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Constructivism in Choral Music Education: Supplemental Activities for the Traditional Choral Ensemble

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Constructivism in Choral Music Education: Supplemental Activities for the Traditional Choral Ensemble

A FINAL PROJECT

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

For the degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC
Music Education

by
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

What is Constructivism in General Education	1
What is Constructivism in Music Education	5
Supplemental Activities	13
KWL Chart.....	18
Think Pair Share (Musical Dictionary).....	22
Reflection Journaling.....	25
Reflective Practice.....	27
Mini Concert.....	29
Consonant Sounds and their Importance in Performance.....	33
Phrasing Application.....	36
Group Rhythmic Composition.....	39
Identifying Key Signatures with Sharps.....	44
Student Led Warm-Ups through Score Analysis.....	48
Sectionals.....	52
Cognitive Apprenticeship, the Student-Conductor/Director.....	56

ABSTRACT

Constructivism in music education can help teachers and students alike better their educational experience by working as a collaborative team. In the choral classroom, constructivist teaching establishes the teacher as the facilitator of learning rather than the “teacher as conductor.” Teachers help foster the musical-thinking of the ensemble. Students learn and retain information when teachers can support learners’ understanding of musical ideas and work within the student’s zone of proximal development. Through the use of teacher-guided questioning, cognitive apprenticeship, informal music-making, CMP, problem-solving, and Understanding by Design, students become active participants. Included are supplemental activities for the traditional choir classroom that give a sense of how to provide meaningful lessons to students through a constructivist lens. Each activity is objective-based, working from what the students will know or be able to do by the end of the activity, to how to foster the learning in a way that builds past experiences into new experiences.

What is Constructivism in General Education?

As a modern teaching method, constructivism derives from the works of many educators, including John Dewey and Lev Vygotsky (Brown, 2008), who both share similar ideas of the relationship between learning and development in children. Dewey (1903) described the school system as falling behind in the general contemporary social movement as a democracy, affecting both the students and teachers. Dewey wanted to combine that of the educational experiences with the interests of the learner:

The remedy here, as in other phases of our social democracy, is not to turn back, but to go further – to carry the evolution of the school to a point where it becomes a place for getting and testing experience, as real and adequate to the child upon his existing level. Taking the child out of doors, widening and organizing his experience with reference to the world in which he lives. (Dewey, 1903, p.202)

Students need to create community by socializing with their classmates, experiencing education while developing a sense of self efficacy, and learning to be self-sufficient.

The primary focus of learning should be on engaging the students in a process that enhances their abilities and includes feedback on the effectiveness of their learning efforts. Conflict, differences, and disagreement also drive the learning process. Learning is a holistic process, integrating the function of the total person – thinking, feeling, perceiving, and behaving (Kolb, 2005).

Vygotsky (1978) believed that learning should occur within a child's developmental level. According to Vygotsky, the three levels of development are the actual developmental level (level of child's mental function), the already completed developmental cycles, and the level where a child is unable to achieve learning goals. Vygotsky defined Zones of Proximal Development as, "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through

problem-solving under adult guidance or in a collaboration with more capable peers" (p.86). For educators, when teaching with the zone of proximal development in mind, we must show various ways of dealing with a problem to determine how our students learn best. Before children even attend school, they begin to learn. Any learning a child encounters in school has a previous history. Learning should be matched in some manner with a child's development level, but developmental process and learning process do not happen at the same time (Vygotsky, 1978).

Teaching methods should give students the opportunity to observe, engage, and discover. According to Collins et al. (1989), there are six teaching methods that fall into three core stages. The stages for cognitive apprenticeship are modeling, coaching, and fading. Instructional activities within those stages are articulation, expression, and exploration. Modeling involves the teacher carrying out a task that the students can observe and build a conceptual model of the process. Coaching is observing the students as they carry out a task and offering feedback, reminders, and scaffolding. Scaffolding is the support the teacher provides to help a student carry out a task. The intention is for the students to assume as much responsibility of the task on their own. A student's current skill level should be acquired and the appropriate level of difficulty in carrying out the activity. Once a student begins grasping control of the task, fading takes place and the support is gradually removed (Collins et al, 1989).

For problem-solving, articulation includes getting students to talk about their problem-solving processes and expression is having students compare their own problem-solving processes with those of another student. Lastly, exploration pushes students into problem-solving on their own. Exploration is the fading of supports in problem-solving. Exploration strategies must be taught in order for students to productively explore. As a method of teaching, exploration develops background knowledge for students that

encourages them to focus on interests and subgoals, and revising general goals when they find something more interesting (Collins et al, 1989).

Jerome Bruner(1977) introduced a curriculum planning strategy called "Spiral Curriculum." He believed that if a curriculum was structured based on a child's existing knowledge of concepts and how those concepts were represented and used, children were capable of understanding complex information. This is similar to Vygotsky's idea that guided learning and use of that knowledge developed child understanding. The concept of the spiral curriculum involves structuring information based on prior knowledge of a concept and revisiting the learned concept at a more complex level. Bruner's theory suggested learning is an active process in which learners construct new ideas and concepts based upon their current and past knowledge. The learner selects and transforms information, constructs hypotheses, and makes decisions relying on cognitive structures.

One curricular design model that supports spiral curriculum is the Understanding by Design framework of Wiggins and McTighe (2005) which encourages intentionality during the curriculum design process. UbD is a form of backward design which begins with the end in mind: objectives (what you want the students to know from the lesson), assessments (the evidence of what was learned), and the learning plan itself. This framework includes designing a curriculum with outcomes, transfer of understanding, and meaning-making. These three ideas are important because they allow for students to learn and retain information, transfer knowledge to new concepts, and know why the knowledge they have learned is important (McTighe & Wiggins, 2005).

Albert Bandura (1977) introduced Social Learning Theory that emphasized the roles played through imitating and observing others. He also emphasized the importance of symbols and self-regulatory processes. Symbols enable students to represent events, communicate with others, and create, imagine, and engage in action.

Imitation and observation are important in the function of constructivism because without models, students would be relying solely on the effects of their own actions. The process of observational learning begins with attentional processes. Attentional processes determine what is observed and what is extracted. In social groups, the functional value of the behaviors displayed are highly influential in determining which models people will observe. For students, the level of observational learning is somewhat determined by the nature of the modeled behaviors and the complexity and capacity to which learners process information. People cannot be influenced by observational learning if they cannot remember what is being modeled; therefore, retention processes are a major step. Response patterns must be represented in memory in symbolic form. Another important component of retention is rehearsal of the response patterns (Bandura, 1977).

Learning from others helps students form an idea of how new behaviors are performed (Bandura, 1977). In the classroom, we could also look at how we are creating a safe space for our students. What we say and how we act directly effects how the students will act in the classroom. We should be modeling an environment that allows for errors and welcomes questions so that students do not feel intimidated or afraid to make mistakes and learn from them.

A large portion of the Social Learning Theory is self-regulation, weighing the pros and cons of our actions and how they affect us and those around us. By being able to figure out the consequences for one's actions, people are able to have some measure of control over their own actions (Bandura, 1977). In the classroom, if students are able to self-regulate their behaviors and emotions, they are better able to engage with other students and engage in daily activities.

Part of self-regulation and engagement is reciprocal determinism. Reciprocal determinism means that a person has an effect on the environment just as much as the environment has an effect on the person (Bandura, 1977).

“People’s expectations influence how they behave, and the outcomes of their behavior change expectations...Lecturers do not influence their students unless they attend their class, books do not affect people unless they select to read them, fires do not burn people unless they touch them, and rewarding and punishing influences remain in abeyance until activated by conditional performances.” (Bandura, 1977, p.195)

If students come to class with a low energy level, it could be difficult to motivate students to learn. A change in environment and a change in instruction from lecture to group work may help students self-regulate their emotions.

Teachers are becoming more aware of student-centered learning environments by incorporating the ideas that children learn through imitating, modeling, observing, engagement with others, and reinforcing and using prior knowledge of concepts. One of the ways classrooms incorporate these ideas is through seating arrangements. Instead of study carrels, classrooms use designs that recognize peer-to-peer interactions. These are spaces designed for small group work, as well as arrangements for whole-class discussions. In elementary classrooms, there are areas for group reading, math centers, and science stations. In middle and high school, seating arrangements are more flexible and allow for small group work. Constructivism is becoming a regular part of educational practice. Teachers are using constructivist-based pedagogy in their classrooms while focusing on placing educational practices on students' learning (Jones & Brader, 2002).

What is Constructivism in Music Education?

In the previous section, we learned that constructivism is a social act where students interpret new concepts based on previous knowledge of concepts. The classroom works as a

community toward shared goals. Constructivism is not a method of teaching, but rather a lens in which teachers examine their own classroom practices and make decisions about how learning and teaching should occur. In arts education, “art is a process driven by individuals in social or socially influenced contexts. Engagement in an artistic process requires artistic knowledge and artistic agency” (Wiggins, 2015a, p.116). Learners need to engage in authentic ways (connecting what students are taught to real-world issues, problems, and applications) and be willing and able to bring their own ideas into the learning situation. They need to be able to evaluate successes of their ideas and make necessary decisions and changes (Wiggins, 2015a).

In the ensemble classroom, there is already an established “teacher as conductor” image, where the teacher controls the musical decision-making. Students in a constructivist music classroom can see the educator as teacher-conductor, fostering musical-thinking of the ensemble, where the students collaboratively think and solve musical problems to create musical understanding (Shively, 2015). Students are involved as composers, performers, and listeners, allowing students to partake in all parts of the ensemble community (Scott, 2006). In the constructivist process of using past experiences to gain access to knowledge, students become active participants.

Tutt (2007) discussed the use of questions in rehearsals to improve basic technical skills and encouraged students to become independent, thinking musicians. He suggests the use of low-level and high-level questions in rehearsal to reach the National Core Music Standards. Low-level questions include recalling facts and basic concepts. An example of a low-level question is, “Are you sharp or flat?” Higher-level questions include the same sort of questioning but require high critical thinking skills. An example of a higher-level question would include asking a singer if the dissonance they are performing serves a specific harmonic purpose in the chord tone and how they would perform that chord tone differently.

Teachers use their questions to learn more about their students' perspectives and levels of understanding. Students may know more than they can verbalize. It is important that lesson plans are built around ways for students to express what they know without having to necessarily articulate in words. Visual representation and body movement are two additional ways in which learners can express themselves. Students may also express their understanding using words other than standard musical terminology. Conceptual understanding is more important than the label. Once a student understands a concept, the next step would be to label the concept (Wiggins, 2015b). Conceptual understanding involves imitation that can be described as sound before sight and experience before theory. Children speak long before they can write the alphabet and understand its construction. Once students are familiar with hearing a melody or rhythm, building onto that familiarity, by concentrating on one concept at a time, will help students build solid foundations (Hicks, 1980).

In Weidner's (2015) study of high school band students, he discovered that the teacher, Mr. Guss, opted for students to have problem solving responsibilities through the use of open-ended questioning. Instead of allowing the students to give a yes or no answer, the questions called for students to critically think and solve the problems on their own, with teacher support when needed.

Assessing before, during, and after performing the pieces allows students to self-reflect on their progress and development. One way to implement self-reflection is through journaling, rubric design, or recorded assessments (Brown, 2008). In a constructivist space, students are the primary source of knowledge when it comes to how they learn. Self-reflection will help teachers understand what students need to learn, have learned, and are learning, allowing teachers to use that information to develop instruction.

Weidner (2018) described the use of the cognitive apprenticeship approach (Collins, et al, 1989) in the traditional music ensemble. In the first phase, modeling, teachers are the

model of musical concepts, walking the rest of the students through the thought-process placing responsibility on the student to critically think instead of the teacher. In the coaching phase, the use of open-ended questioning promotes student awareness that can develop into student-led discussions. The answers can guide the rehearsal instead of the teacher making the decision. The last phase, fading, removes the teacher from the music experience and allows for the students to run the rehearsals. During this process, the teacher is observing, taking note of issues, and addressing the issues through modeling and coaching.

Student motivation and musical independence are two skills involved in a constructivist approach in the music classroom. Kastner (2014) suggested informal music-making as part of a constructivist approach. Part of informal music-making is motivation through student engagement. Students actively engage in music-making when they can make decisions about their own learning experiences. In Kastner's (2014) study, teachers and students had varying control over the amount of help and amount of freedom each student had. If students chose their own song for their group, the teachers would negotiate if the song choices were inappropriate, giving the students a different, but equal, choice. Within the informal music learning activities, teachers scaffolded students' learning by providing lyrics and notation, modeling examples that were representative of possible ideas, giving permission for student independency when students felt the need for approval, and being hands-off while monitoring student progress. Teachers noticed that all students were actively engaged in the music-making process in their groups. Some teachers even noticed their own views of musical independence change as a result of student motivation and engagement.

In a study of musical independence in concert band, Weidner (2020) saw that musical independence was a reflection of student agency and the chance for students to make critical decisions during rehearsals. Students wrote a list of problems after sight-reading and prioritized the list and made a lesson plan for the next set of rehearsals. Each rehearsal, they

would reflect on their progress and continue to prioritize their list. The students were the ones in charge of the rehearsal.

One model that incorporates student-centered learning is Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance (CMP) (Sindberg, 2012). The CMP model encourages students to know and take ownership of the music they perform in an ensemble in addition to learning the piece for performance. The learning environment transforms into a "whole-music" environment. A whole-music environment consists of envisioning music from a perspective of all of its musical dimensions. Instead of seeing elements (i.e., rhythmic organization, pitch and harmony, form or texture) as separate entities, the elements are dimensions that are embedded within the music to make up the whole piece. Students construct an understanding of how the dimensions interact to create a musical whole. Teaching music means facilitating the process by establishing genuine connections among various musical concepts. Instead of interacting with music that was made to teach a certain concept, students have the opportunity to solve performance problems, creation problems, and listening problems that "real" musicians solve through the support of their teacher and peers. The students become agents of their own learning and develop their own musicianship (Wiggins, 2007). CMP focuses on meaningful engagement and deeper understanding of knowledge which are both important parts of constructivism.

For the choir ensemble, directors should include problem-solving activities to help develop musical understanding. In a whole-class setting, the teacher should function as a resource and not necessarily a lecturer. Students should be solving meaningful problems, not just listening to a teacher's solutions. In the introductory phases of teaching content, the teacher's role is to make sure the students have learned and have been given enough information to problem solve in small groups and on their own. Teachers help learners know

how to seek their own answers to questions (Wiggins, 2015b). Hogle (2018) suggested self-evaluative repertoire practice in small groups while identifying musical goals and challenges.

When selecting repertoire for an ensemble, the teacher should consider selecting repertoire that they want the ensemble to learn, the ability level of the ensemble, how the piece fits into the concert cycle, and how it will benefit the students. For analysis, the teacher initiates discussion into form, melodic and harmonic structures, orchestration, and other musical elements deemed important. For outcomes, the teacher sets the goals and allows students to create outcomes by way of listing a set of shared values. When strategizing, the teacher listens to the ideas of the students about how they best learn the concepts being taught (Sindberg, 2012).

The teacher's role in a constructivist learning environment includes scaffolding. Social scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978) includes providing time and space for learners to process musical ideas, supporting students' ideas, clarifying expectations, and providing space for reflection and independent thinking. Scaffolding a child's musical learning includes supporting learner performance, providing a framework for students to better hear complex aspects of the music, and support learners' understanding of musical ideas. Scaffolding enables students to operate in their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), achieving higher levels of understanding in music, and gaining musical independence (Wiggins, 2015b).

Building on musical independence, Morrison & Demorest (2012) stated that, "the charge of music educators is not to simply raise classes of good ensemble members, but to facilitate the development of well-rounded, independent young musicians" (pp. 830-831). Teachers can create a rehearsal environment focused on building on prior knowledge, adapting to students' changing needs, and challenging choir members in a way that fosters their individual abilities (Ackles, 2018). One way to facilitate the development of an

independent musician is to allow ensemble members to assist in the repertoire selection process, with the ability to make informed musical decisions. The class can discuss what constitutes good programming while considering the ensemble's strengths and weaknesses (Scruggs, 2009).

Morrison & Demorest (2012) also suggest implementing concrete strategies for learning new music through a music learning sequence. A music learning sequence includes assessment to improve individual skill development. In their scenario with Mr.C, his approach to learning music suggests that the students can already read the music on piano and have done so at home. He is lacking the means of giving or checking pitches. Mr.C could provide sight-reading examples that give the starting pitch and tempo that could be used to practice at home. Students can then record, self-evaluate, and receive feedback on recordings.

For the choir ensemble, directors should include problem-solving activities to help develop musical understanding. In a whole-class setting, the teacher should function as a resource and not necessarily a lecturer. Students should be solving meaningful problems, not just listening to a teacher's solutions. In the introductory phases of teaching content, the teacher's role is to make sure the students have learned and have been given enough information to problem solve in small groups and on their own (Wiggins, 2015). Hogle (2018) suggests self-evaluative repertoire practice in small groups while identifying musical goals and challenges.

Blair (2009) discussed the consideration of mindful engagement within an experience and contribution to the musical experience. She gave the example of creating an arrangement to a familiar song. The teacher created a series of problem-solving lessons to enable the students to learn about the music and gain understanding. They worked in groups to apply the understanding. The students first learned the song through "iconic representation" of the melody, then performed the piece while singing, playing hand drums, and African rattles. It

was a call and response song, so everyone took turns in leading. Next, they listened to a recorded example, created a texture chart to visually represent the layers of music. Then, the students figured out the note names and were able to play the song on Orff instruments. They regrouped and performed the song, and then created their classroom arrangement by rearranging the order and layers, making all the decisions on where to sing, where to play, and if there was an introduction, interlude, or coda. Finally, they created a texture chart of their new arrangement for visual representation. Students are engaged in the musical experience and are actively creating and performing music.

There are many ways to implement constructivist approaches of teaching into the traditional choral ensemble classroom. The following collaborative activities provide examples of processes that can be used in a traditional choral ensemble classroom. Within each activity, students are learning through experience, what they already know, and through active engagement. The objectives derive from the Indiana National Core Art Standards and the activities are arranged from the easiest implementation to more advanced implementation.

Appendix A:
Constructivist Activities for the Choral Classroom

KWL Chart

(1 class rehearsal + over the course of a lesson)

Standards are derived from the Indiana Music Education Ensemble Standards

LR.6.B.1- Express differences in musical sounds that are high or lower, faster or slower, louder or softer, and demonstrate them through movement, body percussion, and/or conducting.

Students will be able to...

- Articulate new knowledge of concepts within a given piece of music to apply to other pieces of music.
- Explore new knowledge of concepts within a given piece of music and define the concepts
- Demonstrate how to apply and use learned concepts to music appropriate for students' developmental level.
- Organize musical knowledge into categories to help create lesson plans and units.

Procedure:

- Choose repertoire that students will be performing in your ensemble.
- Present the students with a blank KWL chart or have them create their own chart.

Depending on the students in your classroom, some students are more creative than others and would prefer to use their own style of chart. If this is the case, give the students blank sheets of paper.

- Explain to the students that the chart has three different areas of knowledge and the chart is a way to organize their information. Explain that the K- column is for information they may already know, the W-column is for information they want to know, and the L-column is for information that they have learned after completing the lesson/unit.
- Once the chart is explained, give students the repertoire that they will be performing and ask students to complete the K-column on their own.
 - a. “While looking through your music, find the things that are familiar to you and that you know. Write those things down in the K-column of your chart.”
 - b. Student will most likely write down misconceptions, things that students believe to be true or correct, but use those as tools to create lessons based on those misconceptions. Students can then look back to that information and correct the misconception on their own as they are learning.
 - c. Have students create a master list of all students K-columns. While students are creating the master list, they may come across a concept that they do not know that they may want to add to their W-column.
- After the K-column, ask students to fill out the W-column.
 - a. “What do you want to know about this piece of music.”
 - b. If students are looking around blankly or have nothing written down after a minute, present them with questions to jump start their thinking:
 - i. What is this piece about?
 - ii. How does the piece move? Do we repeat sections? How do you know?

- iii. What about rhythm? Can you clap and speak the rhythm?
 - iv. Do you know all the words?
 - v. Can you use solfege for all the pitches? Where is do?
 - vi. What key is it in?
 - vii. Can you identify the style of the piece?
 - viii. What about the notes?
- c. Create a master list of all students W-column.
- Throughout the lessons of learning the music, have students fill out the L-column with the concepts and terms that they have learned. Ask students to check off anything in their W-column that they now have in their L-column. If they think of any new questions, have them write those things in their W-column. Also, it would be wise to have students look in their K-column and identify any of those concepts they thought they knew but can now identify and write in their L-column.

Assessment

- The assessment would be a formative assessment of students' prior knowledge. Once you obtain copies of all the students' charts, you can identify where the students' prior knowledge was before beginning the lessons, where their interest is now, and what concepts you can teach to keep them motivated. Having students fill out the learned section after each lesson can help you identify where to begin your next lesson and what they have learned from your previous lessons.

K-W-L Chart

Topic:

What I K now	What I W ant to know	What I L earned

Think Pair Share (Musical Dictionary)

(Over the course of a learning segment/concert cycle)

Standards are derived from the Indiana Music Education Ensemble Standards

LR.5.B.2- Explore interpretations of the expressive intent and meaning of musical works, referring to the elements of music, contexts, and (when appropriate) the setting of the text.

LR.6.B.1- Express differences in musical sounds that are higher or lower, faster or slower, louder or softer, and demonstrate them through movement, body percussion, and/or conducting.

Students will be able to...

- Identify musical concepts in chosen repertoire.
- Describe musical concepts in chosen repertoire.

Procedure:

- Based on music that the students have studied, pose the question, “What are some musical concepts that you have learned in this piece that you didn’t know prior to learning this piece?”
- Have students, on their own, write a list of concepts and words that they learned through singing and working on the piece of music. Tell students an allotted amount of time they have to work independently. (roughly 2-3 minutes to think and write)
- With an elbow partner (someone sitting on either side of them) students should talk and discuss some of the concepts on their list with their partner. They should write down the things that were different than what they had written down. Give an

allotted time for this portion as well. Tell the students they have roughly 2 – 3 minutes.

- After discussing with a partner, have the partners choose a few of the concepts or words, one that was similar and one that was different from their partner, and share with the class what those concepts or words were. Have students identify the page number and measure numbers where the concepts and words were learned.
- The teacher should write the list on the board. Also, have the students continue their personal list and add those things that they don't already have. If there is space in the classroom, create a student developed word wall, so that the new concepts are on display for the class to view at all times.
- If students can describe and explain a concept, but do not know the name, tell the class the musical term that goes with their definition.
 - a. For instance, "I learned that we are supposed to get louder on page 5, measure 45 on the word [insert word here]"
 - b. Ask the student if they know what mark on the score indicates that particular note getting louder. If they know, then make sure to explain that the "hairpin" open to the right is called a crescendo and does the function that the student was describing.
- Ask students to keep this list for future reference of terms, symbols, and definitions.
- Have students add to their list as they learn new terms or have questions about newly learned techniques. Students are now responsible for learning the information on their own. The teacher can collect the dictionary and look at new terms or

symbols students have written down along with descriptions and definitions.

Teachers can provide comments and feedback.

Assessment

- The assessment would be the students being able to identify and describe certain musical elements, words, and concepts. The list of terms and concepts the students list and the list the teacher writes is a visual representation of what the students can identify and should be able to identify and apply in music going forward.
- The dictionary list itself is also an assessment.

Reflective Journaling

(1 class rehearsal)

Standards are derived from the Indiana Music Education Ensemble Standards

Cn.1.A.2- Utilize research and personally developed criteria to justify choices made when selecting music, citing knowledge of the music, and individual and ensemble purpose and context.

Cn.1.A.3- Consistently demonstrate and apply life skills developed in music studies and activities such as cooperation, effort, perseverance, and respect that transfer to other disciplines and contexts.

LR.5.B.3- Using established criteria, recognize the structure and context of music.

Students will be able to...

- Evaluate and assess personal musical achievement.
- Discuss musical achievement using musical language.

Procedure:

- Have students watch their recent performance/concert in class. This could also apply to after a learning segment or lesson.
- Provide questions to guide student responses regarding the performance/lesson. The questions should be directed in a way that facilitates meaningful responses. These responses can help shape future rehearsals and give you an insight into how students are constructing their knowledge.
 - How do you think the concert went for you and why?

- How do you think the concert went for the choir as a whole and why?
 - Describe your feelings before, during, and after the performance. Did your feelings change throughout? Why?
 - In terms of musicality, what sorts of concepts went well, and what concepts did we miss? Why?
 - What do you think, musically and personally, you need to improve upon as an individual?
 - What are some ways you can work on it?
 - What do you think we need to improve upon as a whole ensemble?
 - What ways do you think we can achieve this?
 - Are there any other details of the performance that you would like to share, good or bad?
- Have students write in a physical journal or electronic journal source. Whichever is preferred for you and your teaching setting.
 - Collect the journals or have students submit them online. This can be done after every performance and learning segment as a way to self-reflect. Students are the best source to discover new and different ways of teaching as every student learns differently. Be sure to read through the responses. Be sure to note their personal goals, goals for that class, and improvements that you can implement into future lessons.

Assessment

- The reflective journal that students turn in will show the future goals for themselves and for the choir.

Reflective Practice

(1 class rehearsal)

Standards are derived from the Indiana Music Education Ensemble Standards

Cn.1.B.1- Demonstrate and explore how personal interests and skills relate to choices when performing music.

Cn.1.B.2- Identify and practice life skills developed in music studies and activities such as cooperation, effort, perseverance, and respect that transfer to other disciplines and contexts.

Cn.1.A.3- Consistently demonstrate and apply life skills developed in music studies and activities such as cooperation, effort, and perseverance, and respect that transfer to other disciplines and contexts.

Students will be able to...

- Set well-defined goals and monitor progress.
- Identify areas of strength and weakness.
- Reflect on their learning styles and re-evaluate their goals.

Procedure:

- This activity will happen over the course of a year.
- Present your students, at the beginning of the year with a S.M.A.R.T goals worksheet.
- Ask the students to think about what they know about themselves as students and singers and create goals for themselves to reach.
 - Specific- What is it that you want to achieve? Where will you achieve it? Why do you have this goal?

- Measurable- Your goal must have a way to track it. How many times, how long, how often?
- Achievable- Yours goals must be realistic if you stick to your plan.
- Relevant- Does your goal fit your needs? Will this goal help you?
- Timely- Give your goal a definite time period to achieve. Specific day/date.
- Once their goals are written, collect them and categorize them based on the topic of the S.M.A.R.T goal (Breathing, singing high notes, vowel shapes, behavior in class, on time assignments, etc.)
- **The next steps can happen as often as it seems necessary.
- Have students meet in groups according to their like-minded goals and complete a check-in of how their goals are going.
 - What steps did you take that allowed you to achieve your goal?
 - If you haven't achieved your goal, why not? What steps might you take in the future to reach your goal?
- Students should discuss these questions within their group, as well as reflect individually. Students can offer support and suggestions if it seems someone is struggling.

Assessment

- The S.M.A.R.T goals and the written reflection

Mini Concert

(2-3 class rehearsals)

Standards are derived from the Indiana Music Education Ensemble Standards

Cn.2.P.1- Explain ways in which the principles and subject matter of various disciplines outside the arts are interrelated within the performed music.

Cn.2.A.1- Demonstrate ways in which the principles and subject matter of various disciplines outside the arts are interrelated within the performed arts.

Cn2.B.2- Discover, identify, and explore how performed music connects to other arts and humanities.

Cn.3.B.1- Discuss and explore genre, style, composer, and historical background information in performed music.

Students will be able to...

- Select repertoire based on a cultural or global issue
- Discuss and describe cultural and global issues within a society
- Analyze music for its cultural representation within a society

Procedure:

- This activity can be used over the course of a learning segment.
- The teacher should prepare groups based on social and cultural background as to make the groups diverse.
- Once students are in their groups, have the students look at some programs from different types of concerts.

- In a whole class environment, discuss and write out the similarities and differences that are seen in a program.
- The style of the program itself.
- The theme of the program.
- Are there descriptions of things in the program (song descriptions, lyrics, theme description, composer description)?
- Ask students questions regarding what they think. Construct a list of the things the students say. Categorize what they say into logical groups. Here are some questions that can be asked:
 - What sorts of songs do you sing and hear during these concerts?
 - Is there normally a theme?
 - What are the similarities and differences that you hear and see in concerts/shows?
 - Fast/slow tempo
 - Is there body movement?
 - What do the singers sing about?
 - What about composers? What sorts of composers do you see in the concerts?
- Structure the categories based on the questions: Composers, tempos, dancing/body percussion, etc.
- Once questions are asked, ask the groups to think about an issue that they care about. Research the issue and research songs that would fit their theme. Have students search for songs that have been used at various concerts.

- What issue resonated with your group the most?
- When researching what your issue is about, can you find any music that stands out to you, that interests you?
- What are they singing about or dancing to?
- Can you find songs that are similar in a choral arrangement on choral music websites?
- Remind them to look at their list of unique qualities of different concert styles that the teacher put on the board. Use that as a reference when looking at different songs.
 - Are they fast/slow?
 - What are the lyrics saying?
 - What is the emotion of the piece and how does it fit the emotion of your topic/theme?
- Then, ask the students to create a music program, using the ones they looked at the beginning of class as a reference:
 - Title their mini concert.
 - Write a description of why they chose each song.
 - Let the students decide the sorts of songs they want to add. If they need help, the teacher can guide them to websites about their topic/issue, ask the students what the topic/issue means to them, and what words best describe the topic.
- The last part of this activity would be to present the programs for the other groups. This can take several days depending on your classroom situation. It is important for

the groups to share their program as this is something the students and can be used for future concerts. Not only does it show their thought process of programming music for a concert, but also what they are passionate about in terms of cultural issues. Teachers can use this knowledge to shape their classrooms for further musical learning. Teachers will learn what the students find important about creating a concert. Groups will bring different issues into the context of this activity and the topics would be a great discussion lesson for your classroom.

Assessment:

- The assessment would be the final product of the mini concert program and the presentation of the material.

Consonant sounds and their importance in performance

(1 class rehearsal)

Standards are derived from the Indiana Music Education Ensemble Standards

P.7.P.1- Demonstrate, identify, and apply proper vocal technique including good breath control, pitch, diction, tone quality, and posture.

P.7.A.1- Be able to explain proper vocal technique including good breath control, pitch, diction, tone quality, and posture.

P.7.P.4- Explore the concepts of vocal health and how they affect singing through warm-ups, breathing exercises, and appropriate repertoire.

P.7.A.4- Demonstrate consistently the concepts of vocal health within warm-ups, breathing exercises, and appropriate repertoire.

Students will be able to...

- Identify the difference between voiced and unvoiced consonant sounds based on the result of vocal fold vibration.
- Discuss the proper technique of producing voiced and unvoiced consonant sounds when singing repertoire.
- Perform repertoire with crisp and clear consonant sounds.

Procedure:

- During vocal warm-ups, incorporate exercises focusing on consonant sounds.
- The end goal of this activity is for students to recognize the difference between voiced and unvoiced consonant sounds, as well as the importance of having clean

and crisp consonant sounds in their repertoire. Without clean and crisp diction, words become muffled and the audience is unable to understand the words being sung. The students will receive written feedback from the teacher after writing an exit ticket about voiced and unvoiced consonant sounds.

- Ask the students,
 - What happens to our sound when we sing words that begin with B or D? P or T?
 - In our warm-ups, what differences did you notice when we sang B/P and D/T?
 - *Did* you notice a difference? Would you like to sing the warm- up again and see if you notice anything this time?
- Teacher introduces the terms unvoiced and voiced consonant sounds.
 - Speak and sing words that begin with B, D, P, and T.
 - Have students lightly place two fingers on their throat, and feel the difference when they say B/P and D/T.
 - Writing the words on the board, add B, P, D, and T under voiced and unvoiced heading.
 - Ask students if they can identify which letters would be voiced/unvoiced and why.
 - Write the letters under each heading.
- The next step is to address the importance of consonant sounds when singing so the audience can understand their words and the interpretation of the repertoire performed.

- Do you notice a difference when we *say* certain words versus when we *sing* certain words?
- Have the students speak a phrase, then sing the phrase. Then ask...
- What differences did you notice?
- So how do the consonant sounds and vowel sounds impact the interpretation of the song that we are trying to convey to the audience?

Assessment:

- The students' ability to identify voiced and unvoiced consonant sounds by describing the differences, naming the consonants, and feeling the difference in the vibration of their vocal folds on voiced sounds and the lack of vibration on unvoiced sounds. Students can show that they are feeling the vibration, or lack thereof, by placing their hand lightly on their throat, and raising their other hand when they feel the vibration after making different voiced or unvoiced consonant sounds.
- Exit ticket: describe the difference between voiced and unvoiced consonant sounds? What letters in the alphabet are consonant?
- Performing their repertoire with crisp and clear consonant sounds that conveys the interpretation of the music to the audience.

Phrasing Application

(1-2 class rehearsals)

Standards are derived from the Indiana Music Education Ensemble Standards

P.7.P.1- Demonstrate, identify, and apply proper vocal technique including good breath control, pitch, diction, tone quality, and posture.

P.7.B.3- P.7.A.3- Begin to sing expressively with attention to blend, balance, dynamics, phrasing, and articulation.

P.7.I.4- Demonstrate, using proper vocal technique and expand vocal range through warm-ups, breathing exercises, and appropriate repertoire.

LR.5.B.2- Explore interpretations of the expressive intent and meaning of musical works, referring to the elements of music, contexts, and (when appropriate) the setting of the text.

LR.5.B.3- Using established criteria, recognize the structure and context of music.

Students will be able to...

- Demonstrate expressive interpretation of music by applying dynamics, tone, and lyrical expression.
- Discuss the intentions of musical phrasing.

Procedure:

- Provide lyrics for the first phrase of the poem/song, "My Country Tis of Thee" or a similar poem/song that the students are familiar with. The partner songs, "Ah Poor Bird," "Rose Rose," and "Hey Ho Nobody Home," are appropriate as well.

- While handing out the lyric sheet, ask the students a question about phrasing as phrasing is a concept that should have been learned in a reading class/literature class:
 - In general, what is a phrase/phrasing?
 - Where do we find phrases or phrasing? (Books, poetry, composer markings, etc.)
 - How do we know that they are phrases?
 - What indicates that these are phrases?
- Introduce the first phrase of the poem/song, “My Country Tis of Thee”, asking the students to read it as if it were a poem, paying attention to the markings provided for them.
- Ask the students to speak through a warm-up song, like “Ah, Poor Bird,” and identify where they take a breath as a preparation versus when they take a breath to start a phrase.
 - Mark those areas as commas (prep breath) or periods (ending a phrase) and then have the students look at “My Country Tis of Thee” and ask them to use the same concept they use in “Ah, Poor Bird” and apply it the periods and commas while speaking “My Country Tis of Thee.”
- Students should include fluctuation in their voice to show the difference in dynamics and difference in the beginning, middle, and end of a phrase.
- Then have them sing it in the same manner. Then ask:
 - What markings did you take into consideration when speaking then singing the poem?

- Did it make sense to pause at the commas when speaking?
- What about when singing? Did it make for an expressive musical line? Why or why not?
- If it didn't make sense to pause at every comma, what can we do to make the phrase more expressive?
- Could we try singing in one breath? Maybe carry over the commas?
- Try singing the phrase again, with the suggested expressiveness.
- After singing again, discuss how the decision to break up text is dependent on how the class wants to interpret the text/music.
- Have students open up a score that they have analyzed.
- Ask the students:
 - What type of markings are provided for us that suggest musical phrasing?
 - What have we written in our scores to help our interpretation of the music?
 - Where in the music do we have text and punctuation that we *sing* differently than we *speak*?

Assessment

- Discussion, through teacher-guided questions, is used as an informal way to assess the students' understanding of musical phrasing and interpretive decision-making. Teachers can determine to what extent their students understand musical phrasing based on musical language.

Group Rhythmic Composition

(1 class rehearsal)

Standards are derived from the Indiana Music Education Ensemble Standards

Cr.10.B.1- Use gesture, movement, and other visual representations to represent pitch and rhythm patterns, motifs, and short melodies that are aurally perceived and/or audiated.

Cr.11.B.1- Create and notate rhythms and melodies (4 to 8 measures) in simple and/or compound meters using either traditional or non-traditional notation.

Cr.11.B.3- Create and share personally developed melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives (individually or as an ensemble) that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or texts studied in rehearsal.

Students will be able to...

- Create an 8-measure composition, utilizing familiar time signatures and rhythms.
- Demonstrate rhythmic accuracy within each section.

Procedure:

- This activity could be used as a first step in creating a composition that a choir could use in a warm-up. The teacher does not need to present the activity in such a way that states this is part of a composition, but rather present it in a way that encourages rhythm and time signature as important parts of singing as an ensemble.
- The teacher has students take out a piece of music that is familiar to them, preferably one they will sing in a concert. (i.e. "Christmas Canon arranged by Andy Beck)

- Choose a section in the music (state the page number and measure number) that has moving parts, where each voice may be singing different rhythms. Have student turn to those pages.
- Instruct the students to clap their voice part's rhythm. The teacher should set the tempo and give a full measure count off:
 - For example, if in 3/4 , "One, ready, go.."
- When students have accurately clapped their voice part's rhythm. Instruct students to clap the same measures again, but this time:
 - Soprano's clap the Alto's rhythm
 - Alto's clap the Tenor's rhythm
 - Tenor's clap the Bass's rhythm
 - Bass's clap the Soprano's rhythm
- After everyone has clapped a different voice part's rhythm, instruct students to gather in a circle with their voice part.
- Once gathered, provide students with blank sheets of 8.5 x 11 paper that are a different color per section. Be sure the paper is light enough for black permanent marker to be seen. Tell them that they are going to create rhythms based on the time signature of the piece they just clapped. (for example: Christmas Canon is in 3/4)
 - Tell the students that each sheet of paper is to be one measure long and they are to create 8 measures as a group.
- Before they begin, provide them with an example in a different time signature (i.e., 4/4). Show the students a model of what the paper is supposed to look like.

- At this point, it is a good idea to ask the students some questions, for example:
 - What is the time signature of the piece we just clapped? (i.e., 3/4)
 - How many beats are in each measure? (i.e., 3)
 - Which type of note gets the beat? (i.e., quarter note)
- Write the information on the board for students to reference as they are creating their measures.
- Then say, “Okay, now it is your turn to create 8 measures of rhythms within your section. I am here to help if you have questions. Your section is also there for help if you get stumped.”
- Remind students to clap their rhythms as they are writing them. They can put their papers in any order they choose. On the back of the paper, have students number their papers 1 through 8 so you know the order they have rehearsed them in.
- Give students 10-15 minutes to work independently in their group. Remember to walk around and monitor the students. Look for active discussion, clapping, and writing.
- When students have finished writing, have clapped their rhythms, and have presented you with their rhythmic composition, attach them to the board for everyone to see.
 - Put the papers in order according to the number written on the back
 - Present them in a choral format (SATB, SSAA, TTBB, etc.)
- Once on the board, ask each voice part, independently as a section, to clap their rhythm together. Instruct everyone else to do it silently by using two finger (pointer and middle) and lightly tapping their palm.

- When counting off, begin at a slow tempo that will encourage everyone who has not seen the section's composition to be successful.
- After each section has performed, instruct everyone to perform each part together.
 - All parts perform Soprano composition, then all parts perform Alto composition, etc.
- Once everyone has successfully and accurately performed each part of the choral rhythmic composition, say:
 - "Remember how we clapped Christmas Canon, let's do that with the rhythms you all have created. Let's begin by clapping your own sections' composition at the same time."
 - Remember to keep the tempo slow. If you have the ability to use a pointer, point to the measure that is being clapped. Some students might struggle to keep a steady beat or clap the rhythm correctly. To keep them on the right measure, a visual cue is valuable.
 - After everyone has clapped their rhythms accurately, switch which rhythm each voice part is clapping (i.e., Soprano's clap Alto rhythm, Alto's clap the Tenor rhythm, etc.)
 - If there is time and the students are successful, the teacher can challenge their students by randomly choosing what part each student is clapping. Also, students can choose a part to clap that is different than the person sitting next to them.

Assessment

- The correct use of time signatures and rhythms' written in the 8-measure composition.
- Student success at clapping their own section's composition and the other section's composition.

Identifying Key Signatures with Sharps (1 class rehearsal)

Standards are derived from the Indiana Music Education Ensemble Standards

LR.4.B.1- Audiate and speak or sing music written in the clef appropriate for their own voice/instrument and in major keys, and simple or compound meter using gesture and/or traditional music notation.

Students will be able to...

- Identify major key signatures with sharp symbols.
- Explain how to determine the key signature with sharp symbols

Procedure:

- For this activity, students should know names of the lines and spaces on a treble clef and bass clef and also know solfege syllables for the major keys.
- This activity may take several lessons before the students feel comfortable enough with key signatures that they can play the game.
- Begin by asking the students a few questions about a piece of music the class is working on (i.e., the beginning of “We Won’t Stop Dreaming” by PINKZEBRA):
 - Where do we find key signatures in the music?
 - What are the symbols that you may see in a key signature? (sharp, flat, or no symbol)
- Next, ask the students why they think key signatures are important:
 - Why do we need key signatures?
 - What if we have 7 sharps in our music and they are written on every note, all the time in our music?

- What if someone asks you what key your solo piece is in because they want to sing it but the piece is too high for them, so they want to change it to fit their voice?
- After familiarizing the students with what the lesson is going to be about, have the students take out their notes for the class and have them write out the order of the sharps with an appropriate mnemonic for easy recall. You may even have creative students in the class willing to come up with a class mnemonic device to use.
 - FCGDAEB (Fat Cats Grab Dinner At Every Bowl) for example.
- Ask the students to write the names of the sharps that are present in the key signature for their specific song, in the order that they see the symbol:
 - For example: the song by PINKZEBRA begins with two sharps. Students would write F-sharp, then C-sharp.
- Next, tell the students that you know that the last sharp in the key signature is 'ti'.
- Ask the students, "if the last sharp in the key signature is 'ti,' then which sharp in our key signature is 'ti'?"
 - In "We Won't Stop Dreaming," C-sharp is the last sharp. So, C-sharp is 'ti.'
- Once 'ti' is established, ask the students to write 'ti' under the last sharp written down. Be sure that you are also writing this on the board so students can see your model.
- Next, ask students to write their solfege syllable according to what is written under the C-sharp.
 - What is to the left of ti in solfege syllables? (do)
 - What is to the right of ti in solfege syllables? (do, re, mi, fa, sol, la)

- Next, tell the students, “Now, we need to find what letter name is associated with ‘do’.”
- Have the students write the alphabet above the solfege syllables according to the sharp that they have identified as ‘ti’.

- For the example:

D E F# G A B C# D

Do re mi fa sol la ti do

- Remind the students to add the sharp symbol to the notes that are sharp in the key signature.
- Ask, “Once we know ‘do,’ we know the key we are in. So, from what you have written down, who can tell me what note ‘do’ is?”
 - For example, ‘do’ would be D.
- Once ‘do’ is established, present the name of the key to the students.
 - “So, the key for this piece is D Major. We begin in the key of D Major.”
- After a few keys have been worked with your guidance, have students work with a shoulder buddy and work the rest of the sharp keys.
- Once everyone has had a chance to work through sharp keys, have students check each other’s work to make sure everyone has the right answer, then, ask the class what answers they came up with for each key.
- Once all keys are correct, call on students to answer questions about the keys with sharps:
 - What key has three sharps? Five sharps? Etc.
 - How do you know? What steps did you take to determine the key?

- Have students look through all the music they will be singing, that include sharps in the key signature, and write what key each piece is in at the top of the page as extra practice.
- The steps in this lesson can be utilized for working with major keys that have flat symbols as well.

Assessment

- Peer-sharing of notes and working with a partner is a way for students to assess each other.
- Playing a memory game is a way for the teacher to assess the students and if the students can demonstrate their thought process.

Student Led Warm Up Through Score Analysis

(3-5 Weeks)

Standards are derived from the Indiana Music Education Ensemble Standards

P.7.P.1- Demonstrate, identify, and apply proper vocal technique including good breath control, pitch, diction, tone quality, and posture.

P.7.I.2- Sing intermediate musical selections, scales, and intervals using note names, solfege, syllables, or numbers and demonstrate sight reading at an appropriate level.

P.7.P.3- Sing expressively with attention to blend, balance, dynamics, phrasing, and articulation.

P.7.P.4- Explore the concepts of vocal health and how they affect singing through warm-ups, breathing exercises, and appropriate repertoire.

Cr.9.B.2- Improvise melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that reflect the characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.

Cr.11.B.1- Create and notate rhythms and melodies (4 to 8 measures) in simple and/or compound meters using either traditional or non-traditional notation.

Students will be able to...

- Analyze the dynamic, tempo, articulation, diction markings and harmonic/melodic structures of rehearsed repertoire.
- Discuss and perform the sequence of a warm-up based on the analysis of rehearsed repertoire.
- Describe the importance of warm-ups in a choral classroom.

Procedure:

- Students take out their music for the day.
- The teacher will ask the students what musical concepts they believe are important within their music:
 - What key are we in?
 - What are our highest and lowest notes in each line of music?
 - Think about the individual lines, where might we have problems with breath control/support?
 - Are there any areas that you think we would have problems learning because of rhythm, sustained notes, interesting harmonies?
 - What language are we singing in? What are we singing about?
 - Where are the places that we need to breathe as a choir and as individual singers?
 - What is the dynamic of the piece and how does the dynamic effect our singing?
 - What type of notes do we sing and how does that play a role in the articulation and diction of our words?
- After students discuss, the teacher will ask them to mark in their scores the important elements/concepts.
- Students will have their own way of marking scores that best suits their learning and understanding. Suggest some ways that you have found helpful in marking your score.
 - Apostrophes between words for breath markings.

- Circling dynamic markings, articulations, and rhythms so they stand out when reading the score.
- Using descriptive words around a section to emphasize a stylistic change or contrasting change (forte to piano, or slow tempo to fast tempo)
- If the piece has multiple voice parts, adding a star or similar indicator can help keep your eyes from wandering.
- Once scores are marked, the teacher asks the students what type of vocalese have been performed in class that would help the choir to achieve the certain musical concepts/elements they deem important. Students will discuss the question in a whole class environment, while teacher writes/types the examples on the board.
- Now that the students have studied the score and already have a sense of the warm-up sequence the teacher uses each day, the teacher will ask the students what they think a proper warm up sequence looks like. They will be using the vocalese examples on the board in their warm-up sequence to effectively warm-up their voices to sing the song. What order do we warm up our voices? Why do we warm up our voices prior to singing our music? Use guided questions to help student reach the answers. For example:
 - If students don't understand why we warm-up our voices before singing, use a sports metaphor or a dancer metaphor. Ask, "So why do football players stretch before their big game? What happens if they don't stretch?"
 - For the order of vocalese, specifically breathing, you could ask, "What parts of our bodies do we use to sing? What do we do as soon once we open our mouths to sing?"

- Also, provide an appropriate term for each part of the vocal sequence for students to learn musical vocabulary.
- Instruct students that they will begin providing warm-ups for the class. This can be done in pairs or small groups, depending on the size of the choir. Eventually, students should prepare a warm-up sequence individually to present to the choir.

Assessment:

- In pairs, or small groups, students will prepare a warm-up sequence based on their score analysis and the section of music being rehearsed for that day. Students will organize their warm-up by order of sequence, vocal exercises, and relationship to the score. On the given day, students will perform their warm-up sequence for the entire ensemble, as well as turn in an organized warm-up sheet. If your school allows recording of students, record their session so that you and the students are able to go back and see how they did and possible improvements.
- The choir will provide feedback to the pair/group after the warm – up of one thing that the pair/group did well, and one thing that they could improve on for next time. Some suggested areas of feedback can be time management, verbal communication, verbal cueing, sequence, and vocalese.
- The teacher will provide constructive written feedback on the warm-up sheet with suggested areas for improvement and strategies for improvement.
- Student self- feedback can also be provided, especially if video recording is allowed. Self – feedback will help the students learn about themselves and what they can do to reach their goals, allowing them to become more independent.

Sectionals

(Over the course of a learning segment)

Standards are derived from the Indiana Music Education Ensemble Standards

Cn.1.B.2- Identify and practice life skills developed in music studies and activities such as cooperation, effort, perseverance, and respect that transfer to other disciplines and contexts.

P.7.B.3- Choral and Instrumental: Begin to demonstrate proper vocal technique including good breath control, pitch, diction, tone quality, and posture.

Students will be able to...

- Discuss problem solving techniques to enhance their musicality.
- Diagnose problems within given music
- Demonstrate effective student error detection and correction.

Procedure:

- Choose a song that the class has been working on for a concert/performance (i.e., Winter Lullaby by PINKZEBRA)
- Within each section (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass), ask the students to write down the page numbers and measure numbers to identify problem areas in their music. 5 minutes.
- After students have had a chance to look at their music, ask a student to identify an error in their music by telling you the page number and measure number (i.e., Page 5, measure 26). Write down the page number and measure number on the board, next to the word "Identification".

- Next, have a discussion within that section and ask if someone can tell you about the error. Can the students describe the error (i.e., We are always late on our “oo” and it is throwing off the whole song). On the board, write the word “Description”, then write the description the students discuss.
- After describing the error, ask the students to think of what could be causing the error. (i.e., What are some reasons that are causing you to be late on the “oo” entrance?”
 - If students have an error like the one from my example, it would be appropriate to sing that section once, especially if the teacher is unclear of the mistake, to see exactly what might be causing the error.
 - Have students look at their music and isolate that section.
 - Ask students if they can clap the section of measures for you while speaking the words. Then see if they can sing them for you while clapping and looking at their music.
 - Now have the students do it without looking at their music.
 - Go back and see if they can diagnose the error.
 - Ask the students,
 - On which beat do we release? (i.e., beat 3)
 - On which beat do we breathe? (i.e., beat 4)
 - Try the section again reminding the students to count the beats. Have the students tap the beat with their foot or tap on their leg.
 - After the students are successful at diagnosing the error (i.e., release and preparatory breath), write the word “Diagnosis” on the board and

then the description of the diagnosis (i.e., release and preparatory breath.)

- Next, ask the question, “So what did you do differently that helped you to fix the problem?” (i.e., I counted how many beats I am supposed to hold the word “by” and breathed on beat 4 to prepare for my entrance.”
 - When the students answer the question, write “Solutions” on the board and the solutions given by the students (i.e., counting)
- Be sure to go through this process to help each section effectively detect and correct errors.
- After each section has had a chance to diagnose some errors with you, let them break off into sectionals and detect and correct errors as a group.
 - Have students write down the words; identification, description, diagnosis, and solutions as they are problem-solving within their group. Have the students keep a notebook of their detection and correction to look back on for when they have similar issues in other pieces. This notebook can also be collected to assess their knowledge of detection and correction. Teachers can use that knowledge to further develop their lesson plans.
- This lesson may be used over a course of several rehearsals. It can be used as many times as needed to help students make a habit out of learning how to problem solve on their own and in their section.

Assessment

- The notebook with error detection and correction notes.

- The ability to perform the corrected errors using solutions discussed in sectionals.

Cognitive Apprenticeship, the Student – Conductor/Director

(Over the course of a learning segment or concert cycle)

Standards are derived from the Indiana Music Education Ensemble Standards

LR.6.B.1- Express differences in musical sounds that are high or lower, faster or slower, louder or softer, and demonstrate them through movement, body percussion, and/or conducting.

P.7.B.1- P.7.A.1- Be able to explain proper vocal technique including good breath control, pitch, diction, tone quality, and posture.

P.7.B.3- P.7.A.3- Sing expressively with attention to blend, balance, dynamics, phrasing, and articulation.

P.7.I.4- Demonstrate, using proper vocal technique and expand vocal range through warm-ups, breathing exercises, and appropriate repertoire.

P.7.B.5- Sing literature representing a variety of vocal styles expressively, utilizing appropriate dynamic contrast, phrasing, and articulation alone or in ensembles, from a score and from memory.

Students will be able to...

- Apply learned musical concepts to rehearsals.
- Identify problems within a rehearsal that need to be corrected.

Procedure:

- This activity is meant to be applied over a period of time. Begin by being the model for your students. Set time aside for each rehearsal to allow students to identify and

demonstrate the steps of cognitive apprenticeship. Let the students become the teacher.

- Modeling (student observation)
 - You can use warm-ups or a piece that you are rehearsing in your ensemble.
 - Allow students to observe you and the way you sing certain phrases/techniques.
 - Explicitly tell and show your students how you produce the sound that you are looking for from them:
 - “To make the sound brighter and less breathy, I pretend to have a golf ball in my mouth. Then, I close my lips around it still keeping that golf ball size space. I practice humming until I physically feel the sound behind my front teeth. When I feel the buzzing, I know my sound is in the right spot. .” *Teacher imitates how the students should sound.*
- Coaching (Student performance, teacher observation)
 - Students should be the ones guiding the techniques in their warm-ups/music while the teacher guides them to success.
 - Provide feedback that might help diagnose any problems the students might be having.
 - “Remember in our warm-ups when we were shooting for that bright tone? Where did we need to feel the sound? Let’s try placing that golf ball in our mouth and lightly closing our lips around it.”
 - “Do you feel your teeth and lips buzzing? Or do you feel it in your throat?”

- Articulation (Students demonstrate and verbalize)
 - This part of the phase is where students can now demonstrate the techniques without the teacher. Through verbalized thinking, students are developing their meta-cognitive skills. The teacher may ask:
 - “Your sound is much brighter and less breathy. What are some of the things you did specifically to change your tone from breathy to bright?”
- Fading (intentional removal of support)
 - Ask the students questions about their progress:
 - What are they doing?
 - “What are you doing to make your tone brighter?”
 - Why are they doing it?
 - “Why are you creating that much space in your mouth?”
 - How will it help them solve musical problems?
 - “How does that help you sound less breathy?”
 - The fading process helps the students reflect on their activities and diagnose musical problems. Asking questions also helps the students articulate the reasoning behind their choices.

Assessment

- The fading phase of cognitive apprenticeship shows teachers that the concepts and techniques students once could identify, are now concepts that students can articulate and apply to repertoire.

References

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