



135  
535  
THS

**LIBRARY**  
**Michigan State**  
**University**

This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

THE PERCEPTIONS OF BOYS REGARDING  
THE CHANGING VOICE

presented by

PAMELA DEE KRIEKARD

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for

MASTERS degree in MUSIC EDUCATION

*Colleen M. Carney*  
Major professor

Date 7/25/01

PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.  
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.  
MAY BE RECALLED with earlier due date if requested.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE
<del>APR 19 2003</del>		
<del>05 11 04</del>		



THE PERCEPTIONS OF BOYS REGARDING THE CHANGING VOICE

By

Pamela Dee Kriekard

A THESIS

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC EDUCATION

School of Music

2001

.

## ABSTRACT

### THE PERCEPTIONS OF BOYS REGARDING THE CHANGING VOICE

By

Pamela Dee Krickard

The purpose of this action research interview study was to examine the perceptions of the boys in my eighth grade choir (n=10) whose voices have changed or are changing. Research questions included: (a) How do the boys in my choir feel about their voice changing? (b) How do their peers treat them as their voice changes? (c) How do their parents treat them as their voice changes? (d) Am I accommodating them with language they understand and music that is comfortable to sing?

Data included a researcher log, two rounds of videotaped interviews with the boys by different interviewers, participant logs and colleague feedback about the interviews. The results based on the data indicated that the boys were at ease with the voice change experience. Both peers and parents were found to be positive, and the boys felt that I treated them positively as well. Results include: discussion of the possible limitations of this study; a description of the classroom environment in which the boys are a part; and details regarding instructional strategies and modeling used in my classroom. Discussion of the validity and transferability of these results and implications for teaching and research are included.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1	
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2	
REVIEW OF LITERATURE	5
Scholarship	5
Review of Research	7
Male Changing Voice	7
Dynamics	8
Male Perceptions	11
CHAPTER 3	
METHODOLOGY	15
Permission	15
Site	15
Participants	16
Pilot Study	16
Data Collection Devices	17
Researcher Log	18
Interviews	18
Second Round of Interviews	19
Participant Logs	19
Colleague Feedback	20
Calendar	21
Validity	21
CHAPTER 4	
ANALYSIS	22
CHAPTER 5	
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	25
How do the boys in my choir feel about their voice changing?	25
How do their peers treat them as their voice changes?	28
How do their parents treat them as their voice changes?	29
Am I accommodating them with language they understand and music that is comfortable to sing?	30
CHAPTER 6	
DETAILS OF MY CLASSROOM	31
Possible Limitations	31
Classroom Environment	31

Instructional Strategies	32
Modeling	33
CHAPTER 7	
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	35
Conclusion	35
Recommendations for Teaching and Research	35
REFERENCES	38
APPENDIX A	40
APPENDIX B	41
APPENDIX C	43
APPENDIX D	45
APPENDIX E	46
APPENDIX F	47



## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Understanding the physical, emotional and mental changes that boys in music classes experience as they go through puberty is a challenge. Many researchers have attempted to explain these changes and to explain how teachers feel when their male students are undergoing these changes. Music educators have continually studied the aspects of the male changing voice in order to assist vocal music teachers who are struggling with the challenges of meeting the needs of these singers (Coffman, 1968; Funderburk-Galvan, 1987; Harris, 1996; Karr, 1988; Moore, 1995; Taylor, 1966). McKinney (1994) suggests voice placement is, "Important because misclassification can rob a voice of tonal beauty and freedom of production, can cause endless frustration and disappointment, can shorten a singing career, and can cause vocal damage of varying degrees of permanence"(p.107). Every voice, male and female will change during the pubescent years, though, the male endures a much more drastic change. Not only can it be frustrating, but it can create "embarrassing moments" (Brinson, 1996, p.209).

Little research has been done to explore the personal perceptions of the boys undergoing these changes. As a middle school choral teacher, I looked at how the male singers in the choir that I teach felt about their voice changes and how they thought others felt about them as well. I wanted to know how I could make them feel comfortable through the change of their voice in the choral setting. Not only can the voice change itself be challenging, according to Brinson (1996), "if they are met with a well-meaning director who has limited knowledge about adolescent vocal development, they are likely to experience frustration, limited musical success, and may decide that continued participation in choir is not what they want to do"(p.210). I anticipated that by conducting this action research study, I would obtain the knowledge I needed about how boys feel during adolescent vocal development so that I could accommodate future singers in my ensembles.

Although I was able to find research related to this study, no researchers have been concerned with the perceptions of the boys in my own class. Performing action research, which is research "carried out by practitioners to improve their own practice"(Gall, Gall & Borg, 1999, p.8), was the most productive and cost-effective, or less expensive course. It was appropriate for me to perform this action research study because of the familiarity I had with these students, it was cost-effective because I used my own time and space to facilitate the study, and because the results I found have immediate use in my classroom.

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of the boys in my choir whose voices have changed or are changing. I wanted to examine how they felt when their voice changes, how they thought they were treated by others during the change and how they felt I was treating them as their choir teacher. I also wanted to find out if the voice change process was a good or bad experience for them.

### Definitions

In this study, *voice change* refers to the physical change a male experiences when his larynx grows both in length and from front to back and when his speaking voice drops approximately one octave.

### Personal Orientation

I have been teaching for just over four years in Forest Hills Public Schools, which is an affluent school district surrounding a large company. The majority of the population is Caucasian and the minority population consists of small percentages of African-American, Indian, and Asian students. I mainly teach choral music to students in grades six through eight.

My undergraduate studies gave me a large body of knowledge as a base for teaching choral music at the middle school level. I felt prepared for organizing concerts, teaching musical concepts, and (I thought) for classifying voices into voice parts. What I was not prepared for was teaching boys whose voices were changing. I did not know how to place them into sections when there was no section that fit their voice. I did not know how to accommodate small ranges that changed from week to week and sometimes from day to day. What I really did not understand was how they felt. I had never asked the boys in my choirs if they felt like they were accommodated in my class. I struggle to keep large numbers of boys in choir, and I felt that this might have been because they were not comfortable singing through their voice changes. By learning the perspectives of these boys on their voice change and whether I am helping them to feel comfortable, I now understand what I can do to accommodate the participants and future singers so they will want to continue singing.

### Theoretical Perspective

The lens through which I viewed the research questions and the data collected were that of a phenomenologist. Phenomenology defined is "the structure and essence of experience of this phenomenon for these people"(Patton, 1990, p.69). Patton explains that it is also "a focus on what people experience and how they interpret the world"(p.70). Most clearly, Patton says that "a phenomenological study is one that focuses on descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience"(p.71).

The phenomenon of this study is the changing voices of the boys in my eighth grade choir. The focus is on these singers' perceptions of this phenomenon, both as it is happening and in the past as it has occurred.

### Research Questions

Based on my own experience with boys whose voices are changing or who have changed, and a literature review, the following research questions emerged: (a) How do the boys in my choir feel about their voice changing? (b) How do their peers treat them as their voice changes? (c) How do their parents treat them as their voice changes? (d) Am I accommodating them with language they understand and music that is comfortable to sing?

## Chapter 2

### Review of Literature

This literature review on the male changing voice includes: (a) scholarly journal publications regarding changing voice, and (b) research of the topics of the changing voice, dynamics, and male perceptions about their voice changes.

#### Scholarship

Noticeably, there is a high attrition rate of males in middle school choirs. I know from experience as a student and a teacher that because a teacher does not know how to accommodate students experiencing "voice mutation" (Cooksey, 1977b, p.5), these students often leave choirs altogether. Because of the struggle with losing these students from our choirs, Demorest (2000) has suggested strategies to improve "the ways in which the male changing voice is evaluated and trained and getting boys more engaged in choir through properly chosen literature"(p.1).

Demorest (2000) also suggests a second set of strategies that focus on "appealing to the boys 'masculinity,' usually through stereotypes"(p.1). These are things that are achievable once the students are in the class. If we as teachers can find ways of making choir participation for boys interesting, for example, focusing on the athletes in the population, we can begin to work on keeping them interested in staying in choir. Kennedy (1999) (in Demorest, 2000) found in her research on boys' reasons for participating in choir that "the most compelling reasons were related not to vocal or musical concerns, but to male identity"(p.1). She observed and interviewed a group of twelve boys from a junior high choir in the Northwest. The following are some of the responses related to "the importance of identifying choir as a male activity":

Bob: "I had a friend that switched into choir and I guess everybody's switching over there. So I said 'might as well join it and then I ended up liking it. So I stayed another year and got into vocal ensemble, and now here I am."

Aki: "That's why I never done it before. Like, man, it's...girl stuff. Only, after I did it...you could see it wasn't. The only way you would know is if you actually get in there and join."(p.1)

Kennedy's study suggests that the reason for participation of boys in choir is not only the singing itself, but the perception of being male that is visible to themselves and their peers. Playing football is perceived as an acceptable activity for boys by their peers. Vocal music teachers need to help singing to become a perceived acceptable activity as well.

In order to understand how to solve the problems of voice classification when voice mutation occurs, one needs to understand the physical changes that happen to a male child of the middle school age. The experts vary a bit on what the ages actually are for the voice change of most boys, but the range has been identified as anywhere between the ages of 9 and 15.

During adolescence, many physical changes occur. Before this happens, there are low levels of sex hormones maintained in the body. These are "androgens, estrogens, and progestins"(Collins, 1993, p.148). Collins goes on to explain that "at an appointed time the hypothalamus relays a message to the pituitary gland, which then increases sevenfold the production of growth hormones"(p.148). All of these things depend heavily upon "body weight, athletic training and exercise, heredity, and nutrition"(Collins, 1993, p.148). Physical changes include growth of pubic and body hair, ejaculation, and fast growth in height. Barresi (1986) (In Brinson, 1996) explains further that, "The boy's larynx grows both in length and in the antero-posterior direction (front to back), resulting in the appearance of the 'Adam's apple.' Their vocal cords lengthen by one centimeter and become much thicker than the female's, allowing for a lower, fuller sound"(p.211).

Understanding the physical aspects of voice change will assist teachers in finding ways to classify their students. The following research clarifies some of the questions asked by many vocal music educators concerning voice change.

## Review of Research

Studies by music educators (Coffman, 1968; Funderburk-Galvan, 1987; Harris, 1996; Karr, 1988; Moore, 1995; Taylor, 1966) are listed that explored the aspects of the male changing voice in addition to a study on the perceptions of males of the voice-change process (Killian, 1997). Descriptions of these studies will provide further insight into the understanding of the male changing voice.

### Male changing voice.

Coffman's (1968) study was based on a conviction that "school music teachers were faced with the occurrence of a significant incidence of boys' voice changes in grades four, five, and six"(abstract). He found that there were data supporting that boys were maturing physically at an earlier age year by year. His research was then designed to secure data concerning boys' voice changes in grades four, five, and six and to determine characteristics of these voices. He also examined music literature available for this age group and determined criteria for writing new material to suit these voices.

Coffman's method of study consisted of the administration of two vocal tests. The first test was given to 2,515 males in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades in Leon County, Florida. The test was given in a group situation and was designed to find boys with the potential for a changing voice. Those found to have voices in any phase of change were then administered a second test. Of 1,063 boys given the second test, 981 were then interviewed individually. The test determined the highest and lowest voice pitches by having the boys sing a simple song in a multiple of keys.

When Coffman found that his theories were confirmed, he reviewed materials in music textbooks for grades four, five and six. He found that, in general, "vocal music presently available for singers in these grades is not commensurate with their unique ranges"(p.119). Finding this, he arranged four folk songs for performance by singers in upper-elementary grades. These arrangements were distributed in five of the schools

containing the research population and were found to be successful when used with this age group.

Coffman (1968) suggests that a similar research project be undertaken on a large scale throughout the country. This research could have a large impact on the availability of music suitable for singers in the upper-elementary grades.

Similarly, Moore (1995) studied the phenomenon of the male voice changing at an earlier age as compared to research in earlier decades. A secondary purpose of her study was to find the extent to which the degree of voice change affects a boy's attitude regarding the testing procedure. Her subjects were 60 boys who were administered a voice testing procedure in the fall and spring of a school year. The results were categorized into stages (according to the stages developed by Cooksey [1977a]: Premutation, early mutation, high mutation, postmutation, and early adult.). When compared to earlier research such as Coffman, the results indicated that voice changes did in fact occur at an earlier age. Responses to the attitudinal survey indicated that the attitude about the testing procedure is not greatly influenced by the degree of voice change.

Karr (1988) was also concerned with the occurrence of earlier ages of boys with changing voices. His study tested a small random sample of 10 singers from grade six through grade ten. He used a simple time-series design method of survey in which two voice tests were given. The data Karr collected indicated "that the voice change was occurring earlier than it had twenty years ago" (Karr, 1988, p.55). This study also lent support to the voice change theories of Cooksey.

According to Brinson (1996), the speaking (fundamental frequency) voice is where one should start in determining a boy's voice range. An exercise beginning on the speaking pitch and then descending by half-steps will help facilitate the lower limits of his voice. The same exercise can be used in the other direction for the higher limits of a boy's voice. Brinson suggests doing this every six to eight weeks. By using Harris'



method for locating the speaking frequency and Brinson's methods for locating the comfortable range, one could more easily and accurately classify a voice.

Once a vocal music teacher determines the strengths of the singers, the teacher faces the challenge of finding music to suit the choir. Taylor (1966) performed a study based on the assumption that "the problems of boys' changing voices were directly linked to the kinds and suitability of music used for junior high school singing"(p.1). The challenge was then to document the scarcity of suitable music and find the norms and limitations for the composition of such music. The norms were what was standard for music at this level, and the limitations referred to what kept this music from being more suitable. Evidence of and reasons for scarcity were drawn from a comparative and critical analysis. From the analysis, norms and limitations were drawn, and based on these findings, ten choral works were composed. Taylor concludes that there is further need for more research in determining ranges in junior high voices and laboratory experimentation on the specifics of the limitations of these voices. He also concludes that there is a need for a survey or catalog of the available contemporary literature suitable for these voices.

Funderburk-Galvan's (1987) purpose of study was to analyze the factors involved in "the type of teaching which results in superior performances presented by junior high school mixed choruses"(abstract). She classified the teachers of these superior performers as performance-successful. A second purpose of her study was to compile a list of compositions suggested by these successful teachers. She investigated the voice ranges and tessituras of junior high school boys as guidelines for these teachers to choose choral music for junior high school mixed choruses. She also examined teachers' choices of voice groupings to use with the singers, the number of rehearsals per week, and the length of the rehearsals. She studied 44 teachers of junior high school choirs in Indiana and divided them into two groups for comparison. The first were those whose choirs received superior ratings at least three times within five years at state choral festivals.

Because of these ratings, she labeled them "performance-successful," and those whose choruses that did not receive superior ratings she labeled "performance-active." Each teacher was sent a researcher-designed questionnaire, which asked about the teacher's "philosophy of the male changing voice, teaching situation, and teaching experience."

Funderburk-Galvan found that there was a significant difference between the two groups of teachers in the number of years of teaching. The number of years of teaching had an effect on success and the ways in which teachers choose music. The performance-successful teachers named ranges and tessituras with a small span of pitches as guidelines for choosing music. The majority of both groups reported using music with soprano, alto and baritone (SAB) voicings for their choirs. A list of 178 compositions was compiled that included comments indicating the need for more compositions for SAB voicing with a more "limited baritone range, melody lines for boys, and arrangements of 'classic' choral literature arranged for SAB voices"(abstract).

#### Dynamics.

Harris (1996) explains that research on voice change falls into two categories: "music education studies of changes in the singing voice and speech studies of changes in the speaking voice"(abstract). He states that what the studies do not consider are the dynamic abilities of male singers at different stages of vocal development. Harris focuses a great deal on the concept of tessitura, which he defines as "a portion of the range which is most controllable in terms of dynamics and agility and is optimal in tonal quality"(p.6). He explains that vocal music literature is inconsistent in defining tessitura, and that it is often used interchangeably with the term range, which means the lowest and highest notes one can sing.

His study used the phonetograph to find differences in measure of intensity control between pre-pubertal, pubertal (changing), and post-pubertal voices in 48 males ages 9 to 18 years old. The measures were compared to ratings of vocal strength by a panel of four music educators in order to determine if tessitura could be identified.

The results showed that the "Greatest Dynamic Range" (GDR) on the phonetograph, which indicated the area the singers had the most dynamic control, was smaller than the range at which a singer sounded the best. The tessitura was found in most singers in the lower portion of the vocal range, around the "mean speaking fundamental frequency" (Harris, 1996, p.69).

#### Male perceptions.

Killian (1997) performed a descriptive study designed to "examine the perceptions of voice change among changing-voice boys by simply asking their opinions" (p.523). Her subjects consisted of boy singers (n=43) (junior high boys presently participating in a choir), boy nonsingers (n=34) (junior high boys currently not participating in any musical organization), men singers (n=31) (men over the age of 23 who reported they were singing in an organization at the time of their voice change), and men nonsingers (n=34) (men over the age of 23 who reported they were not singing at the time of their voice change). Further, the pool of men was divided into men who were currently musicians (men currently in a music profession or musical organization) and men who were currently nonmusicians (men not currently involved with music).

Because the focus of the study was the changing voice, only boys who were already involved in the voice change were of experimental interest. To decide whether the voices have changed or were changing, the speaking voice was judged because it is a good indicator of voice change. Those voices that seemed unchanged were omitted from analysis, but the boys were interviewed for the sake of enabling them to maintain their dignity. Thirteen singers and 10 nonsingers were omitted from analysis.

A director with more than 10 years' experience working with changing voice choirs served as a reliability observer, listening to 20% of the changing-voice interviews. The reliability between observers was calculated by dividing the sum of agreements plus disagreements = .93.

Boy singers were interviewed during a solo/ensemble contest that included boys from 15 different schools. Boy nonsingers were interviewed at a suburban junior high and consisted of those enrolled in industrial technology and computer classes who volunteered to speak with the experimenter. Several races were represented, but no effort was made to control for race or analyze results by race.

Men were interviewed on the campus of a southwestern university and included students, college professors, groundskeepers, staff members, and Rotary Club members, as well as educators and parents in nearby schools. Again, no effort was made to control race or analyze results by race. The men ranged in age from 23 to 80 years. No attempt was made to control for age except to ensure that they had completed the voice change. Anyone under 23 years of age was excluded to insure voice change, because research indicated that the voice change could occur as late as 19-20.

The subjects were individually given a list of open-ended questions about their voice change and were instructed to speak their answers into a tape recorder. The experimenter interviewed the men, but a pilot study showed that boys talked more freely and at greater length when no one else was in the room.

The boys were told: "I'm interested in the words boys use to describe how their voices feel and what their voices do when they begin to change, so please give as much detail as possible" (p.525). Men were told: "I'm interested in the words boys use to describe how their voices feel and what their voices do when they begin to change. I want to compare boys' answers with what men remember about their voice changes, so please give as much detail as possible when you describe your voice change" (p.525).

All subjects were asked the following list of questions:

1. Birth date.
2. Are you presently singing or playing in any organization? If so, what?
3. Has your voice changed yet?[boys]

Approximately how old were you when your voice changed?[men]

4. If you can, tell me when you first noticed it change. (This could be a date or it could be an incident such as "right before solo/ensemble contest," or "just after my birthday.") What made you notice this change?
5. Describe what it feels like to sing or talk while your voice is changing. Use as much detail as possible. Describe what your voice does, how it makes you feel, etc. Be detailed.
6. Does your voice change affect your singing? How?
7. What is the most difficult thing about your voice changing?
8. What is the best thing about your voice changing?
9. Are there any other details you'd like to add? (p.525)

The results of Killian's study were analyzed from transcripts of the audiotaped interviews. The researcher examined the interviews for areas of frequent occurrences. Following this, categories were developed with assistance from two choral educators, each with a minimum of eight years' experience teaching junior high boys. The interviews were then scored based on the frequency of responses within each of the categories.

Results showed that for 87% of the boys and 81% of the men, the voice-change process was positive or neutral. The study explains in greater detail how this is broken down. Analysis of frequency of specific words found in the scripts was done using the Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance by ranks. This revealed no significant differences in the rankings of the terminology among the four groups.

After sharing the results, Killian discusses the findings. Readers are "cautioned to limit interpretation of results to the data as presented. Data did not address whether male or female teachers handle a changing-voice situation differently or whether male or female teachers might require different training to work effectively with changing voices"(p.533). Most importantly, Killian says, that, "the variety of experiences noted by the subjects in this study lend explanation (but not solution) to the conflicts in data in the

profession regarding the physiological stages of the changing voice"(p.534). The researcher suggests further study is needed to examine those "Physiological, acoustical, and psychological factors that affect the human voice"(p.534).

In searching for research, I found that the Killian article was the only study similar to the study I wanted to conduct. It guided me in forming my interview questions and gave me some insight into what responses I could expect. Other research in the area of voice change only talk about the physical changes but not the perceptions of those experiencing the change.

### Chapter 3

#### Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of the boys in my choir whose voices have changed or are changing. I wanted to examine how they felt when their voice changes, how they thought they were treated by others during the change and how they felt I was treating them as their choir teacher. I also wanted to find out if the voice change process was a good or bad experience for them.

The design for this action research study was a qualitative interview format that spanned the 2000-2001 school year from August to June. The action research method gave my participants an opportunity to expand on their responses, because the format lent itself to be open to conversation. Data collection devices included a researcher's log, videotaped interviews, ten participant logs, and feedback about the videotape by two colleagues.

#### Permission

Permission was first requested from Michigan State University using the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects form (see Appendix A). Letters for permission were distributed to the administration of the school where the study was taking place (see Appendix B). Letters for permission were also sent home with the potential participants (see Appendix C). These letters were similar to each other in format and explained the purpose for the study, how the study was to be conducted and who would be involved. The letters also explained the calendar of events and how the findings would be used.

#### Site

Forest Hills Central Middle School is located in the center of a large district containing six elementary schools, two fifth and sixth grade schools, two middle schools, and two high schools. The community is largely affluent and is steadily growing with the

constant building of new housing developments. Central Middle school has a population of approximately 600 students in seventh and eighth grade.

### Participants

The class in which the participants were a part was an eighth grade choir class containing 28 students. Of the 28, 11 were male, and 17 were female. The participants were 10 of the 11 males. One student did not participate because he failed to return a consent form. The socio-economic class is primarily affluent. Most of the students come from two parent incomes, but not necessarily two parent homes.

### Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in December of a 15-student sample enrolled in the choral program at another middle school in the district. This school is equivalent in size to the school in which I teach; however, the size of the choral program is much larger than the size of the choral program where the participants of this study are a part. The teacher was willing to participate by allowing her students to take part in the pilot study. She found it important to assist in any way she could, because the results of this study could give her some information to assist the boys she teaches in her middle school choirs.

My colleague at this middle school allowed me to use her office that she shared with the band and orchestra teachers. All the teachers were teaching at the time, and the office was vacant. I gave a brief description of my study before I started the interviews of the pilot study participants. I described its purpose and explained to them what they would be doing and how it would help me with my future study. One by one, the boys were asked to come in and sit facing me. The questions were asked quickly to facilitate as many boys as possible in one class period, and the responses were recorded in a log. The pilot study was not videotaped.



The boys were asked the interview questions in order to enable me to formulate the questions in a logical order to facilitate the targeted responses from the actual participants in the study. Once the responses were recorded in a log, I found that the pilot study boys were giving me the types of responses I was looking for.

The boys in the pilot study thought that their voice change was of little significance. I realized that if I kept the questions in the same order when I interviewed the participants of this study, I may get similar responses. I thought that because the pilot study boys said the voice change was of little significance, my boys may have the same information to give. I found that this could be important in the results of my study.

Conducting a pilot study gave me the chance to practice the procedures of interviewing. It gave me a chance to practice some of the methods of interviewing talked about in Seidman (1998). He says that, "Interviewers, like good teachers in a classroom- must listen while remaining aware of the process as well as the substance. They must be conscious of time during the interview; they must be aware of how much has been covered and how much there is yet to go"(p.64). Because I knew I did not want to lose valuable rehearsal and instruction time, I wanted to complete my interviews in only one or two class periods. This gave me a chance to practice my pacing. I found that I could interview one boy in approximately four minutes. Some interviews took longer if the responses were lengthy or if the participant spent more time thinking about their responses before they answered the questions.

I also learned a great deal about body language. I found that by asking the questions while looking them in the eyes made some of them uncomfortable. Once I changed to asking the questions while looking at my paper, some of them seemed more at

ease. Those who did seem comfortable with eye contact also appeared more at ease when I smiled while I asked the questions.

### Data Collection Devices

Data collection devices are described here in order of significance. My log contained the most detailed information about classroom occurrences, the interviews, and observations of the participants. The interviews revealed the most direct responses to the questions, and the second round of interviews reinforced those responses. The participant logs gave another lens in which to view the feelings of the participants, and the colleague feedback offered reinforcement to my results.

#### Researcher log.

My log contained notes and observations of daily classroom activity. I recorded behaviors, comments made by the participants, and changes in classroom dynamics as they related to the study. Some notes were made prior to the school year based on the experience of the researcher with the participants in prior years. I would write in my log after class during my prep hour throughout the duration of the study. I would make entries on days when significant things happened in relation to the study or when I would make conclusions about things in the study. There were several days when entries were not made because the events in class did not relate to the study.

#### Interviews.

The interviews were conducted in a small room in the choral music room of Forest Hills Central Middle School. The room only contained boxes of music stored on shelves. Chairs were set up for myself and for the participant. The video camera was set up behind me facing the participant, since my actions were not directly related to the

results. Information on pacing and body language learned in the pilot study were applied to the actual interviews.

The boys were instructed to answer each question with as much detail as possible. They were asked the interview questions (see Appendix D) and given time to think about their responses and give their answers. I also simultaneously recorded their answers by hand using abbreviations to save time in writing.

#### Second round of interviews.

A male colleague in my district agreed to conduct a second round of videotaped interviews to enable the participants another chance to answer the same questions, but with a different interviewer. I used him as the second interviewer because I thought the boys might respond differently to him because he was male. A second interview was conducted to enable the participants to elaborate on their answers, add more to what they said in the previous interview, and have more freedom to be honest because this person was not their teacher and they did not have a personal relationship with him. No feedback regarding the second interviews was solicited from this colleague; however, he did review the first round of interviews.

#### Participant logs.

As a teacher in front of a class of 28 students, some things can often be overlooked. The participant logs gave me one more lens in which to look for more in depth information for this study.

The participant logs were given to the participants prior to the start of the study to give them a full school year to write down information related to the study. I kept the instructions general to allow them to feel as though they could write anything about their

voice change and not just on specific topics related to the change. Most of the boys only made a few entries, but they were useful. The one participant that did not obtain permission to be a part of the study chose to write in his log, but it was not used in the results.

They were told that their writing was confidential and only I would be reading it. They were also instructed to keep their logs in their choir folders and file them in a cabinet in the classroom. False names known only by the participants and myself were written on the logs to insure confidentiality if the logs were found by anyone else.

#### Colleague feedback.

The fourth form of data was feedback from colleagues. I made copies of the interview tape and sent them through inter-school mail to three colleagues in the Forest Hills Public Schools system. The three choral directors range in experience from 20 years choral, 20 years elementary general music and choral, and 10 years choral. Two of the three directors are male. The colleagues were also sent a form, that simply listed the participants in the order in which they were interviewed and were asked to return feedback on each interview based on the research questions. Two of the three colleagues responded. One was male with 10 years choral experience and the other was female with 20 years elementary general music and choral (See Appendices E and F for feedback form.).

## Calendar

The following is a calendar of events from the study:

<u>Month</u>	<u>Event</u>
August:	My personal log was started with writing about thoughts on the study.
September/October:	Inform parents verbally at a parent meeting of the study and explain the study to the potential participants. Journals were given to the potential participants.
December:	Pilot study was conducted. Reminders were made to the participants about writing in their journals.
January-April:	Continued reminders to the participants about the study and writing in their journals. I continued to write in my log about classroom occurrences related to the study.
April:	Obtained permission from parents of the participants.
April-June:	Conducted first and second round of interviews and the participants and I continued writing in our logs.

## Validity

The data collection devices listed above were examples of triangulation of sources. By using multiple sources of data, the results become more valid because the findings are viewed through more than one lens. In addition, the participants were interviewed once by myself, and interviewed a second time by someone else, which gave them an opportunity to evaluate their responses again. Having more than one interviewer also improves validity in this study. Because I already knew the students, and had experience as a choral teacher, I could lean on my own expertise as the investigator. Lastly, having multiple interpretations of the data by colleagues by giving them the opportunity to respond to the interviews further enhanced the trustworthiness of this study.

## Chapter 4

### Analysis

Until this past year, I had never discussed male voice change with my students. I did not bring attention to those who showed symptoms of the change, and simply placed boys in sections where their voices were best suited. There were times when just one year ago some of these boys sang baritone, some alto, and some soprano, and none of them seemed to prefer one over the other.

Initially, it appeared that when I made mention of my study to the participants, they reacted as if their voice change was not important. It seemed that when I spoke with the boys at the beginning of the year to inform them of the study, they wondered why I would be concerned with the topic.

Once all the data was collected and organized, it was time to begin the analysis of the results. In a qualitative study, analysis is combined with data collection. Although Seidman (1998) suggests keeping interviewing and analysis separate (p.96), a qualitative researcher is making conclusions during the entire process. Therefore, even when I was observing things in class and conducting the interviews, I was making some conclusions based on emerging consistencies.

The first form of data I looked at in the analysis stage was my log. I felt that it held the most significant information about the everyday occurrences related to the study and spanned the longest period of time. The interviews, participant logs, and colleague feedback gave me accounts of smaller periods of time or memory.

Second, I looked at the interviews to find if there were any consistencies with my log and observations. I also looked at the interviews to see if I could learn anything that I

had not seen by observing the boys in class from day to day. I found from viewing the videotapes from the first and second interviews that the answers remained mostly the same when I compared them. No new information was obtained from the second interviews, which verifies the results of the first interviews.

Third, I read all the participant logs and compared the findings there to the findings from my log and the interviews. I especially compared the logs to the interviews to find if the chance to write privately enabled the boys to give different answers than they did when they were in front of me.

Fourth, I reviewed the feedback from my two colleagues. I chose to look at this data last, because I knew it did not give me important information related directly to the feelings of each participant. Their remarks about each participant were quite brief and did not give much detail. However, their observations of the interviews seemed to come to the same conclusions that I observed. Although their feedback did not give me new information, it reaffirmed my own conclusions.

I began to see some consistencies from one form of data to the next. As I studied the data, three themes emerged. The first theme was the idea that the voice change experience was of little significance to these boys. All forms of data support the idea that the participants were not emotionally effected by this phenomenon. As I searched the interviews, logs and feedback, some codes surfaced that led directly to this idea. Many of the boys made comments both in their logs and their interviews about the voice change experience being “no big deal.” I wrote in my log following the explanation about the study to the participants, “None of the boys seem to think that their voice changing is

## Chapter 5

### Results and Discussion

The results and discussion section of this paper reviews the research questions and presents data to support the results of the conclusions. Listed in order are the research questions each stating quotes from the different data collection devices and follows with discussion on the findings.

#### How do the boys in my choir feel about their voice changing?

When searching for answers to this question, I wanted to find what sorts of emotions the boys experienced during voice change. I found that in all the forms of data, there appeared the idea that the boys felt their voice change was “no big deal.” The data consistently showed a feeling of ease with the experience.

As I started the year with voice testing for part placement, I noticed that the boys were content with the placements I assigned them, no matter where I located them in the choir. I noted in my log:

*I was surprised to find that even though some boys were singing baritone because their voices had changed, the boys I had to place in the alto section were at ease singing that part. I thought for sure these eighth graders would all want to sing the baritone part, even if their voices weren't ready for it yet. (September)*

When I conducted the pilot study, I found that those particular boys said they did not think the voice change was of much importance. I expected to find different responses from the actual participants, stating that there were struggles, either physical, or emotional, with the change. This did not occur.

When asked the question, “Describe what it feels like to sing or talk while your voice is changing,” most of the comments were similar. For example:



1. *It felt kinda weird.*
2. *Different than what you're used to.*
3. *It felt funny, like using my throat voice, it was kinda weird.*

The next question in the interview asked, "Does your voice change affect your singing?" Many of the participants responded with simple answers saying that the reason the change affects their singing is because now they sing a different voice part in the choir. They did not give the answers that I expected to hear, such as, "It's harder to sing," "I am embarrassed when I sing."

The next series of questions dealt with their experiences. Some of those responses were as follows:

1. *I never even knew my voice was changing because no one said anything about it.*
2. *I noticed my voice was changing, but no one else really did.*
3. *I thought my voice started to sound funny, but then I just realized that it was getting lower and I thought it was cool.*
4. *At one point last year, I was singing alto, then, it got too high, so I switched to baritone. I thought that was pretty cool, but it was no big deal.*

I had asked my colleagues to respond to the videotaped interviews in which they gave me feedback about their thoughts regarding the boys' experiences. Their responses were helpful because they saw generally the same things, but commented on separate issues. The male colleague reported on their physical and emotional states and the female reported on the overall feeling of the group.

1. *Boys are uniformly describing the physical change, rather than commenting on the psychological effects of the change.*
2. *Overall theme "no big deal," but pride in their ability to say their voices had changed or were changing.*

Both of my colleagues that responded and gave feedback identified that almost all the participants gave positive comments about their experiences. They found that both

the physical and the psychological affects of voice change were non-traumatic events in their lives.

Although Killian (1997) explained the voice change experience as a positive one, I was hoping to find that some boys do struggle emotionally with it so that I could adjust my teaching to give them a better choral experience. What I found was that although my methodology for this study was different from Killian's, my results were the same.

Nine of the ten participants claimed to have experienced voice change prior to the study. Most of the participants could not tell me that after their voice had changed, if they could recall symptoms when their voices began to change. They were also unable to recall any specific event that signaled a symptom of change.

It was surprising to me to find that such a drastic physical change in an adolescent male was of little significance to those it was happening to. Although I only interviewed ten boys, they were all in agreement that when their voices changed, if they changed, it was not a very important event in their lives.

I found in my personal log that I made comments on days when we either did voice testing or started new music and needed to re-evaluate voice parts. I saw to my surprise that some significant things were happening. I first thought that by mentioning the study to the participants, it would make them more aware of their voices and their masculinity. What I found was that they did not show signs of being aware of either of those things on most occasions. If their voices had not changed yet, they were at ease about singing a higher voice part because it was more comfortable to sing. They tended not to worry about upholding a masculine image.

There was only one situation that I listed in my log where I noticed one of the participants struggling with singing a higher part:

*We were starting a new piece of music in class, and the baritone section had an intriguing part. (Anonymous) was currently singing the alto part because his voice still rested comfortably in the alto range. When he noticed that all the other males except for him, and (Anonymous) whose voice had not yet changed, were singing the baritone part, he asked if he could switch parts. (April)*

This happened just one month before the last concert and the end of the school year. This was the first sign of any feelings of being uncomfortable with a voice part that I had seen since I started with this group of singers three years prior. It was the only time I saw these feelings during the course of the study.

#### How do their peers treat them as their voice changes?

The questions I wanted to focus on for this study were those pertaining to how they felt they were being treated while experiencing voice change. How were their peers interacting with them and responding to their changes? When asked, “How do your peers treat you while your voice is changing?” most of them replied with responses such as;

1. *They treated me the same.*
2. *Most of them were used to it.*
3. *They acted like nothing was happening.*
4. *The cool thing about my voice changing is that my friends’ voices are all changing too. It’s fun to go through it together, that way we all know what we are going through.*
5. *I like being able to talk to my friends whose voices have already changed. Then I know what to expect. They all tell me it’s no big deal.*

One comment that made me feel particularly good was written in one of the participant logs on a day that one of the boys’ voices was struggling. His voice cracked during a sectional when he could easily be heard. He mentioned in his writing that one of the other boys leaned over and said, “Did you just hear me? My voice cracked too!” He wrote that they both laughed and then started singing again as if it had never happened.

As I have been trying to learn from this experience as a teacher, I wanted to find out how their peers were treating them during their voice change. If there was a problem because of teasing and mockery, I wanted to be able to address it in class. I found that there was nothing to address. Interestingly, the boys form their own sorts of support groups and lean on each other. Not one of the participants in the study (or the pilot study) remarked on being teased when their voices sounded “funny.”

#### How do their parents treat them as their voice changes?

When formulating my research questions, I wondered if the way their parents treated them during the change had any affect on the boys. When asked in the interviews about the treatment from their parents, the responses mirrored those of the responses about their peers.

1. *My parents have never said anything about my voice.*
2. *My parents just say, “Hey, cool, your voice is getting lower.”*
3. *My mom told me I am starting to sound more like my dad every day. That made me feel good.*

One remark I found interesting was:

4. *Now that my voice is lower, I sound older. I get more responsibilities.*

He must have felt like this was a sign that he was growing up.

I commented in my log in the beginning of the year prior to having a meeting with the parents of the students in my class. It was an open house type of meeting during which the parents were meeting all the teachers and getting to know the curriculum. At that meeting, I mentioned the study and the fact that I would later be obtaining permission from them for their sons to be a part of it. I listed the research question and the reactions were those of excitement and curiosity, even when I mentioned that I would be asking them about how they treated their sons. My log entry read:

*Tonight I told the parents of the potential participants about the study. When I told them that I would be asking their boys about how their parents treated them, they seemed interested, not worried. I was nervous about telling them that I would be “digging” into their home lives and thought I would get some opposition. Instead, I received support! Maybe this means that they think that they have nothing to worry about. Maybe they have never even thought about their sons’ voice change? (August)*

I read that entry when I was later searching my data for themes. I realized that the responses of the participants to that question paralleled what I suspected, that their parents treat voice change with little importance.

Am I accommodating them with language they understand and music that is comfortable to sing?

There were two questions in the interviews about their perceptions of me as their teacher and how I treated them as their voices changed in class, and, if I chose music that was comfortable to sing. All ten of the participants stated that I made them feel comfortable both in class, and in the music I selected.

1. *I like how you let me sing the parts that I want.*
2. *You make me feel fine.*
3. *Fine.*
4. *Okay.*
5. *I like the music we sing.*
6. *Singing the low part is hard, but you teach it to us, so it gets easier.*
7. *I like it when you pick music that lets me sing really low.*

When the participants were interviewed a second time, their responses mirrored those of the interviews with me. These responses led me to explore the details of my teaching. Chapter Six discusses the details of my classroom and my teaching.

## Chapter 6

### Details of My Classroom

#### Possible Limitations

Finding out that what I am doing in my classroom is effective in regards to the males in my choirs feeling comfortable when their voices change is comforting to me. However, I question the fact that they all told me they were comfortable with me. I wonder if those responses were out of kindness or to please me. In issuing journals, I had hoped to find comments on days when they felt that they were not comfortable with a comment that I made, or a voice part I placed them in. Instead, I received the same types of responses to classroom activity as in the interviews. One such comment was, “Cool, Mrs. Kriekard let me be a baritone again.” This told me that he was happy with what I did for him.

I also question the second round of interviews with my colleague. When the interviewer walked into the classroom before the interviews, we chatted for a few moments. The boys may have seen that the two of us were friends and may have given their responses knowing that I was going to see them and that we would talk about them after the interviews were over. Their comments about me as their teacher may have once again been out of kindness.

#### Classroom Environment

Had there been a different population of participants that were unfamiliar to me, the results of this study would have been different. I chose to use my own students for this study as a form of action research to find out how I could make my future students more comfortable in a choir class as they experienced voice change. I wanted to learn

how my teaching style impacted this transition and if my relationships with the participants had any effect on the change as well.

What I found was that the participants were very comfortable with me and with my colleague. I believe that because I have been their teacher for three, and for some, four years, we have built a relationship. Some of them started with me in my first year of teaching when I taught Kindergarten through sixth grade. I had almost half of the boys in this study when they were in fifth grade general music class. Others of the boys joined with me in sixth grade choir, and one joined in eighth grade when he transferred to the district. I have been made aware that I had built a relationship of trust and friendship with the boys in my class before the start of this study.

### Instructional Strategies

Because I am trying to build a program that was once small, I have believed in making my class one in which the students feel a certain level of comfort and ownership. If they do not feel as though they belong in choir because of peer, teacher, or personal issues, they will not remain in the program. It has been my philosophy to make sure that all of those things are handled very carefully and that they feel they are a part of a safe environment.

I knew when I began as a middle school choral teacher that I would be dealing with boys whose voices were changing. This gave me an opportunity to learn more about the experience and learn how to improve my teaching skills because of it. Since I was trying to build the program, I wanted to do whatever I could to make all of the students in the class feel welcome and have them stay. I was up against a large instrumental program which was popular with both students and community. The choral program did

not have the same reputation. In attempting to build the program, learning more about the instruments (voices) involved helps know what attracts young singers to singing.

When I placed the students into voice parts, many of them would be placed according to their voice range. However, when placing the males, much of the decision making was done by choice. If a boy was on the edge of a part, but chose to sing there anyway, most often, I would permit it because I knew that I was not hurting their ego. Some choral directors would argue with this method of voice placement, but with the population I had to work with, it kept the students happy. Some of the boys would find that they were unable to sing the part they requested and simply asked to move to a different voice part. Because of our relationship, they felt comfortable asking to move, and, because I never made much of the situations, the class was at ease about it as well.

Another way I made them feel comfortable in the parts that they chose was to write new parts for them. If there were parts out of their range, I would re-write them to accommodate their voices. This did not occur with every song, however, many of the pieces were chosen according to the range of the singers in the choir. Only when the parts were not suitable for some were parts re-written.

### Modeling

An important part of my philosophy of teaching is modeling. Setting examples to my students of the kinds of behaviors that I expect in my classroom gives them a clear understanding of the outcomes I am searching for. When issues of voice change arise, I treat them with sensitivity and ease. When my boys see that I care about them, and that these issues are usually not a big deal, they learn this as part of their own behavior.



This is only one example of a classroom in which boys who are experiencing voice change are comfortable. However, it is a situation that has made many boys comfortable so that they can enjoy doing the thing they love, singing. Other teachers trying to build a choral program may want to consider this environment as a way of making the voice change a thing of ease for their boys.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this action research interview study was to examine the perceptions of the boys in my eighth grade choir (n=10) whose voices have changed or are changing. Research questions included: (a) How do the boys in my choir feel about their voice changing? (b) How do their peers treat them as their voice changes? (c) How do their parents treat them as their voice changes? (d) Am I accommodating them with language they understand and music that is comfortable to sing?

#### Conclusion

Although the methodology of this study was different than that of Killian's (1997), the results mirror each other, which further solidifies the results of this study. In conclusion, I did not find what I expected to find by conducting this study. I expected to share the difficulties that the adolescent male experiences in his relationships with those around him. First, what I found was that, because it happens to half our population, it is a natural phenomenon and, according to the participants in this study, it is "no big deal." Second, I found that as a teacher, if you create a safe environment, use appropriate instructional techniques and model to the males in middle school choirs that the changes in their voices are common, they will react with the same attitude.

#### Recommendations for Teaching and Research

First, I want to encourage the process of action research to all teachers because this format was valuable in enabling me to reflect on my classroom. Because we as teachers have a special rapport with our students, we can learn a great deal from them. We can use our students to find results that could help them and future students and

possibly other teachers in similar situations. In my study, I wanted to find ways through which I could help the boys in my class and the boys I will have in the future. If more teachers conduct action research studies, they will be able to give insight into the world of education.

It is probable that a different method would have obtained different results. A large sample survey to either teachers of middle school choirs or students in those choirs regarding their experiences would provide a different look at this topic. The same types of questions could be asked, but in survey format. The outcome may have even more detail to conclude upon because the survey format lends itself much more to confidentiality. Also, my sample was quite small. A larger sample would enable generalizability to the experiences of more boys.

An experimental study could be designed that examines various instruction strategies of multiple teachers. The students in different teaching situations may react differently to various instruction strategies during their voice change experiences. Teacher approaches to this phenomenon may affect how their students experience it.

A final suggestion for researchers is the possibility of a case study. This could involve one boy who agrees to participate in a study from before voice change until after voice change. The researcher would document all events, feelings, and observations for the duration of the agreed time and the findings could give much deeper insight into the voice change phenomenon for teachers, researchers, and parents alike.

The voice of one of my participants may best sum up this research regarding males and the changing voice. At the end of the school year, in a conversation about the study and his experience with voice change, one participant noted, "I am glad my voice

has already changed because I was worried about it, but when it happened, it wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be" (Recorded in researcher log.).

## References

- Barresi, A. (1986). *Barresi on adolescent voice*. Videotape. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin.
- Brinson, B. A. (1996). *Choral music: Methods and materials: Developing successful choral programs (Grades 5 to 12)*. (pp.209-233) New York: Schirmer Books.
- Coffman, W. S. (1968). A study of the incidence and characteristics of boys' voice change in grades four, five, and six, and implications for school music materials deriving there from. *Unpublished doctoral dissertation*, Florida State University.
- Collins, D. L. (1993). *Teaching choral music*. (pp.147-150) New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Cooksey, J. M. (1977-78a). The development of a contemporary, eclectic theory for the training and cultivation of the junior high school male changing voice. Part I. *Choral Journal*, 18 (2), 5-14.
- Cooksey, J. M. (1977-78b). The development of a contemporary, eclectic theory for the training and cultivation of the junior high school male changing voice. Part II. *Choral Journal*, 18 (3), 5-16.
- Demorest, S. M. (2000). Encouraging male participation in chorus. *Music Educators Journal*, 86 (4), 38-41.
- Gall, J. P, Gall, M. D, & Borg, W. R. (1999). *Applying Educational Research*. (p.8) New York: Longman.
- Funderburk-Galvan, J. (1987). Junior high school choral music teachers' philosophies of vocal mutation, choices of music, and teaching situations. *Unpublished doctoral dissertation*, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
- Harris, L. D. (1996). A study of intensity control in males with developing voices: Implications for pitch range and tessitura (choral music education, voice classification, boys, adolescents). *Dissertation Abstracts*, 57, 11A, (1996): 4682.

Karr, J. P. (1988). A vocal survey of male adolescent voices grades six through ten: A study on the incidence of changed voices with relation to extant theories.

*Unpublished doctoral dissertation*, University of Louisville.

Kennedy, M. (1999). It's cool because we like to sing: Junior high school boys' experience of choral music. *Presentation at the Desert Skies Symposium on Research in Music Education, Tucson*.

Killian, J. N. (1997). Perceptions of the voice-change process: Male adult versus adolescent musicians and nonmusicians. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 45 (4), 521-535.

McKinney, J. C. (1994). *The diagnosis and correction of vocal faults*. (pp.107-119) Tennessee: Genevox Music Group.

Moore, M. M. C. (1995). The adolescent male changing voice: A study of age and attitudinal comparisons. *Dissertation Abstracts*, 34, 01, (1995): 0018.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. (pp.69-71) California: Sage Publications.

Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Taylor, G. L. (1966). The problems of the changing voice and the literature for junior high school mixed chorus. (Research study no. 1). *Unpublished Ed.D. dissertation*, Colorado State College.

**MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

Appendix A

April 26, 2001

TO: Colleen CONWAY  
150 W Circle Dr.  
Music Bldg

RE: **IRB# 01-228 CATEGORY: EXPEDITED 2-F**

**APPROVAL DATE: April 26, 2001**

**TITLE: THE PERCEPTIONS OF BOYS REGARDING THE CHANGING VOICE: A  
QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW STUDY**

The University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects' (UCRIHS) review of this project is complete and I am pleased to advise that the rights and welfare of the human subjects appear to be adequately protected and methods to obtain informed consent are appropriate. Therefore, the **UCRIHS approved this project.**

**RENEWALS:** UCRIHS approval is valid for one calendar year, beginning with the approval date shown above. Projects continuing beyond one year must be renewed with the green renewal form. A maximum of four such expedited renewals possible. Investigators wishing to continue a project beyond that time need to submit it again for a complete review.

**REVISIONS:** UCRIHS must review any changes in procedures involving human subjects, prior to initiation of the change. If this is done at the time of renewal, please use the green renewal form. To revise an approved protocol at any other time during the year, send your written request to the UCRIHS Chair, requesting revised approval and referencing the project's IRB# and title. Include in your request a description of the change and any revised instruments, consent forms or advertisements that are applicable.

**PROBLEMS/CHANGES:** Should either of the following arise during the course of the work, notify UCRIHS promptly. 1) problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects or 2) changes in the research environment or new information indicating greater risk to the human subjects than existed when the protocol was previously reviewed and approved.



**OFFICE OF  
RESEARCH  
AND  
GRADUATE  
STUDIES**

**Assistant Vice President  
for Research**

Michigan State University  
46 Administration Building  
East Lansing, Michigan  
48824-1046

517/355-2180  
FAX: 517/353-2976

If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at (517) 355-2180 or via email: [UCRIHS@msu.edu](mailto:UCRIHS@msu.edu). Please note that all UCRIHS forms are located on the web: <http://www.msu.edu/user/ucrihs>

Sincerely,

Ashir Kumar, M.D.  
Interim Chair, UCRIHS

AK: br

cc: Pamela Krickard  
1142 Northlawn NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

## Appendix B

Dear Mr.Schultz (Principal),

I am writing for permission to conduct an action research study in my classroom for my thesis at Michigan State University. The study will include the male students in my eighth grade choir who have obtained permission from their parents to participate.

I have chosen the males in my class because the focus of my study is the male changing voice. I want to conduct videotaped interviews asking the participants the following questions:

1. Has your voice changed yet? If yes, when?
2. If you can, tell me when your first noticed it change. What made you notice this change?
3. Describe what it feels like to sing or talk while your voice is changing. Use as much detail as possible. Describe what your voice does, how it makes your feel, etc. Be detailed.
4. Does your voice change affect your singing? How?
5. What is the most difficult thing about your voice changing?
6. What is the best thing about your voice changing?
7. How do your peers treat you while your voice is changing?
8. How do your parents treat you while your voice is changing?
9. Am I making you feel comfortable in choir as your voice changes?
10. Am I choosing music that is comfortable for you to sing?
11. Are there any details you would like to add?

The students involved will only be required to use class time for two separate interviews each averaging approximately fifteen minutes. The first interview will be performed by myself and the second interview will be performed by a colleague in the district. There will be no penalties if the students decide to back out of the study at any time.

The study is voluntary and participation is not mandatory. The students can feel free to discontinue the study at anytime for any reason. I am requesting permission from both the students and their parents. Also, there is no personal cost to be involved in the study. The students names will be changed to ensure anonymity in all documents related to the study.

If there are any questions or concerns about the study please contact me, Pam Kriekard at 447-9598, or by e-mail at [pkriekar@fhps.k12.mi.us](mailto:pkriekar@fhps.k12.mi.us).

This study will be designed to enable me to use the results I find to help me to meet the needs of my male singers of the future if I am not already meeting those needs. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Pam Kriekard



(Appendix B)

If there are any questions or concerns about the rights of the subjects of this study, please contact:

UCRIHS Staff  
246 Administration Building, Michigan State University  
East Lansing, MI 48824-1046  
PHONE (517) 355-2180 FAX (517) 353-2976  
E-Mail - [UCRIHS@msu.edu](mailto:UCRIHS@msu.edu)  
WEB SITE - <http://www.msu.edu/user/ucrihs/>

---

Please sign here and return with your approval of this action research  
study:\_\_\_\_\_.

## Appendix C

Dear Parent/Guardian ,

I am writing for permission to conduct an action research study in my classroom for my thesis at Michigan State University. The study will include the male students in my eighth grade choir who have obtained permission from their parents to participate.

I have chosen the males in my class because the focus of my study is the male changing voice. I want to conduct videotaped interviews asking the participants the following questions:

1. Has your voice changed yet? If yes, when?
2. If you can, tell me when your first noticed it change. What made you notice this change?
3. Describe what it feels like to sing or talk while your voice is changing. Use as much detail as possible. Describe what your voice does, how it makes your feel, etc. Be detailed.
4. Does your voice change affect your singing? How?
5. What is the most difficult thing about your voice changing?
6. What is the best thing about your voice changing?
7. How do your peers treat you while your voice is changing?
8. How do your parents treat you while your voice is changing?
9. Am I making you feel comfortable in choir as your voice changes?
10. Am I choosing music that is comfortable for you to sing?
11. Are there any details you would like to add?

The students involved will only be required to use class time for two separate interviews each averaging approximately fifteen minutes. The first interview will be performed by myself and the second interview will be performed by a colleague in the district. There will be no penalties if the students decide to back out of the study at any time.

The study is voluntary and participation is not mandatory. The students can feel free to discontinue the study at anytime for any reason. I am requesting permission from both the students and parents. Also, there is no personal cost to be involved in the study. The students names will be changed to ensure anonymity in all documents related to the study. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

If there are any questions or concerns about the study please contact me, Pam Kriekard at 447-9598, or by e-mail at [pkriekar@fhps.k12.mi.us](mailto:pkriekar@fhps.k12.mi.us).

This study will be designed to enable me to use the results I find to help me to meet the needs of my male singers of the future if I am not already meeting those needs. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Pam Kriekard, Choral Director, CMS

(Appendix C)

If there are any questions or concerns about the rights of the subjects of this study, please contact:

UCRIHS Staff  
246 Administration Building, Michigan State University  
East Lansing, MI 48824-1046  
PHONE (517) 355-2180 FAX (517) 353-2976  
E-Mail - [UCRIHS@msu.edu](mailto:UCRIHS@msu.edu)  
WEB SITE - <http://www.msu.edu/user/ucrihs/>

---

Please sign here with your approval of your son's participation in this  
study:\_\_\_\_\_.

Student signature with agreement to participate in the study:

\_\_\_\_\_.

## Appendix D

### Interview Questions

1. "Has your voice changed yet"(p.525)(Killian, 1997)? If yes, when?
2. "If you can, tell me when your first noticed it change. What made you notice this change"(p.525)(Killian, 1997)? A date? An event?
3. "Describe what it feels like to sing or talk while your voice is changing. Use as much detail as possible. Describe what your voice does, how it makes your feel, etc. Be detailed"(p.525)(Killian, 1997).
4. "Does your voice change affect your singing? How"(p.525)(Killian, 1997)?
5. "What is the most difficult thing about your voice changing"(p.525)(Killian, 1997)?
6. "What is the best thing about your voice changing"(p.525)(Killian, 1997)?
7. How do your peers treat you while your voice is changing?
8. How do your parents treat you while your voice is changing?
9. Am I making you feel comfortable in choir as your voice changes?
10. Am I choosing music that is comfortable for you to sing?
11. "Are there any details you would like to add"(p.525)(Killian, 1997)?

## Appendix E

### Responses

1. Honest, secure, mature, no peer pressure
2. " " " "
3. Most detailed answers to your ?s
4. Honest, noticed change
5. Proud of voice change
6. Not at all concerned (from comments)
7. Secure, honest
8. Shy, but honest
9. Not concerned about change
10. Good answers to questions!

Additional comments: Overall theme "no big deal", but  
proud in their ability to say their voices had changed  
or were changing

## Responses

1. Mostly positive - friends & teacher are supportive. Voice has changed.
2. Voice has not changed; Positive comments.
3. Voice is changing. "Feel like I'm growing up." Positive.
4. Voice has changed. Difference between speaking voice and singing voice. Positive comments from friends & parents.
5. Voice has changed. Voice change does not affect singing. Not much eye contact during responses - nervous?
6. Voice has changed. Pretty good responses.
7. Voice has changed. Feels the same.
8. Voice has changed. Creaks occasionally.
9. Voice has changed. No response, positive or negative, for most answers.
10. Voice has changed. Physical changes - can reach lower notes. Seems normal to him, but others notice changes.

Additional comments: Boys are unconsciously describing the physical change, rather than commenting on the psychological effects of the change. Roy & I went a bit deeper, but all recovered. Tendent to discuss voice changes on an, but a physical level.

MICHIGAN STATE LIBRARIES



3 1293 02177 8497