

GENERAL SUGGESTED TEACHING STRATEGIES

PREFACE Each lesson is only one-page long, for easy duplication. They can be presented in any number of ways. The most common will be to hand out a sheet to each singer at the beginning of each rehearsal and go through the page together. If a piano is available, demonstrate when applicable. Enjoy the side bar together to strengthen community.

The section below applies most specifically to **School Choirs**. Nonetheless, we believe any choir director using this series will find these suggestions most valuable. They can easily be modified to fit any choral situation, including **church** and community choirs. The ADVANCE series also functions well by compressing the lessons into a special retreat event.

I. INTRODUCING A LESSON

- A. Draw the singer's attention to the title** at the outset. This prepares them for what it is they are about to learn. One of the basic precepts we learn in teacher training programs is:
1. Tell them what you are going to talk to them about.
 2. Talk to them about it.
 3. Tell them what you just told them.
- B. Before passing out the written lesson**, use the chalkboard, overhead projection, charts, and other visual aids to present the material. This will keep attention focused and eliminate the temptation for some singers to work on the practice exercises before you have fully presented all of the material.
- C. Use the Socratic method of teaching** as often as possible. In other words, ask lots of questions. When students are asked questions, they tend to be more involved in the learning. Also, you find out which students are familiar with the principles of music notation. These students can tutor other students, help with review sessions, grading papers, etc.
- D. After presenting the material**, pass out the written lesson. You may want to give them a few moments to work on the exercises in class. Or, you may prefer to assign them as homework. Whichever, make certain the instructions for completing the exercises are understood before they begin. It will often be helpful to do the first one or two together. The singers should be able to complete the practice exercises for most of the lessons in a very short amount of time - 5 to 10 minutes.
- E. Review the previous lesson!** This cannot be emphasized enough, whether you present lessons daily, weekly or monthly, research clearly demonstrates that learning is enhanced, and retention increased, when previously studied concepts are reviewed before the introduction of new material. A great educator once said that *people need reminding more often than they need instruction*. Because of the small amount of material covered in each lesson, very little time will be needed for renewing the previous lesson's concepts. Employ a variety of techniques for reviewing material:
1. Review the previous lesson's exercises.
 2. Make frequent references to learned principles within rehearsals.
 3. Set a day aside, periodically, where advanced students tutor the struggling students.
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