CONSTRUCTIONS OF CHOIR IDENTITY IN A HIGH SCHOOL

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The purpose of this study was to investigate constructions of choir identity among high school choir students in the United States public school classroom setting. The research questions were (a) what are the processes involved in construction of choir identity and (b) how are the processes related to the group identity of the choir. The data were collected through participant observations in one selected choir classroom and semi-structured interviews with students from the choir class. The results included six processes of identity construction as well as identification of the ways in which each process was related to the choir group’s identity. The processes and their links to the overall choir group identity provided further insight into the ways in which high school choir students construct their identities, and they also supported methods of teaching commonly used in high school choir settings.
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As my work toward the doctorate degree comes to a close, it’s a funny thing to look back on the path I’ve traveled. The truth in the old saying that success is nothing without someone to share it with has new meaning to me. I am sure I wouldn’t have success at all if it weren’t for my special someone. Luke sat up with me when I wrote late into the evenings, he reassured me when I was defeated, and he kept me going when I was sure I had nothing left. Most importantly, he was never jealous of my effort and time that were wrapped up in writing. Rather, he joined me in my effort and made the experience a shared one. For all of these reasons, this document is dedicated to Luke and to his mother, Marilyn Brimhall. Luke lost his mother unexpectedly in the final weeks of this project. This dedication is an effort to honor Luke’s selfless nature and to show my appreciation to his mother for raising the most amazing man I’ve ever met.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION
Prologue

Between kindergarten and high school, I transferred to a total of seven schools prior to high school graduation, all within the region of Upper East Tennessee. The constant moving was not due to occupational demands or the result of a search for the perfect home. It was the result of a divorce. One of my earliest memories is of myself at four years old helplessly watching my parents struggle to hide emotions as they realized their marriage was dissolving, leaving their two little girls with a broken home. Soon after my fifth birthday, my father thought it best for my sister and me to spend time with each parent. It was the start of what I view as a typical joint custody decision: the children with mom during the week and with dad during the weekend. By first grade, I was already navigating adult issues as a result of my family situation, including the emotional and psychological fallout of an ugly divorce and the breakup of our family. It was a weighty responsibility for a child to shoulder.

Despite the obvious challenges present in my past, I have had what I would define as success in my life. I have pursued a professional career, I am completing a doctoral degree in music education, and I am happily married. Though my family life was inevitably a gumption-testing battleground, the close involvement of my extended family in my life helped me maintain direction, remain motivated in educational settings, and develop strong Christian values that kept me out of trouble.

My path in music is a reflection of my family’s social status, the regional culture, and my personal interests and abilities. When I graduated high school, I had no aspirations of pursuing music in college. I did not have access to voice lessons as a public school student and was
unaware of their necessity at the collegiate level. Lessons were not offered in Grades K-12, and no one in my family knew how to inquire about such things. Although I took piano lessons for about three years, living between two households made practice and lessons inconsistent. My parents were not well informed on the nature of music lessons, and how could they be? Both grew up in white, working or middle class families. While they had access to music through their schools and churches, they did not have private lessons.

My parents valued education and a strong work ethic, just as their parents did. It would be inaccurate to state they did not value music. Rather, music was valued as a skill with which to be familiar, like being able to throw a ball or change the oil in one’s car. My love for singing began with Julie Andrews, and I have been singing since then, but high art, per se, was not something my family commonly consumed. We saw musicals occasionally, watched Disney movies regularly, and always sang to the popular music of the fifties, sixties, and seventies, but we did not attend symphonic concerts or listen to opera.

As I recall my personal music history, I find it curious that I have landed in the field of music education. Throughout my studies in college I have struggled with understanding my past in music and how my interest in music teaching has been shaped. The pursuit of identifying my roots in music has come to the forefront while studying music education. In fact, one of my first assignments was to write a philosophy of teaching. When I was first faced with this task, I had no idea why I wanted to teach music or why I enjoyed it in the first place. The question stumped me, and I struggled with isolating specific events or circumstances that had compelled me to study music. I knew school transfers had offered exposure to music that I likely could have missed if settled into a district without music, but they also made for a disjunctive experience in music education as a child. I could recall learning to read music notation and singing with my
head voice in first and second grade. I was in school choirs in fourth, fifth, seventh, and eighth grades, but for my third and sixth grade years I was in schools that did not offer music. Also, during all four years of high school I was in large ensemble choir along with a smaller, auditioned ensemble. I knew these activities were important but could not piece them together in a meaningful way to form a philosophy.

There were other difficulties that arose as I pursued my place in music education. My background, whether educational or personal, was not comprised of strong musical experiences. The various schools, choir directors, and music teachers did not prepare me, specifically, for majoring in music, teaching music, or developing a philosophy of teaching. My inconsistent past in music made the few reasons I could articulate for pursuing this art form seem unclear and unsupported. I could only point to the ways in which music gave me an emotional escape and helped me connect to caring and supportive teachers. But I could not uncover any particularly poignant experiences, emotional or otherwise. Playing piano did not help me work through the struggles of my household. Choir did not save me from a destructive path; I was already a well-behaved child and an over-achiever in school. Neither singing nor piano gave me a new circle of friends, as many of my friends were not interested in music classes. The more I tried to uncover my roots in music, the less I understood about why I was there in the first place.

It was not until I reached graduate school that I began uncovering the roots of my love of music and connecting to perspectives that underpinned my philosophy of teaching. Exposure to the philosophies and theories in other subjects was perhaps the best means for making sense of my experience in music. Subjects such as sociology, anthropology, and qualitative research offered social theories, cultural theories, and multiple perspectives of reality. As individual parts,
these disciplines serve the human need for understanding, and when integrated, they are all the more potent, providing well-rounded concepts that explain and critique human phenomena.

Sociology of education.

The sociology of education changed my understanding of my place in music by expanding the views I had on the nature of schooling. Sorokin (2011) defined social and cultural mobility and explained the nature of upward mobility through social classes. Coleman and Hoffer (2011) described concepts of human and social capital, articulating the “economics of education” (p. 50). Conflict theory and functional theory offered explanations for the stratification of the educational system in ways I had never considered (Collins, 1971). Racial boundaries in school achievement (Jencks & Phillips, 2011) and cultural norms that create inequities in educational settings (Lareau, 2002) were new concepts to me, and they, too, offered much insight into my world as a music educator, effectively altering my daily assumptions.

The concepts and theories of the sociology of education meant that my view of music and its place in my life had roots. There were underlying structures at work that were shaping my music experiences. I expanded on the ideas of social and cultural mobility, human and social capital, and cultural norms in schooling, for these contributed most directly to the work within this dissertation.

Social and cultural mobility, or the upward movement through social classes (Sorokin 2011), were available to me. My status as a middle-class feminine white female in rural schools made my pursuit of choir music socially acceptable. There was no prodding from my teachers to participate in music for the sake of bringing me out of cultural poverty, as Bates (2011) observed, because I was middle-class and more or less expected to pursue a fine art. It would not have been the same if I had been a working-class stocky white male, for example, who would
have been expected to participate in and enjoy football or another similar contact sport. Simply, my gender, race, and status in society – all components I could not control – allowed me to obtain the social and cultural mobility I needed to succeed in music. Such an endeavor would likely present much greater challenges for a student who did not look like me.

The notion of human and social capital found in the work of Coleman and Hoffer (2011) also presented foundations for my music experiences. Coleman and Hoffer (2011) asserted, “Human capital is created by working with persons to produce in them skills and capabilities that make them more productive. Indeed, schools constitute a central institution for the creation of human capital” (p. 50). Hence, my skills and capabilities were my human capital. I was an over-achieving, intrinsically motivated student, and the skills I needed to be good at school, I already possessed. If working with persons to make them “more productive” (Coleman & Hoffer, 2011, p. 50) is the purpose of schooling, then I had an inherent advantage over my peers who did not possess similar human capital. I was already productive, and schooling highlighted those features. From this vantage point, it is less clear whether I chose music because it was a basic interest or because music offered intellectual challenges that other subjects did not.

Social capital was also helpful in my student career. Defined as “the relations between persons” (Coleman & Hoffer, 2011, p. 50) and “centered on individuals or small groups as the units of analysis” (Portes, 2000, p. 2), social capital is a concept that suggested my success in music, and choir specifically, could be based on my outward personality and ability to form relationships. My father was strict on matters of social relations and required formal manners such as greeting those with whom one interacts during daily errands and answering politely when asked a question. I was a rather introverted and shy child, but because my father taught me that it was impolite to hide and remain silent when someone spoke to me, I strived to make
conversation. Furthermore, my extended family is quite large and very closely knit. I gained many of the characteristics that are primers for social capital through interactions with my family as cited in a brief review of literature on families and social capital by Langston (2011). Another researcher, Kerka (2003), purported, “the family is typically the individual’s initial source of social capital” (p. 2), which supported my gain of social capital through my relations in a large family as an initial base. Perhaps both my father’s instruction and my family interactions contributed to my social skills and therefore my future social capital. These assets, inherent in my life circumstances, were other potential factors behind my engagement in music education.

A final concept within sociology of education literature that offered insight into my involvement with music is that of cultural inequities in schooling. Lareau (2002), in a qualitative study of inequalities in schooling as a result of childrearing strategies, found a marked difference between the childrearing of middle class families and working class families. These differences were manifested in the interactions of parents with professionals that Lareau (2002) observed at doctors’ offices and in parent-teaching meetings. Due to my status as a middle-class student, I had the sense of entitlement Lareau referenced in the study. As a child I felt I could speak with adults, whether in professional settings or not, and that my opinions and thoughts were valid as well as valued by my parents. I knew that if I needed money for a school trip or help from a parent in dealing with a teacher that I had access to both. As a result, I always viewed choir as an activity in which I could easily participate. My family would learn about auditions, see that I was prepared, and pay my choir dues. Unlike the working class families described in Lareau’s (2002) observations, I would not miss out on opportunities because my parent did not receive a letter or because of financial constraints. My cultural advantages as a middle-class student in school
enabled my choir participation, a concept that provides greater understanding of my position in music education.

Anthropology of education.

Anthropology of education offered insight similar to sociology of education for understanding my pursuit of music and my success in music education. Anthropology addressed culture and education, socio-cultural boundaries, and qualitative methods for research in these areas, with an obvious emphasis on the cultural manifestations in education rather than the social. In a course entitled, “Anthropology of Education,” one week of readings in particular provided an explanation for my success as a music student. The topic of the week was “Cultural Differences and Explanations of School Failure,” a title found in the syllabus (Nunez-Janes, 2012), and readings for that week included two chapters from the book “Schooling the Symbolic Animal” (Levinson, 2000), which was a collection of articles on the various social and cultural dimensions of education. I was especially intrigued by one of the readings, as it targeted the influence of home life and family practices on educational success. After reading and considering the relevance of the concepts to music, the perceived effort and success of my music students suddenly shifted in my mind, as did my own perceived efforts and success in my schooling experience.

The first reading selection offered a convincing explanation for my success in music at school. I learned to “take” (or learn information) from music at home in a way that easily transferred to ways of “taking” from music at school (Heath, 2000, p. 169). Heath (2000) wrote about literacy and the varying use of bedtime stories at home and observed, “ways of taking from books are as much a part of learned behavior as are ways of eating, sitting, playing games, and building houses” (p. 169). In the same article, Heath went on to question the ways in which
literate traditions teach children to make connections between oral and written language and to understand those connections. As the transfer of Heath’s observations in the subject of literacy to the subject of music became clearer to me, I could not avoid thinking of my growth in music from Heath’s perspective. It seemed possible to me that my home environment had certainly provided a means for taking from music. I questioned what I had taken from music in my home. What part of it helped me excel at music in school, like the students in Heath’s (2000) work whose bedtime story environments aided their reading in school?

Several experiences with music at home could have helped me succeed in school music classes. Though I had not considered them as integral to my success until I read Heath’s (2000) article, the new perspective revealed several important activities in my home I had previously overlooked. For example, my father was a song leader at church. The church participated in a cappella, congregational singing in four parts, and my father led by singing the soprano line, or melody, for the congregation to follow. Before church services, I loved to sit with my father to watch and listen as he practiced the songs he would lead, and I did this every Sunday morning. Essentially, I was observing my father practice music, a key part of excelling in any kind of music lesson or school music ensemble.

The degree of importance of practice is supported by the bountiful research in music education that has studied student practice techniques and habits. A simple search with the term practice techniques in one of the leading journals in the field yielded 605 results, and the first selection focused on the effect of modeling on practice techniques (Henley, 2001). As a choir student in school, I was perhaps advantaged over other choir students who had not learned to practice music by observing the process. Furthermore, I had been observing it for years before choir was an option in elementary school, and my father was always willing to answer my
questions and explain his actions as he practiced. Heath (2000) offered a perspective that uncovered an obvious but hidden advantage in my family life: I had an in-house teacher who taught me how to practice.

While there are other examples I happened upon as I continued to consider music and its place in my upbringing, the point is that music learning is culturally and socially embedded in people’s lives prior to school and throughout it, just as any other subject requiring reasoning skills and specific kinds of knowledge. Sociology of education and anthropology of education have offered countless ways of thinking that highlight ways of learning. They uncover the often hidden advantages some students enjoy as well as the more apparent disadvantages preventing student success. All of these ideas together, my course work, musical experience as a musician and educator, and my cultural and social background have inspired the work of this dissertation. They have brought me to the questions I have about the way students engage with music in school today and the questions about constructed choir identity that this study seeks to answer.

Statement of the Problem

The research in music education that seeks to understand and describe students who participate in music classes is extensive. Studies extend over numerous topics from demographic descriptions of students (Elpus & Abril, 2011) to their beliefs about success in music (Asmus, 1986; Legette, 1998), motivation in music (Asmus & Harrison, 1990), knowledge of music opportunities beyond high school (Kuntz, 2011; Rohwer & Rohwer, 2009) and characteristics that will predict their continued participation in music after high school (Corenblum & Marshall, 1998).

However, amidst the collection of research on music participants, there are fewer investigations of identity construction of music students. What are the roots of participants’
views that have formed their perceptions? While musicians of all ages in various ensembles have been studied and questioned about their perspectives on music and their musical identities, the ways in which their identities have been constructed have received less attention. Dabback (2010) directly addressed this issue in an article entitled “Music and Identity Formation in Older Adults” through an introduction to the framework of the discussion:

In her keynote address at the 2009 International Symposium on the Sociology of Music Education in Limerick, Ireland, Lucy Green positioned the field [sociology of music] at the intersection of musical meaning, social perception, and the role of social interactions in constructing reality. She charged that music education researchers utilizing sociological lenses must proceed beyond mere description and explore how beliefs form and perpetuate. Descriptive research often reports how participants construe, or perceive their locations, beliefs, and identities; however, studies often lack details of the actual processes of construction through interactions and institutions. (Dabback, 2010, pp. 61-62).

According to Dabback, it seems that ways of constructing meaning are a vital part of the picture in regard to understanding and explaining music participants. Identity construction may offer an avenue through which ways of constructing meaning can be studied.

Identity construction may increase understanding of the ways in which students view themselves, which contributes to knowledge of how students view their identities within a group. Hourigan (2009) suggested methods for assisting “invisible students,” (p. 35) or students who do not fit in with the music ensemble. Hourigan (2009) used the tenets of the social identity construction process to offer “suggestions in creating a positive social and inclusive experience
for all students who participate in performance-based music ensembles” (p. 35). This application illustrates one way in which understanding of identity construction process may inform teaching.

Identity construction and social identity construction in contexts of music classrooms could add to the body of research that seeks to understand and describe music participants. Ojala (2000) argued for greater connectedness among the research of music education and other disciplines and asserted that this connectedness would “improve our chances in becoming more effective as music educators and researchers” (p. 11). To the end of becoming more effective as music educators, the present study seeks to apply the research on identity formation and identity construction in sociology to the study of identity in music education. Perhaps bridging ideas of identity between the fields will broaden knowledge and understanding of choir students in particular.

Assumptions

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) identified “four major interpretive paradigms [that] structure qualitative research: positivist and postpositivist, constructivist-interpretive, critical (Marxist, emancipatory), and feminist-poststructural” (p. 22). Because the focus of this dissertation stems from the researcher’s personal constructions of her identity in music and questions how other students construct their identities in school music, the constructivist paradigm will be used. This paradigm emphasizes the ways people create meaning through individual constructs (Cannella, 2012) and can support different meanings of the same situation that may arise as students’ perspectives are examined.

Three major points of the constructivist paradigm will be discussed including its ontology (nature of reality), epistemology (relationship between researcher and knowledge), and methodology (ways of gaining knowledge) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The first point to consider
is the ontological perspective. A constructivist assumes there are multiple realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), which gives credence to the notion that one student may perceive music class as a means to form friendships, while another may perceive it as a means to fulfill emotional expression. The second point is the epistemological perspective. A constructivist assumes that the researcher and participant “cocreate understandings” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 24). Hence, the knowledge produced from this study will be the result of not only the participants’ perspectives and experiences but also those of the researcher. The third point is the methodology used. A constructivist believes in the importance of naturalistic settings and seeks to utilize procedures that capture happenings in the natural world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This will support the use of observation and interview methods in a natural setting, the music classroom, for the capture of the students’ perspectives.

The use of the constructive paradigm will produce research findings that look quite different, in regard to terminology and labels, from research within the positivist paradigm. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) have acknowledged, “terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability replace the usual positivist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity” (p. 24). Crucial to understanding the position of the findings is that they will be presented in the form of themes and patterns, as is common in the use of grounded theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Purpose of the Study

Music education recognizes its shortcomings in the effort of reaching a more diverse student body. Kratus (2007) observed that music education has reached a “tipping point” (p. 42) and will need to shift with the societal changes or face possible irrelevancy. To combat this issue, some music education researchers have argued for a music curriculum that reaches beyond the
Eurocentric view of music and accounts for the music of the community in which it functions (Kratus, 2007; Mantie & Tucker, 2012; Myers, 2008; Williams, 2011). While it sounds manageable on paper, changing the historically rooted model of music education comes with great challenges (Rohwer, 2011), and success in the original band-choir-orchestra model (Coffman, 2009) makes an interest in changing what seems to be working less likely. Researchers of music teacher training have pointed to the shortcomings of undergraduate programs as they attempt to train teachers for more diverse music making (Myers, 2008; Rohwer, 2011; Williams, 2011). Perhaps more research on the constructed music identities of students could provide further insight into the relationship of student identity to group identity and how individual constructions of self may influence students’ perspectives on their choir, band, or orchestra member identity. It could offer a new way of viewing participation in the band-choir-orchestra model and uncover possible reasons students gravitate toward or away from it.

The purpose of the study was to investigate constructions of choir identity among high school students. Much work has been completed offering reasons students participate in choir (Bartolome, 2013; MacLellan, 2011; Sichivitsa, 2003). Perhaps through study of choir participation by considering the identities students construct within it could extend the present knowledge on student participation. It could broaden ways of thinking about one of music education’s typical performing ensembles – choir – by uncovering the views of varying individual students.

Identity construction in music is not a new endeavor. Hoffman (2012), in a study of socioeconomically diverse middle school wind band students, investigated identity construction through a multiple case study of six students. Hoffman (2012) found:
These six participants negotiated the social institution of the middle school differently, based on their differing backgrounds and personal goals. They defined themselves, in large part, due to their participation in the school band, the only course during their daily schedule that they had the option to choose. (Hoffman, 2012, p. 221)

At present, the researcher is not aware of a similar study of choir members. Through investigation of constructed identities in choir, perhaps possible ways in which students view their relationships between self and the ensemble may be revealed. As a result, this study may offer new insight into what it means for students to participate in high-school choir and to be a choir member. Students’ constructed identities, based on perceptions of how peers, parents, and teachers view them and their perceptions of what it means to be a choir member will be discussed.

The research questions include:

1. What processes – or collections of behaviors, experiences, and activities – are involved in construction of choir identity among high school students?

2. How are the processes related to the group identity of the choir?
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The basic tenets of identity formation have been addressed in music education through the study of occupational identity. Researchers have investigated the development of identity in music students as they transition from music education students to music teachers. Researchers have applied occupational identity concepts as a means of structuring these studies. Given the depth of research in this area in music education, the review will begin with occupational identity studies and will highlight the variables that have been identified in relation to identity formation. Identity formation will be reviewed next to include studies that have investigated similar or different variables. Finally, studies of the construction of self-identity and the construction of self-identity in relation to a group will be examined from a sociological perspective.

Occupational Identity in Music Education

Occupational identity can be influenced by several factors. Because many of these factors may be related to development of choir identity, studies investigating occupational identity are discussed. These include studies that have examined factors related to the choice of music as a career and studies that have examined the identity of music educators, as each area has identified factors that affect identity in music.

Factors and influences in choosing music teaching.

Factors involved in choosing music as a career have been highlighted in several studies. Jones (1970) used vocational choice theory, a theory based on the notion that vocational choice is a developmental process, as a framework for a study of factors involved in the choice of music as a career. Jones (1970) explained choice theory as an explanation of vocational choice as “a group of related decisions over a period of time” (p. 10). As a result, Jones (1970) examined
factors related to choosing music as a career across ages by including participants from sixth grade through graduate school. Jones (1970) studied two groups: music oriented (141 students planning a career in music) and non-music oriented (150 students planning a career outside of music). Each group included samples across the age range, and “these groups were matched as to musical potential, age, grade-level, and where possible, sex” (Jones, 1970, p. 33).

Eight factors were targeted as possible issues involved in the choice of music as a career, including parental influence, teacher influence, ego satisfaction, confidence in talent, interest, status, past experience in music, and economic considerations. A questionnaire based on the eight factors was used to gather data for the music oriented group and the non-music oriented group so that t-tests could be implemented for comparing group means. The instance of a rejected null hypothesis signified a difference between music oriented and non-music oriented groups. Jones (1970) found differences between music and non-oriented groups on all of the factors except past experience in music and economic considerations. All ages demonstrated differences between music and non-music groups for parental influence, confidence in talent, and interest. Three factors illustrated age differences: teacher influence was the same between groups only for college seniors and graduate students, ego-satisfaction was the same between groups only for sixth grade, and status influence was the same between groups for only graduate students.

Interviews allowed for the discovery of factors that were not included on the questionnaire. Jones (1970) completed 71 interviews to confirm the findings of the questionnaire, to give an opportunity for unaccounted factors to surface, and to examine the longitudinal relationship between factors. Factors linked to interest in music surfaced, and Jones (1970) tallied those that were related to the initial, defined factors. However, tallies were not always
aligned with questionnaire findings. For four factors, the participants shared perceptions of music influences that varied from those in the questionnaire. Two of these included parental influence for ninth, twelfth, and sophomore college levels as well as confidence in talent for sixth and ninth grade levels. Neither status nor economic consideration appeared in interview data for any grade except senior college and graduate levels. Furthermore, the interviews revealed two additional perceived influential factors, which were peer and sibling influence and church music experience (Jones, 1970).

Another study expanded research on factors that can influence involvement in music through a study of music education majors, specifically. L’Roy (1983) noted a discrepancy in role identity among music educators and sought to “investigate the development of occupational identity in undergraduate music education majors” (p. 11) by isolating three areas of professional identity: norms and values, commitment to skills and knowledge, and commitment to music education. These three areas were positioned within a symbolic interactionist framework and were selected for their ability to delineate differences between music education students who develop self-concepts as performers and those who develop self-concepts as general teachers (L’Roy, 1983). Data from undergraduate students enrolled in a music education program were gathered from a total of 165 questionnaire responses and 28 focused interviews (L’Roy, 1983).

Background information related to reasons participants chose music education was collected. Factors involved in choosing music education were similar to those found in Jones’ (1970) study of choice of music as a career. Similar to Jones (1970), L’Roy (1983) found that musical experience in school, music teachers, and parents measured highest among influences regarding choosing music education as a career. Focused interviews further supported the findings. “The most frequently mentioned reason as to why they [music education students]
decided to go into music education was that the student had had a good experience in school music, was very successful, and was positively motivated by a teacher, usually the director of an ensemble” (L’Roy, p. 87).

Positive experiences in school settings may provide a basis for the work identity that is developed, whether education based or performance based. Work identity is developed through norms and values in the occupational setting. L’Roy (1983) explained, “An important part of a person’s work identity grows out of his relationship to his occupational title or name, which becomes a symbol of shared norms and values within an occupational group” (p. 6-7).

Professional names and labels were considered symbols of “professional ideology” (L’Roy, 1983, p. 90) and were measured in the questionnaire by participants’ ranking of labels listed. L’Roy (1983) found that choral students ranked performing above other choices of work activity, they ranked teaching general music higher than band and string students, and they “seemed to be more ambivalent and unsure about their future careers than were students of the other two areas” (p. 99). Furthermore, choral students ranked elementary music higher in importance than band and string students, and the researcher attributed this to the inclusion of more coursework in elementary methods for choral students than for band and string students (L’Roy, 1983).

Socialization of music teachers has also been investigated in the effort to learn more about the identity development of music teachers. Cox (1994) used questionnaire and phone interviews to study the socialization process of music teachers through investigation of the role of influential people in their lives. Cox (1994) examined data from 310 questionnaires and 50 phone interviews to determine whether music teachers in Arkansas were socialized as musicians teaching music or educators teaching music. Different from L’Roy (1983), Cox (1994) focused
Findings regarding influential people were somewhat varied in relation to previous studies. Cox (1994) found that family, school music, and private teachers were most mentioned as influencing the role of musician. However, neither Jones (1970) nor L’Roy (1983) found the influence of a private teacher. A second finding specific to the Cox (1994) study was that instrumental and vocal students ranked self differently among the top influential factors of administration, self, and teachers with instrumentalists ranking self first among the most influential factors and vocalists ranking self last among the factors.

Occupational identity and socialization influences have been examined together to observe the relationship between them and their combined impact on music teacher identity. Isbell (2008) examined the socialization and occupational identity of music education students in undergraduate programs and to determine the viability of symbolic interactionist theory in explaining identity development. Also, Isbell (2008) investigated possible differences between primary and secondary socialization as a means to pinpoint experiences that can lead to interest in music teaching. A questionnaire was administered and data were collected from 578 participants, representing 30 undergraduate degree programs for music teaching in the United States.

Similar to Cox (1994), Isbell (2008) found that school music teachers, parents, and private music teachers were most influential in students’ decisions to pursue music teaching. Whether in primary or secondary age groups, these factors were highly ranked. Isbell (2008) also found that previous experiences in music classes were influential, which paralleled the work of others (Cox, 1994; Jones, 1970; L’Roy, 1983). Furthermore, participation in ensembles (as
opposed to private performances) was ranked highest among experiences for both primary and secondary age groups (Isbell, 2008).

A series of correlations were conducted to determine the relationship between socialization and occupational identity (Isbell, 2008). The findings indicated a stronger relationship across secondary socialization variables than primary socialization variables (Isbell, 2008). Also, stepwise regression analysis revealed that experiences in music were significant predictors of occupational identity, while social influences were not (Isbell, 2008). Like previous findings, parents were found to be initial influences in engagement with music, and music teachers were weighted more heavily as music students began considering music as a career (Cox, 1994; Isbell, 2008; Jones, 1970; L’Roy, 1983). However, in regard to occupational identity, Isbell (2008) found that socialization was not a statistically significant predictor.

Construction of music teacher identity.

Another strand of research regarding music teacher identity has used a social constructionist lens to support investigations of the process of constructing music teacher identities. Roberts (1991) gathered data from participant observation and interviews with 108 students in five Canadian universities over three years in an effort to understand the process of music education students “to construct an identity as a ‘musician’” (p. 30). While L’Roy (1983) had completed similar work on the subject of music education majors’ teacher identities through a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, Roberts’(1991) use of a constructionist lens, within a context similar to L’Roy’s (1983), enabled the study of the process of constructing an identity, thus contributing a new facet of knowledge in regard to music education majors’ teacher identities.
Self-identity was a concept of interest for Roberts (1991) because “it is clear that the first obvious anomaly is that music teachers may be typically much more concerned about ‘being a musician’ than perhaps a science or history teacher may be concerned about ‘being a scientist or historian’” (p. 32). Roberts (1991) presented an issue of unclear definitions of musician and the ways in which a varied concept of musician self can affect teacher identity. As a result, Roberts’ (1991) findings were presented in narrative form and worked to capture the various ways the label of musician was developed and constructed as an identity by students in music education programs in Canada.

Roberts’ (1991) findings, though presented in a different form, were similar to L’Roy’s (1983). Roberts (1991) found that students discussed their musician identity in higher esteem than their teacher identity. Furthermore, students more readily referenced a musician identity than a teacher identity when prompted to describe their “professional” self (Roberts, 1991, p. 35). A graduate student, whom Roberts (1991) interviewed regarding her professional identity, sought clarification, “What type of description do you want?” Roberts replied with “Professional,” to which the graduate student responded, “Okay, well a singer – I’m a soprano” (p. 35). Similar narratives from students prompted Roberts (1991) to conclude:

To be a competent school music teacher, the universities appear to operate on the assumption, and it seems to be taken for granted in society in general, that one needs to be a reasonably competent ‘musician’…students often prefer to view themselves first and primarily as a ‘musician’ even in the face of apparently more logical perceptions of themselves. (Roberts, 1991, p. 35)
These findings support those of L’Roy (1983), who after gathering data from a questionnaire on the same topic, found that music education students were not developing a teacher identity in their music education programs.

Not only have ways in which music education majors construct a musician identity been examined, but ways in which music education majors construct a teacher identity have been examined as well. More recent studies have found stronger implications of teacher identity than did Roberts (1991) but have used similar methods to examine the process music education students undergo as they form a music teacher identity. Ballantyne, Kerchner, and Aróstegui (2012) completed an international study of students in music teacher education programs in Australia, Spain, and the United States with the purpose of establishing “cross-cultural research in the area of developing music teacher identities” (p. 213). Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data from nine students in Australia, eight students in Spain, and eight students in the United States. The researchers examined “how pre-service music teachers construct their professional identity” by comparing the students in each country as the foundation of the study (Ballantyne et al., 2012, p. 213).

Findings indicated that students across the three sites decided to become music teachers for similar reasons, many of which were found in research on more isolated populations (Cox, 1994; L’Roy, 1983). Ballantyne et al. (2012) found that students “were oriented towards music,” they “wanted to emulate teaching mentors,” and their “circumstances had dictated that music education was the best/most convenient option” (p. 216). Regarding identity construction, other similarities emerged that were categorized into two themes. The first was that preservice teachers viewed themselves as both a performer and a teacher. The second theme was that as they
continued through music teacher training, their views shifted from a narrow view of music teaching to a broader view (Ballantyne et al., 2012).

The findings “confirmed that music teacher education has a distinct and crucial role in the development of positive music teacher identities” (Ballantyne et al., 2012, p. 222). The researchers suggested the findings may be explained by the more passive role pre-service teachers seem to assume in constructing their professional identity, which could become a more active role if the pre-service teachers are guided in “deconstructing their professional identities” (Ballantyne et al., 2012, p. 223). The factors involved in the students’ decisions to study music education were similar to previous work (Cox, 1994; Jones, 1970; L’Roy, 1983), but the addition of the themes regarding the process of constructed occupational identity served as new knowledge.

In another study examining identity construction of music teachers, Bennett (2012) investigated the ways in which music performers and music education majors construct an occupational identity, or a professional identity, by designing a teaching unit for which participants could volunteer. Data on the development of professional identity were gathered from participants through reflective journal writing, questionnaires, and drawings. A total of 20 students participated, including eight performing arts students, four music education students, and eight performance students (Bennett, 2012). Journals were used to record all teaching activities and included assessments of others and self-assessments. The questionnaires were used at the beginning and end of the study to assess perception of their roles as teachers. Drawings were used to assess students’ view of themselves as a teacher through the request to “draw a teaching situation” (Bennett, 2012, p. 57).
The questionnaires at the outset of the study asked students why they wanted to teach. Bennett (2012) found that students majoring in music education had an interest in teaching and already identified as a teacher, while performance majors “positioned teaching as a supporting role separate to the performer identity” (p. 58). Bennett’s (2012) findings differ from previous research by distinguishing between performance and education music majors. However, the notion of a division between teacher and musician identities is not new and has been found in other studies. L’Roy (1983) found that music education majors did not readily recognize a teacher identity. Also, Ballantyne et al. (2012), who made further contribution to L’Roy’s (1983) work through qualitative methods, found that music education majors did not necessarily dispel a teacher identity but that they shifted between musician and teacher identities to inform their learning as music educators.

Due to the inclusion of a variety of participants, education and otherwise, drawings were used as a platform for enabling students to begin the process of considering a teacher self (Bennett, 2012). Bennett (2012) explained: “students were asked to draw a teaching situation rather than to focus on their own possibly absent self-image as a teacher” (p. 59). The drawings indicated students’ professional identity had shifted throughout the teaching unit, as depictions of classroom settings changed from teacher-centered to student-centered (Bennett, 2012). This finding related to teaching experience aligns with Ballantyne et al. (2012), who found that music education programs were integral in developing teacher identity.

Self-identity was found to be an integral part of professional identity as students grow within teacher training programs (Bennett, 2012). However, Bennett (2012) suggested that based on the findings, “thinking of oneself in terms of a ‘performer’ rather than in terms of a holistic career in music – as a ‘musician’ – is both professionally and personally limiting” (p. 64). This
seems to highlight the importance of self-identity within professional identity, a new addition to
the knowledge base regarding construction of music teacher identity.

Musical Identity in Music Education

Studies on occupational identity in music education have revealed several factors and
influences that contribute to a student’s initial interest in music teaching. One common finding
has been that students who are interested in music education or enrolled in music education
programs reported an interest in studying music while in high school (Ballantyne et al., 2012;
Bennett, 2012; Cox, 1994; Isbell, 2008; L’Roy, 1983). Several researchers have provided
research on the topic of social identity within music education contexts, and their work serves as
a means to better understand the formation of a musician identity prior to enrollment in
collegiate programs of music.

Self-identity and self-concept in music.

Within the concept of musical identity in music, researchers have established two types
of identities, which differ in regard to the relationship that exists between a person and music.
MacDonald, Hargreaves, and Miell (2002) designated the labels, “identities in music” and
“music in identities” (p. 12-14). The latter label, music in identities, is applicable when music
serves as one factor in the development of varying degrees of self-image or when music serves as
part of the cultural process in establishing a specific kind of self-image (MacDonald et al., 2002).
In contrast, identities in music are based on ways in which people view themselves in relation to
roles within music. Hargreaves and Marshall (2003) designed a study that examined identities in
music, “namely the ways in which teachers and schools influence pupils’ musical development
and learning” (p. 264). The researchers administered a questionnaire to 1479 students between
the ages of 8 and 14, interviewed 42 teachers, and engaged in focus groups with 134 students.
The findings regarding music within school reflected a positive view of music by students. Hargreaves and Marshall (2003) reported that 67% of students enjoyed music class overall. More specifically, students reported enjoying playing instruments and singing the most. Outside of school, reports indicated students were playing and creating music several times a week (Hargreaves & Marshall, 2003). The researchers summarized their findings regarding identities of students in music as “what pupils seemed to like most about music in or out of school is to develop the skills and confidence to ‘do it for themselves’: to gain ownership of and autonomy in their own music-making” (Hargreaves & Marshall, 2003, p. 269). Furthermore, Hargreaves and Marshall (2003) suggested that students’ level of autonomy in music education settings is related to how students think about music. The researchers tied autonomy to a sense of musicianship and argued that “self-identity is an inextricable part of the process of development itself: thinking of oneself as a musician can be an important step on the road to becoming one” (Hargreaves & Marshall, 2003, p. 272).

Self-identity has been studied long before Hargreaves and Marshall (2003) began their work, and the findings of prior studies have maintained consistency with the more recent. Greenberg (1970) studied singing among adolescents and its relationship to self-identity, labeled self-concept in Greenberg’s work. Unlike Hargreaves and Marshall (2003), whose study focused on self-identity in a broad sense by gathering data on over one thousand adolescent music students, Greenberg (1970) focused on ten adolescent choir students.

Greenberg (1970) purported that “continued out-of-tune singing and underachievement in music are primarily results of a low self-concept of one’s ability to succeed in musical endeavors” (p. 57). Subsequently, Greenberg (1970) studied self-concept by holding auditions for a fourth through sixth grade choir at a university school and admitting all who auditioned,
regardless of ability to sing in tune. Ten out of 15 boys who were classified as untuned singers (or those who could not match a given pitch) were admitted to the group on the expectation that admission would improve their self-concept and thus their ability to sing in tune (Greenberg, 1970).

At the outset of the study, a questionnaire was used to assess students’ self-concept of various abilities, including music (Greenberg, 1970). Thirty-minute rehearsals were held twice a week, and untuned participants were scattered throughout the ensemble and were never placed side by side (Greenberg, 1970). Furthermore, untuned singers did not receive any additional instruction, and regular classroom music instruction remained continuous (Greenberg, 1970). A final singing test was administered to the untuned singers at the end of the choir experiment (Greenberg, 1970).

The findings indicated differences in outcomes for the ten untuned singers. Based on responses to the questionnaire, Greenberg (1970) believed that the untuned “boys had a lower self-concept of their own singing abilities,” and that they joined choir to “enhance their self-esteem and prestige” (p. 60). Greenberg’s (1970) final examination revealed that of the ten untuned singers, “four untuned singers made little progress in singing as a result of being in chorus…one boy made some progress, and five boys made significant improvement” (p. 63). Greenberg (1970) was careful to acknowledge the lack of controls in the study and the resulting chance of unmeasured variables affecting the results. However, Greenberg (1970) concluded, “Evidence still points the way toward growth in achieving a positive self-concept in music as the reason for progress” (p. 63). Based on the results, Greenberg (1970) suggested “music teachers need to recognize the importance of building up the self in their students” (p. 64).
Greenberg (1970) and Hargreaves and Marshall (2003) found a connection between positive self-concept and success in music among musicians. In addition to study of music participants, Ruddock and Leong (2005) have contributed to research on self-concept in music though their study of non-musicians. The researchers conducted four case studies on non-musicians. The participants aged in range from 27 to 60 and included a lawyer, a teacher educator, a high-school teacher, and a public servant (Ruddock & Leong, 2005). The researchers stated the purpose for selecting varied participants:

Each person reveals a contrasting perception, so that each paints contrasting patterns of musical involvement varying from one where the individual feels entirely alienated and has no active musical involvement to a situation where the informant feels that it is natural to make and listen to music at home and with others in public. (Ruddock & Leong, 2005, p. 11)

Through interviews, telephone conversations, and written comments, the researchers gathered data on how participants viewed themselves as musical (Ruddock & Leong, 2005).

Ruddock and Leong (2005) used categories to organize the information from participants into musical and unmusical and to compare and contrast the participants’ perceptions. The researchers’ analysis “centered on the informants’ perception of musical and the consequent impact this has had on their participation and enjoyment of music making” (Ruddock & Leong, 2005, p. 11). The researchers found that the participants identified themselves as non-musical without considering their prior access to training or practice in music (Ruddock & Leong, 2005). Ruddock and Leong (2005) observed, “their individual verdicts were determined with minimal awareness that music skills develop over time” (p. 18). As a result, participants believed they
were non-musical for reasons that were outside of them and therefore perceived as out of their control (Ruddock & Leong, 2005).

In regard to self-concept, Ruddock and Leong (2005) believed the cases indicated self-judgment practices that were based on the participants’ view of being musical or non-musical. The researchers listed several emergent “perceived dichotomies” (Ruddock & Leong, 2005, p. 19) based on participants’ discussions, which included: a) either a person understands music or it is an out of reach concept; b) only talented people make music, or everyone has potential to make music; c) music is something a person can do anywhere, or it is something to be performed in public; d) music can contribute to socialization or it can cause alienation; and f) music has a private or public nature, where public is only for skilled musicians. The researchers concluded, “each of the four non-musicians revealed a thwarted desire to make music…causes of their estrangement include a perceived lack of analytical understanding of music and an inability to play an instrument” (Ruddock & Leong, 2005, p. 20).

Ruddock and Leong (2005) made several suggestions for changes within music education in order to avoid the negative self-concept that the participants had developed. Like Greenberg (1970), their suggestions included an effort to “do more to effect a profound change in people’s perception of music and themselves as musical beings” (Ruddock & Leong, 2005, p. 20). While Hargreaves and Marshall (2003) and Greenberg (1970) found that self-concept was positively related to success in music among musicians, Ruddock and Leong (2005) found a positive relationship between non-musicians’ perception of being musical and participation in music. Non-musicians equated a self-concept of being musical with being professionally trained or with possessing innate musical talent. As a result, participants who did not self-identify as musical
were less likely to participate in music (Ruddock & Leong, 2005), a finding that aligns with the results of the Hargreaves and Marshall (2003) study of musician identity.

The relationship between self-concept and musical ability has been established by several research studies in music education (Greenberg, 1970; Hargreaves & Marshall, 2003; Ruddock & Leong, 2005). Music psychology has offered similar studies regarding a person’s perceived musical ability and his or her subsequent participation in music. Sloboda, Wise, and Peretz (2005) used semistructured interviews of 15 participations to investigate people’s definitions of tone deafness and their explanations for what they perceive as tone deafness in themselves. Participants ranged from age 18 to 70 and included people of differing perceived musical ability.

The findings indicated a lack of congruency between perceived meaning of musical ability and tone deafness. Sloboda et al. (2005) found that “some people considered themselves both musical and tone-deaf; others considered themselves unmusical but not tone-deaf” (p. 257). Also, the researchers discovered that participants did not equate tone-deafness with being unmusical, but they did subscribe to the notion that being tone deaf was a permanent condition (Sloboda et al., 2005).

In regard to the participants’ self-perceptions, Sloboda et al. (2005) presented findings similar to those of Ruddock and Leong (2005). Where Ruddock and Leong (2005) found that nonmusicians equated being musical with being innately predisposed to music or to being professionally trained, Sloboda et al. (2005) found that “many people think that musical people – either by training or talent – have access to privileged understanding about music that unmusical people do not” (p. 258). Like the suggestions from previous studies (Greenberg, 1970; Hargreaves & Marshall, 2003; Ruddock & Leong, 2005), Sloboda et al. (2005) recommended
that people who self-identity as tone deaf may be aided through reassurance of their musical abilities.

Music psychology was also integral in a study related to children’s self-concept and resulting musical success. Differing from Sloboda et al. (2005) who investigated self-concept among adults, O’Neill and Sloboda (1997) examined the effect of perceived confidence of musical ability on test scores. The researchers used melodic tests to evaluate the effect of success and failure training conditions on 51 children’s (ages 6-10) test scores. Also, questioning was used to determine the participants’ perceived confidence in their ability to complete the tests in the future (O’Neill & Sloboda, 1997). The process of testing included the administration of a melodic test on which participant success was ensured, followed by a test on which failure was planned, and the final test was administered to compare student results post-failure (O’Neill & Sloboda, 1997).

The researchers hypothesized students with lower confidence after the failed test would perform less successfully on the final testing than those with higher confidence post-failure; the findings confirmed the hypothesis (O’Neill & Sloboda, 1997). The researchers acknowledged the possibility of outside effects as well as the limitation of range of skills tested. However, they stated “nonetheless, when faced with difficulty and failure, 53% of the children showed a marked deterioration in their ability to perform a similar test” (O’Neill & Sloboda, 1997, pp. 30-31).

The findings regarding the relationship between testing results and follow-up test results contribute to research on nonmusicians’ self-identification. Where the perception of being nonmusical can stifle musical interests (Ruddock & Leong, 2005) and perceived tone deafness can encourage the notion of musical people possessing privileged access to musical ability (Sloboda et al., 2005), O’Neill and Sloboda (1997) found that poor test performance could
prevent students from developing the confidence necessary for music participation. Hence, the findings that nonmusicians often equate musical ability with innate talent and professional training (Ruddock & Leong, 2005; Sloboda et al., 2005) is evidence of the ways in which confidence in ability can predict motivation to pursue music in the first place (O’Neill, 2002).

The notion of self-identity and its possible impact on music participation has been examined through a variety of approaches by one researcher for more than 10 years. The findings of these studies were presented in a keynote speech at the 2011 Research in Music Education Conference. Lamont (2011) introduced the topic with a statistic: “of 530 amateur adult music-makers (aged 21-83 years) from around the world, nearly 20% had a relatively negative musical identity despite the fact that they were actively involved in making music” (p. 369). Lamont (2011) noted other research findings among children exhibiting similar negative perceptions as furthering the case for addressing musical identity in a more longitudinal manner. Moreover, the purpose of the long-term analysis of the research was to “challenge the view that musical development and continued involvement with music across the lifespan can or should be ascribed to talent, motivation or opportunity, and that the path of musical development needs to be continuous” (Lamont, 2011, p. 370).

Lamont’s (2011) purpose revealed an effort both to support and dispel previous research in music education. Lamont (2011) summarized the research through a discussion of what she labeled “myths concerning musical development” (p. 370). These included the myth of musical talent, of motivation, of opportunity, and of continuity (Lamont, 2011). These myths were labeled as such because Lamont (2011) believed that neither talent, motivation, opportunity, nor continuity were required for music participation. Qualitative, in-depth interviews were used to gather information about music and how it fits into people’s lives, including children and adults.
The data were presented through “scraps of biographical debris” or biographemes “to illustrate [the] fashioning of identity” (Lamont, 2011, p. 370).

The findings indicated that the myth of talent (or belief that talent is required for successful music participation) has produced negative experiences in music education (Lamont, 2011). Lamont (2011) observed that the effect of research that defined musicians as inherently talented had long-term effects on participation in music (Lamont, 2011). Some of the biographemes Lamont (2011) referenced included the following: a) “I always thought that I couldn’t sing and have avoided singing in front of anyone else” and b) “I was an avid listener, but never considered I had the talent to play after the disastrous piano lessons as a kid” (p. 372). Lamont (2011) concluded that the perceived emphasis on the need for talent to participate in music successfully had a notable impact on whether participants pursued music.

Regarding motivation in music, Lamont (2011) purported a complex view of motivation to participate in music, one that offers no clear linear progression of music activity. Findings revealed conflicting accounts from participants, with some having positive experiences and others describing negative ones (Lamont, 2011). Two biographemes included were, a) “The schools music service was wonderful – without it I would not have begun my music education” and b) “I feel I really missed out on music as a child because I had no access to any” (p. 375).

Opportunity in music was also complex when considered as a reason for music participation. Overall, Lamont (2011) found varying results for youngsters regarding opportunity or access to music. Access at a young age may or may not ensure immediate participation in music (Lamont, 2011). As a result, Lamont (2011) argued that the notion of opportunity as a reason for music participation was a myth.
Lamont (2011) approached the myth of continuity by highlighting research findings that were incongruent with the notion of musical continuity throughout life. Lamont (2011) found that some participants indicated a lifelong engagement with music while others described an early life experience, a gap, and then a return to music later in life. Based on these varying experiences, Lamont (2011) concluded, “the dynamic nature of musical development makes it almost impossible to predict how an individual’s trajectory will develop” (p. 380).

Overall, Lamont’s (2011) findings align with previous work regarding the need for positive experiences (Greenberg, 1970), the importance of thinking of oneself as a musician (Marshall & Hargreaves, 2003), and the need for a broader view of being musical (Ruddock & Leong, 2005). This congruency is evident in the complementary relationship between Lamont’s work and previous research. Where Lamont found a lessened interest in music after participants were informed of their inability to sing or play, Greenberg (1970) found the need for positive experiences. Also, Lamont (2011) found that participants did not necessarily maintain consistent motivation in music throughout the lifespan, but instead they reported both positive and negative experiences at different life stages. This aligns with Marshall and Hargreaves (2003), who found that a majority of participants in music programs described their experiences as positive, despite their inconsistent view of their own musician status. Furthermore, Lamont (2011) found that participants generally viewed music tasks as enjoyable whether they identified themselves as talented, or not. The alternate view of what might occur if participants do not take lightly the notion of being talented was revealed by Ruddock and Leong (2005), who found that narrowed views of being musical can inhibit musical development.

Findings agree across other areas as well. Sloboda et al. (2005) and Ruddock and Leong (2005) found that participants viewed musical identity as either an inherent ability or one gained
by professional training; no person would be perceived to be musical without one or the other. Lamont (2011) found similar results, though from a different perspective, as the participants cited an inability to sing or play based on negative music education experiences. Furthermore, Lamont (2011) found that participants who continued music activities either had positive school experiences, or no experience at all. This finding provides additional insight into O’Neill and Sloboda’s (2005) findings that confidence levels can have an effect on music participation. Whereas O’Neill and Sloboda (2005) isolated the effect of testing conditions on follow-up test scores, Lamont (2011) isolated the ways that participants recounted these experiences, as either detrimental to or encouraging of music participation.

Social identity in music.

Self-concept can serve an important role in musical identity. Another facet of musical identity that can be nested within self-concept deals with the social or group nature of identity and can be explained in social identity theory. While self-concept in its general sense addresses the nature of one’s view of him or herself, social identity theory addresses a more specific part of identity that functions in relation to groups. According to Hogg (1996), social identity theory espouses the idea “that a self-inclusive social category (e.g. nationality, political affiliation, sports team) provides a category-congruent self-definition that constitutes an element of the self-concept” (p. 66). In essence, the category represents a social identity for a person by including or excluding particular attributes (Hogg, 1996).

In a study of the reasons people choose to sing together, Durrant and Himonides (1998) investigated motivations for group singing in a British choral society. In this exploratory study, the researchers described the beliefs and backgrounds of the society’s members through
questionnaires, interviews, and a nine-month period of participant observations (Durrant & Himonides, 1998).

The findings across the various forms of data collection were similar. Through questionnaires, the researchers found that most of the members joined the choral society because they experienced well being. The participants enjoyed forming friendships and increasing musical knowledge (Durrant & Himonides, 1998). Of the five interviews that were held, all participants indicated a love for singing, enjoyment of rehearsals, and enjoyment of socializing with others who had the same interest in singing (Durrant & Himonides, 1998). Participant observations revealed similar findings and included reports of observed positive attitudes, enjoyment of singing, and social and organizational activities of the society (Durrant & Himonides, 1998).

Another study recognized the social nature of singing through the study of adolescent singers’ perceptions of vocal identity. Monks (2003) used longitudinal work of recorded excerpts of voice lessons, case studies, a performance scenario, interviews, and questionnaires to describe 30 singers in a secondary school. The study gathered data on students’ reactions to voice changes for purposes of identifying psychological factors associated with vocal change (Monks, 2003).

The researcher found that the peak of the vocal changing process encompassed several hurdles for participants (Monks, 2003). Both boys and girls, ages 12-14, experienced decreases in vocal range, loss in resonance, and less effective breath control. The case studies revealed that as the age of participants increased, their confidence also increased. Ages 11-12 reported lack of confidence, while ages 12-13 spoke of gaining confidence. Ages 13-14 showed an awareness of more mature sounds, and ages 14-15 discussed their ability to control their voices and to sing with improved technique and confidence (Monks, 2003). Through the performance portion of the
study, Monks (2003) found that participants viewed themselves as agents for their own growth in singing, and they perceived themselves as part of a group. Participants viewed their voices objectively and perceived clear limits to their vocal abilities, and participants viewed themselves as entertainers.

Participants were largely aware of their changing voices and the effects this change had on their voices. Overall, they were uninterested in public acknowledgement of skill but were more concerned with their personal evaluations of their progress (Monks, 2003). The adolescents seemed to focus on aspects different from those of the adults in the choral society (Durrant & Himonides, 1998). The choral society members based their choir identity on shared enjoyment of singing and social relationships within the group (Durrant & Himonides, 1998). Adolescent members in Monks’ (2003) study based their vocal identity, a subset of choir identity, on their personal evaluations of their singing ability. Therefore, it seems that the choral society members were focused more on social aspects of choir singing than were the adolescent singers. This could be attributed to the educational setting of youth learning that is inherently more goal-oriented than the more leisurely setting of a choral society.

A study of choral music participants in Finland and Sweden revealed similar ideas to previous work regarding social identities in choir. Durrant (2005) investigated the role of the conductor and of singing in shaping identity through “descriptive and interpretive case study that involved a series of nested mini case studies” (p. 91). Semi-structured interviews, observations, and group discussions were also used to gather data.

Like Durrant and Himonides (1998), Durrant (2005) found that participants reported both social and musical reasons for their involvement in choir. Furthermore, participants reported a choir identity that encompassed social involvement with the group, a sense of national pride, and
an emphasis on conductors’ abilities to create a positive singing environment (Durrant, 2005). The aspects of national pride and conductors’ responsibilities to the environment had not been cited in previous research (Durrant & Himonides, 1998; Monks, 2003) on social identity in choir singing.

Social identity among adolescents.

Music education research of adolescent social identity exists, but in a rather new and exploratory state. Adolescent social identity has received more attention for a longer period in the field of general education. Stone and Brown (1999) used focus groups and questionnaires to collect data from 526 students in grades 6-8 and 1,493 students in grades 9-12 in two public schools. The purpose of the study was to explore “how adolescents identify with various crowds” (Stone & Brown, 1999, p. 8). The researchers asked participants to describe the characteristics of “crowds” – a term defined as “abstract social categories” – in their schools and then to rate themselves on those characteristics (Stone & Brown, 1999, p. 7).

Two to three focus groups in each grade were used to isolate various crowds. Six crowds were isolated that included normals, brains, jocks, populars, the black crowd, and the wannabe black crowd (Stone & Brown, 1999). After these crowds were identified, a separate group of participants was asked to identify at least 10 grade mates who were members of the crowds. Those grade mates who received over 60 percent of total classifications in a crowd were then recruited to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire asked crowd members to characterize the crowds of their school, themselves, and their relation to the crowd. Crowd members were also asked to rate the social status of the crowds on a scale from 1 to 5.

Findings indicated differences between grade levels on some components of the questionnaire but not all. As students aged, the jock crowd increased in status while the popular,
black, and wannabe black crowds lost status. With the exclusion of ninth grade, grade levels were the same in regard to identification with the normal crowd; “overall, the normal crowd was favored more by respondents as a reference group than were their own crowds” (Stone & Brown, 1999, p. 16). Ninth grade only indicated the same level of identification with their own crowd and the normal crowd. Grade differences appeared again in analyses of individual respondents’ questionnaires. As age increased, popular crowd members identified more with the normal crowd than with the popular crowd, and normal crowd members identified more with the popular crowd than with the normal crowd. Furthermore, “the strength of identification with normals [was] inversely related to the distance between that crowd and the normal crowd” (Stone & Brown, 1999, p. 17).

The findings of Stone and Brown (1999) regarding the ways in which a social identity may be formed among adolescents indicated shifts in social identity construction as students aged. Also, the findings indicated that ninth grade students were more likely than students in tenth through twelfth grades to identify themselves equally with the normal crowd and their specific crowd (Stone & Brown, 1999). Both the difference in grade levels and the split social identity of ninth grade students align with social identity research findings in music. Music participants have cited socializing and enjoyment of music with like-minded people as reasons for their involvement in an ensemble (Durrant, 2005; Durrant & Himonides, 1998). The need for social interaction and the company of similar personalities was an inherent aspect of the crowd identification and characterization studied by Stone and Brown (1999). Hence, while Stone and Brown (1999) offered findings that illustrated the nature of adolescent identification with various crowds, Durrant and Himonides (1998) offered findings that illustrated the identification of people with music ensembles (or crowds) in particular.
Efforts to fit in are not always the propelling force behind group membership decisions. Kinney (1999), in a study of alternative peer groups that seemed to form in opposition to mainstream groups, completed 81 interviews with high school aged male and female students in a public school. In addition, Kinney (1999) observed the students interacting at school and in the community. The interviews and observations occurred over a period of two years.

Kinney (1999) found that one particular group of peers, the “hippies,” formed as a result of a desire to disassociate with a negatively perceived group, the “headbangers” (p. 25). The headbangers were equated with lack of academic motivation and rebellious behavior in and out of school. The hippies no longer wished to be identified as rebels who received poor grades in school; they decided to form their own group that was focused on life after high school, college aspirations, and what they perceived as more adult goals (Kinney, 1999). The importance of Kinney’s (1999) finding was that the hippies demonstrated “an attempt to gain control over their lives and identities and share that control with friends” (p. 33). In effect, the new group identity could not have developed in the absence of friends, but rather the group along with collective group activities was required for the identity control among the hippies to develop (Kinney, 1999).

Social interaction among people with similar interests has surfaced as a theme within research on social identity in music (Durrant, 2005; Durrant & Himoniedes, 1998; Elpus & Abril, 2011) and in education research on adolescent social identity (Stone & Brown, 1999). Group identity has also been observed as a result of group rebellion against stereotyped identities (Kinney, 1999). An emphasis on the influence of a group of likeminded people upon the individual identities of members is inherently present within these studies. Groups can impact aspects of self-identity a person chooses to espouse or refuse. Furthermore, they can provide the
motivation necessary for individual people to act upon the characteristics associated with the group identity, such as joining a choir (Durrant, 2005) or rejecting a stereotyped identity (Kinney, 1999).

Social Capital in Music Contexts

Social capital has been defined as “the relations between persons” (Coleman & Hoffer, 2011, p. 50). While defining social capital has a controversial history in sociology (Dika & Singh, 2002; Farr, 2004; Portes, 2000), it is applied in music contexts as access to music resources through people (Dowd & Pinheiro, 2013). Hence, the richness of one’s social capital could contribute to his or her access to a group such as a choir. Studies in music will be examined in this section.

Langston (2011) administered surveys and conducted semi-structured interviews with 27 community choir members. The majority of choir members were retired, no auditions were required to be part of the group, and all soloists were selected from within the ensemble. The purpose of the study was to identify the ways in which social capital developed among the choir members as well as to determine indicators of social capital that were present in the choir setting (Langston, 2011).

Several indicators of social capital were found. These included trust, civic involvement, networks and connections within the community, faith-based engagement, shared norms and values, learning, and fellowship (Langston, 2011). Also, Langston (2011) found that the nature of the choral setting encouraged the development of the social capital indicators. For example, learning and fellowship were byproducts of participation in the community choir. Thus, it is possible social capital was enabled through the increased learning and fellowship that were available in the community choir.
Social capital has also been investigated in occupational contexts in music. Dowd and Pinheiro (2013) used data from “The Study of Jazz Artists 2001” to determine the extent of jazz musicians’ social capital (p. 440). The researchers then compared the social capital of dominant musicians to less dominant musicians to determine whether the amount of social capital, as measured in the study, was a possible predictor of job procurement as a jazz musician (Dowd & Pinheiro, 2013). Social capital was divided into two types within this study. The first type, formal social capital was capital that one obtained through membership in a formal organization such as the American Federation of Musicians. The second type, informal social capital, was capital obtained through personal relationships with musicians, local or otherwise.

The results indicated the kind of social capital a musician possessed could determine reasons some musicians had more social capital than others (Dowd & Pinheiro, 2013). Dowd and Pinheiro (2013) found “Musicians who develop and cultivate capitals, such as general education and formal music training, are most likely to enter into this [formal] type of social capital, as are musicians who are older, who reside in a vibrant city rich with musical history, and who play unusual instruments who also, in turn, could benefit from association” (p. 459). In contrast, the researchers found that formal music training or general education could limit the people known through informal social capital (Dowd & Pinheiro, 2013). Overall, the differences between kinds of social capital were found to influence success in the jazz profession. For example, “higher levels of general education are associated both with greater earnings and with formal social capital” (Dowd & Pinheiro, 2013, p. 460).

Although social capital and its benefits in the procurement of a successful career as a jazz performer are different from social capital gained through community choir, the findings of Dowd and Pinheiro (2013) and of Langston (2011) are complementary. While Langston (2011)
found that community choir could promote indicators of social capital such as learning and fellowship, Dowd and Pinheiro (2013) found that specific kinds of social capital could increase success in a jazz career. In each case, social capital is an integral component within the music environment whether it is an enabler toward success in the field or a product of participation in the field.

Summary

Studies of identity in music education have covered many topics including topics in occupational identity and self-identity. Within occupational identity, influences that spurred pursuit of music education have been examined (Cox, 1994; L’Roy, 1983; Isbell, 2008) as well as the construction of music teacher identity (Roberts, 1991; Ballantyne et al., 2012). Each specific area has noted the involvement of family, music teachers, and experiences in music as foundational both to pursuit of the music education profession and to the development of a music identity. However, there is some disagreement in the research regarding how self-identity is formed as well as how it impacts music participation. Hargreaves and Marshall (2003), Greenberg (1970), Ruddock and Leong (2005), and Sloboda et al. (2005) have found that a more autonomous and positive view of music identity is important to participation in music. In contrast, Langston (2011) has argued that talent in music and motivation are more complex than the research has demonstrated.

Research on social identity or group identity in the field of general education has offered further insight into how participation in a music group may affect identity and therefore the pursuit of music by students. Stone and Brown (1999) found that in general students tend to classify themselves as in the normal crowd. While they recognize other kinds of crowds, they tend to associate themselves with what is perceived as normal (Stone & Brown, 1999). Kinney
(1999) observed a different response to group norms and found that some groups form in an effort to differentiate themselves from an undesirable stereotype.

Studies on social capital in music have offered a final perspective on self-identity in music. One study has suggested that social capital is an asset gained through music participation (Langston, 2011) while another has found that social capital is an asset that determine one’s success in music performance (Dowd & Pinheiro, 2013). In each case, it seems that social capital serves as a function of self-identity thus impacting the understanding of identity construction in music.
CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Much information in the area of musical identity has been gathered. The data have revealed similarities and differences among music students across varying age groups and throughout varying degrees of music participation. However, in regard to the ways in which high school students construct music identities, there is less research. The present study sought to address that gap through investigation of the overarching themes in the music identity literature from a constructionist perspective. These themes included influences of musical identity in general, self-identity as a musician, social identity, and social capital in music. Two methods of study – participant observation and semi-structured interview – were used to collect data on each of the themes. Musical identity in general and social identity received greater emphasis in the observations, while self-identity as a musician and social capital in music received greater attention in the interviews. See Table 1 for a description of themes, their related factors, primary method of study, and guiding questions. This method section includes the pilot study and the components of the main study including: “Participants,” “Observations,” “Semi-Structured Interviews,” “Data Analysis,” and “Limitations.”

Table 1

*Themes, Factors, Methods, and Related Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Music identity in general</th>
<th>Social identity</th>
<th>Self-identity in music</th>
<th>Social capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical descriptions of space</td>
<td>Friendship behavior</td>
<td>Musicianship</td>
<td>Friends in choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical descriptions of students</td>
<td>Interaction between students</td>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td>Support from family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of action</td>
<td>Interaction between teacher and students</td>
<td>Dedication in class</td>
<td>Volunteerism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
### Themes, Factors, Methods, and Related Questions (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Music identity in general</th>
<th>Social identity</th>
<th>Self-identity in music</th>
<th>Social capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description of activities</td>
<td>Social behavior outside of class</td>
<td>Commitment to activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant Observations</strong></td>
<td><strong>Semi-structured Interview</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are the students interacting? What are the specific behaviors that cause me to infer an identity is being constructed?</td>
<td>What behaviors indicate friendships? Are there smaller groups within the choir?</td>
<td>What is it about yourself that makes you want to participate in music? Do you think people see you as a singer?</td>
<td>Think about your group of friends. Does choir have students who match the students in your group? Is it different?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to ensure the processes involved in data collection would be effective. The study’s purpose was to determine the dependability of the semi-structured interview questions and the dependability of the observation procedure. Dependability is defined as “internal consistency among the core elements of the research project – research questions, data collection, analysis, and conceptual understanding” (Bailey, 2007, p. 184). I was aware that a pilot study in a qualitative research setting could cause bias. To address this issue, I observed a sample that was similar to the main study but different in two specific ways that could reduce researcher bias. The first difference was that the main study consisted of observations in a high school choir setting while the pilot study consisted of observations in a college-aged music education course. The second difference was that the main study consisted of interviews with students who were purposefully selected based on observation data gathered over time while the single interviewee selected for the pilot study was a student with whom the researcher was previously acquainted.

**Purpose and participants.**
Although pilot studies may be cautioned in qualitative research, there has been support for their implementation. Kim (2011), in an article on pilot studies in qualitative research, stated, “a pilot study can test a research protocol, such as a data collection method” (p. 191). This was the reasoning behind the pilot study in this case. I completed a 1 hour and 20 minute observation of a music education class on a college campus in north Texas. Though demographic data were not collected specifically, my observations found that the class consisted of 24 students between the ages of approximately 18 and 25. Of the eight females, five were Hispanic and three were White. Of the 16 males, five were Hispanic, nine were White, and two were Black. The student selected for an interview was a Hispanic female vocalist, aged 24, majoring in music education at the university. The duration of the interview was 15 minutes.

Observations.

During the observation I recorded different types of qualitative information. One type included detailed physical descriptions of the classroom, the students, the teacher, the environment, and the activities. Another type of information concerned my perception of attitudes of the students, mood of the class climate in general, and social behaviors. A third type of information consisted of my own thoughts as they interrupted the observation process. An example of this is as follows: on one occasion I realized that I was unable to determine the impact of my presence in the room. I recorded the thought: “Difficult to determine whether they notice me at all. I’m curious how distracting my typing is.” This suggested that not only was my observation technique recording the happenings in the environment, but it was also capturing my personal thoughts as they interjected themselves.

One purpose of the pilot study was to determine the dependability of the observation procedure. By Bailey’s (2007) definition, the observation procedure is dependable if it is aligned
with the research question and other major components of the study. Thus, the first research question of the main study – “what are the processes involved in the construction of high school choir identity?” – was considered. The pilot sought to determine whether the observation procedure was capable of ascertaining information that might answer the main study’s question of choir identity construction. The observation procedure included a) note taking during the observation, b) open coding to code the observation notes in their most basic form, focusing on single words and phrases, d) axial coding (linking categories) to group the open codes together, and e) memoing to record why specific codes were grouped together as well as personal thoughts that might impact conclusions.

Examples of the data may assist in illustrating the effectiveness of the observation procedure. Examples are not exhaustive. Some of the open codes were: “eye contact,” “focus,” “nonverbal interaction,” “teacher expectation,” “and “comfort.” Related axial codes included “student-teacher focus,” “dependency on peers,” and “task behavior.” Memoing may best be exemplified with more depth. During a task of putting hands in the air, an observation note read: “some have straight arms, others have bent arms – seems to exhibit level of comfort with motion.” Next to this, a memo note revealed an alternate explanation. It read: “is this level of comfort or level of participation or is it an indicator of personality shyness?” As I reflected on my memo note, I realized that what I originally interpreted as comfort level with the activity could have a different meaning. Thus, not only was the note-taking procedure effective, but also the memo procedure was effective in promoting the realization of various interpretations.

Further observation was needed to determine the meaning of particular memo notes, as with the whole of the observation notes in general. However, I could confidently deduct that the overall identity of the class was one of a studious nature. Students were focused on the tasks,
mostly unaware of their peers. Their primary concern appeared to be with absorbing the information in the lessons, whether this was exhibited in their full participation in activities or their quiet, focused attention to the teacher during lecture segments. The students’ processes of focusing on learning, taking notes, and participating in activities were a few of the manifestations of their student identity. Thus, I could conclude that the students constructed a studious identity by engaging in class and exhibiting attentive behavior. While a much larger time frame would be imperative for any assertion of these findings, they were in the least indicative of the results of the main study.

The observation procedure was effective in gathering the type of data that would be necessary for the main study. This was supported through the alignment of the main study’s research question, the data collection, and the analysis. The data collection procedure of observation was successful in recording the happenings in the class so that the processes in construction of an identity could be isolated. This was aligned with the research question, “What are the processes involved with construction of choir identity?” as the observable happenings in class were one way that students’ constructions of choir identity could have been manifested. Furthermore, the data analysis of coding and memoing was aligned with the research question and data collection procedure. Each analytic procedure assisted the researcher in discriminating what the students were doing, what they meant to do, and what I (as the researcher) interpreted them as doing. The alignment of these components was key to determining dependability as Bailey (2007) described.

Semi-structured interview.

The interview procedure, like the observation procedure, produced findings of dependability. A semi-structured interview format was employed which included the prompts
and questions that were to be implemented during the main study. With the consent of the interviewee, a digital audio recorder was used to record the 15-minute interview. The interview began with the prompt: “Tell me a little bit about what it meant to you to be a choir member in high school.” The prompt was given in past tense, as the interviewee was in college at the time of the pilot study and was chosen for the interview because of her previous experience in high school choir. As the interview progressed, I guided the conversation to pertinent topics using the prompts and questions from the main study. After the interview, the following procedure was implemented: a) transcription of the interview in its entirety including pauses, hesitations, and verbalized pauses such as “ummm”, b) listening to the interview while reading the transcription and inserting perceived emotional changes as they occurred such as an excited or neutral voice quality, c) open coding to code the transcription in its most basic form, focusing on single words and phrases, d) axial coding (linking categories) to group the open codes together, and e) memoing to record reasons specific codes were grouped together as well as personal thoughts that could impact conclusions.

Examples of the data could be of use in demonstrating the dependability of the interview process. The data included is truncated. Some of the emotional changes that were inserted included: “with a downtrodden tone” and “with giggling and happy emotion.” Some of the open codes were “loved to sing,” “singing in church choir with father,” “an outlet,” “an escape,” and “poor childhood.” Related axial codes included “personal interest,” “music as an emotional release,” and “previous experiences.” An example of a memo is best offered by considering my response to the interviewee after she had listed several reasons for being in choir. One of her reasons was “it was also a way to keep me out of trouble.” When I responded to her, I referred to the same reason but in new terms: “it was something to do with your spare time.” The memo
captures my overtly positive recall of her statement: “I stated spare time while K stated out of trouble. Why did I do that? Is that important?” This memo illustrated my reflection and subsequent consideration of the ways in which my general positive nature could impact findings in the main study.

The overall analysis culminated in two primary concepts of which the interviewee spoke most frequently. Given the prompt, “Tell me about what it meant to you to be a choir member,” the interviewee discussed a) her love of singing and music and b) her need for music as an emotional escape from her reality. These two concepts became apparent after reading her interpretation of what it meant to be a choir member. Additionally, she discussed reasons she was in choir, what music did for her as a person, and how having an identity as a singer was dependent upon her choir teacher who “drilled us very hard.” However, she focused less on these topics than on the topics of love of singing and emotional escape. Though the results left me with areas that needed more explanation from the interviewee, the main study design includes two interviews to accommodate the need for depth. Furthermore, the pilot study interview was successful in modeling the process that was used in the main study.

The interview questions were dependable based on their alignment with the main research components. The interview format and analysis were aligned with the main study’s research questions regarding identity construction. The construction of choir identity may be explained and discussed through the avenue of interviewing participants in a semi-structured format. Due to the alignment of this form of inquiry with the overall research process, I could deduce that the interview prompts and questions were dependable and thus viable for use in the main study.

Summary.
The results of the pilot study indicated that the process of observations and the content of interview material were dependable. The components of the study were aligned, as Bailey (2007) recommended for dependability. Furthermore, the information gathered provoked additional thought regarding the importance of focusing on the participants’ words so that I might accurately portray their ideas. This interpretive kind of analysis has been encouraged for the capture of multiple realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Also, the pilot study process strengthened my ability to view my own ideas and experiences as part of the research. If I am to uncover the processes through which students construct a choir identity, then I must consider multiple meanings by being aware of my own possibly one-sided views. While the main study will result in greater depth of information and greater amount of data in general, it will continue in the same pattern of data collecting, reflecting, and analyzing so that the construction process of students may be discussed with rigor and accuracy.

Participants

Participants in the study were 33 high school choir students in Grades 9 – 12 with signed consent forms at a purposefully sampled public school on the east coast of the United States. The school was located in a town of approximately 3,289 residents per the county’s 2010 census and was selected for two reasons. The first reason was convenience. The school was in a location accessible to the researcher, and its administration was open to the possibility of a research project. The second reason was the status of the choral program. While the program was somewhat established prior to the study, it was not a large successful program as measured by enrollment and adjudicated festival scores. Rather, the program was small, had experienced little success at judged events, and was primarily comprised of freshmen and new students making it a likely environment in which identities would be developing.
The school’s overall student body consisted of 12% African American, 1% Asian American, 78% Caucasian, 5% Hispanic, and 4% multiracial students. Of the 33 participants, 26 were female and 7 were male. Thirteen were freshmen, 9 were sophomores, 8 were juniors, and 3 were seniors. Voice parts represented included 5 basses, 2 tenors, 12 altos, and 14 sopranos. Of the participants in this specific study, 6% were African American, and 94% were Caucasian.

All students were observed during their respective choir classes through participant observation for an 11-week period. The choir observed was a non-auditioned mixed choir that met every other day in two separate sections: second period met from 9:20 a.m. to 10:40 a.m.; and fourth period met from 12:40 p.m. to 2:05 p.m. This ensemble was chosen because it included girls and boys of varying ages and it met regularly (the Women’s Choir and Men’s Choir that were also options for observation met only once a week, which did not offer enough time for in-depth observation).

In addition, six students were selected to participate in two semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews followed the use of guiding questions with room for discussion and leading by the participant as described by Bailey (2007) and Kinney (1999). Three female and three male students were chosen based on indicators of musicianship, enthusiasm during rehearsal, dedication as evidenced through regular class attendance, and commitment to choir activities.

Structured Participant Observations

Structured participant observations occurred for an 11-week period and were used to gather field notes on the happenings within the choral classroom. Due to the scheduled nature of high school choral classes, I collaborated with the choir director to select specific observation appointments. Due to my status as an outside researcher, I originally intended to observe as a
nonparticipant. However, I was quickly included in rehearsals as an accompanist and as an assistant for running sectionals. This allowed me to record data as both an outsider, when I was not involved in rehearsals, and as a participant, when I was playing piano or teaching voice parts. I focused on gathering data regarding student behaviors among students and behavior between the choir teacher and students. I used Microsoft Word on a MacBook Pro for recording the observation information in a typed format.

The purpose of the observations was to record the ways in which students interacted, participated in class, and responded to the rehearsal environment. Previous research has found that one motivator of student participation in choir is the presence of friends (Hargreaves & Marshall, 2003; Ruddock & Leong, 2005). Given this finding, I used observation to determine which choir students exhibited friendship behavior, which choir students were excluded or included, and whether smaller groups of choir students seemed to exist within the larger ensemble. I also observed social interaction in general as it was present and accessible such as in the hallway between classes, at lunch, or in the auditorium during concert preparation rehearsals; this process was used by Kinney (1999), a researcher whose work in adolescent identity used observational techniques in a qualitative study. I observed participation in class activities including singing, note reading, and games. I also observed student responses to the environment by recording facial expressions, physical proximity, and exhibited comfort levels.

Several elements served as the focus of the observations. These included physical descriptions such as the space, objects in the space, people, actions of the people, activities, events, time, goals, and feelings (Bailey, 2007; Spradley, 1980). Also, the observations focused on the physical characteristics of the participants. Bailey (2007) offered guidelines for focused observation of physical characteristics and suggested that researchers begin by noting status
characteristics of participants. Also included was the importance of observing how outward appearances of clothing and hair might convey meaning (Bailey, 2007). Finally, Bailey (2007) suggested observation of personal symbols and the importance of determining the symbols’ meaning or significance among participants. Personal symbols might include tattoos, hairstyles, nail color, or similar outward alterations of physical appearance (Bailey, 2007).

Semi-Structured Interviews

After five weeks of observations were completed, I examined coded data for indications of identity construction that aligned with the research question. From these data, I determined which students would best serve as informants in an interview setting to follow up on my observations and to provide more in-depth information. The return to coded data to assist in selecting students best suited for the interview is a tactic espoused by Kinney (1999). Those students who exhibited perceived indicators for choir identity were targeted for interviews. Indicators included exhibition of high interest in choir such as musicianship, enthusiasm during rehearsal, dedication as evidenced through regular class attendance, or commitment to choir activities. Musicianship, regular attendance, and commitment to choir were chosen to capture all students who identified as choir members due to their dedication to music. As a result, musicianship was based on effort and encompassed both skilled musicians and less-skilled musicians who worked hard to participate as a choir member.

Other indicators of choir identity were added to ensure that students who identified as choir members for reasons beyond music were also included. Because choir participants have been documented as being a part of choir due to social reasons or friends in choir (Durrant, 2005; Durrant & Himonides, 1998), these additional indicators were included. Perceived choir identity based on social factors used the indicators of confident participation in choir as evidenced
through volunteerism in rehearsal such as hand raising, leading a section, or assisting the teacher. These behaviors were considered directly related to the notion of a choir identity, which is the basis for their status as indicators (Bailey, 2007). Participation in the interview was voluntary, and each student provided a signed consent form.

Six students were selected, three females and three males. Interview participant 1 was a white female in her junior year who sang second soprano in the second period class. Interview participant 2 was a white female in her sophomore year who sang alto in the second period class. Interview participant 3 was a white male in his sophomore year who sang bass in the second period class. Interview participant 4 was a white male in his sophomore year who sang tenor in the fourth period class. Interview participant 5 was a white male in his freshman year who sang bass in the fourth period class. Interview participant 6 was a white female in her sophomore year who sang first soprano in the fourth period class. All students exhibited similar attire. Social status symbols regarding appearance, such as clothing, hair, accessories, did not appear to indicate differentiating factors. Each semi-structured interview (Bailey, 2007) was used to gather more in-depth information regarding the student’s choir identity.

Two separate interviews were conducted with each student during the 11-week research period. One occurred after week five and the second occurred during week eleven. Though the effect of the interviews on the participants’ behavior in class could not be controlled, evidence of changes in each interviewee’s behavior in a choir rehearsal was observed and logged in observation notes. This allowed for analysis of the changes along with the other gathered data so that perceived changes could be documented.

The schedule of the two interviews was as follows: a) week six of the observation period and b) week 11 of the observation period. Each interview was scheduled for 30 minutes and was
held in the school’s piano lab so that the participants felt comfortable and safe (Bailey, 2007). Furthermore, the surrounding environment was quiet and conducive to audio recording equipment (Bailey, 2007). Each interview was audio recorded (with the informed consent of the participant) using the voice memo application on an iPhone 5c cellular device.

The semi-structured interview included non-research and research-specific dialogue (Bailey, 2007). Non-research dialogue was used to establish a professional, yet safe setting for the participant. It included questions about how the participant’s day was progressing as well as casual inquiry about current events in the choir. Though interview participants were chosen based on identifying factors of musical and social choir identity, the questions or prompts used to encourage discussion of their musical and social identity were not necessarily aligned with indicators. While observed musical skill was considered an indicator of choir identity in the researcher’s opinion, questions were structured so that students could identify this indicator, or not. The intent was to allow participants to discuss their identity as they saw it, while the selection of interview participants was based on prior research. An initial directive was used: Tell me about what it means to be a choir member at school. This allowed for students to explore their own meanings and constructions of being a choir member in high school. If this did not result in enough information, then prompts and questions were employed.

Questions and prompts were categorized by facets of identity. Questions a and b addressed social music identity and were structured to gather information about students’ perceptions of their position in a group – the choir. Question c focused on music social capital and was constructed to gather information about students’ social capital capacities both inside and outside of choir. Questions d and e targeted individual music identity and were designed to gather information on students’ perceptions of their musical self outside of the choral setting.
The questions were categorized by social music identity (musical identity dependent upon membership in a music group), music social capital (access to individuals also specializing in music), and individual music identity (musical identity based on personal music activity), which provided the structure for the interviews. Though questions were not asked in a specified order, the categories were maintained (Bailey, 2007). For example, depending upon the nature of the initial casual talk, one interviewee may naturally guide the conversation to the self-identity category of questions, while another may gravitate toward the social identity category. In each case, the researcher worked to stay within a category once it was mentioned, but then allowed the interviewee to guide the discussion to the next topic. This allowed for a more conversational session while maintaining the goals of the study as encouraged by Bailey (2007).

The following prescribed research prompts and questions stimulated discussion of research-specific dialogue, when necessary: a) Social music identity - Talk about what it means to be a choir student. Follow up questions included: To what extent do you see yourself as a choir student? And to what extent do your friends and family see you as a choir student? b) Social music identity - Talk about how you fit in with the people in your choir. Follow up questions included: Are your friends only in choir or do you hang out with people outside of choir, too? c) Music social capital - Think about your social group at school in general. Does choir have students who match the students in your social group, or is it different? d) Individual music identity - What is it about who you are that makes you want to participate in music? Follow up questions include: Are there events in your past that make you interested in choir? Are there specific experiences? e) Individual music identity - Talk about the musical side of who you are. Follow up questions included: Do you think people see you as a singer? Do you see yourself as a singer?
After each interview was completed and the student had left the interview area, I used note-taking to record personal reactions, feelings, and ideas that manifested as the interview progressed. These hand-written notes included additional information for accurate recollection of the nature of the interview and provided more in-depth observations that could not be collected while the interview was in session. The note taking produced a fuller, more detailed description of the interaction, as endorsed by Spradley (1980). Finally, all interviews were transcribed and checked for accuracy by the participating interviewee(s).

Triangulation.

To ensure the accuracy of the data, I cross-checked information between observation notes and interview transcriptions. Data were checked for consistency between the collection methods as well as for accuracy through member checking. Member checking is a process in which participants in the study, or members, are asked to review a draft of the final manuscript to confirm whether its contents are accurate (Bailey, 2007). Any incongruence, misinterpretations, or inconsistencies that were located were not considered invalid, as Bailey (2007) warned; rather they were investigated so that further insight could be obtained in an attempt to explain the discrepancies. Further investigation included a semi-structured interview with other participants and/or the teacher to provide insight into the cause of the discrepancy. For example, if a participant’s interview data were misaligned with data from observations in the class, then the researcher requested an additional semi-structured interview with the participant whose data revealed discrepancies. Changes were made where the inconsistency was the researcher’s or explanations were provided for the few instances in which researcher and student data could not be reconciled.
The choir teacher was also asked to review a draft of the final research document, free of any individually identifiable data. The teacher offered a fresh perspective on the research setting and was qualified as the participants’ teacher to evaluate the accuracy of the research document. Using a protocol similar to that used to cross check interview and observation data, the teacher’s analysis of data accuracy determined the presence of inconsistent or inaccurate interpretations. If any issues were located, the researcher investigated the content so that the issues could be explained.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed through a grounded theory approach. Strauss and Corbin (1998) proposed an inductive approach, which begins with microanalysis. This process involved two steps: a) recorded data and b) interpretations of the data by both researcher and participant (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Each type of data (recorded and interpreted) was coded and analyzed through a series of steps including open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In addition, the use of memoing (Bailey, 2007) was used as data were coded so that new insights or connections could be readily recalled as needed.

Memoing is a collection of “written records of analysis that may vary in type and form” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 217). They are intended to serve an analytical purpose rather than a descriptive one and may appear in several forms including code notes, theoretical notes, or operational notes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Bailey (2007) described memoing as the writing of “insights one derives from coding and reflecting on the data” (p. 133). Given the analytical purpose of memoing, it was used simultaneously with coding so that information gained during coding was retained. Beginning memos were awkward and simple, but this was expected (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Several specific pieces of information were included in the memoing
process according to the technical procedures outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998). These included dates on each memo, references to material from which ideas were drawn, conceptual headings, quotes of raw data that spurred the memo, title, modifications as new information was gained, and theoretical or operational references.

Isolating the processes of identity construction.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) defined open coding as “the analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data” (p. 101). The purpose of open coding was to identify concepts (or labeled phenomena) within the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Concepts were considered the actual processes of choir identity construction students experienced. The coding involved three primary steps. First, events or happenings were grouped by their common characteristics or meanings. Second, these groups were labeled with a name representative of their nature. These labels were considered the concepts that were discovered. Third, the concepts were grouped into broader categories that served as representations of the phenomena observed (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Relating the processes to the choir’s group identity.

Axial coding is “the process of relating categories to their subcategories, termed ‘axial’ because coding occurs around the axis of a category, linking categories at the level of properties and dimensions” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 123). Because data were dismantled and fragmented during open coding, axial coding worked to reassemble the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Axial coding enabled the researcher to build data around a category. As the data were collected, the relationship between the processes of construction and the group identity was highlighted. The effort revealed a dense collection of subcategories around a central category as well as connections between categories so that similarities across data could become evident
(Strauss & Corbin, 1998). To ensure axial coding was guided in the right direction, several questions were asked of the data such as “how come, where, when, how, and with what results” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 127). Answers to these questions assisted the researcher in connecting structure to process, and Strauss and Corbin (1998) explained that understanding process allows for understanding how while understanding structure allows for understanding of why. They asserted a need for both how and why (process and structure) for effective collection of the nature of events.

Building a theory for explaining the processes.

Selective coding is “the process of integrating and refining the theory” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143). After data were placed into categories and subcategories, the goal was to begin to consider the relationships between and among the categories. The process of examining the relationships is termed theory building or selective coding. Strauss and Corbin (1998) described this process:

Relational statements, like concepts, are abstracted from the data. However, because they are interpreted abstractions and not the descriptive details of each case…they are “constructed” out of data by the analyst. By “constructed,” we mean that an analyst reduces data from many cases into concepts and sets of relational statements that can be used to explain, in a general sense, what is going on. (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 145)

Constructed abstractions should emerge toward a central category. To facilitate the identification of a central category, Strauss and Corbin (1998) offered several options. These included writing a storyline, using diagrams, and reviewing memos.

As categories were analyzed for their relational properties, I used the analysis process of writing a storyline for properly representing “what is going on” in the data (Strauss & Corbin,
1998, p. 145). Bailey (2007) purported storytelling as a means both to analyze and present data. However, I utilized storytelling primarily as a means to offer further insight into the relational analysis. It enabled me to connect the construction processes and isolate possible explanations for their use by students. Bailey (2007) asserted that this process allows data that have been dormant to appear as “the researcher crafts them into something meaningful” (p. 162). I chose this particular process for further analysis, as it allowed for inclusion of context and the presence of the researcher (Bailey, 2007). Furthermore, Bailey (2007), in recounting experiences with graduate committees and teaching field analyses noted: “students who use this [storytelling] technique tend to write manuscripts that are more detailed and conceptually stronger than when employing other strategies” (p. 171). Hence, I have intended to offer a more complete, accurate analysis of observed events through implementation of the storytelling analysis process. It brought a different perspective to the concepts and relational abstractions that I constructed and provided a framework for transforming the data into a holistic format.

Limitations

The nature of an interpretive epistemology accommodates researcher bias. However, the inclusion of bias also serves as a limitation of the study. The extent to which my interaction with the participants and data collection could have altered findings could not be fully anticipated. Therefore, a limit to this study is its inability to generalize to other populations or settings. However, qualitative research offers an alternative to generalizability, termed transferability. Bailey (2007) defined transferability as “criteria that refers to the applicability of findings beyond the setting, situations, and participants included in the research” (p. 182). A specific type of transferability that Bailey (2007) offered is labeled “analytic generalizations” and is characterized by identifying “concepts and social processes that have theoretical implications or
significance beyond a specific setting” (p. 183). Thus, the study worked toward analytic
generalizations to provide an alternative form of rigor in the place of generalizability.

This study was also limited in its ability to produce reliable results. It would be difficult
for a second researcher to replicate the results exactly given that my personal influence is an
inherent part of the work. However, the results aim for dependability as an alternative construct
to ensure rigorous research. Bailey (2007) stated dependability “requires internal consistency
among the core elements of the research project – research questions, data collection, analysis,
and conceptual understanding” (p. 184). In essence, if the research is dependable, then it should
outline the research process and clearly highlight the congruency between the methodology and
the conclusions (Bailey, 2007). The result is a kind of audit trail that documents the research
process in full to provide dependable results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Another limitation is the issue of validity. The determination of whether or not the study
measured what it intended to measure is more challenging in qualitative research through use of
the term validity. However, a label in qualitative research that may be substituted for validity is
trustworthiness. Trustworthiness “requires that the reader see how the researcher arrived at the
conclusion he or she made” (Bailey, 2007, p. 181). It offers a construct for ensuring that the
research investigated what it purported to investigate by providing a detailed account of
procedures and decisions made throughout the research process. If the research is rigorously
documented, then it should be clear to the reader whether the method and conclusions are aligned
(Bailey, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Internal validity is another limitation of the study. Given the interpretive nature of the
research, the notion of an accurate representation of a setting is problematic (Bailey, 2007). If
there are multiple social realities, as an interpretive paradigm asserts, then the portrayal of a
stable social reality is a contradictory goal. As a result, qualitative research of this kind substitutes the concept of credibility. Bailey (2007) described credibility as the level of appropriateness and rigor applied in the methods for collection and analysis of data. Also, credibility “implies believability, authenticity, and plausibility of results” (Bailey, 2007, p. 182). Hence, while multiple social realities are not rightfully determinable as accurately portrayed through internal validity, they may be authentic and plausible based on the processes through which they were observed, analyzed, and interpreted.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to investigate constructions of choir identity among high school students. A constructionist philosophical underpinning was chosen to support a qualitative naturalistic form of inquiry. The method included participant observation, interviews, and member checking and allowed the researcher to collect field notes, obtain student perspectives, assemble meaningful interpretations, and construct an overview of the process of choir identity construction. A grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) was employed for data analysis.

Research questions were developed in accordance with a grounded theory approach. Strauss and Corbin (1998) purported that when analyzing data for process, “one is purposefully looking at action/interaction and noting movement, sequence, and change as well as how it evolves (changes or remains the same) in response to changes in context or conditions” (p. 167). To address the two components Strauss and Corbin (1998) described – action and context – the two research questions of the study were:

1. What processes – or collections of behaviors, experiences, and activities – are involved in the construction of choir identity among high school students?
2. How are the processes related to the group’s identity of the choir?

Research question one addressed the processes or “action/interaction” of the data analysis while research question two addressed the “context” of the processes by examining how processes were related to the group’s identity (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 167). Therefore, as the processes are presented they are labeled with the heading, process. Each process is followed by a
discussion of how the process was related to the group’s identity and labeled with the heading, context.

Participants in the study were given pseudonyms for the protection of their privacy. To provide clarification during reading the results, a list of interview participants is provided.

Interview participants included:

Sarah, an alto in her freshman year of high school
Ashley, a first soprano in her sophomore year of high school
Rachel, a second soprano in her junior year of high school
Michael, a tenor in his sophomore year of high school
Jake, a bass in his junior year of high school
Derek, a bass in his freshmen year of high school

Process and Context

In response to research question one, six processes of choir identity construction were isolated through data analysis. The processes included behaviors, activities, and experiences involved in choir identity. Processes included:

- Working in choir rehearsal
- Evaluating ability
- Assessing the classroom environment
- Taking pride in singing
- Forming social bonds
- Enjoying choir singing

In response to Research Question 2, the context – or way in which each of the processes was related to the group’s identity, success in choir singing, – was identified and labeled. The
group’s identity was best represented as an identity of success in choir singing. After discussing my constructed label of success in choir singing with both the teacher and the students, I learned that an identity of success was one with which everyone agreed. The teacher clarified the importance of independent musicianship among the choir members, achievement at adjudication events, and recognition of personal improvement in singing. The students recognized the importance of improving one’s singing, working toward that improvement with a positive attitude, and using one’s singing as a way to contribute to the success of the group. Both the students’ and the teacher’s ideas of musicianship, achievement, and improvement culminated in the label of the group’s identity as success in choir singing. The way in which each process and the group’s identity, success in choir singing, was related provided context for the process and will be described as a connection between process and context.

Working in choir rehearsal.

**Process.**

As students developed their choir identities, they experienced the work that was imbedded in the act of rehearsing in choir class. The concept, *working in choir rehearsal*, consisted of two subcategories: (a) on-task behavior and (b) off-task behavior. Some students exhibited participation in class work, which was observed and labeled as on-task behavior during class. Other students exhibited resistance to class work, which was observed and labeled as off-task behavior during class. Field notes and interviews accounted for both types of behavior – working or resistance to working.

1. Working as exhibited by on-task behavior.

Student behaviors that exhibited participation in work were encompassed in the concept, *on-task behavior*. The concept of *on-task behavior* ascribed meaning to the terms and phrases
that were collected from the data such as “quietly working,” “following procedures,” “singing,” “listening to teacher,” and “focusing on self-performance.” Each of these data fragments was considered indicative of working. Thus, they were labeled with the concept on-task behavior. An exhaustive list of the microanalysis terms and phrases that were grouped to form on-task behavior is provided in Appendix A.

Field notes recorded on-task behavior but in more complete accounts than the data fragments in the microanalysis. Fields notes that accounted for on-task behavior included statements such as the following:

- Almost all students are paired and working on handout. Only a handful seems to be off task.
- All are listening to recording from judging festival. None are talking; none are looking at peers; most seem concentrated on what they’re hearing.
- Interesting how quiet and focused everyone here is! The environment is so excellently supported by the director and very conducive to learning music from the bottom up – reading, rhythm, solfège, audiating, singing. Very good participation; students are singing and doing hand signs and focusing on looking at sight-reading music.
- Students are talking and striving to get the key signature thing. It’s fun to know that they are excited about learning the music theory part and that even if they aren’t excited they are hard working in the face of the challenge to figure it out.

Interview participants recognized on-task behavior as a component of developing choir identity. Students who participated in interviews were chosen because they exhibited on-task behaviors. They were familiar with working in choir and had opinions about others in the group
who resisted the work. Michael expressed the differences in work requirements that he noticed between the previous choir director and the current one. He explained the change in behavior that he saw in himself and in his peers:

   Michael: With Ms. Taylor [previous teacher] we sang songs for like 20 minutes then she worked with individuals and we just went crazy and ran around and stuff. It was great, but it was also that we weren’t getting anything done. With Ms. Smith [present teacher], I think most of us were a little unsure at first. Just because there was such a huge change and we still have those moments. Like Ms. Smith will let us make jokes and such and have a few moments of long conversation. Not as much as Ms. Taylor, but it’s still there and it’s still more than enough really. And then Ms. Smith has also gotten us a lot further than Ms. Taylor did skill wise, like a lot.

   Me: Do you think that’s important?

   Michael: Yes, I would not have been able to make All State without Ms. Smith.

   Me: So has it changed what it means to be in choir? Has it changed the identity at all?

   Michael: I guess [the high school] has more to do now. We have more of a reputation because we’re getting better. Before choir was really fun. People took choir because you could sing but also have a lot of fun. But now it’s also the prestige and the competition that we can actually compete in now and we’re actually contenders in that.

   Me: Does that make it seem more formal and professional?

   Michael: I guess so.

   Me: To me, that would change the identity a bit, right? If it meant that now when you join, you have to do a little work to actually be a help to the ensemble instead of a hindrance.
Michael: Yeah, which was tedious at first. Early on, like the first few months, everyone was kind of slow and confused. Basically, I was getting a little bit of extra help for All State. I started picking up on it really fast and I just kinda blew through all the warm-ups and sight-reading. Recently I notice that it’s not just me. Everyone seems to be getting it. Michael explained the connection between the shift in the choir’s reputation and working harder. He stated, “We have more of a reputation because we’re getting better.” Through the process of working in choir, the members were constructing an identity. They started “getting it,” as Michael described, and the identity seemed to change accordingly.

2. Resisting working as exhibited by off-task behavior.

As students constructed a choir identity through working in choir rehearsal, there were some who resisted the work. Students who resisted the work also constructed a choir identity, but it differed from the choir identities of students who accepted the work. Students who accepted the work, constructed choir identities that were defined by active participation and focus during rehearsals, but students who resisted the work, constructed choir identities that were defined by minimal effort during rehearsals and interest in off-task behaviors. The behaviors associated with resisting the work were labeled off-task behavior. The terms and phrases from the data that were collected to form the off-task behavior concept included items such as “not participating in activity,” “avoiding teacher instruction,” “talking about something else,” and “pretending to participate in front of teacher.” A complete list of the terms is located in Appendix A.

Field notes recorded off-task behavior. Notes that accounted for off-task behavior included statements such as the following:

- Teresa isn’t doing any hand signs or singing. She turns and looks at friend, does wrong hand signs, looks at teacher, adjusts clothes, and looks at friend.
• Students were not as focused. Maria is talking loudly to anyone who will listen.
• Two altos look over their shoulders and don’t even try to engage with others.

They laugh and look at each other.

Interview participants addressed off-task behavior as well. Sarah offered her opinion about one student who rarely participated: “I think that [alto] doesn’t really want to be in it.” Michael observed that students who avoided the work “never know the music and then the whole section can get blamed for one person not knowing anything at all.” Ashley explained her account of students who joined choir because “they thought it was an easy class.” She stated, “Some people do that [join because they think it is easy], so when we’re talking about music and stuff, you can tell that they just aren’t interested in it.”

The concept, on-task behavior, described the behaviors of students who accepted the work responsibilities in class, while off-task behavior described the behaviors of students who resisted the work in class. Each of these concepts was a subcategory of the process of working in choir rehearsal to construct a choir identity. After questioning the teacher about the notion of working in choir within identity construction, she informed me that she did lose some of the choir students who were enrolled with the previous teacher at the end of the fall semester. She explained that they were students who were not interested in serious choir singing and that their decision to leave choir was not unexpected. As a result, those students exhibited a complete refusal to participate in the work by dropping the class.

Context.

In response to research question two, the way in which working in choir rehearsal was related to the group’s identity, success in choir singing was examined. Working in choir rehearsal was related to the group’s identity, success in choir singing, through a means of
manifestation. *Success in choir singing* incorporated ideas of being successful as a choir, working to improve, and enjoying singing, while the process of *working in choir rehearsal* encompassed sight-singing, rehearsing, and vocal development activities that were included in the work of choir singing. Hence, *working in choir rehearsal* appeared to be a manifestation of the ideas of success that existed in the group’s identity.

*Working in choir rehearsal* as a manifestation of the group’s identity also appeared to contribute to students’ constructions of choir identities. *Working in choir rehearsal* exposed students to the nature of the group’s identity – *success in choir* – and allowed students to work or to resist work. Through the acts of working or resisting work that were part of *working in choir rehearsal*, students could delineate the behaviors associated with choir participation and construct their choir identities accordingly. For example, if students exhibited off-task behaviors, identified through codes such as “not participating in activity,” “avoiding teacher instruction,” “talking about something else,” and “pretending to participate in front of teacher,” then those students were viewed as demonstrating lower levels of acceptance of the group’s identity, *success in choir singing*. A student who possessed lower levels of acceptance might construct a choir identity that revolved around activities indirectly associated with choir, such as socializing or taking field trips. Students who exhibited on-task behaviors, identified through codes such as “quietly working,” “following procedures,” “singing,” “listening to teacher,” and “focusing on self-performance,” were viewed as demonstrating higher levels of acceptance of the group’s identity, *success in choir singing*. A student who possessed a higher level of acceptance might construct a choir identity that revolved around activities directly associated with choir such as singing or performing.
One interview participant spoke about the connection between working in choir rehearsal and identity construction. Rachel seemed to attribute her shift in choir identity to increased opportunities for working in choir rehearsal:

Rachel: “I definitely think when I joined choir I thought, “Hmmm, choir looks fun.” And now I’ve developed into it’s a real thing, we actually do all this, and it’s really professional. I’ve started to get more comfortable with not just being a choir member but being more of a soprano.

Me: What do you think…do you have specific things that have happened to change that?

Rachel: Well definitely, Mrs. Smith has really stepped it up [expected more work that resulted in students’ success at the regional adjudicated choir festival].

Evaluating ability.

Process.

To construct their choir identities, students examined the ability levels of both themselves and those around them. They engaged in a process of comparing their own abilities to their peers’ abilities. Examples of the phrases and terms that comprised the concept of evaluating ability include: “watching each other during sight-singing,” “checking with neighbor for correctness,” “everyone seems to be getting it,” “everyone knows she’s a good singer,” and “I’m not confident about my voice.” The phrases were collected into the concept of “evaluating ability,” as each pertained to students’ behavior of evaluating themselves and their peers. A complete list of the concept components is located in Appendix B.
Field notes recorded details of student acts of *evaluating ability* in the classroom. The following example is one instance of exhibited indicators of evaluation that I could readily identify. It took place while I was rehearsing the choir.

During one rehearsal, in which I was focusing on the soprano section, the sopranos were circled around the piano. I asked them to sing in groups of three so that I could more easily identify issues with notes. I moved around the circle and each group sang, but then I reached the last group and I could not get the three girls to sing. They were mumbling and stalling. After a minute or so of my prodding, a student exclaimed, “We’re the bad singers. We can’t sing out like that.” I instinctively asked how she had made that assessment. She did not have a response, but the reaction of the others in her group indicated that they disagreed with her. I asked the others if they thought they could do it with some help; when they agreed, we added a stronger singer and the group sang with success.

In this example, the sopranos who would not sing were exhibiting that they had evaluated both their peers’ and their own singing abilities. One student had gone as far as to label herself and the others in her group as “bad singers.” Though the others did not share her opinion, they appeared to be somewhat influenced by it, as until I convinced them to sing alongside a stronger soprano, they would not participate in the singing exercise.

Evaluative behavior was identified in interview sessions by conceptualizing what students were discussing. The following excerpts were taken from various interview transcripts and serve as examples of student talk that indicated their evaluation of singing abilities:

Ashley’s statements indicated that she had evaluated her ability to sing as well as her peers’ abilities:
Ashley: So I was the only one who could sing soprano-soprano. So that kinda set me apart because I could sing that high.

Sarah evaluated the ability of her peers and formed opinions about how they evaluated her. She perceived others’ decisions to “sing out” as a means to exhibit their superior singing abilities, and to Sarah, the students who she labeled as “actual leaders” were belittling her ability to sing. Sarah illustrated a rather complex evaluation of ability, as she saw ability as a manifestation of confidence, leadership, and superiority:

Sarah: Some people, like the people who are actual leaders you know, who are confident…sometimes they’ll act like they’re a little bit better than you because they are more confident about themselves. They sing out more because they do that, and it’s like “because I can do this and you can’t, I sing better than you.”

Michael demonstrated his evaluation of himself and his peers. He was aware that he and a few others understood and that the remaining students were “starting to get it:”

Michael: Everyone seems to be getting it. I’m still probably one of the…I probably get it the most aside from one or two other kids. But I notice that everyone is starting to get it now.

Sarah indicated her evaluation of others and herself by describing whether students were sharing their voices. She explained that some students who she believed had higher ability “share it with everyone.” She contrasted the higher ability to her own ability and explained that she was not “very confident,” and was afraid of someone criticizing her voice:

Sarah: Most people in choir can – especially if they’ve done it for a really long time – by that time they actually can sing really good and stuff by then, then
they’ll share it with everyone. But I’m not very confident about my voice so I
don’t like singing out because I’m afraid somebody will say something about it
like “that was horrible” or “wow that was a wrong note.”

In the excerpts, students exhibited their evaluations of the singing abilities of themselves
and their peers. Participant observations allowed me to experience the results of evaluation
during rehearsal. This was manifested in the reluctance of some to sing and in the outright
labeling of “bad singing” that one student exclaimed during rehearsal. Interviews revealed
similar findings. Students were aware that members in the choir were evaluating each other, as in
the case with Sarah who expressed her fear of someone criticizing her voice. They were also
aware of how their own abilities compared to the abilities of others, as Michael explained.

Context.

In response to research question two, the way in which evaluating ability was related to
the group’s identity, success in choir singing, was examined. Evaluating ability, as a process of
choir identity construction, was related to the group’s identity, success in choir singing in an
evaluative manner. In the context of success in choir singing, the process of evaluating ability
functioned as a form of assessment through which students could measure the singing abilities of
themselves and their peers. Students appeared to use the assessment for comparing abilities so
that a kind of informal rank regarding singing ability within the group could be applied. The
informal ranking that seemed to result from evaluating ability was one avenue through which
students could attribute individual contributions toward the group’s identity, success in choir
singing.

Evaluating ability was one collection of behaviors and activities that allowed students to
assess the singing abilities of themselves and their peers. It appeared students conceptualized the
group’s identity of *success in choir singing* through *evaluating ability*. For example, if students viewed their abilities as aligned with the group identity, then they tended to exhibit neutral or positive evaluations such as: “checking with neighbor for correctness,” “everyone seems to be getting it,” and “everyone knows she’s a good singer.” However, students who viewed their abilities as incongruent with the group’s identity tended to exhibit more negative evaluations such as: “I’m not confident about my voice,” or “calling self part of the ‘bad group’.”

Students conceptualized the group’s identity through *evaluating ability*. Michael expressed his concept of the group’s identity by discussing his frustration with other students: “People who try [as compared to those who don’t], even though it’s still kind of annoying, I have respect for them trying because they’re at least doing their best to keep up.” Michael appeared to recognize that the group’s identity was one of success, as his evaluations of ability indicated that while he respected students who tried he was still annoyed by their inabilities to sing.

Assessing the classroom environment.

*Process.*

*Assessing the classroom environment* encompassed three subcategories. These were (a) watching peers, (b) making assumptions about attitudes, and (c) determining the teacher’s expectations. Each of the subcategories of the concept, *assessing the classroom environment*, was chosen for its descriptions or explanations of components of the classroom environment.

Watching peers was a means for determining appropriate behaviors in the classroom. Making assumptions about attitudes was a method for determining the mood of the classroom. Determining the teacher’s expectations was a means for establishing the level of work that was required in the classroom.

1. Watching peers.
Watching peers was a subcategory of the concept, *assessing the classroom environment*, because it was an activity that enabled students to learn what kind of behavior was acceptable. The subcategory was compiled from phrases and terms such as “watching peers during activity,” “secretly watching other’s behavior,” “looking across the group,” and “looking at neighbor’s music.” A complete list of the concept components is located in Appendix C.

Field notes accounted for the act of watching peers through more detailed accounts. Scenarios are provided along with specific statements drawn from field notes that indicated watching peers.

- **Students were listening to adjudication notes during class:**
  
  All students are listening and looking around at one another. Students are discussing notes from the judge while the recording is going.

- **During a silly warm-up exercise designed to awaken the students and stimulate their engagement, I observed two boys who closely watched each other’s cues to determine the extent of silliness that was acceptable:**
  
  Two boys are paired together; they are locking elbows and singing all the warm-ups. Both need a lot of support from each other. Their eyes stay fixed on the other’s movements.

- **An alto in her freshman year was instructed to sing second soprano on a section of a song. She was relocated to a new seating area among older students, and she watched closely after admitting she did not know what to do:**
  
  The younger student just said, ‘I don’t know what I’m doing,’ and she seems to need to admit she is confused. She wants to be a part of the group; she listens, looks, and watches what [the older student] is doing.
Interview participants discussed watching others. However, their discussion of watching others did not necessarily result in labeling the act of watching. Rather, I conceptualized the act of watching others through the actions they referenced.

Jake discussed his way of watching others when he was a freshman:

Jake: Freshman year I wasn’t a very strong person with notes, so I was a major copy cat.

Jake also emphasized his reason for copying others:

Jake: It’s kind of harder for someone to grow by themselves.

Ashley referenced a situation in which I was running rehearsal. I had stopped to address a student who was showing signs of pushing. I briefly corrected the issue and moved forward with rehearsal. Ashley recalled this event and stated:

Ashley: I think because you pointed that out for her we [the soprano section] thought, “Oh, we have to do this now.” So we kind of fixed ourselves.

2. Making assumptions about attitudes.

Making assumptions about attitudes was a subcategory of the concept, assessing the classroom environment, because it served as a method for determining the mood of the classroom. Students demonstrated their assumptions through their behaviors during the rehearsals, and interview participants voiced their assumptions directly through discussion of classroom events. The subcategory was developed by grouping phrases and terms such as: “everyone will be friendly in choir,” “choir is always happy,” “people are kind of inviting,” “trying not to smile if group isn’t smiling,” and “showing interest in same task.” A complete list of the concept components is located in Appendix C.
Field notes offered a more complete description of the subcategory, making assumptions about attitudes, through accounts of classroom behavior. The following excerpts are descriptions of behaviors in the classroom that students demonstrated as they made assumptions about attitudes. Each is presented with a description of the scenario.

• Kate was the oldest of the first soprano section, and she would often shake her head or roll her eyes if the younger first sopranos, Molly or Hannah, made mistakes. As a result, Molly and Hannah worked to determine Kate’s attitude on a daily basis by watching her and staying quiet. They rarely spoke to one another but instead watched Kate to avoid accidentally irritating her:

  Back row [Kate, Molly, and Hannah] is sitting together though they don’t seem to talk much.

  Kate is talking to Molly. This doesn’t always happen.

  During play-through of notes, Molly and Hannah are watching Kate.

  Molly seems not to feel confident [while sitting] beside of Kate, like maybe Kate vibes [exudes an attitude of dislike] her a little.

• While students were working on a sight-singing example, I was seated close to Michelle. I could hear what she was saying and sense her desire to determine which attitude her peers would accept. Initially, she assumed that an attitude of not caring would be acceptable. When Rebecca and Sarah ignored this attitude, Michelle tested a second attitude, that of caring about the assignment – or at least appearing to care in front of Rebecca and Sarah.

  Rebecca asks about writing in solfège. Michelle says, “I don’t know; I don’t give a shit.” Rebecca does not respond.
Interview participants exhibited the act of making assumptions about attitudes. They expressed opinions about their peers that revealed they had made assumptions. An interview segment with Derek, a freshman in the bass section, seemed to exhibit making assumptions about attitude particularly well:

Me: Do you think all students would like that, or do you think it’s just you?
Derek: Really depends on the kid; sometimes I like personal interaction – like how to fix myself so that I can help other people. And some people – they don’t want to be called out personally to be helped. They just want everybody to do it.
Me: How can the teacher tell [who wants to be helped]? How can you tell?
Derek: I think it’s attitude [the students’ attitudes] towards the chorus. Like if they ask for help or if they constantly try to push for new notes by themselves, then that would be a way to tell. But if they’re constantly sticking to where they’re safe, that could be a completely different thing in general. But it could also be that they don’t want to be personally talked to.

Derek was explaining his assumptions about students’ attitudes toward being personally corrected by the teacher. It seemed that he was associating attitude with intrinsic motivation. As a result, Derek based his assessments of his peers’ attitudes on whether his peers would “push for new notes” or remain “where they’re safe.”

3. Determining the teacher’s expectations.

The subcategory, determining the teacher’s expectations, was part of the concept, assessing the classroom environment, because it was a means for establishing the level of work that was required in the classroom. The subcategory was identified through phrases and terms.
such as: “looking to teacher for reassurance,” “watching teacher,” “teacher makes it challenging,” “teacher has stepped it up,” and “listening to teacher when talking.” A complete list of the concept components is located in Appendix C.

Field notes offered a more detailed account of the subcategory, determining the teacher’s expectations. The act of determining the teacher’s expectations was a behavior that allowed students to understand how much work was required of them. In some cases, students were observed participating in class activities by pretending to participate rather than actually doing the work. This was a possible indication that the student was determining whether the teacher would accept this pretense as enough, or not. Other examples indicated the students were determining the expectations so that they could work toward them effectively.

- All students are listening.
- Teacher is talking about future pieces; students are engaging in conversation with her.
- Teacher is writing on board and she says aloud, “It got quiet.”
- When teacher addresses a section, the students listen and watch her.

One student, Maria, pretended to be working. It seemed that she realized working was an expectation in spite of her effort to avoid working:

- Now that she sees the teacher has noticed, she stops and watches like she is focusing. But it’s fake. As soon as the teacher can’t see her, she reverts to disruptive behavior.

Interview participants discussed the ways in which they determined the expectations of the teacher; participants offered opinions regarding expectations for social behavior. Social behavior expectations served as an additional aspect of expectations that I had not observed
during class rehearsals. I had recorded expectations of work behavior. Rachel, Ashley, and Jake addressed the social expectations of the ensemble. Each explained why he or she felt it was easier to form friendships.

Rachel felt it was easier to make different kinds of friends in choir – friends who were different from her regular group:

Me: You said you can make different kinds of friends more easily in choir. Why do you think it’s less restrictive?
Rachel: I don’t know, everybody in choir is just more…kind of open and always happy. Like Mrs. Smith [the choir teacher] is always happy. She’s easy to talk to and that’s…[stops to think]… I guess everybody reflects on her attitude, usually. And they’re a lot happier and so it’s easier to talk to them and meet them. Then we start to share the same interests because we talk about choir things and musicals and all that kinda stuff. So it’s easier; I like it.

Ashley explained that the teacher made it easier for people to become a part of the group:

Me: Do you think Mrs. Smith has anything to do with how students fit in?
Ashley: I think it’s – I like Mrs. Smith – it’s because she’s really nice and she’s friendly and open to everybody.

Jake explained the influence of the teacher’s social expectations and how he perceived the social expectations as affecting the choir:

Jake: If the choir director is not fun and interactive, then the students are just meh [boring or plain]. It radiates from the teacher to the student and they’ll [the students] think that’s how they’re supposed to act on stage.
Students also expressed the ways in which they determined expectations for work. Rachel and Michael offered explanations for the shift they saw in classroom work between the previous teacher and the current teacher.

Rachel discussed the high expectations for work that she felt the teacher had established. Her discussion represented a possible way that she determined the teacher’s expectations. Rachel mentioned the requirements of the class rehearsal and related them to doing “so much better:”

Me: Does she demand more from you?

Rachel: Yes, I think Mrs. Smith has really stepped it up. I think Mrs. Smith knows that we can do so much better so she tells us to learn the hard songs, she makes us tracks [sing-along recorded tracks], and she makes us memorize. And yeah, gives us tests.

Michael determined the teacher’s expectations by comparing them to the previous teacher’s expectations. He also viewed the expectations in relation to the choir’s success as a group of singers:

Michael: With Mrs. Smith [current teacher], I think most of us were a little unsure at first just because there was such a huge change. Mrs. Smith has gotten us a lot further than Ms. Taylor [previous teacher] did – skill wise – like a lot [further].

Each component of assessing the classroom environment offered a means for constructing identity. For example, students who watched others tended to watch so that they could align their behaviors with the group’s behaviors. Jake spoke of being a copycat so that he could learn how to do what the choir students did. It seemed that he constructed a choir identity that meant he should function as a part of the group. Assessing the attitude of the environment
was also a part of identity construction. Molly and Hannah constructed what appeared to be quiet and observant choir identities through assessing the attitude of their older peer, Kate. In their effort to avoid irritating Kate, Molly and Hannah constructed identities that were about considering the well being of others. The last component of environment assessment was determining the teacher’s expectations. This, too, aided in identity construction. Rachel, who found the environment a friendly and inviting one, spoke excitedly about making different kinds of friends. As a result, Rachel constructed a choir identity that meant she would have friends who were different from her regular crowd.

The concept, assessing the classroom environment, encompassed three subcategories. These included: (a) watching others, (b) assessing attitudes, and (c) determining the teacher’s expectations. Each of the subcategories offered information about the ways in which students assessed the classroom environment. The acts involved in each subcategory addressed individual, yet related, processes through which students constructed their identities. As a student assessed the environment, he or she was constructing a choir identity in response to the assessment.

Context.

In response to research question two, the way in which assessing the classroom environment was related to the group’s identity was also examined. Assessing the classroom environment was related to the group’s identity, success in choir singing, in an interpretive manner. Assessing the classroom environment incorporated processes through which students could interpret the group’s identity, success in choir singing. As a result, students appeared to utilize the process of assessing the classroom as a means for determining the extent to which their choir identities aligned with the group’s identity of success in choir singing. Overall, the
process of assessing the classroom seemed to serve as a means for students to determine how well they fit in with the group.

Assessing the classroom was one collection of behaviors and activities that allowed students to determine how well their choir identities aligned with the group’s identity of success in choir singing. For example, students appeared to be “secretly watching other’s behavior” or “looking across the group” in an effort to assess the classroom. Watching provided a way for students to learn the behaviors and make decisions regarding whether or not they would adopt the behaviors. Also, students seemed to assess the group attitude of the choir by qualifying the nature of the group. For example, students described the group attitude with phrases such as “choir is always happy” and “people are kind of inviting.” The descriptions of “happy” and “inviting” suggested students perceived a positive attitude in the group. Students also engaged in determining the teacher’s expectations as a means for assessing the environment. Observation notes recorded behaviors such as “looking to teacher for reassurance” or “watching teacher,” which seemed to indicate students’ interest in understanding the teacher’s expectations.

Students spoke directly about their assessments of the environment and the ways in which it related to the group’s identity. Ashley described the choir as open and stated, “I think choir people are more open to more people…so it’s more like…[thinks]…it’s a better environment to get to have friends.” Ashley assessed the classroom environment by making assumptions about attitudes; she viewed the attitude of choir members as “more open to people.” Ashley used this assessment of openness to interpret the group’s identity as one that included having friends. Jake related the group’s identity to attitude, a component of assessing the classroom.
Me: So can you think of any other things that might contribute to this growth [as a choir member] that you’re talking about?

Jake: The right attitude does help because if you have the wrong attitude – like if you’re always angry – how are you supposed to pay attention to all the little happy details? [How do you know] what’s going on around you?

Jake seemed to struggle to understand how a person he perceived as having a bad attitude could have awareness of the group. This reasoning suggested that Jake was making assumptions about the attitude of the group and interpreting the group’s identity as something oppositional to a “wrong attitude.”

The process of assessing the classroom environment enabled students to observe behaviors, to perceive the group attitude of the class, and to gain insight into the teacher’s expectations. As a result, assessing the environment provided a means for students to acquire an understanding of the group’s identity as evidenced through behaviors, attitudes, and expectations. Assessing the classroom environment was connected to the group’s identity through its ability to enable interpretation of the group’s identity as students experienced the behaviors, actions, and experiences encompassed within assessing the environment.

Taking pride in singing.

Process.

Students used the act of taking pride in singing to construct their identities. The concept, taking pride in singing, encompassed three subcategories including: (a) developing independent musicianship skills, (b) responding to challenges, and (c) responding to criticism. Each of the subcategories was included under the larger concept of taking pride in singing for its ability to provide further understanding of a specific component. Developing independent musicianship
skills highlighted an individual process through which pride in singing manifested within the choir. Responding to challenges and responding to criticism addressed the extent to which students took pride in singing, as some students embraced challenges and criticism while others refused challenges and criticism.

1. Developing independent musicianship skills.

Developing independent musicianship skills functioned as a behavioral manifestation of a student who took pride in his or her singing. The teacher viewed independent musicianship as an integral component of the choir’s goals. This was evidenced through conversations with the teacher as well as through activity selections in class such as structured discussions of musicality issues and individual singing exams. Students seemed to construct their choir identities by engaging in activities that focused on developing independent musicianship skills. As a result, some students constructed an identity that was concerned with being an independent musician while other students constructed an identity that retracted from independent musicianship and preferred relying on peers and the teacher. Phrases and terms that encompassed the subcategory of developing independent musicianship skills included: “singing independently,” “leading discussion of music,” “expressing dedication,” and “observing personal independence.” A complete list of the concept components is located in Appendix D.

Field notes offered an explanation of developing independent musicianship skills in rehearsals in a more complete format than the microanalysis phrases.

- During a listening exercise:

  All are listening to recording. None are talking; none are looking at peers. They seem concentrated on what they’re hearing.

- During an activity on the circle of fifths:
The circle of fifths is being presented. The students are providing the next letter as it appears. Students have created their own sentences to recall the order of sharps and flats.

- Students were completing a music theory worksheet:

  Michael asked for something else – this is the talented and advanced male in the group – I think he wants a more challenging task because I heard him say that he is bored. The teacher is at the desk retrieving another worksheet for Michael.

Interview participants discussed situations that seemed centered on the importance of independent musicianship. Jake discussed his development from dependent to independent. His discussion implied that he viewed musical independence as a realized goal:

  Jake: Well freshmen year, I wasn’t a very strong person with notes so I was a major copycat…[smiling]

  Me: (laughs) But that’s how you learn.

  Jake: So I just did that and now I’m more independent from that so I remember the notes better.

Michael recognized the independent musical growth of his peers and himself:

  Early on, like the first few months everyone was kind of slow and confused. I started picking up on it really fast and I just kinda blew through all the warm-ups and sight-reading and stuff. And recently I notice that it’s just not me anymore, everyone seems to be getting it. I mean I’m still probably one of the… I probably get it the most aside from one or two other kids. But I’ve noticed that everyone is starting to get it now and we actually got a 1 [at the county adjudication event]. I
didn’t expect [that] to happen at all because I thought there were still a few kids who just didn’t know how to keep time.

2. Responding to challenges.

The act of responding to challenges was another means students used to construct their choir identities. The phrases and terms that were used in the subcategory of responding to challenges included: “exhibiting higher engagement during challenging exercise,” “smiling when an activity is more challenging,” “raising the bar,” and “challenge myself.” A complete list of the concept components is located in Appendix D.

Field notes accounted for the act of responding to challenges. Notes included recordings of students’ reactions to challenges.

• Students are practicing leaving out a pitch of the scale. They are challenged by this task and seem to exhibit higher engagement. All are working; none are talking or looking at peers.

• Most students are intrigued by the challenge of singing two times through to test breath support. Some smile when they can’t get it at first; others get more serious.

• The teacher points out that [students] shouldn’t need to write in solfège. She says, “challenge yourself” to them. Students move to areas in the room to work on solfège on their own.

Interview participants discussed the act of responding to challenges; the discussions highlighted ways the participants viewed challenges in choir and offered insights into how their responses helped them construct their identities.

Derek spoke more in depth than other interview participants about challenges in choir:

Me: Do you have any other things you think have been integral to your choir role?
Derek: My teachers have been helping me and challenging me, and my friends that are in choir are challenging me too, so I think that’s just about it. And I challenge myself personally too. I kind of push. I have that goal in mind to be a famous actor and famous musician, and my goal is my drive. I set a goal and I reach it, and then I set another one. And I keep going, just keep raising the bar.

Me: That’s really outstanding. Do you think other people in your choir group are doing that?

Derek: Oh yeah, definitely. I know, personally, Michael and Taylor – and countless others in the choir – they are always like, “We got a 1 but it’s an A minus, let’s push for the A plus. I’m in junior all state chorus right now; let’s go for the next one up and keep going to try and increase range.” Michael, he listens to David Bowie a lot and so he’s trying to match those pitches. Taylor listened to a lot of pop so she matches those notes.

Me: Do you think there are other people, though, in your group who aren’t doing that?

Derek: Yeah, because I’ve got some friends who don’t really push themselves for stuff like that. They just stay the same continuously, and they don’t really challenge themselves. But then I can tell when they do because there’s points where they challenge themselves and keep going, and they get a lot better. Then there’s points where it’s a continuous straight forward thing, and they just are the same for a while.

Ashley, a sophomore, discussed the way that singing alone to improve her voice was more challenging than singing in the group to improve her voice. She seemed to accept
the challenge of individual criticism and indicated a certain level of comfort with the notion of individual challenges through her steady tone and matter-of-fact discussion of improvement:

Me: So you think working on singing by yourself [for Ashley, singing by oneself was the equivalent of individual practice outside of class] doesn’t have the same benefits for building an identity as a singer as working in a group…maybe because it’s more challenging?

Ashley: Yeah, definitely. When you’re in a group you kinda can’t…[she reorganizes her thoughts]. You think of the group as one voice so you’re kinda criticizing the group, but when you listen to yourself you’re making criticisms of yourself so you can improve on yourself rather than the whole group.

3. Responding to criticism.

The act of responding to criticism was a process similar to responding to challenges that students used to construct their choir identities. The phrases and terms that were used in the subcategory of responding to challenges included: “smug smiling when disagreeing with correction,” “agreeing with judge criticisms,” “criticism helps,” and “criticizing and improving is making a commitment.” A complete list of the concept components is located in Appendix D.

Field notes accounted for the act of responding to criticism. Notes included recordings of students’ reactions to criticism as they were observed in class.

• Students listened to the comments of a judge that were recorded during their festival performance. Two students, Mark and Amy, exhibited reactions to the judge’s comments. Mark seemed slightly offended, while Amy saw the criticism as helpful:
Mark looks up and has a definite reaction if there is any criticism from the judge’s comments. He smiles but it’s the smile that says he is a little annoyed by the comment.

As she [the judge] further discusses the tenors’ performance, Mark is squinting while his friend just listens. The judge mentions they [the tenors] need to get the sound out of the throat. The judge thinks they [the tenors] could do a lot to get better. She [the judge] says the first piece needs more work. Mark doesn’t like her and says aloud, “I don’t like her.” But Amy [an alto sitting next to Mark] says it’s constructive criticism.

- Michael, who also listened to the same judge comments as Mark, viewed criticism as helpful. However, Michael was enrolled in a different section of choir, and the students in Michael’s section were noticeably more open to criticism than those in Mark’s section:

  Listening to comments, tenor speaks out as judge addresses issues: “Very helpful; you always want to listen to your biggest critic.”

  The students are interested in improvement and the criticism required to know how to improve.

Interview participants discussed instances of responding to criticism. It appeared that while criticism from teachers or judges was accepted, criticism from peers in choir was mostly rejected.

Ashley spoke in detail regarding her opinion of criticism; she found it helpful and necessary for her to improve as a singer:

Me: What would be some of the things that you do to form Ashley the choir member?
Ashley: I think to form me, criticism definitely helps – like things that you need to improve on – so when you’re improving on them you feel like you’re a part of it. [With criticism] you can improve yourself and your ability to sing. That kinda helps you think of yourself more as a choir member – like you’re trying hard to do something. It’s like a sport. When you’re by yourself and practicing you feel more like a part of the team [because] you’re actually involved by yourself. It’s like making a commitment to do it.

Jake discussed reasons he criticizes himself. He implied that criticism was a way for him to improve his singing:

Jake: I can really notice myself singing, and most of the time I don’t usually like what I hear. So that’s why I criticize myself a lot when I’m singing – like when I hear recordings in class.

Unlike Ashley and Jake, who discussed their acceptance of criticism in general, Sarah discussed her aversion to criticism from peers:

Sarah: I don’t like singing out because I’m afraid somebody will say something about it like “that was horrible” or “wow that was the wrong note.”

Me: Would someone do that to you?

Sarah: I feel like they would.

The subcategories within the concept of taking pride in singing served as individual ways through which participants displayed their pride. Some participants exhibited behaviors from all the subcategories while others exhibited behaviors from one or two subcategories. The processes of developing musicianship and responding to challenges and criticisms seemed to allow students to determine the depth of choir study with which they were comfortable. As a result, it
appeared that developing musicianship and responding to challenges and criticisms were processes through which the participants constructed their identities. Essentially, through *taking pride in singing* participants could determine whether or not their choir identities were about becoming more accomplished at choir singing.

*Context.*

In response to research question two, the way in which *taking pride in singing* was related to the group’s identity was also examined. *Taking pride in singing* as a process of choir identity construction was related to the group’s identity, *success in choir singing*, through a means of manifestation. *Taking pride in singing* appeared to serve as a manifestation of students’ levels of commitment to the group’s identity, *success in choir singing*. Through *taking pride in singing*, students could delineate the parameters of their choir identities.

*Taking pride in singing* was one collection of behaviors and activities that served as a manifestation of students’ levels of commitment to the group’s identity, *success in choir singing*. Students who appeared highly committed to the group’s identity tended to exhibit behaviors within the process of *taking pride in singing* such as “leading discussion of music,” “expressing dedication [to rehearsing],” or “smiling when an activity is more challenging.” However, students who appeared minimally committed to the group’s identity, *success in choir singing*, tended to exhibit behaviors of *taking pride in singing* such as “defending singing,” or “disagreeing with corrections [of singing].”

As students took pride in singing, they appeared to construct identities related to their levels of pride. Derek, a freshman who was in his first year of high school choir, appeared to take pride in singing. He demonstrated *taking pride* by regularly participating in class and showing interest in improvement. His teacher viewed him as willing to accept challenges and criticism.
When questioned about components integral to his role in choir, Derek responded by listing people who supported him and challenged him. His reply appeared to indicate that he perceived support, challenges, and help from teachers (components within *taking pride in singing*) as integral to his choir role.

Me: Do you have any other things you think have been integral to your choir role?
Derek: My family and friends have always been supportive. My teachers have been helping me and challenging me, and my friends that are in choir are challenging me too. I think that’s just about it. And I challenge myself personally too.

Forming social bonds.

*Process.*

*Forming social bonds* functioned as a process through which students could construct their choir identities. *Forming social bonds* encompassed five subcategories that identified specific behaviors that students used to form bonds. These include: (a) disapproving of non-participation, (b) trying to be socially included, (c) choosing seating, (d) being alone, and (e) forming groups. Although students engaged in the subcategory behaviors at varying rates, it seemed that the behaviors occurred in a somewhat sequential fashion. Disapproving of non-participation, trying to be included, choosing seating, and being alone each served as means through which students could form groups. Thus, forming groups seemed to function as an outcome of students’ decisions within the processes of disapproving of non-participation, trying to be included, choosing seating, and being alone. Individual students may have participated in one or in all of the processes – disapproving of non-participation, trying to be included, choosing seating, and being alone – before they were observed forming a group.
1. Disapproving of non-participation.

Disapproving of non-participation seemed to function as a means for students to separate themselves from those who did not participate or as a means for students to pressure others into participation through subtle actions. Examples of the phrases and terms that were used to identify the concept of disapproving of non-participation include: “turning away from off-task person,” “ignoring disruptive behavior,” and “section moves away from student not participating.” A complete list of the concept components is located in Appendix E.

Within field notes, disapproving of non-participation was accounted for through detailed recordings of exhibited disapproval.

- During rehearsal, one student, Maria, tried to interrupt:

  Maria is turned around to talk to Lauren. Ashley and Liz, who are in the middle, either smile quietly or just ignore it [the talking].

  Maria is playing with her necklace and putting it in her mouth to get attention.

  The focused students ignore the behavior and they keep doing their work.

- During a warm-up activity, one student, Kate, was refusing to participate:

  Kate seems to think it’s [the warm-up activity] dumb, but the other sopranos move away from her so that they can be more a part of those participating.

Interview participants offered discussion of disapproval of non-participation; participants did not refer to students who avoided taking part in class with negative implications, but disapproval was suggested through the ways in which non-participants were addressed.

Ashley expressed her difficulty with understanding students who did not participate:

  Me: Do you wind up being as good of friends with [students who do not participate]?
Ashley: Well, no.

Me: Do you know why?

Ashley: I guess it’s just because I love music so much. I don’t see how somebody else couldn’t. So I’m just like – how could you not like this?

Michael stated that he felt an obligation to “pick up the slack” for students who did not participate:

Me: [Your friend] first told me that it can be difficult to sing with people who don’t really care…

Michael: [Interjects before I finish] Yes.

Me: You agree?

Michael: Yes, very much.

Me: How come?

Michael: Because it’s just like they never know the music and then the whole section can get blamed for one person not knowing anything at all, which, is just tedious because then you have to pick up the slack for them.

2. Trying to be socially included.

Trying to be socially included was an action that students appeared to use for working their way into a group. Phrases and terms that were used to identify the subcategory of trying to be socially included were: “smiling at others,” “looks at group to see what they’re doing,” “showing interest in same task,” and “looking for approval.” A complete list of the concept components is located in Appendix E.

Field notes included observation accounts that provided details regarding the behavior of trying to be included.
• During a sight-singing activity, several of the sopranos were looking at Lauren. Lauren was talking to some of the girls while Ashley chose only to listen. It seemed Ashley was trying to be included by physically leaning toward the girls and listening:

   Front row sopranos are turned around looking at Lauren. I can’t tell what they’re talking about. Ashley is looking on during conversation with the others but isn’t talking - only Lauren is talking. They are all leaned in together, toward each other.

• A student who I had observed as being quite shy, Liz, was looking at her sight-singing music like the other students, even though it seemed she did not understand the music:

   Students are sight-singing new music now.

   Liz is looking at music but her eyes are moving up and down as though she isn’t sure where her part is.

• During independent rehearsal, Michelle was trying to find a conversation that she could join by wandering around the room:

   Teacher stops to tell the women she is going to check with them in a few minutes, and they should be ready to speak their parts.

   [The women] are working.

   Michelle is looking around and trying to join [in any] conversation as she can.

• One student, Nicole, who I often observed trying to be socially included, seemed to use quiet observation to determine her next move. She would move closer to other students and smile as if to present herself in a kind, interested way.

   Nicole has joined one of the groups by standing closer to the girls in the group.

   She seems uncomfortable looking at other girls – she is looking at their shoes and
clothes and the floor, and she looks across the group to make sure she’s together with them. [Nicole] watches the girls – who are friends – and smiles but doesn’t talk [to them], and they don’t talk directly to her.

Interview participants discussed their efforts to be socially included. They expressed the effort to be socially included through explaining their views of how to make friends.

Sarah focused on being open and inviting:

Sarah: [clarifies the question] So how would they become a part of the group?
Me: Yeah, how do they [students] know what to do?
Sarah: Most people are kind of inviting, and they kind of invite you into the group. It’s just like they get to know you and you have the same sort of personality as them…[she stalls]
Me: I know what you mean when you’re talking about the same sort of personality there; I think I do…
Sarah: [Jumps back into what she was saying] Because some of the people are already…Sometimes you’re already friends with them and then you just kind of join by [association with] their friends. Then after a while you get to know pretty much everybody, and then you’re close with everybody.

Derek explained the ways he learned about people so that he could determine which choir members were more like him. He focused on being socially included through finding similarities in musical interests:

Me: How do you think you were able to learn that [their musical interests] about people? What is it that you could do in choir class that let you…
Derek: Free time. I could go and talk to them and stuff like that. Sometimes I will talk to them in the hallway, and I will just learn what they like. Sometimes you can even tell in class and it just kinda clicks.

Me: How can you tell though?

Derek: Like with Michael, he wears classic rock shirts like Pink Floyd and Queen and stuff. Me and him have been talking about class rock and stuff since I was in sixth grade…[Derek shifts his focus.] We [students] just kinda talk and sometimes you can tell [what students’ interests are] if they’re singing a Taylor Swift song or Metallica.

3. Choosing seating.

Choosing seating seemed to be a means for students to socialize with whom they felt the most comfortable. When students were in rehearsal format, they were in assigned seats on the risers. When students were completing work outside of rehearsal, such as music theory assignments, they were in unassigned seats in desks. The phrases and terms that were used to identify this subcategory included: “lining up outside of seats to scope out desired spot,” “keeping distance between those not in group,” “doesn’t like seating to be changed,” and “group decision about where to sit.” A complete list of the concept components is located in Appendix E.

Field notes accounted for the subcategory of choosing seating through detailed observations of student behaviors. Voluntary seating during desk work was observed as a means for students to maintain their comfort levels, as they could choose to sit close to people with whom they were already acquainted. However, when seating was involuntary, such as on the
risers, students were not necessarily seated next to someone familiar. As a result, students of varying social groups were more likely to socialize.

- During a dress rehearsal, students were in the auditorium trying to determine where to sit. They seemed to hesitate to choose a seat because they wanted to ensure they could be with their friends:

  The seating is chosen by the students, they all line up on the walls and aisles as if they are waiting to see where everyone goes.

- Students did not always choose the same seat:

  The seating arrangement looks different today. I learned last week that students are allowed to sit where they wish when they are working at the desks…so I think this means their seats could change anytime they want them to.

- After the teacher used timbre matching to rearrange the seating, the students interacted differently, as their seats were not voluntarily chosen. Some students who I had not regularly observed as interacting were beginning to interact with one another:

  Sopranos have a new seating arrangement based on a voice-blending task.

  It has created a different dynamic within the section.

  Megan is definitely more engaged with the others rather than only talking to Taylor.

Interview participants did not directly discuss the subcategory of choosing seating. While interview participants acknowledged that different groups existed and that some students were closer than others, they did not seem to relate the social bonds to seating, necessarily. For example, Rachel stated that when her group of choir friends was divided this year (due to
scheduling), she had to “meet new people.” However, I often observed her sitting with the people she knew from the previous year.

Rachel: There was a group of us who always hung out. Then we all separated…it was…you just had to meet new people.

Sarah identified two other altos as her friends. They all sat close together in the alto section and they regularly sat together at events, but Sarah did not address the seating when she spoke about her friends:

Sarah: I’m also friends with, you know the one, Olivia?

Me: Yeah!

Sarah: And then Mary? I’m friends with those two.

To gain clarification on the possible misalignment between interview participant data and field note data, I reviewed the interview material with the interview participants. I inquired about the discrepancies that existed between my observations of choosing seating and their accounts. Interview participants assured me that they chose seats that were close to their friends, and they chose those seats because they were comfortable. I referred to a field note that read, “Sopranos have a new seating arrangement based on a voice-blending task. It has created a different dynamic within the section.” Both Ashley and Sarah agreed that the new seating arrangement changed the dynamic because they began talking to different people. However, neither Ashley nor Sara referenced any negative impressions, but instead seemed undisturbed by the change. They appeared to accept the change as an understood part of being in choir. As a result, choosing seating seemed to be a subcategory that identified where students were most comfortable.

Being alone was a behavior students appeared to use if they preferred more independent participation; students also seemed to use being alone as a way of exhibiting dislike of activities. Phrases and terms that were used to identify the subcategory of being alone included: “avoiding conversation,” “standing alone during activity,” and “works on own but watches others.” A complete list of the concept components is located in Appendix E.

Field notes accounted for being alone through detailed descriptions of student behaviors that exhibited being alone.

- During sight-singing, Maria, who was often quite talkative during rehearsals, was observed working independently:
  
  Sopranos are working on notes in their section. Maria has her back to the rest of the group. Not sure why she’s working alone today.

- The teacher offered opportunities for students to choose to work alone or with a partner. The option accommodated either preference:
  
  [Students] are allowed to work alone or with someone else. The teacher explains that partner work is beneficial but the test is still coming, and individual work is required [on the test].

- In some instances, students were alone because others were not acknowledging them. This behavior seemed to indicate that not everyone was included. Liz was seated closely to a group of altos who were working on a worksheet. Members of the group would make eye contact with Liz, and Liz would lean close to the group as if signaling that she would like to be included. However, no one spoke.
Liz seems to be watching them [a group of students who are working together] like she wants to be in the group. She works on her own page [assigned worksheet] but sometimes looks up to see what they’re [the group] doing.

- In other cases, students appeared to be alone because they were more comfortable with working alone. Ashley, for example, was a student who was often working alone:
  
  Maggie and Caroline are teamed up. Ashley is working alone.
  
  Ashley is alone and listening. [She makes] no eye contact with other students.
  
  Ashley is again seated by herself in the front of the room. I’m guessing she prefers to work alone, but I have noticed her maturity level seems quite beyond the others.

Interview participants discussed situations that offered other perceptions of being alone. Ashley shared opinions regarding a peer’s shyness as well as her own. Sarah did not mention her aloneness, but she did explain her shy personality. Ashley, a student who I had observed being alone in the classroom, was an interview participant. Ashley thought that being alone was related to possessing a shy personality:

  Me: I also see some people, especially in this class, who – they are participating and they are engaged, but they still don’t talk to anyone.

  Ashley: It might be because… I know Matt is really quiet, like naturally…and some people…[stalls]. I’m quiet. I’m a quiet person; I don’t like talking to people usually. So maybe that has something to do with it. I didn’t talk to people mostly in my freshmen year until we actually started having time to talk to people.
Sarah did not directly address being alone, though I had observed her working on class material by herself. However, she did explain that she was shy about making friends and about her voice. Either could have been reasons I observed her being alone.

Sarah: They’re [others in the choir] very close together. I’ve never always felt like that, but I’m a lot to myself. Choir has always helped me bring out more people and become more [closer] friends.

Sarah: I’m really shy when I sing. I like to keep my voice to myself. I’m always kind of shy and nervous. It’s hard singing in front of other people.

5. Forming groups.

Forming groups seemed to occur as a final manifestation of disapproving of non-participation, trying to be socially included, choosing seating, being alone. After students experienced one, some, or all of the processes within the concept of forming social bonds, they tended to form a group. Forming groups served as a sort of conclusive event within forming social bonds. Social bonds encompassed all of the subcategories while forming groups was a more specific means through which students determined who they would accept as close friends. The phrases and terms that identified the subcategory of forming groups included: “group forming in alto section,” “three sticking together,” “boys stay together,” and “people outside of my friends’ group.” A complete list of the concept components is located in Appendix E.

Field notes accounted for observations of the behaviors involved in forming groups. They included recordings of observable indicators of forming groups such as sitting or standing close together. In the examples below, second or fourth period class is stipulated to illustrate that the formation of groups occurred in both sections.
• After a successful experience at the state adjudication festival, I observed students forming groups that were not previously recognized:

  Group effort is definitely forming in this soprano section; it’s one that wasn’t there before. (fourth period class)

  Sopranos have formed a kind of group that wasn’t there before. (second period class)

• After about one month of observations, I noticed:

  Three girls have formed group in front of me. (second period class)

  Girl group has formed. (fourth period class)

  Same group of five altos is still together. (fourth period class)

  Boys always seem to stick together with the only tenor kind of merging into group with girls. (fourth period class)

  It’s interesting to me how I’m beginning to see the smaller groups.

  Interview participants discussed the existence of groups in the choir rather than the formation of them.

  Sarah noted that while the friends in her group would not be rude to her about her singing, people in other groups might:

  Me: You sit with your friends pretty much on the risers. So they wouldn’t say anything to you, would they?

  Sarah: Not them, but other people who are outside of my friends’ group would.

  Me: So you definitely think in the ensemble – like in this class in second period – that you have a group that you trust more than other people to be kind to you?
Sarah: I think everybody does. Because everybody kinda has their own group of friends that they stick with. They’re not mean to everybody else, but they aren’t as nice to them.

Ashley felt she had formed more friends in her sophomore year of high school than her freshman year:

Ashley: I’ve definitely found more friends. Not just people who are like, “Oh, you’re cool!” but people who are actually connecting [close] friends. We’re a tighter knit group of choir students. We’re all kinda friends. We make our own group.

*Forming social bonds* functioned as a possible process through which students could construct their choir identities. *Forming social bonds* encompassed five subcategories including: (a) disapproving of non-participation, (b) trying to be socially included, (c) choosing seating, (d) being alone, and (e) forming groups. As students participated in *forming social bonds* – whether through one, some, or all of the subcategories – they appeared to construct a choir identity that related to the bonds they were forming. For example, if a student formed bonds with students who were highly motivated to achieve in choir, then his or her choir identity was partially constructed by the motivation of friends to achieve in choir.

*Context.*

In response to research question two, the way in which *forming social bonds* was related to the group’s identity was also examined. *Forming social bonds* as a process of choir identity construction was connected to the group’s identity, *success in choir singing*, in a reflective manner. *Forming social bonds* encompassed actions that were a reflection of the students’ connections to the group’s identity.
Forming social bonds was one collection of behaviors and activities that served as a reflection of students’ connections to the group’s identity. The group’s identity, success in choir singing, incorporated elements of success as identified by students including: musicianship, achievement, and improvement. As students adopted the elements of the group’s identity, they appeared to form social bonds that corresponded to their alignment with success in choir singing. As a result, forming social bonds revealed the tendencies of students to gravitate to others who shared similar interests. Students who espoused the group’s identity appeared to form social bonds with others who also espoused the group’s identity. Likewise, students who appeared to reject the group’s identity appeared to form social bonds with others who rejected the group’s identity. For example, students who seemed to share the group’s identity formed social bonds by “watching the group to [learn to] be a part” or “looking for approval.” However, students who seemed to reject the group’s identity formed bonds by “avoiding engaging in class” or “trying to form friends by distracting others [from assigned tasks].”

Students highlighted forming social bonds as a process that occurred within the classroom rather than outside of it. Hence, the process of forming social bonds appeared to be connected to the group. This was visible through students’ interview content, which suggested that friends in choir were a benefit of participation rather than a precursor to participation. Michael stated that friends were not a precursor to his decision to join choir.

Me: You didn’t do it [join choir] because your friends were in there?

Michael: No

Me: Okay, well what about now? Do you think friends are more important in choir now [in high school] than they were then [in middle school]?

Michael: Well, yeah, but I’d still be doing choir if I didn’t have any friends in it.
Derek stated that he made friends when he joined choir.

Me: What if you don’t have any friends in choir, does it change whether or not you’d do it?

Derek: Not really. I’ve learned to get along with them [people in choir he did not know]. I would make new friends if I had to because we would all have the singing in common.

It seemed students used forming social bonds as a way to delineate their choir identities. The friends students chose appeared to be outward displays of their alignment with the group’s identity.

Enjoying choir singing.

Process.

Enjoying choir singing was a concept that encompassed what appeared to be a fundamental process of constructing choir identity. Students participated in enjoying choir singing and appeared to identify with enjoying choir singing to varying degrees. Some students enjoyed choir singing at higher levels while others enjoyed choir singing at lower levels.

Enjoying choir singing was identified through phrases and terms such as: “showing excitement toward rehearsal,” “running and skipping, exclaiming ‘It’s a party!’,” “bouncing up and down during singing,” “having fun,” and “love singing.” A complete list of the concept components is located in Appendix F.

Field notes recorded behaviors that exhibited enjoying choir singing; they provided detailed accounts of the act of enjoying.

- The following example illustrates a change in Rebecca’s level of enjoyment, as she was a student who did not always exhibit enjoyment of singing:
Sarah and Rebecca are working to get it right here. This is neat because Rebecca doesn’t always put forth this effort.

• During a dress rehearsal, students were particularly excited to sing:

  High school students are excited. They are using higher pitched voices. They are running or skipping when moving from location to location.

  One girl exclaimed, “It’s a party!” while skipping up the auditorium aisle.

• The teacher directed students to the floor, rather than risers, so that students could rehearse while standing in circles with their section members [all altos in a circle, all tenors in a circle, etc.]:

  All are asked to move to floor. They are smiling and excited!

• While completing a worksheet on music theory:

  Students are talking and striving to get the key signature thing. It’s fun to see that they are excited about learning the music theory part!

  Interview participants discussed enjoying singing. Some simply referenced their innate love of singing, while others offered more detail regarding the growth of their enjoyment or how enjoyment played a part in their success in choir.

  Rachel, who described herself as more of a sports person, discussed how her enjoyment of choir increased over time:

    Rachel: I definitely think when I joined choir I thought, “Hmmm, choir looks fun.” Now I’ve developed into it’s a real thing. We actually do all this and it’s really professional. I’ve started to get more comfortable with not just being a choir member but being more of a soprano.
Ashley expressed her love of singing. Choir offered another avenue in which she could use her voice:

Ashley: I personally just love all types of singing, so it’s easy to connect – I think – to the [choir] music.

Michael loved to sing and cited the Beatles as his first influence:

Michael: I guess I first joined choir just because I like singing – just because it’s fun. I like music. I think I was listening to the Beatles by then. I think the Beatles is what made me really become a musician, because I was like, “Wow that’s the best stuff ever!”

Jake, when prompted to discuss what it meant to be a choir member, replied:

Jake: Well, in order to be – I guess – a successful choir member, you would have to like what you’re doing. You would have to like doing music because…a person who understands or who wants to engage in class – that helps a lot [with being a choir member].

Enjoying choir singing was a possible process through which students constructed their identities in choir. It appeared that students initially joined choir because of their interests in music, singing, or both. As they continued participating, they seemed to enjoy choir singing to varying degrees. The process of enjoying – or determining to what degree they enjoyed singing – functioned as a means for constructing a choir identity. Students who were observed consistently enjoying choir singing also exhibited behaviors that indicated a stronger choir identity.

Alternately, students who were observed enjoying choir singing inconsistently, or not often, also exhibited behaviors that indicated a weaker choir identity.

Context.
In response to research question two, the way in which enjoying choir singing was related to the group’s identity was also examined. Enjoying choir singing as a process of choir identity construction was related to the group’s identity, success in choir singing, in a reflective manner. Enjoying singing allowed students to experience the benefits of singing in a choir. The process was a reflection of the context of the group’s identity, success in choir singing, through its ability to expose students to the enjoyment of singing through fun yet serious engagement in rehearsal activities. As a result, through the process of singing in choir, some students constructed a choir identity that enjoyed choir singing to a greater extent. Other students constructed a choir identity that enjoyed choir singing to a lesser extent.

Enjoying choir singing was one collection of behaviors and activities that allowed students to explore their levels of acceptance of the group’s identity, success in choir singing. For example, students who exhibited enjoyment were characterized with observations such as: “showing excitement toward rehearsal,” “bouncing up and down during singing,” and “having fun.” Students who experienced enjoyment of choir singing to a lesser extent exhibited similar behaviors, though they appeared to present them with less indicators of exuberance and less consistency. For example, some students were perceived as “having fun” but they were not observed having fun on a regular basis. In other cases, students “exhibited greater enjoyment after a non-participant [left the room], a phenomena that seemed to suggest enjoyment of singing could be depressed when a student who chose not to participate was present.

Two students’ interview excerpts served as examples of the ways in which students conceptualized the process of enjoying choir singing as a part of being a choir member. Jake, when questioned about what it meant to be a choir member, responded with the importance of enjoying choir.
Jake: [Restated my question] What does it mean to be a member of choir...umm...that is a question I’ve never thought about. Well, in order to be...I guess a successful choir member...you would have to like what you’re doing.

Me: Mmmh, okay.

Jake: You would have to like doing music.

Michael viewed enjoyment of singing and music as the basis for his development into a choir member.

Me: So can you tell me how you’ve come to be a choir person?

Michael: I guess I first joined choir just because I liked singing, just because it’s fun; I like music.

It appeared that both Michael and Jake viewed being a choir member, or becoming a choir member, as influenced by enjoyment of choir singing and music in general.

Summary

The six processes of choir identity construction that were identified through observations and interviews appeared to function as a means for students to determine how and to what extent they fit in with the choir group. The processes included: (a) working in choir rehearsal, (b) evaluating ability, (c) assessing the classroom environment, (d) taking pride in singing, (e) forming social bonds, and (f) enjoying choir singing. Engagement in the processes seemed to reveal to students who they were as choir members, and the processes of identity construction were embedded within the context of the classroom in which the research took place. As a result, the second research question revealed identifiable connections between each process and the group’s identity, success in choir singing. The connections were similar in some cases. Both working in choir rehearsal and taking pride in singing were connected to the context through a
means of manifestation, as each process was a way in which students’ responses to the group’s identity were manifested. Both *forming social bonds* and *enjoying choir singing* were connected to the context through reflective means, as each process enabled students to reflect their levels of alignment with the group’s identity. Other connections were unique. *Evaluating ability* was related to the group’s identity through evaluative means, as it incorporated students’ evaluation of the group’s identity. *Assessing the classroom environment* was connected to the context in an interpretive manner and incorporated the actions of students that allowed them to interpret the group’s identity.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

This chapter provides a summary of the results, examines the results of the study in light of previous research, highlights implications for music teachers, and offers suggestions for future research. The purpose of the study was to investigate constructions of choir identity among high school students. It examined choir identity constructions by determining processes of construction as well as the ways in which the processes were related to the group’s identity. Two research questions supported the inquiry and included:

1. What processes – or collections of behaviors, experiences, and activities – are involved in the construction of choir identity among high school students?

2. How are the processes related to the group’s identity of the choir?

Research question one addressed the processes or “action/interaction” within the data while research question two addressed the “context” of the processes by examining how processes were related to the group’s identity (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 167).

Summary of the Results

To provide clarity in terminology, labels were applied to the results of research question one and to the results of research question two. In response to research question one, six processes of choir identity construction were found and labeled with the term, process. In response to research question two, each process was found to be related to the group’s identity. Because the group’s identity served as the context for the processes, the relatedness of each process to the group’s identity was termed, context.

In response to research question one, six processes of choir identity construction were found. The six processes included: (a) working in choir rehearsal, (b) evaluating ability, (c)
assessing the classroom environment, (d) taking pride in singing, (e) forming social bonds, and (f) enjoying choir singing. Each process contained a collection of related activities, behaviors, and experiences.

In response to research question two, the group’s identity was labeled as an identity of success in choir singing. Both the students’ and the teacher’s ideas of musicianship, achievement, and improvement culminated in the label of the group’s identity as success in choir singing. The way in which each process was related to the group’s identity, success in choir singing, provided context. As a result, the context was provided through discussion of ways in which each process was related to the group’s identity.

The results of research question one included six processes, the first of which was working in choir rehearsal. Working in choir rehearsal encompassed the work students experienced – such as sight-singing, developing vocal technique, and music rehearsal – as they participated in class work. Working in choir rehearsal consisted of two subcategories: (a) on-task behavior and (b) off-task behavior. Students used components of working in choir rehearsal to delineate the behaviors within choir participation and to construct choir identities that paralleled their levels of participation in the work.

The results of research question two described the context of working in choir rehearsal. Working in choir rehearsal was related to the group’s identity, success in choir singing, through a means of manifestation. The components of working in choir rehearsal were a manifestation of the ideas of success that existed in the group’s identity.

The results of research question one included a second process, evaluating ability. Evaluating ability encompassed the actions students used to compare their own abilities to their
peers’ abilities. To construct their choir identities, students used *evaluating ability* to rank choir members informally according to ability levels.

The results of research question two described the context of *evaluating ability*. *Evaluating ability* was related to the group’s identity, *success in choir singing* in an evaluative manner. Students evaluated the abilities of choir members in order to determine the group’s progress toward *success in choir singing*.

The results of question one included a third process, *assessing the classroom environment*. *Assessing the classroom environment* included three subcategories, including: (a) watching peers, (b) making assumptions about attitudes, and (c) determining the teacher’s expectations. Watching peers was a means for determining appropriate behaviors in the classroom. Making assumptions about attitudes was a method for determining the mood of the classroom. Determining the teacher’s expectations was a means for establishing the level of work that was required in the classroom. Students constructed choir identities through the process of *assessing the classroom environment*.

The results of research question two described the context of *assessing the classroom environment*. *Assessing the classroom environment* was related to the group’s identity, *success in choir singing*, in an interpretive manner. *Assessing the classroom environment* incorporated processes through which students could interpret the group’s identity, *success in choir singing*. As a result, the process of assessing the classroom seemed to serve as a means for students to determine how well they fit in with the group.

The results of research question one included a fourth process, *taking pride in singing*. *Taking pride in singing* included three subcategories: (a) developing independent musicianship skills, (b) responding to challenges, and (c) responding to criticism. Developing independent
musicianship skills included behaviors that were manifestations of taking pride in singing. Responding to challenges and to criticism included behaviors that indicated students’ ways of taking pride in singing. Some students embraced challenges and criticism while others refused challenges and criticism.

The results of research question two described the context of taking pride in singing. Taking pride in singing was related to the group’s identity, success in choir singing, through a means of manifestation. The components of taking pride in singing were a manifestation of the ideas of success that existed in the group’s identity. Through taking pride in singing students could delineate the parameters of their choir identities.

The results of research question two included a fifth process, forming social bonds. Forming social bonds encompassed five subcategories that identified specific behaviors students used to form bonds. These included: (a) disapproving of non-participation, (b) trying to be socially included, (c) choosing seating, (d) being alone, and (e) forming groups. Disapproving of non-participation, trying to be socially included, choosing seating, and being alone each served as a means through which students could form groups. Thus, forming groups seemed to function as an outcome of students’ decisions within the processes of disapproving of non-participation, trying to be socially included, choosing seating, and being alone. Students constructed choir identities through forming social bonds that were further supported by their selection of friends.

The results of research question two described the context of forming social bonds. Forming social bonds was related to the group’s identity, success in choir singing, in a reflective manner. Forming social bonds incorporated activities and behaviors that reflected the students’ alignment with the group’s identity. As students constructed identities that aligned with success
in choir singing, they tended to form bonds with others who also aligned with success in choir singing.

The results of research question one included a sixth and final process, enjoying choir singing. Enjoying choir singing encompassed what appeared to be a fundamental process of constructing choir identity. Students participated in enjoying choir singing and identified with the aspects of enjoying choir singing to varying degrees. Some students enjoyed choir singing at higher levels while others enjoyed choir singing at lower levels.

The results of research question two described the context of enjoying choir singing. Enjoying choir singing was related to the group’s identity, success in choir singing, in a reflective manner. Enjoying singing allowed students to experience the benefits of singing in a choir. The process reflected elements of success in choir singing by exposing students to the enjoyment of singing through fun yet serious engagement in rehearsal activities.

Connections to Previous Research

The six processes of choir identity construction as well as the processes’ connections to the group’s identity are presented in light of previous research. Most of the present study’s findings were aligned with the results of previous research. In some cases where disagreement was found, possible reasons for the lack of alignment are discussed.

Working in choir rehearsal.

The concept of working in choir rehearsal, found in the present study, aligned with the findings of previous studies. Hargreaves and Marshall (2003), in a study of identities in music, found that “what pupils seemed to like most about music in or out of school is to develop the skills and confidence to ‘do it for themselves’: to gain ownership of and autonomy in their own music-making” (Hargreaves & Marshall, 2003, p. 269). The observation of students who enjoyed
developing skills and confidence (Hargreaves & Marshall, 2003) was similar to the present study’s process of working in choir, which consisted of observation data that recorded students who enjoyed the work. Furthermore, both working in choir and the findings of Hargreaves and Marshall (2003) supported a link between work and identity. Hargreaves and Marshall (2003) suggested students’ autonomy was linked to the development of their musician identities. Perhaps the present study’s result of working in choir rehearsal as a process of choir identity construction is further support of Hargreaves’ and Marshall’s (2003) link of autonomy and musician identity development.

The present study’s finding regarding the connection between working in choir rehearsal and the group’s identity may offer new understanding of choir identity construction. In the present study, working in choir rehearsal was related to the group’s identity through a means of manifestation. The elements of success in choir singing were manifested through the behaviors that incorporated the process, working in choir rehearsal. Ballantyne, Kerchner, and Aróstegui (2012) examined constructions of music teacher identities and found that “music teacher education has a distinct and crucial role in the development of positive music teacher identities” (p. 222). While Ballantyne et al. (2012) found education as occupying a role in identity construction, the present study found that participation in choir work was a manifestation of the choir group’s identity.

A second study found results that explained an individual aspect of identity construction, which varied from the social aspect of identity construction on which the present study focused. Roberts (1991) found that participants discussed their musician identity in higher esteem than their teacher identity. While Roberts (1991) found a distinction between musician identity and teacher identity, the present study found a connection between choir work and group identity.
This was not unexpected, as Roberts (1991) investigated teacher identity, a topic that is vastly different from performers’ identity. Therefore, the present study’s findings regarding the connection between the identity construction process, working in choir rehearsal, and the group identity may offer new understanding of the construction of choir identities.

Evaluating ability.

The concept of evaluating ability found in the present study aligned with the findings of other studies. Evaluating ability encompassed students’ efforts to rank themselves informally through evaluating one another so that they might construct their identities accordingly. Previous researchers have investigated a topic similar to ability and identity: the topic of musician identity and confidence levels. Greenburg (1970) studied adolescent choir singers and found that when students who could not sing in tune were selected for an auditioned group, their ability to sing in tune was improved; Greenburg suggested that the positive self-concept that accompanied acceptance into the auditioned group was partly responsible for the students’ progress. O’Neill and Sloboda (1997) used a series of melodic tests to determine how confidence affected test performance and found that a decrease in confidence had a negative effect on test scores. The findings of Greenburg (1970) and O’Neill and Sloboda (1997) suggest that self-concept (or confidence) and performance (or progress) are connected.

The findings of previous research (Greenburg, 1970; O’Neill & Sloboda, 1997) aligned with the present study’s finding that evaluating ability was a part of choir identity construction. Previous research suggests positive self-concepts are connected to higher performance levels (Greenburg, 1970; O’Neill & Sloboda, 1997). Similarly, the present study found a connection between self-concept and performance. However, the present study’s connection indicated that self-concept could be lower and students could still progress in singing. Therefore, the present
study was aligned with the suggestions of previous studies in finding a connection between identity and performance, but it did not find a directional trend as did Greenburg (1970) and O’Neill and Sloboda (1997).

The present study found that a connection existed between evaluating ability and the group’s identity. In essence, students were aware of their abilities – whether they perceived higher personal ability or lower personal ability – and their awareness was a part of the way in which students constructed their choir identities. For example, an interview participant in the present study, Sarah, stated, “I’m not very confident about my voice.” I observed her as an active participant in choir who enjoyed singing. In support of my observation, Sarah also stated in the same interview, “I’m really into music…music is everything.” It appeared that Sarah was constructing a choir identity that consisted of a lower level of confidence in voice and an interest in music. As a result, the present study’s finding, evaluating ability as a process of identity construction, was aligned with previous studies that found connections between self-concept and performance. Although the present study did not find a directional trend between self-confidence and performance, as did previous research (Greenburg, 1970; O’Neill & Sloboda, 1997), the present study’s finding that confidence and performance were connected was similar.

The present study’s finding regarding the connection between evaluating ability and the group’s identity may provide new understanding of choir identity construction. In the present study, evaluating ability was related to the group’s identity in an evaluative manner. In essence, evaluating ability allowed students to evaluate their own alignment with the group’s identity, success in choir singing. Other studies have found that participants joined choirs so that they could increase their knowledge of music (Durrant & Himonides, 1998) and improve their own voices (Monks, 2003). Lamont (2011) found that participants enjoyed music regardless of
whether or not they identified themselves as talented in music. However, the present study’s finding of a connection between evaluating ability and the group’s identity may offer new understanding of identity construction, as it provides a different perspective on the connection of evaluating ability to a group identity. The present study found that evaluating ability functioned as a means for students to choose whether or not to align with the group’s identity. Although previous studies (Durrant & Himonides, 1998; Monks, 2003; Lamont, 2011) also documented ability evaluation of one’s self – such as viewing one’s self as talented or improving one’s voice – the relatedness between one’s personal ability and the group’s identity was not the focus.

Assessing the classroom environment.

In the present study, assessing the classroom environment served as a process in choir identity construction that allowed students to determine their levels of alignment with the group. The notion of accepting a group’s identity based on its alignment with one’s individual identity is aligned with the findings of previous studies. Previous studies on social identity theory have explored the phenomena of accepting or rejecting a group’s identity based on whether components of the identity align with one’s personal identity. Hogg (1996) purported, “Social identity theory espouses the idea that a self-inclusive social category (e.g. nationality, political affiliation, sports team) provides a category-congruent self-definition that constitutes an element of the self-concept” (p. 66). Similarly, the present study found that students who labeled themselves as choir members appeared to do so because the choir group’s identity, success in choir singing, aligned with their individual choir identities.

A second study’s findings aligned with the present study’s result regarding assessing the classroom environment as a process of choir identity construction. Jones (1970), in a study of reasons people chose music as a career, found that participants cited interest as a reason. Interest
as a reason for choosing music is similar to the present study’s finding that students used *assessing the classroom environment* as a process of choir identity construction, as *assessing the classroom environment* included behaviors of determining what the class was about and choosing whether or not to align with it.

The present study’s finding regarding the connection between *assessing the classroom environment* and the group’s identity aligned with previous studies of identity construction. In the present study, *assessing the classroom environment* was related to the group’s identity in an interpretive manner. In essence, *assessing the classroom environment* was a process through which students could interpret the classroom environment. Other studies have examined how participants assessed their environments and developed subsequent social identities (Kinney, 1999; Stone & Brown, 1999). Kinney (1999) found that some participants formed social groups that rebelled against mainstream identities. In essence, groups were forming as a result of assessing the mainstream identity and rejecting it. Stone and Brown (1999) found that younger high school participants were more likely to identify as normal than were older high school participants. Essentially, participants were assessing the group identity within the schools and choosing to align themselves with normal. As a result, the present study’s finding that students used *assessing the classroom environment* as a means for interpreting the group’s identity and choosing whether or not to align with it, is supported by the findings of previous studies (Kinney, 1999; Stone & Brown, 1999).

Taking pride in singing.

The concept of *taking pride in singing*, found in the present study, aligned with the findings of previous research. Studies most closely related have examined social identities in choral settings (Durrant, 2005; Durrant & Himonides, 1998). Durrant and Himonides (1998)
studied a British choral society to isolate reasons for participation and found that one reason participants joined was the opportunity for increasing their musical knowledge. The decision to join a choir for the benefit of learning more about music is similar to the findings of the present study, as the present study found that one aspect of identity construction was the development of independent musicianship skills. Durrant (2005) investigated the role of singing in shaping identity and reported that participants cited a sense of national pride as one aspect of their choir identities. National pride, though different from the kind of pride identified in the present study, may be a form of pride that implies the job of singing in choir is a serious one. Students who exhibited *taking pride in singing*, regardless of the extent to higher or lower levels, demonstrated elements of serious study that were encompassed in the subcategories of *taking pride in singing*, such as responding to challenges and criticism. As a result, the findings of Durrant (2005) and Durrant and Himonides (1998) were aligned with the present study’s results.

The present study’s finding regarding the connection between *taking pride in singing* and the group’s identity appears to conflict with the findings of previous research. In the present study, *taking pride in singing* was related to the group’s identity through a means of manifestation. In essence, *taking pride in singing* was an observable manifestation of students’ levels of commitment to the group’s identity. The connection between *taking pride in singing* and the group’s identity illustrated students’ willingness to strive for success in singing through developing skills. This appears to disagree with previous research. Ruddock and Leong (2005), in a study of non-musicians, found that participants viewed music as a talent people possessed rather than a skill they could learn. In contrast, the present study found that students were willing to develop skills and did so in the process of *taking pride in singing*. The disagreement may be attributed to the different kinds of participants involved in the studies. Ruddock and Leong
(2005) investigated non-musicians, while the present study investigated choir members. Therefore, while the results appear to conflict, this could be due to the differing emphases of the studies.

Forming social bonds.

The concept of forming social bonds found in the present study aligned with the findings of previous studies. Forming social bonds as a process of identity construction encompassed behaviors of forming bonds with others based on shared values regarding choir singing. Previous studies have examined choir contexts and isolated socialization as a component of choir participation. Langston (2011) found that shared norms and values were benefits participants experienced through choir participation. Durrant and Himonides (1998) found that participants viewed socializing with people who shared their interests in choir as a reason for participation.

Although the results of the present study and the results of previous studies aligned in their recognition of socialization in choir, previous studies’ findings differed in their emphases. As a result, the forming of social bonds as a means for constructing a choir identity may serve as new knowledge regarding choir identity construction. Though previous studies and the present study address similar components dealing with the search for like-minded peers, the recognition of forming social bonds as a process of choir identity construction appears to be a new concept.

The present study’s finding regarding the connection between forming social bonds and the group’s identity aligned with the findings of previous research. In the present study the concept, forming social bonds, was related to the group’s identity in a reflective manner. Forming social bonds was a process through which students’ agreement levels with the group’s identity were visible. Students’ agreement levels were reflected in the social bonds they chose.
The present study’s finding of the reflective connection between *forming social bonds* and the group’s identity aligned with previous research. Isbell (2008) found that socialization was not a predictor of pursuit of a career in music teaching. Though experiences in music class influenced pursuit of a career in music teaching, socialization did not (Isbell, 2008). Similarly, the present study found that students did not join choir because they had friends in choir; they joined to find friends. Durrant and Himonides (1998) found that participants in a choral society joined the ensemble because they enjoyed forming friendships and socializing with others who shared their interests in singing.

Enjoying choir singing.

The concept of *enjoying choir singing*, found in the present study as a process of identity construction, may be new knowledge regarding the construction of choir identity. Previous studies have found enjoyment of experiences in school music, such as choir, as a reason for pursuing music teaching careers (Cox, 1994; Jones, 1970; L’Roy, 1983). Other studies have found enjoyment of singing as a reason for participation in choirs (Durrant, 2005; Durrant & Himonides; 1998). However, *enjoying choir singing* as a process for constructing a choir identity appears to be a concept that offers a new perspective regarding enjoyment of singing and choir identity construction. Durrant and Himonides (1998) found that participants joined a choral society due to their love of singing and enjoyment of participating in a choir ensemble. Lamont (2011) found that participants generally viewed music participation as enjoyable regardless of their perceptions of their musical talent. Durrant (2005) found that participants enjoyed choir if the conductor created a positive environment. As a result, though previous research has cited participants who reported participation in choir for reasons related to enjoyment of choir singing,
enjoyment of singing as a process of choir identity construction seems to have received less attention in the findings of other studies.

The present study’s finding regarding the connection between *enjoying choir singing* and the group’s identity seems to serve as a new contribution to understanding identity construction. In the present study, *enjoying choir singing* was related to the group’s identity in a reflective manner. In essence, *enjoying choir singing* was a process through which students’ actions indicated their responses to the group’s identity. In essence, students’ enjoyment was a reflection of their responses to the group’s identity. Though other studies have found that choir participants enjoyed singing (Ballantyne et al., 2012; Durrant, 2005; Durrant & Himonides, 1998), studies that investigated the connection between *enjoying choir singing* and a group identity are less prevalent.

The present study presents a new perspective on the ways in which students may construct choir identities. It identified new knowledge regarding understanding of choir identity construction among high school students by isolating processes and contexts. Of the six processes that were identified, one of them offers new ways of understanding high school students’ constructions of choir identities. The process of *enjoying choir singing* contributes new knowledge regarding the ways in which it may enable students to construct choir identities. Of the six connections between process and group identity that were isolated, five of them contributed new ways of understanding the connections between construction processes and a group’s identity.

**Implications for Music teachers**

The processes choir students underwent as they constructed choir identities were comprised of behaviors that allowed students either to fit in with or separate from the ensemble.
For accurate interpretation of these processes, it is pertinent to consider the context of the study. The students in this study were members of a non-auditioned choir at a small high school in a rural area on the east coast of the United States. The group’s identity, *success in choir singing*, served as the context in which the six processes of identity construction were identified. The six processes included: (a) *working in choir rehearsal*, (b) *evaluating ability*, (c) *assessing the classroom environment*, (d) *taking pride in singing*, (e) *forming social bonds*, and (f) *enjoying choir singing*. The processes and their connections to the group’s identity provide possible implications for music teachers.

**Working in choir rehearsal.**

*Working in choir rehearsal* was identified as one process in which students engaged as they constructed their choir identities. Students who were observed exhibiting on-task behaviors were viewed as accepting the work. Students who were observed exhibiting off-task behaviors were viewed as refusing the work. The process, *working in choir rehearsal*, as a part of choir identity construction implies that music teachers can rely on working tasks in choir to equip students with experiences that may aid in delineating who they are as choir members. While some students may accept the work and others may not, the choice of accepting or rejecting is inherent as students engage in any activity. The benefit is that *working in choir rehearsal* enables students to determine their responses more readily than they might without the opportunity to work in choir. Alternately, without *working in choir rehearsal* as a part of the choir context, it is possible that students would miss the opportunity to engage with the nature of choir rehearsals. Thus, students would not experience *working in choir rehearsal* and may not be as prepared to construct an identity.
Music teachers may utilize _working in choir rehearsal_ as a means for exposing students to the nature of choir – identified in the present study as _success in choir singing_. Through establishing regular work habits, routines, and activities, music teachers may immerse students in the norms of choir participation. Engagement through _working in choir rehearsal_ may enable students to interact with and become familiar with choir so that they can construct their choir identities. Examples of _working in choir rehearsal_ may include: routine rehearsals of music, regular exposure to the sight-singing process, listening and evaluating performances, consistent and meaningful warm-up activities, and well-prepared performances.

Evaluating ability.

_Evaluating ability_ was one process in which students engaged as they constructed their choir identities. Students appeared to evaluate ability so that they could informally rank themselves and their peers, thereby constructing a part of their identities. For music teachers, the process of _evaluating ability_ implies that opportunities to evaluate may be valuable to students. Students appeared to evaluate as a means for examining and measuring their own abilities as compared to others. Results of their evaluations enabled students to construct choir identities as it facilitated identification of their rank among other singers.

Music teachers may offer opportunities for students to evaluate ability so that students may construct their identities. Experiences in the classroom that allow evaluation do not have to take the form of a formal assessment. Rather, the present class experienced informal events such as timbre matching and daily sight-singing that offered opportunities for students to evaluate one another. Other possibilities might be auditions for solos, singing in small groups in front of the class, or individual singing for demonstration of a specific concept. These examples and many
others that may suit a particular classroom are ways in which music teachers can provide
opportunities for students to evaluate ability and perhaps better understand their choir identities.

Assessing the classroom environment.

Assessing the classroom environment was one process in which students engaged as they
constructed their identities. Students appeared to assess the environment by watching, assessing
attitude, and determining the teacher’s expectations. The actions of watching and gathering
information on group attitude and teacher expectations enabled students to develop a sense of the
nature of the classroom environment. The choir in the present study exhibited a group identity of
success in choir singing. As a result, the classroom environment was comprised of events and
experiences that were related to success in choir singing. Students appeared to absorb the
environment – identified as success in choir singing – and test its alignment with their individual
identities. The process of aligning one’s self with a group has been explained in social identity
theory, a theory that purports individuals self-categorization into groups that comprise some
aspect of their personal identities (Hogg, 1996).

For music teachers, students’ engagement in a process of assessing the environment
implies that students may be absorbing many aspects of the classroom environment. Knowledge
that students are assessing the environment implies that teachers might consider how to support
students’ assessing process and implement opportunities for students to assess in the classroom.

Teachers may support students’ assessing processes by setting up opportunities for
students to assess the environment. In the present study, the choir members were observed in
several activities that accommodated assessing the environment. For example, students often
rehearsed in a circle formation. Students would use the floor space in the classroom to stand in a
circle that included the members of the same voice part – such as all the basses in a circle or all
the sopranos in a circle – and occasionally the choir in its entirety would rehearse in one large circle. In the circle formation students could easily watch one another for cues regarding behavior, attitude, and expectations. Similar options may be: instructing the front row of students to face the back row of students when working on risers, using students as models where appropriate, or watching performances of other choirs, whether live or via recordings.

Taking pride in singing.

*Taking pride in singing* was one process through which students constructed choir identities. Students who exhibited consistent high levels of engagement were perceived as taking high levels of pride in singing. Students who exhibited consistent low levels of engagement were perceived as taking low levels of pride in singing. The behaviors associated with *taking pride in singing* enabled students to construct an identity that was more defined through recognition of their levels of pride. As students experienced *taking pride in singing* they engaged in (a) developing independent musicianship skills, (b) responding to challenges, and (c) responding to criticism. The nature of students’ engagement with these activities – whether positive or negative – appeared to contribute to the kinds of choir identities that were constructed.

For music teachers, the process, *taking pride in singing*, implies that selection of classroom activities may be critical to the formation of pride. For example, activities that promote independent musicianship skills might enable *taking pride in singing*. Teachers might consider implementing regular sight-singing activities or opportunities for theoretical analysis during rehearsals so that independence in musicianship is fostered. Classroom activities that are challenging may provide exposure to the sense of reward that follows meeting a challenge. The present study observed tasks such as singing long phrases in one breath or singing scales with one note missing. Teachers might consider similar tasks to challenge students. Exposure to
appropriate criticism may promote students’ development of pride. Criticism can equip students with a clear understanding of their weaknesses so that they may address them and move beyond them. In the present study, the teacher recorded the students and encouraged critical feedback from the ensemble as they listened to their performances. The teacher also shared criticism received at adjudication events by reading the judges’ comments. The activities involved with taking pride in singing may provide experiences that allow students to take ownership of their voices and construct aligned choir identities.

Forming social bonds.

*Forming social bonds* served as one process through which students constructed choir identities. Students tended to seek peers who exhibited shared values and whose interests in choir were at the same levels of engagement as their own. Through *forming social bonds*, students found affirmation of their levels of interest in choir and thus constructed choir identities around their affirmed interests. For example, a student who was highly engaged in choir singing tended to seek peers who exhibited similar high engagement. As students formed social bonds, they engaged in a variety of behaviors: (a) disapproving of non-participation, (b) trying to be socially included, (c) choosing seating, (d) being alone, and (e) forming groups.

For music teachers, *forming social bonds*, can offer several implications for teaching. *Forming social bonds* implies that teachers may have the ability to provide occasions for students to form bonds, as students in the current study were exhibited forming bonds through activities in the class. For example, because students used seating choice as a context for forming bonds, teachers might consider providing opportunities for voluntary seating in their classrooms. Some students also exhibited a preference for aloneness. During group or pair work, teachers might consider a less restrictive structure that also allows solo work so that students have options
that accommodate their differences. Students also exhibited behaviors of trying to be included. To accommodate students who are trying to be included, teachers might consider implementing activities that temporarily separate social group members in the classroom. This may allow students who are trying to be included more chances to integrate themselves. For example, teachers can introduce an activity that mixes students in a game in which students are required to switch partners frequently; it exposes students to new people in a fun and safe manner.

Enjoying choir singing.

*Enjoying choir singing* served as a process through which students constructed their choir identities. Through *enjoying choir*, students could engage in choir happenings to a higher or lower extent and construct a subsequent identity. Students who highly enjoyed choir were observed as constructing choir identities that revolved around high enjoyment of choir singing. Students who minimally enjoyed choir were observed as constructing choir identities that were possibly driven by outside influences rather than choir singing in particular.

For music teachers, the process, *enjoying singing in choir*, encompasses ideas that suggest students may benefit from a positive learning environment and from positivity as exemplified by the teacher. However, it seemed that the positive learning environment was inextricably linked to the positivity of the teacher. As a result, teachers may enable enjoyment of choir singing primarily through their own actions and attitudes. For example, teachers who exude excitement for singing and who teach with a positive attitude toward singing may influence students to approach choir singing with similar levels of excitement and positivity.

Positivity may be a well-known component of teaching. However, because positivity – as it existed in *enjoying choir singing* – in the present study seemed to contribute to the process of constructing an identity, the importance of a positive teaching disposition seems to have deeper
roots than I previously understood. As a choir director, I understood that my enjoyment of choir singing, as displayed in the classroom, influenced my students. However, I was unaware that my enjoyment could influence the identity constructions of my students. In essence, students may construct choir identities based on the identity I model as their teacher. Music teachers may want to consider their own choir identities and the ways in which students perceive them so that adjustments may be considered.

Suggestions for Future Research

The purpose of the study was to investigate constructions of choir identity among high school students. The results included a collection of six processes and their connections to the group’s identity, *success in choir singing*. The processes included: (a) *working in choir rehearsal*, (b) *evaluating ability*, (c) *assessing the classroom environment*, (d) *taking pride in singing*, (e) *forming social bonds*, and (f) *enjoying choir singing*. Each process was connected to the group’s identity through various ways. Some processes encompassed a connection through manifestation of the group’s identity in behaviors, while others were connected through interpretive, evaluative, or reflective means. In addition to highlighting the processes through which students constructed their choir identities, the results of the study also suggest a need for future research.

Variation in kinds of choir members.

Exploring constructions of choir identity within varied contexts would provide further understanding of construction processes. The present study examined a non-auditioned choir of about 40 members. It may be helpful for future research to investigate similar research questions within auditioned ensembles or ensembles of varying sizes. For example, questions of identity constructions among high school students might spur different answers if asked within the
context of an auditioned choir. The non-auditioned choir that served as the context for the present study yielded results that were indicative of an ensemble of different kinds of members – some highly engaged and others minimally engaged. Perhaps an auditioned ensemble would be comprised of members who were more alike and thus results may vary accordingly. Identity construction may point to more specific processes rather than ones that allow for the pursuit of various goals. For example, in the present study working in choir rehearsal accommodated students who engaged in on-task behavior and students who engaged in off-task behavior. A similar study of an auditioned ensemble may not find off-task behavior in the same capacity as the present study.

Isolating an age group.

Isolating the age of participants may also provide further understanding of constructions of choir identity among high school students. The present study included high school students of varying ages, from freshmen to senior years. As a result, students whose identities were already quite established were included. Though the researcher focused the interviews on students who exhibited a beginner-like disposition toward choir singing, it would be helpful to conduct a study on a choir comprised of only freshmen. Perhaps observing a freshman choir from the beginning of enrollment in the fall through the end of their first year in the spring would provide further insight into which processes students used as they constructed choir identities throughout their first year of high school choir. As a result, future researchers might consider investigating an ensemble comprised of only first-year high school choir members so that the beginning stages of high choir identity construction may be isolated.

Interviews with varied members.
Semi-structured interviews with all or with a variety of ensemble members may provide a broader understanding of choir identity constructions. Six participants were selected for the present study due to their exhibited behaviors in the classroom. Each interview participant was observed regularly participating in and enjoying choir rehearsals. Furthermore, the interview participants exhibited indications of young identities in choir. That is to say that they did not appear to possess established choir identities, but they appeared to be in the process of constructing their identities. Future research might benefit from conducting semi-structured interviews with a variety of choir members – some who appear to possess established choir identities and some who appear to possess less established choir identities. This may provide a broader range of responses, which could develop and refine the processes of identity construction that were found in the present study.

Semi-structured interviews with all members may also contribute a broader understanding of choir identity constructions. The present study did not have time for the large scope of data that would be obtained from interviewing all choir members. However, future research may consider undertaking a study that would include observations and interviews with all choir members. If all choir members were interviewed, the data regarding identity construction processes would likely be much more varied. As a result, other processes of identity construction may surface. The present study yielded six processes, but a study that included interviews with all of the members of an ensemble may yield a larger number of processes or different kinds of processes that could not be uncovered within the limits of the present study.

Gender as a determinant of varied constructions.

The present study did not isolate or compare participants based on gender. However, I did notice informal differences between males and females during the interviews. Of the six
interview participants three were male and three were female. Overall, the females spoke more freely in the semi-structured format than did the males. This was not a measured component of the interview, but I was aware that the females exhibited greater comfort levels than did the males, which may account for the reasons the females spoke more freely.

Future research on constructions of choir identity may benefit from investigations of whether there are differences in identity constructions between males and females. Also, it may be beneficial for studies to consider the gender of the researcher. In the present study, my female gender may have influenced the comfort levels of students during interviews. Perhaps designing a study with two researchers, one male and one female, would allow the researchers to determine whether interview participants offer varied responses in relation to the researcher’s gender.

Varied group identities.

The present study found that the processes of identity construction were inextricably situated within the group’s identity, *success in choir singing*. As a result, investigation of the connections between choir identity construction processes and the group’s identity may be of some benefit to understanding construction processes. Through social identity theory Hogg (1996) documented the nature of one’s tendency to self-categorize based on components of one’s identity. As a result, a study evaluating the applicability of social identity theory to choral ensembles may identify how choir members’ individual identities influence their acceptance or rejection of a choir group’s identity.

Process and context may also vary according to a choir group’s identity. The present study examined a choir group that espoused an identity of *success in choir singing*. A choir group that espoused a different identity may have produced processes of identity construction that were quite different. For example, if a choir group possessed a group identity that primarily
encompassed notions of prestige, then the actions, activities, and behaviors of the group may have been more focused on competition or awareness of outside perception of the group’s abilities. I am not suggesting a certain identity of a choir is more correct or incorrect, but I am suggesting that a choir focused on prestige may be comprised of identity construction processes that look different from those found in the present study. As a result, perhaps future research could benefit from studying identity construction within ensembles that present varied group identities.

Summary

The present study identified six processes of identity construction, including: (a) working in choir rehearsal, (b) evaluating ability, (c) assessing the classroom environment, (d) taking pride in singing, (e) forming social bonds, and (f) enjoying choir singing. Each of the processes was situated within the choir group’s identity, success in choir singing. Many of the components within the processes were supported in previous research while others offered new concepts to the area of identity construction in choir. The processes also offered implications for music teachers. Some of the processes supported the consideration of specific activities in the classroom that might facilitate choir identity construction, while others offered a new perspective on choir identity that may or may not have been previously documented. Future research could examine choir identity construction within different contexts and through more extended methods of research. Investigations that examine identity in other ways may expand the present understanding of choir identity construction and its function in choir classrooms. One interview participant, Jake, captured the essence of the study in a creative analogy; his words eloquently summarized the importance of the processes of choir identity construction. I asked Jake what
would happen if one of the processes were left out of the overall picture of identity construction. He replied:

To put it in perspective of a plant: if you deprive it of a little bit of sunlight, then it won’t grow as fast. For some plants it can’t grow in a certain kind of sunlight so it won’t grow at all. So you need all the factors to have a perfect result or a very good result.

While choir identities are constructed regardless of the presence of “all the factors,” (or all the processes) perhaps the importance of “all the factors” lies in the possibility of “very good results” that may accompany students’ exposure to processes within choir identity construction.
APPENDIX A

WORKING IN CHOIR REHEARSAL
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working in Choir Rehearsal</th>
<th>Microanalysis terms and/or phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-task behavior</td>
<td>Quietly working Sections rehearsing Students following procedures Students accepting responsibility for rehearsal procedure Singing Listening patiently Teacher appreciating students’ questions Avoiding conversation to listen to teacher Focusing on self performance Giving little attention to peers during rehearsal Standing for rehearsal Singing together Working in sections Students observing issues with their performance Asking for my advice eagerly Shhh’ing others during rehearsal Helping teacher during dress rehearsal Boys focusing on music Working to get signs and notes correct Foot tapping, leg patting, hand signs during singing Listening when teacher speaks Working harder at challenging task in theory All reading aloud when cued Working on handout Teacher allows working with partner Concentrating on listening and watching music Demonstrating eagerness to work on theory Big five on task Working in pairs/groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-task behavior</td>
<td>Playing with nails Not participating in activity Avoiding teacher instruction Laughing loudly during activity Looking at clock Eating banana Playing with hair Buying candy during individual work time Disinterested watch closely those who are working Talking about something else Pretending to participate in front of teacher Looking at ceiling Seeking attention through off-task behavior Talking while teacher is talking Adjusting clothing Looking at friend for approval of off-taskness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

EVALUATING ABILITY
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluating Ability</th>
<th>Microanalysis terms and/or phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating own sections</td>
<td>Listening to adjudication comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching each other during sight-singing</td>
<td>Watching each other’s reactions to judges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glancing at each other’s music</td>
<td>Discussing opinions of judge comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking with neighbor for correctness</td>
<td>Observing at others in section during judge comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching each other during poor participation</td>
<td>Using peers as guidelines for behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching peers during solfège sight-reading</td>
<td>Discussing vocal ranges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School was never seen as a great choir</td>
<td>They want to be by themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They don’t fit into the group</td>
<td>She doesn’t want to be in it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun if you have someone good</td>
<td>Leaders are more confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harder to have individual sound</td>
<td>Everyone seems to be getting it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking at each other to be together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing answers on worksheet</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Showing level of ability with hand numbers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Calling self the “bad group”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student offering ideas for improvement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Eagerly participating in timbre matching</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>They are more confident</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’m not confident about my voice</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>As strong as weakest link</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I could sing high</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>One is same skill as me</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Working on theory with those who are familiar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking at peer’s work and comparing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking about liking a song and comparing other’s opinions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening and observing during warm-ups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less confident singing in week after seat change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everybody knows she’s a good singer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She’s not as interested as everybody else</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s annoying when someone isn’t working</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

ASSESSING THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessing the Classroom Environment</th>
<th>Microanalysis terms and/or phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watching peers</td>
<td>Looking at shoes and clothes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looking across group</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watching friends and smiling</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Watching peers during activities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secretly watching other’s behaviors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Judging other’s feelings of being hot or cold</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watching peers after seat change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looking at people with disapproval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looking at neighbor’s music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making assumptions about attitudes</td>
<td>Choir people are more open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Better environment for friends</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not exclusive</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music is something to talk about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fix ourselves as a group instead of one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting friends</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chat about music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stay together</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Everyone is committed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Willing to be in a group</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Not by yourself</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Have each other’s back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Like the group feeling</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Get closer to people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friends in choir are challenging me</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loyalty is part of friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People are kind of inviting</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They invite you</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They get to know you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Join by friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Already knew them and had choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be true to your choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talk to somebody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t be by yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chat about music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Everyone will be friendly in choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not about being rude to people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In choir they have to talk to you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choir has own group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make our own group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choir people are supposed to be nice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Members set goals and work toward them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong as weakest link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connect with people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talk about the song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Everyone is there for same reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All sing along</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Someone to back you up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choir kids are the best kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Should work together with everybody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choir member should stay together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choir is more open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choir is always happy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easier to talk to them and meet them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working together helps in sight-reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More supported in choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part of something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group as one voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whole section blamed for one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining the teacher’s expectations</td>
<td>Do all this and it’s really professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Looking to teacher for reassurance</strong></td>
<td><strong>We’ve proven we can go to state, that’s helped</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increasing comfort level between student and teacher</strong></td>
<td><strong>Good scores make me feel more confident</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good scores make me feel more confident</strong></td>
<td><strong>More of a reputation because we’re getting better</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increasing comfort level between student and teacher</strong></td>
<td><strong>Good scores make me feel more confident</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Good scores make me feel more confident</strong></td>
<td><strong>More of a reputation because we’re getting better</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increasing comfort level between student and teacher</strong></td>
<td><strong>Good scores make me feel more confident</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

TAKING PRIDE IN SINGING
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taking Pride in Singing</th>
<th>Microanalysis terms and/or phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing independent musicianship skills</td>
<td>Singing independently Students not pairing up to work on parts Pairing is only among tenors Singer label means individual Soprano label means choir singer Resisting assistance from me on worksheet Asking for help after trying it alone Working alone on handout Soprano means sing high in choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to challenges</td>
<td>Tells us to learn the hard songs Makes us memorize Gives us tests Challenges make it more professional Exhibiting higher engagement during challenging exercise Want to be able to sing Like learning how to fix myself Challenge myself, too Set a goal and reach it Keep raising the bar Intrigued by singing exercise in one breath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to criticism</td>
<td>I like learning how to fix myself Criticism helps Squinting during criticism Smug smiling when disagreeing with correction Criticizing and improving is making a commitment Defending singing if corrected at times Labeling it “constructive criticism” and encouraging acceptance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Listening to recording as a section to learn part
- Love all types of singing
- Choir helps be better vocalist
- Bass label is only for people in chorus
- Responding to criticism
  - I like learning how to fix myself
  - Criticism helps
  - Squinting during criticism
  - Smug smiling when disagreeing with correction
  - Criticizing and improving is making a commitment
  - Defending singing if corrected at times
  - Labeling it “constructive criticism” and encouraging acceptance
  - When you improve on something you feel like a part of it
  - Agreeing with judge criticisms
  - Smiling during judge comments
  - Criticize the group
  - Criticize yourself
  - Students disagree with corrections
  - Freaking about not knowing things

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APPENDIX E

FORMING SOCIAL BONDS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forming Social Bonds</th>
<th>Microanalysis terms and/or phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disapproving of non-participation</td>
<td>Working on rhythm; turning away from off-task person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helping others so that all are getting it right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trying to be socially included</td>
<td>Smiling at others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoiding talking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waiting for someone to talk to you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pretending to do task to be accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talking about task like doesn’t care to disinterested group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choosing seating</td>
<td>We all separated and had to meet new people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Got to know them better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choosing seating during rehearsal is big decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thinking with social group to make decision about where to sit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moving away from peers who intimidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being alone</td>
<td>Preferring to be alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation with others</td>
<td>Music alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing alone during floor activity</td>
<td>Soprano alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouthing words in back of section (shy)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forming groups</th>
<th>Little social activity</th>
<th>Exhibiting higher level of familiarity through talking</th>
<th>Closer friendships revealing outliers in class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seeming unacquainted with one another</td>
<td>Showing front row friends and back row friends</td>
<td>Chatting, clapping games, laughing in groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical space existing between students</td>
<td>Pair not talking to others</td>
<td>Three sticking together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group forming in alto section</td>
<td>Big five staying together during activities</td>
<td>Social groups together in various environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hugging after success</td>
<td>Talking during transition and downtime</td>
<td>Being off-task and goofing off as bond-forming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussing assignments</td>
<td>Developing closer ties</td>
<td>Leaning in to be part of conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sitting close together</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working with group to exclusion of others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| | Group sticking together | Talking in seats during transition | Pairing is visible in several activities |
| | | | Leaving class and entering class together |
| | | | Front row teaming up |
| | | | Exhibiting “missing” an absent peer |
| | | | Spending time with friends in other sections |
APPENDIX F

ENJOYING CHOIR SINGING
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enjoying Choir Singing</th>
<th>Microanalysis terms and/or phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Showing excitement toward rehearsal</td>
<td>Physical jumping and wiggling in excitement for singing solfège round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running and skipping to place on risers</td>
<td>Dancing in seats to warm-up activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclaiming during dress rehearsal “it’s a party!”</td>
<td>I’m into music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everybody reflects teacher’s attitude</td>
<td>Music is everything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like choir</td>
<td>Why be in choir if you don’t like it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sing a lot</td>
<td>Singing out during Friday game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing out though no one listening directly</td>
<td>Singing out during solo section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling neighbor about solfège syllables</td>
<td>Defending singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing pride when teacher compliments</td>
<td>Showing happiness with teacher saying “awesome”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smiling and excited for rehearsal on the floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exhibiting greater enjoyment after nonparticipant leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Having fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Love all types of singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easy to connect to choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music is flowing and pretty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loudly singing to section in warm-ups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ignoring laughing from off-task when there’s a mistake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inquiring about an auditioned choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clowning during breaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bouncing up and down during singing song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Love singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You have to like it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annoying to have a person who doesn’t like it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have to want to do it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singing out random song in front of peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher acknowledging the group’s pride in their contest behavior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


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