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A Foreword

by Clifford K. Madsen

I do not remember having ever gone through a music education methods book that is as well grounded in scientifically demonstrable techniques, solid evidenced-based suggestions and explicit exercises as found in this work. Previously, I have stated there are pedagogical exercises that are based on imagery or seemingly odd or even ridiculous things intended just “to get the particular sound or phrase development, or whatever the teacher desires validated by seemingly good results of the activity.” For example, in developing good posture one might find “Head lightly suspended by an imaginary ‘string’ through the spine.” And “Feel grounded, free, and lifted at the same time.” However, suggestions become more meaningful if nested within a solid empirical approach. This point of view finds expression in the empirically based content throughout. Yet, all of this is aiming toward developing the art of making beautiful music. The content of this book is not just well organized. More importantly, it contains a great deal of new material not usually found in such an endeavor. I highly recommend it knowing it will provide a meaningful contribution to the development of singers of all ages.

Clifford K. Madsen

CLIFFORD MADSEN, the Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor of Music, is Coordinator of Music Education/Music Therapy/Contemporary Media and teaches in the areas of music education, music therapy, research, and psychology of music. He serves on various international and national editorial and research boards and is widely published throughout scholarly journals in music education and therapy.



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Dr. Madsen received the bachelor's and master's degrees from Brigham Young University and the Ph.D. from The Florida State University. He was appointed to the FSU faculty in 1961.

Introduction and Acknowledgments

by Christopher W. Peterson

The “art” of teaching is different from the “act” of teaching in that an “art” is creative, unbound, and spontaneous. The “act” of teaching can be methodical, planned, well sequenced, and clearly logical. Obviously, teachers must be well planned and methodical in order to deliver information that makes sense to their students; yet, information that only informs, without relevance to the questions that the students hold, is likely to be perceived as one dimensional, boring, and sterile. One major foundation of the Art of Teaching is the concept that “everything relates to everything.” There is nothing that can be discussed, examined, or explored that is not related to everything else in the known world.

resonance¹

noun

res·o·nance | \ 're-zə-nən(t)s, 'rez-nən(t)s\

Definition of *resonance*

1a: the quality or state of being resonant

b (1): a vibration of large amplitude in a mechanical or electrical system caused by a relatively small periodic stimulus of the same or nearly the same period as the natural vibration period of the system

2a: the intensification and enriching of a musical tone by supplementary vibration

b: a quality imparted to voiced sounds by vibration in anatomical resonating chambers or cavities (such as the mouth or the nasal cavity)

c: a quality of richness or variety

7: a synchronous gravitational relationship of two celestial bodies (such as moons) that orbit a third (such as a planet), which can be expressed as a simple ratio of their orbital periods

Resonance. This one amazing word can relate to so many of the things that we, as choral music educators, do. We work to create beautiful music that is rich and resonant, and we strive to connect with our audiences so that they will resonate with our ensemble sounds and the expression of our art. We work to relate to our students so that they will be inspired to be their best, hoping that the structure and opportunities that we create for them multiply and resonate positively in their own teaching. As one resonating body can initiate sound in another potentially resonating body in close proximity, our work to train future educators ripples out to affect change in subtle and very significant ways. When things are in a state of “resonance,” there is a common vibration, a sense of wellness, and a feeling of satisfaction that comes from a general sense that everything we do is affected by, and connected to, everything else. It is hoped that this textbook will inspire you whether you are an experienced teacher,

1 Excerpted from:
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resonance>

a new teacher, or an emerging teacher, and that you will be changed in positive ways through your interaction with and exploration of the material. I hope that you resonate with the concepts you will read and that you will be inspired to apply and “steal” everything that you think will make you a better teacher.

The title of this book “Resonance: The Art of the Choral Music Educator” is intended to relate to a philosophical foundation in my approach to teaching: instead of teaching teachers how to teach as if it were a black-and-white quantifiable science-like endeavor, I believe that we need to teach our preservice teachers how to think, how to learn, and how to solve problems creatively. The arrival of the COVID-19 global pandemic in spring of 2020 emphasized the efficacy of this approach more than ever before. In what felt like a split second, the entire world changed. Singing was determined to be a “super-spreader activity,” and choral music...indeed most ensemble music making nationwide... ceased to exist except as online, pre-recorded virtual events. We were all suddenly physically alone, in quarantine, and wondering when we would be able to return to our “normal” lives in artistic resonance together. Student teachers, and all teachers for that matter, were thrust into a teaching world that few knew anything about. The environment of online music teaching and Zoom technology was foreign to all but a few of us, and the skills of being able to think, learn, and solve problems creatively became absolutely essential to our survival as teachers in a virtual classroom.

Yet, for all the challenges of virtual instruction and the constraints of making music through technology, most of the concepts, techniques, and philosophies of effective teaching remain unchanged. Good teaching is still good teaching, regardless of the teaching environment. Teachers have, by pure necessity, found new ways to mentor their students in engaging and creative ways, and we have emerged into a new world of teaching that we could not have imagined possible before COVID-19. And while many people have embraced the need for change and raced ahead to adapt and learn new strategies for instruction, others have felt left behind and sad that so much has suddenly changed in our musical and educational world. Indeed, we must all endeavor to remember how we once felt as emerging teachers, and we must strive to come to terms with the feeling of struggle that accompanies unfamiliar experiences that force us to grow. It gets easier. Great teachers are always striving to learn, even when the learning feels particularly uncomfortable. Like many, I have had to dig deep into my creativity, problem-solving abilities, and my pedagogy to try to be as effective as possible, and it would be a lie to say this has been easy for me to do in a moment’s notice when the pandemic materialized. But together we can move ahead, in resonance, to create a teaching world that embraces the effective techniques we have used for decades while also capitalizing on what we have learned during COVID-19 to make our instruction even more effective than it was before.

I have had the wonderful opportunity to teach music as an elementary general classroom music educator, as a middle school and high school choral director, as a church choir director, as a community chorus director, as a guest conductor and workshop clinician, and for over twenty years, as a college professor in higher education, directing choirs and training choral music educators. With all the years

1. Becoming a Professional Music Educator

“Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.”

~Confucius

Music Educator by Choice

Welcome to the professional world of the choral music educator! You are reading these words because you have, on some level, decided to explore the idea of becoming a choral conductor and teacher of choral music students. It is a big decision to become a professional educator, and it is not a decision that should be made without a lot of thoughtful consideration. Are you right for this profession, and is this profession right for you? There are no easy answers to these questions.

When it comes to choosing a job, there are really only two kinds to choose from: jobs that require you to shower *before* work and jobs that require you to shower *after* work. If you have never considered the “shower before or after work” concept, think about the kinds of jobs you have had in your lifetime. Did you need to wear a uniform for your job, and did you have to stand and interact with customers and smile at people? If so, then you probably had a “shower before work” kind of job. If you had a job that allowed you to wear casual, non-uniform clothes, and that required you to get dirty and smelly for the job, you certainly had a “shower after work” kind of job. There are some jobs, of course, that are both, such as working at a fast-food restaurant where you take a shower before work, wear a uniform, interact with customers, and still get dirty and smell like French fries when you’re done...requiring *another shower after work*. Being a professional music educator is primarily a “shower before work” kind of job, so knowing who you are and what you like to do are important considerations as you embark into the world of the conductor/educator.

If you are a “shower after work” kind of person, choral music education might not be the right profession for you. To be happy, you will probably need to be outdoors working with hands-on materials and getting yourself dirty making, growing, or fixing things. Likewise, if you prefer to work alone on a computer and are annoyed when people interact with you, you are probably not well suited for teaching either. If you love music, but don’t enjoy helping other people gain musicianship and grow to love music the way you do, you might not be a good fit for teaching. If you are using music education as a backup plan if something else doesn’t work out for you, you will probably not

become a passionate and effective professional music educator. If you are going to become an effective and professional teacher, you have to be someone who likes people, is a superb musician, and who enjoys the process as well as the product. Do not fall back on teaching as a plan B, but instead make a decision to embrace teaching music as your profession. Make an informed decision to become a music educator...by choice.

One thing to ask yourself is, "What could I bring to teaching, and what would teaching bring to me?" Choosing a profession that you enjoy and can thrive in is a very important decision; you could possibly remain in your chosen profession for your whole life. You need to choose a job that will help you feel fulfilled while also allowing you the chance to grow, change, and learn.

daily lesson plan

Those Who Can, Teach!

A truly effective and inspiring teacher brings a large mix of skills, knowledge, and experiences to the classroom. You may already possess some of these skills because of your own experiences and background or perhaps because of your natural dispositions or inclinations. Some people are "natural teachers" who have been enjoying interacting with, and helping, others their whole life. These natural teachers relish opportunities to explain and demonstrate things to others, and they get excited when people improve and acquire the skills that they are teaching. Not everyone, however, feels the calling to teach at an early age, and some people come to teaching after a great deal of life experience and soul searching. Still others "awake" to teaching as something they never considered, but that they are quite well suited for in terms of their personality and work ethic. And then there are some people who seem to default to teaching as a back-up plan, who aren't curious about being a great teacher, but who consider teaching as something that anyone can do if need be.

The truth is that talent for teaching is like talent in music; natural teachers can be effective with less practice because they possess the inherent skills that effective teachers develop, and they start practicing their teaching skills very early in their lives. But talent for teaching is not a prerequisite for becoming a great teacher any more than talent for music is a prerequisite for becoming a great musician. Some people work and practice to become fine musicians despite having an average aptitude for music, and some people work hard and become great teachers even if their disposition is not that of a natural teacher.

It is important that you, as an aspiring teacher, become acquainted with the knowledge, skills, and behaviors of great teachers so that you can work on the areas that you have not developed already through hard work or natural talent.

Playing the piano confidently and without harming the progress of the choir is a valuable skill for the emerging choral professional. You will need to be able to work in many settings, including *a cappella*, with an accompanist, and without an accompanist. With practice and experience, you will feel confident and capable in any rehearsal setting, in front of any choir, even if you are an emerging or “late-blooming” choral pianist.



RECAPITULATION

1. Everyone has a story about playing the piano. Some people took lessons from an early age and stuck with it while others started early and then quit for some reason. Still others didn't play piano at all growing up, but may have played another instrument in concert band, orchestra, or in an extra-curricular ensemble such as a folk or rock band. Discuss your experience playing piano, as well as others instruments, in your lifetime. How has your experience playing these instruments affected your skill and confidence as a future professional music educator?
2. Write a paragraph as a self-assessment of your own piano skills in relation to the various sections of the *Music Assessment Rubric for Piano Skills*. Do this *before* you take the assessment. Read the descriptions and guess where you would probably score on each section. Where do you think you would have the most success and where do you think you would have the most challenges and why?
3. Use the *Music Assessment Rubric for Piano Skills* to measure your ability to be a “do-no-harm” pianist. Find a choral octavo with an accompaniment that you can study and give yourself a few days to practice it. Have someone watch you to fill out the rubric or video yourself playing the accompaniment and fill it out yourself. Find some musical examples to test yourself on each section of the rubric. Compare these scores and results to the self-assessment you did in the previous section. Did you do the same, better, or worse than you thought you would on the actual assessment? Discuss the factors, in your opinion, that lead you to this result.
4. Create a “Practice Log” for your piano playing. Get a notebook or use an electronic device with an app that you like, and keep track of the date, location, and number of minutes that you practice the piano every day.

2. Career Paths in Music Education

“Passion is what gives meaning to our lives. It’s what allows us to achieve success beyond our wildest imagination. Try to find a career path that you have a passion for.” ~Henry Samueli

The Importance of Learning to Teach

When it comes to studying music and becoming a trained musician, it is a true statement that virtually everyone will assume the role of a teacher in some fashion and at some point in time. Some people will become credentialed public school educators, while others will become private school music teachers. Some will become workshop and master class clinicians, and some will become college and university professors. Some people will start, build, and maintain private music studios where they will teach students one on one, while others may hold corporate jobs in the music industry where they will interact with and train others to do their jobs effectively. Professional conductors and performers (who may work with highly trained musical colleagues) will need to use the skills of a trained teacher some of the time to be most effective. Even public school administrators, who don’t work with musicians most of the time, need to know how to manage and teach their staff to be valued employees in the workplace. Everyone, regardless of their professional title, will be a teacher in some form, and every person would benefit from learning how to teach others as effectively as possible.

But while everyone would benefit from learning how to teach more effectively, not everyone will study to acquire the pedagogy of highly effective teachers. This implies that there will be a good number of music teachers in the world who may be good performers, conductors, or administrators, but who are not adequately prepared to be highly effective professional music educators. Of course, if a person is born with the innate traits of a natural teacher, they will probably have a good chance of “figuring out” how to teach over time, through trial and error, without any formal education training. But for many other people, teaching is not something that comes naturally. Without any specific teacher training, most people will teach exactly the way that they were taught by their own teachers, for better or for worse.

It is presumed that you are reading these words because you are intending to be a professional music teacher someday and that you are curious about the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of highly effective music educators. But you may be a little unsure of your future role in the profession and the various opportunities that are available to you after graduation. If you are called

strongly to teaching as a profession, rest assured that you will encounter ample opportunities to express your passion in the professional world. As it has been stated, everyone will be a teacher at some level. The questions to consider are, *“In what music-teaching situations could I envision myself enjoying and growing? In what situations can I see myself making a difference in the world? What kind of lifestyle do I want and what am I best suited for based on my talents, focus, and innate dispositions?”*

Keep these questions in the forefront of your thinking as you read the rest of the chapter. You will be presented with a short description of the most common career paths in music education, along with a few of the advantages of each. It is not uncommon for a person to work in several of these positions at different times throughout their career, so consider each one with an open mind, knowing that you may very well experience any of these if you choose to.

The Elementary General Music Teacher

Elementary general music teachers are normally public school educators who teach students in grades kindergarten through fifth or sixth grade (roughly ages five to twelve years old). The duties of these teachers can vary widely depending on the district they work for, the support for elementary music education in the school and district, and the facilities and resources available to them. Students usually take music together as a homeroom class, so class sizes can be small to large depending on the average class sizes of the school. The amount of time per class might range from twenty minutes or less to an hour or more. In many public school elementary music programs, one music specialist may teach hundreds of students every week, and it is not unusual for a single music teacher to be the only classroom music teacher for several schools.

In some schools, there will be a dedicated music room that students come to for music class, and sometimes the music teacher will be required to move from class to class, instruments and materials in tow, in a situation called the *itinerant* (traveling) music teacher. There are too many districts across the country, unfortunately, that do not have any classroom music instruction in the elementary curriculum, though they may offer band instrument lessons in fourth or fifth grade and choir as a school elective in fourth, fifth, or sixth grade.

Elementary music educators need to be able to teach and relate to very young students as well as adolescent students and to plan and implement musical activities that are rich, varied, and age appropriate. Effective classroom lessons require detailed and well-sequenced lesson plans that keep students engaged, interested, and experiencing music through singing, playing, listening, and moving activities. All good teachers must hold the attention

most public schools on the other hand, tenure is automatically awarded in year three if the teacher has proven to be competent in their teaching and has acted professionally in their official school duties.

Other Career Paths

There are many other jobs that music education majors thrive in after graduation besides the public school, private school, independent contractor, and higher education teaching scenarios. Simply graduating with a college degree sets you up for improved earning potential. Studies show that individuals with bachelor's degrees will earn \$400,000 more in their lifetimes than those with just a high school diploma, and that the money earned by those graduates makes up for tuition and other costs for many by age thirty-three.³ Click on the Dig Deeper icon to read about seventy careers in music and what you can expect to be paid in those situations.



RECAPITULATION

1. Think about the roles and advantages (and disadvantages) of the elementary public school music teacher, the secondary public school choral teacher, the private school music teacher, the independent contractor, and the higher education educator. Which ones are you drawn to as possible career paths, and which ones do you think you are less drawn to? Explain why you feel this way. Explain your thinking for all five of the situations and your desire (or lack of desire) to possibly follow each path. Remember to consider the questions, *"What music teaching situations could I envision myself enjoying and growing in, and in what situations can I see myself making a difference? What kind of lifestyle do I want, and what am I best suited for based on my talents, focus, and innate dispositions?"*
2. After reading through the seventy careers on the music webpage, make a list of the top ten careers that you think you would be happy doing and that you might be particularly good at if you applied yourself to the position. Be ready to discuss your top ten list in class or with colleagues, including why you made your choices. Is there something not on that list of seventy that you would consider doing as a profession? If so, list it below your top ten list, and you can list more than one if you want to.

³ <https://www.educationdive.com>

3. Teaching for Transfer

*"I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only make them think."
~Socrates*

The Exponential Expansion of Knowledge and Information

There was a time, in the distant past hundreds of thousands of years ago, when a person could be aware of virtually everything that was known in the world. Early hunting and gathering civilizations didn't require vast amounts of information to ensure survival, and "education" was likely focused on the essential skills necessary for hunting and surviving in a hostile environment.

Sometime around 8000–5000 BCE humans began to stop roaming and they started putting down roots in the first recorded civilizations where, for the first time, they lived in dwellings and raised food by farming. As agricultural techniques improved, the number of people needed to produce and store enough food to feed the village decreased; this triggered the rise of new professions within the village as more and more people had the leisure time to become trained professionals, including craftsmen, bankers, poets, and musicians. As you can imagine, diversified labor created new bodies of knowledge specific to each profession, and a need was created to pass on the skills and knowledge of these professions to the next generations. There are no existing records of exactly how this early education was delivered, but we can guess that it was probably accomplished through some form of mentoring, job shadowing, and on-the-job apprenticing. Specific knowledge within the known world was beginning to expand at a fast rate, and as this expansion continued, it became more and more difficult to be an expert on everything in your immediate environment.

At some point in time the institution of the "public school" was started in order to facilitate the passing on of the ever-growing body of knowledge in the known world to succeeding generations. According to existing records, one of the oldest known public schools was founded in China in the Han Dynasty between 143-141 BC by Wén Wēng and was named Shishi Middle School. New public schools were established in Europe in the 6th, 7th, and 8th centuries AD, and these institutions were charged with deciding what to include, and what *not to include*, in the curriculum. Information was continuing to expand, and it became increasingly important to deliver education with a focus on specific disciplines and areas of study.

Today we live in the age of networked computers and digital media, and the world continues to experience a tremendous growth of data, facts,





concepts, and information. The amount of information is not only increasing, but it is increasing at an exponential rate. R. Buckminster Fuller (1895–1983), a renowned inventor and visionary, wrote about his “Knowledge Doubling Curve,” noting that until 1900, human knowledge doubled approximately every hundred years, but by 1945, knowledge was doubling every twenty-five years. According to knowledge doubling theory, which measures the amount of data produced annually, the digital universe was doubling in size every two years in 2013 and was predicted to multiply by a factor of ten by the year 2020...from 4.4 trillion gigabytes to 44 trillion gigabytes. As of April 2020, the world’s data was measured to be an astounding 4.4 zettabytes! It is already humanly impossible, then, for any one person to know everything there is to know about everything.

Memorizing multiple facts to pass high-stakes tests makes less and less sense in an ever-expanding data age, and today’s educators are faced with the daunting challenge of not only teaching students *what to learn*, but also to teaching them *how to learn*. Because there is too much information in the world for any single person to learn and memorize, it is essential that our students learn how to make cognitive connections between their present studies and their previous knowledge and understandings. This will help them “learn how to learn” by challenging them to look beyond a single right answer and to search for shades of meaning and new insights into the topics they are studying. One way to address this need is to teach students how think critically and to apply what they know into new situations that they have never encountered.

The ability to interrelate learned information is usually referred to as generalization or “*transfer*.”¹ Unfortunately, many students you will teach in your classes and rehearsals will not have been taught how to make cognitive connections between previously learned concepts and new ones. Many of them will have spent years and years studying seemingly unrelated trivia and facts for tests in various classes without ever connecting those ideas to other subjects; what they learned in English class wasn’t compared and contrasted with what they learned in math, history, chemistry, or music classes. You will need to develop and implement exercises and experiences to teach your students how to transfer knowledge within your academic subject and also across other various subjects.

When students learn to transfer information and knowledge to new situations, they are more likely to retain that knowledge; this retention seems to be enhanced when the information is presented within an activity where

1 Material from this chapter was adapted from: Peterson, C. W. & Madsen, C. K., (2010) Encouraging Cognitive Connections and Creativity in the Music Classroom. *Music Educators Journal*, 97(2), December, 2010, pp. 25–29.

creativity is encouraged. It is easy to assume that students in our choirs, for example, understand the unifying musical elements of the various pieces in their folder or the stylistic differences and similarities between the music of two different composers. But unless students are taught to make these connections, we know that they are unlikely to do it by chance. And it would be unwise to ask them to make high-level connections about anything until you teach them how to make simple connections in a safe and creative classroom environment. If you were not given opportunities to transfer knowledge in a creative setting when you were younger, it might be difficult at first for you to teach your students how to do it. But when you learn and implement some of the techniques of teaching for transfer in this chapter, you will encourage your students to be more curious, creative thinkers in your classroom and throughout their lifetime.



RECAPITULATION

1. What kinds of teaching do you remember experiencing as a student in your lifetime: more fact-based teaching where you did a lot of memorization or more concept-based teaching where you had to explore and explain ideas? One way to remember is to think about how you were tested. If you remember more “one right answer, fill in the bubble” tests, your studies were more fact based. If you remember more “essay and discussion-based” tests, you had more concept-based instruction. Which kinds of instruction and tests do you prefer and why? Did these approaches play into your strengths as a learner or would there have been better methods for you to learn and be successful in school? Explain your ideas.
2. In a normal day, how much do you rely on your smart phone, tablet, or personal computer to get your work done? What tasks do you do without technology and which ones do you always depend on technology to complete? In your opinion, is this a good thing or a bad thing? Do you think we will still be using these devices in some form in twenty years? Why or why not?



Everything Relates to Everything

The first step to nurturing transfer skills in students is to establish the concept that “everything relates to everything.” Music relates to everything, including art, dance, theater, math, English, sports, popular culture, and so

4. Managing the Choral Classroom

“Everything we do, we do together.” ~ Christopher Peterson

Understanding the Classroom Management Problem

As a professional choral music educator, you will have to develop a significant amount of knowledge and a wide array of skills to be successful. Some of these skills may seem obvious to you, such as becoming a clear and expressive conductor, working on your error-detection skills, and writing and implementing well-paced and effective lesson plans. Some other skills and areas of expertise might seem less obvious to you, such as being good at building a budget, managing the materials in your room, or relating well to your students’ parents and your professional colleagues. Of all the skills you will need to develop and practice in your preservice teacher training, an ability to manage student behavior in your classroom with consistency and kindness is arguably one of most important and essential.¹ An emerging teacher who lacks the necessary skills and knowledge to create a positive and consistent learning environment will not be able to teach and motivate all of their students in an educationally sound and functional manner. You will certainly need to be good at teaching *music*, but you must also learn how to be effective at teaching *manners* to your students first. Without this first step, nothing else really matters in your classroom.

Here are several scenarios that describe some common experiences that some teachers can find themselves in with respect to classroom management:

- **Mr. Sheppard** is in his first year of teaching music at a small, private high school. He feels like he is making the choirs sound better, but he also feels frustrated when the kids won’t focus in his rehearsals. As a new teacher, he feels that it is important that the students like him, so he is careful not to disagree with them if he can help it. When the students talk during rehearsal, he does his best to be patient, but sometimes he wishes that they would just listen, sing, and respect the learning process more. Deep in his heart, Mr. Sheppard hopes that someday he can teach in a school where the kids are more respectful and where they care more about being in choir.
- **Ms. Hernandez** has been teaching music for three years in a large public school. She knows that her style can be a little sarcastic

1 Much of the information in this chapter has been adapted from: *Teaching/Discipline: A Positive Approach for Educational Development*, 4th edition by Madsen, Clifford K., Madsen, Charles H., Raleigh, NC: Contemporary Publishing Company, 1998

at times, but she also feels that the kids “get her” and that they know when not to challenge her authority. Still, about once a week, someone pushes her to the edge of her patience and she has to get angry to make a point. She can’t quite understand why students can’t abide by the rules all the time, and after someone breaks a rule for the fourth time on a “low patience day,” she lets her anger get the best of her. When she cools down, the students seem to behave better, at least for a while.

- **Mr. Reeff** is a choral educator with ten years of music teaching experience at a suburban middle school. He knows that if he “gives the class an inch, they will take a mile,” so he keeps their behavior in check at all times. Mr. Reeff is proud that his students do not talk in rehearsal and that they have learned to stand up straight and motionless without touching their neighbor when signing; they always seem to have a strong discipline and an intense focus. His choirs sing with close to 100% of the correct notes and rhythms, and they often demonstrate clear and clean diction. They never take their eyes off him when he is conducting. He shrugs off feedback from adjudicators at festivals who tell him that the choir is accurate, but unexpressive. He knows deep down it’s better to have kids be afraid of you than it is to allow them to walk all over you.

- **Mrs. Nguyen** is in her third year of teaching at a private religious school. She likes to involve the students in many of the decisions in the room, knowing that if they “buy in,” they will abide by the rules. She values the ideal of treating everyone fairly, and she even has a poster on the wall that says, “In this room we treat everyone with honesty and fairness.” She lets the students decide on the classroom rules at the beginning of every school year, and though she doesn’t always agree with the rules that they choose, she agrees to honor what they come up with as a class. Occasionally she finds herself in a tough spot when one class period has established a rule, but another class chooses a different rule. For example, one class decided that being late to class would be 1 point off the final grade while another class decided not to take off any points for being late. Some students complained to her that it is not *fair* that they lose points for being tardy when the other class can be tardy without a penalty. When she agreed that it wasn’t fair and changed the rule so that no points were taken off for being tardy, other students complained that changing the rules wasn’t *fair*...they all agreed on the rules. Mrs. Nguyen changed her mind again several times to try to be fair, but no matter what she did, someone complained that her decision was still unfair. Deep down she wishes that they could just get along and stop complaining about the rules, and she also wishes that they could all agree on one set of rules.

5. Lesson Planning

*“Give me six hours to chop down a tree and
I will spend the first four sharpening the axe.”
~Abraham Lincoln*

Preparing to Teach

A famous quote that is often attributed to Benjamin Franklin goes like this: “By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” This quote speaks directly to one of the most important pedagogical skills of any good teacher: the skill of constructing and implementing effective lesson plans that function well in the classroom. Teachers must learn how to organize lessons (and rehearsals) into logical and well-sequenced steps and activities so that students are engaged, on task, and learning throughout the entire class.

Beginning teachers often make the mistake of believing that they do not need to write detailed lesson plans or take the time to carefully think through all the steps that are involved for teaching. It is also common for emerging teachers to struggle as they attempt to control the classroom environment effectively, neglecting the physical aspects of the room, or underestimating the need to prepare teaching materials well ahead of time. Preparing to teach takes time and effort, and like score study and personal rehearsal on your instrument, it should not be done hastily, mindlessly, haphazardly, or at the last minute. As a beginning teacher you will have to accept that preparation is essential and that planning to teach will require you to dedicate a significant amount of your time at first.

One of the reasons that young teachers fail to recognize the need to plan thoroughly is that they may have witnessed some of their own teachers not teaching from lesson plans. While it is true that not all experienced teachers use detailed daily lesson plans, it is also important to remember that veteran teachers can make teaching look easy; because of the years of experience they have acquired implementing lessons, as well as the learning they gained from their own teaching mistakes over the years, experienced teachers can often deliver effective instruction without referring to a detailed, written lesson plan. Another way to say this is that people who have been teaching a long time know what to do because they have done it so many times. Even if what they planned to teach doesn't work, they always have a good plan B, a good plan C, and even a plan D ready for anything that they might encounter in the classroom. It is a rare teacher, however, that does not have at least a list of activities and outcomes in mind for every class or rehearsal session, even if these are not specifically written out on paper. To the observer, great teachers seem to just

As an example of what is meant by “smaller steps” and “larger steps,” consider the following directive for students in the choir to perform a musical selection on solfege syllables. This is one large step:

- Students will sing *Ave Verum* on solfege syllables.

There is nothing wrong with this large step, but it will only work with a choir that knows what this means. If you ask a choir to do this step, and then they are successful, your plan was perfect for that one, larger step. But if they are not successful, then you need to break that larger step into smaller steps:

- Students will take out *Ave Verum* and identify the key and time signature.
- Students will read the notes silently as they use hand signs to demonstrate understanding of the pitches in the key.
- Students will then sing the major scale of the key together as a class.
- Students will then sing their correct starting pitch on solfege.
- Students will then attempt to sing the whole piece on solfege, *a cappella*.

The level of detail in these smaller steps should also be compared to the ability of the class to understand and perform them. If they can experience success with the detail found in these steps, you planned perfectly for them. If they seem bored and can do the steps really quickly, you may have over-planned for them. A sure way to lose any class is to give them *more* steps than they need, or *less* steps than they need. What if the class is still not successful even when you have broken down the activity into smaller steps? Then you will need to break the activity into *even smaller* steps:

- Students will take out *Ave Verum* (and a pencil) and will locate the key and time signature.
- The teacher will review how to find “do” (the last flat is “fa”) as well as how to name the key (“do” names the major key, using the G and F clefs).
- Students will write in the solfege syllables for their part in pencil for the first page.
- The teacher will review the solfege hand signs and sing up and down the major scale, including any leaps that are in the music.
- Students will read their own notes silently on the first page as they use hand signs to demonstrate understanding of the pitches in the key.
- Sopranos will sing their solfege out loud as a section while the other sections demonstrate the hand signs in their part silently.

Essential Elements of Lesson Plans

Your lesson plan is your guide for engaging the class in appropriate activities to teach your subject matter. It is much more than just a list of activities, however. You will be writing lesson plans in many different formats and for many different purposes, and there is no single format for a lesson plan. Some professors or administrators will want you to include state or national teaching standards, or adaptations for exceptional learners, or special activities to help English as a second language (ESL) students. Regardless of the format that you will be using, a comprehensive and detailed lesson plan will usually have a number of essential elements, including:

1. What to teach and what order to teach your steps, being sure that you consider the ability level of the class (**Scope and Sequence**)
2. What you want your students to be able to do at the end of the lesson (**Objectives and Outcomes**)
3. Materials you will need and room preparations (**Controlling the Environment**)
4. How you will know if they learned what you taught them (**Assessment Strategies**)
5. A gauge of how long you think your lesson steps will take (**Time Management**)
6. A list of vocabulary words and related questions that you can use to guide student learning (**Lexicon and Essential Questions**)

It is easy to believe that this list is too long and that taking the time to write all of this out in a lesson plan is not a good use of your time. But as a beginning teacher, you have to be ready for the very likely possibility that your class will need not only your academic guidance and structure, but also a consistent social structure. You will be responsible for managing the behavior of the students in the classroom at the same time that you are teaching your academic lesson plan! Without a well-thought-out lesson plan, and with the distractions of some students misbehaving or getting off task, you might get flustered easily and lose your focus; what you thought might be simple to do (teaching the class), might actually be more of a challenge for you. It is at these times that the beginning teacher should be able to rely on a solid lesson plan to stay focused, keep their pace fast, and keep the students on task.



6. Rehearsing the Choir

"The conductor of an orchestra doesn't make a sound. He depends, for his power, on his ability to make other people powerful."

~Benjamin Zander

You May Like This



Benjamin Zander TED Talk

Preparing to Rehearse

Rehearsing the choir is one of the most important musical activities that you will participate in as a professional choral music educator. The rehearsal is where you will do a majority of your teaching and where many of your students will connect to you, to music, and to the art of ensemble singing. Becoming good at rehearsing is essential to your success, and students will join (or drop) your choir classes based on your ability to engage the class, pick interesting and appropriate literature, and structure fun and educational rehearsal segments. How do you become *good* at rehearsing? The honest answer is that you will get better at it the more you do it, over time. But a second answer to this question is that you will do better immediately if you are prepared to rehearse, and there are some essential areas that need to be in place before you lead a choir in your first live rehearsal. Here are some of the most important preparation areas to consider:

- **Choosing music and studying your scores:** As is discussed in Chapter 8, *Materials for the Choral Music Educator*, your music is your textbook, and your overall music choices represent your curriculum. What you will teach will largely be generated and supported by the literature that the choir will be learning. You should pick a variety of music that is appropriate for the ability of the group that will be studying it. Once you have selected your music, then you must study it so that you *really know* it. Really knowing a piece of music means that you have studied all of the aspects listed in the "*Choral Literature Full-Analysis Form*" and that you have sung through (or played through) all the voice parts to know the inherent challenges of the voice leading. Next, you must know the harmonic and rhythmic language of the piece by analyzing it and writing in any chord progressions that you can't recognize at sight as well as working out and practicing any tricky rhythms. If you are also a "late-blooming pianist," you should have all the chord progressions notated in the music so that you can provide a no-harm-accompaniment if needed. (And you should also practice playing it too.) Your score study should also solve any questions of part assignments so that if the parts divide, you can know ahead of time what sections, or parts of sections, will sing them. Finally, you must know the score well enough to have created your own personal musical interpretation for the musical performance of the piece. You should have a

sound in your mind that represents what the music will sound like when the choir knows and performs it well.

- **Preparing to conduct:** One main focus of this book is to help you use your conducting skills to be a great teacher, but it is not intended to be so broad in scope that it can adequately teach you conducting technique. There are excellent books dedicated exclusively to conducting, and you would do well to read as many books on the topic as you can. Hopefully, you have had the opportunity to take one or more semesters of choral conducting so that you have a basic foundation in the use of conducting patterns, cues, cut-offs, articulations, and the function of basic gestures.

With that being said, your conducting preparation for any rehearsal should include “dry conducting” through each piece in the privacy of your own practice room while either singing the major lines or audiating them (hearing them in your head). Many conductors like to add marks in the score to designate cues for the various voice parts and accompaniment, and some also like to mark dynamics and tempo changes by highlighting them or circling them. How (and how much) you mark your score is a personal preference, but you should always have enough markings to keep you clearly focused on the mechanics of the score so that you can focus your attention on the choir and listen carefully to what they are doing musically.

- **Preparing a rehearsal plan:** Before you step on the podium, it is imperative that you create a detailed rehearsal plan that outlines the scope (what you will do) and sequence (the order you will do it) of your rehearsal. Beginning teachers sometimes overlook this important aspect of planning, figuring that they will simply “sing through the music and see how the choir does.” But a detailed lesson/rehearsal plan will include much more than what literature you will sing through and in what order; it will also outline exactly what you plan to accomplish in the rehearsal segment as well as the musical concepts to be taught and reinforced and musical vocabulary that can be included. Your plan should be detailed enough that you know what to do at all times and comprehensive enough that you don’t run out of things to do before rehearsal ends. A major part of the art of teaching is learning how to plan fun, educational, musical, and engaging rehearsals, and the more you do it, the better you will get at it.
- **Controlling the teaching environment:** When you have chosen your music and you know your scores, and you have practiced your conducting gestures and written your lesson plans, you still have one major thing to consider before you start to rehearse: you need to consider the physical aspects of the teaching environment. Any aspect of the teaching environment that you don’t control

RECAPITULATION

1. It is true that most people won't get to experience very much authentic practice as a choral conductor until they are older and have a real choir to lead. Comment on your experience as a choral conductor up to this point in your training. Do you think you have had more experience or less experience than the average person your age, in your opinion? Describe why you feel this way and give evidence to support your opinion. Additionally, reread the "Five Guidelines to Focus Upon in Your First Teaching Experiences" and comment on each one in terms of your ability to meet the behaviors presented in each section.
2. Comment on five of the most interesting or useful sequences in the section called "Twenty-Five Conceptual Strategies for Building Skills While Rehearsing the Choir." Why do you think these were useful or interesting to you, and have you seen any of these technique sequences used before in a real rehearsal? If so, provide some background about where you have experienced them.
3. Think of all the choral teachers you have sung for in your lifetime. In your experience, would you describe your primary choral directors as having a "positive approach" or a "negative approach" in the rehearsal based on what you read in the chapter? If some were positive and some negative, describe aspects of two contrasting mentors. If they were all similar, describe them all in one short narrative. Additionally, do you feel that you respond better as a singer in a choir to a primarily positive approach or to a primarily negative approach? Support your answer.
4. Group movement in the choir rehearsal is a very common technique that is used in many choral classrooms in America. Describe your experience with movement techniques in ensembles that you participated in throughout your lifetime. Do you think you will use some of these techniques in your teaching? Why or why not?
5. In a student-centered classroom the students are a big part of the learning and teaching, and students must take some responsibility for their own progress and mastery. In a teacher-centered classroom the teacher

7. Developing Musicianship Within the Choral Rehearsal

*“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day.
Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”*
~Chinese proverb

Understanding The Musicianship Problem

The problem is easy to understand: virtually every choral director has the good *intention* for students to be able to read music. Many choral teachers hone that desire into some sort of instructional plan and sequence intended to help the singers develop their musicianship during the rehearsal. Unfortunately, many of these good-intended plans fall short of the goal of creating independent choral musicians. Even though instructional time and resources may be spent in the rehearsal addressing aspects of musicianship, it is often the case that the final outcome does not *function* well; despite the time and effort that is invested, it is not unusual for students to fail to acquire a functional ability to learn to read and interpret musical notation independently. This is a real problem, and it is a problem that you must examine and understand if you are to be a student-centered, comprehensive, artful, and professional choral music educator.

As the leader of your choral program you will be charged with creating choral concerts that both educate students and entertain audiences, and you will be under some pressure to maintain quality in every public performance. But some teachers stress the experience of the public concert so much that they fail to instruct the choir comprehensively in the rehearsals leading up to the performances, requiring them to rely on teaching music by ear (rote) or relying on part recordings or performance recordings to help teach the notes and rhythms. Other teachers may enact programs of sight singing that don't get the educational results and outcomes they are hoping for, causing them to question the value of the instruction and the time that it requires. Here are several scenarios that describe some common experiences that teachers can find themselves in with respect to teaching musicianship:

- **Mrs. Ledon** is a wonderful pianist who can play anything in the score accurately and musically. She picks challenging music for all the choirs, and she enjoys teaching and rehearsing with the students. The choir is always preparing for an upcoming concert, yet it seems like there is never quite enough time to perfect the subtle nuances in the music. Despite this, the concerts are solid, and the reputation of the school's choral program is good. Rehearsals are packed full of

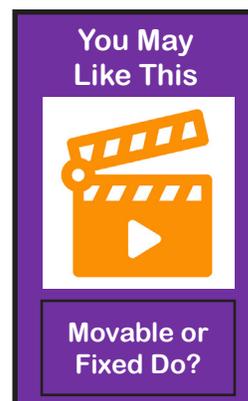
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✓ *Fixed "Do" Solfège*

In this system, syllables are assigned to note names regardless of the key or tonal center. The pitch "C" is always "Do" and the pitch "D" is always "Re." For example, the pitch "C" is "Do" in the key of "C," and "C" is also "Do" in the key of Bb. Additionally, chromatic alterations do not have distinct syllable names that can be sung to identify the alterations; the pitch sequence of C-C#-C would be sung "Do-Do-Do," and the pitch sequence of D-Db-D would be sung "Re-Re-Re." When the key signature in the music changes, the solfège pitches are not shifted together to reflect the new key, thus "C" is always "Do" and is therefore "fixed."



- **Advantage:** Students already have a good grasp of traditional number systems from their math classes, and the system is easily taught and learned.
- **Disadvantage:** Students may be confused if a system of numbers has also been used to teach pitch concepts.

Rhythm and Counting Concepts in Common Time (4/4)			
1	2	3	4
1 1 +	2 2 +	3 3 +	4 4 +
1 e + a 1 trip let	2 e + a 2 trip let	3 e + a 3 trip let	4 e + a 4 trip let

✓ *Takadimi*

In this system, much like the counting system above, every rhythm is labeled in relation to its function in the measure and meter. In simple meter, the first part of any beat is pronounced “ta” and the second half of the beat is pronounced “di.” If four subdivisions of a beat are encountered, the rhythm is performed as “ta-ka-di-mi.” In compound meter, the first part of the beat is still “ta,” but the first subdivision into thirds is pronounced “ta-ki-da” and a subdivision into six groupings is performed as “ta-va-ki, di-da-ma.”

- **Advantage:** Students can perform and count rhythms with percussive consonants and syllables that clarify the onset of the rhythmic values.
- **Advantage:** The system can’t be confused with other numbers that may be used in a pitch system.
- **Disadvantage:** Students will have to memorize a new system from scratch and it may not be as intuitive for some as it is for others.

You May
Like This



Takadimio
Rhythm
Counting

8. Materials for the Choral Music Educator

*“For every minute spent organizing, an hour is earned.”
~Benjamin Franklin*

The Importance of Managing Classroom Materials

An experienced teacher, after being in front of choirs and classes for many years, has a wealth of experience and pedagogical techniques to draw upon while instructing in the classroom. A veteran educator has practiced and developed their teaching art, year after year, through many successes and failures, to make lesson and rehearsal time a positive, engaging, and functional experience for the students. Great teachers can both teach and manage large groups as well as small groups, beginning and advanced students, as well as exceptional students; and sometimes these groups are all in the same room, in the same class, at the same time. The knowledge and expertise that an experienced teacher gains over the years is the single most important tool that they have to teach effectively, and you will also develop these skills throughout your career.

But while the art of great teaching relies in large part upon the knowledge and expertise of the educator, effective teaching is also dependent upon the management of the physical aspects of the teaching environment. These physical aspects, which we will refer to as “materials,” need to be appropriate, of high quality, well organized ahead of time, and functional for the learning environment. Your materials will include your choral literature, textbooks, musical instruments, technology, and all of the physical aspects of your teaching environment. In essence, anything that can’t be stored in the brain of the educator will be classified here as an aspect of the classroom environment and materials. Your ability to organize and manage your classroom materials will most certainly shape your teaching outcomes and effectiveness because “having the stuff to teach with” can be just as important as “knowing how to teach.” Beginning teachers must be willing to develop their understanding and organization of the physical aspects of the classroom and curriculum so that their developing skills and knowledge are not negatively affected by any shortcomings inherent in the quality of the chosen classroom materials.

Selecting a “Textbook” for Your Class

There are many similarities between teaching math and teaching music. Imagine, for a moment, what it would be like to be a math teacher. You would be responsible for many of the same things that a music teacher is responsible

Choral Literature Full-Analysis Form

Your Name _____

Title & Translation: _____ Composer: _____

Composer's Dates: _____ Arranger/Editor (if applicable) _____

Voicing: _____ Octavo Number: _____ Publisher: _____

Text/Poetry Source: _____ Secular or Sacred: _____

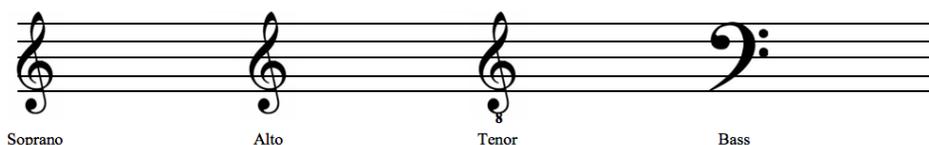
Language(s): _____ List the accompaniment, instrumentation, or a cappella: _____

Accompaniment difficulty level: Easy/Beginner ____ Moderate/Intermediate ____ Difficult/Advanced ____

Tempo & Changes: _____ Form _____ Length of Piece: _____

Tonality/Modality: _____ Period & Style/Genre: _____

Range & Tessitura:



Difficulty of the piece (rubric score): _____ Designation of Difficulty: _____

Justification of difficulty score:

Assign this piece to all the uses that apply:

- Beginning Unison Songs (any voicing)
 Rounds and Canons (any voicing)
 Partner Songs (SA, SAB, 3-part mixed)
 Middle Level Mixed (3-part mixed, SAB)
 Beginning Mixed HS Choir: SATB
 Intermediate Mixed HS Choir: SATB
 Advanced Mixed HS Choir: SATB
 Beginning Treble Choir: SSA (including SA, SSAA)
 Intermediate Treble Choir: SSA (including SA, SSAA)
 Men's Choir: TB (including TTB, TTBB)

Why is this a piece of music worth including in your single-copy choral music library? List at least three specific musical or educational concepts that you can teach by programming this music.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

RESONANCE: The Art of the Choral Music Educator

Music Literature Difficulty Assessment Rubric

Name of Choral Selection _____ Voicing _____

	Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced	Level Score
Form	A (Simple Melody) AB (Binary) ABA (Ternary) Rounds Partner Songs other _____ (1-5)	Theme and Variation Strophic with Variation ABACA (Rondo) ABCBA (Arch) other _____ (6-10)	Through-Composed Fugue other _____ (11-15)	1-15 _____ Notes:
Harmony	Diatonic Simple Chromatics Major or Minor Mode Clear Tonal Center Simple Key Changes Few Dissonances other _____ (1-5)	Chromatic Possibly Modal Borrowed Chords Unusual Key Changes Tonal Center Shifts Use of Dissonances other _____ (6-10)	Very Chromatic More Dissonance Possibly A-Tonal Unusual Chords Possibly Bi-Tonal Part Splits other _____ (11-15)	1-15 _____ Notes:
Rhythm	Simple Rhythms Few Syncopations Same in All Parts Repeated Patterns Simple Meters other _____ (1-5)	More Complex Rhythm More Syncopation Only Some Repetition Varied in Parts Odd Meters other _____ (6-10)	Complex Rhythms Unusual Patterns Little Repetition All Parts Different Shifting Meters Unusual Notation other _____ (11-15)	1-15 _____ Notes:
Voice- Leading/ Range/ Tessitura	Mostly Step-wise Moderate Ranges for All Parts Mid-Range Tessituras in All Parts other _____ (1-5)	Some Wider Leaps Extended Ranges for Some Parts Extended Tessituras in Some Parts other _____ (6-10)	Angular Leaps Extended Ranges for Most Parts Extended Tessituras in Most Parts Part Crossing other _____ (11-15)	1-15 _____ Notes:
Text	Less Complex Familiar English Easier Foreign Texts Rhyming other _____ (1-5)	More Complex Old English Harder European Texts Less Rhyming other _____ (6-10)	Very Complex Non-European Texts Rich English Little or No Rhyming Large Amounts of Text/No Repeats other _____ (11-15)	1-15 _____ Notes:
Texture/ Accomp.	Homophonic Texture Accomp. Supports Harmony Easy A Cappella Simple Percussion One solo Instrument other _____ (1-5)	Polyphonic and Homophonic Textures Acc. Contrast Harmony Harder A Cappella Complex Percussion Several Solo Instr. other _____ (6-10)	Polyphonic Texture Acc. Differs Harmony Difficult A Cappella Unusual Percussion Unusual Ensembles Excessive Splits other _____ (11-15)	1-15 _____ Notes: (TOTAL) _____ Assigned: _____

Difficulty ranges for Literature Analysis Levels (Rubric scores)

5-35 points (Beginning Range), 36-65 points (Intermediate Range), 66-90 points (Advanced Range)

1 C G⁷ C

Sa - ra - spon - da, sa - ra - spon - da, sa - ra - spon - da, ret, set, set. Sa - ra -

3 C G⁷ C F C

spon - da, sa - ra - spon - da, sa - ra - spon - da, ret, set, set. A - do - ray - oh! A -

6 F C G⁷ C G⁷ C

do - ray boom - dee - oh! A do - ray boom - dee ret, set, set, A - say, pah - say oh!

My Country, 'Tis of Thee

Samuel F. Smith

Voice

My coun - try, 'tis of thee, Sweet land of lib - er - ty,

Voice

10 Of thee I sing: Land where my fa - thers died, Land of the

Voice

pil - grim's pride, From ev - 'ry moun - tain - side Let free - dom ring!

Start by having the male singers stand in a group together or possibly in a circle with you in the middle, if space is available. Tell them that you are going to check to see what voice part will fit them best today, and that they should just do their best to sing as well as they can. Remind them that the voice change is natural as they grow into their adult voice, and that every adult male singer, even the most famous ones, went through this very same voice change at some point. Be light and even try to make it a fun experience for them. Use this sequence:

1. Have them sing the song in the key of C (approximate range C up to G). Listen for which students are choosing to sing the whole song in the higher octave and which ones are singing in the lower octave. Some will be struggling in this key to match all the notes but will still be trying in a lower or higher octave.
2. Move them into two groups: higher octave and lower octave, making a mental note of those having trouble singing in the key of C. Check the higher and lower octave groups to be sure you didn't miss someone that you thought was singing in a different octave.

9. Recruiting for the Successful Choral Program

"Pretend that every single person you meet has a sign around his or her neck that says, 'make me feel important.' Not only will you succeed in sales, you will succeed in life."

~Mary Kay Ash

Why Do You Have To Recruit?

Being a secondary choral music educator is different than being a math or an English teacher in several important ways. One significant difference is that you, as a music teacher, are responsible for attracting and retaining students into your program. Classes like English and math have attendance requirements built into the curricular offerings of the school and a significant number of students will always be required to populate the seats of those classes, ensuring that those teachers will always have a minimum number of class sections offered in the schedule and full-time employment guaranteed as well.

But while many schools require some sort of "fine arts credit" to graduate, students can often earn that credit in visual arts, photography, drama, dance, concert band, orchestra, and even in classes like industrial arts in some instances. In that sense, it is likely that very few students will be required to be in any of your choirs. It is essential, then, that you learn how to recruit students for all your classes and that you also strive to build a comprehensive choral curriculum that will keep students engaged and interested so that they will continue to choose to be involved, year after year, in your choral program.

Successful recruiting for any organization or cause is largely based on specific skills and methods that you can learn and adopt, and many of these skills are the same ones shared by professionals outside of the education profession. People who work in the fields of product sales, psychology, design, advertising, and many other professions are constantly creating positive scenarios that will help attract people to their products, and we can learn a lot from what they know and practice in their professional duties.

It may not seem fair that you have to recruit while some other teachers are guaranteed students in their classes by the requirements of the general education curriculum, and it's true...it's not fair. And while it certainly isn't your fault, it certainly is your problem, and you will have to solve that problem if you want to be successful. But the sooner you get over that, and the sooner you start preparing to be an excellent recruiter, the sooner you will begin to enjoy how much fun it can be to encourage students to make music a central part of their personal expression and education.

RECAPITULATION

1. Make a recruiting poster for your choir or choir program (you decide the name of the school and choirs). This would be a poster that you could duplicate and put up all over the school. You only need one copy for this class assignment, and it can be hand-drawn or done by computer. Make it fun, colorful, and interesting. Present it to the class and share your choices for the poster. Scan and upload your work and share it with the community.
2. What other ideas or strategies, besides the ones presented in this chapter, can you come up with for recruiting singers into your choirs? Which ones do you think would be particularly effective and why? What do you think kids want in a choir class, and why do you think they will want to join *your* choirs?
3. Comment on the following statement:

*“Recruiting never stops! It is done one conversation,
one interaction, one uplifting moment at a time.”*

Does this speak to you in any way? What implications does it have for you in terms of your recruiting efforts?

10. Assessment Strategies for the Music Classroom

“Everyone is a genius. But if you judge a fish on its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it is stupid.”

~Albert Einstein

Grading on Attendance Only

Every teacher has the responsibility to set learning goals and objectives for the students and to track their progress across time and through instructional tasks. Ideally, students will make significant and sustained progress toward the learning goals of the teacher, and the student’s skills, attitudes, and behaviors will be enhanced and molded in positive ways. All good teachers have good intentions for their students to learn and progress, but not every teacher is completely effective when it comes to making their good intentions function positively for the students. This is further complicated if the teacher is not skilled at evaluating and assessing the progress and outcomes of the student’s academic work and musical skills. Being able to measure student progress is one of the most important aspects of the art of teaching, and it is sometimes overlooked in college methods classes except for a few references to the fact that you will need to learn how to do it effectively.

Many student teachers do not learn methods of assessment until they reach the student-teaching phase of their development, and often they observe and adopt the methods of their master/cooperating teachers in the field. This can be good or bad depending on the training and experience of the master teacher. Because we tend to teach the way we were taught, it is not surprising that student teachers often adopt the methods they have seen being used with real students in the classroom. But there are too many practicing, veteran teachers who were never properly trained in college to create assessment tools, and these teachers often default to what their college choirs may have used for grading: attendance only.

Attendance has been used for grading in college choir classes for many years, and in a performance-based class, attendance is an important part of the experience. In some non-artistic college academic classes, students do not have to attend classes as long as they can pass the written exams. In music performance classes, like choir and band and orchestra, where artistic expression is major part of the experience and educational outcomes, attending rehearsals is essential. It’s actually amusing to entertain the thought of choir members performing in a public concert without attending ANY of the rehearsals as long as they know the words and notes. Likewise, imagine a football team that only

Assessment and Rubrics

Teachers are trained to teach, but most teachers are also entrusted to assess student achievement and to report a grade that is expressed as a final percentage or letter grade. It is not an easy task to teach a creative art form such as music, where personal expression with more than one right answer is encouraged, while also being required to differentiate between, say, an 87.5% and an 88% final grade. How are we to assign specific grades when much of our class is based in participatory, creative, and expressive activities, rather than lecture and fill-in-the-bubble tests? The answer is that we need to find ways to evaluate behaviors that exist in the gray areas of student performance, and to quantify those behaviors into numbers somehow. One way to do this is with rubrics.

Rubrics are assessment instruments designed to pinpoint levels of student achievement by describing how each level of mastery might look to an observer. The teacher first chooses the skills they want to assess, and then they describe what the behaviors or skills would look like at various levels of mastery. One way to do this is to start with the highest level of mastery (the exemplar) and work back to establish lower levels of mastery, but this is not the only way to approach it. Most standard rubrics are organized in boxes with the skills listed in the far left vertical column and the levels of mastery described in the horizontal rows to the right. There can be as many skill boxes and achievement levels as are needed for the particular assessment. The skills can be organized around a single interdependent outcome, such as *the skills required to drive a golf ball* (proper standing position, speed of the swing, rotation of the torso, etc.) or the skills can be more independent for a larger outcome, such as *playing golf at a high level* (driving, putting, bringing proper equipment, etc.). Regardless of the skills chosen by the teacher for the rubric, there must be clear and observable descriptions of each level of mastery so that the evaluator can pinpoint a score as objectively as possible.

Rubrics can be classified by how many skills they address and how many levels of mastery are identified. A two-by-two rubric is organized around two identified skills and two levels of mastery, and a three-by-three rubric is organized around three identified skills and three levels of mastery. You can have as many skills and levels of mastery that you need for your evaluation purposes.

Music Assessment Rubric for Piano Skills

Name _____

Date _____ *Total Score _____

Skills and Points	Late Bloomer (1-3)	In Progress (4-6)	Competent (7-9)	Advanced (10-12)
Supporting choral singing with "do no harm" prepared piano playing Score: <input type="text"/>	Very basic analysis of chords, possibly with some incorrect chords, possibly no inversions notated, plays tempo slower than marked tempo, stops and starts often, changes tempi, plays incorrect harmonies, insecure playing that will not inspire students to sing confidently, playing does not reflect essential rhythmic aspects of written accompaniment.	Correct analysis of chords, inversions correctly notated, plays tempo slightly slower than marked tempo, keeps tempo steady, knows what to leave out, plays correct harmonies with few mistakes, secure playing that will inspire students to sing confidently, playing somewhat reflects the essential rhythmic aspects of written music.	Correct analysis of chords including inversions, plays tempo at marked tempo, keeps tempo steady, chord choices help choir sing accurately, can monitor students while playing, secure playing that will inspire students to sing confidently, playing completely reflects the essential rhythmic aspects of written music.	Plays the accompaniment primarily as written and possibly improvises an improved piano accompaniment, can monitor and shape student behavior while playing, can bring out voice parts as needed while playing, exudes confidence that inspires students to sing confidently and musically.
Playing warm ups from the piano Score: <input type="text"/>	Not confident playing major and minor chords in all keys, weak when playing patterns with both steps and leaps, can play only a few warm ups, does not inspire confident singing, playing can possibly hinder rehearsal progress.	Somewhat confident playing major and minor chords in all keys, can play patterns with both steps and leaps with few mistakes, can play many warm ups, inspires confident singing, playing enhances rehearsal progress.	Confident playing major and minor chords in all keys, can play patterns with both steps and leaps without mistakes, can play many warm ups, inspires confident singing, playing enhances rehearsal progress, can monitor student engagement.	Very confident playing of various patterns in all keys, can improvise many warm ups, inspires confident singing, playing is musical, can monitor student engagement, use of piano integrated well into teaching.
Playing single-line parts from choral octavos Score: <input type="text"/>	Pauses significantly before playing, inaccurate pitches or rhythms played, might not keep tempi steady, might not give starting pitches, inefficient or unconfident approach to rehearsing with significant mistakes.	Plays parts without pausing often, mostly accurate pitches or rhythms played, keeps a steady tempo, gives starting pitches, can lead a sectional or rehearsal from the piano with occasional mistakes.	Plays parts without pausing, accurate pitches and rhythms played, can play at a steady indicated tempo, gives starting pitches, can strongly lead a sectional or rehearsal from the piano.	Plays parts without pausing, accurate pitches and rhythms played, can play at a steady indicated tempo, gives starting pitches, can strongly lead a sectional or rehearsal from the piano.
Playing four-part hymns and open-score octavo parts Score: <input type="text"/>	Pauses and seems not ready to start playing, inaccurate pitches and/or rhythms, stops and restarts often, awkward playing of treble and bass clef lines, unconfident.	Seems ready to start playing, mostly accurate pitches and/or rhythms, steady tempo, can play one treble and one bass clef line together, mostly confident.	Starts playing immediately, accurate pitches and rhythms, steady tempo, can play several open-score lines together, is confident leading the choir.	Plays immediately, accurate pitches and rhythms, steady tempo, musical playing, can lead singers well, reads open score well, can improvise on notes.
Transposing melodies Score: <input type="text"/>	Inaccurate playing of new key, rhythms not correct, stops and restarts, not confident.	Accurate playing of key within a second away, rhythms correct, keeps tempo, is confident.	Accurate playing within a third, rhythms correct, keeps tempo, is very confident.	Accurate playing in any key, perfect rhythm and tempo, is supremely confident.

*NOTE: Grading for this assessment is (F=0 to 5 pts., D=6 to 15 pts., C= 16 to 25 pts., B= 26 to 40 pts., and A=41 to 55 pts., A+ = 56 to 60 pts.)

11. Leading a Discussion

*"A good discussion increases the dimensions of everyone who takes part."
~Randolph Bourne*

Discussion as a Teaching Tool

Leading a discussion is possibly the least understood and probably the least rehearsed technique that beginning teachers will implement in their classrooms. In fact, even some experienced teachers find that they have some difficulty moderating and planning effective discussions in their classes. Additionally, it is not unusual for teacher-training programs to ignore or minimize some of the crucial aspects of this important teaching technique, presuming that emerging teachers will "figure it out" as they go. The art of leading a discussion, like any technique or skill, can be perfected over time in front of real classes, but it is important to know some of the best practices and potential pitfalls of this teaching technique before you practice it in an authentic setting with students.

It can be easy to assume that leading a discussion is the *easiest* teaching technique to use in a classroom, especially if you believe that all one has to do is let the students talk about a topic. Discussion can also be misperceived as a logical choice for a teacher who has no lesson plan or who has run out of material to teach. It can even be regarded by some as a fallback lesson plan rather than as a primary plan. But leading a discussion is far from being the easiest teaching strategy, and it could possibly be *the most difficult* teaching approach to master and implement. Leading a discussion effectively requires the teacher to manage many various elements of the classroom environment, to read body language, to summarize and restate points made by the students, and to use proximity and extended questioning to keep the students engaged, listening, thinking, and on topic.

If you try to recall the class discussions that you have participated in during all your years in school, you will probably remember various teachers who made the discussion experience a positive and interesting one and also some who made the experience seem like a difficult exercise in random or specific recall. This is because some teachers understand how to structure a discussion effectively so that students think and respond critically to well-crafted, open-ended and high-level questions, while other teachers try to lead discussions with lower-level questions and "guess what I'm thinking" teaching. High-level questions are essential for setting the stage for interesting class discussions, and "guess what I'm thinking" teaching should not be confused with leading an effective classroom discussion.

You May
Like This



Body
Language
TED Talk

“Guess What I’m Thinking” Teaching

Well-meaning teachers sometimes use this technique in their classrooms with the belief that they are leading a discussion, when in fact they are asking the students to respond with one correct (and possibly random) answer that is held in the mind of the teacher. Similar kinds of questioning techniques are best used to quiz the students verbally on topics and facts that they have been taught previously or that they may have learned in readings or through some other mode of discovery. This line of discourse can be effective for reinforcing facts and for reviewing specific bits of information that are presumed to be in the short-term recall abilities of the students. Here is a simple example of this type of questioning when done effectively:

Teacher: Last class we learned how to find the solfege syllable “do” in any piece of music. There were three rules. Raise your hand if you can remember the rule for flats. Brandi? *(The teacher calls on a student with a raised hand.)*

Student: The last flat tells you what line or space is “la.”

Teacher: Yes! That’s correct. Good job remembering. What about sharps? Raise your hand. Ming? *(The teacher calls on another student with a raised hand.)*

Student: The last sharp tells you where the note “C” is.

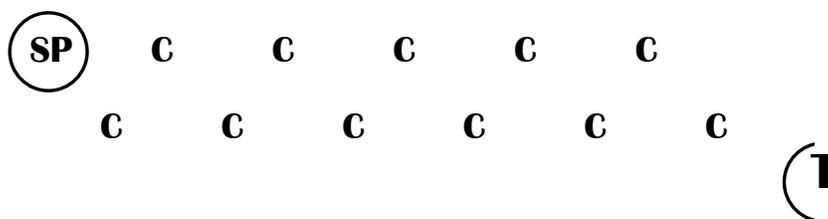
Teacher: No, but I see why you remembered it that way. You combined two of the three rules together. Who can recall the rule for sharps from last class? Jayden? *(The teacher calls on another student with a raised hand.)*

Student: Doesn’t the last sharp mark where “ti” is?

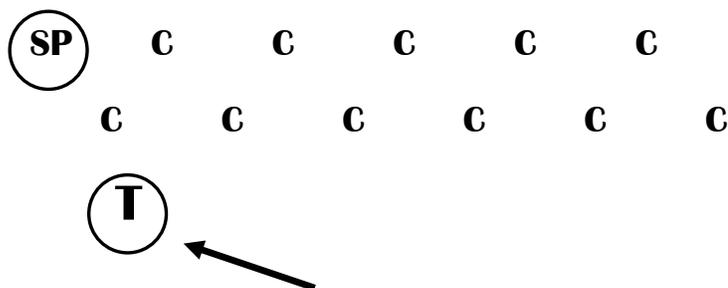
Teacher: Yes, that is correct! “ti” is indicated by the last sharp in the key signature. Who knows the rule for finding “do” when there is no key signature...no sharps or flats present on the staff? Raise your hand. Tzipora? *(The teacher calls on another student with a raised hand.)*

Student: If there are no sharps and no flats then the note “C” is “do.”

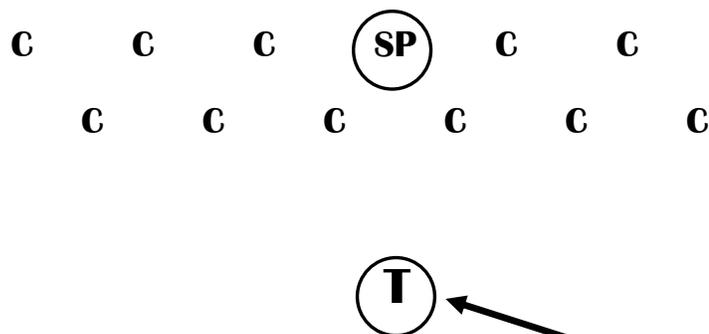
Teacher: That’s right. You can use the “G” and “F” clefs to count up and down to the note “C” and establish “do” when there are no sharps or flats present. Well done!



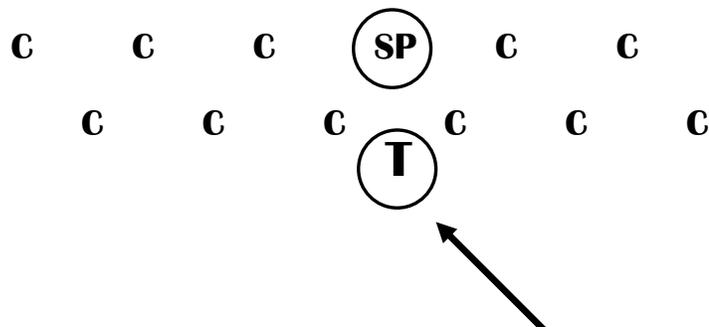
Stand HERE when the speaker is on the far left.



DO NOT stand here when the speaker is on the far left.



Stand HERE when the speaker is near the



DO NOT stand here when the speaker is near the center.

12. Formulating Your Philosophy of Music Education

“Your beliefs become your thoughts, your thoughts become your words, your words become your actions, your actions become your habits, your habits become your values, your values become your destiny.”

~Mahatma Gandhi

Why Do You Want to Teach Music?

When you first start preparing to be a professional music educator, you will invariably spend a large amount of your time studying the pedagogy of the craft. Among the many things you study, you will learn about scope and sequence, classroom management, and how to create practical, detailed, and usable task analyses to create dynamic lessons for students of various ability levels in your classroom. You will spend a great deal of your time improving your musicianship and determining *what* to teach by writing detailed, step-by-step lesson plans. But at some point you will need to focus not only on what you teach, but also *why* you teach. The question of “why” you teach is very different than the question of “what” you teach, and unless you have a solid and grounded understanding of why you teach, you will probably not be as inspiring a teacher as you could be. Your ability to inspire others must be fueled by your impassioned drive to accomplish great and important things and to make a difference in the world. Every professional music educator should be able to articulate, in plain language, why they teach, what they teach, and why the study of music is essential to a comprehensive education.

If you think back to the moment you decided to become a music teacher, there was probably something significant that happened to you, something you thought about, or an experience that focused your attention toward the profession. You may have experienced a significant and transcending musical moment, or you may have been inspired by the teachers that you had. Perhaps you are someone who has always known that you are a teacher, but found your way to music later in life. It is also possible that you don’t know or remember why you made the choice to pursue choral music education as a career, and you could still be searching for a basic explanation for why you want to teach. No matter how you describe the path that led you to where you are today, it is of great benefit for you to explore the reasons that you choose to study music and to clarify and describe why you want to become a great teacher.

You May Like This



Simon Sinek
TED Talk on
Leadership

A good place to start a personal inquiry into your beliefs about a philosophy of music education is to think of a single word that best describes *why* you want to teach. A common reaction to this task is to think, “I can’t sum it up in a single word. There are too many things to consider.” Yet you can do it if you simply ponder what you want your students to be able to do because of your teaching, or the values you hope they will come to hold through the study of music in your program. Once you choose a word or two that describes why you want to teach, compose one or two sentences that elaborate on the word or words. Let these sentences represent a kind of personal “mission statement” about how you intend to change the lives of your students through music. If you take the time to refine these sentences so that they describe your intentions concisely, you are well on your way to writing a paragraph, and then a page, and finally a full statement of your music education philosophy.

RECAPITULATION

1. Because the motions of the wings of a butterfly can change the world in significant ways, you likewise change the world in even more significant ways every day when you are interacting with people, your environment, and even your own thoughts. Write a short narrative about some of these interactions by describing some specific things you have done or experienced in the recent past that may have affected a change in another person, the environment, or your own mind in a positive way.
2. Think about why you want to teach music. Then think about your potential to be a positive influence on your students through the experience of music. Consider what is in it for you and also what you expect your students to receive through the experience. Next, brainstorm as many single words as you can that embody your intentions as a teacher of music. Once you have this list of words, decide on which ones come the closest to representing your broadest and most positive intentions for the profession. From your continued thinking about these words and ideas, compose four sentences that start with each of the following:
 - a. “I teach music because...”
 - b. “As a professional music educator I intend to ...”
 - c. “Music has the power to...”
 - d. (Compose the fourth sentence using any words you choose)

Starting to Write Your Philosophy of Music Education

Many educational institutions that train preservice music teachers will include within the curriculum a section on music education philosophy. Undergraduate students, who may not have much, if any, experience in authentic classroom environments are asked to articulate their beliefs regarding a profession that they are only just beginning to explore. In a sense this seems premature, or at least difficult, in the same way that creating a mission statement about fine art painting would be daunting if you only had experience finger painting. There is a reasonable argument that can be made that a philosophy of music education is best composed during post-graduate study by students who are experienced educators with knowledge of real-world classroom dynamics and outcomes. Indeed, life is the greatest teacher, so experienced educators are usually best able to reflect and articulate detailed explanations of why they do what they do, and why they believe music is important, in more powerful ways than beginning teachers can.

But preservice teachers can and should explore their own beliefs about the profession before they get their first job, even if those beliefs are not grounded in authentic teaching experiences. It is not unusual, therefore, for your first attempt at writing your philosophy of music education to feel like a rote exercise or a task of the mind rather than the heart. Hopefully you gained valuable insights and learned something about yourself when you brainstormed words earlier in this chapter and then completed the four sentences that might form the theme of your personal philosophy.

As you begin to write, it is perfectly normal for you to struggle to find your unique voice while you search to find the appropriate words, and it is perfectly appropriate for you to read other students' philosophies online and to talk to your fellow students and the community about the common philosophical beliefs of the profession. As you digest what other people have written, you should begin to think about what you agree with, what you do not agree with, and to begin writing about the beliefs that you hold strongly *in your own words*. If you simply copy someone else's words verbatim, you will not be able to own them later or talk to parents, colleagues, administrators, students, school boards, or hiring committees about your philosophy when it matters the most. As you read other's work, and as you think about your philosophy of music education, look for *themes of agreement*, and then strive to find your own voice through your own writing.

13. Gender Matters in Choral Music Education

by William Sauerland [he/they]

“Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves.”

~Parker Palmer

Introduction

A Wide-Angle Lens

As music teachers, we are asked to deal with a lot of different issues, from underfunded programs to overcrowded classrooms, from legal issues of copyrighted music to sorting out forms for competitions and field trips. Among our teaching duties, we are responsible for choosing repertoire, facilitating auditions, balancing a music budget, fundraising for concert attire, recruiting new members, interacting with supportive (and unsupportive) families, and many other important and menial tasks. We must not forget that vocal technique, piano skills, score study, and conducting are part of our job! If we were to formulate a list of the scenarios and situations we, as music educators, face, it might be overwhelming, especially as we consider the complex and diverse range of students and colleagues among us. It is a wonder how we do it all.

If we broaden our periphery to view the “complex web of connections” that Palmer mentions, we gain a greater awareness of the complexities that reach beyond pitches, rhythms, and musical nuance. The lens through which we view the world is only our perspective, yet we are called to understand and embrace each student as an individual, with unique life experiences, self-perceptions, identities, and diverse learning styles. The art of developing rapport and weaving connections among our students to engage them in and through our discipline is fundamental to teaching.

Critical thinking and reflection should be at the core of our profession. A deeper evaluation of teaching can unearth a “hidden curriculum” (Basow, 2004; Jackson, 1968), where our work implicitly teaches our students what is important and what is not – forms of empowerment and oppression. We might discover that our curriculum and pedagogies unintentionally reinforce stereotypes, racism, sexism, bigotry, Androcentrism, heteronormativity, and various kinds of discrimination. The way we address our students, or the way we select and teach repertoire, can reify belief systems and ideologies. Songs in the traditional choral canon, even some we have sung over and over, may

fortify an oppressive or old-fashioned belief of a culture or way of life. “Music educators are so involved in the practice of music,” Lamb (2010) suggests, “that reflection on what we are doing is difficult and often contradicts our practice” (p. 33). It can be complicated to see how our teaching empowers some students or ideas while oppressing others.

Investment in high-quality music-making is essential to our job, but if it deters you from the opportunity for reflection (as it frequently does in my own life), I invite you to consider these questions:

1. How does my pedagogy imitate the way I was taught and/or the learning styles of my students?
2. How does my choral repertoire mirror my musical interests and/or my students’ interests?
3. What music is deemed worthy for my students, school, and community? (Why and by whom?)
4. How do I maintain or abate stereotypes and cultural expectations through repertoire, curriculum, and pedagogy?
5. How do I seek student input for curricular design and repertoire selection?
6. How does my teaching evolve with modern views and emerging technologies?
7. What do I prioritize: student experience or musical output?
8. How do I judge the success of my choir(s) and who gets to judge its outcomes?
9. How do I consider the individual identities and life experiences of my students?
10. How does my teaching foster access and belonging for a diverse range of students?

These questions endeavor to align Lamb’s call for reflection with Palmer’s web of connections. They also seek to be an entry for uncovering the “hidden curriculum” within our music programs. A choral teacher’s role is a taxing balance between music teaching and administration, but I welcome you to widen your lens and reflect on your teaching (or the kind of teacher you want to be). Consider the complex web of connections among your students. Contemplate the wide range of students who do (and do not) enter our learning spaces and how we might foster connectedness (or instigate disconnectedness) through our actions and words.

In starting this chapter so broadly, my goal is to elicit critical thinking and reflection – to lead with questions, not answers. The purpose of this chapter

and 5. romantic attraction. An interactive version is available on their website (transstudents.com/gender), which enables a person to include their name and pronouns, in addition to sliding a marker along the scales below each category.

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources

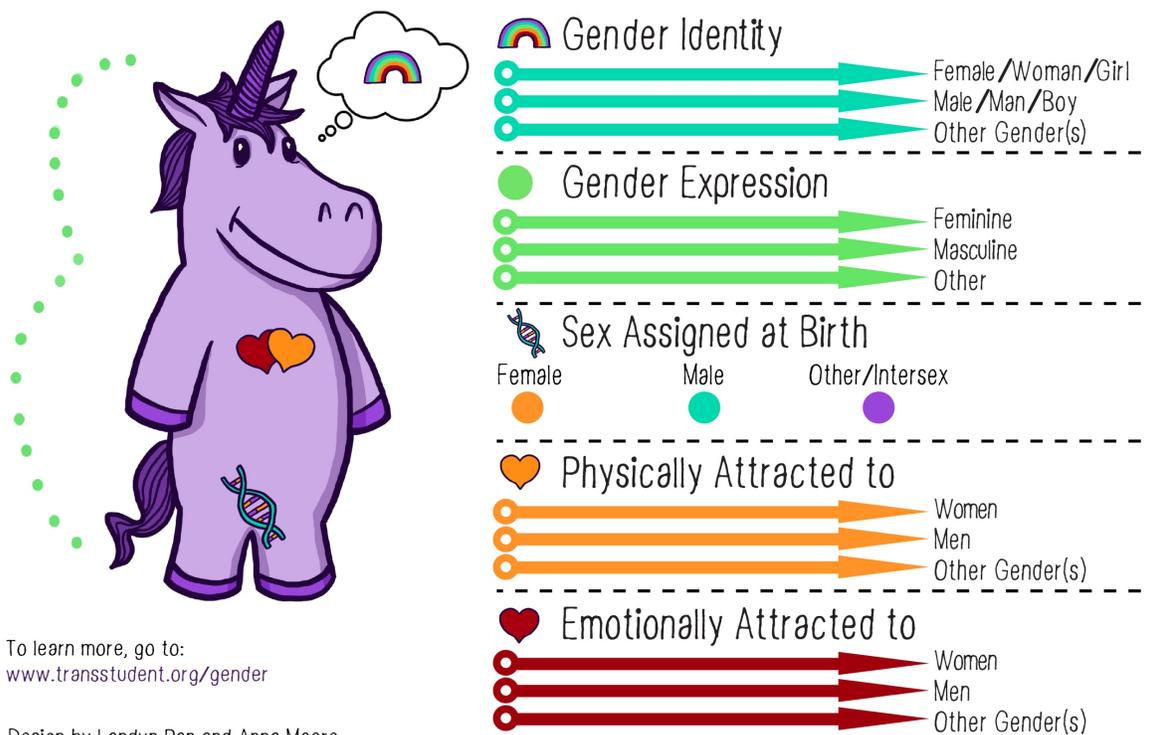


Figure 1: The Gender Unicorn illustrates the connections between gender identity, expression, sex categorization, and sexuality.

Making assumptions of gender or sex categorization based on someone's outward appearance can cause *gender dysphoria*, a feeling of discomfort or distress due to being misgendered or referred to by the wrong gender. Employing a tool like The Gender Unicorn cultivates an environment where we allow people to name their gender and sexuality without judgment or assumptions.

Though I do not want to disseminate non-inclusive language, I think it is pertinent to be clear on language deemed offensive. Never is a person *transgendered*, which connotes that a trans identity has been forced upon them. *Transsexual* is historically more for a person who modifies their body through surgery to align their sex categorization with their gender. Though the term transsexual is not seen as offensive by all, a person's physical body should be of little concern unless you interact with the individual on a more intimate

14. Other Considerations for Emerging Choral Music Professionals

“Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.”
~Lucius Annaeus Seneca

The Student-Teaching Experience

There are several topics that will be addressed briefly in this last section as a sort of “tag” on the coda. These are important topics to consider conceptually, yet they may be site specific or dependent on your actual job and circumstances or dependent on how your particular state or university rules dictate the manner in which your experience will be structured. The first topic is the student-teaching experience.

Most emerging teachers look forward to the student-teaching experience as a time when they will be able to “show what they know” and finally get to be a “real teacher” in front of actual classes. Sometimes the thought of being in charge of actual classes is less exciting and more stressful for some people, but usually there is a mix of excitement and mild uneasiness associated with the start of student teaching. The circumstances of your student teaching may vary widely from the next person’s experience, and rather than get too specific about what you might encounter, here is some general conceptual guidance to consider:

- **You may not get to do as much as you thought you would:** Sometimes student teachers do get excited to “show what they know” when they get into their placement, and they can sometimes get disappointed when they either have *too much* or *too little* to do. While this all depends on how the program is structured, music teachers who run choral programs rarely let student teachers lead all the choirs; but in a math classroom, it would be common for the student teacher to teach everything at some point. If your expectation is that you will get to do some things, but not everything, you will probably have those expectations met. If you do find that you are feeling really under-utilized or grossly over-utilized, you should alert your university supervisor to determine if your perception is valid and if adjustments can be made to your responsibility load in conjunction with your cooperating teacher.¹

¹ The term “cooperating teacher” is used to identify the person who is teaching in the public schools and with whom the student teacher works on a daily basis. In some situations, this person is called the “master teacher” or perhaps the “site teacher.” The term “university supervisor” is used to identify the local teacher or professor who acts as the observing party for the university or college.

1. Don't apply for a job you don't really want to take, or that you are not qualified to accept. It's unprofessional and wastes the time and money of the school district.
2. Dress professionally. It's never casual Fridays when you are interviewing.
3. Arrive a little early. Wait quietly. Be polite and smile at people.
4. Do some research to find out about the school, the mission statement, and the history of the arts program before you arrive. Have something nice to say about the school and program.
5. Review your philosophy of music education (and your elevator pitch) so that it is in the forefront of your mind when you are asked questions. It should positively inform virtually every answer you give.
6. Answer each question briefly and concisely, but don't talk too much. Show that you understand the question and have an informed answer, but don't use the opportunity to pivot and talk about another topic. Make your point directly and then wrap it up.
7. Picture yourself as a colleague, not as a student teacher. Be positive and professional, but don't make any excuses or tell stories about times that you were not successful.
8. If the question could be considered controversial in some way, speak to both sides of the issue to show that you are open minded, and that you can see more than one point of view.
9. Have fun and enjoy the time as much as you can. Make eye contact and smile. Think to yourself "I am going to get a wonderful job somewhere, and maybe it is here."
10. If you do not understand a question, feel free to ask a clarifying question to the panel if this helps you focus your response. Be sure you know and understand what they are asking so that your answer is clear and to the point.
11. Have a question or two for the interview panel (if they ask) and have these memorized. Do NOT ask about salary in the interview because you have not been hired yet, and there will either be time to negotiate this if you are hired, or the salary schedule will already be set by union and school district contracts. You might ask about the music program budget, or parental support for the arts in the school or district, or maybe how they envision the program growing over time. Ask questions that you are fairly confident will function well in this setting. Consider running your questions by a colleague or professor before your actual interview.
12. Always be gracious and say "thank you" when you are done interviewing. Let them know you enjoyed meeting them, and shake

Dig Deeper



More Sample
Interview
Questions

school musical production? What skills could you bring to the team, and what kinds of musicals do you think fit well in a diverse high school population?

- Talk about your plan to recruit for the choir program. What would you do first, second, third, and on an ongoing basis?
- Discuss your ideas for fundraising for the choral program. How would you supervise and organize your music booster group?
- Discuss your training in working with diverse populations such as ESL students and students with physical and mental challenges. How would you help them be successful in your choral program?
- What is your greatest personal or professional strength and also what do you consider to be your greatest personal or professional weakness?
- Do you have any questions for us?



RECAPITULATION

1. This section is a sort of “potpourri” of topics that could easily fill a large chapter in any choral methods textbook. List the top three topics that you found to be most interesting to you, and then go online and find out as much as you can about them. Prepare a half-page summary of what you found for each of the three topics, including websites, resources, articles, and blog summaries. Present these to your class or to a colleague.
2. This textbook has a lot of information for the emerging choral music teacher. No book could possibly address every topic that you will need to know in your career. Make a list of any topics not mentioned in this text that you would want to know more about at some point in your career. Share this list with a friend, a colleague, or with the class. Keep that list with you (or in your mind) whenever you attend professional music conferences in the future to help guide your learning and curiosity. Be curious...always.



15. Cadenza and Resources

"The best teacher in life is experience."

~ LeBron James

Living in the Real-World Classroom

If you have read and studied the concepts in this text and have made it to this final section, congratulations! I hope you have enjoyed the presentation of ideas in this book, and I hope you feel more prepared and ready to change the world through your teaching. You have gained many insights into some of the important aspects of becoming a professional choral music educator. You have been exposed to a lot of ideas, and you have had the opportunity to explore these concepts with open-ended prompts that did not have one specific "right" answer. For some people, the absence of one "correct" answer is stressful and for others, it is freeing. Some people thrive when they can think creatively while others need to "get it right" and move on. Which kind of person are you, and how does it affect your approach to teaching and learning?

One semester a few years ago, one of my students asked a very telling question during class. The question made me think hard about how people learn, and how I sequence my own training of future teachers. It was about three weeks into the semester, and she raised her hand and asked, "Are you ever going to tell us what to do...like *exactly* what to do in our classrooms?" I smiled and answered, "Yes, *sometimes* I will. But most of this class and this year you will hear me teaching you about how to *figure out* what to do, as opposed to *telling* you what to do." She didn't seem to be particularly satisfied with that answer in the moment, though she came to appreciate the methodology behind the pedagogy over the year. She also came to realize that even the prescribed sequences I provided like "movable do with a la-based minor" and "Menu Programs" and "Teaching Units" and "Whole-Part-Whole" rehearsing were only placeholder techniques for addressing larger values. My students know that I will make them learn specific sequences in methods class, but I will never judge them if they use different techniques in their classrooms, as long as they function to implement the values we share. I really do want them to "figure it out" when the real world appears in their reality, and I want them to feel confident that they have tools to do this effectively.

As I thought about her excellent question after class, I thought back to all the teachers who trained me. How much did they prescribe what I should do, and did they balance that information with conceptual problems for me to consider and solve in the real world? I came to the conclusion that, as far as I could remember, they mostly taught me specifically what to do. They gave

me tools and sequences and games and ideas and lessons and literature lists. During my student teaching and my early teaching years, I was excited to try all the things they taught me, and for the most part I did what they taught, and I emulated my mentors to the best of my ability. For the most part, what they told me to do worked. The struggles came for me, however, when I encountered situations that were not part of their “how to” lectures; there were a lot of times when I felt completely unprepared to face things that I encountered in my schools and classrooms. It wasn’t a fault of my professors; it just isn’t possible in the time allotted in methods classes to cover everything that could possibly happen in the real world. I came to the conclusion that I wanted my methods classes and teaching pedagogy to reflect a balance of “giving my students some fish,” but also “teaching my students how to fish” as much as it was practically possible.

Knowing *about* something is much different than *knowing it*. I always tell my students that what they learn in my classes to become student teachers is nothing compared to what they will learn during student teaching and in the real world, in authentic classroom and rehearsal situations with real students. Words do not teach...it’s life that teaches. It’s real life that wakes us up and makes us take notice so that we ask the critical questions that then bring the answers that we are ready to hear. Life is your classroom, and you must be ready to face the unpredictable challenges and problems in your professional world. You have to be ready to figure out the concepts that are interacting with any specific challenge, try to predict how various possible courses of action might function, and then make the best choices you can. When your choices function well, great! When they don’t, you have to reassess and try again and acknowledge that you learned something new about that specific problem. Be humble, be open, and be ready to learn through your successes as well as your failures. You are not supposed to know everything. All you can do is keep learning in Life’s Classroom and demonstrate for your students that learning never ends.

Keeping Your Questions Alive

Remember that your curiosity drives your questions, and your questions summon the answers that you need so that you can grow. The questions that are important to you now are not the same questions that you will be asking after one, three, five, or twenty years of teaching. Even if you go on to earn graduate degrees and you “know about” so much more, keep your curiosity stoked and your questions alive. Nurture the *Learning Cycle* in your life so that you always move through comfortable times when you feel like you know



everything and into uncomfortable times where you suddenly realize that you don't know *anything*. If you go too long without that uncomfortable feeling, it might be a sign that you need to ask tougher questions. Life, of course, usually does a good job of motivating us to that uncomfortable space where we can learn. I urge you to consciously keep track of your journey through the Learning Cycle throughout your career to be sure you don't stall out and stop asking your questions. Ideally, learning never ends for anyone. We are never done learning...unless we decide to stop learning. This fact is a great motivator for me as a teacher, and as a student in life.

Finding Resources To Answer Your Questions

As we have established, when you ask a question that is important to you, you immediately summon answers into your experience. In other words, as soon as you ask a question, the answers come to you in many forms such as conversations, TV commercials, and in emails that you might normally delete without reading. While the answers will start to flow automatically to you, it's also a good idea to have "go to" resources and places you can look to find quick and specific answers. The richest and most-related sources are on the websites of your professional organizations. As a member of NAfME (The National Association for Music Education) and ACDA (The American Choral Directors Association) along with the aligned state organizations that are included in your membership, you have access to incredible information provided by music educators all over the country, and with decades of real teaching experience. There are forums and articles and "how to" lessons for virtually anything you are curious about. There are many other organizations and websites available for you if you look for them, such as Chorus America, the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS), and the National Collegiate Choral Organization (NCCO) just to name a few. If you find the information on a website particularly relevant to your questions and interests, consider donating to the organization or becoming a member.

Another resource for you is attending your professional conferences, both state and national. We all know that COVID-19 halted in-person conferences starting around March of 2020, resulting in the creation of many virtual conferences that could be attended without leaving one's home. As the world returned to some sort of new "normal" with travel and live in-person conferences, new opportunities have arisen that allow us to take advantage of the virtual aspects of these events. I think this could be considered one of the "Covid benefits" that has been created through the pandemic that has allowed us to be even closer as a choral community. Take advantage of these

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Photo: Hugo Alberto Mata, Jr.

Praise by the San Francisco Chronicle for his “limpid tone and astonishing eloquence,” Dr. Sauerland remains active as a professional countertenor. His recent solo appearances include the American Bach Soloists, Echoing Air, Festival Opera Company, Folger Consort, Handel Opera Project, Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra, Oakland Symphony Orchestra, and Pacific Chorale. A former member of the Grammy Award-winning vocal ensemble Chanticleer, Dr. Sauerland has sung throughout the world, and recorded multiple albums for Warner Classics.

Dr. Sauerland received the Doctorate of Education in Music and Music Education from Teachers College, Columbia University. His research interests include social justice pedagogy in vocal music education, trans and gender expansive vocality, and student-centered teaching. His publications appear in the *Journal of Singing*, *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, *VOICEPrints* (Journal of the New York Singing Teacher’s Association), and in *The Choral Conductor’s Companion* (GIA Publication, 2020). As a Marshall Scholarship recipient, he earned a Master of Music and Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Vocal Performance from the Royal College of Music in London. Raised on a small dairy farm in Ohio, he received a Bachelor of Music in Music Education and Vocal Performance from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.



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He has been invited to teach, judge, and conduct choirs in more than thirty US states, five Canadian Provinces, and nine countries including China, England, Sweden, Japan, Germany, New Zealand, and Holland, and has conducted All-State Choirs across the nation including Maine, North Carolina, Oregon, and California. Dr. Peterson also holds the position of Director of Music at Irvine United Congregational Church in Irvine, CA. His "hobby" for many decades has been enjoying singing barbershop harmony, and he is a BHS District Quartet Champion baritone, a top-5 medalist chorus director, and a four-time gold medalist with the Masters of Harmony, nine-time International Men's Chorus Champions of the Barbershop Harmony Society.