

SAMPLE PROPOSAL OUTLINE

1. PROBLEM STATEMENT - Pitch-matching of Junior High Boys

The ability to match pitch is one of the most fundamental skills in vocal music. The absence of this skill is one of the most challenging problems that vocal music teachers and their students face. Consequently, pitch-matching problems and potential solutions have been the focus of a number of research studies. Early literature on this problem used such pejorative terms as “tone deaf” or “monotone” to describe students who had difficulty matching pitch. More recently scholars have labeled these students as “uncertain” or “inaccurate” singers.

2. VARIABLES - Researchers have looked at a number of factors that might influence pitch-matching performance including age, experience, gender, model characteristics, and perceptual skills.

A. Potential Causes of Boys Vocal Pitch-matching Problems

1. Physiological changes in vocal mechanism.
2. Poor breath support/control.
3. Inconsistent vowel shapes.
 - Attitude regarding singing during this time/lack of effort.
 - Inappropriate model
 - Poor perceptual skills

B. Types of Pitch-matching Problems

1. Pitch matching.
2. Poor intonation.
3. Finding the right part/octave.

C. Potential Solutions

1. Training in breath control.
2. Training in vowel consistency/shape.
3. Singing experiences prior to change.
4. Development of falsetto.
5. Better diagnosis of range/tessitura.
6. Better models
7. External feedback
8. Perceptual training

3. LITERATURE -

A. Primary:

Yarbrough, C., Morrison, S. J., Karrick, B., & Dunn, D. (1995). The effect of male falsetto on the pitch-matching accuracy of uncertain boy singers, grades K-8. Update: Applications of Research in Music Education, 14 (1), 4-10.

B. Secondary:

Phillips, K.H. (1992). Research on the teaching of singing. in R. Colwell (Ed.), Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning (pp. 568-576). New York: Schirmer Books.

4. QUESTIONS

- a) Is there a difference in perceptual ability between certain and uncertain male adolescent singers?
- b) Are perception or matching scores affected by the singing range of the subject?