

places the most animated singers toward the middle of the choir where they are more visible to the audience.⁶

- **Imagery:** The use of imagery or visualization is a powerful tool in the choral rehearsal. This technique is most effective when connecting the music and movement to the emotional context of the song. Also, student discussion of texts of songs can evoke vastly-improved, committed singing.

Conclusion

The initial incorporation of movement exercises may be met with resistance from students. It is important to explain to students the effect movement can have on an audience. This will encourage both the enthusiastic and reluctant singer. Keep in mind the suppression of a performer's visual expressiveness opposes the body's natural reaction to music. From infancy, children naturally respond to music with movement. Their bodies are compelled to move with the beat.⁷ A student might appear reluctant, but she or he may be simply shy or insecure.

The effect movement has on an audience is profound, but at the heart of the matter is a question of passion. As choir directors, are we encouraging students to openly express the music through movement or suppress it through strict posture guidelines? If we expect music to move our audiences emotionally, the performers must convey the passion of the music and the meaning of texts through nonverbal expression.

NOTES

¹ Jay Juchniewicz, "The Influence of Physical Movement on the Perception of Musical Performance," *Psychology of Music* 36, no. 4 (2008): 417–27.

² Sabine Horstmann, *Choral Vocal Technique* (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2013).

³ Frauke Haasemann and James Jordan, *Group Vocal Technique* (Chapel Hill, NC: Hinshaw Music, 1991).

⁴ Sabine Horstmann, "Group Vocal Technique" (lecture, Westminster Conducting Institute, Princeton, NJ, June, 2016).

⁵ Archibeque, Charlene. "Quick Fixes for Common Choral Ailments." Lecture at the Texas Music Educators Association, San Antonio, TX, February 10, 2017.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Patricia Campbell and Carol Scott-Kassner, *Music in Childhood: From Preschool through the Elementary Grades* (Belmont, CA: Thomson Schirmer, 2006), 121.

Bibliography

Archibeque, Charlene. "Quick Fixes for Common Choral Ailments." Lecture at the Texas Music Educators Association, San Antonio, TX, February 10, 2017.

Campbell, Patricia, and Carol Scott-Kassner. *Music in Childhood: From Preschool Through the Elementary Grades*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Schirmer, 2006.

Haasemann, Frauke, and James Jordan. *Group Vocal Technique*. Chapel Hill, NC: Hinshaw Music, 1991.

Horstmann, Sabine. *Choral Vocal Technique*. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2013.

Horstmann, Sabine. "Group Vocal Technique." Lecture at the Westminster Conducting Institute, Princeton, NJ, June, 2016.

Juchniewicz, Jay. "The Influence of Physical Movement on the Perception of Musical Performance." *Psychology of Music* 36, no. 4 (2008): 417–27.

Moving Toward More Progressive Choral Music Teacher Education Programs

Jeffrey A. Murdock
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, Arkansas

(Used with permission of the author)

Over the years, teacher education programs (TEPs) at institutions of higher learning have sought to create undergraduate curricula to prepare pre-service teachers for their work in the field. As the landscape of education changes frequently due to new educational initiatives, increasingly diverse student populations, lack of funding for music programs, it is paramount that TEPs adapt to the changing times. Choral music education programs are no different.

Given the peculiarities of the profession of choral music, the additional skills necessary to teach music and the duties

of ensemble directors that extend beyond the classroom, it is incumbent upon choral music education programs to ensure the best-possible preparation of all pre-service teachers. Based on the findings of the author's earlier research, universities and colleges are fairly consistent with most of their undergraduate music education course offerings; however, many choral music education degree programs lack opportunities for training in areas that are necessary to be effective music educators in the twenty-first century.¹

Technical Skills

In the mid-nineteenth century, greater emphasis was placed on music teachers' piano skills. During that time, the lack of piano proficiency was considered a major deterring factor for music teachers in all areas.² Studies of middle school choral directors have also implied that the ability to use the piano effectively is helpful in assisting weaker singers with note learning and accuracy.³

Music professionals agree that pre-service music educators should possess the skills of sight-reading, harmonizing melodies, and improvising for accompaniment purposes and that these skills could be easily taught in a class piano setting.⁴ Additionally, good piano skills have traditionally been a requirement for jobs in the music field. Regardless of the type of ensemble, music teachers inevitably find themselves dependent upon their piano skills either to become familiar with new repertoire or for use in classroom teaching.⁵

Barresi generally supports this concept, but like many choral directors, considers it folly for choral conductors to rely too heavily on the piano in rehearsal, as younger singers quickly become dependent on the piano. "The effective teacher must also know when to encourage a cappella singing as a means of strengthening tone quality, musicality, and independence."⁶

While most choral musicians would likely agree that choral music educators must exhibit mastery in the area of conducting, the reality is that many choral music educators leave conducting programs in colleges without a true sense of what choral conducting actually encompasses. Most choral conducting courses focus upon gesture, beating time, and expressivity. Many programs even delve into types of communication and rehearsal structure and pacing. These courses often involve the apprentice conductor working with his or her peers within that particular class setting.

Based upon my research, few programs offer students opportunities to practice what they have learned in a realistic scenario. While an undergraduate would love for his or her

first choral job to be the primary choir director at a well-established school that has a history of choral excellence and students clamoring to participate, the harsh reality is that most undergraduate students will find themselves in situations that look quite the opposite. For these reasons, and myriad others, I believe that a conducting lab choir mandate for undergraduates would prove extremely helpful. One reason this is important is that students must find their own "choral director personality."

Research has shown that the personality of the conductor is a pivotal factor in the effectiveness of that conductor and the success of his or her choral program. Further, the ways of communicating to an ensemble during rehearsal, responding to unsatisfactory singing and overall synergy of the conductor and choir through the conducting gesture are skills that are innate for many choral conductors but must be taught to the vast majority.⁷

A conducting lab provides an opportunity in which undergraduate students are allowed to teach and learn in a realistic setting. This could be accomplished by taking a non-auditioned choir (the y'all-come choir, as it is jokingly called at many institutions) that serves students of varying skill levels and require all conducting students to take that particular choir as a "lab" concurrently with a choral conducting course.

Each student conductor chooses or is assigned a work to rehearse with the ensemble and is also given the musical freedom to prepare the work as he or she wishes under the supervision of the conducting professor or conducting graduate student. Such a model becomes a benefit to:

- 1) The ensemble by enhancing the quality of the group and boosting the numbers
- 2) The undergraduate choral music education major by creating real-life experiences that cannot be created in a conducting class alone
- 3) The choral conducting professor who now has the luxury of choosing when to give up precious podium time with his auditioned ensembles since there is no longer a need for doing so.

At many universities, student teaching and other such practica offer the most valuable experiences for pre-service music educators. I believe that this practice is helpful in many ways but harmful in others.

Student teaching, along with practicum opportunities that are typically offered as part of various methods courses,

usually involves the pre-service teacher providing instruction within higher quality programs with established master teachers as supervisors. In this environment, the circumstances are ideal for the success of the student teacher which falsely leads the student teacher to believe that his or her experience is the norm and not the exception. This is precisely why an understanding of the many situations in which teachers work might be encouraged.

Sociological Skills

Teachers in urban public settings and rural schools contend with many challenges such as lower achievement rates, higher rates of absenteeism, and more instances of disruptive behavior. Additionally, there is historically a lack of parental participation in student education and extracurricular activities excluding sports.⁸

These factors negatively impact teacher morale and student achievement and behavior. Pre-service teachers rarely consider the possibility that they may be required to teach choir in a room that is not conducive to choral singing, a room with no piano, or no room at all. They may work as a “floating” teacher who moves from room to room to accommodate overcrowded schools. In many cases, pre-service teachers do not consider the fact that they may find themselves teaching in a high school choral program where there is no feeder, music literacy is non-existent, and where administrators care very little about the arts, treating music programs with blatant disrespect and indifference.

Bowers suggests that teachers in urban areas must possess the wherewithal and desire to commit to continuous learning and service within the community they serve, particularly because the needs of the students and the community reach beyond the classroom.⁹ An example of this would be to introduce pre-service teachers to urban environments, training them within urban communities through guided mentorships, and hands-on teaching experience. The author agrees and would submit that urban schools are not the only less-than-ideal environment that students and teachers should be able to navigate. Similar problems exist in rural areas, in charter schools, and in areas of high cultural diversity.

In addition to the surface-level constraints that are unfortunately becoming all too common in many secondary choral programs (i.e., lack of funding, lack of parental support, lack of administrative support for music, etc.), there are many other problems that go unnoticed and unaddressed. For example, how does an educator handle the discipline problems from a

child who arrives at school hungry or the student who cannot pay his or her choir fee because \$25 is the difference between a utility bill being paid or not?

Do teacher education programs prepare prospective teachers for the possibility of presenting a concert where less than 5 percent of parents show up? Are music teachers taught the ways in which racial minorities have little or no relationship to western choral music? Are we as music educators taught to be sensitive to gender inequalities and varied sexual preferences? How do choral directors in “ideal” teaching situations advocate for the use of sacred music in the curriculum and remain sensitive to the diversity of faiths within their programs? Due to these issues and other problems unique to particular school settings, it is important for pre-service teachers to understand and empathize with their students. Courses dealing with racial and social inequality and sociology in education should help with this challenge. Courses that teach the implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy would also prove helpful.

Other Courses

As opposed to the typical biology courses offered, a choral education student may consider taking an anatomy and physiology course. While the anatomy and physiology of the voice are ideally covered in a vocal pedagogy class, an anatomy course could also serve to reinforce that knowledge and build greater understanding of the body, how it works, how to keep it healthy, and how our bodies work to produce sound since the body, from the perspective of singers, is an instrument. In the process, students would be fulfilling the science requirement mandated by many universities.

As ensemble conductors (band, choir, and orchestra), we tend to spend far more time with students than teachers from other disciplines. With rehearsals, performances, trips, tours, and the level of teamwork required to produce a quality musical product, it is natural for ensembles to morph into a familial place with the conductor-teacher becoming a parental figure.

Often, ensemble directors are the first line of defense when students are dealing with issues at home, domestic abuse, teen pregnancy, matters of sexual identity, and a plethora of other concerns. For these reasons, courses in counseling could prove beneficial to the pre-service teacher. For example, a large southern urban university offers the following course, COUN 4621—Human Interactions, for three credits. The course description states: “Human relations exercises and other personal experiences related to effective learning climates.

Includes communication skills for working in groups, one-to-one relationships, and identification and referral of persons to appropriate resources.”

A course similar to this one could be helpful for teachers needing to learn how to navigate the issues that may arise in a school. Teachers need to know what resources are available when a situation is beyond the teacher’s purview.

Finally, in a world where lawsuits abound, teacher unions are ineffective, and evaluations are sometimes less than fair, it is important for teachers to know the law. A law class such as “Educational Law” could be valuable to a pre-service teacher if that class taught the history of education from a legal perspective, citing cases that have significantly impacted the field. Such a class would, hopefully, also address topics such as teacher responsibility, what to do if wrongfully terminated, due process, and the rights of teachers.

Based on ten years of experience as a secondary choral educator, I have created a course of study for choral music educators of the twenty-first century. I also believe that while such a program of study may not alleviate all the ills plaguing new and inexperienced teachers, it offers pre-service choral teachers a good chance for success, teaching them musicianship and vital music skills, sociological and cultural awareness, classroom teaching practices, and the law as it pertains to education. The suggested course of study for Millennium University (a fictitious name, obviously) follows:

Bachelor of Choral Music Education – 120 credits*

(*120 credit hours assumes piano proficiency requirement is met upon acceptance into the music program.)

Major Ensemble – 8 credits

Music Education Students are required to register for one choral ensemble (1 hour) each semester except during the student teaching semester.

*If a student is a recipient of a scholarship, he or she must also participate in Masterworks Chorus (1 hour) each semester. These credit hours fulfill scholarship requirements but are not counted toward degree fulfillment.

Applied Voice – 24 credits

Minimum of three credits each semester until satisfactory completion of senior recital. Student will perform for a jury

presentation at the end of each semester.

Piano Class/Piano Proficiency – not to exceed 4 credits

All choral music education students will be required to register for class piano until the piano proficiency is passed (only two semesters of study will count toward the degree). Students may continue to register for piano class to ensure a passing grade on the proficiency exam. If a student has not fulfilled the piano proficiency requirement at the end of the 4th semester of study, he or she will be subject to departmental review and possible removal from the choral music education program.

Music Core – 21 credits

Intro to Music Theory I (1 hour.) - Ideally an 8-week course taken in the first semester at the college

Music Theory I (2 hours) - Ideally an 8-10 week course taken after Intro to Music Theory has been completed.

Music Theory II (3 hours)

Music Theory III – Form and Analysis (3 hours)

Music Theory IV – 20th/21st Century or theory elective (3 hours)

Music History I (3 hours)

Music History II (3 hours)

History of Choral Music (3 hours)

*A grade of C or better is required in all music theory and music history classes in order to proceed to the next level. The levels are not independent. Each level is a prerequisite for the next. (The classes may not be taken out of sequence).

Music Education Courses – 21 credits

Intro to Music Education (3 hours)

Elementary and General Music Methods (3 hours.)

Music Education Practicum (3 hours)

Vocal Pedagogy (3 hours)

Choral Literature (3 hours)

Choral Conducting/w lab (3 hours)

Choral Music Methods (3 hours)

*Studio class is required in the fall and spring semesters of the first two years. – 0 hours

School Of Education Courses – 21 credits

Introduction to Exceptional Children (3 hours)

Educational Psychology (3 hours)

Tests and Measurements (3 hours)

Education Law (3 hours)

Student Teaching (9 hours)

General Education Courses – 21 credits

English/Speech (6 hours)

English Composition (3 hours or competency exam)

Oral Communication (3 hours)

Science and Mathematics (6 hours)

Anatomy and Physiology (3 hours)

College Algebra or Calculus (3 hours)

Social and Behavioral Sciences (9 hours)

Racial and Social Issues (3 hours)

Sociology in Education (3 hours)

Counseling (3 hours)

Human Interaction (3 hours)

NOTES

¹ Jeffrey A. Murdock, Jr., *Where Preference Meets Praxis: Exploring the Choral Music Preference of Urban High School Students and their Teachers*, PhD diss., University of Memphis, 2015.

² Gillian Buchanan, “Skills of Piano Performance in the Preparation of Music Educators,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 12, no. 2 (1964): 134, doi:10.2307/3343653.

³ A. L. Barresi, “The Successful Middle School Choral Teacher,” *Music Educators Journal* 86, no. 4 (2000): 23-28.

⁴ Steven L. Betts and Jane W. Cassidy, “Development of Harmonization and Sight-Reading Skills among University Class Piano Students,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 48, no. 2 (2000): 151-161.

⁵ Buchanan, “Skills of Piano Performance in the Preparation of Music Educators.”

⁶ Barresi, “The Successful Middle School Choral Teacher” 23.

⁷ C. L. Gonzo, “Metaphoric Behavior in Choral Conducting,” *Choral Journal* 17, no. 2 (1977): 8-12.

⁸ Bowers, Rebecca S. “A Pedagogy of Success: Meeting the Challenges of Urban Middle Schools.” *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas* 73, no. 4 (2000): 235-38.

⁹ Rebecca S. Bowers, “A Pedagogy of Success: Meeting the Challenges of Urban Middle Schools,” *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas* 73, no. 4 (2000): 235-238.

Bibliography

Barresi, A. L. “The Successful Middle School Choral Teacher.” *Music Educators Journal* 86, no. 4 (2000): 23-28.

Betts, Steven L., and Jane W. Cassidy. “Development of Harmonization and Sight-Reading Skills among University Class Piano Students.” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 48, no. 2 (2000): 151-61.

Bowers, Rebecca S. “A Pedagogy of Success: Meeting the Challenges of Urban Middle Schools.” *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas* 73, no. 4 (2000): 235-38.

Buchanan, Gillian. "Skills of Piano Performance in the Preparation of Music Educators." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 12, no. 2 (1964): 134.

Gonzo, C. L. "Metaphoric Behavior in Choral Conducting." *Choral Journal* 17, no. 2 (1977): 8-12.

Murdock, Jeffrey A., Jr. *Where Preference Meets Praxis: Exploring the Choral Music Preference of Urban High School Students and their Teachers*. PhD diss., University of Memphis, 2015.

Considering Choral Competition: Perspectives on Motivation

David W. Langley, Georgia Southern University
Shannon Jeffreys, Georgia Southern University
Savannah and Statesboro, Georgia

(Used with permission of the authors)

The singers nervously walk single file into the empty, cold concert hall. As they turn to the audience from their places on the risers, they see that instead of seats filled with enthusiastic supporters, there are a few people scattered about the back rows. Near the front, seated prominently at three tables, are the adjudicators.

These three strangers have the power to shape the memory of this experience for each singer. One choir member recalls the rehearsals preparing for this moment, how the director insisted upon making sure that the crescendo started on beat 2, not beat 3, since that was what was written in the score. Instead of relaxing and enjoying the moment, she could only focus on singing that crescendo with technical accuracy. Even after the performance was finished, that singer would not know how she felt about the experience until she saw the score given by each judge. Everything hinged on that particular number.

To many directors, this is a common image. Adjudicated performances, whether at competitions or local festivals, can be a stressful time for all involved. All too often, the director's emphasis is placed on a ranking with little thought about the musical experience of the moment or what each performer might learn from that experience. This particular philosophy has driven many directors to avoid adjudicated opportunities altogether. Other individuals in the field seem to be driven by

competition. They claim that it brings about motivation that pushes ensembles to achieve their very best. What about the singers in these choirs? Are they as motivated as their director? If such competitions are to have a place in the concert cycle of a choir, how can we make them a positive experience for all involved?

The authors do not intend to prescribe what a choral teacher-director should and should not do. Instead, we hope to bring to light different viewpoints about choral competition to help directors make the best decisions regarding their choirs. The experts who were interviewed for this article did not present a unified position. As you will note, all three experts find both beneficial and negative aspects of attending adjudicated choral festivals and competitions. The difference in their attitudes toward an adjudicated festival (or contest) lies in their motivation for participation. This has led them to different conclusions. Our hope is that the ideas presented here will help directors refine their philosophy concerning choral competition.

Phillip Copeland of Samford University continues a tradition of competition based on his experiences as an undergraduate student singing with Jerry Jordan at the University of Mississippi. Jo-Michel Scheibe has served as an adjudicator for international competitions, but he has chosen not to compete with his choirs from the University of Southern California. Kent Hatteburg, choral director at the University of Louisville, is a frequent competitor whose choir is currently ranked third in the world by Interkultur Choral Competitions.

For some choral directors, adjudication is not a choice but a requirement. While the three people listed here represent primarily university choirs, much of the same debate surrounds K-12 competitions, festivals, and performance evaluations. Most middle and high school programs are encouraged or required to take part in district/state adjudication. For many of these teachers, employment decisions and even merit raises are based upon adjudication results. The insights of the conductors presented here may help frame these experiences as an educational endeavor as opposed to simply a performance that is given a numerical value.

The authors feel that it is important to share both the benefits and the challenges from our experiences involving adjudication. Our backgrounds include a decade at small liberal arts colleges as well as thirteen years of public school music teaching experience. We have judged similar events at the district, state, and national levels, and we have seen both positive and negative effects from adjudication and competition. Consequently, we hold differing views of the benefits