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# Undergraduate Choral Methods Instructors' Value Ratings of Choral Methods Topics for Non-Choral Music Education Majors

The purpose of this study was to explore participants' value ratings of specific methods course topics in the choral teaching preparedness of non-choral music education majors. Forty-four university/college level choral methods instructors, identified through the College Music Society membership list, participated in the survey. Participants rated 16 choral methods topics using a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = *Not Very Important*; 7 = *Very Important*) in their importance to non-choral music education majors' choral teaching preparedness. Participants identified choral rehearsal techniques, vocal techniques, and choral repertoire as the three most important topics. Participants also identified choral student recruitment and retention, choral conducting techniques, choral student recruitment and retention, and choral class administrative tasks as the three least important topics. The findings of this study may provide undergraduate choral methods instructors information on developing effective course experiences in the preparation of non-choral music education majors for future classroom choral instruction.

*Keywords: choral methods, music teacher preparedness, undergraduate music education, preservice music teachers*

Methods courses are key venues for aiding preservice music teachers in the acquisition of music teaching and learning knowledge. When designing a methods course, instructors often consider which content is critical and how to assimilate content in efficient and effectual ways. Music education researchers have identified methods courses as one of the most important teacher preparation program components to prepare music education majors to become competent classroom practitioners (Hamann & Ebie, 2009; Parker & Powell, 2014; Teachout, 2004). Therefore, it would be prudent to provide methods courses to preservice teachers that include beneficial instructional activities to strengthen their teaching preparation.

Selecting and designing course topics and activities that effectively prepare preservice music teachers to meet their needs for teaching a subject after course completion should be a primary goal of methods course instructors (Teachout, 2004). Preservice music teachers reported their opinions that methods courses should provide the skills and knowledge to prepare them to teach those subjects after completion (Conway, 1999; Coppola, 2009; Hamann & Ebie, 2009; Parker & Powell, 2014). Since providing student-centered learning experiences by choosing course topics and including curricular activities that are advantageous for music teaching preparedness is a methods course instructor's role (Kim, 2022), a review of various methods course topics can be valuable to create the most effective course experience for music education students.

Methods course instructors attempt to offer the most valuable course topics for music education students to prepare them to become competent classroom practitioners. However, only limited instructional time is available to accomplish that goal. Due to time constraints, undergraduate music education methods course instructors need to regulate both topic offerings and time spent on various topics in their courses. Although instructors would like to cover a variety of skills, techniques, and knowledge in a methods course, time limitations could prohibit effective presentation of various course topics. To use given instructional time effectively, a prioritized list of topics considered most important by other methods instructors could provide valuable information when instructors plan course topics, especially when preparing music education students to teach outside of their specialized areas.

Music teacher preparation programs have encouraged undergraduate music education majors to enroll in methods courses outside of their specialized areas. For instance, band, orchestra, and/or general elementary music majors often take a choral methods course (Hamann & Ebie, 2009; Kuebel, 2021; Parker & Powell, 2014). Institutional and/or state licensure K-12 music requirements promote broad, rather than specific, area teaching preparations for music education majors (Groulx, 2016; Kuebel, 2017; May et al., 2017; Robinson, 2010). Music education researchers support the need for music teachers to provide instruction outside their primary teaching area (Bowles, 2002; Conway, 2002, 2012; Hamann & Ebie, 2009; Kuebel, 2019; Parker & Powell, 2014). Groulx (2016) reported that 82.85% of classroom music teachers had taught outside of their teaching specialization. Groulx also found that 63% of the classroom music teachers who had experiences teaching in non-specialized areas reported that the second most frequent teaching assignment outside of their specialization area was choir, perhaps resulting in a feeling of unpreparedness for those whose specialization was outside the choral area.

Kim (2020) found a difference in self-reported comfort levels in teaching choir between instrumental music major teachers who enrolled in a choral methods class than those who did not. Given these findings, exploring choral methods topics in relation to the preparation of non-choral track preservice teachers would be an important undertaking for choral methods instructors.

Since reflecting pertinent classroom setting experiences by providing helpful teaching and learning activities is an essential role of methods course instructors (Brophy, 2002; Conway, 2002; Groulx, 2016), seeking feedback from choral methods instructors on the importance of topics in relation to non-choral music education majors' choral teaching preparedness can be meaningful to the organization of a useful preservice music teachers' methods course. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore undergraduate choral methods instructors' perceptions of choral course topics in the preparation of non-choral music education majors. The research questions under investigations were as follows:

1. What percentage of universities/colleges represented in this study require that non-choral education majors take a choral methods course in their undergraduate program?
2. What percentage of universities/colleges represented in this study require different choral methods courses for choral music education majors and non-choral music education majors?
3. What are choral methods instructors' perceptions of choral methods course topics in the choral teaching preparedness of non-choral music education majors?
4. What are the three most important items, in order of importance based on the choral methods instructors' ratings, among the 16 choral methods topics in the choral teaching preparedness of non-choral music education majors?
5. What are the three least important items that choral methods instructors rated among the 16 choral methods topics in the choral teaching preparedness of non-choral music education majors?
6. What is the list of top five items that choral methods instructors selected as the most important topics among the 16 choral methods topics in the choral teaching preparedness of non-choral music education majors?
7. In addition to the 16 choral methods topics listed in the choral teaching survey, what additional choral methods topics, if any, do participants identify as important to include in an undergraduate choral methods course to enhance non-choral music education majors' choral teaching preparedness?

## Method

### *Participants*

The participants in this study ( $N = 44$ ) were choral methods instructors reached through the College Music Society (CMS) membership lists. I chose to recruit participants from the population of collegiate/university choral music educators in the CMS membership directory to receive responses from various geographic areas rather than receiving responses in a particular, concentrated geographical area; the CMS directory includes choral music educators from different colleges/universities, which represents six geographical divisions in the United States (Eastern, Northern, Central, Northwest, Southern, and Western).

CMS distributed survey invitations via email to 1,780 instructors who identified themselves as choral music educators at the college/university level. CMS sent three follow-up survey invitations to the same group. All of the 50 qualified participants responded to all of the survey questions. The overall obtained survey response rate was 2.5%; although CMS indicated that 1,780 individuals identified themselves as college/university choral music educators, the actual number of qualified participants may have been significantly fewer. Thus, an accurate response rate may not be cogently achievable.

Initially, I received responses from 50 participants who identified as choral music educators from the population of instructors categorized under “choral music education.” However, forty-four participants self-identified that they had taught coursework in choral methods. Therefore, I disqualified six participants who had never taught a choral methods course and computed the response from the remaining 44 participants to use as the data for this study.

### *Data Collection*

I used a hyperlink, via email, to invite participants and Google Forms to administer the online survey and collect data responses. I included an IRB statement in the survey invitation and required participants to record their own answers on all of the questions, to complete, and to submit the survey. Survey responses were downloaded in a spreadsheet format and data were analyzed employing SPSS version 24, a statistical software program. No incentive was offered for participation in the study.

### *Survey Instrument*

I constructed a survey to examine perceptions of choral methods instructors' course topics in the preparation of non-choral music education majors. In this

survey, I defined non-choral music education majors as those music education majors whose primary instructional areas were band, orchestra, and/or elementary/general music education. I requested participants to rate 16 choral methods course topics and select five items among the 16 choral methods course topics as most important to non-choral music education majors' preparedness to teach choir in the teaching field.

To develop the choral methods topics questionnaire, I used items from my previous studies (Kim, 2020, 2022) which were formulated based on prior literature (Byo & Sheldon, 2000; Fisher, 1991; Ford, 2001; Freer, 2017; Kim, 2013; Lane, 2006; Parker & Powell, 2014; Reames, 2001; Sieck, 2013; Silvey, 2011; Silvey & Major, 2014; Spurgeon, 2004). I included the following 16 choral methods topics in the survey instrument: ability to establish choral program goals and objectives, choral class administrative tasks, choral classroom management, choral conducting techniques, choral field experiences, choral lesson plan, choral microteaching, choral music student assessment, choral rehearsal observations, choral rehearsal techniques, choral repertoire, choral score study, choral student recruitment and retention, diction, sight-singing, and vocal techniques. Choral microteaching was defined as the process of providing hands-on teaching and learning experiences to preservice music teachers in the methods class to enhance their instructional skills in future choral classrooms. Choral repertoire was defined as a stock of choral pieces that are useful for classroom choir teachers to be prepared to rehearse and perform with students.

I computed survey reliability (Groves, 2009; Rawlings, 2015) and calculated a coefficient of reliability through Cronbach's Alpha to measure the internal consistency of my questionnaire. The value of Cronbach's Alpha for the survey was  $\alpha = .890$ . As values of Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency  $0.8 \leq \alpha < 0.9$  are usually interpreted as good, the internal consistency of the 44 participants' responses on my survey, across the 16 choral methods items on a multiple-item measure, can be considered acceptable.

### *Survey Construction*

I asked participants to respond to six survey questions. The six questions that each participant responded to were:

1. Do you or have you taught a choral methods course at the college/university level?
2. Does your institution require that non-choral music education majors take a choral methods course?

3. Does your institution require a separate choral methods course for non-choral music education majors and a separate choral methods course for choral music education majors?
4. Please rate the level of the following 16 choral methods topics in their importance to non-choral music education majors' choral teaching preparedness by clicking the appropriate box (1 = *Not Very Important*, 7 = *Very Important*).
5. Please select, by clicking the appropriate box, a group of the five most important topics that should be included and emphasized in all choral methods courses.
6. Please list additional items, if any, that you think are important to include in an undergraduate choral methods course to enhance non-choral music education majors' choral teaching preparedness.

Once choral teaching topics were established, I administered a pilot study to third- and fourth-year music education students ( $N = 13$ ) enrolled in a band methods course at a large, public university in the southwestern United States. Participants rated their levels of self-perceived comfort and competence on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Uncomfortable/Incompetent*; 7 = *Strongly Comfortable/Competent*). The pilot study was used to eliminate awkward question wordings and measurement and non-response errors. I administered a second pilot test to 10 choral music teachers (these participants had between 2 to 15 years of choral teaching experiences) who were full-time students in a graduate choral conducting program at the same university. The second pilot test was used to request the choral music practitioners to review the choral methods topic items for the purpose of increasing the clarity and understandability of the measure. Following the second pilot test, the vocal faculty at the same university reviewed the survey items for the purpose of including vocal specialists' perspectives prior to finalizing and distributing the survey.

### *Analysis*

Responses to participants' teaching information, their ratings of the 16 choral methods course topics, and their selection of the five most important course topics were analyzed using descriptive statistics comprised of measures of central tendency, frequency distributions, and standard deviations. In addition, I reviewed open-ended question responses that participants indicated were important to enhance non-choral music education majors' choral teaching preparedness in an undergraduate choral methods course.

## Results

### *Participant Background Information*

The statistical results of the participants' background information are reported in Table 1. Twenty-three participants (52.3%) responded that their institution did not require non-choral music education students to take choral methods courses while 21 participants (47.7%) did require such courses. There was an almost even split between institutions that required non-choral music education majors to take undergraduate choral methods courses and those institutions that did not require non-choral music education majors to take undergraduate choral methods courses. I requested participants to indicate whether their universities/colleges offered a separate choral methods course for non-choral music education majors. Thirty-seven participants (84.1%) responded that their institutions did not offer separate choral methods courses for non-choral music education majors while seven participants (15.9%) responded that their institutions offered such courses. The vast majority of the participants stated that their institutions did not offer separate choral methods classes for non-choral music education majors.

**Table 1**

*Participants' (N = 150) Background Information*

Survey Question	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Participants' current institutions requiring non-choral music education majors to take choral methods courses		
Yes	21	47.7
No	23	52.3
Participants' current institutions offering a separate choral methods course for non-choral music education majors		
Yes	7	15.9
No	37	84.1

### *Rating of Choral Methods Topics*

Participants rated the 16 choral methods survey topics in their importance to non-choral music education majors' choral teaching preparedness. I then ranked participants' value ratings of the 16 choral methods course topics. The means, standard deviations, and ranks are displayed in Table 2. Based on the ranking of the 16 choral methods topic value ratings, the three most important participant' rated choral methods topics were choral rehearsal techniques, vocal techniques, and choral repertoire. The three least important participant' rated choral methods top-

ics were choral student recruitment and retention, choral conducting techniques, and choral class administrative tasks.

**Table 2**

*Ranking of Participants' 16 Choral Methods Topics Importance Ratings*

Choral Methods Topics	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Rank
Choral Rehearsal Techniques	6.57	0.87	1
Vocal Techniques	6.16	1.31	2
Choral Repertoire and Literature	6.14	1.36	3
Choral Rehearsal Observations	5.91	1.36	4
Choral Lesson Plan	5.91	1.27	5
Choral Field Experiences	5.77	1.46	6
Choral Score Study	5.66	1.26	7
Ability to Establish Choral Program Goals and Objectives	5.61	1.56	8
Sight-singing	5.57	1.63	9
Choral Microteaching	5.41	1.65	10
Choral Classroom Management	5.39	1.63	11
Choral Music Student Assessment	5.39	1.54	12
Diction	5.23	1.52	13
Choral Student Recruitment and Retention	5.14	1.71	14
Choral Conducting Techniques	5.11	1.59	15
Choral Class Administrative Tasks	4.73	1.83	16

*Participants' Selections/Identifications of Top Five Choral Methods Topics*

I asked participants to select a group of the five most important choral methods topics, selected from the 16 choral methods topics listed in this survey, that should be included and emphasized in choral methods courses. Statistical results for the five most important items are reported in Table 3. I asked participants to select their top five most important choral methods topics from those included in the survey.

*Open-Response Items*

I asked participants to provide any additional choral methods topics they thought were important to include in an undergraduate choral methods course to enhance non-choral music education majors' choral teaching preparedness. Seventeen participants did not provide additional choral methods topics. Twenty-seven participants suggested that the following items be included in a choral methods course: planning concerts; working with accompanists; non-traditional vocal techniques for musical theater; vocal jazz and popular music; music literacy techniques; curriculum writing and mapping; special topics; programming for a choral



**Table 3**

*Top Five Choral Methods Topics that Choral Methods Instructors Selected*

Choral Methods Topics	Frequency	Percent	Rank
Choral Rehearsal Techniques	41	18.7	1
Vocal Techniques	27	12.3	2
Choral Repertoire and Literature	23	10.5	3
Choral Lesson Plan	16	7.3	4
Choral Microteaching	15	6.8	5
Choral Classroom Management	12	5.5	6
Choral Music Student Assessment	11	5.0	7
Sight-singing	11	5.0	7
Choral Conducting Techniques	11	5.0	7
Choral Field Experiences	10	4.5	10
Choral Rehearsal Observations	9	4.1	11
Choral Score Study	9	4.1	11
Choral Student Recruitment and Retention	9	4.1	11
Ability to Establish Choral Program Goals and Objectives	8	3.7	14
Choral Class Administrative Tasks	4	1.8	15
Diction	4	1.8	15
Total	220	100	

concert; piano skills; pedagogy for children’s voices; changing voice; adolescent voice; culturally responsive pedagogy; keyboard skills; social-emotional learning; and diversity and inclusion.

**Discussion**

*Requiring Non-Choral Music Education Majors to Take Choral Methods*

There was an almost an even split between yes and no responses between the institutions requiring and not requiring choral methods for non-choral music education majors. Close to one-half of the participants’ institutions ( $n = 21$  or 47.7%) did require choral methods courses for non-choral music education students, thus anticipating that their graduates should be prepared to teach outside of their emphasis area; however, the majority of participants’ institutions ( $n = 23$  or 52.3%) did not require choral methods courses for non-choral music education students in their undergraduate programs. Finding out whether these same institutions required non-choral music education majors to take other music education methods courses such as elementary and/or instrumental methods courses could be useful to the understanding of music teacher preparedness in those establishments. Identifying certification requirements in various states could be helpful in understanding music teacher preparedness in various institutions as there are states with certification requirements that encompass all specialty areas within a single certifi-

cation, while others may offer a vocal/choral music certification or an instrumental music certification.

### *Offering A Separate Choral Methods Course to Non-Choral Music Education Majors*

At the time the survey was administered, 15.9% ( $n = 7$ ) of the participants responded that their institutions offered a separate choral methods course for non-choral music education majors. This finding raises the question of why some institutions offer separate choral methods courses for non-choral music education majors. This may be due to a myriad of reasons such as staffing, state certification/licensure, program size (students), curriculum size (credit hours), and other state requirements. These and other rationales for an institution's decision to offer separate methods courses for non-choral music education majors should be explored in future future studies.

### *Comparison of the Five Top Rated Items and the Five Most Important Topic Selections*

There was a commonalty when I ranked participants' each of 16 choral methods topic importance ratings to determine the five most important choral methods topics as compared to the top five selections identified by participants. There were four agreements between the two lists: choral rehearsal techniques, vocal techniques, choral repertoire, and choral lesson plan. The top three items in the order of importance in both lists were the same: choral rehearsal techniques, vocal techniques, and choral repertoire. Perhaps the reason that rehearsal technique was considered the most important in both lists could be due to non-choral music education majors' inexperience teaching and leading choral ensembles. The second most important choral methods course topic in both lists was vocal techniques. Parker and Powell (2014) found that non-choral music education majors expressed unfamiliarity with vocal techniques in the choral methods setting. Choral methods instructors valued choral repertoire as the third most important topic in a choral methods course. This supports Kim's (2020) finding that non-choral music education major teachers felt most uncomfortable with choral repertoire regardless of their undergraduate choral methods curricular experience.

While acquiring the skills, techniques, and knowledge inherently embedded in the 16 choral methods topics would be important for non-choral music education students, time limitations could prohibit effective presentation of all 16 choral methods topics. Thus, a prioritized list of topics, considered most important by

other choral methods instructors, would be useful when choosing various choral methods topics, especially when considering class time limitations.

### *Value Ranking for 16 Choral Methods Topics – Six Lowest Rated Topics*

Using participants' ratings, I ranked the choral methods topics and noted the six lowest valued choral methods topics, which were choral class administrative tasks, choral conducting techniques, choral student recruitment and retention, diction, choral music student assessment, and choral classroom management. One reason choral conducting techniques and diction may have been rated lower than many other topics could be that participants considered choral conducting techniques and diction as a subject or class taught elsewhere or in a specialized course, such as introduction to conducting or a diction for vocal music education class. Thus, instructors may have been less inclined to rate choral conducting techniques and diction higher. Choral student recruitment and retention and choral class administrative tasks were two of the lowest ranked value items. Again, participants may have thought that these topics were covered in other classes or that it might be best to learn and develop recruitment and retention practices and class administrative tasks in actual field settings. Since preservice teachers take classroom management courses in teacher training programs (Weber et al., 2018), participants may have thought that this topic was adequately covered in other courses. Additionally, choral classroom management might also have been considered as a skill that preservice music teachers could develop in the teaching field rather than in a choral methods classroom. Finally, student assessment was one of the lowest ranked value items. Teachout (2004) reported that assessment was the lowest-rated instrumental methods course activity among instrumental methods course topics.

### *Implications for and Applications to the Profession*

Overall participants in this study indicated that the three most valued choral methods topics in non-choral music education majors' choral teaching preparedness were choral rehearsal techniques, vocal techniques, and choral repertoire. Given this finding, instructors could consider strengthening these three areas when they plan a choral methods course for non-choral music education students. These findings support Smith et al. (2021) who found that extended teaching and learning strategies and learning activities in the lab ensemble settings, created for the purpose of effective music teacher preparation, improved music education students' rehearsal techniques. Obtaining as much practical teaching experience

in undergraduate choral methods settings through enhanced course work experiences and varied and extended teaching and learning strategies would be indispensable for music teacher preparation. These learning activities can be achieved in microteaching settings as one of the top five topics in this study to be included in a choral methods course; microteaching can serve as an opportunity for non-choral music education majors to practice choral rehearsal and vocal techniques utilizing appropriate/various choral repertoire.

Kim (2013) found that 89% of the choral methods instructors surveyed encouraged students to participate in a university choral ensemble as a curricular activity. Encouraging non-choral music education students' participation in a university choral ensemble for a semester could be a meaningful course activity to assist them in becoming more comfortable with singing. Such exposures could help non-choral music education majors become acquainted not only with vocal techniques, but also choral rehearsal techniques and choral repertoire.

Knowledge of ensemble repertoire and a teachers' knowledge of various styles, genres, and levels of suitable repertoire is essential when teaching ensembles in the classroom (Silvey, 2011; Silvey & Major, 2014). Participants in this study rated the topic appropriate choral repertoire knowledge as the third most important choral methods skill for non-choral music education majors. Findings in this study support a need for choral methods instructors to provide various levels and styles of choral ensemble repertoire that can be useful in the choral classroom to non-choral music education students (Kim, 2020, 2022). Instructor could lead reading sessions and facilitate microteaching sessions of such suggested choral works in the methods class to expose non-choral music education majors to useful repertoire and provide hands-on teaching experiences during the choral methods coursework, including a discussion of which pieces should be taught or not taught in the classroom.

### *The Same Choral Methods Course for Non-Choral and Choral Music Education Majors*

According to Parker and Powell (2014), non-choral music education students' acquaintance with singing, vocal techniques, and the voice as an instrument would be important knowledge to acquire for effective choral classroom instruction. In order for non-choral music education majors to acquire a level of comfort teaching vocal techniques, various approaches may be needed to prepare them for the choral classroom. For example, in a class that includes both non-choral and choral music education majors, where a lab choir is used to provide peer teaching and/or microteaching activities, both vocalists and non-vocalists can learn from their

peers; furthermore, non-choral music education majors have an added benefit of singing with choral music education majors as well as the advantage of singing along with and next to experienced singers. Smith et al. (2021) reported that pre-service teachers found the lab class format ensemble more authentic to teaching readiness than other course related assignments and activities.

Considering that voice may not be the primary instrument for non-choral music education majors, opportunities to learn from choral music education majors by observing how they lead vocal warm-ups and rehearsing a choir in peer teaching and microteaching situations could be advantageous. Approaches to consolidate vocal techniques and skills could include taking informal voice lessons in one-on-one or small group settings, or by using suggested repertoire and singing vocal parts together so that non-choral majors could become familiar with various levels and styles of repertoire and acquire vocal skills and techniques through hands-on experiences in integrated settings.

### *Separate Choral Methods Course for Non-Choral and Choral Music Education Majors*

Given that the top five rated choral methods items in this study were rehearsal techniques, vocal techniques, repertoire, choral rehearsal observations, and lesson planning, instructors may wish to design methods courses to spend more time on these topics with non-choral music education majors. An effective way to prepare non-choral students as choral classroom practitioners is to provide real choral classroom experiences in which they visit/observe and teach (Brophy, 2002; Conway, 2002; Powell, 2011, 2014). Visiting choral classrooms to observe how veteran choir teachers instruct singers and how they lead choral ensembles could be valuable in developing non-choral music education students' familiarity with teaching and using various vocal techniques. In a choral methods course with only non-choral music education majors, students could observe elementary and secondary choral rehearsals, attend secondary and collegiate choral concerts, sing in vocal groups, and enroll in private or group voice lessons as course activities and assignments.

### *Additional Choral Methods Topics Suggestions by Participants*

Participants provided additional choral methods topics that they thought were important to include in an undergraduate choral methods course to enhance non-choral music education majors' choral teaching preparedness. They suggested: planning concerts; working with accompanists; non-traditional vocal techniques for musical theater; vocal jazz; popular music; music literacy techniques; curricu-

lum writing and mapping; special topics; programming for a choral concert; piano/keyboard skills; pedagogy for children's voices; changing voice; adolescent voice; culturally responsive pedagogy; social-emotional learning; and diversity and inclusion. The list of additional choral topics recommended by study participants can be useful to include when instructors organize and teach a choral methods course. Other topics to consider should include culturally responsive pedagogy and diversity and inclusion as a dominant component of 21st century music teacher education. Instructors could also provide inclusive instruction of vocal techniques if they cover topics related to transgender and non-binary singers, as suggested by Palkki (2017), to emphasize the importance for twenty-first century choral music educators' understanding of the "rapidly changing gender landscape" (p. 22).

An exploration of vocal techniques most relevant to various age levels, including changing voice and adolescent voice, and discussion of differentiated vocal teaching approaches and strategies at the elementary, middle school, or high school levels could be important curricular inclusion considerations. Participants suggested a choral methods course should cover keyboard/piano skill development for non-choral music education majors and self-reported that piano/keyboard skill development was essential to play voice parts, accompany warm-ups, and play simple chordal accompaniments, etc. that are relevant in the choral classroom.

### *Recommendations for Future Research*

Considering the possibilities of gathering different population's views on the importance of choral topics, current choral practitioners' views, especially those who were non-choral music education majors, could be a meaningful future research area, one that could discover non-choral music education major teachers' views of various choral topics (Kuebel, 2017). Methods instructors could create course-specific evaluations and request that students self-assess their preparedness to teach various choral methods topics after completion of the course (Collwell & Beall, 1985; Conway, 1997; Duerksen, 1995; Ferguson, 2007; Hamann & Ebie, 2009; Yourn, 2000) to collect valuable information to prepare choral methods courses for their next cohort of non-choral music education students. Such evaluations can be beneficial not only for instructors to identify areas of weaknesses and uncertainties that preservice music teachers may have after completing choral music education methods courses, but also for preservice music teachers to partake in opportunities for self-reflection and self-awareness when reviewing their coursework in relation to their experience and teaching preparation (Smith et al., 2021).

Informal interviews at the midpoint of the semester and/or at the end of the semester could be a helpful method of understanding the needs of preservice music teachers' needs and uncertainties, as Goodrich and Icenogle (2019) encouraged music teacher preparation program instructors to "engage in dialogic interactions" to effectively aid preservice music teachers' reflection and planning for future teaching preparation (p.18). In future studies, requesting qualitative feedback in addition to the quantitative feedback from classroom choir teachers who took undergraduate choral methods course as non-choral music major teachers, could be useful in such dialogic interactions. Interviewing first year classroom choral music teachers who are non-choral music education majors and determining the usefulness and effectiveness of their undergraduate choral methods experience would be an interesting study to complete with non-choral major music teachers to learn more about their perceptions of choral teaching preparation.

### *Limitation*

One limitation of this study was the low survey return rate. Basing choral methods topics and course requirements for non-choral music education students on the finding in this one study can be questionable. Determining whether to offer separate choral methods courses to non-choral music education majors from choral music education majors based on this one study also can be difficult; in this study, 15.9 % ( $n = 7$ ) of participants responded that their institutions offered a separate choral methods course to non-choral music education majors. The low participant numbers and return rate limit the generalizability of these findings.

The focus of this study was to examine choral methods instructors' perceptions of choral methods course topics in the choral teaching preparedness of non-choral music education majors. According to Groulx (2016), 82.85% of classroom music teachers stated that they had taught outside their specialization at some point during their career and that choir was the second most common non-specialized area teaching assignment. However, research related to music teachers instructing outside of their areas of specialization is limited (Kuebel, 2017). Based on this study, choral methods instructors could support preservice music teachers' choral instructional readiness more efficiently by reviewing and strengthening the topics/sections of rehearsal techniques, vocal techniques, choral repertoire and literature, choral lesson plan writing, and choral microteaching when they design choral methods courses, especially for non-choral music education students. Thus, the importance of non-choral music education students' preparedness to teach choir and similar studies is to explore methods course topics for the purpose of gaining understanding and making best practice recommendations.

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