

THE FOUNDATION For Music Education

The Six M's: Providing the Foundation for a Magnificent Choral Program

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MANAGEMENT

1. Monitor and control time, materials and expectations:
 - plan ahead: time management is crucial
 - study the physical arrangement of the room to devise the most efficient procedures for getting and putting away class materials, collecting and distributing memos, worksheets, tests, permission forms, fund raising materials, uniforms, t shirts--and MUSIC!
 - establish procedures and routines and use them consistently
2. Set forth clear expectations and state with clarity:
 - what to do
 - how to do it
 - why it should be done
 - the consequences if expectations are not met and the rewards if they are
3. Remember, your task is to cause the students to put aside their personal agendas and adopt *your* agenda; enthusiasm, energy, humor and a clear sense of purpose are key ingredients.
4. Eliminate distractions to encourage students to be attentive to directions for activities and tasks.
5. Be willing and able to adapt to changes in events and conditions.
6. Demonstrate patience in dealing with unexpected circumstances and human interactions.
7. Know and apply with consistence and fairness the campus discipline management plan.
8. Remember, students respond to order, and as long as they stay focused and actively involved, off task behavior will be kept at a minimum.
9. Explain expectations for behavior by giving students *reasons* for procedures and rules.
10. Assemble and arrange materials and teaching aids before each period begins.
11. Prepare students for the sequence of activities so that time is not wasted at the beginning or at any time during the class period; keep the students focused on the task at hand.
12. Display a lesson outline/materials needed so that transitions between activities are smooth, with minimal loss of time for teaching/learning.
13. Stay constantly aware of all aspects of the learning environment, both to stay in control and to anticipate and address potential problems before they bubble out of control.
14. Remember, spontaneity compliments creative pursuits; seek a balance between established routines and the excitement of the unexpected; always be ready to take advantage of the teachable moment.
15. Make it routine to open each class with vocalization, but vary the content to keep the students both interested and challenged.
16. Foster teamwork and cooperation: all for one and one for all works when you give your students *ownership*.
17. Always relate each activity to a goal and behavior to an outcome.
18. Seat each class appropriately by being aware of both musical and behavioral aspects. Who sits by whom and the amount of space between singers are key factors in finding the optimum arrangement for successful sight reading, performance preparation and consistent focus on the task at hand.
19. Success depends on how well you manage the teaching/learning environment.

METHODS and MUSICIANSHIP

1. Apply your personal philosophy of music education to every aspect of your teaching.
2. Teach for lifelong learning.
3. Keep the development of *musicianship* as the basis for every class activity.
4. Provide models of fine musical performance.
5. Determine the steps that are required to teach a particular performance skill and take students through those steps systematically.
6. Realize that productive activities involve *change*.
7. Convey an expectation of great results.
8. Maintain your enthusiasm.
9. Pace the activities so that there is no wasted time, no time for your students to lose interest.
10. Be ready with a plan "B" and "C" when plan "A" doesn't work.
11. Whenever possible, relate the lesson content to prior and future learning to facilitate students being able to form concepts and retain knowledge.
12. Accept this fact: discriminating listening is a key element in producing quality performances; devising a variety of ways to encourage students to develop their listening skills will result in improved accuracy, intonation, balance and blend.
13. At the beginning of the year, introduce the concept of audiation--mental rehearsal--and use the silent rehearsal technique in class.
14. Begin instruction with an appropriate introduction, followed by the presentation of information and/or activity in a logical sequence.
15. Use terms, symbols and explanations appropriate to the level of the students.
16. Clarify potential areas of difficulty and stress important points.
17. Be prepared to review or reteach if students misunderstand.
18. Give honest evaluations of your students' efforts, *always* balancing a negative reaction with encouragement and praise, particularly for the progress your choir is making.
19. Use appraisal to help you determine how much reteaching is needed and to determine whether the choir is being challenged sufficiently.
20. Use appraisal to reveal if progress is satisfactory and whether your teaching techniques, time distribution or other factors need adjustment.
21. Use evaluation both to measure progress and improve your effectiveness as a teacher.
22. Provide students with the means to evaluate their own performance in comparison to the ideal.
23. Give students the tools to bridge the gap from where they are to where they need to be.
24. Strive consistently for maximum student participation.
25. Interact with students in a dynamic manner.
26. Systematically pursue student contributions.
27. Involve students with questioning techniques by giving additional information and by providing ample time for student response; establish the ground rules for Q & A (spontaneous responses, or only when recognized).
28. Use the lecture method sparingly: instead, involve the students in active responses, experiencing the elements of music through moving, chanting and singing.
29. Avoid "Kill and Drill" rehearsals!
30. Communicate learning expectations and standards of success to students during each segment of instruction.
31. Monitor performance so that, when correct responses are made, students receive reinforcement.
32. If corrective feedback or re-teaching is indicated, provide it in a specific and meaningful way.
33. After breaking music down and isolating and simplifying specific tasks, help students to synthesize the individual components into a total musical whole.
34. Remind students that their voice is a musical instrument like any other, that they can learn how to perform with it, and that they can acquire vocal technique that will improve it.
35. Compare singing with speech and work outward from that understanding. Explain the differences.
36. Connect work on vocal technique with its application in the songs being prepared for performance; carry the techniques into the music.
37. Review the vocal warm up procedures if students lapse in their concepts of technique and its application to the song you are rehearsing.
38. Constantly evaluate the progress of students in improving their vocal quality and offer solutions if problems are noted.
39. Explore the students' general concepts about the meaning of music and what it takes to communicate it.
40. Provide students with ample opportunities to practice translating the printed page into expressive sound.
41. Keep verbalization clear, brief, and highly focused.
42. Model the various expressive effects (negative and positive) when appropriate, and ask the students to imitate the desired model.
43. Consistently use a tonal reading system (solfege) to reinforce intervallic relationships.
44. Utilize hand signs and the concept of thinking pitches silently (audiation).
45. Provide enough practice time so that hand signs become automatic.
46. Adopt the approach, "sound before sight" and apply it to preparatory drills as well as performance preparation.

47. Teach the literature from the inside out, not the outside in.
48. Separate rhythm and pitch for sight reading drills, ear training drills and preparatory drills for specific songs to reduce cognitive overload and increase each student's ability to achieve mastery in learning and performing each song.
49. Clearly state the goals in both rhythmic and melodic reading so that your students know *what* you want them to do, *why* they need to do it and *how* they will benefit from doing it.
50. Devise innovative tonal pattern drills for teaching and reteaching tonal patterns; for example, alternating choir response with individual response, teacher-led drills with student-led drills, and written and sung responses.
51. Monitor students as they hand sign tonal patterns. Test students individually on tonal patterns; redrill tonal patterns as needed.
52. Involve the students in active *doing* and *experiencing* rhythm through moving, chanting and singing.
53. Keep students engaged by having them clap, tap and pat to the steady beat.
54. Ask students to echo rhythmic patterns, first created by the teacher, then by students. Invent rhythmic rounds in two and three parts.
55. Emphasize transfer by relating new rhythmic exercises to a previously studied concept.
56. Show the relationship between rhythmic exercises and the actual music being rehearsed. Help students to see how the exercises have direct application to their performance preparation.
57. Prepare rhythmic assignments of varied difficulty so that every student is challenged.
58. Use a rhythmic reading system to verbally encode rhythmic patterns. Begin with familiar patterns and transfer what students *hear* to what they *see*.
59. Evaluate students' ability to maintain the steady beat while responding to changes in tempo and dynamics.
60. Evaluate the students' ability to conduct, as a choir, as a section, and as individuals.
61. Reteach as necessary by reviewing rhythm patterns that cause difficulty.
62. Be prepared to demonstrate musical performance behaviors such as hand signs and solfege so that students have a clear model to follow.
63. Relate pitch learning to language learning.
64. Practice audiation (inner hearing) and relate it to mastering music reading.
65. Point out similarities between tonal patterns studied and tonal patterns in new pieces being learning.
66. Expect transfer.
67. Ensure that the skill and knowledge being acquired during the practice of exercises is experienced in a variety of different forms (different keys, for example), so that students recognize when to apply them in new situations.
68. Use credible sequences for learning to read pitch, i. e., audiation of pitches, sounding of tonal patterns, tonal patterns connected to hand signs, tonal patterns signed and sung from notation.
69. Involve students in hearing, singing and "feeling" harmony by singing triads, rounds, familiar songs with descants, ostinatos, or partner songs.
70. Pull chord progressions and cadences out of concert repertoire and use as preparation for rehearsing the song.
71. Relate the performance of chords and cadences in major and minor tonalities to music literature being studied.
72. Sustain newly experienced chords to provide students with a "sense" of harmony.
73. Continue to practice rhythm (with movement) and pitch (with hand signs) separately.
74. Gradually increase the difficulty of reading in parts, but continue to read rhythm and melody separately, as necessary.
75. Have students change parts so that they have the challenge of additional reading and *hearing*.
76. Monitor and correct, and evaluate progress of small groups as well as the entire choir.
77. Use recordings to facilitate assessment and students' self-evaluation of their emerging sight reading skills.
78. Limit the use of the piano to improve choral tuning and develop independence from reliance on an instrument.

MATERIALS

1. Remember the old adage, "You are what you eat." Truly, you are what you sing. Junk music equals garbage in, garbage out. Seek to program quality literature at every level; your students deserve it.
2. The repertoire you select must fit the needs of your students.
3. Choosing songs which are too easy produces boredom.
4. Choosing songs which are too difficult produces frustration.
5. Understand that you cannot rely solely on the advice of others, or select material because others have done those particular songs. Ultimately, you are the only person who can assess the needs and abilities of your students, and program accordingly.
6. Understand the technical level of your choir and choose music that is appropriately challenging.
7. Select music which accentuates your choir's strengths while providing the opportunity to improve their weaknesses.
8. Choose music on the basis of suitable voicing, range, difficulty, variety of musical styles and periods, and student interest.
9. Quality wins out every time. If a quality experience for you and your students is a goal, than the key to reaching it is quality literature.
10. There is beauty in simplicity; uncomplicated music provides optimum opportunities to perfect the literature and achieve a high level of musicianship.
11. Structure experiences and introduce complexity gradually. If you are programming a Renaissance piece in the spring, rehearse and perform a simpler one in the fall.
12. Utilize rounds, canons, partner songs to prepare students for more complex literature.

13. Select works that challenge but do not defeat, thereby building your choir's confidence.
14. The time you spend selecting appropriate literature will pay off as students become actively engaged and achieve success by meeting appropriate challenges for their level of skill and understanding.
15. If possible, plan proposed literature for the school year in the summer. Select several pieces within each category you'll need which represent a range of difficulty so you will have choices when you meet the students and begin to get a better idea of their strengths and weaknesses.
16. Prepare a detailed plan for teaching each song you have chosen.
17. Include preparatory melodic, rhythmic and harmonic exercises which can be introduced before the students receive the actual song.
18. Remember, there is no substitute for score study!
19. Provide the students with the tools they need to decode the score and fully utilize solfege, a rhythmic reading system and meaningful responses to expressive markings.
20. Supplement sight reading published materials with drills taken directly from songs about to be or being rehearsed.
21. Write sight reading drills encompassing both intervals and rhythmic patterns designed specifically to address weaknesses you have noted in a particular choir.
22. Consider the value of unison reading as opposed to reading in parts when selecting sight reading materials.
23. Constantly evaluate whether or not the literature and sight reading materials you have chosen are effectively keeping your students on a path to musical growth and understanding. If something isn't working, don't hesitate to exchange it for something else.
24. Look for the truest test of all: students eager to sight read and sing songs they have come to love!

MOTIVATION

1. Energize each class! Remember, students get their energy from YOU.
2. Integrate motivational strategies into the lesson.
3. Relate student experiences to the activity to increase interest and perception.
4. Stress the value or importance of an activity so that students see a purpose for learning that will enhance their efforts.
5. Acknowledge and communicate the challenge that extra effort will bring satisfactory completion of the task.
6. Avoid negative or demeaning comments.
7. Establish courtesy and respect.
8. Offer patience and encouragement to students who are having difficulty.
9. Make provision for consistent and specific praise and reinforcement.
10. Strive to maintain a positive rapport within the learning environment.
11. Encourage all students, from the most reluctant to the most enthusiastic.
12. Accept all student responses, whether correct or incorrect, with respect.
13. Capitalize on students' natural sense of competition in devising mini-performances by sections, or rows, or individuals, including rhythmic, melodic and sight reading drills as well as performing excerpts from the literature.
14. Seek to capture each student's imagination; make flexibility, spontaneity and responsiveness to unpredictable things students may say or do a part of your presentation.
15. Establish meaningful teacher-student relationships and make it clear that you are there to give them an opportunity to grow and develop as musicians; they are not there to serve the choral department.
16. Stay in touch with how students respond to each song you have selected, and make changes as needed.
17. Be sure students are fully aware that you acknowledge the value and importance of their opinions and responses.
18. Recognize the close relationship between classroom management and motivation of students; a well-organized physical setting, clear expectations and carefully planned instruction invites students to fully participate, for they see the opportunity for success.
19. Keep students on a steady path to improving skills and understanding by constantly evaluating their progress and reteaching as necessary. As students accomplish each new challenge, they will want to strive for further success. The key is to structure according to their abilities and needs.
20. Describe what motivates you as a means to understand what motivates students. Refer to this when making decisions about literature, materials, activities, concert preparation and performance.
21. Remember how being involved, realizing an adult cares about whether you learn and what you learn, being successful, feeling an important part of a group, receiving praise, learning something new, interacting with peers in a team setting, being recognized for an accomplishment, sharing experiences which are fun, laughing with classmates and teacher, working together to accomplish a goal can spark consistent, productive efforts throughout the school year.
22. Teach effectively, and the motivation will take care of itself.
23. Avoid wasting students' time and they are more likely not to waste yours.
24. Adopting shallow goals will produce temporary success; the more you appeal to higher level thinking skills, the more long-lasting the effort which produces enduring success and personal growth will be a part of each class.
25. Establish a classroom environment where students can come for respite from their personal trials and tribulations, where they can experience joy and laughter and accomplishment, and you will have succeeded in creating order in their chaotic worlds. And they will respond by working hard for you.

MARKETING

1. Remember, "What happens in the classroom does NOT stay in the classroom." Your students are the best source of information about your choral program. And they do talk, to friends, to parents, at church, in the neighborhood.
2. Realize that the first step in a successful marketing program is to have something to market. Accomplished, productive students who enjoy choir are your best marketing tool.
3. Create a positive image for your department by displaying activities (fun) and accomplishments (success) in every possible way; hall bulletin boards, website, district website, front office, facebook pages.
4. Take time to explore every avenue for recognizing individual achievement such as honor choir membership and solo medals.
5. Be a part of campus life; volunteer to host events, participate in orientation for incoming students, teach the alma mater, engage in a service activity.
6. Organize and produce an all-school talent show, a prime source for new recruits.
7. Increase visibility on campus and in the community through specially selected performances at regularly recurring events such as singing the national anthem at ballgames, performing for traditional celebrations, civic and service clubs.
8. Plan co-curricular events with other departments.
9. Broaden your circle of influence by seeking to perform for the entire student body of a feeder school, not just the students already involved in music.
10. Plan concerts and activities with feeder schools.
11. Network with colleagues to obtain ideas for appropriate activities with feeder schools.
12. Regularly seek recommendations from your current students for friends who might be interested in choir.
13. Invite these potential choir members to a concert or special activity.
14. Go to ball games!
15. Be sure your public concerts are well-publicized. More importantly, be sure your performances are well-prepared and well-presented. Success breeds success.
16. Be creative in using a portion of a public concert, or an in-school concert for selected classes to demonstrate each choir's sight reading skills.
17. Accept this truth: each student you teach is an ambassador for your choral department and its future well-being. Good teaching is the best marketing tool of all!

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

(DVD) Choral Conducting/Teaching: Real World Strategies for Success

Sandra Snow

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Schott Bradshaw Publications

Distributed by GIA Publications

140 minutes of 38 artistic, productive mini-rehearsal segments of mixed, women's and men's choirs at the high school and college levels. These segments model how to continually analyze and respond to the sounds being produced by an ensemble. The DVD includes full-color animated graphics to illustrate the recommended method of score study and marking as well as a helpful, step-by-step demonstration of the process of improving keyboard and perceptive listening skills. Dr. Snow's topics include:

- Unlocking Imagination in Teaching
- The Path to an Engaged Classroom
- Developing Diagnostic Rehearsal Strategies
- Capitalizing on Teachable Moments in Rehearsal
- Productive Score Study
- Planning Rehearsals Based on One's Individual Musical Interpretation
- Empowering a Student's Full Musical Potential

Co-Publisher/Producer

(Book) Have We Had This Conversation?

Lasting Words for Establishing Choral Excellence

John Yarrington

Schott Bradshaw Publications

Distributed by Lorenz

An amazingly practical, helpful and humorous book full of helpful information about rehearsal techniques, score study, gesture, communicating with singers, developing ensemble, collaboration and effectively expressing the text. Eight musical examples are included; each has score markings which lead singers to perform with a functional understanding of the stylistic period in which the song originated. Significant chapters include:

- The Conversation Begins with Text, an exploration of how the text guides all of our works
- The Conversation Continues with Careful Score Study
- Without Appropriate Gesture, the Conversation is Impaired

- Preparing the Ensemble for the Conversation--Build and nurture the voices--and persons--in your choir with purposeful and targeted warm ups

(DVD) Paul Salamunovich: Chant and Beyond

Quaid/Schott Media Productions

www.ChoralPerspectives.com

Houston, Texas

Distributed by QSMP and the Hal Leonard Corporation

Approaching two hours in length, the contents of this DVD include rehearsals with Allen Hightower's Sam Houston State University Chorale, the St. Charles Borromeo Choir, the Los Angeles church choir Salamunovich began conducting in 1949, and the St. Charles Borromeo Children's Choir.

Reviewer Dale Warland says, "*Chant and Beyond* offers a wonderful opportunity to meet one of America's most inspiring choral conductors, to sense his deep passion for choral music and to gain insights into his dynamic personality as well as his effective methods of rehearsing." In his review, John Rutter says, "This DVD provides a look behind the scenes from which we can learn what drives his quest for choral excellence and how he achieves it. At the heart of his vision of choral music lies the rich repertory of Gregorian chant. . .providing a true and solid foundation for good singing in a whole range of styles."

Candid, unscripted interview topics include:

- The Tonal Palette
- Singing is Acting
- Making the Tone Fit the Style
- Choral Pedagogy--*Lauridsen's Lux Aeterna*
- Choral Pedagogy--*Durufle's Requiem*

In collaboration with Eddie Quaid, produced and published the DVD.

(DVD) Weston Noble: Perpetual Inspiration

Quaid/Schott Media Productions

www.ChoralPerspectives.com

Houston, Texas

Distributed by QSMP and the Hal Leonard Corporation

Almost two hours in length, this DVD contains footage of the legendary Weston Noble rehearsing the Bay Area Chorus, an all-volunteer community chorus located in the Greater Houston area. Reviewer Craig Jessop says, "At long last the greater choral world can partake of the spiritual and musical genius of Weston Noble through this magnificent DVD. His remarkable personal style and charisma have been perfectly captured in rehearsal, performance and lecture, preserved for all to enjoy and relive time and time again." According to reviewer Craig Hella Johnson, "Those who see this DVD will be enriched by this heartwarming portrait." DVD extras feature extended interviews with Mr. Noble. Topics include:

- Professionals vs. Amateurs
- The Challenge of Discovery
- A Home for the Spirit
- Choral Pedagogy--Positioning Singers to Achieve Optimum Voice Matching
- Choral Pedagogy--All Music Must Dance

In collaboration with Eddie Quaid, produced and published the DVD.

Sight Reading Books published by AMC Publications, Houston, Texas (a division of Alliance Music Publications, Inc.)

Sing A Cappella! (SSA)

Ten Songs suitable for sight reading or concert. Appropriate for middle school or high school non-varsity ensembles.

Preparatory exercises for each song include key orientation, harmonic orientation, rhythmic, tonal, melodic and harmonic preparation and interval study.

In collaboration with composer Lou Williams-Wimberly.

Sing A Cappella! (TB/TBB)

Six Songs with TB and TBB versions of each song. Suitable for sight reading or concert.

Preparatory exercises organized by the keys of the songs feature key orientation, tonal preparation and intervals in treble and bass clef. Includes many helpful charts. Appropriate for middle school or high school non-varsity ensembles.

In collaboration with composer Lou Williams-Wimberly.

Sight-Singing Made Accessible Readable Teachable (SMART)

Founded on the premise that young singers tend to view each key as a separate "language," the book provides visual orientation and melodies to sight read in seven keys. Each of the two sections begins with the scale and outlines the tonic chord for that key, followed by a tonal drill. For each key, there are eight unison sight reading melodies plus a challenge melody.

In collaboration with composer Denise Eaton and with Janwin Overstreet-Goode.

Sight-Singing Made Accessible Readable Teachable MINOR

The minor version of the SMART book was written to hone the reading skills of advanced choirs and to provide preparatory materials for the rehearsal and performance of works in minor tonalities. Students are given the opportunity to become immersed in a key, facilitating their ability to audiate and sing at sight the steps of the natural, harmonic and melodic scales and commonly found intervals within each of these minor scales.

In collaboration with composer Denise Eaton.

The Foundation of Artistry:

An Annotated Bibliography of Distinctive Choral Literature for High School Mixed Choirs

Monograph No. 11, 2002

American Choral Directors Association

An annotated list of well-conceived compositions and arrangements for beginning and intermediate choirs. ACDA has now made Monograph 11 available online.

Co-Chair of the Music Selection Committee Chaired by ACDA National R & S Chair Janice Bradshaw.

Sing!

Hinshaw Music Textbook Division (pop)

Houston, Texas

Copyright 1988

A ground-breaking state-adopted choral text with vocal and choral techniques written by Doreen Rao. The sight reading sections prepared by Lois Land and Ruth Whitlock feature the principle of COMPONENTING. In this approach, rhythm and pitch are separated as knowledge and skills are developed in these distinct areas. The sequencing and alignment of skill building is designed to reduce cognitive overload and address the special needs of visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners. From the third step, reading melody, singing in harmony is the last component to be added. Preparation includes singing cadence patterns as preparation for singing in harmony. The practice of "SOUND BEFORE SIGHT" is utilized in the incorporation of extensive ear training/audiation materials.

Coordinator of the Writing Team

Conscience of a Profession: Howard Swan, Choral Director and Teacher

Hinshaw Music, Inc.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Copyright 1987

Informative and inspirational articles and lectures spanning the fifty years this influential choral director had a pervasive influence on the choral profession. Introduction by Robert Shaw. Includes a very functional ear training test for auditioning singers.

Sections include: CREDO: THE CHURCH MUSICIAN, THE CONDUCTOR, THE CHORAL PROFESSIONAL

Topics include:

Reflections of a Realistic Optimist, Johann Sebastian Bach--Humanitarian, Musician, Theologian

Style, Performance Practice and Choral Tone, Choral Tradition and the Choral Sound

The Interpretation and Performance of Classic and Romantic Choral Music

Steps to Choral Excellence: Choices, Compromises and Decisions

Editorial Advisor

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