

INDIVIDUAL SIGHT-SINGING SUCCESS:
EFFECTS OF TESTING CONDITION, LARGE ENSEMBLE SIGHT-SINGING RATING,
SCHOOL SIZE, AND SELECTED BACKGROUND FACTORS

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to investigate the relationship of assessment setting to sight-singing success of the individual student in relation to (a) past ensemble sight-singing ratings, (b) school size, and (c) a group of selected background factors. An assessment strategy was used measuring pitch accuracy and rhythm accuracy individually, through audiotaped performance, both (a) in an isolated setting, and (b) in a setting patterned after the adjudicated music festival experience.

Subjects for the study were members of eight Illinois high school choirs ($N = 220$) who had participated in the sight-singing portion of IHSA large ensemble festival at least two years. The ensembles were chosen by consistency of festival sight-singing ratings (4 had received "I" ratings, 4 had not), and by school size, as indicated by IHSA classification.

The results revealed significant difference between the act of sight-singing in isolation and sight-singing within the ensemble, with significantly higher mean scores for the within-ensemble setting. No statistically significant difference was found for previous festival sight-singing ratings or school size, and no interaction was found between test setting and previous rating or school size.

Musical background factors found to influence sight-singing ability were: (a) instrumental experience, both in ensembles and individually, (b) considering one's self able to play the piano, (c) private instrumental lessons, both for piano, and other instruments, and (d) years of choir experience. Results indicated a significant negative relationship between years of choral experience and sight-singing across testing conditions. Additionally, the within-ensemble testing procedure, was determined to be a reliable testing method for gathering information on the individual student while within the ensemble.

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