

**Intentional harmony: Laying the groundwork for musical
independence**

by

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Abstract

In the lessons I present, my students worked toward developing and reinforcing their musical independence. For the purpose of this report, I define musical independence as the student's ability to perform an independent line of music in various choral music textures. Although this skill is often developed at the elementary and middle school levels, I have found that many students entering my program lack the necessary skills and experience to succeed in singing traditional three and four-part choral music. Through a series of transformations over several lessons, students will change a simple melody into a multi-layered musical experience by utilizing different textures of harmony. These intentional uses of various textures over the course of their time in my program will help students find greater success in singing multi-part choral music. Some of these transformations will be explicitly dictated by me, while others provide students with the opportunity to compose or improvise within certain parameters.

This focus on musical independence is one of several adjustments I have made to the curriculum I employ in my classroom as a result of my learning and experiences in the Kansas State Summer Master's Program. The course objectives I utilized in my classroom had remained relatively the same over my first nine years of teaching. Now, as a direct result of my coursework at K State, I have found clearer ways to describe my objectives which has, in turn, clarified how best to assess my students. I have developed overall program objectives as well as individual course objectives which build from one course to the next. These changes have helped simplify classroom procedures and the planning process leading up to teaching from year to year.

The primary driving force behind these changes lies in the influence and importance of personal philosophy. Up to this point in my career, I had not intentionally written out my philosophies as a music educator. Although I regularly thought about my beliefs regarding the

many facets of my profession, the process of writing them out has brought added clarity and focus to what matters most in my curriculum. Moreover, the ability to justify my philosophies with credible sources has brought greater depth to my core beliefs. In essence, the process of writing out my philosophy regarding music education has helped me to return to my core, authentic self as a musician. This re-centering of identity has shed light on things which did not serve a purpose in my classroom and helped me identify practices better suited to reach my objectives.

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Chapter 1 - Teaching Philosophy

Introduction

Since the foundations of this country, the United States of America has advocated for the education of its citizens. Music began taking root in American schools in Boston in 1838. Following the success of Lowell Mason and his contemporaries, these programs spread throughout the growing country to include most schools in America (Gary & Mark, 2007). According to Raiber (2014), nearly all schools in the country incorporate some form of music program.

I refer to this document as my credo as a choral music educator. The word “credo” means “a guiding principle or belief” and comes from the Latin word for “I Believe” (Merriam-Webster, credo, n.d.). Therefore, what follows are my beliefs and guiding principles in terms of music and education.

Education

Teaching, learning, and education existed long before the formation of the institutions established for that purpose: schools. Parents teaching children to walk. The apprenticeship system used to learn a specific craft from an established master. These represent but a few of the ways that learning occurred without the need of a formalized school. In theory, people experience the opportunity to learn multiple times every day.

Simply stated, the purpose of education lies in learning and self-growth. Whether that learning consists of the acquisition of knowledge or garnering a new skill, education enables an individual to do more than they could previously. This knowledge or skill set often fulfills a specific function within society. Without that societal function, the need for education significantly diminishes.

I believe formal education, or schooling, assists parents in preparing children to become contributing members of society by helping provide knowledge and skills determined requisite by the society in which they live. Evidence of this is present in today's emphasis on literacy and numeracy in American schools as well as incorporating the so-called 21st century skills. People believe these skills provide the foundation for success in several different fields in today's society (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). This education should be carried out by professional educators with the support and assistance of parents at home.

In addition, I also believe that education allows students to explore and discover new territory. These experiences expand their comfort zones and allow them to potentially uncover a previously unknown passion or talent. Beyond the initial discovery, education then empowers students to succeed in this new field.

One of the hallmarks of education, I believe, is research. Through the acquisition of knowledge, people become enabled to expand the current boundaries of understanding. People have engaged in learning and discovery for centuries now. Yet, new horizons still exist with new information emerging every day. Therefore, education not only allows for self-growth, but societal-growth as students work together to uncover something new.

Learning

In my experience, learning is a choice. While some people may seem predisposed to assimilating certain skills or knowledge, each students' choices will do more to govern their level of proficiency than their perceived talents. As stated by Professor Dumbledore in the Harry Potter series, "It is our choices...that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities" (Rowling, 1997, p. 333).

The acquisition of knowledge and skills is essentially the rewiring of the human brain to operate more efficiently in desired domains. This process takes place over an extended period of time through repeated action. Passion and urgency play key roles in that transformation (Coyle, 2009).

Understanding how the brain changes in response to new information is vital to successful learning. Although the details of this process lie beyond the scope of this document, this concept plays a key role in my philosophy of education. All students' brains (except those inhibited by damage or disease) are capable of incorporating new knowledge and skill. As author Daniel Coyle (2009) stated,

You are born with the machinery to transform beginners' clumsiness into fast, fluent action. That machinery is not controlled by genes, it's controlled by you. Each day, each practice session, is a step toward a different future. This is a hopeful idea, and the most hopeful thing about it is that it is a fact." (xix)

Music Education

The definition of music continues to be a topic of debate among musicians. I assert that music is multidimensional. It is both a product (noun) and a process (verb). In terms of product, music is an organized set of sounds in time. This set of sounds includes some of the characteristics of pitch, rhythm, dynamic, tone, timbre, etc. The process of music is the creation of these sounds through performing, composing, or improvising. A third, social dimension exists in many forms of music making, but is not always present when the music making experience takes place with or within a single person (e.g., singing in the shower). This dimension encapsulates the feelings of camaraderie and connectedness that occur when a group of people participate in musical experiences together.

I speak with many people each year who claim they cannot sing or participate in the music making process. I submit that all human beings have the capacity to make music in some form. Current culture seems to divide people in two categories when it comes to music: performers and consumers. Evidence of this can be seen when my sister insists that the only musical instrument she plays is the radio or when a student tells me they weren't born with that talent. To these cynics I resoundingly respond with the words of Buddy the Elf (Favreau, 2003), "Singing is just like talking except longer and louder and you move your voice up and down." In essence: if you can talk, then you can also sing. This idea transfers to other music disciplines as well.

I believe this misperception arose from an overemphasis on the product of music which placed lesser value on music making experiences with less technical precision. I argue that music does not need to be complicated in order to be transcendent. Some of the most sublime musical experiences come from the performance of a simple, single melody (think of the feelings generated from the playing of taps at a military funeral). Christopher Small (1998) advocates for a reversal in this mindset when he says, "Our powers of music have been hijacked and the majority of people robbed of the musicality that is theirs by right of birth, while a few stars, and their handlers, grow rich and famous through selling us what we have been led to believe we lack" (p. 8). This division needs to go away.

Music's value stems partially from its role in society. In a society in which music holds no value, the individual pursuit of music would occur less-frequently and be viewed as inconsequential. Music has continued to hold a strong position in many societies as a means of expression, enjoyment, and conveying ideas. How many times has music been used to assist in remembering factual information (I still remember the quadratic formula today because a teacher

sang it to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”)? Music is incorporated in movies, TV shows, and video games. You cannot shop at a store without some form of music in the background. Even your wait time on a phone call is often filled with music. As described by Merriam (1964) “there is probably no other human cultural activity which is so all-pervasive and which reaches into, shapes, and often controls so much of human behavior” (p. 218).

Music’s greatest value lies in the self-growth and self-expression that comes as a result of music making. Elliott (2005) stated “musicianship is not only a rich form of thinking and knowing, it is a unique source of one of the most important kinds of knowledge humans can achieve: self-knowledge” (p. 9). This was especially evident early in my life. For me, music acted as a means of expression previously unattainable. I struggled (and continue to struggle) to clearly articulate my thoughts and feelings. This made building relationships difficult, so my circle of friends was quite small. Speaking was difficult, so I turned to music. It provided me a voice and a means to connect with others. Success in music then led to greater success in verbalizing my thoughts and ideas.

I am not alone in this experience. I have found great joy in speaking with many of my students and hearing similar experiences from them. Humans connect through the medium of music.

The purpose of music education, therefore, comes in providing these experiences to our young people. I agree with Reimer (2003) when he states, “the central task of music education... is to make musical experience in all its manifestations as widely available to all people, and as richly cultivated for each individual, as possible” (p. 69). We are a musical people. Patricia Shehan Campbell (1998) said “Children think aloud through music. They socialize, vent emotions, and entertain themselves through music. Their bodies stretch, bend, step, hop, and skip

in rhythmic ways, while their melodic voices rise and fall, turn fast and then slow, loud and then soft. Their music can be ‘seen’ and heard in their playful behaviors, some of it a realization of the songs in their heads. It is almost as if children exude music” (p. 4).

As a musical society, the role of the music educator is to prepare all students to incorporate music making beyond the classroom. Students bring a history and culture of music with them to the classroom and we, as educators, have the privilege of empowering these students to take part in more musical experiences. My aim in teaching music to children is to empower them to bring music making into their homes and daily activities for the enrichment of their existence, not just for the product itself.

Conclusion

Making music is an important component of the human experience. Doing so enriches life and brings people together. All students hold the capacity to make music. All students can increase their aptitude for making music. Music education is a key component for empowering societies and the people therein to weave music into the fabric of their existence. In doing so, life will be more rich and full for all.

How My Philosophy Informs My Teaching

The biggest way the lessons I present demonstrate my music education philosophy is that all skills can be learned and acquired. I believe all students possess the ability to learn the skills required to succeed as a choral musician. The degree to which students succeed is determined in part by their choices and effort as well as the opportunities and instruction I can provide.

Chapter 2 - Lesson Plan(s)

Lesson Plan

2014 Music Standards Addressed

- MU:Cr1.1.E.8a Compose and improvise ideas for melodies and rhythmic passages based on characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal (National Association for Music Education, 2014).
- MU:Cr3.2.E.8a Share personally-developed melodies and rhythmic passages – individually or as an ensemble – that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or texts studied in rehearsal (NAFME, 2014).
- MU:Pr5.3.E.5a Use self-reflection and peer feedback to refine individual and ensemble performances of a varied repertoire of music (NAFME, 2014).

Prior Knowledge/Skills

- Students already understand singing technique concepts such as resonance, breath management, and diction.
- Students already understand their two- and three-part voice assignments (soprano/alto, high/middle/low).
- Students already know solfege and the Kodaly hand signs.
- Students already understand how to read written musical notation.

Lesson Objective(s)

Students will accurately perform “The Beetle Twister” (Mills, 2021) a cappella in various two- and three-part textures including echo, chain phrases, unison singing, body ostinato, rhythmic ostinato, multiple rhythmic ostinati, rhythm canon, augmented melodic canon, harmonic ending, chord root, and vocal chording.

Assessment of the Lesson

I will assess the students through large-group, small-group, and individual performance.

Relevant Contextual Factors and Needed Modifications/Accommodations

- Sophomore treble ensemble with 13 singers.
- Instruction in music skills is deficient at the elementary level.
- Lessons presented during the last two weeks of school.

Instructional Resources, Materials and Technologies

- Computer & projector
- Visuals of text, melody, and various harmonic variations

Lesson Sequence

Day #1 Objective: Students will perform “The Beetle Twister” a cappella in echo with the conductor, as chain phrases in two and three parts, and in unison.

1. Rap the text in rhythm in echo with the conductor
2. Sing in echo with the conductor
3. Sing in chain phrases as sections
4. Sing the whole thing in unison with supported sound and expressive diction

Assessment: Large-group performance and selected small-group performance

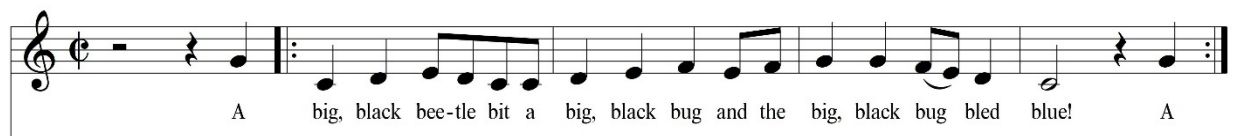


Figure 2.1 The Beetle Twister - Main Melody

Day #2 Objective: Students will perform “The Beetle Twister” a cappella with a body ostinato, rhythmic ostinato, and multiple rhythmic ostinati.

1. Sing in unison with supported sound and expressive diction
2. Perform body ostinato
3. Sing while performing body ostinato

4. Perform rhythm ostinato
5. Sing while performing rhythm ostinato
6. Ask 1-2 students to create a new rhythmic ostinato pattern.
7. Sing while performing new ostinato pattern(s)
8. Divide the ensemble into 2-3 sections to sing while performing multiple ostinati

Assessment: Large-group performance and selected small-group performance

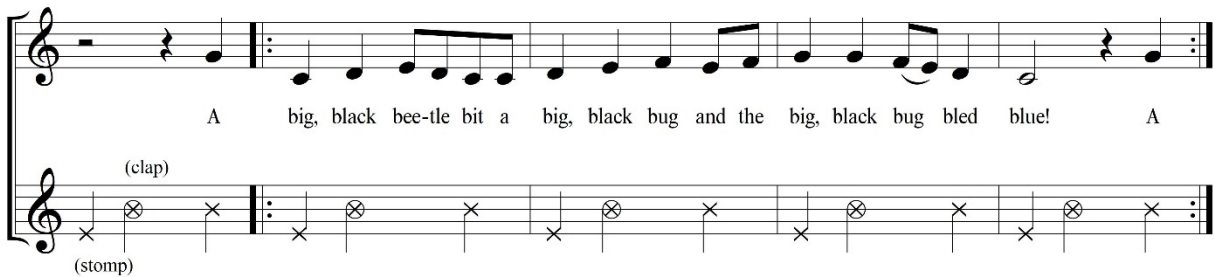


Figure 2.2 The Beetle Twister - Rhythmic Ostinato

Day #3 Objective: Students will perform “The Beetle Twister” in rhythm canon.

1. Sing in unison with supported sound and expressive diction.
2. Clap rhythm of the song
3. Sopranos sing while Altos clap rhythm in canon.
4. Switch roles.
5. Sing while clapping rhythm in canon.

Assessment: Large-group and individual assessment

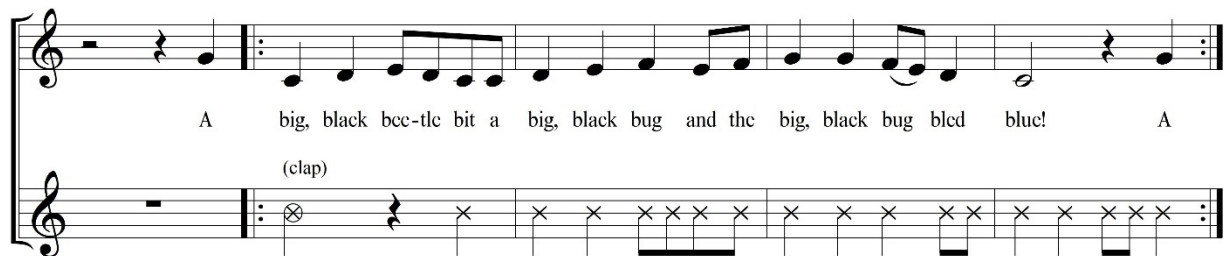


Figure 2.3 The Beetle Twister - Rhythm Canon

Day #4 Objective: Students will perform “The Beetle Twister” in Augmented Canon.

1. Sing in unison with supported sound and expressive diction.

2. Sing in unison with supported sound and expressive diction with augmented rhythms
3. Sopranos sing with normal rhythms (repeat one time) while Altos sing with augmented rhythms.
4. Switch roles.

Assessment: Large-group assessment

The musical score is written for two voices, Voice 1 and Voice 2, in a 2/4 time signature. The melody is a simple, catchy tune that repeats. The lyrics are: "A big, black bee-tle bit a big, black bug and the big, black bug bled blue! A". The score includes a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature of 2/4. The melody is written on a single staff for each voice, with the lyrics written below the notes. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system containing the first two lines of the melody and the second system containing the last two lines. The melody is a simple, catchy tune that repeats. The lyrics are: "A big, black bee-tle bit a big, black bug and the big, black bug bled blue! A".

Figure 2.4 The Beetle Twister - Augmented Canon

Day #5 Objective: Students will perform “The Beetle Twister” with harmonic ending.

1. Sing in unison with supported sound and expressive diction.
2. Teach two-part harmonic ending by rote.
3. Sing with two-part harmonic ending as a vocal exercise (moving up by half steps).

Assessment: Large-group assessment

Figure 2.5 shows a musical score for three voices. Each voice part consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are: "A big, black bee-tle bit a big, black bug and the big, black bug bled blue! A". The melody is a simple, repetitive tune. The first voice part is labeled "Voice 1", the second "Voice 2", and the third "Voice 3".

Figure 2.5 The Beetle Twister - Harmonic Ending

Day #6 Objective: Students will perform “The Beetle Twister” with added chord roots.

1. Sing with two-part harmonic ending as a vocal exercise (moving up by half steps).
2. Teach chord roots by rote using solfege and hand signs.
3. Sopranos sing melody while Altos sing chord roots.
4. Switch roles.
5. Sing as a vocal exercise (moving up by half steps) alternating between melody and chord roots.

Assessment: Large-group and individual assessment

Figure 2.6 shows a musical score for two voices. Voice 1 is the same as in Figure 2.5. Voice 2 is a new part, labeled "Voice 2", which consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics for Voice 2 are: "Do Do Sol Sol Sol Sol Do". The melody is a simple, repetitive tune.

Figure 2.6 The Beetle Twister - Chord Roots

Day #7 Objective: Students will perform “The Beetle Twister” with added vocal chording.

1. Teach chord tones by rote using solfege and hand signs. Start with one part and layer new parts at a time.

2. Conductor sings the melody while students sing vocal chording.
3. Select individual students to sing melody while remaining students sing vocal chording.
4. Sing with added vocal chording as vocal exercise (moving up in half steps).

Assessment: Large-group and individual assessment

The musical score for 'The Beetle Twister' is presented for four voices. Voice 1 (top staff) features a melody with lyrics: "A big, black bee-tle bit a big, black bug and the big, black bug bled blue! A". Voice 2 (second staff) provides a chording line with lyrics: "Sol Mi Fa Re Fa Fa Sol". Voice 3 (third staff) provides a chording line with lyrics: "Mi Do Ti Ti Ti Re Mi". Voice 4 (bottom staff) provides a chording line with lyrics: "Do Sol Re Sol Re Sol Do". The score uses a grand staff with four treble clefs and includes repeat signs at the beginning and end of each line.

Figure 2.7 The Beetle Twister - Vocal Chording

Reflections

Throughout the course of these seven lessons, I sought to strengthen each of my students' ability to sing independent lines of music. Unfortunately, many students enter my program lacking sufficient training in this area. I feel daily deposits in students' musical independence accounts will pay great dividends throughout their high school career.

In addition to these musical independence goals, I aimed to strengthen students' ability to sing clearly with resonant tone and expressive diction by utilizing a challenging text.

As a result of these lessons, I believe I achieved my objectives. Many students struggled with different components within the lessons. Those who already perform independent lines with relative success picked up the concepts I taught with greater ease than those who naturally

gravitate toward singing the melody. With persistence and some corrective instruction, all students found some level of success. I feel it important to note that, throughout these lessons, I did not define success as perfection. Rather, my students succeeded through progress.

In order to reach my objectives, I relied heavily on rote teaching with call and response singing, especially teaching the main melody. For other harmonic variations within the lessons, I leaned on students' music reading skills to read some very basic notes on the projector screen or follow Kodaly hand signs from me, the conductor.

To assess student learning, I listened to students perform The Beetle Twister as a large group, occasionally in smaller groups, or as individuals. The ensemble I taught is relatively small (13 when all students are present) so hearing mistakes from individual singers does not require great effort. Small-group and individual performances compelled students to test the skills I sought to instill within them while in a more vulnerable state.

I was enlightened by jumping into these lessons. The biggest takeaway for me lies in the importance of breaking it up. We did these lessons seven days in a row. Although I plan to incorporate a variation of this activity into our daily warm-up routine, using the same melody each day for seven days caused it to become stale. By day four, it seemed that students were ready for something fresher. I believe this negated some of the benefits I sought to achieve. I need to have several melodies with corresponding independence skills prepared to teach in order to rotate through them and help students maintain high levels of energy.

In addition to rotating melodies more frequently, I need to do more to assess students and provide feedback for improvement. In watching these videos, I find many missed opportunities for instruction that would lead toward reaching the goals I laid out entering these lessons. I also need to engage in more small-group and individual assessment.

I had a wonderful insight toward the end of the fourth lesson when students sang “The Beetle Twister” in augmented canon. Our first attempt went very poorly. I had asked my sopranos to sing the augmented canon with my altos singing the main melody. The sopranos were completely lost! Rather than giving the sopranos some feedback to help them grow or another opportunity to succeed, I immediately asked these sections to switch roles. The altos experienced immediate success in singing the augmented canon.

This moment perfectly illustrates the reason to engage in such intentional instruction. The students in my alto section have sung harmonies in choir pieces for at least 2 years with me. While many have made significant improvements in maintaining their part when all parts are present, some still struggle. On the other hand, my sopranos have little experience in singing anything but the melody and it showed. All students need these skills. This realization has led me to double down on intentionally building independence skills within each singer and not leaving it to chance. As I gain more experience incorporating this instruction in my curriculum, I plan to advocate for such learning to take place at middle and elementary school levels within my district.

Chapter 3 - Reflections

As I look back on my experiences in the Masters' Program at Kansas State University, I am filled with gratitude for the opportunities I have had to expand my capacity as a choral music educator. These opportunities have come through many ways: direct instruction in classes, studying the work of others at the encouragement of my professors, conversations and networking with other colleagues within the program, and through the trial and error of implementing new things.

In my first summer, I enjoyed working with Drs. Payne, Thompson, and Yu. From Dr. Payne I learned the importance of being willing to try something new, even before it has been refined. From these experiences, we learn from our failures and, in turn, teach our students to do the same. He also instilled the importance of continuous education. Learning never stops and it is our duty and music educators to stay on top of the latest research intended to help us learn and improve. While this process can be difficult and time consuming, we will benefit greatly from that investment.

With Dr. Thompson and my fellow colleagues in her class, I enjoyed a refresher course on the anatomy of the voice and its healthy use in singing. Although very little discussed in the content of the course was truly new to me, I appreciate the reminder that, without regular study of these things, I can lose some of the knowledge I have gained over time.

Dr. Yu helped me understand the importance of practicing my instrument. As a conductor, my instrument is now conducting. In order to stay sharp, I need to intentionally do things to grow and challenge myself. Moreover, that growth does not need to come as a result of a formal course or direct instruction. She taught me that, in order to improve as a conductor, all you need is a mirror or a good camera.

In my second summer, I learned from Dr. Weston in addition to Drs. Yu and Payne. Composing and arranging has been a part of who I am as a musician since I was a freshman in high school and is something I regularly employ with my students. Within his course, Dr. Weston helped me to see a different way to look at not only composing and arranging but studying choral scores. We spent a good deal of time early in the course discussing textures of choral music (Ostrander & Wilson, 1986). In my undergraduate studies, Dr. Jessica Napoles introduced me to Judy Bowers' hierarchy for musical independence (Holt & Jordan, 2008). Our discussion of textures merged with my previous knowledge of this independence hierarchy to help me see more clearly how I can use my composition skills to help my students experience greater success in singing independent lines of music in choir.

Dr. Yu continued to refine my skills in studying and preparing scores for use in rehearsal. I have known the importance of understanding my score before I attempt to teach it, though I had not always been consistent in applying it. Through my time with Dr. Yu, that skill was reinforced and she helped me refine my process for score study. Moreover, she emphasized that studying the score is only a preliminary step in the process. Beyond that study, I need to invest time and thought planning how to achieve my goals through the rehearsal process.

Perhaps my greatest growth during my time at K-State came through the instruction and help of Dr. Payne in defining my philosophy of music education and the refinement of my classroom curriculum. Like all music educators, I hold beliefs regarding what I do for a living. Prior to this semester, I had never taken the time to fully flesh out these ideas, write it down, and back it up with the ideas and research of others. Perhaps I did not recognize the importance of doing so and that, being my personal philosophy, I already knew and understood it. I was wrong.

Through the process of studying others' philosophy, I began to see my own beliefs emerge. Many aspects of my philosophy did not surprise me, but there were others that I had suppressed. One such example was in determining whether I felt music were a process or a product. Answering this question took some time but helped me return to my roots as a musician. I did not study music because I enjoyed the finished product (although I have learned to do so). I spent much of my life participating in music because, in the process, I found myself and my voice. I had buried this truth under five years of undergraduate work and nine years of teaching. This re-discovery alone changed the way I approached teaching this past year.

With codified philosophy in hand, I felt prepared to tackle curriculum. The objectives I put in my class syllabus and discussed with students at the beginning of each year had gone largely unchanged in my first nine years of teaching. Looking back on them now, they were too broad and did little to help guide my teaching or the students' learning. Through my studies with Dr. Payne and discussions with fellow colleagues, I have outlined both program goals as well as course objectives for each of my classes. These course objectives build on one another to help students achieve my program goals by the time they finish high school. While these objectives could still change in the future, I feel that they do a better job in directing my instruction process.

One tangible product of this growth lies in a spreadsheet I have created and now refer to often in preparing for teaching. On this sheet I have outlined my objectives as well as steps to achieve these goals for each course I teach (see table below). This living document also includes many teaching activities and assessments to use throughout the process. I feel this document will simplify and speed up my planning process year to year and, in turn, better enable me to connect with students rather than worry so much about what and how I teach.

Table 3.1 Program and Course Objectives

Program Goal	Year	Course Objectives
Cultivate a sense of community within the choral ensemble	1-2	Cultivate a sense of community within the choral ensemble
	2-3	Cultivate a sense of community within the choral ensemble
	3-4	Cultivate a sense of community within the choral ensemble
Create music using healthy vocal technique, musical artistry, and emotional authenticity	1-2	Describe components of healthy technique, musical artistry, and emotional authenticity
	2-3	Apply components of healthy technique, musical artistry, and emotional authenticity
	3-4	Create music using healthy vocal technique, musical artistry, and emotional authenticity
Perform independent lines in various textures of choral music	1-2	Perform choral music that contains two to three parts in homophonic and other textures
	2-3	Perform choral music that contains three to four parts in homophonic and other textures
	3-4	Perform choral music that contains four or more parts in homophonic and other textures
Improve musical performance using self and outside evaluation	1-2	Develop criteria for evaluating musical performances
	2-3	Develop a rubric for evaluating musical performances
	3-4	Improve musical performance using self and outside evaluation
Create musical experiences using written musical notation	1-2	Perform, using solfege, melodies in major keys; simple meter; using step-wise motion; incorporating leaps in the tonic triad; & whole, half, quarter, eighth, and dotted rhythms.
	2-3	Perform, using solfege, melodies in major or minor keys; simple and compound meter; using step-wise motion; incorporating leaps of thirds, fourths, and fifths; & whole, half, quarter, eighth, sixteenth, and dotted rhythms
	3-4	Perform, using solfege, melodies in major or minor keys; simple, compound, and irregular meter; using step-wise motion; incorporating leaps of thirds, fourths, and fifths; with chromatic pitches; & whole, half, quarter, eighth, sixteenth, dotted rhythms, and triplets.
Integrate new styles of music into their current musical experiences	1-2	Appreciate new styles of music
	2-3	Relates new styles of music to the music they enjoy
	3-4	Integrate new styles of music into their current musical experiences

The last important growth I will point out deals with assessment. I learned that assessment and grading are not synonymous. Not all things I assess need a grade and, sometimes, grading interferes with true growth when used incorrectly (Medcalf, 2015). This shift in mindset was liberating for me. Assessment provides me opportunities to evaluate students' understanding and give corrective feedback in order to help them develop as musicians. Their grade is meant to reflect their progress in achieving the established standards of the course.

My three summers at Kansas State University have refreshed and simplified my approach to teaching choral music. I feel grateful to bring my focus back on the process of musicking as I work with my students to create a meaningful product. Because of my experiences here, I better appreciate the last ten years of my teaching career and feel better prepared for the next ten and beyond.

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