

## **CITATION:**

May, J. A. (1993). A description of current practices in the teaching of choral melody reading in the high schools of Texas. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Houston, 1993). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 54, 856A.

## **ABSTRACT**

**PURPOSE:** To describe what methods, how much class time, and which printed materials were used by the high school choirs of Texas for melody reading training.

Three questions addressed were: 1) What system is used for melody reading?; 2) how much class time is spent on melody reading; and 3) what books and materials are used for study and practice?

## **RATIONALE:**

(1) Long history of music reading as part of American Music Education, but debate between rote and note. Vocal music programs from the 40s to the 70s de-emphasized music reading, using rote procedures instead.

(2) Lots of song books, but not text books for developing music reading skills.

(3) Previous research has investigated melody reading systems in choral curricula (Hales, Daniels, Tucker), but not class time or materials.

(4) Value of melody reading is questioned by some choral conductors. Melody reading required by Texas essential elements.

(5) No one has described what Texas high school choirs do to teach MR.

## **DESIGN AND PROCEDURE:**

**Sample:** Select mixed choirs from 927 high schools eligible for Texas UIL contest participation. Surveys sent to entire list of schools.

**Variables:** Categories on the survey referred to system of melody reading, class time spent, and materials used. In addition, contest ratings were asked for.

**Instrument:** Close-ended survey (with two “other” options if choice not available).

**Procedures:** Survey created from interviews and piloted with 25 active members of TMEA vocal division (level not specified). Additions to third section were made. Survey distributed by mail with a single mail follow up for non-respondents.

**Analysis:** Crosstabs and frequency distributions.

## **FINDINGS/RESULTS:**

1) Return rate of 24.16 % and a usable set of 192 surveys representing 20.71% of the original sample population.

2) All results in terms of frequencies (ratios) and percents. Findings as follows:

**System:** Moveable Do was most used system. Relative minor (minor Ia?) was most frequent.

**Time:** 55% practice 31-36 weeks a year; 79% 4-5 days a week; 52% practice 6-10 minutes per rehearsal.

**Materials:** Octavos, Hymnals, Self-composed and Oxford books 1 & 2 were most frequently used materials. Modes were not used frequently.

3) Appendices provide crosstabs on how often materials were used.

## **INTERPRETATIONS:**

- 1) Melody System - implications for beginning music teachers, music publishers and college ear training regarding the most commonly used method-moveable do.
- 2) Time - Amount of time spent on melody reading indicates a strong commitment from these schools.
- 3) Materials - Reveals focus and scope of training. Significant that octavos for performance most widely used. Publishers and teachers need to be talking to provide better materials.

**Recommendations:** This study was broad in scope, and now narrower studies might be valuable. Studies polling entire state would be more valuable.

**Questions Raised:** Moveable Do popularity and relationship to training? How is rehearsal time on SS being used? Reason for selection of certain materials?

Relationship between materials and UIL performance?

Rhythm reading methods?