how to select repertoire, she recalls learning by example. She did have a choral literature class in her doctoral studies at Charles State University, but she feels like she learned by observing what worked and what didn’t work. It was at Charles State that Dr. Green started collecting octavos. She saw what the singers liked and what the audiences liked. She started to look for music that had a good mix of things like emotions and tempos, stressing that she looked for a wide variety of music, but that it always had to be of high quality.

*Jefferson University Courses Offering Choral Music Experiences*

Students at Jefferson University have the opportunity to learn college-level choral music in both of the select mixed ensembles that are offered. A women’s ensemble open to any female who likes to sing is also offered at Jefferson University. These ensembles sing music that is of an appropriate voicing and difficulty for the singers in the groups. Although they may musically prepare the students for future leadership in a choral ensemble, the choirs are not intended to give future choral music educators experience in repertoire that would be appropriate for choral ensembles they may end up teaching at the elementary, junior-, or senior-high level. This is not to say that some of the music that is appropriate for these college ensembles may not also work in younger ensembles. Dr. Green hopes that students will see what works and what does not work with these ensembles as she strives to select new repertoire every year that will be appropriate for the group of students she has in the choirs.
**Choral Conducting Class**

In addition to the choral ensembles offered at Jefferson University, choral music education majors also get experiences with choral repertoire in both the required choral conducting class and in the required class called Teaching Choral Music in the Secondary Schools. For the conducting class, Dr. Green uses *Five Centuries of Choral Music* (published by Hal Leonard) as her textbook. This textbook includes choral standards ranging from the Renaissance to the 20th Century. The selections are at a moderate difficulty and might be appropriate for an advanced high school choir. Students in this class are also required to conduct sections of whatever large choral work the large mixed choir is performing with the local professional orchestra each year. Dr. Green mentioned that this year it will be Stravinsky’s *Symphony of Psalms*.

**Teaching Choral Music in the Secondary Schools**

In the past, the choral methods course called Teaching Choral Music in the Secondary Schools has been a half-semester course, generally meeting approximately 22 sessions. Its purpose has been to acquaint students with a wide range of knowledge and skills that they will need to become successful choral music educators. The length of this course is changing as Jefferson University is changing its degree offerings. In the future this course will have a similar purpose, but will be offered for an entire semester. Due to the limited number of days this course has met and the large breadth of material that needs to be covered, Dr. Green could not spend more than a couple days on any given topic. Consequently, Dr. Green has two days scheduled for teaching about repertoire. The text used for this class is *Choral Music Methods and Materials: Developing Successful Choral Programs (Grades 5 to 12)* by Barbara A. Brinson. Although only two days are
spent on the chapter that discusses repertoire, Dr. Green also talks about repertoire during discussions of other chapters in the book, such as the chapter on programming music.

Dr. Green admits that, although she has occasionally had her choral methods students select repertoire for an assignment on programming music for a concert, she could do more with requiring students to select repertoire in other parts of the class. In the past, when she has required students to select repertoire for an imaginary concert program, students could choose music from the Jefferson University choral library for their assignment. The goal of this assignment has been to get students to consider how they will program music for a concert, including what types of music to select and what order might work for a concert program. Other assignments that give students opportunities to experience repertoire that is appropriate for the ages they may teach include: Mini-Project #3 in the chapter on repertoire, a choice of mini-projects in the chapter on programming, and a score-preparation assignment. Students can also learn about repertoire in an article by Hilary Apfelstadt that they are required to read. It is also possible that they may get a few repertoire ideas from the music within the chapter on the changing voice.

**Mini-Project #3**

According to Dr. Green’s syllabus, Mini-Project #3 from the chapter on repertoire in the textbook is the first assignment she gives that directly relates to selecting repertoire. The assignment is as follows: “Using any music available to you (such as music from your school’s choral library, any single copies you may have collected, and any anthologies), choose three to four selections that would be appropriate literature for the following choir. Give specific reasons for your choice” (Brinson, 1996, pg. 89-90).
The assignment goes on to describe a fictional high school choir with its voicing, numbers, and abilities in each section. It also describes the ability of the accompanist. This project emphasizes choosing music based on ability level and balance of parts. Students will need to get to know the music to at least a small degree so that they can create a rationale for why they chose the music each piece of music.

*Mini-Project Assignments Not Included*

It may also be worth noting what mini-projects in the chapter on repertoire that Dr. Green has chosen not to assign. Mini-Project #1 requires students to study five pieces and fill out a choral repertoire card for each piece. The choral repertoire card must include the title, composer/arranger, range/tessitura, difficulties, style or period, voicing, and other publisher and cataloguing information (Brinson, 1996). Mini-Project #2 requires students to write a review of two or three pieces based on reviews of new music they have read in the Choral Journal. Their reviews should include “ranges and tessituras; vocal demands; difficulty level; text; appropriate age group; etc” (Brinson, 1996, pg. 89). Both of these assignments emphasize the appropriateness of pieces in areas like range and difficulty. Mini-Project #4 emphasizes the differences between choosing repertoire for chamber choirs vs. large mixed choirs (Brinson, 1996). And finally, Mini-Project #5 requires students to familiarize themselves with *Choral Music in Print* (Brinson, 1996) - a listing of choral titles and composers, languages, voicings, and publishers.

*First Things First: Selecting Repertoire*

Students are assigned to read *First Things First: Selecting Repertoire* by Hilary Apfelstadt from the Choral Journal and write a one-paragraph response. This article emphasizes quality of repertoire, teachability, and appropriateness; text, range, difficulty,
cultural context, and programming considerations could all fall under this last category. Each of the National Standards for Music Education is discussed in terms of repertoire selections. Consequently, this section of the article emphasizes the CMP aspects of repertoire selection both in terms of concepts and skills.

**Assignments on Programming**

Dr. Green gives her students the choice of which mini-project they would like to do after they have read the chapter on programming in the textbook. Mini-Project #1 is to attend several choral concerts and discuss any changes you would make to the order of the choirs or the order of the pieces sung by the choirs (Brinson, 1996). Mini-Project #2 requires the students to select five to seven pieces of music and put them in a concert order. The third mini-project is the same as the second one except it is to be planned around a theme (Brinson, 1996). Finally Mini-Project #4 challenges the students to come up with an order of when each choir will sing; this is based on a given scenario that details the various levels and ages of the choirs as well as set-up logistics (Brinson, 1996). With the exception of Mini-Project #4, all of the mini-projects on programming require students to have some sort of experience with repertoire. The assignments do not specify what age, ability, or voicing the choirs will be.

**Score Preparation Assignment**

After reading a chapter from the textbook on musical analysis and score preparation, students are assigned a modified version of Mini-Project #4 from the Brinson textbook. The project consists of analyzing two pieces of music and marking them for rehearsal. Dr. Green requires her students to bring copies of the music to class. This assignment gives students the opportunity to experience a piece of music through
analyzing it. Students may also get the opportunity to be exposed to new repertoire because they may get the chance to sing through the scores that their peers have analyzed.

Summary

As a pianist and organist, Dr. Green majored in music education with an instrumental emphasis. Much of her early experience in choirs was as the accompanist. After working full-time at a church, she decided to get her doctorate in organ performance from Charles State University but changed her mind after being encouraged by Dr. Darwin Arnold to consider a choral conducting major. Dr. Green’s church music position provided opportunities for her to teach musicians of many different ages and abilities. She also gained choral experience directing a community children’s choir.

Influenced by her choral conducting experiences at Charles State, Dr. Green tries to find a wide variety of high quality repertoire for the choirs that she directs at Jefferson University. She spends large amounts of time finding new repertoire each year that will keep her excited and will be worthy of teaching her students. Dr. Green conducts a large mixed choir and a small mixed ensemble at Jefferson University.

Besides the experience with music in the choirs, students can also learn about choral repertoire in Choral Conducting and Teaching Choral Methods in the Secondary Schools. Students in Choral Conducting practice their craft while conducting exemplary works from the Renaissance to the twentieth century. In the choral methods class, students are offered a brief half-semester overview of the various aspects related to teaching choir. Consequently, only a few days are devoted to repertoire or related topics. This class will soon become longer and more in-depth as degree offerings change at Jefferson University.
Although Dr. Green admits she could do more with requiring her students to select repertoire that is appropriate for the ages her students may teach in the future, she does give a few assignments that require her students to think about repertoire. The mini-assignment she requires of her students as part of the chapter on repertoire emphasizes finding repertoire to match the ability level and balance of the choir. Her students are also required to react to a reading assignment that emphasizes the National Standards for Music Education at their CMP aspects. Finally, both an assignment on programming music for a concert and an assignment requiring students to prepare a score of music give Dr. Green’s students opportunities to experience music. Both of these assignments simulate preparation for a concert and are indicative of Dr. Green’s interests in preparing quality music for a quality performance.
Dr. Asher grew up in a small, town in the Midwest. He showed musical interest and promise from early in his life, taking piano lessons from an early age and becoming the organist and church choir director at his church in the seventh grade. Although he describes his high school choir as “ok,” he recalls that his junior high teacher understood the changing voice, and that he had a “good” madrigal choir director. This choir not only sang madrigals, but also sang popular tunes of the time.

An experience that stands out as being “powerful” is the opportunity that Dr. Asher had to travel to Europe with a group of other good singers: this choir was conducted by a man who was nationally recognized in the field of choral conducting. He chose eclectic repertoire for their concerts ranging from standard literature from history, to spirituals, to a rock cantata. The conductor made an impression on the young Asher not only through his example, but also through recognizing his potential and encouraging him. Before this experience, Asher was thinking about becoming a math teacher, but decided he would major in music education instead.

Dr. Asher earned his Bachelor of Music Education degree at a Christian school that Dr. Asher describes as having a “long and proud tradition of choral singing.”
According to Dr. Asher, it was a good school for preparing professional singers and conductors, but it did not provide what he would consider to be good music education training. In terms of choral literature selection, his undergraduate training was, in his own words, “nonexistent.” Fortunately for Asher, the choral conductor at that school took him under his wing and taught him advanced choral conducting as an independent study. During his undergraduate experience, Asher sang in the top collegiate choir and also led several groups including a men’s quartet, a boys’ choir, and a church choir.

Dr. Asher’s first public school teaching job was in band. He recruited to get a choir. It was at this point he started realizing that the repertoire he learned in college may not work with the high school choir he had with its limited voicing. Consequently, he did some of his own arranging and went to workshops and reading sessions to try to better understand what voicings of repertoire were appropriate for the voices he had in his choir.

After teaching public school for a few years, Dr. Asher did his masters at Northeastern Wesleyan University where a prominent choral conductor was in his last few years of teaching. It was a “strong music ed. program” according to Asher, and it was the place where he did his master’s thesis on the changing voice. He chose the topic of the changing voice because he recognized he did not know much about it at the time.

Once he earned his masters degree in music education, Asher taught public school for a couple more years before taking a full-time music ministry position in a large church. It was there that he gained more experience in working with a wide range of ages from kindergarteners through adults. By his own admission, the program was too large
for him now that he had started a family, so after a few years, Asher decided to pursue his doctoral degree.

By the time Asher had decided to get his doctoral degree, he had also decided he wanted to pursue a Ph.D. in music education. He chose to focus on education in his studies rather than choral music. Consequently, he was not in the choirs at the university, but he did take the doctoral level choral literature class.

After he earned his Ph.D., Dr. Asher came to Kerr University where he continues to teach. Kerr University has a large music education enrollment, so Dr. Asher’s responsibilities are currently focused on methods classes. He has conducted the Women’s Chorus at Kerr University as well as a youth chorale that he founded, but the demands of his position have necessitated him giving up those ensembles.

*Kerr University Courses Offering Choral Music Experiences*

At Kerr University there are several classes that offer choral music education students a chance to be exposed to repertoire. The ensembles offered include a men’s chorus, a women’s chorus, a Concert Choir of mixed voices, and a select mixed choir called Chamber Choir. These ensembles sing music that is of appropriate difficulty and voicing for the types of choir they are, and are not intended to teach the participants repertoire that would be appropriate for young choirs.

Students also learn repertoire in choral lab during their first three years of college. In their first two years, they experience the music by singing in the lab choir; in their third year, they participate as conductors. The music the students learn in the choral lab is dependant upon what the conducting teacher chooses.
Once they reach their junior year, students also take Choral Methods, Choral Literature, and Capstone. In the choral methods course, students choose music that fits the limited number of voices in the class. A library of over 100 titles is provided for them to choose the music. They also do some field experience associated with the methods class, where students can see what repertoire public school directors are choosing. The choral literature course is the primary course that provides students with opportunities to experience choral music that is age-appropriate for the ensembles that they plan to teach. This course will be discussed in much more detail in the next section. Finally the Capstone course offers specialized approaches for the vocal and general majors. This includes discussions on repertoire selection for musicals, madrigals, jazz choir, and show choir.

**Choral Literature Course**

Of the courses Kerr University offers, Choral Literature has the most comprehensive curriculum geared toward teaching undergraduates how to select appropriate repertoire for their future students. Dr. Asher spends the first couple of weeks of this course teaching his students about the voice ranges they may have in their choirs and how the various voicings of literature can be chosen to accommodate the ranges in these choirs. A majority of the semester is devoted toward singing through literature that is representative of appropriate voicings for various school choirs, starting with elementary and working through high school. This not only gives the undergraduate students the opportunity to experience specific choral repertoire for various choirs, but it also teaches them how to choose appropriate voicings to fit a variety of vocal ranges and
needs. The following assignments are requirements for the choral literature course and relate to repertoire selection.

*Annotated Literature Assignment*

This assignment requires students to know how to get music and who some of the composers are that write for various publishers. The assignment also requires students to know information about vendors and resources that provide lists of literature. It does not give students an experience with repertoire. It emphasizes voicings by requiring the students to know what voicing is a specialty of the composer.

*Choral Library Assignment*

Students are required to develop a computer-based choral library database. Fields for the database include: title, composer, editor/arranger, publisher, price, publication date, ID number, voicing, accompaniment, solos, language, occasion, ranges, concepts, skills, and potential problems. The assignment requires students to find appropriate music for a variety of choirs and voicings. It gives students experience with the music by requiring them to provide original copies of 25 different pieces. It also requires the students to analyze all of the entries by their educational potential with regard to concepts, skills, and potential problems. Consequently, this assignment emphasizes educational considerations. The Choral Library Assignment also emphasizes the appropriateness of voicings due its requirement of the students to find voicings for specific choirs, small ensembles and solos. This assignment is 1/5 of the overall grade and is worth more than any other assignment.
Concert Observation Assignment

An observation of one K-12 choral concert during the term is required. After the concert, students are to write an evaluation of the concert, commenting on the appropriateness and value of each choral work. Although the term “value” could mean different things to different people, the assignment description later asks the students to write about the appropriateness of the literature, recommending the students include proper voicing, appropriate difficulty, and educational value among other things. Consequently the term “value” here may highlight the piece’s potential to be used as a tool to educate students on skills, concepts, or even aesthetically.

Choral Music Educator Interview Assignment

Students are required to interview a presently employed school choral music educator and complete a summary of the interview. Topics of the interview are to include: voicing of ensembles they direct, choral selections and composers/arrangers that have been most successful with the ensembles and why, process of selecting literature, and other practical issues such as budget, purchasing procedure, and vendor information. This assignment gets the students to consider what factors into the process of repertoire selection from the philosophical viewpoint of someone other than Dr. Asher. If the students respect the choral music educator they are interviewing, the list of recommended repertoire and arrangers could prove helpful to the students because director recommendations have been found to be a trusted source for finding new repertoire (Diddle, 2005; Forbes, 1998). Since the assignment also requires the students to find out why the educators believe these selections have been successful, the list of recommended songs may have additional value to the students.
Thematic Concert Program Assignment

This assignment requires students to come up with a concert program based on a theme. Dr. Asher requires the students to select repertoire for the following choirs: Elementary Treble Chorus, Middle School Chorus, High School Women’s Chorus, High School Mixed Chorus, and Combined Chorus. Students are expected to choose a variety of styles and tempi and are required to give a rationale of why they chose the piece “with respect to the theme and other criteria such as difficulty, educational value, contribution to the balance of literature, etc.” Consequently, this assignment requires students to not only consider a theme, but it also emphasizes a balance and variety of styles and educational considerations within the confines of specified voicings. Students are encouraged to avoid themes that limit a balance and variety of repertoire. On the rating sheet that is used as the assessment tool on this assignment, out of a total of 50 points, students can earn five points for balance/variety of the literature, and ten points for their rationale. Although 25 points can be earned for thematic considerations, students may only earn the total credit in these categories if they program at least one legato/expressive piece for each of the choirs. Consequently, this assignment emphasizes the importance of the balance and variety of literature much more than the title of the assignment may suggest.

Unit Plan and Presentation

The Unit plan requires students to look at one piece of music in depth. Students should choose this piece based on what they can teach with it. After selecting the piece, the students must make a Literature Spec. Sheet (listing such things as the piece’s reference information, voicing, concepts or skills that could be taught using the piece, and
potential problem areas in the piece), create a study guide, write learning goals, specify a
time frame, generate assessment strategies and materials, provide related reading, and
prepare a lesson plan. In addition, the students are then required to lead the class in a
successful reading of the piece. This assignment not only gives the students an in-depth
experience with a piece of choral repertoire, but it also highly emphasizes
Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance and the National Standards for Music
Education. Learning goals should “reflect focus on most of the 9 music standards,” so
students cannot merely teach the notes of the piece to their students. Rather they must
focus on teaching more comprehensively. This assignment is worth 1/10 of the overall
grade. Although the point value on this assignment is not weighted as heavily as the
choral library, the unit plan requires the letter grade of a C or higher in order for students
to earn a C or higher in the class.

The presentation part of this assignment should cause students to consider the
voicing and difficulty of the music they are selecting. Since the students are to “lead the
ensemble in a reading of the work,” they must consider what vocal ranges and abilities
are represented in the class. Depending on their piano skills and conducting skills, the
students may also need to consider the difficulty of playing the parts or the
accompaniment, or whether or not an a cappella could be successful. Once again, this
part of the assignment emphasizes voicing and difficulty considerations.

Summary

Dr. Asher showed musical promise from an early age. It was through the
encouragement of mentors and through significant musical experiences that he decided to
pursue a music education degree. Recognizing that he was not trained to select
appropriate voicings for choir, he took it upon himself to learn about the various voicing options for choirs. He did this through going to workshops and by researching the changing voice for his master’s thesis. As he better understood the changing voice, he also started to understand how to select appropriate voicings of literature based on his choir’s ranges and abilities. These were pivotal discoveries for him, and they have shaped how he teaches Choral Literature classes today. Determined to provide his students with a better education than he received in literature selection, Dr. Asher emphasizes how specific voicings of literature can be successfully chosen for certain ranges future teachers may encounter in their choirs. Consequently, many of the choral repertoire selection opportunities Dr. Asher assigns require the students to select repertoire of an appropriate voicing for given choirs.

Although Dr. Asher showed promise as a choral conductor, he chose to get his Ph.D. in music education. This interest in music education is evident in the assignments he gives his students. Not only is it important to Dr. Asher that his students learn to select music of an appropriate voicing for given choirs, but he is also concerned that they consider what educational benefits can be gleaned from the music they select. Although most of his assignments encourage Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance to some degree, the Unit Plan assignment emphasizes it the most.
Influences and Experiences

Dr. Asher and Dr. Green have a lot in common beyond being choral methods instructors. They are both accomplished keyboardists. Both had influential experiences in choral music in high school. They both sang in the select choirs at the universities they attended for their bachelor degrees. They each grew up in Christian homes, attended Christian universities, and later served as full-time church musicians. Since they were both full-time church musicians, they have conducted similar types of ensembles. Neither of them set out to be choral conductors, but they were both encouraged to consider music by mentors who saw potential in them. Dr. Asher originally wanted to teach math, but the conductor on his choral tour of Europe encouraged him to consider music. Dr. Green started her doctorate as an organ performance major, but was convinced by the choral professor at the school to switch her major to choral conducting.

There are some notable differences in their experiences as well. Dr. Asher led choral groups from an early age, unlike Dr. Green. Although Dr. Green did not elaborate on her undergraduate experience in choir, she did recall spending a lot of the time as the choir’s accompanist. Dr. Asher’s undergraduate experience was at a school with a proud choral tradition but with a music education department that he believes did not prepare
him well. Although Dr. Green mentioned very little in her interview about her masters
degree, Dr. Asher’s master’s degree at Northeastern Wesleyan University was a pivotal
time for him. Northeastern Wesleyan University had a strong music education program
where Dr. Asher learned from a much-respected choral music educator of his time. Dr.
Asher recognized his own lack of understanding of the changing voice during the years
he was teaching public school before getting his master’s degree. He is a self-proclaimed
person who “will not fail,” so he did his master’s thesis on the changing voice.

It is evident by the type of doctoral degree Dr. Asher and Dr. Green pursued that
their interests and possibly their philosophies of music education were different. Dr.
Green switched from organ performance to being a choral conducting major.
Consequently she spent a lot of time singing in and conducting choirs before getting her
D.A. Conversely, Dr. Asher knew that he wanted to pursue a doctorate in music
education. He, by choice, spent no time singing in choirs while working on his doctorate,
but focused on education courses to complete his Ph.D.

The teaching responsibilities that Dr. Asher and Dr. Green currently have may
further illustrate how their music education interests differ. Dr. Asher does not currently
direct any choirs at Kerr University due to his music education responsibilities. Dr. Green
conducts two choirs and teaches choral conducting along with teaching choral methods
and fine arts. These differences in schedules also have much to do with the size of school
in which they teach.
Course Requirements Beyond Collegiate Choirs That Offer Experiences in Learning

Repertoire

If the class requirements at a university are indicative of what the leadership at the university believes is important for students to learn, then an examination of what courses at each university are offered that teach students repertoire may be helpful. The main course at Kerr University where students learn repertoire that is appropriate for the children they will be teaching is in the required choral literature class. Dr. Asher worked to get this course in the curriculum because he recognized students were not learning music that was appropriate for young students. He saw the curriculum at Kerr University as “ineffective” because it was so much like his own undergraduate education in college. After graduating from a college with a similar curriculum, he realized that he did not know much about how to choose appropriate repertoire for choirs. His experiences were limited to the songs that he learned in the advanced college choir and in conducting classes. Consequently, he saw the need to add a course that was designed to teach students how to choose appropriate repertoire as well as give students some examples of repertoire that they could use with various choirs. He also added a vocal pedagogy class at the same time. Due to the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) requiring students to take private lessons for four years, however, Kerr University has once again had to make a change in curriculum to make room for these additional required credits. Soon Kerr University will be integrating the choral methods course, the literature course, and an administration course into two semesters of choral methods. Dr. Asher is hopeful that this arrangement will at least be as good, if not better for the students. He admits that the fact that the music program is large at Kerr University is a positive when trying to add
classes because the school of music has more teachers who can devote their time to specific areas of instruction. All of Dr. Asher’s efforts in striving to give students more instruction on repertoire selection than what they were getting point to his belief that repertoire selection instruction is important.

At a much smaller school of music, Dr. Green admits that although adding a choral literature class may be ideal, they are “strapped” there. The main course at Jefferson University where students get instruction on how to choose repertoire is in the choral methods class. This class has been a half-sememester long, but will soon be a semester in length. The class was designed to accommodate area majors who were being licensed to teach both choral and instrumental music K-12. Consequently, the choral methods class was a brief overview of as much of everything about choral music that Dr. Green could cover in half of a semester. Unlike at Kerr University - where not only was there a semester class called Choral Literature, but also a methods class where students are required to select repertoire - at Jefferson University the methods instructor has typically devoted two days to repertoire selection and has integrated it into discussions on topics like programming or the voice change.

Students at both Kerr University and Jefferson University also have experiences with repertoire in conducting classes. At Kerr University, freshmen and sophomore choral music education majors are required to take a lab class where they participate as singers for the juniors who are taking choral conducting. The repertoire that students learn in these labs is dependent upon what the conducting teacher chooses for the students to conduct.
At Jefferson University, Dr. Green uses *Five Centuries of Choral Music* (published by Hal Leonard) as her textbook. This book might be described as a combination of what Richmond (1990) would call an exemplar model and a forms model. These standard choral works represent a canon of literature from the Renaissance to pieces from the 20th Century. This literature may be appropriate for some high school choirs of at least average ability.

The differences in the way the two universities opt to teach choral conducting may show a difference in belief about what concepts of repertoire selection are most important. Kerr University seems to highlight choosing music that is of the appropriate voicing and difficulty for the choir. Music is likely chosen for the voices they have in the lab choir; however, this is difficult to say with any certainty due to the frequent turn over of conducting instructors for the class. Whether or not the repertoire that is selected is considered something of such great worth that all choirs should experience it at some point may be of lesser consideration. Conversely, at Jefferson University conducting students are taught how to conduct using a canon of literature deemed to be of quality. Whether intentional or not, less emphasis is placed on the appropriateness of voicing or the difficulty of the selection. These considerations are not as necessary for the course because the students are not conducting a lab choir with specific voicing limitations. The differences in how the labs are set up are most likely also indicative of the differences in size of the two schools.

*Quality*

Although the term “quality” is defined in the first chapter of this paper, one cannot presume to know what others mean when they speak of that term. In the
interviews, there was a contrast in the frequency in which the term “quality” was used. Dr. Green spoke of “quality” frequently, while Dr. Asher less frequently spoke of “quality.” He did, however, speak of some of the music that he sang when he was growing up as either “good” or “great.” Dr. Asher even went so far as to say “I guess I sort of feel like if they don’t know that a piece, you know, called ‘Cafeteria Rap’ is perhaps not the most quality piece they’re ever going to see, I’m not sure I can help them!” As he spoke of the “supposed canon of literature,” he continued: “I try not to be too preachy about [it].” He also admitted that even a song like “Cafeteria Rap” might be used under the right circumstances. Conversely Dr. Green explained that quality is one of the main things she looks for in a piece for one of her ensembles. She elaborated on several specific pieces she is planning on teaching her choirs, using them as examples of music she believes to be of quality.

Although it may sound like Dr. Asher doesn’t think it is worthwhile to teach students how to select quality repertoire, there is evidence that he does encourage his students to consider what makes a piece something of quality. The Concert Observation Assignment requires students to evaluate the value of the pieces that they heard performed. Dr. Asher also introduces numerous selections to his students throughout the duration of the Choral Literature course. Although he doesn’t like to use the term “exemplars,” he would consider these pieces to be “samples of literature that are appropriate” for choirs of specific vocal ranges. He admits that although he is more interested in teaching the students how to find music, he is also providing his students with some specific pieces that they might be able to use in their classrooms.
Dr. Asher and Dr. Green may view the term “quality” differently due to their different backgrounds and philosophies. Dr. Green, with her background in choral conducting and her current choral performance schedule seems to look at repertoire selection from more of a performance perspective that values an aesthetic experience than Dr. Asher. In her interview she spoke of searching for music that is “worthy” of her students. Music of “good quality” that has “great poetry” that is “uplifting” is important to her. She also considers her audience when selecting repertoire for her choirs. Her hope is that her students in the choirs “would see the pieces of music that work and the pieces that we try and then they don’t work.” Like Dr. Asher, she gives an assignment on programming, but this assignment focuses more on the program order than on educational purposes. This is not to say that Dr. Green does not teach her students to select music by its educational merits. She teaches her students to consider range, tessitura, and difficulty as well as whether or not the music is teachable. Evidence of this would be an article that Dr. Green requires her students to read call *First Things First: Selecting Repertoire* by Hilary Apfelstadt (1996) in which Apfelstadt emphasizes finding music of quality, that can be used to teach, and is appropriate. The National Standards for Music Education are discussed in terms of repertoire selection in this article. The article by Apfelstadt is not only evidence that Dr. Green teaches her students to select music based on its educational quality, but also further illustrates her emphasis on selecting music of quality.

Dr. Asher, with his Ph.D. in music education and his class schedule filled with music education classes, tends to view repertoire selection from more of an educational standpoint than Dr. Green. He emphasizes the appropriateness of the repertoire and what
it can teach as a means for measuring its value. In his interview he spoke of the circumstances and contexts dictating what literature would be of quality, saying he is “about [finding] literature that kids can be successful singing.” Dr. Asher’s rationale for the Choral Literature course is:

To effectively teach musical concepts and skills, choral music teachers need to have a thorough knowledge of appropriate musical literature, be capable of analyzing that literature and correlating it with curricular objectives, and be skilled in developing teaching units and lessons from the literature which address curricular objectives. This course develops students’ knowledge and skills in these areas.

(Music Education 396 Choral Literature Syllabus, Asher, p. 1)

The rationale clearly points to Dr. Asher’s belief that teaching musical skills and concepts should be the objective when selecting repertoire. Dr. Asher’s assignments further illustrate that the term “quality” could be tied to a piece’s potential to be used as an educational tool. The Concert Observation Assignment requires students to reflect on the “appropriateness and value” of the choral works they heard. Later it asks students to evaluate the pieces on their “educational value” among other things. The term “value,” particularly in the first context, is a little ambiguous. It could suggest educational value or degrees of aesthetic appeal, but Dr. Asher has not mentioned teaching in the affective domain anywhere else in his syllabus, assignment descriptions, or interview. Perhaps the term “value” is intentionally left to the student’s interpretation here. “Educational value” is also mentioned in the Thematic Concert Program Assignment. Although the terms “quality” or “value” are rare in the artifacts collected from Dr. Asher, he did speak of believing there is “great literature out there of every voicing.” Since he also speaks of his
“roots in a CMP,” it is clear that repertoire should have the potential to be used as a teaching tool for Dr. Asher to consider it a quality piece for the classroom. It would also stand to reason that if he really desires to teach comprehensively through the repertoire, then aesthetic education would be included in his list of concepts or skills to cover. Consequently, it would be unfair to say that just because Dr. Asher does not mention aesthetic education in his syllabus, assignment descriptions, or interview that he doesn’t include aesthetics in his own understanding of what a quality piece of music is.

Appropriateness

For this discussion, the term “appropriateness” will be limited to difficulty and voicing issues. Both Dr. Asher and Dr. Green teach their students about how to find appropriate repertoire for their choirs, but Dr. Asher spends much more time and effort teaching his students about voicings of music. Dr. Green spoke in the interview of how she teaches her students to consider range, tessitura, and difficulty of the piece when selecting repertoire. She spoke of “common sense kinds of things” such as not programming a piece that has low bass notes if you don’t have a low bass in the choir. She emphasizes choosing music based on ability and balance of parts by assigning Mini-Project #3 from the Brinson textbook. This assignment requires the students to select music for a given choir with a given number of singers on each part. The textbook also describes the abilities of each section in the choir. Students are required to choose music that is of an appropriate voicing and difficulty for the choir. Issues of extreme ranges or dynamics are discussed in the Brinson textbook. Although a list is given of every type of voicing, little is written about which voicings of music can be successfully matched with specific ranges. Due to the time restraints of the course, Dr. Green spends two sessions on
repertoire selection and two sessions on the changing voice.

Dr. Asher, on the other hand, has much more time to spend on issues such as voicing and difficulty. It is apparent from both the interview and Dr. Asher’s syllabus that teaching about voicings is a high priority for him. He admittedly emphasizes this because he wants his students to know more about it than he did when he started teaching. Unlike Dr. Green, who spends a day or two on voicings, Dr. Asher spends the first few weeks of the Choral Literature course teaching about voice ranges and voicings of literature. He is concerned that choir directors do not know how voice ranges can be paired with an appropriate voicing of repertoire. Consequently he believes many choral directors are making some poor choices. Dr. Asher spends between half and two-thirds of the semester singing through examples of various voicings of literature with his students, beginning with literature appropriate for elementary choirs and working his way up. Not only does he suggest appropriate voicings for specific ages, ranges and tessituras, but he also incorporates some vocal pedagogy, pointing out how certain voicings can develop vocal and aural skills.

The assignments Dr. Asher requires his students to complete also emphasize the importance of understanding how the ranges and tessituras in the choir should dictate the voicing of literature chosen. The Annotated Choral Resource List Assignment requires students to list composers with the voicing that is considered their specialty. The Choral Library Assignment requires the students to find music from a wide variety of given voicings; it also includes voicings that would be appropriate for solo and ensemble contest. After observing a concert, students must comment on the appropriateness of both the voicings and difficulty of repertoire sung. The first question on the Choral Music
Educator Interview Assignment is about the voicing of the choir. Specific voicings of choirs are given for the Thematic Concert Program. All of these assignments require students to consider or search for repertoire that would be appropriate for a variety of choirs that they may encounter in their teaching experiences. Although Dr. Asher covers a lot of topics in the Choral Literature course, he emphasizes more than any other topic the necessity to find appropriate voicings for the specific ranges and tessituras of ensembles.

*Diverse Styles*

Both Dr. Asher and Dr. Green claim to have grown up learning a variety of musical repertoire, and both of their experiences seem to have been rooted in serious choral music from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century. In high school, Dr. Asher sang in a madrigal choir that also performed music like “MacArthur Park” and other popular music of the time. Dr. Asher experienced more “standard lit.” in the choir that toured Europe. He recalls singing music of Bach, Haydn, and Mozart in that choir; however, he also recalls singing a jazz tune, spirituals, and a rock cantata with the ensemble that toured Europe. He credits the director of the European tour choir for influencing in subtle ways his desire to be eclectic in the repertoire selection choices he makes.

Dr. Green had similar experiences with repertoire to Dr. Asher in her high school choir. She describes her high school choir director as choosing “a wide variety of the great choral literature,” and specifically remembers a concert when the choir sang some “heavier” music at the beginning, then lightened it up with Henry Mancini’s “Charade” at the end. Both Dr. Green and Dr. Asher received similar experiences with repertoire in college, generally ranging from classics from the various periods of history to spirituals.
Dr. Green’s experience also included some jazz, however neither Dr. Asher nor Dr. Green experienced singing much popular music in college.

Currently, Dr. Green tends to place more emphasis on the classics of choral literature than does Dr. Asher. She speaks of “the great choral literature” as a canon of exemplars while Dr. Asher speaks of great literature in a broader sense of the phrase. Dr. Green teaches choral conducting from a textbook that is designed to offer students a chance to conduct serious music from the Renaissance to the twentieth century. Although he does not place as much emphasis on the music of Mozart and Haydn, and other notable composers of history, Dr. Asher does provide his students with a more eclectic experience with repertoire. In addition to Choral Literature, students at Kerr University must also take a class that has a component focused on jazz, madrigals, and show choir literature. With the exception of madrigals, students at Jefferson University are offered many fewer opportunities to experience these popular styles of music. In the past, Dr. Green has generally spent one day discussing pop ensembles and musical productions.

Diversity of languages and music from various cultures is also encouraged at both Kerr and Jefferson University. The collegiate choirs at both universities sing music of other cultures and languages. At least to a small degree, methods classes at both universities also encourage singing in languages other than English as well as singing music of other cultures. In Dr. Green’s Teaching Music in the Secondary Schools choral methods class, the chapter in Choral Music: Methods and Materials by Brinson on programming briefly mentions achieving variety in the program by selecting songs of various cultures and languages. The chapter also provides examples of concert programs that illustrate how to program music of contrasting texts and cultures. With the exception
of one piece in French, *Five Centuries of Choral Music* (the textbook used for the conducting class at Jefferson University) only includes selections with texts in Liturgical Latin and English. Consequently, the main opportunity students at Jefferson University have to learn choral music of other cultures is in the collegiate choir. It should be noted, however, that Jefferson University requires its students to take a music education class on world music as well. As part of Choral Literature at Kerr University, Dr. Asher requires his students to purchase *Pronunciation Guide for Choral Literature* by May and Tolin. He also expects his students to read an article from the *Music Educators Journal* called “Rationales for Teaching World Musics.” Dr. Asher’s Choral Library Assignment requires students to fill in a field called “language.” Perhaps the assignment that most encourages his students to select music of other languages is the Thematic Concert Program Assignment. It challenges students to find a variety of languages. Balance/Variety is then a small part of the overall Thematic Concert Program Assignment assessment that holds the students accountable for finding music of various languages. All of these requirements are evidence that Dr. Asher encourages his students to consider a variety of languages and cultures when selecting repertoire.

*Programming*

Due to the short amount of time Dr. Green has with her choral methods students, she does not assign as much homework as Dr. Asher. Consequently, there are few similarities in the assignments the two professors give their students. One assignment that they both have in common, however, is a concert program assignment. Dr. Asher calls it a Thematic Concert Program Assignment. Dr. Green allows her students to choose from four similar assignments at the end of the chapter on programming in the textbook. One
of these four assignments is a thematic concert program assignment. Each of the four assignments from which students may choose in Dr. Green’s class focuses on the ordering of selections within a concert program. Students must consider such things as the balance and variety of music to be sung on the program, the level of the various choirs, and the logistics of stage preparation for each choir. Dr. Asher’s assignment also has an emphasis on balance and variety. Like Dr. Green’s assignment, his assignment requires students to place the music in a concert order. Not surprisingly, his assignment also requires students to choose appropriate voicings of music for given choirs. Although the Thematic Concert Program Assignment does require the students to select music based on a theme, it also emphasizes the importance of choosing music to fit the ages, abilities and vocal ranges of the students in the choir.

Other Emphases

Beyond the previously discussed repertoire selection concepts that Dr. Green and Dr. Asher emphasize, they also both teach some other concepts related to repertoire selection that are not emphasized as highly through written or lab assignment. In Dr. Green’s class these include topics such as practical applications of ChoralNet, and important publisher information. Due to the fact that the Choral Literature class at Kerr University offers more in-depth instruction on repertoire selection, Dr. Asher is able to spend more time on topics such as publisher information. He also gives at least minimal attention to the following topics: copyright laws, how selected repertoire can affect vocal pedagogy, issues of sacred music in the public school, and music for solo and ensemble contest. Some of these topics are also slightly emphasized through inclusion in a written assignment.
Summary

Although Dr. Asher and Dr. Green have many similar music and life experiences, there are some pivotal points in each of their lives that have resulted in slightly different outlooks on music and philosophies of music education. Dr. Asher’s interests in learning more about the changing voice may have resulted in a much better understanding of how to choose appropriate repertoire for given ages, ranges, and ability levels. It also contributed to his desire to help his students understand this better than he did in his first year of teaching. His degrees in music education, including his Ph.D., shaped his belief that choral music teachers should comprehensively teach music skills and concepts through the repertoire that they select.

Dr. Green’s ambitions changed from organ performance to choral conducting as she worked on her doctorate. The experiences she had while working on her choral conducting degree shaped her views of how repertoire should be selected. She devotes much time searching for high quality repertoire of various styles. Consequently she has a slightly more performance-oriented approach to teaching how repertoire should be selected than Dr. Asher does.

One difference between Dr. Asher and Dr. Green is what each perceives music of quality to be. Dr. Green describes searching for music that has uplifting texts and that is “worthy” of her students. Music that has the potential to provide an aesthetic experience seems important to Dr. Green. Although Dr. Asher may share some of the same ideals about desiring his students to have aesthetic experiences with the music he selects, his definition of quality is shaped more by his training in music education. He believes that although a piece may not be of the highest musical quality, it may still be of value in the
right situation. He values music that can reach students where they are in their musical
development, and he believes there may be times when music of lesser quality is
appropriate to do that. Consequently Dr. Asher tends to view repertoire selection more
from an educational standpoint than Dr. Green, who views it from a slightly more
performance-oriented vantage point.
CHAPTER VII
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate what concepts of choral repertoire selection are emphasized by selected choral methods instructors in Indiana and why these concepts are being emphasized. The following discussion will provide answers to the research questions investigated at a small, private, Christian university and a large public university in Indiana.

1. What philosophical or musical concepts are emphasized through assignments requiring undergraduate choral music students to select age- and ability-appropriate repertoire?

Of the two universities investigated in this study, students at Kerr University were offered many more opportunities to select choral repertoire than the students at Jefferson University. This is largely due to the fact that students at Kerr University are required to take a course called Choral Literature, while no such course is offered at Jefferson University. Kerr University can offer this course because it is a much larger school with a much larger and specialized music education faculty. The university added the course because Dr. Asher believed it was necessary. He believes it is not the college choral director’s job to program music that is appropriate for elementary, junior high, or high school.
At Jefferson University there are far fewer faculty to teach additional courses, and while Dr. Green believes the addition of a choral literature course would be beneficial, she does not believe the university would be willing to add it to the course requirements. The amount of credits that are required of music education majors is also a factor in both schools. Consequently, Kerr University will soon integrate Choral Literature, Choral Methods, and administrative issues into a two-semester course rather than having these separated into different courses.

Both schools require students to select repertoire for a concert program assignment. In Dr. Asher’s class, this is a thematic concert assignment where students must select age- and ability-appropriate repertoire for given choirs based on a theme. Dr. Green offers her students a choice between four assignments related to programming a concert. Two of the four choices require the students to select repertoire for a concert. Neither of the two assignments that call for students to select repertoire requires students to select the music for specified ages or abilities. All of these assignment choices offered by Dr. Green emphasize selecting repertoire with a concert order and audience in mind. In order to achieve a balance of repertoire for the imaginary concert, diversity of repertoire may also be emphasized. Although the Thematic Concert Program Assignment that Dr. Asher requires does have a large element that encourages students to consider thematic and programming challenges, it also emphasizes finding appropriate literature. It requires students to find music for specific choirs, emphasizing voicings. A balance of repertoire is required, emphasizing the need for diversity of literature. It also requires students to give a rationale of the music they chose. This part of the assignment could emphasize educational value among other things.
Students must select repertoire for a fictional choir in an assignment that Dr. Green requires from the chapter on repertoire in the textbook. Here students are given the strengths and weaknesses of each section in an SATB choir, balance between the sections, and general ages of the singers. The drawback with both this assignment and the concert program assignment that Dr. Green requires is that the main place where students have access to music is in the college choral library. Music in the Jefferson University music library was selected for the collegiate choirs at Jefferson University and may not be age- or ability-appropriate for high school choirs not to mention younger choirs.

Dr. Asher also assigns a project that requires his students to select music for specific ages and abilities. He calls it the Choral Library Assignment. Although the assignment does not provide information on the balance issues within each choir, it does require the students to select music for a broader spectrum of ages than the assignment given by Dr. Green. While Dr. Green’s assignment focuses on a high school choir, Dr. Asher’s assignment requires students to “complete a choral library DB [database] of music appropriate for elementary, middle school, junior high, and high school.” Students must also find vocal contest literature for soloists of both genders and various ages. This assignment not only emphasizes the need to find appropriate voicings and difficulty levels of music, but it also emphasizes the need to select music with educational goals in mind. Beyond cataloging the titles, composers, other publication information, and the voicings, students must analyze the pieces for their educational potential, outlining concepts, skills, and potential problem areas of the pieces. This project, with over 100 pieces in the database, is much larger than the assignment that Dr. Green requires of her students. Students at Kerr University are required to include all of the music that they
have been introduced to in class as well as 25 copies of music they must buy on their own. They also have access to a library of age- and ability-appropriate music that Dr. Asher provides. Consequently students at Kerr University are exposed to substantially more age- and ability-appropriate music than the students at Jefferson University.

One last assignment that Dr. Green gives her students that requires them to select repertoire is a score preparation assignment. Students must select a piece of choral repertoire and mark it up in preparation for rehearsal and a performance. Each student in the class can gain some experience not only with the piece they are studying, but also with the copies of music the other students bring to class. Once again, Dr. Green emphasizes preparation for a performance with this assignment. It may also emphasize aesthetic education by encouraging students to make musical choices based on their feelings.

Among several other smaller written assignments that Dr. Asher gives his students is the sizeable Unit Plan and Presentation. Only one piece of music is to be selected for this project. Students must consider learning goals based on the national music standards for the unit when selecting repertoire to teach these skills or concepts. The belief that music educators should strive to teach comprehensively through the music they select is emphasized through this assignment. Consequently, it is important to find repertoire that has a lot of potential as an instructional tool for the learning goals.

In general, Dr. Green’s assignments tend to encourage students to consider the final performance when selecting repertoire. There is an emphasis on finding aesthetically pleasing music of some diversity that fits the ability and balance of the choir. SATB music is emphasized in the assignments but there is evidence that Dr. Green
teaches about a variety of voicings. Educational considerations may also be emphasized in the classroom but are not emphasized through music selection experiences required of the students.

There are more opportunities at Kerr University for students to select repertoire than at Jefferson University, and there are more concepts of repertoire selection that are emphasized. Dr. Asher’s repertoire selection assignments unapologetically emphasize finding appropriate voicings for given choirs and finding music that can be used to teach skills and concepts. An emphasis is also placed on finding diverse repertoire. Although quality may be discussed in terms of aesthetics in the classroom, the repertoire selection assignments tend to equate “quality” with repertoire that fits the ranges of the choral participants and can be used to meet instructional goals.

2. What life experiences or philosophies have influenced the professors to provide these experiences in repertoire selection?

The pivotal point in Dr. Green’s life was when Dr. Arnold at Charles State University mentored her and encouraged her to pursue a D.A. in choral conducting. Although her two other degrees were in music education, they were with an instrumental emphasis. She spent much of her time in choirs behind the keyboard, although she did get valuable choral experience in her full-time church job. Dr. Arnold influenced her love of quality music and encouraged her to choose eclectic repertoire for concerts. Dr. Green started collecting music at Charles State and continues to find a variety of music that she believes to be of quality. It is for these reasons that she tends to assign repertoire selection homework that focuses around programming and preparing scores for concerts. She believes in finding diverse repertoire and her concert program assignment may
reflect this. Her definition of “diverse repertoire” is probably also influenced by her
choral conducting experience at Charles State where diversity included music from the
various periods in history, spirituals, jazz, and novelty selections. She also spoke of her
high school choral director choosing serious music with some lighter selections at the end
of her concerts. The Brinson (1996) textbook that Dr. Green uses describes selecting
repertoire like planning a dinner, with the main course music being followed by some
lighter dessert music. Dr. Green most likely encourages her students to think of this
analogy as they do their concert program assignment.

Dr. Green may find the textbook helpful in teaching her class since her doctorate
is in choral conducting and not education, and since she has not had a lot of experience in
public school music education. It is a textbook that is an overview of choral music
education, so it fits her half-semester class well. This is where she finds most of her
assignments, so her decision to use the Brinson textbook has also influenced what
assignments she chooses to give her students.

All of the assignments that Dr. Asher gives his students requiring them to select
repertoire in the Choral Literature class have a component that necessitates the students
to select appropriate voicings of repertoire. In some instances the level and voicing of the
choir is given. In other assignments, the students get to choose the general ages and
ranges of the singers that would most likely be successful performing the literature that
they select. Dr. Asher’s emphasis on finding appropriate voicings may stem from his
desire for his students to have a better understanding of voicings than he had when he
started teaching. In the interview, he admitted that it was when he started teaching that he
realized he did not know how to select appropriate repertoire for his students. His own
recognition of this weakness caused him to seek a better understanding of how various voicings of repertoire could be paired with certain ranges of singers. Dr. Asher’s desire to learn more about voicings of repertoire motivated him to choose a master’s thesis topic that related to voicings. His persistence paid off, and what was once a weakness of Dr. Asher’s is now a strength.

Dr. Asher also spoke of his “roots in a CMP (Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance) approach.” This is the belief that music concepts and skills should be taught through the music that is selected for the choir to sing. Dr. Asher’s CMP roots are evident in most of the assignments he gives his students requiring them to select repertoire. The Unit Plan is the best example of how he emphasizes teaching comprehensively through performance, but the Thematic Concert Program and Choral Library also have significant CMP aspects to them. The Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance approach was most likely ingrained in him during his masters and doctoral work and reinforced and affirmed when the National Standards for Music Education came out in the early 1990’s.

Summary

Students at Kerr University are given more opportunities to select repertoire than students at Jefferson University. This is largely due to the differences in the size of each university. Kerr University is much larger, so it has more resources such as more specialized instructors. It also has a broader curriculum that has more classes focused on specific instruction such as how to choose repertoire.

Dr. Green’s approach to teaching repertoire selection has been influence by her training and experiences in choral conducting. Repertoire selection experiences in Dr.
Green’s classes tend to encourage students to choose music that is of aesthetic quality and of musical diversity while ultimately keeping the performance in mind. Although she teaches her students voicing and difficulty considerations, repertoire selection assignments do not offer much of an opportunity for students to experience a wide range of voicings or difficulties of literature. An emphasis is placed on SATB music, and the college choral library is the resource provided for students to find repertoire. In the classroom, Dr. Green may encourage her students to select repertoire based on skills or concepts the music could be used to teach, but none of the assignments she gives her students require them to select repertoire based on such educational considerations.

Dr. Asher’s approach to teaching repertoire selection has been influenced by his experiences in public school teaching as well as the classes he took while pursuing a Master’s Degree and Ph.D. in music education. Because he teaches a semester-long class called Choral Literature that is intended to teach students how to select repertoire, he has the opportunity to provide his students with much broader and in-depth choral repertoire instruction than Dr. Green is able to offer her students. His background in learning about the changing voice and how that should impact repertoire selection choices has influenced what Dr. Asher emphasizes in his Choral Literature class. Encouraging his students to find repertoire that is of the appropriate voicing and difficulty is of high priority to Dr. Asher. Finding music that can be used to teach music skills and concepts is also emphasized in Dr. Asher’s Choral Literature class. It is apparent in the repertoire selection assignments that he gives his students that Dr. Asher was convinced of the merits of the Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance approach during his studies of music education. Several of his assignments require his students to consider
what could be taught through the pieces they are to analyze. Although aesthetics may be emphasized in Dr. Asher’s class, the assignments he gives tend to focus on more tangible things such as voicings of repertoire and the concepts and skills the music can be used to teach.

Assignment Recommendations

Dr. Asher teaches choral repertoire selection in a very comprehensive manner. Assignments cover a wide variety of repertoire selection considerations and issues, and they are weighted appropriately. There are two recommendations that the researcher would suggest Dr. Asher consider emphasizing more in his repertoire selection assignments. The first recommendation is that Dr. Asher should require his students to learn more age- and ability-appropriate music from the various periods of music. He may expose his students to numerous pieces from history in his class. If that is the case, he may be giving his students adequate exposure to the music. If it is not the case, students have little motivation to search for music from history for the repertoire selection assignments Dr. Asher gives. Although the Thematic Concert Program Assignment does encourage diverse repertoire, it seems possible, albeit unlikely, that his students could fulfill the requirements of that assignment without programming any music composed before the twentieth century. Exposing future teachers to choral repertoire from the various periods of history is important because Reames (2001) found that experienced choral music educators are inclined to program more Baroque music for their beginning high school choirs than directors with less experience.

The second recommendation for Dr. Asher is that he may need to consider whether or not he is emphasizing aesthetic education enough with the assignments he is
giving his students. Music of aesthetic quality is admittedly difficult to measure because of its subjectivity. Perhaps it would be enough for students to explain what makes the literature they select for their Choral Library Assignment music of aesthetic quality. This may already be happening to some degree when Dr. Asher’s students complete their concert observations because students are required to reflect on the value of the music. In the context of the class, however, the term “value” could be interpreted as appropriateness or as educational value with regard to skills and concepts. These recommendations may already be addressed sufficiently through music examples in class, as well as class lectures and discussions. In general, Dr. Asher and Kerr University are to be commended for placing repertoire selection as such a high priority in their curriculum. Hopefully, it will remain a priority as the curriculum changes.

Dr. Green has also done well given the time constraints under which she has had to teach a large breadth of material. There is a lack of sufficient repertoire selection assignments given in her choral methods class, but this situation will hopefully change as the class time will soon be twice as long. Recommendations for additional repertoire selection assignments would include: providing experiences in selecting age- and ability-appropriate repertoire for middle school/ junior high choirs, and providing experiences that require students to consider skills and concepts the repertoire could be used to teach. In order for these assignments to be of value, it will also be necessary for Dr. Green to provide a choral library of repertoire that would be appropriate for young students. This way her methods students could peruse music that could be useful in their first years of teaching.
Recommendations for Further Research

Although “quality” is defined for the purposes of this study in Chapter I, it is still an extremely subjective term. In this investigation it was apparent that the two participants had different views of what “quality music” is. One participant seemed to think of it in regard to how appropriate the music was for the choir in terms of voicing and educational considerations. The other seemed to be more concerned with aesthetic value. Both participants would most likely acknowledge the importance of all of these things and probably consider them all to varying degrees. They also believe that quality can be found in a variety of musical styles.

It is important to better understand what choral methods teachers believe makes repertoire something of quality. This is in part due to the influence they have on their students. If Apfelstadt (2000) is correct in asserting that the repertoire teachers choose conveys a philosophy of what we believe is important for students to know, then methods teachers who expose their students to repertoire have a great responsibility to select repertoire that will serve as an example of what quality repertoire is. It is also important to better understand what choral methods teachers believe makes repertoire something of quality because so many of their former students list quality as an important criterion for selecting repertoire. Forbes (1998) found quality of music to be the most important criterion for selecting repertoire. Diddle (2005) discovered that “quality of music” was the third most important criterion teachers consider when selecting repertoire, but she also found that teachers only listed quality as a criterion if they felt competent to select repertoire. She suggests that this competence comes from experiences in selecting repertoire in college. Diddle’s recommendations for further research were instrumental in
establishing a need for this study on repertoire experiences that methods teachers offer their students. This study found that the two methods professors studied do provide repertoire selection experiences, but that the experiences may send differing messages about what quality repertoire is. Consequently it is recommended that further investigation be done of what criteria choral methods instructors would consider quality repertoire to have.

Since both universities investigated in this study are going through curriculum changes that could impact how repertoire selection will be taught, it would be beneficial to conduct a follow-up study on how the changes have affected the way repertoire selection is taught. Jefferson University will no longer offer an Area Music Degree and will require students to choose between choral or instrumental music as a major. Consequently, the choral methods class will be a full semester in length. This should provide more time for instruction and assignments on repertoire selection. In order to meet the National Association of Schools of Music additional requirements of private study durations, Kerr University will no longer be offering Choral Literature as a separate course. Instead, it will be integrated with a couple of other courses. This could impact the amount of instruction time and assignments that will be allotted to repertoire instruction. In both cases, further research might prove beneficial to find out whether or not these changes have had positive or negative effects on repertoire selection instruction offered at each of these universities.
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Music Educators National Conference.


APPENDIX A

Consent Form for Thesis Research Project
“Choral Repertoire Selection Experiences Required of Undergraduate Choral Music Education Majors in Selected Indiana Universities”
Brent Hyman, Masters Student
Department of Music Education – Ball State University
Spring 2009

Purpose of the Study

The discrepancies in repertoire selection behaviors between novice and experienced teachers as well as “outstanding” and “not outstanding” teachers may be traced back to their experiences in repertoire selection in undergraduate education. Studies of repertoire selection and interviews with beginning teachers suggest that choral methods classes need to provide students with more opportunities in selecting quality repertoire for the ages and abilities for which they are being prepared to teach. Music educators have been found to choose music for their ensembles based on experiences they have had with the music, rather than based on recommendations. The small amount of research that has been done on the repertoire selection behaviors of public school teachers in Indiana seems to suggest a disparity between what is being practiced in public schools and what criteria is being advocated by choral specialists. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to investigate what concepts of choral repertoire selection are being emphasized in lab experiences by selected choral methods instructors in Indiana.

Participation Procedures and Duration

You will be interviewed for approximately 1 hour. A syllabus from your choral methods course or other relevant courses requiring students to select repertoire will be requested. Assignment descriptions or lesson plans pertaining to repertoire selection may also be requested.

Audio Tapes

For the purposes of accuracy, the interview will be taped and transcribed.

Respect for Persons

Participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw your permission at anytime for any reason without penalty or prejudice from the researcher. You will not be included in the study without your informed consent.
Confidentiality

Although the participants will be provided an opportunity to see the results of the study, they will not be given access to the names of the other participants or institutions in which they represent.

Benefits and Risks

Your personal risks will be minimal in this study. The benefits may include new insights on how other universities teach their students how to select repertoire. The study may also provide evidence to why there may be a disconnect between those concepts of repertoire selection being emphasized by lab experiences in college and the repertoire selection habits of practicing public school teachers.

IRB Contact Information

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the following:
Research Compliance, Sponsored Programs Office
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306
(765) 285-5070
irb@bsu.edu

I, _______________________________________________, agree to participate in the research project entitled “Choral Repertoire Selection Experiences Required of Undergraduate Choral Music Education Majors in Selected Indiana Universities.” I have read the description of the project in this consent document and give my consent to participate. I understand that I can print a copy of this consent document for future reference.

_________________________________________  __________________
Participant’s Signature                       Date

Researcher Contact Information

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