Contents

Appendix B

Lesson Design

Many choral performance classrooms can be described as multi-leveled, requiring teachers to respond to students' various abilities and needs. The needs of a beginning student differ from the needs of an intermediate or advanced student. As a means of achieving meaningful results at all levels, each lesson is designed to guide the teacher and the learner through a series of sequenced learning events from the least complex (lower-level thinking skills for beginning students) to the more complex (higher-level thinking skills for the intermediate and advanced students). To facilitate this goal, the learning events are delineated by pinpointing learning objectives, assessment strategies, teaching strategies, teaching notes, and learning strategies.

Learning Objectives

Eisner (1985) lists three reasons for education objectives needing to be specified clearly: 1) to provide goals toward which the curriculum can be designed, 2) to facilitate the selection and organization of course content, and 3) to facilitate and focus the assessment of learning outcomes. The use of educational learning objectives has been a widely accepted pedagogical practice in the music classroom for some time (Abeles, Hoffer, and Klotman 1994; Anderson 1983; Boyle and Radocy 1987; Colwell 1970; Labuta 1974; Leonard and House 1959; Moore 1970; Ogdin 1980; and Whybrew 1962).

In *Movable Tonic*, Learning Objectives are constructed in succinct terms. Each objective uses a transitive verb to specify action. Each verb requires the student to demonstrate different behaviors that use different levels of thinking. Following the verb, a direct object answers the question what (Anderson and Krathwohl 2001; Bloom 1956; Kryspin and Feldhusen 1974).

By carefully monitoring individual success, the teacher is encouraged to choose those learning objectives that challenge students' abilities and levels of thinking. Given time and the appropriate sequential steps, every student can succeed. Students should be encouraged to master lower-level skills before attempting to demonstrate higher-level skills.

Assessment Strategies

Assessment Strategies begin with the stem "Have the student." A restatement of the learning objective's transitive verb and direct object follows the stem. An augmented form of the statement specifies *how* the student is expected to demonstrate mastery.

Music teachers can no longer avoid assessing student progress. Paul Lehman writes, "Like it or not, the idea that 'you can't test what I teach' is no longer defensible in today's educational climate" (1992, p. 61). Convinced that learning assessment provides indicators that suggest whether learning is taking place, advocates have been calling loudly for the use of a variety of assessment techniques to assess students on an individual basis in the music performance classroom. However, assessing individually takes time—something that is in short supply in a scheduled class (Anderson 1983; Glidden and Shannon 1988; and McClung 1996). As a result, the learning assessments of many music performance teachers consist of only a series of informal and subjective estimates of acquired performance skills. In so many music performance classrooms, where the primary value is public performance, the product comes only by neglecting the process (Norris 2004; Saunders 1995). However, research suggests that the time taken to assess individual learning may enhance and reinforce those individual skills that result in a group's improved performance as a whole (Culbert 1974; Hedberg 1975; Killian and Henry 2005; McClung 2000; Nolker 2001; and Whitlock 1981).

One example of a study specific to the individual assessment of sight-singing skills was conducted by Steven Demorest (1998). In this study, Demorest wanted to determine the effect of individual testing, in conjunction with group instruction, on students' sight-singing skills. Participants included 306 members from six high school choirs. The results indicated that sight-singing skills improved for those students who received individual sight-singing assessments.

These findings could be interpreted to suggest that a performance group is capable of learning music faster when sight-singing skills improve at the individual level. Additionally, the findings could suggest student accountability for note accuracy is increased when sight-singing skills improve at the individual level. Individual testing offers teachers and students the opportunity to discover specific strengths and weaknesses, resulting in the organization of learning and thinking in meaningful and powerful ways.

Because there are a variety of approaches to learning and thinking, learning assessment, like learning objectives, should be multidimensional. A variety of assessment formats provides educators with a multidimensional approach to use with a full range of learning levels, learning styles, multiple intelligences, and psychological types (Ester 1994; Hibbard 1994; Brandt 1990; Spoto 1989; and Gardner 1983). However, there are practical concerns when conducting individual multidimensional assessment in large performance groups.

Individualizing multidimensional assessment in large performing groups can generate a daunting amount of paperwork even for the most organized teacher. In such cases, it is important for the teacher to devise thoughtful management techniques. Consider the possibilities outlined in the section Learning Assessment Management Techniques.

Teaching Strategies

The Teaching Strategies in each lesson offer a variety of instructional techniques to facilitate the teaching of the Learning Objectives and to assist with the student preparation for individual and group learning assessments. When appropriate, the Teaching Strategies include opportunities for students to experience different learning styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, or mixed (a combination of two or all three).

Notes for the Teacher

Field testing of this textbook was done over a six-year period. I developed the Notes for the Teacher in response to questions and pedagogical practices observed by preservice and in-service teachers during a series of sight-singing classes and sight-singing pedagogy workshops.

Notes for the Student

Notes for the Student encourage students by offering useful hints on how to organize leaning events in meaningful ways.

Learning Assessment Management Techniques

- Plan, limit, and pinpoint the number and type of formal individual assessments. Create an overall year plan, and break that plan down into specific grading periods. As K. H. Phillips (1984) suggests, learning should be structured in small steps. The results will add up as students become independent learners.
- Allow students to practice sample test items through guided group work. Formative testing provides immediate feedback for the student and the teacher.
- Construct simple, concise tests 5–10 minutes in length. When constructed thoughtfully, brief assessments can offer the student an adequate opportunity to demonstrate mastery of a specific skill. Keep a test bank with exchangeable test items.
- Remember that increased speed increases the difficulty when designing an assessment for multi-level groups. Given the same test, an advanced student should be able to demonstrate mastery in less time than a beginning student.
- For larger groups, facilitate the recording of written assessment grades by collecting student papers in grade-book order.

- Invite and encourage students who have demonstrated mastery on a specific objective to tutor students who require individual attention (Inzenga 1999).
- Allow students to retake tests until they have reached an acceptable level of competency. Offering every student reasonable opportunities to demonstrate mastery should be a classroom goal. When confronted with appropriately sequenced lessons, practice, and thoughtful, challenging assessments, every student in a music performance group should achieve an A. High levels of individual achievement can be a very good thing for the musical achievements of a performance group.
- Establish an audio recording station for performance-based tests that require individual assessment.
- Invite academic, arts, and athletic colleagues; parents with musical backgrounds; or advanced students to monitor and facilitate the audio recording station. Consider the benefits of periodically inviting a school administrator to monitor the audio recording station.
- Investigate computer software that enhances the teacher's ability to manage and compute summative grades.

Appendix A

General Design of Movable Tonic

Movable Tonic is designed to accommodate teachers and students at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced stages of their sight-singing development. It is constructed with a movable-tonic notation system using solfège syllables and a traditional beat-based counting system using subdivided rhythm numbers (1 e & a, 2 e & a, 3 e & a, 4 e & a). *Movable Tonic*'s design helps the teacher manage the pedagogical challenges in sight-singing by guiding the teacher and the student through an array of sequential teaching and learning events. Each lesson requires the student to master sequenced learning events that reinforce the teaching and learning of performance classroom choral literature.

Unit Design

Unit I: Establishing Tonal Relationships

Unit I creates a sight-singing foundation by showing the teacher and student how to establish fundamental pitch relationships and to decode notational pitch symbols. Echo-singing on movable solfège syllables (*do–re–mi–fa–so–la–ti–do)* uses an aural stimulus to prompt external responses and to establish pitch relationships. Audiation skills are introduced internalize those relationships. The internalization of these pitch relationships is developed through audiation skills. Visual stimuli (written syllables, Curwen hand signs, and modified music staff notation) are added to prompt external and internal responses. *Mastery of this pitch foundation requires skills that will be called on again and again*.

Unit II: Combining Duration and Pitch

The skills required to decode pitch notation are different from the skills required to decode duration symbols (rhythmic notation). Students are introduced to duration symbols through echoed sound patterns. Traditional beat-based rhythm numbers are used to describe and label durational values and metrical beat locations. Higher level skills include practiced performances, sight-singing presentations, compositions, and dictation. Rhythm numbers are *tools* that provide an effective and specific means to express measured time, a fundamental element in artistic rhythmic integrity.

Robert Shaw was probably the most renowned proponent of using traditional beat-based rhythm numbers as a means of achieving rhythmic integrity. To promote synchronized clarity of the group pulse and beat subdivisions, his choirs would rehearse and prepare entire major works by *count-singing* with rhythm numbers. Modern rhythmic notation uses symbols that represent durational time as unchanging mathematical ratios. In common time, a whole note equals two half notes, two half notes equal four quarter notes, four quarter notes equal eight eighth notes, and so on. Although the ratios of the duration symbols are unchanging, music's emotional aspects are ever changing. Beyond robotic proficiency, students should to be made aware of the shifts in emotional quality, of the weight and direction of each duration symbol, and the subtle nature of music's potential for ebb and flow.

Can young students cognitively decode duration symbols and effectively perform rhythmic notation using a beat-based counting system and rhythm numbers? The answer is: yes, when the information is presented in a thoughtful, logical, and sequential manner.

Although other rhythm systems can be used to teach rhythm effectively, none of the available rhythm systems is without flaws. I have witnessed other rhythm systems produce meaningful results, especially with elementary students performing simple rhythmic patterns; however, the effectiveness of these systems diminishes as rhythms become increasingly complex. Because of the unchanging mathematical ratios, the traditional beat-based rhythm number system provides beginning and advanced students with a means to decode and perform an inexhaustible number of rhythmic possibilities.

Unit II is designed to develop and unite rhythm-reading skills with the pitch-reading skills learned in Unit I. *Based on a need to enhance and reinforce classroom literature preparations as well as the differences between classrooms, a teacher may find it preferable to alternate certain lessons in Unit II with certain lessons in Unit III.*

Skills are reinforced and enhanced when sight-singing lessons are embedded into the techniques used to prepare the choral literature. Because of the cause-and-effect relationship between the literature and the development of sight-singing skills, choral literature should be carefully chosen. Literature selections should reflect the students' music-reading abilities at easy, intermediate, and advanced levels. When students experience musical growth and success, the connection between the sight-singing objectives and the sight-singing outcomes becomes as obvious to the students as it is to the teacher.

Unit III: Developing Musical Independence—Part I

The lessons in Unit III are designed to develop the student's musical independence. If applicable to the classroom situation, the sequenced rhythm-reading lessons in Unit II could be taught concurrently with the lessons in Unit III. For every musical concept, there is an appropriate time to teach for deep learning and an appropriate time to teach for surface learning.

The annual phenomenon of spring cleaning may serve as an analogy to explain the perceived difference. During the year we surface clean. We go about our daily and weekly rituals of vacuuming, dusting, doing laundry, and washing the dishes. Once a year, frequently in the spring, when the weather warms, a deep cleaning takes place. Winter clothes are stored, windows are cleaned inside and out, hardwood floors are waxed, blinds are washed, carpets are shampooed, cabinets are rearranged, yards are fertilized, and gardens are planted. In that there is a time for deep cleaning, there is an appropriate time for deep learning, and in that there is a time for surface cleaning, there is an appropriate time for surface learning.

Surface learning is a necessary and justifiable means of delaying deep learning experiences until an appropriate time when prerequisite skills are mastered. Consider the variety of musical concepts inherent in a simple melody. A simple melody would have a music staff and at least one clef; it would have a variety of musical pitches and rhythmic symbols, a time signature, a key signature, and probably some suggested music markings. Additionally, this melody would imply musical concepts, including vocal production, tone considerations, dynamic concerns, phrase development, appropriate use of vowels and consonants, rhythmic precision and vitality, and concern for style, form, and more. Attempts to teach every musical concept prior to making music would be an exercise in futility.

To keep the music-learning process moving, a brief explanation and a few minutes of rote instruction can offer an effective and efficient solution. The deep learning of selected musical concepts should be delayed or postponed until the appropriate time, and the appropriate time for a singer versus an instrumentalist to experience deep learning events can be profoundly different.

Most music educators would agree that all music students should learn the letter names of the grand staff's lines and spaces and the function and names of key signatures, but deep learning of that information should happen when there is an applicable need. The singer and the instrumentalist require different time sequences for the presentation of certain information. To apply appropriate fingerings, instrumentalists learn letter names and key signatures early in the music-making process. When limited to diatonic melodies, a singer can progress to a respectable sight-singing level without knowing letter names or the intricacies of key signatures. It is important to acknowledge

that the learning sequence for an instrumentalist is different than that needed to sight-sing (Miller 1980).

Unit IV: Developing Musical Independence—Part II

Success in Unit IV is based on mastery of Units I–III. The student who has demonstrated an acceptable level of individual mastery in Units I–III will have developed a meaningful music vocabulary and a basic foundation for sight-singing concepts. Unit IV is designed to broaden and refine the student's reading skills and overall musical understanding. The teacher may choose to teach these lessons in the group setting or allow these advanced students to master the sequence of lessons independently.