

**Master of Arts in Music Education**

**Thesis Title**

**An Elementary Vocal Music Teaching Module Focusing  
on Prevention of Performance Anxiety**

**Prepared by  
Carrie R. Bain**



**The University of North Carolina at Pembroke**

**An Elementary Vocal Music Teaching Module Focusing on Prevention of  
Performance Anxiety**

**Prepared by  
Carrie R. Bain**

**In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree in  
Master of Arts in Music Education**

Approved by:

Dr. Valerie A. Austin \_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Advisor Date

Dr. Beth Maisonpierre \_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Committee Member ate

Mr. Tracy Wiggins \_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Committee Member

Dr. Joseph Locklear \_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Committee Member Date

Dr. Sara C. Simmons \_\_\_\_\_  
Dean of Graduate Studies Date

*Student  
graduated  
Dec. 2008*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Introduction.....                         | 3  |
| Acknowledgements.....                     | 4  |
| Review of Literature.....                 | 5  |
| Discussion .....                          | 14 |
| Conclusions.....                          | 25 |
| References.....                           | 31 |
| Biography.....                            | 33 |
| Appendixes                                |    |
| A. Pre- and Post-Test Control Group.....  | 34 |
| B. Pre-and Post-Test Treatment Group..... | 44 |
| C. Music Performance Survey.....          | 54 |
| D. Teacher Script.....                    | 56 |

## INTRODUCTION

At the time of a performance, the performer may feel anxiety due to the unknown reactions of the audience or performance outcomes. As a performer, one needs to determine the cause of his/her individual trigger of performance anxiety. "The central difference between fear and anxiety is that fear is a reaction to a specific danger, while anxiety is a reaction to an unspecific source. The special characteristics of anxiety are the feelings of uncertainty and helplessness in the face of danger" (Havas, 1973 p. 6).

To a performer, stage fright can be a very common disabler. Many people will attempt to diminish stage fright by practicing to better their skills as performers. Although appropriate preparation is a "must" to produce a quality performance, one also needs to remove musical and vocal insecurities and self-doubt or, as Green calls it, "inner chatter" (1986, pp.18-23) that may hinder the performance. Also according to Green (p.12), there is a performance equation that helps to identify areas of hindrance:  $P=p-i$ . The "P" represents the performance, "p" represents one's potential, and "i" represents interference (a person's ability to get in his/her own way). One can practice for hours but self-doubt can still destroy the quality of a performance. By reducing interference related to self-doubt, the performer comes closer to realizing his/her true potential. Green states there are ways to alleviate performance anxiety such as preparing oneself completely (vocally and musically) and then trusting the achieved levels of one's abilities.

This study describes a teaching module for use with elementary chorus students over a six-week period. This module implements teaching strategies recognized by practicing professionals as discussed in Henderson's How to Train Singers to Sing and Barker's The Alexander Technique: Learning to Use Your Body for Total Energy, to minimize anxiety during performances. The students were divided into two groups, treatment and control. The treatment group was made up of twenty-two fourth and fifth grade choral students from the author's elementary school chorus. The treatment group met once a week for forty minutes. The control group was made up of twenty students from the author's colleague, meeting once a week for forty minutes. The treatment group received specific teaching strategies (Appendix D) found to reduce anxiety during performances. These strategies were separated into the three categories: practice, performance, and physical exercises. The control group received general music instruction by their regular music instructor. Both groups were given the pre and post-survey (Appendix C) to determine their preparation skills and attitudes regarding vocal performances. Results indicate varying differences pertaining to what techniques should be used to diminish anxiety during performances.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my son Aaron who sacrificed a lot of *mommy* time during the long hours of work. I would also like to express appreciation to my mother, Jeanette Lupo for her relentless encouraging words to continue the process even after a couple of personal tragedies. And last, but not least, I would like to express extreme gratitude to my husband Michael who delayed the next step in his educational growth until I complete my degree.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The terms stage fright and performance anxiety are often used interchangeably. Anxiety is the reaction to an unknown or unspecified danger and stage fright is a specific type of anxiety. Both are the most destructive elements to a performer. The specific characteristics of anxiety are the feelings of uncertainty and helplessness in the fear of danger. There are symptoms of anxiety that vary from person to person and include cold hands when it is hot or warm hands when it is cold. Another symptom is a throat so dry it is difficult to swallow. Havas (1973, p. 3-6) Anxiety may begin days before the performance or as a performer walks on stage. The performer may begin focusing on questions or concerns of how the audience will respond to his/her performance, even before the performance has begun. The performer's feelings of inadequacy may also cause some level of anxiety. Some performers may begin to second-guess their own readiness to perform. Others may have inner voices that begin planting doubts in their brains as to whether enough time was spent in practice to pull off the performance or whether they will be able to perform a specific passage correctly.

When one is dealing with the fear of non-specific causes, gaining control of the problem may be difficult. Many authors give suggestions of various techniques to control or completely eliminate anxiety. Herrigel (1953, p. 104) states that students need to take focus off themselves or to disregard selves. The performer develops a new sense that will allow one to clear his/her mind regarding the actions one must take to complete the performance. The author continues to explain that the perfection of an archer is met when one has no longer centered ones thoughts of self, the opponent or how the opponent will attack. The suggestion is to completely clear the mind of any and all distractions. As

singers, performers may relate this statement to our performances and not try to think too technically while performing.

Learning to concentrate without trying to concentrate is beneficial. Gallwey (1974, p. 31) suggests that calculation leads to miscalculation. The most important tool for one to have is the ability to remain calm while fast changes are happening. The author continues with the description of the term, "freaking out." This is a state of mind when a tennis player, or in our case, a performer has produced a poor shot or has sung poorly. It also applies when thoughts of poor performances flood the performer's mind just as he or she is about to begin. Gallwey also states that, when one is so upset, one does not see clearly enough to understand what is happening and to take the appropriate action." When an action begins during a state of worry and self-doubt, the action is usually not very effective. The author further states the freak-outs can be categorized into three sections. The first section is regret about past events. As performers we have all had performances we wish we could forget. Regretting past performances will usually lead to self-criticism. As soon as some performers make a mistake, negative thinking begins that hinders the performance. One needs to stop doubt as soon as it begins. (p. 131).

The second section is the performers' dislike of the present event or situation. One may feel the anxiety levels rising due to several scenarios, for example, the concert hall temperature at extreme levels, the accompanist arriving late, cramped stage area and poor lighting are just a few among many others. Gallwey suggests that there are two ways to deal with dislikes of the present situation, one is change the circumstance, if

possible and two, change the mindset. The performer must concentrate on the performance at hand. Concentration is a very valuable tool in these situations.

The last section is the fear or uncertainty of the future. The performer's mind can be previously filled with anxieties and questions of possible results of future events.

This author also suggests that people have two selves. The first self is the *I*, which is the teller. This self in a singer would be telling the performer instructions such as stand straight, breathe in one measure before entrance, and lift the soft palate. The second self is myself, which is the doer. This self would tell the singer to sing. Mentally getting it together takes several skills. The first personal skill needed to accomplish the control of the performance is learning to program one's computer, which is self two, with images rather than instructing oneself with words. The second would be learning to trust oneself enough to let self two do what self one asks of it. The third is learning to see in a non-judgmental way what is actually happening, rather than noticing how badly it is happening.

Sieber, O'Neil, Tobias (1977, p.7) also list a few techniques to lessen anxiety. The first is to change the situation to relieve stress by modifying social interactions. Before a performance one needs to find a quiet space with few or no others around and relax. Another technique is to change the performer's reaction by desensitization. This process would include repeated exposure to a performance situation to reduce the anxieties. A third technique would be eliminating anxiety through positive self-talk. The performer would take the time to positively talk or think through the performance. One final technique of Sieber would be to manage preparation time. Organizing a well-planned rehearsal schedule will also greatly reduce anxieties.



Several resources use more than one strategy to help control performance anxiety. Andersen (2002, p. 27) states that systematic desensitization which is a technique used to treat fears based on behavior modification, and exposure therapy which is a technique in which the person is exposed to a fearful situation. Another technique Andersen lists is cognitive restructuring, which is reprogramming your brain to think positively during fearful situations. According to this author, all of these techniques are very useful strategies with musicians who suffer from performance anxiety. Andersen also states that amateur musicians and students might experience more performance anxiety than professionals in an audition. He states that performance anxiety relates to the fear of failure as well as to disapproval by parents. Other authors, such as Parncutt and McPherson (2002, p. 47) suggest that the most effective treatments for performance anxiety are those that combine relaxation techniques with the development of realistic expectations regarding an actual performance. Another would be to change habitual self-doubt and negative attitudes toward the performance.

There are other suggested methods in overcoming stage fright. Previously discussed are techniques used to help control or lessen anxiety, but there are also physical techniques such as the following examples stated by Ristad (1982, p. 5). One example she describes is how a workshop attendee found her "relaxed resonating tone" after kneeling and singing with her head upside down. Another attendee was asked to use various adjectives to describe different ways to perform her piano pieces, such as ugly, frivolous, pathetic, and lighthearted. She then played the piece without thinking of how to play it and it turned out to be one of her best interpretations. Also according to the writer, performers think with very boxed in limits for example, that there is only one way

to play piano, forte, or any other dynamic markings. She discusses the multiple levels of degrees in performance expressiveness. She further explains that we, as performers, should become our own friends. If your performance turns out to have been a flop, you yourself are not.

Henderson (1991, p. 160) refers to singing as an athletic event. The muscles that support and control the breath are strengthened ideally by daily practices of breathing exercises. Singers need to maintain some form of regular physical exercise, achieving the goal of vocal fitness. Henderson states that performers must have good physical control of their bodies to perform well. The author describes a few of these exercises, one of which is the circle arm breath (p. 33). The purpose of this exercise is to increase breath capacity and help control exhalation of air. This results in a calm heart rate and allows the performer to focus more on singing. The author also continues to discuss the use of correct body alignment following the steps in the Alexander technique (p. 38).

Barker (1991 p. 20) also describes the Alexander technique and how it may better one's physical condition as well as one's emotional state. The author continues to state that daily use of this technique will improve one's ability to eliminate the stress of every day routines while walking, talking, and standing. Relaxed movement is important to a good performance.

Rummage, Morrison and Nicole (2004, p. 232) state that, only at the point of proper posture positioning, will a singer be ready to create and sustain the voice while singing. The strategies that a singer would use to gain good vocal resonance would be to develop appropriate models; listen to other singers with similar voices using good

techniques. Another strategy would be to use a variety of environments such as singing in rooms with varying acoustics, covering ears to make a megaphone out of the hands to hear the feedback of one's own voice. A third technique would be the use of tape recorders to ensure that the sounds the singer believes to be the best, is the same to the listener.

Rummage, Morrison and Nicole also discuss imagery, sometimes referred to as visualization, which is another strategy to lessen performance anxiety. The authors continue to suggest that imagery is the path to controlling the voice (pp. 241-243). Imagery is used to produce good tone and control of the voice but the authors speak of caution against the use of vague imagery. With the use of imagery, the image itself needs to be clear and precise to the singer. An example of possible vague imagery is the use of the yawn reflex. The yawn reflex is a good example of the feel of the beginning of a tone, but if the singer completes the yawn reflex, he has moved into an incorrect position for a proper tone. The singer needs to be fully aware of the specific point in the yawn reflex that is helpful in producing a proper tone.

Latham discusses (retrieved 2007) visual imagery and gives the following steps that use visualization to minimize anxiety. The first is to write a short story about the piece to be performed adding specific feelings, actions, and pictures throughout the writing. After the story is complete, the performer will close his or her eyes and run the story through their head like a movie, including as many details as possible. This will allow the performer to have a better understanding of what the composer is attempting to convey through the piece. The author suggests that the more familiar the performer is with the piece of music, the more that he or she will be expressive and less anxious.

Ayers (1990 video) discussed this technique using the following example. The participant would visualize the entire day of the performance beginning with the choice of dress for the performance and continuing until the end of the performance. During this time of visualization, the performer would envision him or her self feeling very relaxed and ready to complete the performance without any complication. Relaxation results from carrying out the visualization process.

Memorization of the music to be performed reduces anxiety. Hallam (2006, p. 94) states that in relation to memorization of music, there is a connection between declarative knowledge, which is knowing something, and procedural knowledge, which is knowing how. Declarative memory is the linking of ideas together and procedural memory is following a process to complete tasks.

Hallam further states (p. 95) that there are two types of rehearsals. The first is maintenance rehearsal, in which the performer will use repetition during rehearsals. The other is elaborative rehearsal, which is relating new material to existing information. Using these techniques to help retain music in memory will enhance communication during a performance and possibly experience less performance anxiety. To prevent anxiety during rehearsals, the author suggests chunking sections of the music. Chunking music is to break the piece into smaller sections and rehearse those sections repeatedly. Rehearsing mentally is a technique that can be used away from a piano or rehearsal hall by simply running the music through one's mind and studying the music before actually singing.

Emmons (1998, p. 152) states that anxiety exists in one's mind, resulting from one's perception about what is demanded and one's feelings about one's own capability

to achieve what is being demanded. To assist in recognizing symptoms of performance anxiety, the author suggests the following exercises. The first exercise is to use a Likert scale to determine the range of physical responses from calm to high levels of anxiety. The next exercise would be to write in detail how anxious one was during the performance. A third exercise would be to think back to a previous performance that was well done. Before a performance, the performer would also need to check for some of the following cognitive symptoms that relate to the mental process of perception and somatic symptoms that relate to the physical body. One of the first cognitive symptoms to check is indecisiveness. The performer must have complete confidence in the decisions made concerning the presentation and performance of the music. Obtaining this confidence will eliminate worry and the feeling of being overwhelmed, which are two other symptoms to be aware of. The inability to concentrate is a symptom that needs to be examined as well. The inability to focus will lead to loss of memory and loss of control of the performance situation. A few somatic symptoms the performer should attempt to control are the pounding of the heart, profuse sweating and increased respiration. These symptoms of anxiety can be managed through positive thinking and proactive strategies. The performer should enjoy rehearsals and performances even when things may not be going well. The performer should walk and talk in a positive manner and smile and be aware of internal and external distractions that are hindering the performances. To assist with these strategies, the performer should arrive early to performances to acclimate oneself with the surroundings of the performance area. Also the performer should discuss any distractions with other performers and also build in distractions into rehearsals.

These strategies would assist in promoting positive thinking and managing the symptoms of anxiety.

Having confidence in oneself is also a key to suppressing anxiety. Sloan (1999, p. 4) states that becoming a better singer comes from trusting one's own abilities for finding one's own voice. When the voice is freed and allowed to resonate within its natural channels, the tone can be beautiful. When the voice is forced or controlled, it loses energy and dies. Sloan (p. 8) also states that we, as performers, are bombarded with advice from experts advising us how to relax, how to eat and sleep, and how to listen to ourselves. Through building confidence in our singing, we can revive what has been tucked away within us.

According to Osborne (2004, p. 130), the first thing in controlling anxiety is to identify it and accept a minimal amount of it as a normal part of performing. One suggestion the author gives to address anxiety is to perform frequently. These could include performances for friends, parents, church, contest and recitals. The performer should also avoid listening to other performers before a performance and use that time to concentrate on the music. The author also states (p. 129) that one cannot stress enough the most important step for overcoming anxiety begins with thorough preparation. Inadequate preparation and memorization are the greatest contributing factors to the performance anxiety.

## DISCUSSION

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is designed to determine to what degree the use of specific strategies and techniques, as recognized by practicing professionals as important in minimizing performance anxiety, diminish anxiety during elementary choral performances.

### DESIGN

The participants in this study were students from the author's fourth and fifth grade elementary choral group at Sherwood Park Elementary as well as fourth and fifth grade elementary choral students from Rockfish Elementary. The students were divided into two groups, the treatment and control groups. These students met once a week over a period of six weeks for an average of 35 minutes. The treatment group received instruction of specific vocal strategies and physical exercises recognized by professionals to minimize anxiety during performances. The control group received general music instruction taught by their regular music instructor following the Cumberland County task analysis.

### METHODOLOGY

A pre-survey (see Appendix C) was given to both groups to measure their preparation skills and attitudes regarding choral performances before instruction began. The survey covered three main categories of instruction. The first category of the survey includes practice techniques such as practicing the melody on syllables, repeating small sections of the music, and speaking the words in rhythm. The second category includes performance techniques such as focusing on the music through pictures or words, having complete confidence when walking on stage, and pride of performances. The last

category includes physical techniques such as body stretches and other physical exercises to prepare for singing, proper breathing techniques, and the use of relaxation techniques.

The author sent initial parent permission and student assent forms to both groups and approximately twenty-student assent and parent permission forms were returned from both groups. The writer sent a second more detailed parent permission and student assent letter as requested by The University of North Carolina at Pembroke Institutional Review Board committee. The writer received a very low return percentage from both groups of students participating in this study. The student participants for the control group had a low return of six revised parent permission and student assent forms, and the treatment group had a low return of nine parent permission and student assent letters. The author suggests that parents did not see the necessity of signing a second form. The terms used in the revised slips were very technical which may have also deterred the parents from giving their students permission to participate. Only the signed revised forms could be used for this study.

The students in both the control and treatment groups were given the pre-survey (see Appendix C) to complete before instruction began. The author began instruction using the teacher script (see Appendix D) to apply the vocal activities and physical exercises to improve skills in preparation for performing to the treatment group. The students met once a week for thirty-five minutes after school. Following six weeks of instruction, the same students were given the post-survey (see Appendix C).

The students from the control group received instruction that was designed by their regular music teacher. This instruction consisted of lessons practicing appropriate phrasing and dynamic control to improve expressive singing through the



use of a medley of patriotic songs. The teacher also rehearsed proper vocal techniques including clear diction and speaking/singing words of the songs in the correct rhythm. The instruction continued for six weeks and these students were also given the post-survey.

### **Control and Treatment Groups: Pre-test Comparison**

Comparing the pre-test for the control and treatment groups, there were a few similarities. In Item 1, *practicing the melody on the syllable "lah,"* the treatment group had a high percentage of responses in the All Right/Often category with forty-four percent of the student responses, and fifty-six percent in the Fair/Sometimes category (see Appendix B-1). There were zero student responses for the Lousy/Never, and Super/Always categories on the pre-test for the treatment group. The treatment group received previous vocal instruction during general music class involving the use of the vocal strategy singing on "lah." The control group had student responses in all four categories (see Appendix A-1). The Lousy/Never category received the most responses with 49% with the remaining three categories each receiving an equal amount of seventeen percent. The author notes that the control group instructor usually uses the syllable "ahh" and not specifically the syllable "lah." Therefore, the number of Lousy/Never responses could be positively biased.

Responses to Item 3, *practicing body stretches and other physical exercises* were similar in both groups with the treatment group showing eighty-nine percent of the responses in the Lousy/Never category. (see Appendix B-3) The author suggests that the students in the treatment group were in a structured choral setting for the first time and had not been previously exposed to any physical exercises relating to vocal

performances. The pre-test for the control group had responses in three of the four categories with thirty-three and thirty-four percent. (see Appendix A-3) Item 4, *practice by speaking words in rhythm*, had large differences with sixty-seven percent of students responding to the Super/Always category and thirty-three percent in the Fair/Sometimes category in the control group (see Appendix A-4). In the treatment group, there were only eleven percent of student responses in the Super/Always category and sixty-seven percent of students responding Fair/Sometimes. (see Appendix B-4) The researcher notes that responses in the Super/Always category from the treatment group were low in spite of the frequent utilization of this strategy during general music instruction.

Responses to Item 8, *focusing on the music through pictures or words*, fell at the outside ends of the range with eighty-nine percent of the treatment group responding to Lousy/Never and eleven percent responding Super/Always (see Appendix B-8) versus sixty-six percent of the control group responding Super/Always and zero percent responding Lousy/Never. (see Appendix A-8) Infrequent utilization of visual exercises during rehearsals minimized visual connections with the music. Items 9, *referring to being ready to perform when on stage*, and 10 *after a performance, I am proud*, had similarities within the control and treatment groups. (see Appendix A 9-10, Appendix B 9-10) Eighty-nine percent responded Super/Always in the treatment group in Item 9, while only sixty-seven percent responded to the same category in the control group. Item 10 had a little closer margin between the two groups with seventy-eight percent of the students responding to the category Super/Always in the treatment group and eighty-three percent responding the Super/Always in the control group. The author concludes that the

students, at such the young age of nine and ten, have a relatively high level of confidence due to little or no experience with lack of success.

### **Control Group: Pre- and Post-test Comparison**

The comparison between the pre-test control group and the post-test control group resulted in a varying range of percentages. (see Appendixes A 1-10) Seventeen percent of the students responded Super/Always on the pre-test to Item 1, practicing the melody on "lah," compared to zero percent on the post-test in the same category. Item 2, *relating to practicing in small sections*, had a sixty-six percent response on the pre-test compared to thirty-three percent on the post-test. These differences raised the question of the drop in responses to this item. The author interviewed the teacher of the control group regarding the drop in the responses of Super/Always from the pre-test to the post-test. Her reasoning was that she did not give any information about the pre-test neither did she discuss the meanings of the items. She requested that the students complete the test and that the students respond to each item to the best of their knowledge. By the end of the six weeks, she suggested that the students were more familiar with the items' meanings and responded with a better understanding to each item. One could conclude, therefore that the pre-test results were not valid due to lack of understanding by the students.

Another variant in this groups answer was in Item 4, *relating to rehearsing with speaking words in rhythm*. Sixty-seven percent of responses in the Super/Always category on the pre-test declined to fifty percent of responses in the same category on the post-test. This shows a decrease of seventeen percent in the responses from the

pre- to post-test. This decrease could be related to the instructor not using this strategy continuously throughout the instructional time frame.

There were instances where the responses had significant gains. Item 7 *relating to deliberately relaxing while performing* increased from the pre-test of fifty percent in the Super/Always category, to eighty-percent on the post-test. This is not just statistically significant but also functionally more important because the relaxation skill is more-closely related to reducing performance anxiety. Item 8, *using visualization while singing*, changed from seventeen percent student responses to the category All/Right on the pre-test, to fifty percent on the post-test. The responses to Item 9 had no change at all from the pre-test to the post-test. Student responses to Item 10 remained the same at eighty-three percent for Super/Always, with a move by seventeen percent of the respondents from Fair/Sometimes to All Right/Often.

#### **Treatment Group: Pre-and Post-test Comparison**

Comparing the pre-test to the post-test in the treatment group exposed significant changes. Super/Always responses to Item 1, *relating to rehearsing while singing 'lah.'* (see Appendix B-1) increased from zero percent on the pre-test to thirty-three percent on the post-test. The responses in the category of Fair/Sometimes decreased significantly from fifty-six percent on the pre-test to zero percent in the post-test. Due to the author using this strategy during regular classroom instruction as well, the pre-test response of zero in the Super/Always category was a very unexpected result. The author does conclude that the use of this technique is more consistently used during choral rehearsals, which would explain the higher results in the top two categories on the post-test. During regular classroom settings, the instructor does

move on to incorporate other music skills. Item 3 which is relating to *body stretching in preparation for singing* (see Appendix B-3) had a large increase of responses in the Lousy/Never area of eleven percent on the pre-test. Most students do not commonly relate physical exercise to music classes. The low percentage of responses on the pre-test was not surprising. Eighty-nine percent on the post-test showed a seventy eighty percent increase. This significant change was due to many of the students not previously participating in a choral setting. The students also had not previously been exposed to a strict rehearsal practice. Physical exercises are used during the general music class setting to prepare students for proper singing techniques, but they are not used every week throughout the year as they are in a choral setting where the total focus is on proper singing.

Responses to Item 2 pertaining to *practicing by repeating small sections* (see Appendix B-2) had an unusual percentage change. Responses to Super/Always dropped forty-five percent from the pre-test to the post-test. The author interviewed these students and concluded this change was due to more familiarity with the music by the students near the end of the treatment period and not rehearsing the music as much by dividing the piece into smaller sections. Item 8, referring to *focusing on music through pictures* (see Appendix B-8) had a percentage of eighty-nine percent of the responses on the pre-test that decreased to a percentage of thirty-three percent on the post-test. In these two areas, the author concluded these techniques had not been consistently practiced during rehearsals previously other than light breathing and certain upper body stretches. During this research, the author exposed the students to more demanding strategies such as the Alexander Technique as well as imagery,

mentally and materially, in a more consistent manner. The Super/Always responses also improved from eleven percent on the pre-test to forty-five percent on the post-test. This is a thirty-four percent increase in the category of Super/Always. Item 9, *relating to readiness to perform when going on stage* (see Appendix B-9) had an increase from eighty-nine percent on the pre-test in the area of Super/Always to one hundred percent in the post-test. Although only eleven percent increased in this area from All Right/Often, this is significant due to the purpose of this research is to prepare all students for their readiness of a performance with reduced or no anxiety.

#### **Treatment and Control Group: Post-test Comparison**

Comparing the post-tests from both groups revealed more similarities than differences. Item 1, *practice the melody on "lah,"* the responses from both groups was only from the All Right/Often and Fair/Sometime categories. The student response in the control group was fifty percent in both categories (see Appendix A-1) while in the treatment group (see Appendix B-1), two thirds of the responses was in the All Right/Often category. There were similar responses between both groups in Items 2 *relating to practice repeating small sections* (see Appendixes A-2, B-2) and Item 4, *practice speaking words in rhythm.* (see Appendixes A-4, B-4) Item 2 had the most student responses in the category of All Right/Often with a percentage of fifty percent in the control group and fifty-six percent in the treatment group. In Item 4, forty-five percent of the student responses from the treatment group responded to Super/Always and fifty percent from the control group responded to the same category. Both of these techniques are very commonly used in vocal training whether in a classroom or choral setting. Item 3, *practice using body stretches and other*

*physical exercises* had a wider discrepancy to the responses. In the Lousy/Never category, thirty-three percent of the students responded from the control group (see Appendix A-3) as opposed to eleven percent of the students responded from the treatment group (see Appendix B-3) within the same category. Item 5, *practice breathing properly when rehearsing and performing* had an equal percentage of student responses from both groups in the category of All Right/Often with thirty-three percent. Both groups show a more distinct difference in the Super/Always category with fifty-six percent of student responses from the treatment group (see Appendix B-5) and sixty-seven percent in the same category from the control group. (see Appendix A-5) Item 6, *referring to the use of vocal exercise for preparing the voice for performances* shows a significantly positive outcome compared to the control group. One third of the students in the control group (see Appendix A-6) responded in the Lousy/Never category compared to zero in the treatment group. (see Appendix B-6) In addition, fifty-six percent of the students in the treatment group responded to the All Right/Often category compared to only seventeen percent in the control group. These results show that the use vocal exercises such as the “Flah-Flah-Nee” and the “Ning-ee” vocal exercises by Henderson (1991) greatly improved students vocal ability in preparation of performing. Item 7, *relating to deliberately relaxing while performing* results show that eighty-three percent of the students in the control group (see Appendix A-7) responded to the Super/Always compared to only thirty-three percent of students from the treatment group (see Appendix B-7) to the same category. Forty-five percent of the students also from the treatment group responded to the All Right/Often category. This large group of students answering

Super/Always from the control group is due to the control group performs several times throughout the year; therefore they are more relaxed during their performances. The treatment group showed significant increase in the responses from the Super/Always and All Right/Often categories as well. Interestingly, Item 8 *relating to focusing on the music through pictures or words* fifty percent of the students in the control group responded favorably to the top two categories while only sixty-seven percent of the students from the treatment group responded favorably between the top three categories. Thirty-three percent of the students from the treatment group still responded Lousy/Never. This is difficult to explain as well since the students in the treatment group received specific instruction using strategies focusing on using pictures or words during rehearsals. The author suggests that more time spent on this strategy in the treatment group may have increased student responses in the top categories. This inconsistency deserves further review and deeper analysis. In a future study the writer would do more research to clarify this inconsistency.

Item 9 *relating to being ready to perform on stage* showed clear differences in the results. One hundred percent of the students in the treatment group (see Appendix B-9) responded to the Super/Always category compared to only sixty-seven percent of students responding from the control group (see Appendix A-9) in the same category. Item 10, *referring to being proud of self*, had a difference of six percent in the responses from the Super/Always category. Eighty-three percent responded in this category from the control group (see Appendix A-10) and eighty-nine percent responded in this category from the treatment group (see Appendix B-10). Although this is a small difference it is note worthy and may increase with continued use of the



techniques in this study. I hypothesize that both groups resulting in high percentages of responses in this category are due to the students having more confidence in their abilities and therefore, more successful during performances.

## CONCLUSIONS

During this study the author used a teaching module implementing specific strategies to help elementary choral students minimize performance anxieties for the treatment group. The instructor for the control group designed strategies that were used to prepare choral students for performances. The majority of the students in this study had not previously participated in a structured performance or rehearsal setting. Some students were previously aware of some levels of anxiety when a scheduled performance approached, although they may not have known the exact trigger that initiated these anxieties.

Results from Item 9 referring to readiness to perform on stage, and Item 10, pride in self after a performance, were defining results for this study. On Item 9, four of the students from the treatment group did not feel ready to go on stage to perform previous to the use of the strategies proposed by the author. Subsequent to the implementation of the module, all of the students were ready to perform on stage. Responses to Item 10 relating to being proud of self after a performance improved eleven percent. As the author pointed out earlier in this document, students have a tremendous amount of self-confidence due to little exposure of disappointments at such a young age. This accounted for the high percentages on the pre-test, even though in both items 9 and 10, the students in the treatment group showed improvement. The control group, on the other hand, had four of the six students responding favorably to the highest category of Super/Always on Item 9 of the pre-test and two of the six responding to the category of All Right/Often. (see Appendix A-9) There was no change or improvement on the post-test for this group on this item. Item 10 of the pre-test, eight of nine students responded

to the category of Super/Always (see Appendix A-10) and again showed no change or improvement on the post-test for this group. Although in both of these Items, the student responses were high. This showing of a high level of readiness can be accounted for by the students having high levels of self-esteem previous to using the strategies given by their instructor. These students also had several opportunities to perform throughout this study. The audiences for both groups in this study were mostly their peers. The control group had a spring concert performing patriotic pieces in which the audience consisted of students, parents and teachers. The treatment group performed once for a Teacher Assistant Banquet with the audience consisting of Teacher Assistants from the school district.

Reiterating the statement Green (1986) makes in reference to the performance equation ( $P=p-i$ ), "P" representing the performance, "p" representing the potential, and "i" representing the interference is shown in this study. Eliminating or reducing the interferences such as anxiety, low self-esteem, lack of proper vocal techniques, the performer will achieve his/her true potential. Rehearsing with the appropriate vocal, musical, and physical techniques to gain confidence, improve musical, vocal, and physical skills; students were ready to perform on stage with a lower level of anxiety.

As I reflect on the research involved in this study, I find that problems arose in seven different aspects of my planning. In this reflection of my work I will explain the problems and what I would do differently if I were to begin new research today.

**The Topic:** The topic pertaining to performance anxiety chosen for this study required the writings to include reports of how the students felt during performances. It was not

until after the topic was chosen, the permission slips were sent out, the study was completed, and the first draft was written, that I was informed that terms such as "I felt" or "she felt" could not be used. All research for this topic is based on the feelings of the performers and not being able to write about these feelings made it almost impossible to complete. After the realization of this fact, the author was still encouraged to continue to write on this topic and did so. If this study were repeated, I would most definitely choose a topic that had no relation to measuring the feelings of any of the participants.

**Solo vs. Group Performance:** For the purpose of this paper, the groups had about twenty students. Most students are naturally more confident having a partner or a group of at least two to three others to perform with. Also these groups were performing with students they were familiar with, therefore would have fewer feelings of anxiety when performing. The feelings of anxiety when performing a solo, versus in a choral group, could vary greatly and the decision for the participants to perform solo or as a group should be made before the study begins. Allowing the participants to do both would create biased results. An alternative would be to give the participants the opportunity to respond to a survey concerning their feelings of anxiety after a solo performance and again after a group performance. All of this should be decided before the study begins.

**Permission Slips:** I realized very quickly that having a complete understanding and following proper protocol is essential when using students as participants in a research project. Although the graduate advisor approved the original permission slip and the author sent them out to be signed by parents and students, the guidelines required by the University's parent permission and student assent forms were not followed. These guidelines required more details about the research using terminology such as no harm

would be done to these students because their program of instruction has continued as designed by their music instructor. Another statement in the parent permission form that was required is "this study is voluntary and will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the student is entitled." The numbers of returned slips from the original writing were approximately twenty from both groups. Because the permission slips were sent out before a response was received from the Institutional Review Board, the slips were invalid.

**Age:** Deciding on the age of the participants used in a study should be thought through thoroughly when choosing a topic. This is a very important aspect to any study. The activities requested by the author must be age-appropriate to receive unbiased results. At the conclusion of this study this author realized the young nine and ten-year-old participants in this study might not have had the ability to understand thoroughly the context of the items on the survey. Using participants in this particular study that were middle school age or higher would have been more beneficial to the results.

**Control Group:** Another aspect that would have made the results of this study more conclusive is that the same person should have instructed both the treatment and control groups. The control group would have continued the study with no specific instructions. This again is a conflict using public school children due to the fact that we as music teachers are expected to ensure the best music instruction to all students. Giving one group or class instruction using strategies that are best for music performance and not the others is not an equal opportunity for all students. It is also requested in the Institutional Review Board letter to parents that no child during this study will have any penalty or loss of benefits to which they are entitled and there will be no harm done to these

students because their program of instruction has continued as designed by their music instructor. Choosing public school students for participants in this study was not the best decision. The best option in hindsight would have been to use the music group at the church in which this author works. In this setting, there is no required instruction that the children would miss. Another option would be to use the adult or youth choir.

**Audience:** Choosing an audience for the participants to perform for is another crucial decision. Both the control and treatment groups need to perform for the same audience to gather results that are less biased. Working with a colleague from a different school district instructing the control group made it difficult for both groups to perform for the same audience. Adding to this scenario, some possibilities to enhance anxieties would be to strategically place people in the audience that the participants would know would be judging the performance and have a second performance with no judges. The judges could be parents, peers or teachers. At the conclusion of each performance, the author would give the participants a survey to determine if there were varying levels of anxiety.

**Performance Venue:** Both groups should have the opportunity to rehearse their performance in the same venue that they will perform. This change in detail would have given both groups identical opportunities to perform and could have possibly produced very different results. In this study the treatment and control group did have the opportunity to practice their pieces in the same space as their performances, but each group had their own individual performance venue. This was due to the fact that I used a colleague in different district to work with the control group. As stated earlier, this choice was not beneficial to the study at all. Due to this decision, having both groups to perform

in the same venue would have required the participants to travel across town. This relates back to the instructor for both groups should have the same.

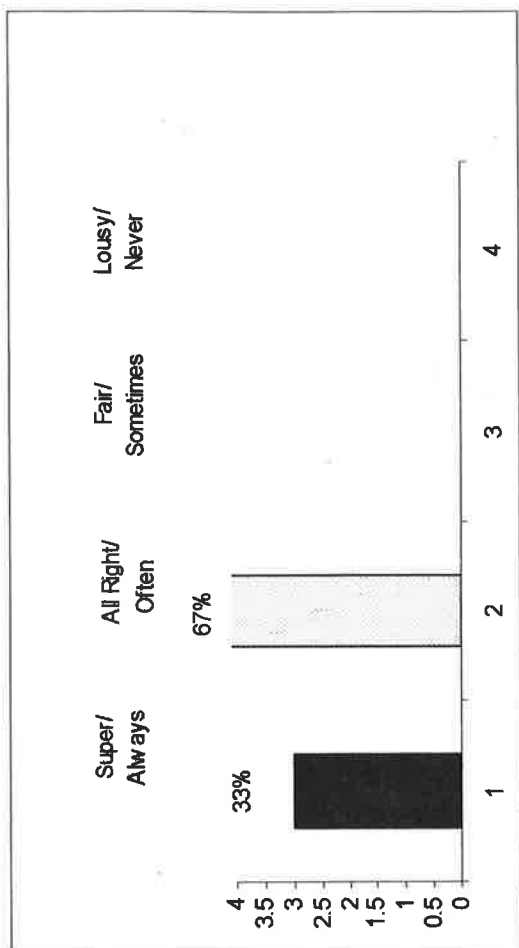
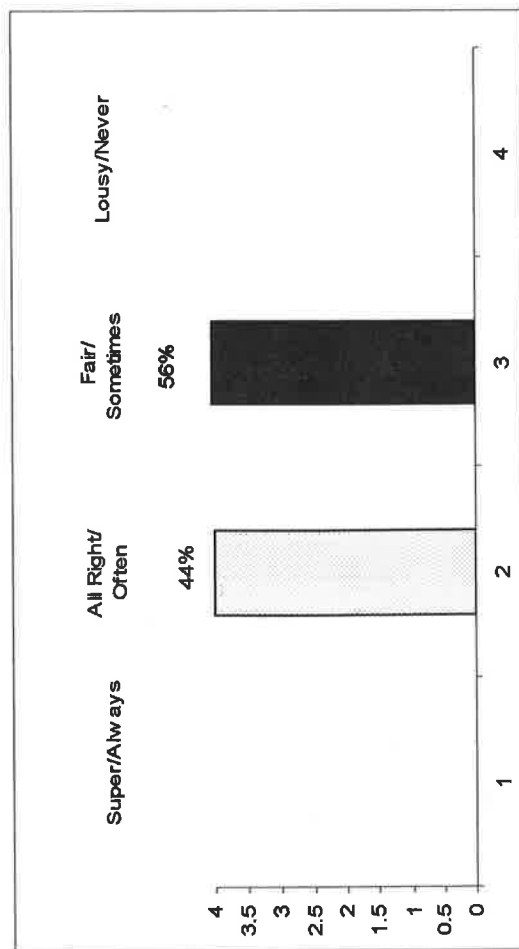
In closing, as a result of this study I have been able to see the weaknesses in my instruction that need to be strengthened. Also I have been reading more diligently articles and journals relating to teaching different strategies to improve student learning. In the end, I suggest that rehearsal techniques and strategies will diminish anxiety but instructors need to find techniques and strategies that work for them and for their students.

## REFERENCES

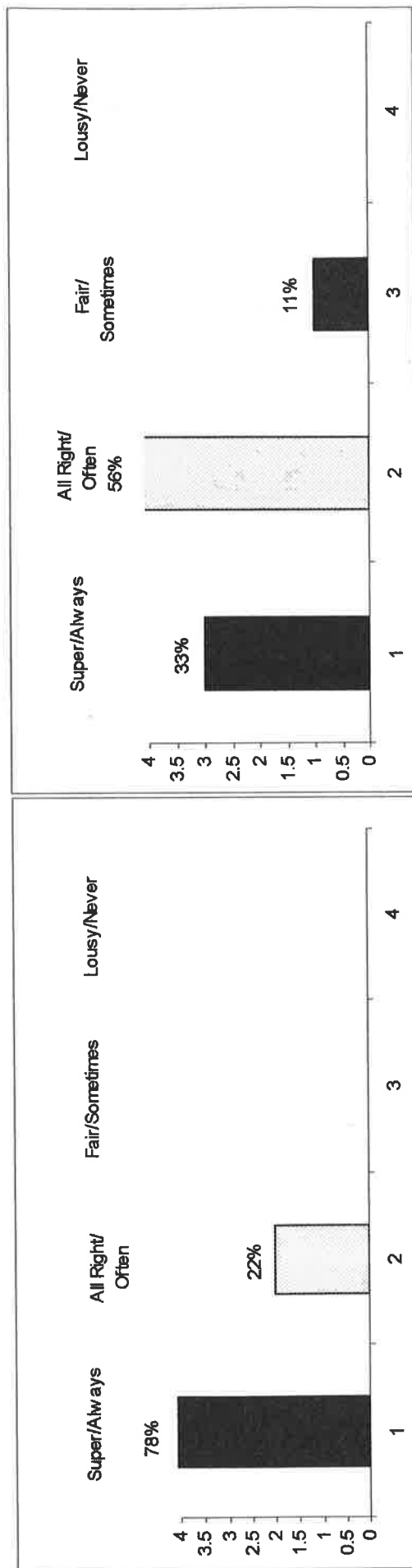
- Andersen, M.B. (2000). *Doing sports psychology*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Alsbrook, J. (2002). *Pathways: A guide for energizing and enriching band, orchestra, and choral programs*. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications.
- Ayers, J. (1990). *Coping with the fear of public speaking* [Video].  
Location: Communication Video, Inc.
- Barker, S. (1991). *The Alexander technique: Learning to use your body for total energy*. New York: Bantan Books.
- Emmons, S., & Thomas, A. (1998). *Power performance for singers transcending the barriers*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gallwey W.T. (1974). *The inner game of tennis*. New York: Random House.
- Green, B., & Gallwey, W.T. (1986). *The inner game of music*. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press.
- Hallam, S. (2006). *Music psychology in education*. Bedford Way Papers 25.  
London: Institute of Education, University of London.
- Havas, K. (1973). *Stage fright its causes and cures, with special reference to violin playing*. London: Bosworth and Co. Ltd.
- Henderson, L. B. (1991). *How to train singers to sing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. West Nyack, New York: Parker Publishing Inc.
- Herrigel, E., & Hull, R. F. C. (1953). *Zen in the art of archery*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Latham, L. *Stage fright management*. Retrieved from World Wide Web December 20, 2007 from [www.emusicguides.com](http://www.emusicguides.com)
- Osborn, R. (2004). *The private music instruction manual a guide for the independent music educator*. Victoria B.C.: Trafford
- Parncutt, R., & McPherson, G. (2002). *The science and psychology of music: Creative strategies for teaching and learning*. New York: Oxford University Press.



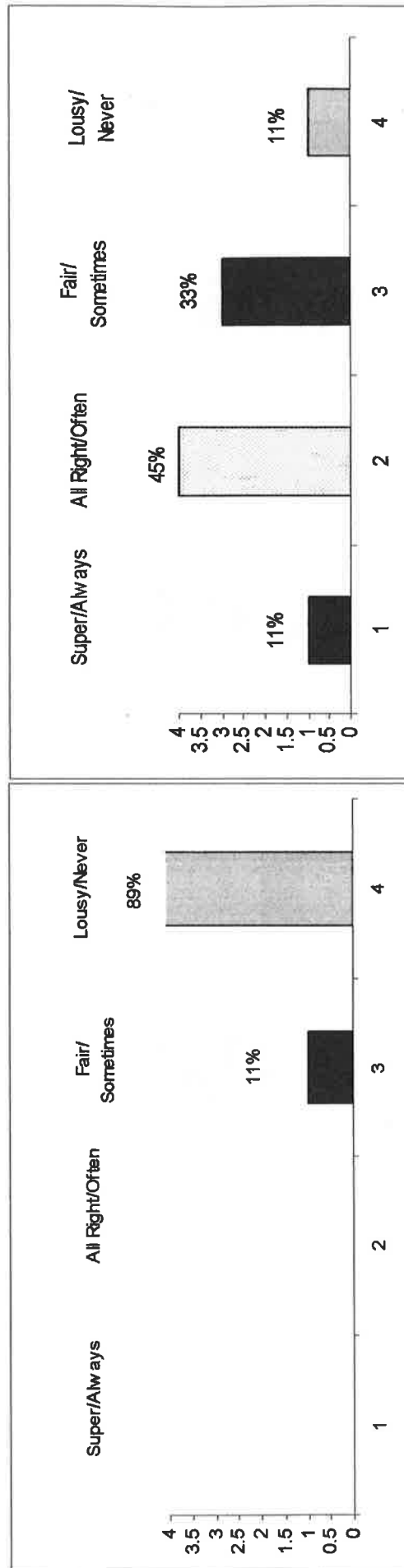
# 1. I practice the melody on the syllable “lah” before adding the words Appendix B-1



## 2. I practice repeating small sections of a song. Appendix B-2

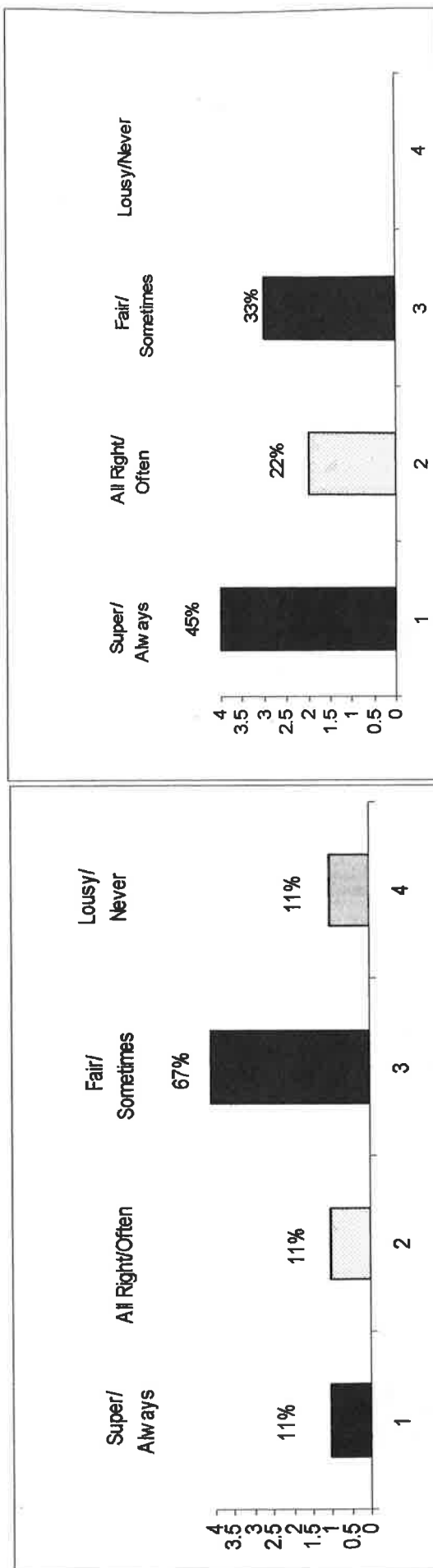


### 3. I practice body stretches and other exercises to prepare for singing. Appendix B-3

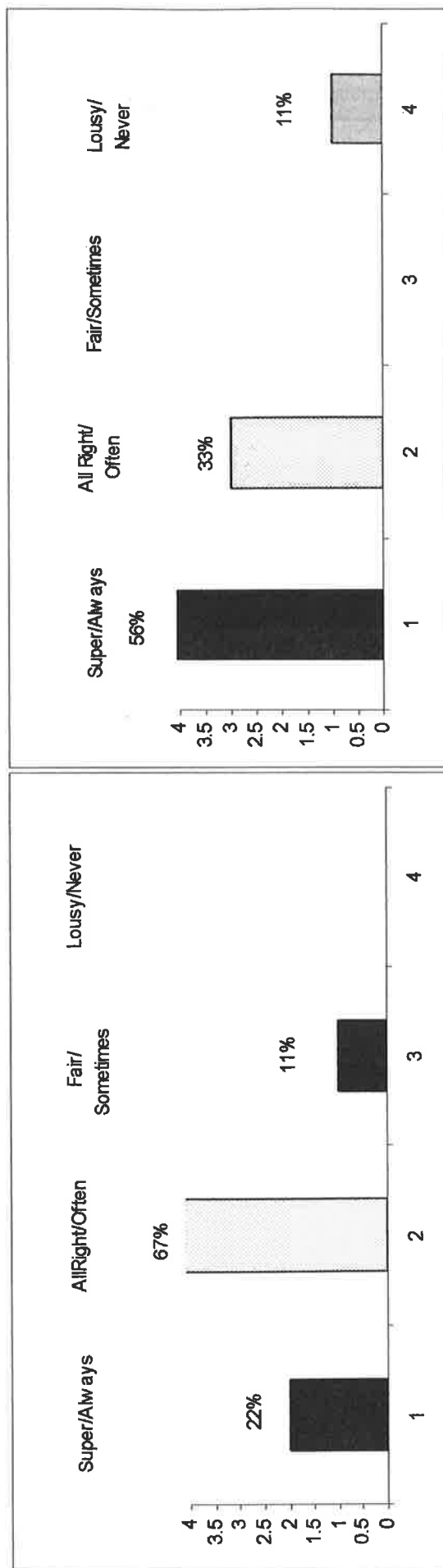


#### 4. I practice speaking words in rhythm to help with memorization.

##### Appendix B-4



# 5. I practice breathing properly when rehearsing and performing. Appendix B-5



Rammage, L., Morrison, M.D., & Nicol, H. (2004). *Management of the voice and its disorders*. San Diego, CA: Singular/Thompson Learning.

Ristad, E. (1982). *A soprano on her head*. Moab, Utah: Real People Press.

Sieber, J.E., O'Neil, H. F., & Tobias, S. (1977). *Anxiety, learning, and instruction*. Hillsdale, N. J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

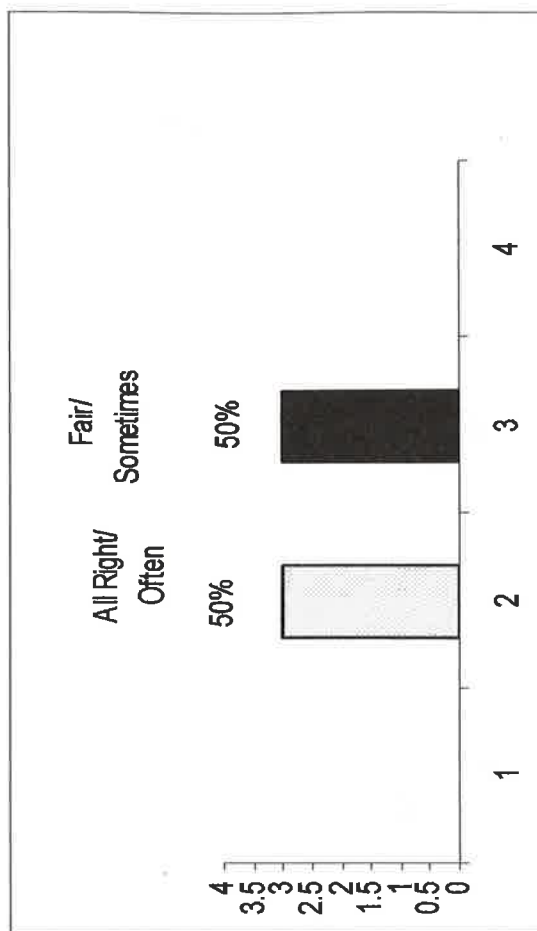
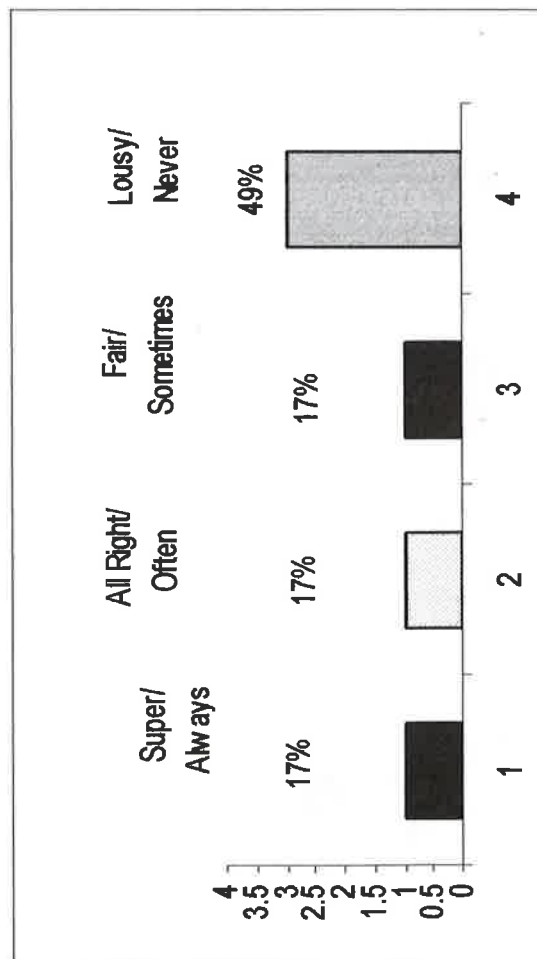
Sloan, Carolyn. (1999). *Finding your voice: A practical and spiritual approach to singing and living*. New York: Hyperion.

## BIOGRAPHY

Renee Bain works Cumberland County Schools where she has served for twenty years as an elementary general music teacher. She received her Associates degree in 1985 at Southeastern Community College in Whiteville, North Carolina. She received her Bachelor of Music Education Degree in 1988 at Methodist University in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

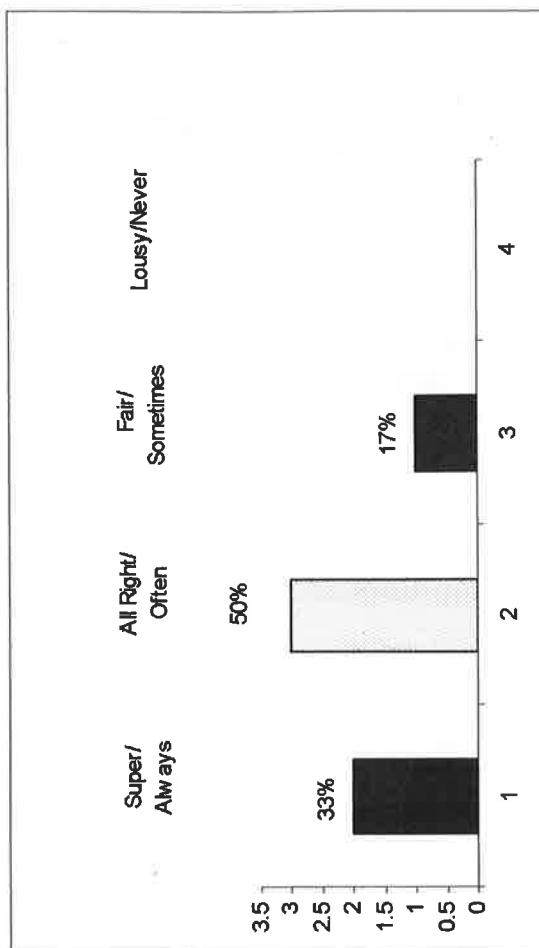
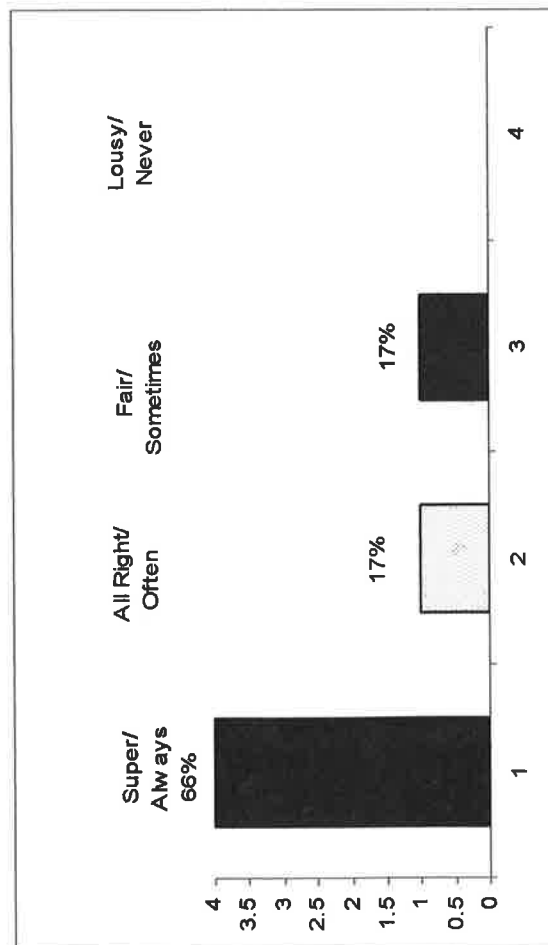
Ms. Bain is a member of North Carolina Association of Educators, Cumberland County Association of Educators, and the Music Educators of North Carolina. She received the Teacher of the Year Award from Sherwood Park Elementary School in 1996.

**1. I Practice the Melody on the Syllable "lah" Before Adding the Words.**  
**Appendix A-1**



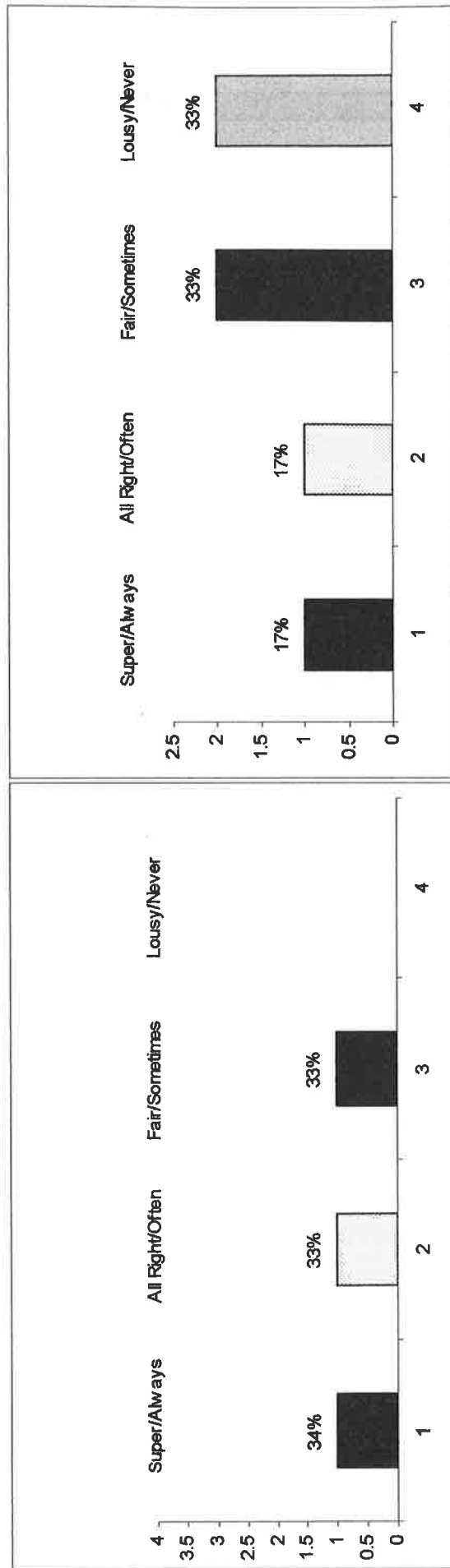


## 2. I practice repeating small sections of a song. Appendix A-2



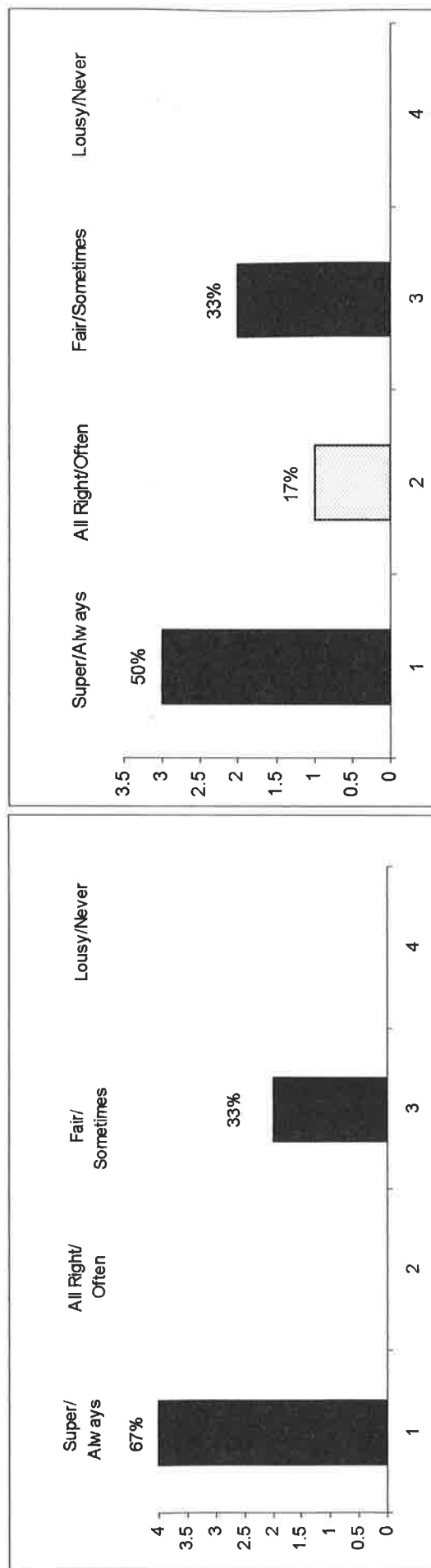
### 3. I practice body stretches and other exercises to prepare for singing.

#### Appendix A-3

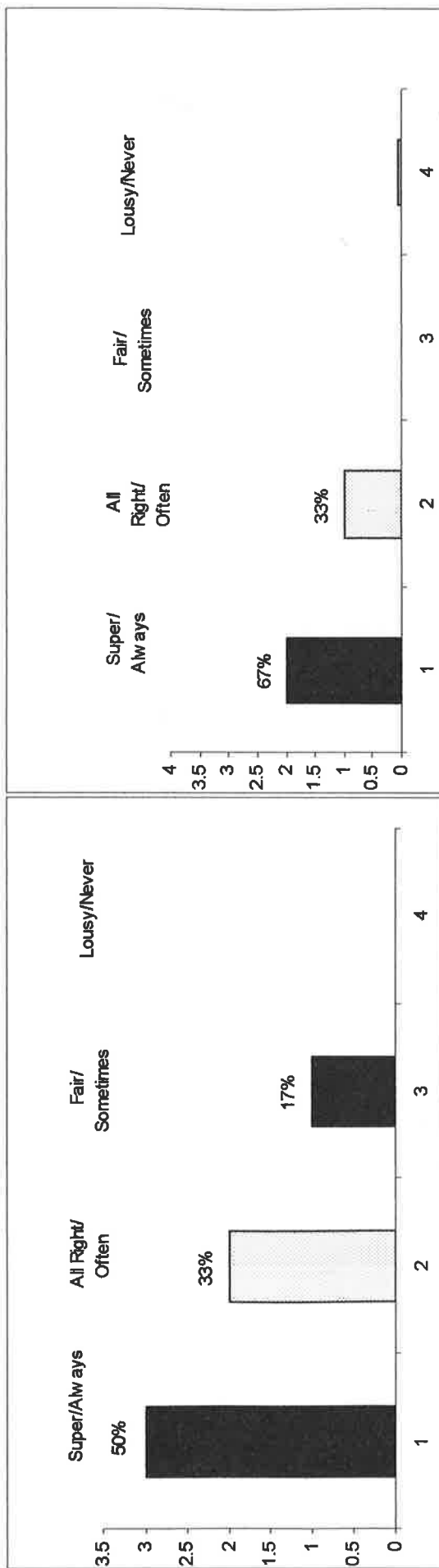


#### 4. I practice speaking words in rhythm to help with memorization.

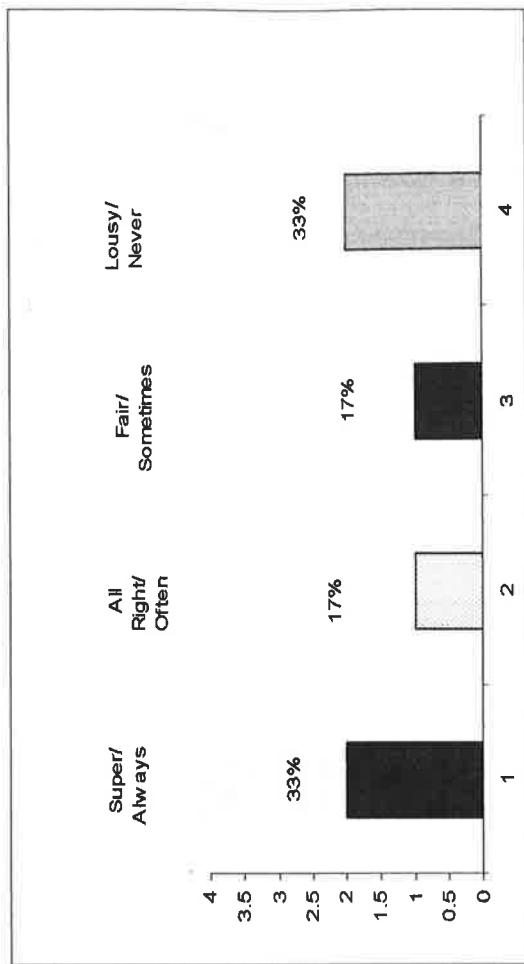
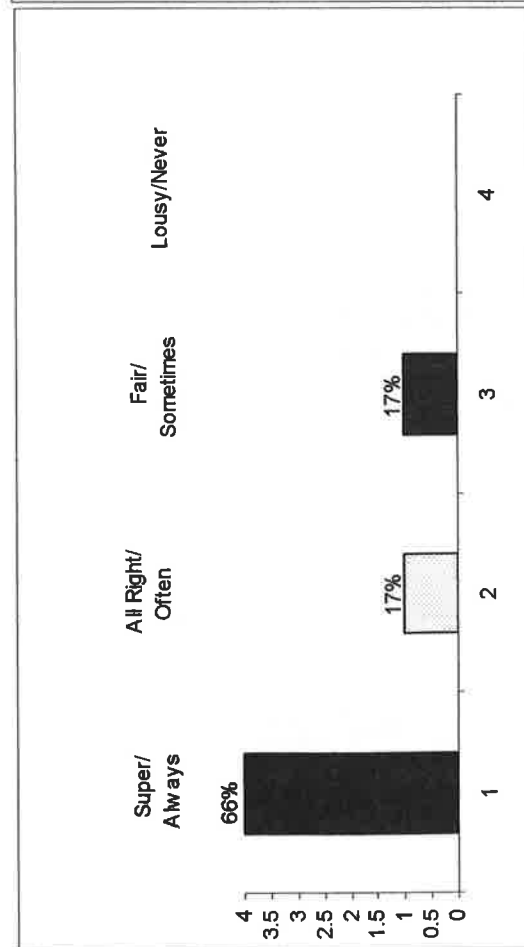
##### Appendix A-4



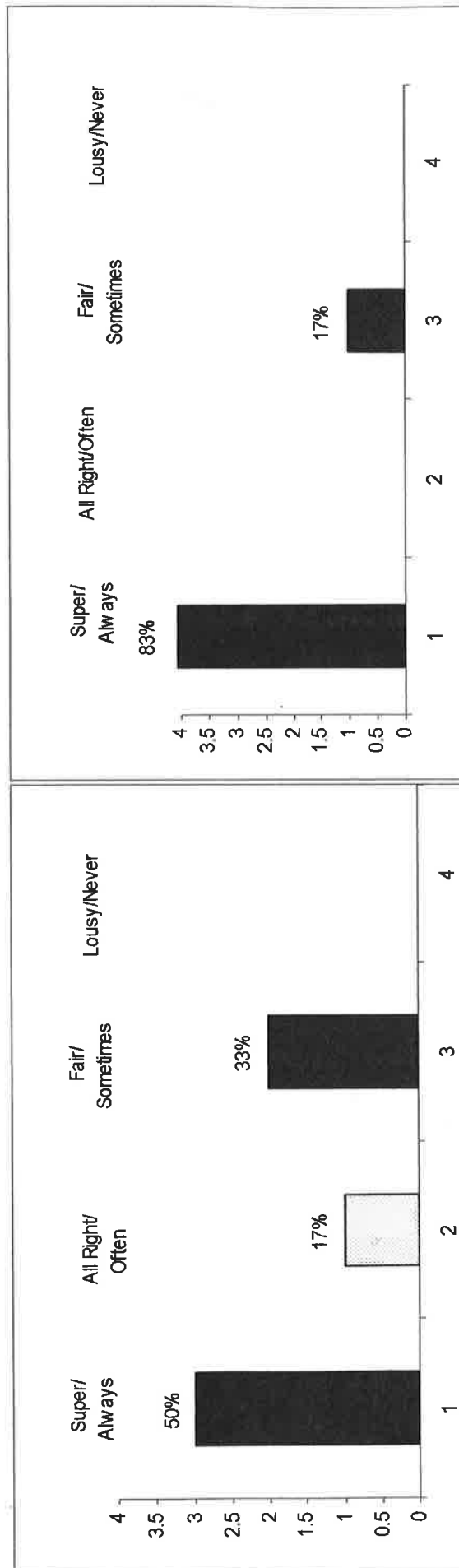
# 5. I practice breathing properly when rehearsing and performing. Appendix A-5



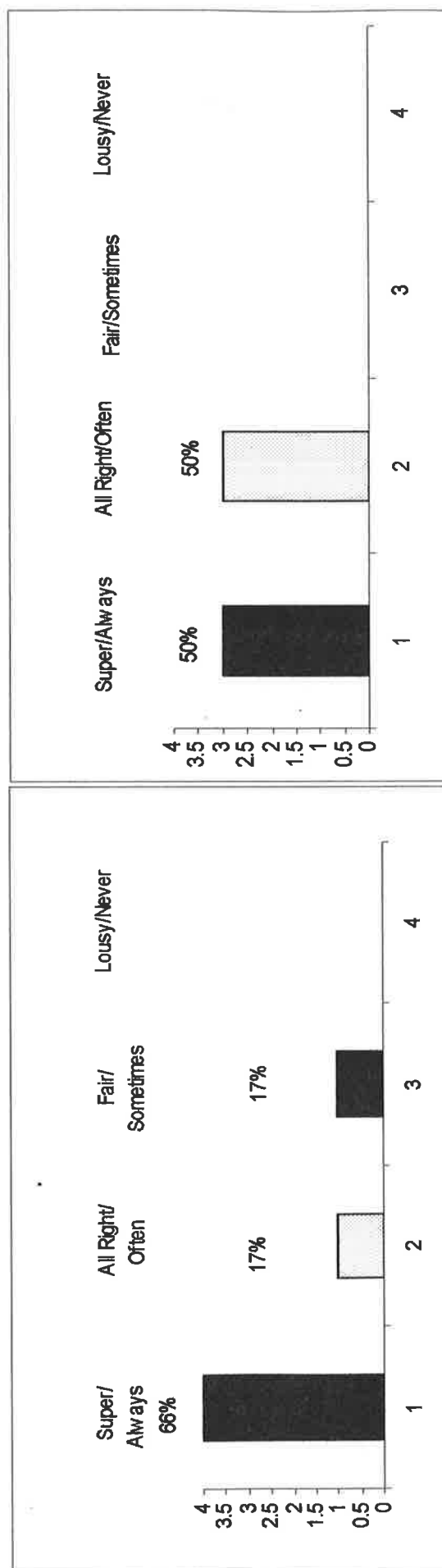
**6. I use vocal exercises to prepare my voice or performances.**  
**Appendix A-6**



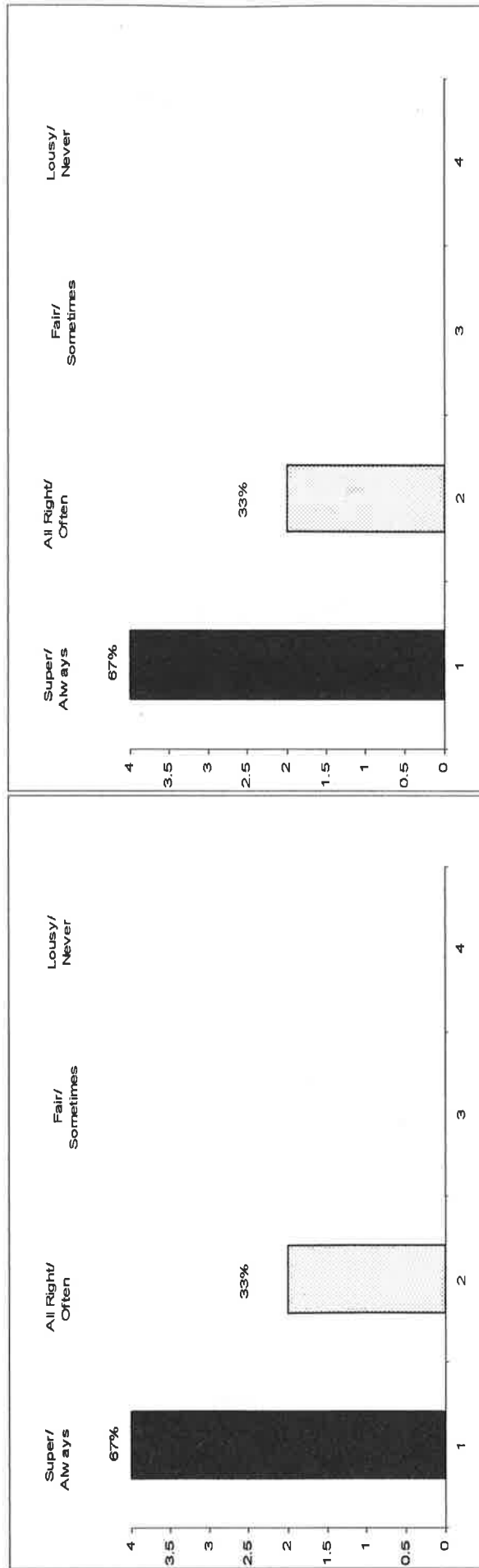
**7. When I perform, I deliberately relax.**  
**Appendix A-7**



**8. When I perform, I focus on the music through pictures or words.**  
**Appendix A-8**

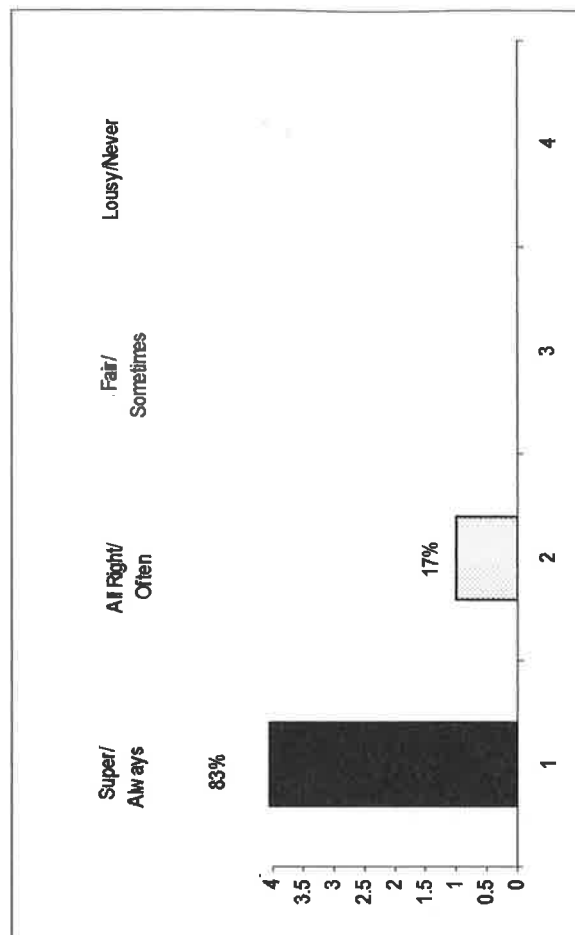
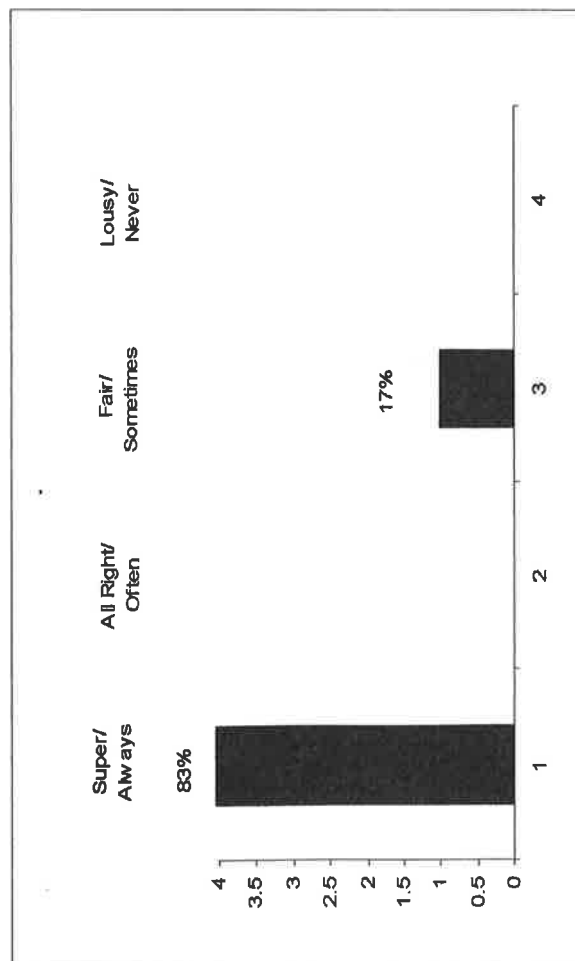


# 9. When I go on stage, I'm ready to perform. Appendix A-9

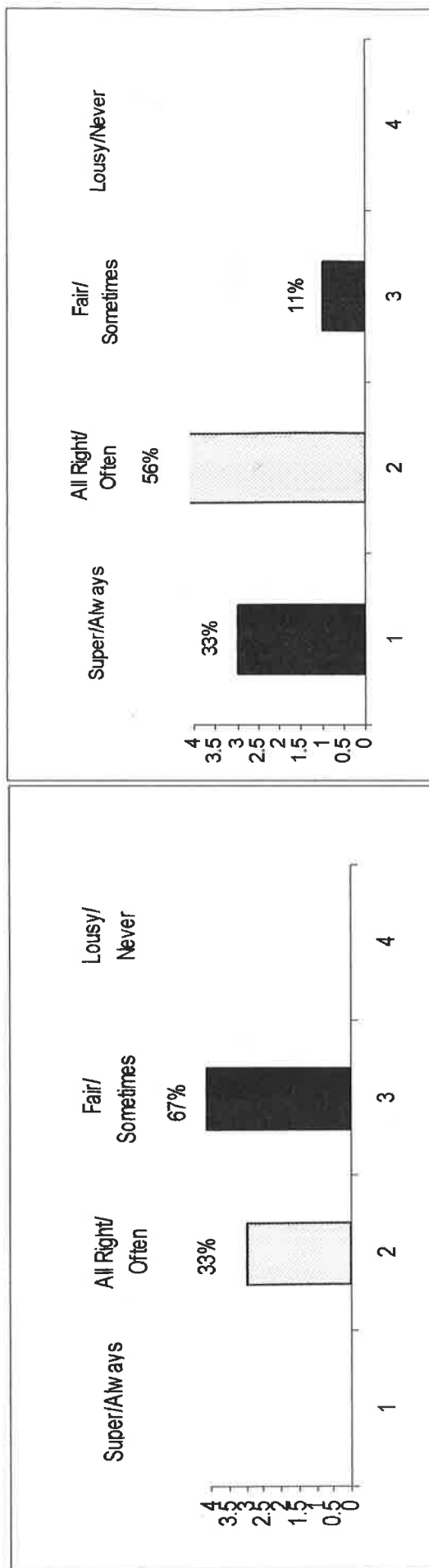




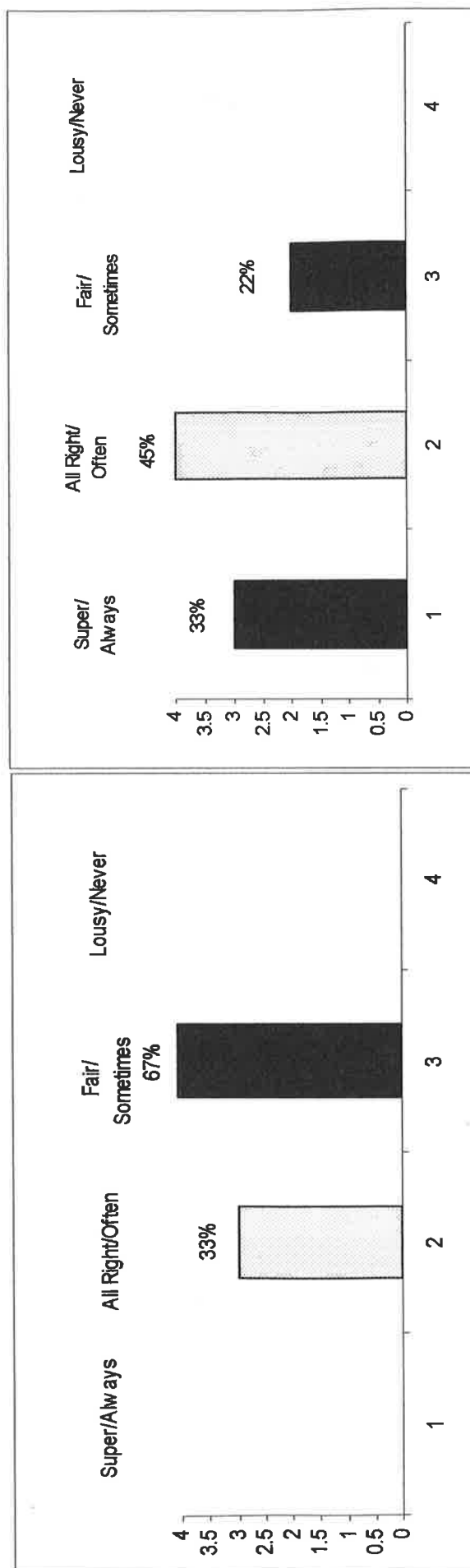
**10. After a performance, I am proud of myself.**  
**Appendix A-10**



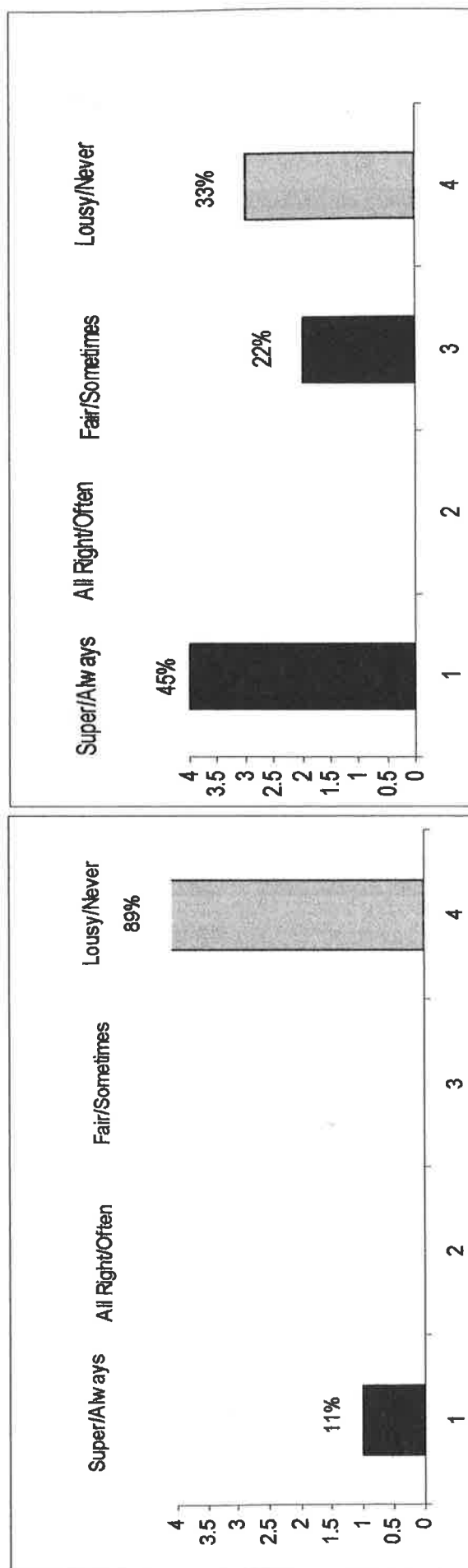
6. I use vocal exercises to prepare my voice for performance.  
Appendix B-6



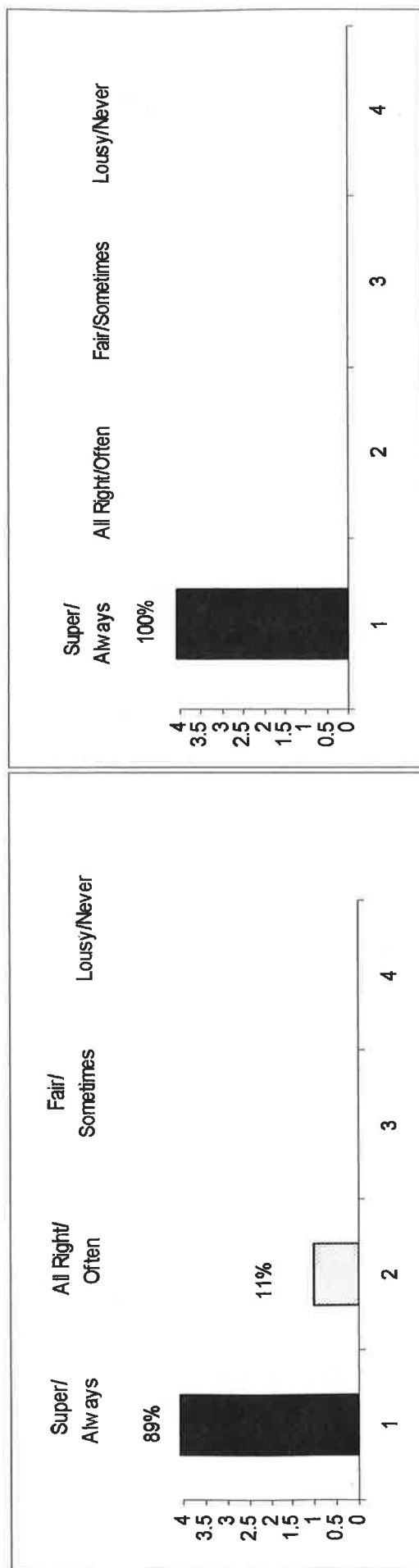
**7. When I perform, I deliberately relax.**  
**Appendix B-7**



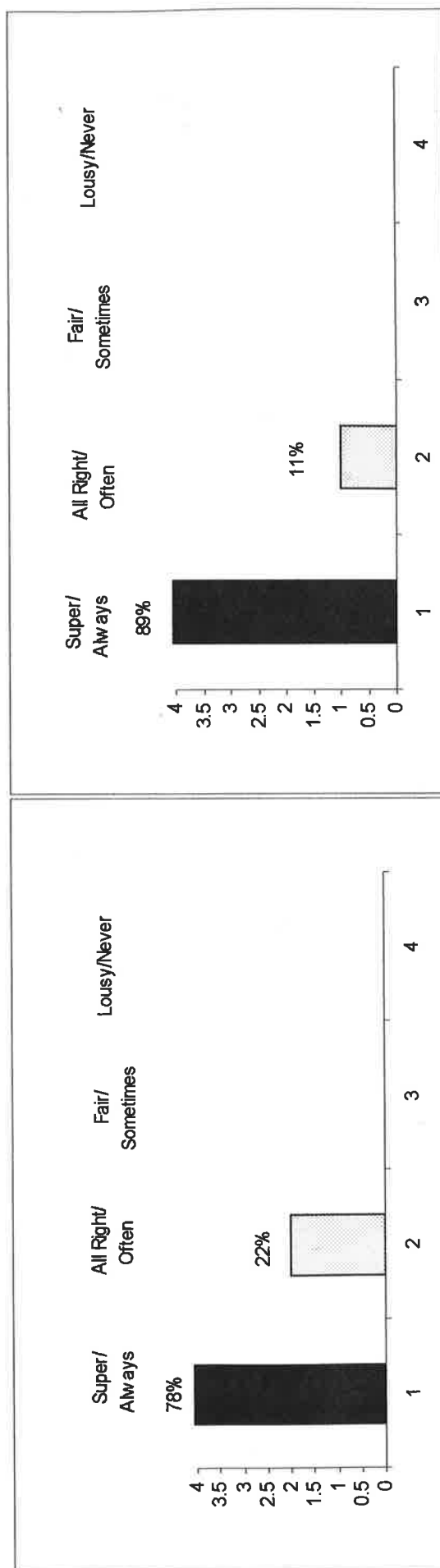
**8. When I perform, I focus on the music through pictures or words.**  
**Appendix B-8**



**9. When I go on stage, I'm ready to perform.**  
**Appendix B-9**



**10. After a performance, I am proud of myself.**  
**Appendix B-10**



## Appendix C

Name \_\_\_\_\_ MUSIC PERFORMANCE SURVEY Class \_\_\_\_\_

Super/Always    All Right/Often    Fair/Sometimes    Lousy/Never

1. I practice the melody on the syllable *lah* before adding the words.



2. I practice repeating small sections of a song.



3. I practice body stretches and other physical exercises to prepare for singing.



4. I practice speaking words in rhythm to help with memorization.



5. I practice breathing properly when rehearsing and performing.



# Appendix C

Name \_\_\_\_\_ MUSIC PERFORMANCE SURVEY Class \_\_\_\_\_

Super/Always   All Right/Often   Fair/Sometimes   Lousy/Never

6. I use vocal exercises to prepare my voice for performances



7. When I perform, I deliberately relax.



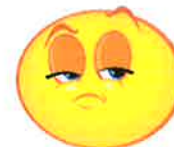
8. When I perform, I focus on the music through pictures or words.



9. When I go on stage, I'm ready to perform.



10. After a performance, I am proud of myself.





### Teacher Script

#### Introduction:

The next few weeks we will be applying exercises during our rehearsals that will help us easily learn new music and remain relaxed so that, when we perform for an audience, we will perform our best.

#### Week One:

**Say:** Before we begin our rehearsal today, please take a few moments and answer the questions on this survey to the best of your ability.

**Directions:** Give students ample time to complete survey and collect them.

**Say:** To begin memorizing the music, we will study the music locating repeats, codas, dynamic markings, and other markings within the music. Next we will rehearse using a basic breathing exercise to make sure we are aware of how our body feels to breathe correctly.<sup>1</sup>

**Directions:** Read the following steps to the children.

- 1) Put hands together over your belly, fingers barely touching.
- 2) Breathe in slowly through the nose, and then breathe out through the mouth – slowly and deeply.
- 3) Pay attention to your fingers as they separate and come back together as your belly moves in and out.
- 4) Ask the student what they felt to gain awareness of their body during proper breathing (Anderson, 2000).

**Say:** Now turn to your right and massage the shoulders of your neighbor. Turn to your left and massage the shoulders of your neighbor.

**Directions:** Give students time to perform this exercise.

---

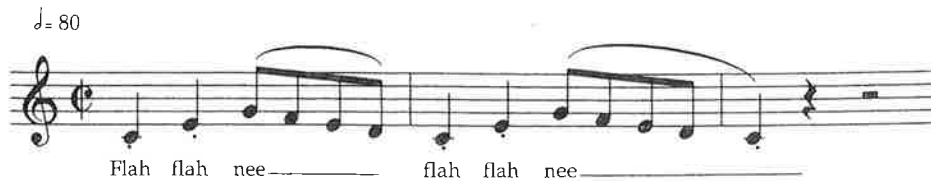
<sup>1</sup> This exercise is related to the skill assessed by "Music Performance Survey" item #5.

## Appendix D

**Say:** We will now practice a vocal exercise that will help our tongue and jaw to move together.<sup>2</sup>

**Directions:** Practice the following exercise.

Flah-Flah-Nee (Henderson, 1991)



**Say:** Open music to new selection. We will begin by speaking the lyrics in rhythm of the first four measures.<sup>3</sup> This will help memorize the correct rhythm.

**Directions:** Continue with this pattern until you have rehearsed the lyrics for the entire song four measures at a time.

**Say:** We will now begin to learn the melody on the syllable lah for four measures at a time.<sup>4</sup>

**Directions:** Continue this pattern until you have rehearsed the melody for the entire song four measures at a time.

Follow these same instructions for the all pieces.

**Say:** Praise students for rehearsal sections done well

### Week two:

**Say:** We will begin rehearsal today writing a short story about the piece to be performed.

Write specific feelings, actions and pictures in the story. Close eyes and run the story through your head like a movie. The more details within your story, the easier it will be

<sup>2</sup> This exercise is related to the skill assessed by "Music Performance Survey," item # 6.

<sup>3</sup> This exercise is related to the skill assessed by "Music Performance Survey," item # 4.

<sup>4</sup> This exercise is related to the skill assessed by "Music Performance Survey" item # 1.

## Appendix D

to communicate the music to the audience.<sup>5</sup> This activity will enhance positive expectations during performance. We will then practice a basic breathing exercise to ensure we are aware of how our body feels to breathe correctly.<sup>6</sup>

**Directions:** Read the following steps to the children.

- 1) Put hands together over your belly, fingers barely touching.
- 2) Breathe in slowly through the nose, and then breathe out through the mouth – slowly and deeply.
- 3) Pay attention to your fingers as they separate and come back together as your belly moves in and out.
- 4) Ask the student what they felt to gain awareness of their body during proper breathing (Anderson, 2000).

**Say:** We will now sing on the syllable “oo” alternating between whole and half steps.

**Directions:** Do this on a five-note scale beginning with the key of C.<sup>7</sup>

**Say:** We will now practice a vocal exercise that will help bring your tone forward behind your teeth.

**Directions:** Practice the following exercise.

Ning ee vocal exercise: Henderson (1991) focusing on forward vowels<sup>8</sup>



**Say:** We will now do a relaxation exercise to help keep your body relaxed at all times during rehearsals and performances. To begin, bend forward allowing arms to hang in

<sup>5</sup> This exercise is related to the skill assessed by “Music Performance Survey,” item #8.

<sup>6</sup> This exercise is related to the skill assessed by “Music Performance Survey,” item #5.

<sup>7</sup> This exercise is related to the skill assessed by “Music Performance Survey,” item # 6.

<sup>8</sup> This exercise is related to the skill assessed by “Music Performance Survey,” item # 6.

## Appendix D

front of body. Slowly return to a standing position while slowly breathing in. Practice this during rehearsals and just before going on stage as many times as needed.<sup>9</sup>

Now review pieces previously rehearsed.

**Say:** Open next piece. We will begin by speaking the lyrics in rhythm of the first four measures.

**Directions:** Continue with this pattern until you have rehearsed the lyrics for the entire song four measures at a time.

**Say:** We will now begin to learn the melody on the syllable lah for four measures at a time.<sup>10</sup> This will assist in learning the melody accurately, and also improve on memory.

**Directions:** Continue this pattern until you have rehearsed the melody for the entire song four measures at a time.

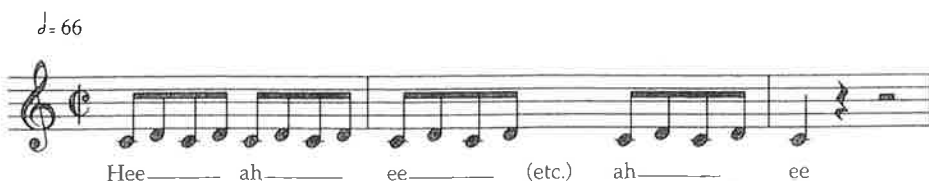
**Say:** Praise students for specific progress noted.

### Week three:

**Say:** Today we will begin rehearsal with a vocal exercise working with breath control.

Being in control of your breathing will allow your body to remain relaxed and keep our minds focused.

**Directions:** Do the Hee-Ah exercise. Henderson (1991)



## Appendix D

**Say:** We will now do an exercise that will help us keep our bodies relaxed while singing.<sup>11</sup>

**Directions:** Ask students to sit comfortably in a chair and follow the steps for the Alexander technique.

- 1) Allow your body to lengthen with your head to gently moving upward and your body following.
- 2) Sit down with your knees slightly bent. Think of how you feel.
- 3) Roll hips upward. Think relaxed. Release.
- 4) Roll head side to side. Think relaxed body.
- 5) Lift arms one at a time beginning with the hand then the lower arm, then entire arm. Remain relaxed.
- 6) Lift one leg at a time. Bring leg toward chest with the least amount of tension in your stomach. Allow each leg to slowly move back down.

**Say:** We will now practice what it feels like inside our mouths while we sing called the inside smile.

**Directions:** Follow the directions given. Do this three times.

Close the mouth with teeth apart and smile. You will feel a slight lifting in the area under the eyes and a space opening on the inside top of the mouth, as in the beginning of a yawn. The soft palate will go up (Henderson, 1991).

**Say:** We will rehearse sections in our selections that need a little extra attention.

**Directions:** Focus on difficult passages, leaps, or intervals.

### Week Four:

**Say:** We will begin rehearsal today with a different breathing exercise.<sup>12</sup>

**Directions:** Follow the steps for the breathing technique listed.

- 1) Take a deep breath in through the nose and let it out very slowly through the mouth. Do this ten times.
- 2) For the next five breaths, choose a comfortable pitch and hold each breath to the count of four maintaining pitch and volume.
- 3) For the next five breaths, change the volume of each pitch from piano to forte back to piano. Choose a different pitch for each breath.

<sup>11</sup> This exercise is related to the skill assessed by "Music Performance Survey," item # 3.

<sup>12</sup> This exercise is related to the skill assessed by "Music Performance Survey," item # 5.

## Appendix D

- 4) For the last set of five breaths, do everything in the previous step, but change the timbre of your voice by "sweeping" through the vowels: a,e,i,o,u (Anderson, 2007).

### **Say:**

We will practice the Alexander technique today. Allow your body to lengthen with your head to gently moving upward and your body following.

- 1) Sit comfortably with your knees slightly bent. Think of how you feel.
- 2) Roll hips upward. Think relaxed. Release.
- 3) Roll head side to side. Think relaxed body.
- 4) Lift arms one at a time beginning with the hand then the lower arm, then entire arm. Remain relaxed.
- 5) Lift one leg at a time. Bring leg toward chest with the least amount of tension in your stomach. Allow each leg to slide back down until the leg is straightened and fully on the floor.

**Say:** We will review the three vocal techniques. 1) Flah-Flah-Nee, 2) Ning ee, and 3) Hee-Ah. (Refer back to previous weeks) Rehearse all pieces focusing on memory. We will rehearse each song with repeating the lyrics four measures at a time.

### **Week Five:**

**Say:** We will begin rehearsal today with our breathing technique.

- 1) Take a deep breath in through the nose and let it out very slowly through the mouth. Do this ten times.
- 2) For the next five breaths, choose a comfortable pitch and hold each breath to the count of four maintaining pitch and volume.
- 3) For the next five breaths, change the volume of each pitch from piano to forte back to piano. Choose a different pitch for each breath.
- 4) For the last set of five breaths, do everything in the previous step, but change the timbre of your voice by "sweeping" through the vowels: a,e,i,o,u (Anderson, 2007).

**Say:** We will now rehearse the Alexander technique.

- 1) Sit comfortably with your knees slightly bent. Think of how relaxed you feel.
- 2) Roll hips upward. Think relaxed. Release.
- 3) Roll head side to side. Think relaxed body.
- 4) Lift arms one at a time beginning with the hand then the lower arm, then entire arm. Remain relaxed.

## Appendix D

- 5) Lift one leg at a time. Bring leg toward chest with the least amount of tension in your stomach. Allow each leg to slide back down.

**Say:** We will review the three vocal techniques. 1) Flah-Flah-Nee 2) Ning ee and 3) Hee-Ah. (Refer back to previous weeks)

**Directions:** Give students time to do these exercises.

**Say:** We will rehearse each song singing the melody with the lyrics four measures at a time.<sup>13</sup>

### Week Six:

**Say:** We will begin rehearsal today with the windmill exercise that will awaken our body. The steps are as follows:

- 1) Stand with feet approximately two feet apart
- 2) The upper body falls slightly front and towards the floor from the hips.
- 3) Left arm hangs to the side, the right arm circles in front of the body, over the head and then down to the right.
- 4) Inhale through the nose as the arms lift in front of the body and exhale through the mouth as the arm falls.
- 5) Reverse arms and do the same.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, we will work today on the breathing technique we've learned previously:

- 1) Take a deep breath in through the nose and let it out very slowly through the mouth. Do this ten times.
- 2) For the next five breaths, choose a comfortable pitch and hold each breath to the count of four maintaining pitch and volume.
- 3) For the next five breaths, change the volume of each pitch from piano to forte back to piano. Choose a different pitch for each breath.
- 4) For the last set of five breaths, do everything in the previous step, but change the timbre of your voice by "sweeping" through the vowels: a, e, i, o, u (Anderson, 2007).

**Directions:** Give students time to do these exercises.

**Say:** We will rehearse pieces with accompaniment.

---

<sup>13</sup> This exercise is related to the skill assessed by "Music Performance Survey," item # 2.

<sup>14</sup> This exercise is related to the skill assessed by "Music Performance Survey," item # 3.

## Appendix D

**Directions:** Allow students to sing through all pieces with accompaniment

as many times as needed. Work on any problems heard.

**Say:** We will end rehearsal today with the Alexander technique today. Allow your body to lengthen with your head to gently moving upward and your body following.

- 1) Sit with your knees slightly bent. Think of how you feel.
- 2) Roll hips upward. Think relaxed. Release.
- 3) Roll head side to side. Think relaxed body.
- 4) Lift arms one at a time beginning with the hand then the lower arm, then the lower arm. Remain relaxed.
- 5) Lift one leg at a time. Bring leg toward chest with the least amount of tension in your stomach. Allow each leg to slide back down.

**Say:** Give positive comments on how well students are working with melody, memory, relaxation, and other noticeable improvements.

Before performance, do both of the following exercises.<sup>15</sup> The first exercise is a positive visual exercise. Repeat this exercise until you see and feel yourself positively performing free of any negative thoughts.

**Say:**

- 1) Sit in a comfortable chair and close eyes.
- 2) Take a slow deep breath and hold for approximately 2-5 seconds.
- 3) Release through the nose.
- 4) Notice the relaxed feeling.
- 5) Visualize self the day of the performance beginning with dressing in clothes that will be worn to the performance.
- 6) Visualize self in the place where the performance will take place.
- 7) Visualize people telling you how good you look.
- 8) Visualize self feeling great as you step onto stage.
- 9) Visualize self performing well.
- 10) Visualize self feeling nothing about the performance could have been done better.
- 11) Congratulate self on a job well done.

The second, a few moments before entering the stage area, perform a pre-performance posture check to ensure your body is aligned and ready to perform.

---

<sup>15</sup> The following exercises are related to post-performance confidence in "Music Performance Survey" item # 10.



## Appendix D

- 1) Head is balanced comfortably at the top of the spine.
- 2) The jaw is relaxed and the chin is level.
- 3) Shoulders are down.
- 4) The chest is comfortably up.
- 5) The pelvis tucked slightly inward.
- 6) The knees are relaxed and not locked.
- 7) Your weight is evenly balanced on the soles and heels of the feet.
- 8) (Morrison, 2001).

Do a dress rehearsal if possible, or schedule a time at your discretion, previous to the performance, to allow students to view the performance area.

At the conclusion of the six weeks of rehearsals, ask students to complete the Post Music Performance survey.