

PRACTICAL & PRODUCTIVE  
ASSESSMENT IN THE  
CHORAL CLASSROOM

T H O M A S J . R I N N  
C O L L E Y V I L L E H E R I T A G E H S

# WHY?

- ✿ “What gets monitored, gets done”  
- Michael Hill, Associate Superintendent, Arlington ISD
- ✿ Provides student and teacher feedback
- ✿ Provides documentation for grades, future placement, and feedback for parents
- ✿ Underscores our validity as a core subject
- ✿ Research overwhelmingly supports that good assessment strategies lead to increased student performance

# CHALLENGES

- Time
- Lack of effective assessment tools
- Objective evaluation of Performance  
(subjective)
- Students psychological view of testing

# COMMON PROBLEMS

- \* “Gotcha” Assessment
- \* No student feedback
- \* Assessment not related to teaching
- \* Assessment is too complicated or too cumbersome

“WHY AN A IS NOT  
ENOUGH”



# PHILOSOPHY

Passionately  
Persistently  
Patiently  
Pursuing  
Perfection!

- ✿ Formative Assessment that allows for Mastery is the most helpful
- ✿ If assessment doesn't help the students, it isn't worth our time
- ✿ Assessment should provide feedback for improvement
- ✿ Assessment should be concise and time effective for the teacher and positive for the student.

# WHAT DO I ASSESS?



Vocal Skills

Musical Knowledge

Sight-Reading Skills

Life Skills

# Choral Department Student Outcomes

The following list of skills based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for High School Fine Arts and the education philosophy of the Choral Department that summarizes the outcome of a student engaged in the choral program for 4-years:

## I. Vocal Technique

- a. The student can demonstrate good singing posture and proper breath technique
- b. The student has a basic knowledge of the biology associated with the vocal instrument
- c. The student can sing with consistent tone throughout their vocal range
- d. The student has a basic knowledge of the registers of the voice and can navigate appropriately through all vocal registers
- e. The student can sing accurately and expressively at different tempi and with a full range of dynamics
- f. The student has basic knowledge of singing diction including the use of the International Phonetic Alphabet in English, Latin, Italian, German, French and other languages as encountered in the repertoire
- g. The student can evaluate vocal and choral performances and identify strengths and weaknesses

## II. Musicianship

- a. The student can accurately sight-sing melodies in major and minor keys using chromatic tones within functional harmony using solfège syllables and hand signs.
- b. The student can accurately read standard rhythms in a variety of simple and compound meters
- c. The student can accurately sight-read a single part in a four-part choral texture
- d. The student understands basic musical terminology and can evaluate the expressive and technical markings in a choral score and respond appropriately
- e. The student can evaluate structural qualities (form) of a piece of music regarding repetition and formal properties.
- f. The student understands basic conducting gestures and their connection to choral performance

## III. Ensemble Skills

- a. The student demonstrates proper ensemble etiquette through consistent performance in rehearsals
- b. The student demonstrates the ability to perform choral music for an audience
- c. The student can sing their choral part accurately and expressively either alone or as a member of an ensemble with attention to tone, blend, intonation, and balance
- d. The student can memorize music and perform music from memory for an audience
- e. The student can identify the historical and cultural background of the literature being performance

## IV. Life Skills

- a. The student will develop a life-long appreciation for choral music and the other arts
- b. The student will obtain the skills needed to engage in music as a performer, patron, and/or consumer throughout their lives
- c. The student will develop cultural awareness and tolerance learning to cooperate with an eclectic group of people to reach a common goal
- d. The student will develop communication and time management skills needed for success in higher education
- e. The student will develop self-discipline and the ability to focus on difficult tasks in order to achieve goals
- f. The student will demonstrate the core values of the Choral Department (Responsibility, Integrity, Professionalism, Dignity, and Compassion) in all of their daily endeavors

# PRE-TEST

- ✿ Provides a data point for effective use of assessment
- ✿ Provides Teacher Feedback and direction to plan for teaching
- ✿ Provides a goal/reality check for students to focus and self-identify growth
- ✿ Sample Skills Assessment

# TEACHER RUBRICS

- Fast, Clear, Objective Assessment
- Provides concrete feedback to students
- Provides documentation for student growth
- Time effective strategy for large classes

# CHECKLIST RUBRICS



Simple YES / NO elements



Observable



Works best when done randomly



Can be done over several class meetings



Remember that our goal is  
**MASTERY**

# ASSESSING MUSIC READING

- \*Use quick individual assessments during the learning process**
- \*Not every assessment needs to be an “all-state” sight reading example**
- \*Decide what you value in music reading and make time for occasional 1 on 1 testing**

# Examples

**Rhythm Reading Rubric**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Rhythm is accurate \_\_\_\_\_
2. Visually Keeps Steady Beat \_\_\_\_\_
3. Uses projected tone \_\_\_\_\_
4. Uses correct counting syllables \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Rhythm Reading Assessment**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	Rhythm	Counting Syllables
25	Steady tempo and accurate rhythm throughout	All notes are identified with correct rhythm syllables or numbers
15	Steady tempo, missed a few rhythmic patterns	Most notes are identified with correct rhythm syllables or numbers
5	Rhythms are not accurate and/or stopped during performance	Rhythm symbols or numbers are not correct

Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_

**Melodic Reading Assessment**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	Pitch	Rhythm	Solfege	Handsigns
25	All pitches are accurate	All rhythms are accurate	All solfege is accurate	All handsigns are accurate
20	Most pitches are accurate	Most rhythms are accurate	Most solfege is accurate	Most handsigns are accurate
15	Some pitches are accurate	Some rhythms are accurate	Some solfege is accurate	Some handsigns are accurate
10	Few or no accurate pitches	Few rhythms are accurate	Little or no solfege is accurate	Few handsigns are accurate

Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thirds Singing Assessment**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

	Vocal Technique - Vowel Production	Vocal Technique - Posture	Solfege	Handsigns
25	Students sing with tall, rounded vowels throughout	Students sing with correct body alignment, feet balanced, and torso erect throughout.	All solfege is accurate	All handsigns are accurate
20	Students sing with tall, rounded vowels most of the time.	At least one element of posture is missing (feet balanced, head alignment, torso erect)	Most solfege is accurate	Most handsigns are accurate
15	Students sing with tall, rounded vowels sometimes, but not consistently.	Multiple elements of proper posture are missing (feet balanced, head alignment, torso erect)	Some solfege is accurate	Some handsigns are accurate
10	Vowels are shallow / mouth position is too closed.	Student does not show an attempt at proper singing posture.	Little or no solfege is accurate	Few handsigns are accurate

# EAR TRAINING ASSESSMENT

- Helps to develop sight-reading skills
- Individual assessment of a student's ability to HEAR rather than their ability to produce the sound
- Often an effective classroom management tool
- Many variations and uses

# SAMPLE EAR TRAINING

S	S	S	S	S	S	S
F	F	F	F	F	F	F
M	M	M	M	M	M	M
R	R	R	R	R	R	R
D	D	D	D	D	D	D
T	T	T	T	T	T	T
L	L	L	L	L	L	L
S	S	S	S	S	S	S

# USING TECHNOLOGY FOR ASSESSMENT

- ☼ Sight-Reading Factory -  
[www.sightreadingfactory.com](http://www.sightreadingfactory.com)
- ☼ CHARMS Recording Studio (Advantage of  
having an accompaniment)
- ☼ Google Classroom / Google Forms
- ☼ Doctopus and Goobric
- ☼ Choral Auditions and Placement

# OTHER TOOLS

## Word Quizzes

### AWAKEN THE MUSIC - WORD QUIZ

Wherever you've \_\_\_\_\_, wherever you've \_\_\_\_\_,  
a \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_, just \_\_\_\_\_ it all \_\_\_\_\_.

What \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ to you  
\_\_\_\_\_ you have \_\_\_\_\_ of is yours \_\_\_\_\_.

# OTHER TOOLS

## SKILL EVALUATION

In Two ( $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 40$ )  
*f-p*

Tut - ti ve - ni - te ar - ma - ti

*f-p*

Tut - ti ve - ni - te ar - ma - ti

1. This symbol is called the \_\_\_\_\_.

2. This symbol is called a \_\_\_\_\_ and it marks the solfege syllable \_\_\_\_\_.

3. This is called the \_\_\_\_\_ and in this case tell us that there are \_\_\_\_\_ beats in a measure and the \_\_\_\_\_ receives the beat.

4. This is a \_\_\_\_\_ note and receives \_\_\_\_\_ beats.

# OTHER TOOLS

- ✻ Exit Tickets
- ✻ Concert Evaluations
- ✻ Text Analysis
- ✻ International Phonetic Alphabet

# MEMPHIS MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

- ☼ Response to a full curriculum redesign
- ☼ Summative Assessments designed to meet goals of established curriculum and show progress of students district wide
- ☼ Goal to create a test that met the State/District Assessment Needs while giving teachers a tool that improved student performance

# CONCLUSION

- ✿ Effective assessment is a positive tool for student growth
- ✿ Effective assessment will increase student performance
- ✿ Effective assessment will provide concrete evidence for student grades and placement
- ✿ Looking Ahead to tomorrow
- ✿ Questions?