

Spring 5-2022

## An Analysis of In-Service Choral Music Educators' Methods of Classroom Management

Brooke Ann Ward  
*Old Dominion University, bswee001@odu.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/music\\_etds](https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/music_etds)



Part of the [Music Education Commons](#), and the [Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Ward, Brooke A.. "An Analysis of In-Service Choral Music Educators' Methods of Classroom Management" (2022). Master of Music Education (MME), Thesis, Music, Old Dominion University, DOI: 10.25777/7esq-qq85  
[https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/music\\_etds/3](https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/music_etds/3)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Music at ODU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Music Theses & Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ODU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@odu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@odu.edu).

**AN ANALYSIS OF IN-SERVICE CHORAL MUSIC EDUCATORS' METHODS OF  
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

by

Brooke Ann Ward  
B.M. December 2019, Old Dominion University

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of  
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

**MASTER OF MUSIC EDUCATION**

**OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY**  
May 2022

Approved by:

Douglas T. Owens (Director)

Nancy K. Klein (Member)

Taryn K. Raschdorf (Member)

## **ABSTRACT**

### **AN ANALYSIS OF IN-SERVICE CHORAL MUSIC EDUCATORS' METHODS OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

Brooke Ann Ward  
Old Dominion University, 2022  
Director: Dr. Douglas T. Owens

The purpose of this study was to discuss topics of classroom management as it relates to the experience and training of pre-service music educators. Topics reviewed in the discussion include issues of mentorship, pre-service teacher training, experiential learning, student teaching experiences, conducting knowledge, and confidence in pre-service music educators. This research project was granted an IRB exemption by the Old Dominion University College of Arts and Letters.

The participants in the research survey were choral music educators who had accumulated one through 40 years of teaching experience. The participants were graduates of a music education degree program, or a music degree program with a teaching certificate. The survey was completed using Qualtrics and the responses to several questions were analyzed using NVivo. The survey was limited to participants in the United States. All participants acknowledged the informed consent statement.

The participants responded to questions about mentorship, including their experience as a mentored pre-service music educator or a mentor for pre-service educators. Several questions referred to the participants' understanding of conducting experience as it relates to classroom management, and their perceived ability to employ classroom management strategies. The 25 survey questions were intended to provide data on current practices for music educator

preparation programs to assist in the development of classroom management skills. The results of the survey echo current research in literature related to classroom management training.

Copyright, 2022, by Brooke Ann Ward, All Rights Reserved.

This thesis is dedicated to pre-service choral music educators entering the field and in-service music educators that are serving as mentors.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to first give thanks to God for the strength and wisdom to pursue this thesis journey. Additionally, I am grateful to acknowledge the support and encouragement I have received from family and friends during this process. To my husband, Rees Ward, you have worked tirelessly to provide time and space for study and writing. You encourage me to chase my dreams, take on challenges with grace, love others more fully, and push me closer to the best version of myself. You knew I could achieve this goal from the start and helped me reach the finish line. To my son, Percy, while others may think that your presence might detract from my abilities, I know that you gave me a greater understanding of the purpose for education. You are one of my favorite motivations. To my grandparents, Marc and Terri Kirchner, I thank you for my musical journey, for the years of music lessons and chorus rehearsals. To my parents, you gave me a love of education and a foundation on which I could grow.

I could not thank my thesis director, Dr. Douglas T. Owens, with more enthusiasm. This work would not exist without his encouragement, knowledge, and direction. Thank you for your quick responses to my many questions, your patience for this long journey, and the wisdom you effortlessly share. You are a master educator, and my classrooms will reflect the principles I have learned from you.

To my thesis committee, Dr. Nancy K. Klein and Dr. Taryn K. Raschdorf, thank you for your guidance and insight during this process. Thank you for encouraging my educational journey and for the way you've impacted my teaching. I highly value our interactions and the countless ways in which you've inspired me.

Finally, I would like to thank the choral music educators that responded to my survey. Your experiences have encouraged me and given me a greater perspective for the field of choral music education. I am honored to share this information for you and for the future of our field.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES .....	x
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xi
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	1
Purpose of the Study .....	2
Definition of Terms .....	2
II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE .....	4
Classroom Management .....	4
Pre-Service Teacher Training .....	9
Service and Authentic Context Learning .....	11
Conducting and Pedagogical Experience .....	14
Mentorship and Classroom Management .....	16
III. METHODOLOGY .....	18
Purpose of the Study .....	18
Limitations of the Study .....	18
Assumptions .....	18
Research Questions .....	18
Selection of the Sample Population .....	19
Survey Instruments .....	20
Data Analysis Procedures .....	20
IV. RESULTS .....	21
Research Questions .....	21
Description of the Participants .....	22
The Role of Teaching Experience in Effective Classroom Management .....	23
Classroom Management Skill Training .....	25
Classroom Management in the University Classroom .....	28
Experiential Learning as Training in Classroom Management Skills .....	30
Student Teaching Experience and the Impact on Classroom Management .....	31
The Role of Student Teaching Experiences .....	32
Conducting Knowledge and Feelings of Confidence .....	34
The Role of Mentorship .....	36

Chapter	Page
V. DISCUSSION .....	41
Teacher Preparation Programs and Classroom Management .....	41
Teaching Experience and Expansion of Experiential Learning Opportunities.....	42
Student Teaching Experience and Classroom Management.....	43
Conducting Knowledge and its Effect on Classroom Management .....	45
The Role of Mentorship in Development of Classroom Management Skills .....	46
Conclusion .....	47
REFERENCES .....	48
APPENDICES .....	55
A. HUMAN SUBJECTS EXEMPTION COMMITTEE APPROVAL EMAIL.....	55
B. INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH .....	56
C. SURVEY QUESTIONS.....	57
VITA.....	61

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table	Page
1. Race or Ethnicity of the Subject Population ( $n = 99$ ).....	22
2. Experiential Learning Opportunities for Music Education Degree Holders ( $n = 83$ ).....	24
3. Experiential Learning Opportunities for Music Degree Holders with a Certificate Program ( $n = 16$ ).....	24

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Participants' years of experience ( $n = 104$ ) .....	23
2. Impact of experiential learning on confidence in classroom management ( $n = 66$ ).....	25
3. Music education degree holders' perception of preparedness to handle classroom management ( $n = 83$ ) .....	26
4. Music degree with certificate program holders' perception of preparedness to handle classroom management ( $n = 16$ ).....	27
5. Choral classroom management discussion in the university classroom ( $n = 84$ ) .....	30
6. Perception of practicum experience provide better opportunities to hone classroom management skills ( $n = 84$ ).....	31
7. Student teaching experiences as opportunities to hone classroom management skills ( $n = 103$ ).....	33
8. Impact of conducting abilities on effective classroom management ( $n = 86$ ) .....	35
9. Student teachers well-equipped to handle classroom management needs ( $n = 37$ ).....	37
10. Effectiveness of mentoring in the development of confidence and pedagogical abilities in beginning music educators ( $n = 84$ ).....	39
11. Willingness to mentor beginning music educators ( $n = 84$ ) .....	40

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Statement of the Problem**

Conducting prowess, social skills, musicianship, and pedagogical skills all have an impact on the confidence of the music educator, and as the pre-service music educator develops these skill sets, they increase their opportunity to influence the students that they teach. Studies have shown that as the pre-service music educator steps into the role of classroom teacher or enters their student teaching internship, the creation of systems or strategies for effective classroom management is a primary source of anxiety and stress (Conway, 2002; Gordon, 2002; Noon, 2019).

Teacher preparation programs focused on music education tend to cover a wide range of topics in order to best prepare future music educators. While these programs cover the subject of classroom management and provide opportunities for experiential, service, or authentic context learning, pre-service music educators note that they would like to participate in experiential learning projects (Johnson, 2014; Kelly, 2000; Madson & Hancock, 2002; Silvey & Major, 2014; Legette & McCord, 2015). Service, experiential, and authentic context learning are essential elements in the growth and development of pre-service music educators' pedagogical, social and leadership abilities, which ultimately assist their confidence in initiating effective classroom management practices (Burton, 2009; Shaw, 2015; Reynolds, Jerome, Preston, and Haynes, 2005).

Because music education is a continually changing and growing field of study, music teacher education programs must continually reform their curricular and educational practices. This study aims to understand current music teacher preparation programs, classroom

management techniques, and to glean perspectives from the knowledge and experience of in-service music educators. Existing teacher practices are always subject to review, redevelopment, and improvement. The importance of how to teach classroom management skills and their relationship to the success of pre-service teachers is worthy of this type of review, redevelopment, and improvement. The data gathered through this research should create insight into this need.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to gain insight on effective classroom management practices that are currently applied by in-service music educators in the choral classroom. Effective classroom management skills are the building blocks to create an environment where student participation, dialogue and success can be best achieved (Alderman & Green, 2011; Gordon, 2001; McDonald, 2000). Classroom management is a major facet of the music educator's goal to develop a classroom environment that makes learning accessible to all students, and to provide clarity for the creation of art with their ensembles. Extensive amounts of planning, thought, and preparation must be dedicated to the work that is to be accomplished to create that environment. The instructor is constantly discovering methods for providing effective classroom management (Freer, 2008; Stammer, 2009; Stoughton, 2007).

### **Definition of Terms**

#### ***Classroom Management***

Within this study, classroom management will be regarded as the strategies used by educators to provide an inviting, stimulating, and structured learning environment (Gordon, 2001; Stoughton, 2007; McDonald, 2000).

### ***Authentic Context Learning***

Authentic context learning provides a practical opportunity for pre-service music educators to engage in the practices for classroom management, pedagogy, or educational activities that were studied in their teacher preparation programs (Haston, W. & Russell, J. A., 2012).

### ***Service Learning***

Service learning is a targeted method to provide collaborators and volunteers for community organizations and pedagogical growth for the participants (Felten & Clayton, 2011). For the purposes of this study, service learning is a mutually beneficial relationship that involves pre-service music educators giving music lessons, participating in the teaching of a lesson for a community ensemble, assisting in-service music educators, or working alongside local ensembles or music classes.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### **Classroom Management**

Effective classroom management is regarded as one of the most important facets of teaching in the classroom. Its effects are wide-ranging and exhibit incredible impact. At its most basic level, the student and teacher relationship is evidence of the presence or lack of effective classroom management (Alderman & Green, 2011). Simonsen, et al. (2014) state the importance of effective classroom management for both the educator and the student as follows.

Effective classroom management is critical for teachers and students. As described, ineffective classroom management is associated with negative outcomes for teachers and student, and effective classroom management is associated with desired outcomes, including improved student behavior and academic achievement. (p. 186)

The presence of classroom management provides opportunities for student motivation and creates an optimal learning environment. When classroom management is effectively applied, the interactions that educators facilitate with students lead to student success. Classroom management has become crucial to the success or failure of the modern-day educator (Gordon, 2002; Gordon, 2000). However, it is not always clear how in-depth instruction on implementing classroom management and teaching styles are received by pre-service music education students. Teacher preparation programs should provide methods to prepare novice teachers for the intricate culture of the school system and how to manage their classrooms with tact and skill (Stoughton, 2007; Christofferson & Sullivan, 2015).

Effective classroom management is a building block for the success of the choral classroom. The students' ability to participate in classroom dialogue, knowledge of successes, expectations, and the development of classroom culture are fundamental to their ability to invest in the musical classroom. Gordon (2001) states,

The issue of classroom management is an important one for all teachers. Arming future educators for the rigors and demands of the classroom appears to be the most effective and expeditious way to contribute to their success. The teacher who is knowledgeable only about music may quickly fail in the classroom; however, the one who has a working knowledge of music and classroom management is better equipped. (p. 23)

Choral music educators that implement the principles of effective classroom management more effectively engage their students and establish a rapport in their classroom environment. By avoiding a chaotic or unmanageable classroom culture, the music educator can help the ensemble focus on the performance or product on hand (Freer, 2008; Stamer, 2009).

Communication is a large part of a successfully managed classroom environment. Robison (2020) suggests that the use of clarifying questions combined with a commitment to understanding all people are crucial to communication. Respect for students and their families can help educators to provide classroom management for diverse student bodies. In a case study of four music educators, Parker (2016) found that fostering an accepting, respectful community helps students to value one another and the creation of music. A successful ensemble is filled with participants that support and connect with one another; these values are carried both by the ensemble as a whole and by each section within the whole. Planned group activities during rehearsal and outside of rehearsal helps students to get involved with the program and to care

about the happenings inside of class. Respect for one another and the mutual goal of music production helps students to engage in the classroom environment (pp. 229-232).

The use of supportive instructional language is crucial to fostering a classroom environment that values the education and the individual, and teacher-student relationships have an impact on student success. While technique, quality and musicality should be addressed in the rehearsal, music educators must provide a context for corrections (Alderman & Green, 2011). In a study of instructional language, Freer (2008) determined that effective choral rehearsals are found to have student-centered pacing and outcomes. In terms of student performance, these rehearsals indicated to students that substandard performances were a part of the learning process and that exemplary performances were the result of the learning process. The students involved in these rehearsals found satisfaction in the process of learning and the product of performance, and the two became interchangeable (Freer, 2008). Alderman and Green (2011) continue the emphasis on language in the classroom. They state, "How a teacher uses language to convey a correction often makes the difference in how emotionally supported a student feels" (p. 41). The use of an understanding tone and non-threatening body language contributes to the perspective and well-being of students.

Additionally, exclusionary discipline strategies are found to be associated with less than favorable perceptions of school climate and higher instances poor behavior (Mitchell & Bradshaw, 2013). Mitchell and Bradshaw (2013) conducted a study of 1,902 fifth-grade students and 93 homeroom teachers. The researchers found that proactive management strategies led students to have a favorable perception of the classroom environment and were associated with positive student behavior. Also, while student perceptions were shaped by individual factors such

as race or gender, classroom management strategies were important in the creation of a positive classroom environment (pp. 606-607).

Stamer (2009) surveyed 515 choral students in the state of Arizona. The survey required students to observe motivational strategies employed by their directors, and to rate them as follows: “very ineffective,” “ineffective,” “neutral,” “effective,” and “very effective” (Stamer, 2009, p. 27). The top three strategies, “director/student attention,” “knowledge of results,” and “interest” were noted by the students to be very effective in eliciting motivation from the students. “Director/student attention” provides students with opportunities or complements in order to build their confidence and to progress their understanding. “Knowledge of results” gives students the opportunity to work alongside the director. Providing feedback and detailed explanations aided in the creation of trust. Finally, “interest” requires the music educator to select repertoire that engages their students and to provide contextual background for their singers (Stamer, 2009, p. 27).

Classroom management is largely affected by the students’ perception of their director. While instructional language helps to bridge the gap of educator intention and student understanding, the student’s perception is crucial to an effectively managed classroom (Freer, 2008; Stamer, 2009). Bonshor’s (2017) survey of 34 adult singers yielded similar findings. The singers indicated that verbal feedback was a major influence on their confidence levels. Ideally, praise would be consistent and constructive criticism would be delivered in a manner that encouraged growth in the ensemble.

Gordon (2001) found that an educator’s own perspective on their students is a building block to a successful classroom management situation. As pre-service music educators prepare to enter the field, and as new teachers work to better understand their students, they must define

their beliefs about students and then make plans to create a learning environment that will lead to success for all. While understanding that instructional language is a tool for educators, it is important to remember that the music educator should participate in activities that encourage reflection. These reflection activities should be completed both in private and in empathetic listening groups of comprised of other music educators. Music educators should take time to understand their challenges and to glean insight from colloques (McDonald, 2000).

It is impossible to discuss the classroom environment without acknowledging the needs and diversity of students. Shaw (2012) emphatically reminds music educators of the importance of a culturally responsive choral music education. Author Geneva Gay uses the term “culturally responsive” in the book *Culturally Responsive Teaching* (pp. 1-17). While Gay did not specifically address music education, music educators must address the unique heritages and diversity of their students. Specific to music education, Shaw (2012) suggests that choral music educators should implement diverse musical selections paired with the culturally appropriate lesson planning. Shaw (2012) notes the following,

Consider a teacher who selects a gospel piece in response to African American students who have grown up singing gospel at their church, where music is learned aurally. The teacher introduces the piece by handing out scores and asking the choir to sight-read from notation. While the repertoire choice may be responsive, the learning and performance styles emphasized in the rehearsal may not be synchronous with those emphasized in these particular students’ culture of reference. (p. 78)

A simple way to address cultural responsiveness and its relation to classroom management is found through intentional understanding. Respect, as a facet of classroom

management, is different in every culture and in every household. The differences can be both small and large in perception. Robison (2019) discusses this in an example of two separate students. One student's behavioral challenges could be overcome by a conversation with the parent, resulting in an understanding of the child's culture. Another student needed small encouragement throughout the day to improve the relationship. Robison (2019) notes, ". . . respect is the common denominator between cultures; it is something for which everybody strives" (p. 20).

While discussing the preparation of music educators, Anderson, and Denson (2015) stress the importance of student-teacher relationships in culturally diverse environments. Students will not understand lesson planning objectives or a culturally diverse program if they do not see that care in their director's implementation. While it is the aim of music educators to provide a variety of music for their students, an important element of teaching the music and maintaining a classroom culture can be found while thoughtfully implementing a curriculum of culturally responsive musical experiences (Shaw, 2012; Shaw, 2015). Potter (2021) found that school and student context did not affect the implementation of classroom management, and that diverse student bodies are receptive to varying strategies for classroom management.

### **Pre-Service Teacher Training**

The success of pre-service music educators in the classroom relies on the music teacher preparation programs to provide the experiences needed for contextual understanding. The social development and experiential knowledge of a pre-service music educator determines their ability to implement classroom management structures and exposure to the classroom environment. Instruction from mentors in the educational community contribute to the development the social

and experiential confidence needed for effective classroom management. Additionally, effective classroom management gives structure for musical skills to be studied and pedagogical growth to be achieved (Anderson & Denison, 2015; Johnson, 2014). Pre-service music educators seek to understand and hear stories and strategies of successful classroom management experiences, while in-service music educators understand that classroom management techniques are instrumental in reaching learning goals or achieving a satisfying workday (Robison, 2018).

Use of classroom management and discipline skills are the primary source of anxiety for pre-service educators (Bauer, 2001; Heddon, 2015; Pritchard, 2017). While it is the goal of teacher preparation programs to shed light on methods for successful classroom management, these fears lessen as pre-service teachers gain access to the classroom environment and apply effective classroom management strategies (Kelly, 2000). Educators exhibiting effective classroom management skills have proactive strategies to eliminate excessive worry or stress. Preemptive planning for each lesson and potential behavioral issues reduces the need for worry and creates a safeguard for the learning environment (Bauer, 2001). Gordon (2001) states, “. . . teachers skilled in music and management usually demonstrate knowledge of what to teach, as well as how to teach.” (p. 22). The effective management of the classroom environment informs pedagogical practices and the communication of those practices.

Pritchard (2017) found that music teachers’ efficacy beliefs are affected by their confidence in resolving behavior issues and that effective classroom management is crucial to the confidence of pre-service and in-service educators. A well-managed classroom provides a peaceful learning environment for the educator and for students. The confidence of pre-service

music educators and in-service educators is shaped by their ability to resolve issues and to maintain a healthy classroom environment and the inability to create a structured environment leads to stress.

Heddon (2015) studied 61 pre-service music educators over four academic semesters to determine their confidence levels. The participants took a pre-test to determine their existing confidence levels, participated in several months of classroom management training, and completed a post-test to determine their growth. The results showed that most of the students found confidence in their learned classroom management skills. Pre-service music educators should be exposed to opportunities to develop their classroom management skills, which will increase their confidence in the choral classroom (Heddon, 2015, p. 39).

Barnes (2010) conducted a study of five first-year music educators in the Southeastern United States. When asked about their experiences with students, several of the participants noted feelings of distress and inadequacy due to student behavior and classroom management factors. Several music educators discussed issues with students using inappropriate language, speaking loudly during class times, and difficulties with administration. These circumstances are factors in teacher retention and should be addressed during pre-service music educator preparation (Barnes, 2010). Music teacher preparation programs are responsible for future music educators' feelings of readiness during the first year of teaching, which will in turn affect their willingness to stay in the profession.

### **Service and Authentic Context Learning**

Service learning is a powerful tool for pre-service music educators. In service learning, pre-service music teachers engage with the community while receiving practical solutions for effective classroom management. This can be achieved in the student teaching experience,

practicum hours, and in some observation opportunities (Burton & Reynolds, 2009). While participating in the classroom through student teaching or service-learning projects, pre-service music educators receive hands on experience in classroom management. Additionally, frequent exposure to the music classroom provides the pre-service music educator with opportunities for reflection (Reynolds, Jerome, Preston & Haynes, 2005).

The cooperative aspect of student teaching gives pre-service music educators the opportunity to build relationship and rapport with other educators, which is necessary for their continued development in classroom management and pedagogical practices (McDonald, 2000). Silvey and Major (2014) state:

Rather than learning each skill independently, perhaps a curriculum that enables students to conduct the full ensemble or leading students who are not their peers, earlier in the semester would elicit higher confidence levels as the students learn to navigate the difficulties of leading ensembles. (p. 87)

Service learning provides an opportunity for pre-service music educators to engage with students, learn authentic context experiences, and receive training in various learning environments; all while assisting in an area that would benefit from their participation (McDonald, 2000; Silvey & Major, 2014).

The classroom management efficacy beliefs of first year music educators are affected by their previous experiences. Shaw (2015) discusses the importance of personal practical knowledge to produce a culturally responsive environment in the classroom. When pre-service teachers are comfortable in their environment, they can provide effective classroom management for their individual students. Forrester (2019) states, “Providing PSTs [pre-service teachers] with teaching and learning experiences that are rich and authentic requires that music teacher

educators commit to building strong partnerships with schools and community organizations” (p. 37). While pedagogical and academic training is important to subject knowledge, regular exposure to authentic, contextual learning experiences provide music educators with the opportunity to engage their students with effective classroom management, and gain confidence in their pedagogical skills (Baughman, 2020; Forrester, 2019). In a survey of in-service music educators’ implementation of classroom management and confidence, Potter (2021) found the following:

A majority of participants’ comments implied that teaching experience positively affected their ability to manage the classroom, and this was reflected in three prominent themes: [A]dapting classroom management ‘tools’ to different behaviors in the classroom, implementing new classroom management strategies and techniques, and instituting a consistent classroom management plan. (p. 70)

Conway (2002) conducted a study with 14 first year music educators to determine their thoughts about the effect of their student teaching internships on their first year of teaching. These teachers commented on their student teaching internships and wished that the pre-service internship experience had been extended to gain additional confidence in their classroom management skills. Several students found that the semester-long internship length paled in comparison to the five-year program. Additionally, a semester-long internship precludes students from experiences that occur in different seasons. An understanding of administration, school workings, and preparation for auditions or holidays impact beginning music educators’ feelings of confidence (pp. 20-36).

Legette and McCord’s (2015) survey of 104 music education majors questioned their feelings of preparation for their student teaching experience. The participants noted a lack of

classroom management preparation and felt unprepared for the basic responsibilities in education. Once in the classroom, pre-service music educators' feelings of unpreparedness were coupled with feelings of isolation and fear. Additionally, there is often a break in communication between music educator preparation programs and the classroom. Classroom management techniques, if discussed, did not always translate into classroom use (Legette & McCord, 2015). When asked about the transition from pre-service to in-service teaching, the participants noted that their student teaching experience was quintessential in their training (pp. 163-176).

### **Conducting and Pedagogical Experience**

Pre-service music educators view conducting experience as equally necessary for success in classroom management (Plondke, 1992; Noon, 2019). The pre-service music educator's confidence in their pedagogical and conducting abilities can influence their effectiveness in the classroom, thus affecting their managerial confidence. Effective music education degree programs understand multiple opportunities to conduct choral ensembles are important to the development of conducting experiences. In the same way, authentic context learning, and long-term observation are essential for the development of that conducting skill and confidence (Noon, 2019).

Conducting courses effect the efficacy beliefs of pre-service music educators (Jansson & Balsnes, 2020; Napoles & Bowers, 2010; Plondke, 1992; Noon, 2019). While pre-service music educators should experience time in front of an ensemble, there is some debate about the importance of feedback in the development of conducting skills. In a study involving 27 pre-service music educators from two state universities, Napoles and Bowers found that verbal feedback from professors produced similar outcomes as the pre-service teachers' self-analysis. In some occurrences, self-analysis proved to be more effective in the development of conducting

skills. This finding could be useful to the development of music educator preparation programs as they continue to develop their programs. Feedback from professors and self-analysis are necessary tools in the development of the pre-service music educator's preparedness (Napoles & Bowers, 2010). Weber, Gold, Prilop, and Kleinknecht (2018) found that video feedback was useful for student reflection. With the use of video, peer reviews and educational moments could be recorded for future reference. The time of reflection and implementation of feedback would serve to increase skill and pedagogical understanding. Additionally, incorporating space for feedback and reflection has the capability to impact the confidence and feelings of preparedness in pre-service music educators (Napoles & Bowers, 2010; Weber, Gold, Prilop & Kleinknecht, 2018).

The confidence of pre-service music educators is continually shaped by the development of conducting experience. A survey of 294 choral conductors found that conducting efficacy beliefs are founded both in pre-service education and in the continued practice and life-long experience. Additionally, it was found that conducting gestures are not the primary measure for perceived success. There are several factors that contribute to the effectiveness of a rehearsal including ability to detect errors, rehearsal organization, aesthetic will, and sense of control. Pre-service music educators should feel confident in exercising their ability to lead a productive rehearsal and classroom environment. The conducting experience adds to a choral music educator's ability to implement classroom management (Jansson, Elstad, Doving, 2019).

Plondke (1992) finds that conducting is the music educator's opportunity to engage in performance with an ensemble. Effective conducting gestures will affect the performance of the ensemble and will help direct the intricacies of rehearsal (pp. 45-49). Music educator preparation programs should provide these authentic context learning experiences by seeking opportunities

for pre-service music educators to gain conducting experience. Additionally, maturity and time spent in a conducting position are found to impact performance and confidence among choral conductors and the ensembles' trust in their director (Jansson & Balsnes, 2020; Bonshor, 2017; Jansson, Elstad, Doving, 2019). In a study of 20 choral conductors, it was determined that the identity and efficacy beliefs of a conductor can be affected by their level of perceived achievement and individual purpose. These perceived achievement and purpose beliefs affect their performance of conducting gestures and confidence in their leadership role (Jansson & Balsnes, 2020).

### **Mentorship and Classroom Management**

While there are classroom management sessions and courses geared toward assisting new educators, such courses are irrelevant to music educators. Conway (2006) asserts that mentorship is the best method for pre-service and beginning music educators to receive training in classroom management skills. During their student teaching experience, pre-service music educators are provided the opportunity to engage in classroom scenarios under the watchful eye of an experienced music educator. Snell, Wilson, and Cruse (2019) state,

Pre-service students require as many opportunities [as] possible to spend time in schools observing how in-service teachers integrate theory and best practice.

When pre-service teachers receive high-quality preparation and regularly interact with and observe in-service teachers, they have potential to be even stronger student teachers and ultimately new in-service teachers. (p. 94)

The learning of effective techniques for classroom management is a career-long endeavor. Because of this, mentoring pre-service and beginning music educators will benefit both the mentor and the mentee. As mentors impart their wisdom and practices, mentees will

bring in fresh perspective and methods currently taught in teacher preparation programs. In addition, mentoring teachers receive the opportunity for professional development (Conway, 2006; Snell, Wilson & Cruse, 2019). In a study of five beginning music educators, Blair (2008) found that mentoring relationships helped to provide in-service music educators with the opportunity to ask questions, seek advice, and receive feedback on issues that they face in the classroom. Additionally, each of the five beginning music educators grew in their ability to confidently manage their classroom.

Similarly, teacher retention and attrition are affected by the skill sets and cultural expectations set forth by teacher preparation programs. Unfortunately, curricular reform and large curricular demands make it challenging to incorporate additional courses or experiences in teacher preparation programs (Madson & Hancock, 2002; Blair, 2008). When opportunities for a mentoring relationship are presented, in an environment that fosters a growth in confidence, music educators are less likely to leave their position (Hancock, 2008). A healthy mentoring relationship can give beginning music educators a positive outlook on their new career. Bernhard (2016) found that emotional exhaustion contributed to the decision for music educators to leave the profession; this suggests that mentoring relationships can possibly ease feelings of burnout in beginning music educators.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to gain insight on effective classroom management practices that are currently applied by in-service music educators in the choral classroom.

#### **Limitations of the Study**

The survey distribution will be limited to choral music educators.

#### **Assumptions**

In order to continue the advancement of music educator preparation programs, an assumption must be made that advancement is necessary. Additionally, it is assumed that the participants will answer all study questions truthfully.

#### **Research Questions**

The study aimed to answer eight research questions:

RQ1: Did in-service choral music educators learn effective classroom management skills while they were undergraduate music education majors?

RQ2: Does teaching experience aid in the growth of classroom management skills?

RQ3: What classroom management skills do in-service music educators believe can and/or should be taught in the university classroom?

RQ4: What classroom management skills must be gained through experiential learning?

RQ5: Should music educator preparation programs expand experiential learning opportunities?

RQ6: Does the student teaching experience provide opportunities for classroom management understanding and growth?

RQ7: Does conducting knowledge affect pre-service music educators' feelings of confidence?

RQ8: Does mentorship play a role in the development of classroom management skills?

### **Selection of the Sample Population**

The study participants were limited to choral directors at the middle school and high school level, grades six through twelve. The survey was distributed through the following music educator groups on Facebook:

- Music Teachers: Middle School Choral/General Music
- I Teach Middle School Chorus
- I'm a Choir Director
- Choral Music
- Middle School Choir Directors
- Virginia Music Educators
- Choir Directors
- American Choral Directors Association

In addition, the survey was distributed by the Virginia Music Educators Association to Virginia middle and high school choral directors. Each participant was asked for their permission to use the information and assured of their anonymity.

### **Survey Instruments**

The survey consisted of twenty-five questions geared to discover the background and experiences of the participant, their beliefs toward the student teaching internship, and their thoughts about service, experiential, or authentic context learning as they relate to music educator preparation. The survey questions were in multiple choice, Likert-type scale, and open-ended response styles. The study was approved for an IRB exemption by the Old Dominion University College of Arts and Letters Human Subjects Review Committee.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

The data were analyzed using the statistical tools within Qualtrics. The open-ended responses were coded in NVivo.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Research Questions

The study aimed to answer eight research questions:

RQ1: Did in-service choral music educators learn effective classroom management skills while they were undergraduate music education majors?

RQ2: Does teaching experience aid in the growth of classroom management skills?

RQ3: What classroom management skills do in-service music educators believe can and/or should be taught in the university classroom?

RQ4: What classroom management skills must be gained through experiential learning?

RQ5: Should music educator preparation programs expand experiential learning opportunities?

RQ6: Does the student teaching experience provide opportunities for classroom management understanding and growth?

RQ7: Does conducting knowledge affect pre-service music educators' feelings of confidence?

RQ8: Does mentorship play a role in the development of classroom management skills?

## Description of the Participants

The survey participants were 108 choral directors that teach elementary chorus, middle school chorus, junior high school chorus, high school chorus, or community chorus. Of the participants, 32.69% were between the ages of 21 and 29. Those between the ages of 30 to 39 represented 31.73%; 20.19% were ages 40 to 49; 10.58% were between the ages of 50 and 59; 4.81% were between the ages of 60 to 69.

In survey question three, the participants chose to disclose their gender. Of those participants, 75.96% ( $n = 79$ ) were female and 22.12% ( $n = 23$ ) were male. Additionally, 0.96% of the participants were non-binary or a third gender. Another 0.96% of the participants chose not to disclose their gender. Specific data regarding race and ethnicity are displayed in Table 1.

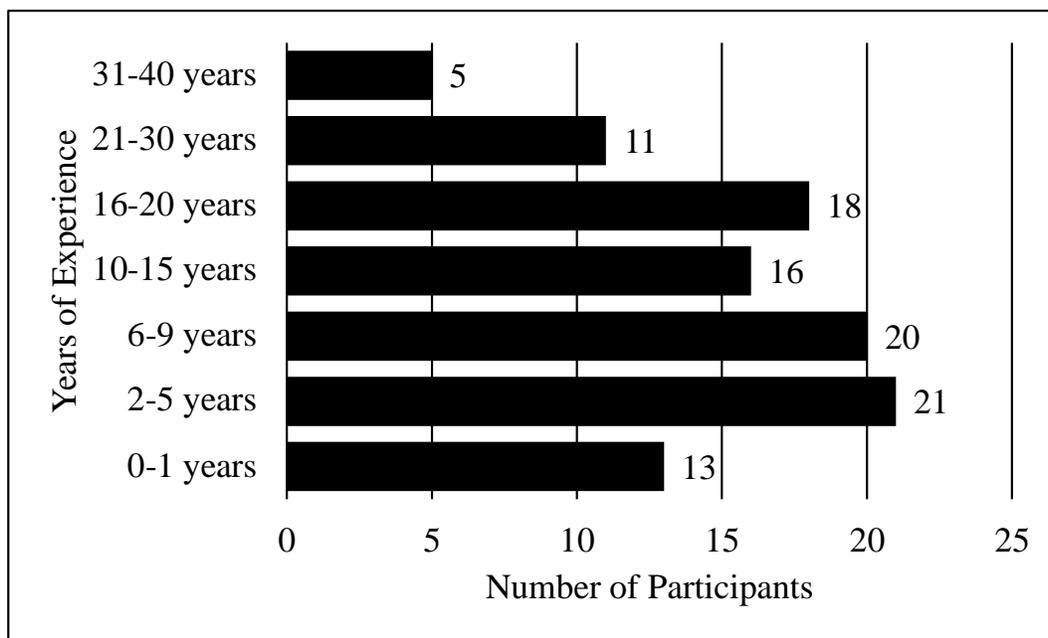
*Table 1: Race or Ethnicity of the Subject Population ( $n = 99$ ).*

Race or Ethnicity	Percentage of Participants	Number of Participants
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.01%	1
Asian	0.00%	0
Black or African American	4.04%	4
Hispanic or LatinX	2.02%	2
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.00%	0
White	92.93%	92

One hundred and four participants listed their path to becoming an educator in survey question six. Of those subjects, 80.58% ( $n = 83$ ) participated in a music education degree program, 15.53% ( $n = 16$ ) chose a music degree with certificate program, and 3.88% ( $n = 4$ ) chose alternative methods of certification.

Survey question six asked the participants to disclose their years of teaching experience.

Their responses are displayed in figure 1.



**Figure 1. Participants' years of experience ( $n = 104$ ).**

### **The Role of Teaching Experience in Effective Classroom Management**

The participants responded to two questions regarding their level of experience and feelings of preparedness to enact effective classroom management skills. The survey questions that concern the role of experience were as follows:

Q9. Before entering the field, have you had experiential learning opportunities beyond practicum courses and/or student teaching experiences?

Q10. How did experiential learning impact your confidence in providing effective classroom management?

The participants who graduated with a music education degree and those who chose a music degree with a certificate program shared similar participation in experiential learning opportunities. The percentage of participation in experiential learning opportunities is similar for those who completed a music education degree and those who earned a music degree with a Certificate Program. Their responses appear below in Table 2 and 3.

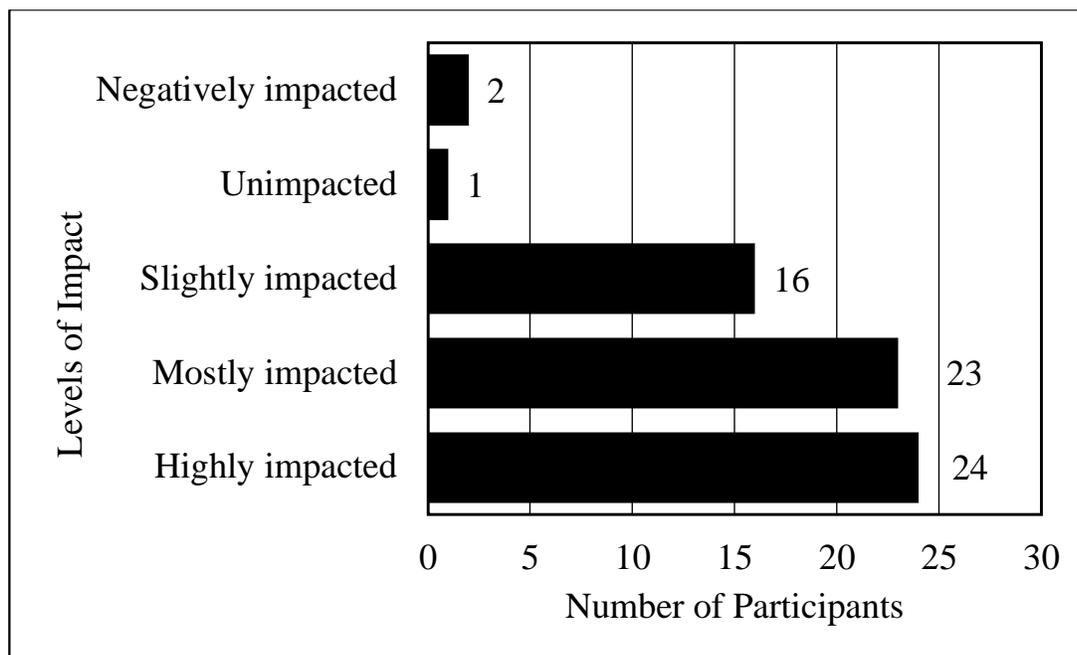
*Table 2: Experiential Learning Opportunities for Music Education Degree Holders (n = 83).*

Participants with a Music Education Degree	Percentage of Subjects	Number of Subjects
Had participated in experiential learning opportunities outside of practicum courses and student teaching experiences	65.06%	54
Had not participated in experiential learning opportunities outside of practicum courses and student teaching experiences	34.94%	29

*Table 3: Experiential Learning Opportunities for Music Degree Holders with Certificate Program (n = 16).*

Participants with a Music Degree with Certificate Program	Percentage of Subjects	Number of Subjects
Had participated in experiential learning opportunities outside of practicum courses and student teaching experiences	62.50%	10
Had not participated in experiential learning opportunities outside of practicum courses and student teaching experiences	37.50%	6

Question ten asked if experiential learning opportunities had impacted participants' perceived levels of confidence in providing effective classroom management. The responses are recorded in Figure 1.



**Figure 2. Impact of experiential learning on confidence in classroom management ( $n = 66$ ).**

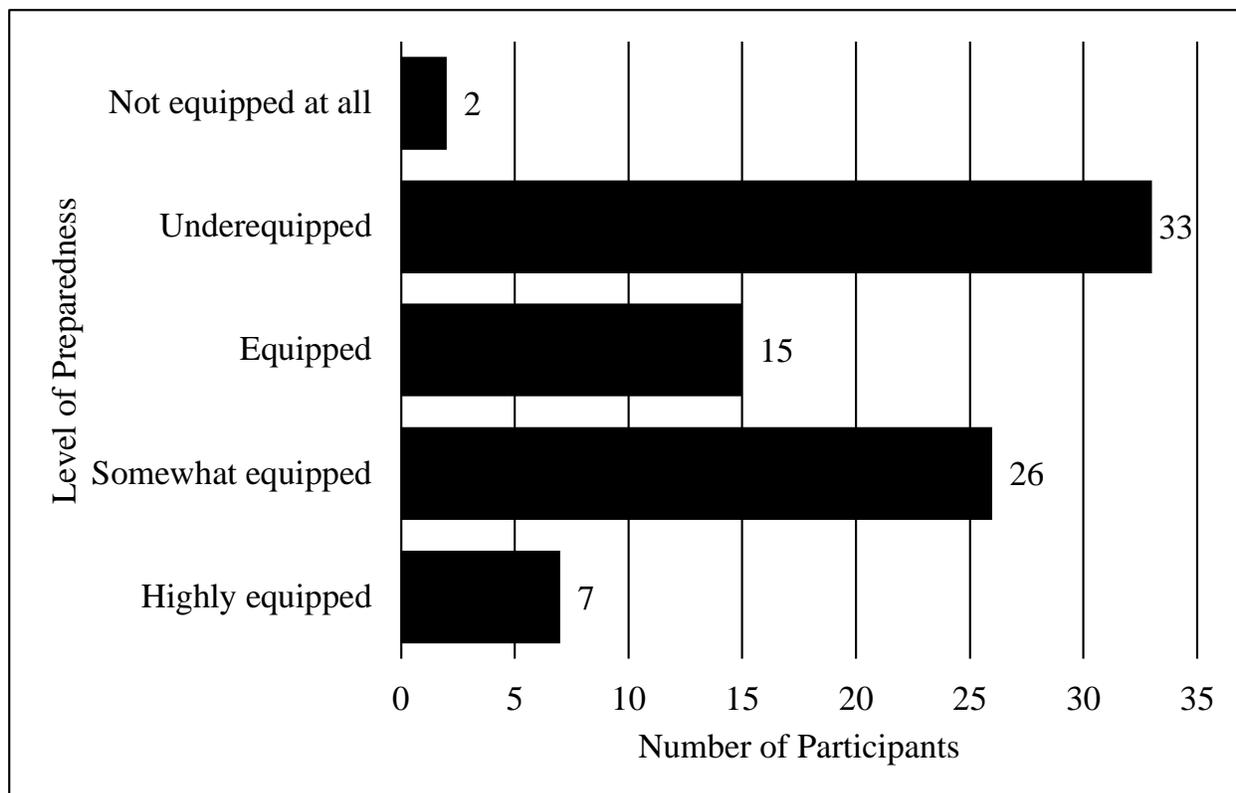
### **Classroom Management Skill Training**

The participants were asked to determine their level of preparedness to enact classroom management upon entering the field of education. The survey questions that pertain to readiness were as follows:

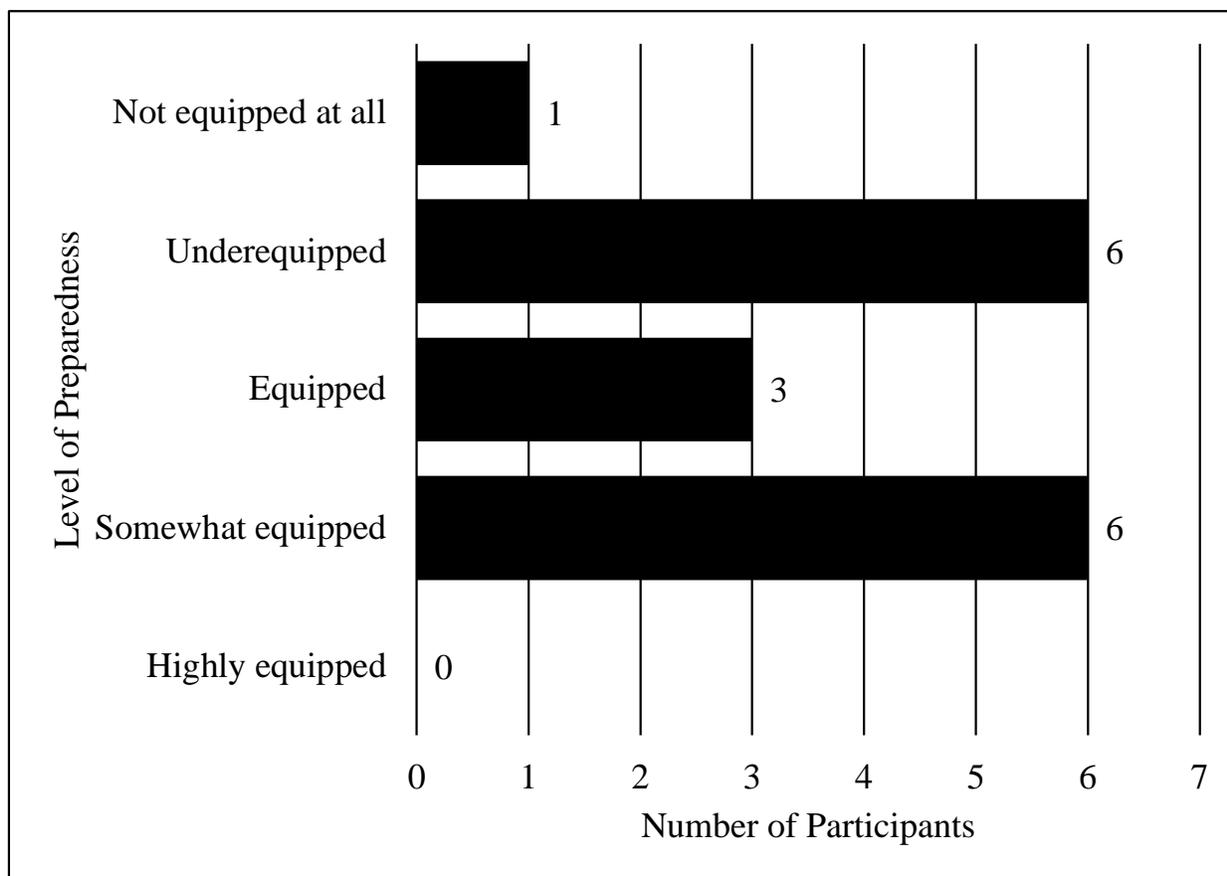
Q7. When you were hired as a music educator, at what level did you feel equipped to handle classroom management issues?

Q8. In relation to your answer to the last question, why or why not?

In question seven, the participants were asked to examine how equipped they felt to handle classroom management issues. The results from the participants that graduated with a music education degree and those who graduated with a music degree with a certificate program were analyzed separately to provide additional data. The results are displayed in Figures 2 and 3.



**Figure 3. Music education degree holders' perception of preparedness to handle classroom management ( $n = 83$ ).**



**Figure 4. Music degree with certificate program holders' perception of preparedness to handle classroom management ( $n = 16$ ).**

Survey question eight asked participants to expound upon their answers in question seven. There were 91 responses to the question with 60% ( $n = 55$ ) of responses that discussed issues of experience, preparation, or practice as a contributing factor to their feelings of preparedness. In addition, 29% ( $n = 27$ ) of responses discussed experiences in undergraduate preparation programs. These responses noted that methods classes were productive but did not discuss enough or fully cover classroom management tactics. Of the responses that discuss preparation programs, six participants wrote that classroom management was not discussed in

their degree program. Two participants dealt with complications from the effects of Covid-19 on in-person learning.

### **Classroom Management in the University Classroom**

The participants were asked to describe their understanding of teacher preparation programs and content that would benefit future music educators. The questions were as follows:

Q13. What classroom management skills do you believe can and/or should be taught to music education students in the university classroom?

Q25. To what level can choral classroom management be effectively taught and learned in the college or university classroom?

The participants that responded to question 13 were asked to name classroom management skills that they believe should be taught in pre-service preparation programs. Of the 78 persons that responded to question 13, 50% ( $n = 39$ ) suggested several topics regarding relationship building and developmental needs for students, as follows:

- Mental health in students
- Developmentally appropriate content
- Equipping pre-service music educators with additional time to work with students
- De-escalation tactics
- Positive behavior intervention strategies
- Verbal and non-verbal communication
- Working with students that don't want to sing
- Keeping students engaged

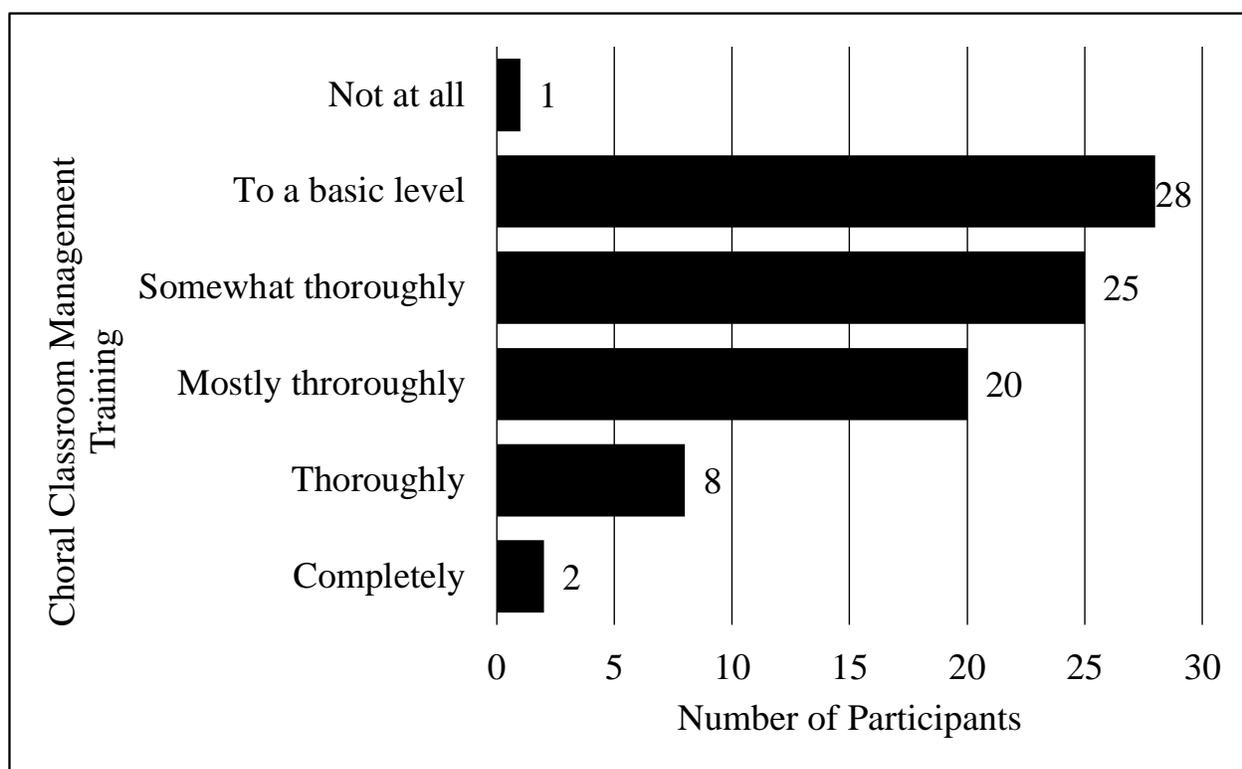
Additional classroom management topics equaled 55.12% ( $n = 43$ ) of the responses to question

13. The following are examples of topics that aid in classroom management and lesson planning:

- Repertoire selection
- Physical movement
- Budgeting
- Time-management
- Lesson plan pacing
- Differentiation in lesson planning
- Curriculum
- Classroom procedures
- Transitions between activities
- Daily routines
- Conducting gestures
- Methods and pedagogies

Of the participants that responded to question 13, 8.48% ( $n = 4$ ) mentioned that pre-service preparation programs should prepare music educators to maintain healthy relationships with school administration, coworkers, and parents.

Survey question 25 asked participants to describe the level to which they believe classroom management could be taught in the college or university level classroom. The results are displayed in Figure 4.



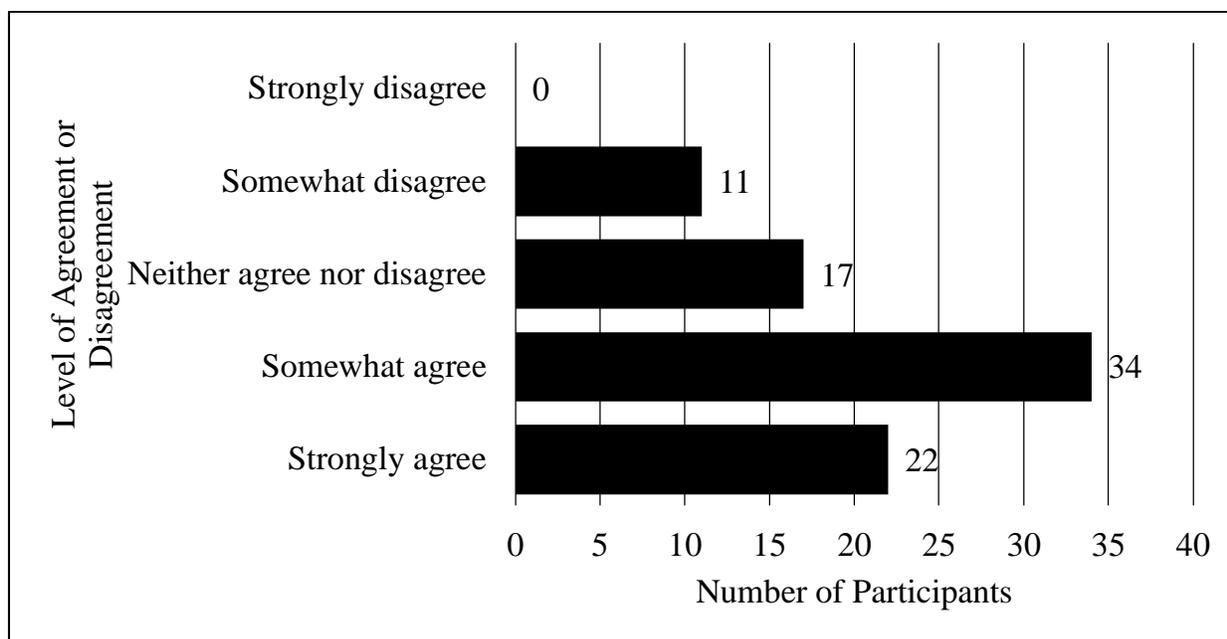
**Figure 5. Choral classroom management discussion in the university classroom ( $n = 84$ ).**

### **Experiential Learning as Training in Classroom Management Skills**

The participants were asked about experiential learning opportunities as they affect training in classroom management skills. The survey questions were as follows:

Q19. Have you found that practicum experiences provide better opportunities to hone classroom management skills?

In survey question 19, participants were asked if their classroom management skills were influenced by their participation in practicum learning experiences. The majority of participants ( $n = 56$ ) either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that their skills were impacted by participation in practicum learning experiences. The results from question 19 are listed in figure 6.



**Figure 6. Perception of practicum experience provide better opportunities to hone classroom management skills ( $n = 84$ ).**

### **Student Teaching Experience and the Impact on Classroom Management**

Survey participants were asked about their willingness to participate in experiential learning opportunities. The survey question that pertained to this topic was as follows:

Q22. Are you willing to partner in experiential learning projects for pre-service music educators?

The participants ( $n = 73$ ) that responded to question 22 had two to forty years of experience in the classroom. The participants were asked if they would be willing to partner in experiential learning projects for pre-service music educators. Of the participants, 82.19% were

willing to mentor or partner with pre-service music educators in experiential learning opportunities. Additionally, 17.81% were unwilling to participate in experiential learning opportunities.

### **The Role of Student Teaching Experiences**

The participants were asked about their understanding of the role of student teaching experiences as it concerns the development of classroom management skills. The survey questions were as follows:

Q11. Did the student teaching experience impact your confidence in providing effective classroom management?

Q12. In what way did the student teaching experience impact your confidence?

Q20. Did your student teaching experience provide opportunities to hone your classroom management skills?

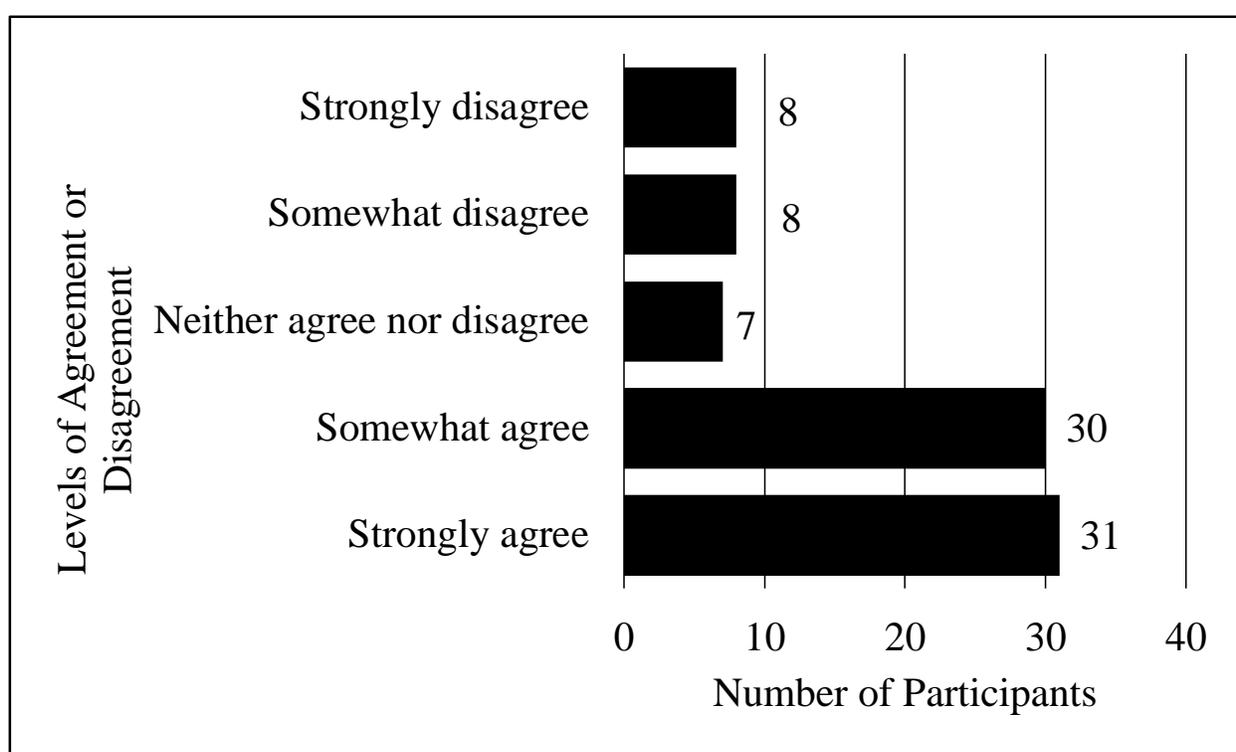
Q21. Why or why not?

Survey questions 11 and 12 asked educators to describe their feelings of confidence in relation to the student teaching experience. Survey question 11 asks participants if their student teaching experience impacted their confidence in applying effective classroom management techniques. Of the 103 responses to question 11, 73.78% ( $n = 76$ ) of the participants found that their confidence was impacted by student teaching experience and 26.21% ( $n = 27$ ) of the participants found that it did not affect their confidence.

The participants that responded to question 12 ( $n = 57$ ) were asked to describe the way the student teaching experience impacted their confidence. Of those responses, 38.59% ( $n = 22$ ) reported that their cooperating teacher affected their understanding of classroom management techniques and confidence in implementing new strategies. Another 45.61% ( $n = 26$ ) stated that

the opportunity to practice classroom management techniques provides additional levels of security. Relationship building skills, understanding of procedures, and greater perspective for the classroom environment were stated by 14.54% ( $n = 8$ ) of the participants.

Question 20 and 21 asked music educators to describe their student teaching experience as it pertains to the development of their classroom management skills. The results from question 20 are listed in Figure 7.



**Figure 7. Student teaching experiences as opportunities to hone classroom management skills ( $n = 103$ ).**

Question 21 asked survey participants ( $n = 61$ ) to describe their student teaching experience regarding their development of classroom management skills. Of the participants, 40.98% ( $n = 25$ ) found that hands-on experience was the most valuable part of the student

teaching experience in relation to classroom management skills. Another 29.5% ( $n = 18$ ) discussed their relationship with their cooperating teacher. Additional topics involving the student teaching experience are as follows:

- The cooperating teacher acted as a safety net for the pre-service music educator
- Pre-service educators should be provided the opportunity to witness several classroom management techniques from at least two educators
- A productive relationship with a cooperating teacher could provide the student teacher with opportunities to try new techniques and strategies
- Constructive and practical feedback from mentors
- Independence to enact ideas for classroom management
- Responsibility over classroom practices
- Observing and mimicking in-service educators

In addition, 14.75% ( $n = 9$ ) of the survey participants found that the student teaching experience did not provide an authentic classroom management experience. Those responses included issues with implementing their own methods in classrooms that held pre-existing classroom management structures. Responses also mention that the lack of student teacher authority can each impact the opportunity to enact new or individualized classroom management structures.

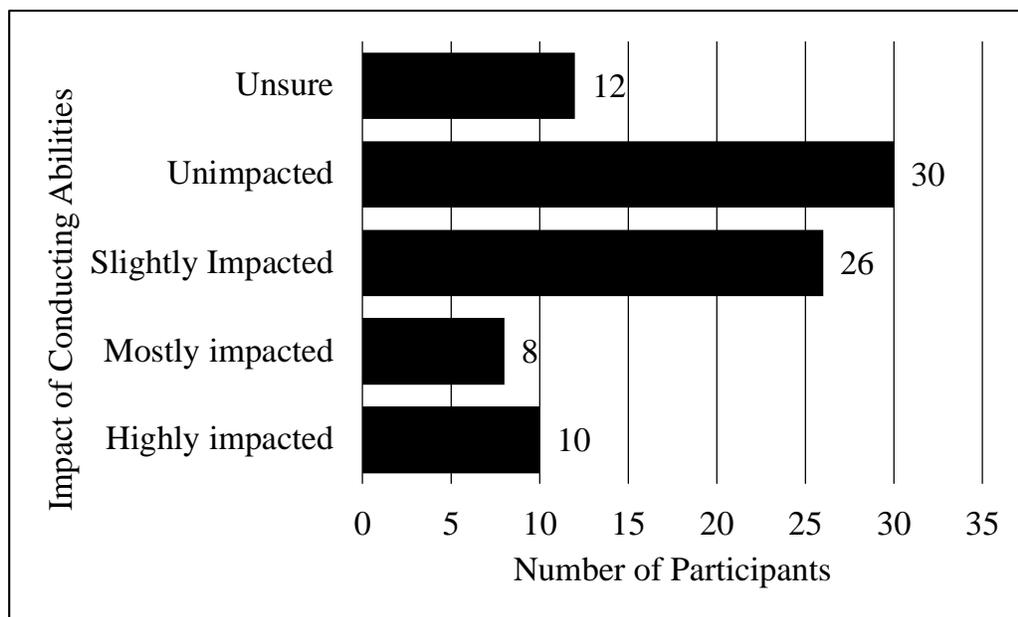
### **Conducting Knowledge and Feelings of Confidence**

The survey questions pertaining to conducting were as follows:

Q14. How much have your conducting abilities impacted your ability to provide effective classroom management?

Q15. In relation to the last question, why or why not?

Question 14 asked survey participants to describe the impact that their conducting abilities had on their classroom management. The responses are listed in Figure 8.



**Figure 8. Impact of conducting abilities on effective classroom management ( $n = 86$ ).**

Survey question 15 asked the survey participants to expound on their response to question 14. Of the participants, 67 responded to question 15. It is noted that 10.44% ( $n = 7$ ) stated that they did not regularly conduct their ensemble. Issues of classroom management, lack of accompanists, basic note-learning and teaching were the stated challenges that impeded the participants' opportunities to conduct their ensembles from the podium. Additionally, 32.85% ( $n = 22$ ) of the participants that responded to this question reported that they did not believe their conducting abilities were correlated to their classroom management skills. Responses related to conducting abilities listed several varying themes. Those themes are listed as follows:

- Student understanding of gestures can limit or enhance the effectiveness of gesture

- Application of conducting gestures varies between music educators
- Pre-service music teacher conducting experience varies between individuals
- Availability of accompanists or resources can limit time spent conducting

Of the survey participants that responded to survey question 15, 31.34% ( $n = 21$ ), stated that conducting should be a secondary concern following issues such as classroom management, musical or theory education, or the development of a classroom dynamic. The participants stated a correlation between conducting knowledge and the effective communication of goals or musical ideas. Another 25.37% ( $n = 17$ ) of participants believed that conducting abilities were paramount to success in classroom management. The benefits listed by survey participants are as follows:

- The opportunity to create eye contact with students
- The silent gestures lead to focused environments
- The ability to multitask while conducting and making musical adjustments
- The student focus is trained on the educator
- The reduction of non-essential discussion
- The use of conducting promotes educator familiarity with music

### **The Role of Mentorship**

The participants were asked several questions regarding the role of mentorship in the development of classroom management skills. The survey questions were as follows:

Q16. Have you mentored a student teacher?

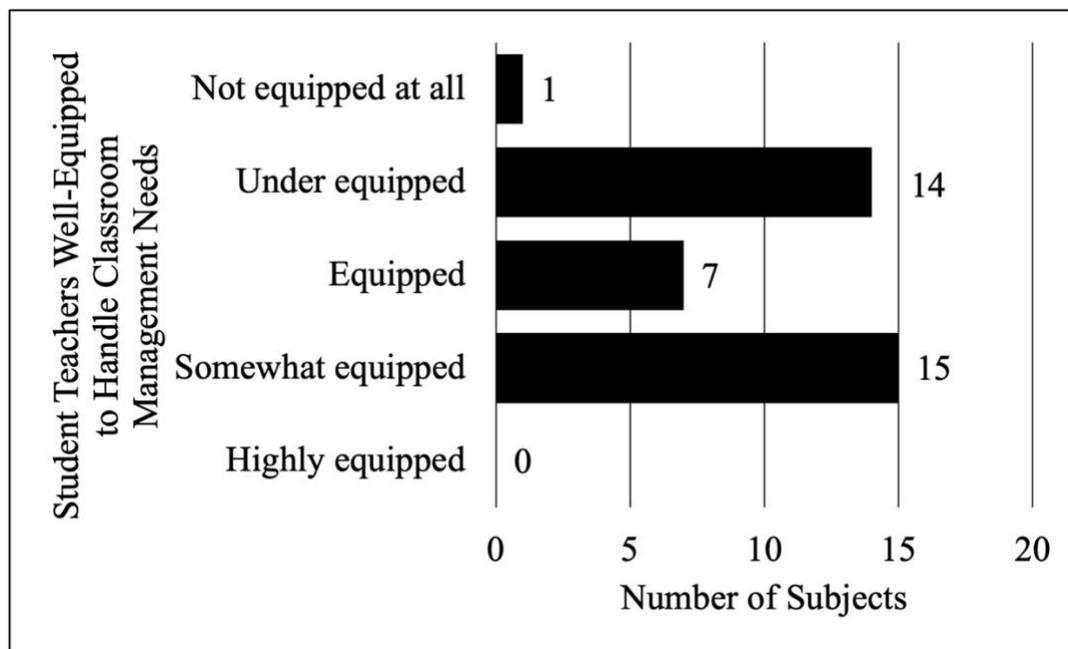
Q17. On average, have your student teachers been well-equipped to handle the classroom management-related needs of your students?

Q18. Why or why not?

Q23. How effective is mentoring in the development of confidence and pedagogical ability in beginning music educators?

Q24. Are you willing to mentor beginning music educators?

Questions 16, 17, and 18 pertain specifically to potential mentors for pre-service music educators. When asked in question 16 if they had mentored a student teacher, 44% of the 86 participants ( $n = 38$ ) stated that they had mentored a student teacher. Question 17 asked those participants if their student teachers had been well-equipped to handle classroom management needs. Of those 38 participants, 97% ( $n = 37$ ) responded to question 17. Their responses are listed in Figure 9.

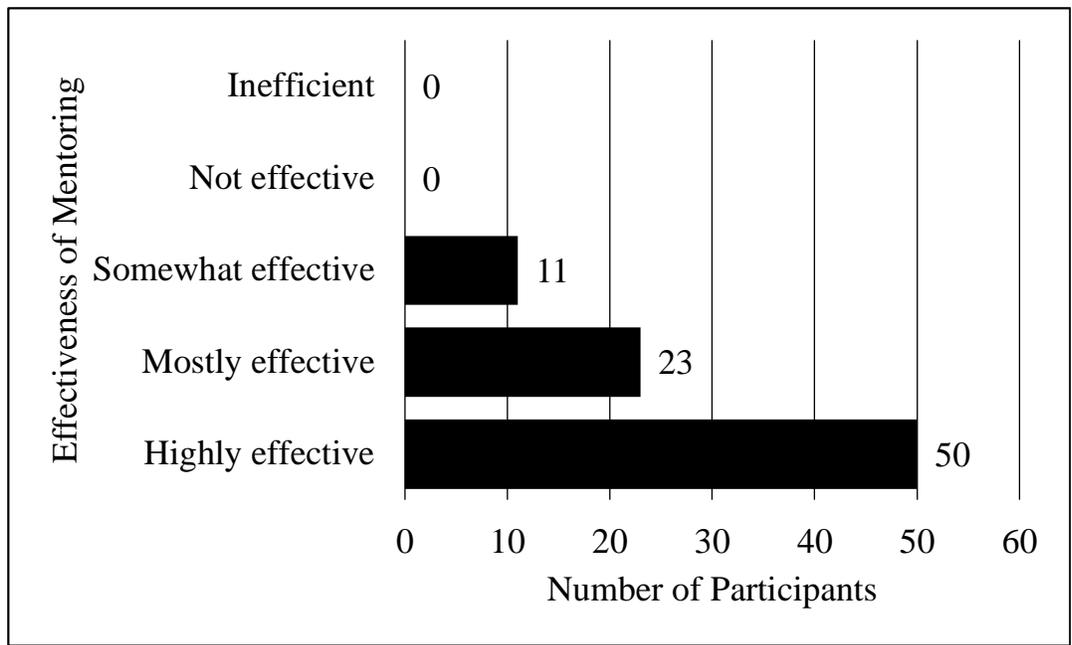


**Figure 9. Student teachers well-equipped to handle classroom management needs ( $n = 37$ ).**

Survey question 18 received 28 responses that described their student teachers' level of preparedness as it relates to classroom management issues. When responding to survey question

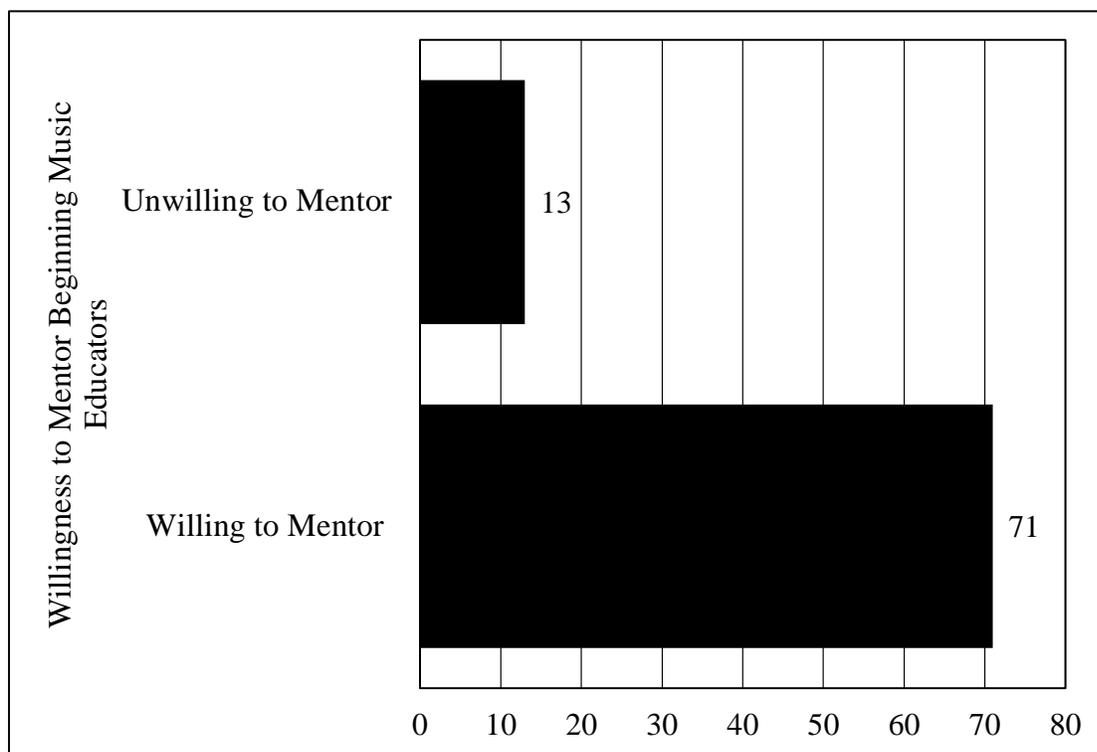
18, 67.85% ( $n = 19$ ) of the participants believed that the success of a student teacher was influenced by their previous experience and additionally impacted by their student teaching experience. Topics stated by participants included the impact of previous classroom experience on comfort level in providing adequate classroom management. Additionally, participants stated that confidence can be affected both positively and negatively by the student teaching experience. The student teaching experience exposes pre-service music educators to student behavior and allows for building rapport with students. Other topics stated by participants address the perceived need for classroom management strategies to be gained through the student teaching experience and that there is a lack of necessary methods classes that should be taught at teacher preparation programs.

Survey question 23 asked the participants to rate the effectiveness of mentoring in the development of confidence and pedagogical ability in beginning music educators. The responses are listed in Figure 10.



**Figure 10. Effectiveness of mentoring in the development of confidence and pedagogical abilities in beginning music educators (*n* = 84).**

Survey question 24 received 84 responses. The survey participants that were willing to mentor beginning music educators totaled 84.52%. Those that were unwilling to mentor beginning music educators totaled 15.48% of participants. The results are listed in Figure 11.



**Figure 11. Willingness to mentor beginning music educators ( $n = 84$ ).**

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### **Teacher Preparation Programs and Classroom Management**

Research questions one and three discuss classroom management skills as they pertain to pre-service preparation and the university classroom. Pre-service teacher training programs exist to prepare music educators to enter the classroom setting. The confidence of pre-service music educators is impacted by their perceived ability to implement classroom management skills. In addition, preservice music educators experience higher levels of anxiety around issues of classroom management (Heddon, 2015; Bauer, 2001; Pritchard, 2017). This confidence can be built through time spent in the classroom by working with students and enacting effective classroom management strategies. Music educators are most comfortable when they understand what they will be teaching and implement effective strategies to teach their content to their classes (Barnes, 2010). While authentic context environments are desired by pre-service music educators, other topics could be taught to update music teacher training curricula.

Survey participants in question 13 suggest innovative topics that may be effective in pre-service teacher training. Participants desired instruction on how to deal with mental health issues within their students and selecting developmentally appropriate content for their students. Other participants desired to receive more instruction on strategies for behavior management, de-escalation strategies, and positive behavior intervention strategies. Other meaningful responses suggest more practical skills to be taught to pre-service music educators. These skills included budgeting, repertoire selection, classroom procedures, time-management, and conducting gestures and were considered by participants to be an important part of their work.

Survey question 25 asked participants to indicate the level at which they believed classroom management could be taught at as a part of the university classroom. Of the 84 participants who responded to the question, 86.9% ( $n = 73$ ) believe that classroom management skills could be taught at a basic level, somewhat thoroughly, or mostly thoroughly. While this is somewhat encouraging, only 3.57% ( $n = 3$ ) believe that classroom management could be thoroughly or completely taught in the music classroom. These data suggest a reform in pre-service music educator training. If classroom management is the primary source of anxiety for pre-service music educators, effective and transferable training in classroom management strategies should be a key focus of teaching preparation programs.

### **Teaching Experience and Expansion of Experiential Learning Opportunities**

While the university classroom is an excellent environment to learn about classroom management strategies, pedagogical practices, or other practical knowledge, music educators cannot fully practice what they have learned without experiential learning opportunities. Research questions two, four, and five aim to review classroom management as it pertains to experiential learning opportunities and their effect on pre-service music educators. Service learning, or experiential learning, provides pre-service music educators with the opportunity to engage with students, understand classroom environments in a more diverse way, or gain pedagogical insight. Additionally, a collaboration with local schools could prove beneficial for pre-service music educators as well as in-service music educators (Silvey & Major, 2014; McDonald, 2000).

Survey question 19 asked participants if their practicum learning experiences provided better opportunities to hone classroom management skills. Of the 84 responses, 66.66% ( $n = 56$ ) either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that their experiences in practicum learning provided

learning opportunities. Another 43.33% ( $n = 28$ ) neither agreed nor disagreed or somewhat disagreed. No participants selected the strongly disagree option. The responses to this question emphasize the necessity of practicum learning experiences as a means to hone and discover classroom management techniques.

Survey question seven asked participants to describe their feelings of preparedness to handle classroom management issues. Of the responses to the question, a majority of participants felt they had little to no feelings of preparedness to handle issues of classroom management. In survey question eight, participants had the opportunity to include reasons for their feelings of preparedness or lack thereof. Of the 91 responses, 60% ( $n = 55$ ) of participants mentioned issues related to experience or preparation. Another 29% ( $n = 27$ ) of participants reported experiences related to undergraduate preparation programs. Responses discussed the need for more in-depth methods courses that could cover issues of classroom management. Participants' responses to survey question seven and eight act as evidence for the need of experiential learning courses and updated curriculum for music educators.

### **Student Teaching Experience and Classroom Management**

Research question six refers to the student teaching experience and its' impact on classroom management and growth of pre-service music educators. According to participants' responses, the feelings of confidence and feelings of preparedness are increased among pre-service music educators through experience with authentic context learning experiences. The student teaching experience is an opportunity to implement classroom management strategies, teach in their content area, and prepare for their own classroom environment. Additionally, the time spent in the student teaching experience gives the pre-service music educator the

opportunity to reflect on their hands-on experiences and their future careers (Heddon, 2015; Silvey & Major, 2014; Reynolds, Jerome, Preston & Haynes, 2005).

Pre-service music educators view the student teaching experience as their most valuable learning tool in preparation for their own classroom. Some music educators wish that their student teaching experience was expanded beyond the required semester. More so than classroom discussion, the student teaching experience exposed students to relationships with administration and other educators, as well as provide an opportunity to engage with the local student body and families. These factors increase confidence and provide insight (Potter, 2021; Conway, 2002).

In addition to helping pre-service music educators practice pedagogical tools and classroom management skills, the student teaching experience is a confidence building experience. Of the 103 responses in survey question 11, 77.78% ( $n = 76$ ) of participants found that the student teaching experience impacted their levels of confidence. Question 12 received additional feedback indicating that the student teaching experience provided participants with additional levels of security and understanding of their content knowledge.

Survey question 20 asked participants if their student teaching experience provided opportunities to hone their classroom management skills. A majority of participants found that they strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that their student teaching experience provided opportunities to hone their skills in classroom management. With this knowledge, question 21 asked participants to describe the skills they gained during the student teaching experience. Of the 61 responses, 40.98% ( $n = 25$ ) felt that the hands-on experience benefited their skills. Other responses discussed classroom practices and management skills, mentoring relationships, observation of and mimicking in-service teachers, and experiencing the classroom environment

under the protection of a seasoned educator. These skills are fundamental in the formation of pre-service music educators' confidence and understanding of the classroom environment.

### **Conducting Knowledge and its Effect on Classroom Management**

Unique to the music classroom, a discussion about classroom management in the chorus classroom would be incomplete without understanding the effects of conducting knowledge and its effect on confidence for music educators. The Conducting courses and conducting skills impact the efficacy beliefs of pre-service and in-service music educators. Additionally, these skills can be viewed as equally necessary for success in classroom management (Plondke, 1992; Noon, 2019; Napoles & Bowers, 2010; Noon, 2019; Balsnes, 2020). Feedback from professors and self-analysis assist in the development of preparedness in pre-service music educators (Napoles & Bowers, 2010). In addition, conducting experiences impact levels of confidence. When pre-service music educators receive conducting training, they receive additional layers of preparedness for teaching in the music classroom (Jansson, Elstad, Doving, 2019; Jansson & Balsnes, 2020). Research question seven seeks to determine the affect conducting knowledge has on pre-service music educators' feelings of confidence.

Survey question 14 asked participants to describe that impact conducting skills have on their classroom management skills. Of the 86 participants, 51.16% ( $n = 44$ ) of survey participants stated that their conducting skills would slightly impact, mostly impact, or highly impact their classroom management skills. Survey question 15 asked participants to describe why conducting skills might or might not affect their classroom management skills. Of the 67 responses, 56.71% ( $n = 38$ ) of participants found that conducting was either a secondary or primary concern for classroom management skills. Several responses mention that their conducting and silent gestures helped to maintain a focused environment and reduce non-

essential discussion. It is noted that 10.44% ( $n = 7$ ) of participants stated they rarely had the opportunity to conduct due to lack of accompaniment or time spent learning parts.

### **The Role of Mentorship in the Development of Classroom Management Skills**

Mentorship opportunities are essential to the pre-service music educator and the best method for pre-service and beginning music educators to hone their classroom management skills (Conway, 2006). Mentoring relationships can be beneficial for both the student teacher and the mentoring teacher. Mentors impart learned experience and suggestions, while beginning music educators can provide innovative perspectives and new methods from teacher preparation programs (Snell, Wilson, and Cruse, 2019; Conway, 2006). Mentoring relationships provide a safe space for pre-service or beginning music educators to ask questions and receive feedback for issues of classroom management or pedagogical practice (Blair, 2008). In addition, when music educators are confident in their abilities and in an environment that encourages their growth, they are less likely to leave the profession (Hancock, 2008; Bernhard, 2016).

If mentoring is such a beneficial resource for pre-service music educators, it should be valued highly by teacher preparation programs and by school districts. When asked in question 16 if they had mentored a student teacher, only 44% ( $n = 38$ ) of the 86 participants had worked with a student teacher. Of those 38 educators that had mentored a student teacher, none of the mentors found that their cooperating student teacher had been highly equipped with classroom management skills. The responses from survey question 17 show that most student teaching mentors did not have a student teacher that was highly equipped to manage issues of classroom management.

Survey question 18 asks participants to explain why they felt their student teachers were equipped, or not equipped, to handle issues of classroom management. Of the 28 responses,

67.85% ( $n = 19$ ) of the participants found that classroom management skills are honed through previous experience, and that their skills were improved by the student teaching process. The student teaching experience positively impacted their classroom management skills.

Question 23 states the impact of confidence and pedagogical abilities in beginning music educators. Of the participants' responses, a majority found mentoring to be highly effective in the development of confidence in pre-service music educators. Mentoring appears to be a beneficial tool in the development of music educators. Question 24 asks participants ( $n = 84$ ) if they would be willing to mentor a student teacher. Of the responses, 84.52% ( $n = 71$ ) said that they were willing to mentor a student teacher.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to gain insight in the realm of classroom management. The complete study of classroom management for choral music educators must include the content of university methods classes, conducting courses, student teaching experiences, experiential learning opportunities, and mentorship must all be examined. The participants had from one to 40 years of classroom management experience, each with their own background and understanding of how to implement it. As topics in the field of classroom management are further reviewed and modified, future studies can facilitate greater perspective in the realm of pre-service music educator training.

## REFERENCES

- Alderman, G. L., & Green, S. K. (2011). Social powers and effective classroom management: Enhancing teacher–student relationships. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 47*(1), 39–44. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1053451211406543>.
- American Psychological Association, (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association: (7<sup>th</sup> edition.)*.
- Anderson, S. A. & Denison G. L. (2015). Preparing the successful urban music educator: The need for preservice and in-service development. *Music Educators Journal, 101*(4), 35-40. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432115573965>.
- Barnes, G. (2010). Teaching music: The first year. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, (185)*, 63-76. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41110366>.
- Bauer, W. I. (2001). Classroom management for ensembles: Effective preparation, good teaching, and fair and consistent discipline can help teachers manage ensembles of any size. Here are some useful ideas for your classroom. *Music Educators Journal, 87*(6), 27–32. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3399689>.
- Baughman, M. (2020). Mentorship and learning experiences of preservice teachers as community children’s chorus conductors. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 29*(2), 38-52. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083719876116>.
- Blair, D. V. (2008). Mentoring novice teachers: developing a community of practice. *Research Studies in Music Education, 30*(2), 99–117. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X08097502>.

- Bonshor, M. (2017). Conductor feedback and the amateur singer: The role of criticism and praise in building choral confidence. *Research Studies in Music Education, 39*(2), 139–160. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X17709630>.
- Brand, M. (1982). Effects of student teaching on the classroom management beliefs and skills of music student teachers. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 30*(4), 255–265. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3345299>.
- Burton, S. (2009). Transforming music teacher education through service learning. *Journal of Music Escher Education 18*(2), 18-33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083708327872>.
- Christofferson, M. & Sullivan, A. L. (2015). Preservice teachers' classroom management training: a survey of self-reported training experiences, content coverage, and preparedness. *Psychology in the Schools, 52*(3), 248-264. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.21819>.
- Conway, C. (2002). Perceptions of beginning teachers, their mentors, and administrators regarding preservice music teacher preparation. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 50*(1), 20-36. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3345690>.
- Conway, C. M. (2006). Navigating through induction: How a mentor can help. *Music Educators Journal, 92*(5), 56–60. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3878504>.
- Felton, P. & Clayton, P. H. (2011). Service-learning. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 128*, 75-84. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.470>.
- Forrester, S. H. (2019). Community engagement in music education: Preservice music teachers' perceptions of an urban service-learning initiative. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 29*(1), 26-40. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083719871472>.

- Freer, P. K. (2008). Teacher instructional language and student experience in middle school choral rehearsals. *Music Education Research, 10*(1), 107-124.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14613800701871538>
- Freer, P. K. (2017). Problem-based learning and structural redesign in a choral methods course. *Contributions to Music Education, 42*, 53-72.
- Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching theory, research, and practice* (Third ed., Multicultural education series (New York, N.Y.)).
- Gordon, D. G. (2000). Sources of stress for the public school music teacher: Four case studies. *Contributions to Music Education, 27*(1), 27-40.
- Gordon, D. G. (2001). Classroom management problems and solutions. *Music Educators Journal, 88*(2), 17-23. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3399737>.
- Gordon, D. G. (2002). Discipline in the music classroom: One component contributing to teacher stress. *Music Education Research, 4*(1), 157-165.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14613800220119831>.
- Haston, W. & Russell, J. A. (2012). Turning into teachers: Influences of authentic context learning experiences on occupational identity development of preservice music teachers. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 59*(4), 369-392.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429411414716>.
- Hedden, D. G. (2014). Music education preservice teachers' confidence in resolving behavior problems. *National Association for Music Education, 34*(1), 33-41.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123314548040>.

- Jansson, D., & Balsnes, A. H. (2020). Choral conducting education: The lifelong entanglement of competence, identity and meaning. *Research Studies in Music Education*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X19863184>.
- Jansson, D., Elstad, B., & Døving, E. (2019). Choral conducting competences: Perceptions and priorities. *Research Studies in Music Education*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X19843191>.
- Johnson, V. V. (2014). Preservice music teachers' social skills: Are they really prepared? *National Association for Music Education* 32(2), 18-25.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123314521035>.
- Kelly, S. N. (2000). Preservice music education student fears of the internship and initial in-service teaching experience. *Contributions to Music Education*, 23(1), 41-50.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24127017>.
- Legette, R. M. & McCord, (2015). Pre-service music teachers perceptions of teaching and teacher training. *Contributions to Music Education*, 40, 163-176.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24711077>.
- Madsen, C. K., & Hancock, C. B. (2002). Support for music education: A case study of issues concerning teacher retention and attrition. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 50(1), 6–19. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3345689>.
- McDonald, N. (2000). Constructivist listening: Real-life classroom management and discipline concerns. *General Music Today*, 13(2), 3–7.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/104837130001300202>.

- Mitchell, M. M. & Bradshaw, C. P. (2013). Examining classroom influences on student perceptions of school climate: The role of classroom management and exclusionary discipline strategies. *Journal of School Psychology, 51*(5), 599-610.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2013.05.005>.
- Napoles, J. & Bowers, J. (2010). Differential effects of instructor feedback vs. self-observation analysis on music education majors' increase of specific reinforcement in choral rehearsals. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, (183)*, 39-48.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/27861471>.
- Noon, C. M. (2019). Students' and teachers' perceptions of undergraduate conducting curricula: A review of literature. *National Association for Music Education, 38*(1), 46-54.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123319857221>.
- Parker, E. C. (2016). The experience of creating community: An intrinsic case study of four midwestern public school choral teachers. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 64*(2), 220–237. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429416648292>.
- Plondke, J. (1992). Prepare yourself for better conducting. *Music Educators Journal, 78*(6), 45–49. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3398383>.
- Potter, J. L. (2021). Novice and experienced elementary general music teachers' classroom management self-efficacy. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 30*(2), 65–76.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083720980465>.
- Prichard, S. (2017). A mixed-methods investigation of preservice music teaching efficacy beliefs and commitment to music teaching. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 65*(2), 237-257. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429417710387>.

- Reynolds, A. M., Jerome, A., Preston, A. L., Haynes, H. (2005). Service-learning in music education: Participant's reflections. *Bulletin for the Council for Research in Music Education* (165), 79-91. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40319272>.
- Robison, T. (2018). Classroom management through lesson design: Considering some often-overlooked variables to prevent issues before they start. *General Music Today*, 32(1), 33–35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1048371318793147>.
- Robison, T. (2020). Culturally responsive classroom management in the general music class: Building connections with families, Part 2. *General Music Today*, 34(1), 37–39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1048371320909801>.
- Robison, T. (2019). Improving classroom management issues through your carefully chosen approaches and prompts. *General Music Today*, 32(3), 20–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1048371318812440>.
- Shaw, J. (2012). The skin that we sing: Culturally responsive choral music education. *Music Educators Journal*, 98(4), 75–81. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432112443561>.
- Shaw, J. T. (2015). Knowing their world: Urban choral music educators' knowledge of context. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 63(2), 198–223. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429415584377>.
- Silvey, B. A., & Major, M. L. (2014). Undergraduate music education majors' perceptions of their development as conductors: Insights from a basic conducting course. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 36(1), 75–89. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X14523532>.

- Simonsen, B., MacSuga-Gage, A. S., Briere, D. E., Freeman, J., Myers, D., Scott, T. M., & Sugai, G. (2014). Multitiered support framework for teachers' classroom-management practices: Overview and case study of building the triangle for teachers. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *16*(3), 179–190.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300713484062>.
- Snell, A. H., Wilson, J., & Cruse, C. S. (2019). Cooperating teachers' perceptions of hosting and mentoring music student teachers. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, *28*(2), 84–97.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083718786269>.
- Stammer, R. A. (2009). Choral student perceptions of effective motivation strategies. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* *28*(1), 25-32.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123309344113>.
- Stoughton, E. H. (2007). “How will I get them to behave?”: Pre-service teachers reflect on classroom management. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *23*, 1024-1037.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2006.05.0001>.
- Weber, K. E., Gold, B., Prilop, C. N., & Kleinknecht, M. (2018). Promoting pre-service teachers' professional vision of classroom management during practical school training: Effects of a structured online- and video-based self-reflection and feedback intervention. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *76*, 39-49. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.08.008>.

**APPENDIX A****HUMAN SUBJECTS EXEMPTION COMMITTEE APPROVAL EMAIL**

From: Randy Gainey no-reply@irbnet.org  
Subject: IRBNet Board Action  
Date: July 2, 2021 at 11:03 AM  
To: Douglas Owens dtowens@odu.edu

Please note that Old Dominion University Arts & Letters Human Subjects Review Committee has taken the following action on IRBNet:

Project Title: [1775232-1] An Analysis of In-Service Choral Music Educators' Methods of Classroom Management

Principal Investigator: Douglas Owens, D.A. Music, Master of Music, Bachelor of Music, Music Education

Submission Type: New Project  
Date Submitted: June 18, 2021  
Action: EXEMPT  
Effective Date: July 2, 2021

Review Type: Exempt Review

Should you have any questions you may contact Randy Gainey at rgainey@odu.edu.  
Thank you,  
The IRBNet Support Team

## APPENDIX B

### INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

#### **Survey: An Analysis of In-Service Choral Music Educators' Methods of Classroom Management**

I hope that you can assist with my research by completing this brief online survey. I am seeking the participation of middle school and high school choral music educators that teach in grades 6-12. The purpose of this study is to gain insight on effective classroom management practices that are currently applied by in-service music educators in the choral classroom.

The survey consists of 25 questions geared to discover the background and experiences of choral music educators, their beliefs toward the student teaching internship, as well as their thoughts about service, experiential, or authentic context learning as they relate to classroom management and choral music educator preparation. The survey is completely anonymous and should only take 15 minutes to complete. There is no more than minimal risk involved in participating in the survey process. Your completed electronic survey responses will be sent anonymously to Dr. Douglas T. Owens, the Responsible Project Investigator and Associate Professor of Music at Old Dominion University. Dr. Owens will then give the completed surveys to me, the Investigator.

This research project has been approved for an IRB exemption by the Old Dominion University College of Arts and Letters Human Subjects Review Committee. Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary and you can choose not to participate. However, I do hope you can help me conduct this important research in music education. Please know that if you do choose to participate, please do not reveal your name, the name of your employer, or other information that is personally identifiable. Any identifiable information will not be included in the final written research document.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Brooke A. Ward, Investigator  
Master of Music Education Candidate  
F. Ludwig Diehn School of Music  
Old Dominion University  
Norfolk, VA  
bswee001@odu.edu

**APPENDIX C**  
**SURVEY QUESTIONS**

1. What is your age?
  - a. 21-29
  - b. 30-39
  - c. 40-49
  - d. 50-59
  - e. 60-69
  
2. What is your gender?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  - c. Transgender
  - d. Other
  - e. Prefer not to disclose
  
3. What is your race/ethnicity?
  - a. American Indian
  - b. Asian
  - c. Black
  - d. African American
  - e. Hispanic or Latino
  - f. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
  - g. White
  - h. Other
  - i. Prefer not to disclose
  
4. At which instructional levels do you teach? Select all that apply.
  - a. High School
  - b. Junior High School
  - c. Middle School
  - d. Elementary School
  - e. Other
  
5. List your path to becoming a music educator.
  - a. Music education degree
  - b. Music degree with certificate program
  - c. Other

6. How long have you been teaching choir?
  - a. 0-1 years
  - b. 2-5 years
  - c. 5-9 years
  - d. 10-15 years
  - e. 16-20 years
  - f. 21-30 years
  - g. 31-40 years
  
7. When you were hired as a music educator, at what level did you feel equipped to handle classroom management issues?
  - a. Highly equipped
  - b. Somewhat equipped
  - c. Equipped
  - d. Under equipped
  - e. Not equipped at all
  
8. Why or why not?  
(Open ended response)
  
9. Have you had experiential learning opportunities beyond practicum courses and/or student teaching experiences?  
(Yes/No)
  
10. If yes, how did experiential learning impact your confidence in providing effective classroom management?
  - a. Highly impacted
  - b. Mostly impacted
  - c. Slightly impacted
  - d. Unimpacted
  - e. Negatively impacted
  
11. Did student teaching impact your confidence in providing effective classroom management?  
(Yes/No)
  
12. If yes, in what way did student teaching impact your confidence?  
(Open-ended response)
  
13. What classroom management skills do you believe can and/or should be taught in the university classroom?  
(Open-ended response)

14. How much have your conducting abilities impacted your ability to provide effective classroom management?
- Highly impacted
  - Mostly impacted
  - Slightly impacted
  - Unimpacted
  - Unsure
15. Why or why not?  
(Open-ended response)
16. Have you mentored a student teacher?  
(Yes/No)
17. On average, have your student teachers been well-equipped to handle the classroom management-related needs of your students?
- Highly equipped
  - Somewhat equipped
  - Equipped
  - Under equipped
  - Not equipped at all
  -
18. Why or why not?  
(Open-ended response)
19. Have you found that practicum experiences provide better opportunities to hone classroom management skills?
- Strongly agree
  - Somewhat agree
  - Unsure
  - Somewhat disagree
  - Strongly disagree
20. Did your student teaching experience provide opportunities to hone your classroom management skills?
- Strongly agree
  - Somewhat agree
  - Unsure
  - Somewhat disagree
  - Strongly disagree
21. Why or why not?  
(Open-ended response)

22. Are you willing to partner in experiential learning projects for pre-service music educators?  
(Yes/No)
23. How effective is mentoring in the development of confidence and pedagogical ability in beginning music educators?
- Highly effective
  - Mostly effective
  - Somewhat effective
  - Not effective
  - Inefficient
24. Are you willing to mentor beginning music educators?  
(Yes/No)
25. To what level can choral classroom management be effectively taught and learned in the college or university classroom?
- Completely thoroughly
  - Mostly thoroughly
  - Somewhat thoroughly
  - Basic level
  - Not at all

**VITA**

Brooke Ann Ward

Old Dominion University

F. Ludwig Diehn School of Music

1330 West 49<sup>th</sup> Street

Norfolk, Virginia 23529

Brooke Ann Ward is completing her Master of Music Education degree at the Old Dominion University F. Ludwig Diehn School of Music, where she graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Music, Music Education degree. Brooke is the chorus teacher at Blair Middle School in Norfolk, Virginia.

Brooke has participated in choral music ensembles such as the University Concert Choir, Diehn Chorale, New Dominions Vocal Jazz, Really Big Chorus, Symphonicity, Virginia Chorale, and the Virginia Symphony Chorus. As a pianist, she has accompanied various high school ensembles, been accepted into the Brevard Music Center's summer intensive, and performed as a soloist at the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts in Virginia Beach. During her time as an undergraduate student, Brooke Ward functioned as the resident choir manager, a member of the Honors College, and was inducted into several honors fraternities on campus including Phi Theta Kappa, Pi Kappa Lambda, and Omicron Kappa Delta. Brooke was the recipient of the Nybakken-Graves Education Scholarship, Higginbotham Endowed Scholarship, Vogan Scholarship, Claire Cucchiari-Loring Scholarship, Old Dominion Presidential Scholarship, and the F. Ludwig Diehn Scholarship.