

NYSSMA MUSIC VIEWS

Standards-Based Teaching & Learning Across the State



Lesson Plan for NYSSMA Music Views

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Title: Elementary Chorus Rehearsal - A Sound Approach

Level

- Elementary
- Middle School
- High School

Content Area

- Band
- Chorus
- Classroom
- Orchestra

Objective

The objective of this chorus rehearsal is to promote excellent singing through quality literature, in a setting where students can offer feedback and contribute ideas for improvement, in preparation for the NYSSMA Major Organization Evaluation Festival.

The NYS Learning Standard(s) this lesson will address...

- Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts
- Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources
- Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art
- Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts

National Standards for Music Education this lesson...

- Singing – alone and with others – a varied repertoire of music
- Performing on instruments – alone and with others – a varied repertoire of music
- Improvising melodies, variations and accompaniments
- Composing and arranging music within specific guidelines
- Reading and notating music
- Listening to, analyzing and describing music
- Evaluating music and music performances
- Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts
- Understanding music in relation to history and culture

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Instructional Ideas

This lesson focused on the use of visual aides and manipulatives to reinforce quality singing and enhance student connectivity. Topics in a typical choral rehearsal include tone, intonation, blend and balance, technique, accuracy/execution, diction/pronunciation, interpretation, and influencing factors including discipline and appearance. The implementation of visual aides and toys assists with reinforcing these fundamentals.

1. I use a squeaky hammer as an excellent visual for ending consonant sounds clearly together. Great for words that end in "T," "D," and "S."
2. I use a spool of ribbon to visualize phrasing. Slowly pull the ribbon from the spool when the musical phrase begins. At the conclusion of the phrase, drop the ribbon, visually demonstrating to your chorus where they may correctly breathe.
3. I use a Hoberman Sphere to assist with dynamics. Opening the sphere for crescendo and closing for diminuendo.
4. I use a tennis ball with a slice in it to represent a human mouth. This helps with vowel formation and reinforces, "Opening your mouth, North and South."

Assessment

The students are empowered as self-evaluators by listening to the performance and discussing what they did well and what they can do to improve. Several posters are spread out throughout the classroom containing the song titles. Students are called on to make objective decisions as to the placement of the poster in the room based on each song's preparedness (the goal being to get the poster to the "finish line.")

Students are also called on to sing by themselves, where other students can critique their performance in a non-threatening, supportive, yet objective manner. Student evaluation must always contain something that the students did well and something the student can do to improve.

If the students truly understand the goals, they will have a better comprehension of what needs to be accomplished as well as of the results the teacher is looking. They will become improved evaluators, thus further developing their growth and development as singers and artists.

References/Resources

1. "Lee Gwozdz Presents: Singing FUNdamentals Toy Box and Handbook" – Lee Gwozdz – World Library Publications 2001 – West Music Catalog Number: TOGW7186
2. "Lee Gwozdz Presents: Singing FUNdamentals Toys That Teach" – DVD – Lee Gwozdz – World Library Publications 2005 – West Music Catalog Number: DVGW7189
3. "Good Rules for Singing!" – DeAnna Venable – Singing Is Fun 1995 – Music In Motion Catalog Number: 2163
4. "We Will Sing – Choral Music Experience for Classroom Choirs" – Doreen Rao – Boosey & Hawkes Inc., 1993 – J.W. Pepper Number: 3093671
5. "Manx Lullaby" – Manx Folk Song – Arranged by Lori-Anne Dolloff – Boosey & Hawkes – J.W. Pepper Number: 3092160
6. "Fairest Lady" – Nick Page – Boosey & Hawkes – J.W. Pepper Number: 3244092
7. "Oh, How My Heart Sings!" – Barbara Wolfman – Boosey & Hawkes – J.W. Pepper Number: 3154390
8. "Medieval Gloria" - Vijay Singh - Alfred Publishing - J.W. Pepper Number: 3024577

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9. "Eamonn An Chnoic" - Lori-Anne Dolloff – Boosey & Hawkes – J.W. Pepper Number: 3297401
10. "Didn't It Rain" - Emily Crocker - Hal Leonard Publishing Corp. - J.W. Pepper Number: 1972132
11. "The Star-Spangled Banner" – Words: Frances Scott Key, Music: attr. John Stafford Smith, Arranged by Jill Gallina – "All-American Sing-Along Songs" – Shawnee Press, Inc. 2001 – J.W. Pepper Number: 3294426
12. MENC National Standards For Music Education - <http://www.menc.org/publication/books/standards.htm>

Notes

1. Students learn 15% of what they hear, 85% of what they see and they learn 100% of what they feel and experience. ("Tell me, I forget. Show me, I remember. Involve me, I understand." – Confucius)
2. Empower the children – Let the students conduct, and let them use the toys to reinforce concepts. Children learn from experiencing!
3. Singing is fun! Make it the most fun experience possible for your students. Your best teachers in school were those who made learning fun.
4. Select good repertoire. Use the NYSSMA manual as a resource guide. Don't be afraid to try difficult selections. Mix up the light-hearted and fun music with solid, serious repertoire. Children are the most observant people on the planet. They truly know the difference between "good" music and "bad" music. Look into music from Doreen Rao's "Choral Music Experience," also, anything from the Henry Leck series, Ruth Dwyer, Mary Goetze, John Rutter, André Thomas, Nick Page, Rollo Dilworth, Janet Galvan, etc.
5. Be honest with the students. The students know when they sound good and they know when they don't. Boost their confidence by praising their accomplishments and use positive reinforcement. Children like to hear when they did a good job. Also, point out their errors by asking questions. Don't tell them what they did incorrectly; ASK them what they can do to make it better. Children want to correct any mistakes, and, if you earn their respect, they will want to work for you and make you proud to be their chorus teacher.