How To Teach What You Know

Resource Book

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First Things

Welcome!

Congratulations! You're the teacher of a barbershop chorus. It's a lot of fun. You get a lot of recognition and appreciation. And you only have to be good at ... everything!

Fortunately, this course is not about everything. It's not about conducting, musicality, performance or singing — all things that may fall within your sphere of responsibility. But it is about the process of engaging adults in activities that will help them develop competence in all of these areas, and more. It's about teaching a chorus while maintaining an atmosphere of fun and mutual respect. Welcome!

To Begin

We're going to begin by looking at some important issues in teaching adults. People of all ages prefer to be treated as adults and, in my experience, learn best when they are treated that way.

We'll continue by examining the competencies we find in good teachers: personal competencies, relationship competencies, and curricular competencies. All of us have these competencies to some degree. We'll identify the ones that are strongest for us and also those that we need in greater measure. Although some of these competencies can be gained by study, most of them are best learned by noting that we need to change our awareness and our behaviour in certain ways in order to be more effective teachers. The intention to change is very powerful. With our intentions clear we can often leave it to our unconscious selves to help us with the changes we intend.

Our attention will often move from ourselves to our students, from teacher to student, from teaching process to learning process. Good teachers learn to move their point of view around at will, often discovering useful strategies and techniques in the process. Enjoy the views! Often the most effective people treat their vocations and avocations as games to be played and enjoyed by all participants.

Teaching Adults[1]

"In time of change, learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists."

Eric Hoffer

Historical approaches

- Chinese and Hebrews - Members of the group pose questions that the whole group solves.

- Greeks - Leader poses the dilemma for the group to solve.

- Romans - Members of the group state their positions and defend their positions.

Productive Adult Learning

- Starts not with content, but with situations or problems.
- The learning experience of the group members is the group's greatest resource; fixed viewpoints, however, can interfere.
- Mutual inquiry is the most useful learning mode.
- Information is validated on the basis of personal beliefs and experiences.
- Teachers seek after wisdom. They do not try to function as oracles.
- Everyone aids in the formulation of curricula.
- Planning is shared between the facilitator and group members.
- A collaborative environment is more productive than an authoritarian environment.

Qualities of Effective Teachers of Adults

- Warmth and Respect - The teacher speaks well of students and approves of people in general.

- Democratic Style - The teacher makes use of the learner's ideas and opinions, emphasizing group discovery methods.

- Cognitive Organization - The teacher has an overall grasp of the subject matter and is able to provide a balanced perspective.

- Enthusiasm - The teacher is animated and enthusiastic about the process and the subject matter.

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[1]Knowles, Malcolm. *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*. Gulf Publishing, 1990.

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Teaching Competencies[2]

Personal Competencies

1. *You think before you act*
   You act after consideration and reflection upon your goals.

2. *You take the initiative*
   You consistently take the initiative and get things done in spite of difficulties.

3. *You act out of clear beliefs*
   You have thought a lot about your beliefs and act in accordance with them.

4. *You solve problems effectively*
   You are inquiring and open-minded, effective in solving problems.

5. *You find innovative approaches*
   You assess situations and find appropriate, novel approaches.

6. *You are reliable*
   You can be trusted to get things done regardless of circumstances.

7. *You have a positive attitude*
   You look at the bright side of life and communicate your attitude to others.

8. *You are observant of the whole*
   You strive to make sense of learning, educating yourself as you educate others.

Interactive Competencies

1. *You are caring*
   Your relationships are caring and nurturing, enabling others.

2. *You are respectful*
   You value the statements and opinions of others and respond respectfully.

3. *You value inquiry*
   You invite input and contribution, promoting learning and growth.

4. *You encourage interaction*
   You promote opportunities for people to dialogue and learn from each other.

5. *You are genuine*
   You are authentic with others, honest and open, able to admit mistakes.

Curricular Competencies

1. *You have many strategies*
   Your toolbox is extensive, varied, and well used.

2. *You are knowledgeable*
   Your knowledge of music and specific material is extensive and has depth.

3. *You plan appropriately*
   You sequence long- and short-term tasks for optimum learning and motivation.

4. *You select music thoughtfully*
   You choose repertoire for motivational, musical, performance, and teaching value.

5. *You evaluate usefully*
   You use evaluation as a tool to improve learning and reinforce competence.

6. *You provide a rich experience*
   Your rehearsal is alive, zestful, a vital and stimulating learning environment.

7. *You unify the group*
   Everyone works towards goals in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

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[2]Wasserman and Eggert, *Profiles of Teaching Competency*, Simon Fraser University, 1973

Commitments to Improved Competency

After examining personal, interactive, and curricular competencies, it is useful to be as clear as possible about directions for change. What we intend to change, we attend to. Regular attention provides the feedback that results in permanent change. Please summarize below the competencies you see as needing the most attention in order to make you a more effective teacher.

Personal Competencies

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

Interactive Competencies

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

Curricular Competencies

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

The Learning Process

It is important in the teaching process to be aware of the ways in which people learn. Teaching can be seen as a study of the learning process and how to influence and affect it. When most of us think of teaching, we go to experiences that we have had with teachers in the past and, for better or for worse, we re-enact those past experiences as we take on teaching roles for ourselves. There are many ways of thinking about the teaching/learning process. Here are three that may be helpful.

1. Four stages of learning

One useful way to look at teaching and learning comes from the idea that individual awareness varies. Everyone's experience is unique and therefore every person's awareness is unique. Learning is the process of becoming aware and then acting on awareness to make a change in the way we perceive, think, feel, or act.

All of us are specifically incompetent in most ways. Possibilities are unlimited, experience and time are limited. All of us regularly convert time and experience into new competencies every day. We vary in our ability to make these conversions and to learn. There is no way that we can be specifically aware of all the things about which we are unaware. The first job of the teacher, then, is to have us recognize our **unconscious incompetence** and make us aware of it. When in such a situation we think, "Aha! Here's something new to know about!" We are now **consciously incompetent**. That is, we know that we don't know a specific thing that we could know.

If the teacher teaches well, we will now be motivated to work on our newly discovered incompetence. The teacher will provide information and activities that allow us to change our incompetence to competence. At this point in the process we are able to demonstrate competence as long as we are paying attention, maintaining deliberate awareness. Here, though, the process often stops. There are many things we have been "taught" that we only do competently when we are thinking about them. We have not yet completed the process. We are stalled at the **consciously competent** stage.

Conscious competence is not enough because we are not able to pay attention to many things at once. The average number of things to which we can attend with relative ease is six or seven. In a particular situation much of our attention must be given to perception. For instance, when we sing in a group, much of our attention must be used to synchronize what we do with what others are doing. We must attend to things that may change from moment to moment. For this reason, most of what we do in any situation must happen without our specific attention, that is "unconsciously".

A learner moves from conscious to **unconscious competence** through practice. The teacher's job is to provide opportunity for practice and repetition. Clearly it is the competency that must be practised. Practice does not make perfect. Only practice of the competency, perfect practice, results in perfection. In this case, perfection is the mastery of the skill to the point where it is integrated into our unconscious behaviour. That is, we do it without thinking about it.

To summarize:

- The learner is in a state of: **unconscious incompetence**
- The teacher changes the awareness of the learner who achieves: **conscious incompetence**
- The teacher engages the learner in activities that result in: **conscious competence**
- The teacher initiates the process of practice and repetition which eventually results in: **unconscious competence**

Or, to look at it another way useful to coaches:

Novice	**Apprentice**	**Journeyman**	**Master**
UI-------->	CI -------->	CC ------->	UC
Develop awareness of skills	Acquire and practise skills	Develop and practise skills	Use skills transparently, unconsciously

2. Successive Approximation

Successive approximation is another useful way of thinking about the teaching/learning process. In this spiral model the learner compares his present state with a different desired state and acts upon himself to achieve the desired state. Evidence is collected to determine whether or not the desired state has been attained. Often progress is noted, but there is still a discrepancy between what has been achieved and what is desired. The learner then continues to act to close the gap between the two states, spiraling towards a more exact match.

The teacher's job in this model is similar to that in the stages of competence. First the learner must be made aware of the possibility of a more desirable state. If the possibility seems attractive (big, bright, clear, colourful, centered, etc.), the learner will be motivated to work towards that state.

This model recognizes that learning is a process that goes on in the learner. But there is a role for the teacher who is aware of experiences that will enable the learner to change his state. The teacher develops and provides experiences that the learner can use. If, for instance, a learner wants to produce a vocal sound that is more roundly resonant, the teacher may engage the student in experimentation, ask for attempts to approximate a sound that the teacher or

another singer makes, or direct the attention of the learner through metaphor or imagery to the sensations experienced when making certain sounds. These and many other experiences may assist the learner in moving to the desired state.

You don't expect an exactly correct, polished performance at the outset. As the student's behaviour approaches the desired level of performance, reinforce it positively, staying aware of the slightest appropriate changes or signs of progress. The type of consequence learners experience as a result of their behaviour is the single most crucial determinant of the speed with which they approach the desired performance. "Positive" consequences tend to increase the rewarded behaviour in the future, while "negative" consequences merely disrupt or suppress on-going behaviour.

To ensure that the new behaviour is maintained over time, reinforcement must be scheduled in an effective way, initially through "continuous" reinforcement (where the teacher reinforces the new desired behaviour each time it occurs) and then through "intermittent" reinforcement (reinforcing through, say, a prescribed number of responses or a specific lapse of time). The learner goes for periods of time without reinforcement with the aim of having the desired behaviour become "self-reinforcing," where external strokes from the teacher are no longer necessary. The necessary condition for the attainment of "self-reinforcing" behaviour is consistency. Reward only the desired behaviour or the evidence of improved behaviour. The ultimate goal is to have the learner assume responsibility for motivating his own behaviour.

Finally, the learner needs an evidence procedure to determine progress. Often learners do not reach states that others have attained because their way of determining success is not sufficient. For instance, a person not singing in tune may never have built the auditory feedback procedures that most barbershop singers use unconsciously to determine their "intuneness". They might need feedback from outside to develop it. They might have to watch a dial that shows pitches matching or mismatching, follow a hand signal that indicates higher or lower, be directed to listen for beats between tones, or work on their ability to follow in unison. Another difficulty is to clearly understand the criteria to be met to be successful at a new skill. Front row performers may need to better understand the need for a relaxed, fluidly moving body, or develop a better sense of body rhythm. If you don't realize that your facial contortions or stiff hands are working against you, it will be difficult to deal with such impediments to achieving a desired state.

To summarize:

- The teacher presents a possibility towards which the learner is attracted.
- The learner compares present and desired states.
- The teacher provides information and activities that help the learner change.
- The learner acts upon his own awareness and skill to move toward the desired state.
- The teacher reviews and clarifies progress towards the goal at increasing intervals.
- The learner uses feedback to spiral closer to the desired state.

3. Levels of Change and Learning[3]

Some kinds of learning generate more change in us than other kinds. For instance, a spiritual change that allows us to realize that satisfaction in life is more about serving than about acquisition can have profound effects upon our sense of self, our beliefs about people, our capabilities, our behaviour, and our chosen environment. A smoker may not be able to change his behaviour until he no longer identifies himself as a smoker. He needs to change at the level of identity or self-concept. Here is a hierarchy for change or learning. Changes that take place higher on the list tend to generate significant changes lower on the list.

- **Spirit**
- **Identity**
- **Belief**
- **Capability**
- **Behaviour**
- **Environment**

Perhaps you've heard the slogan *Barbershop is Love!* Understanding that statement can generate tremendous positive change in people. Can this idea be taught? Can a teacher affect the **spirit** of a person in this way? Probably not directly. But everything a teacher in barbershop does carries that subtext. The example speaks. The reality comes through.

Are you a singer? What does a singer do? If your **identity** is "singer" you will do a great many things, believe a great many things, see yourself as capable of achieving a great many things. How can barbershoppers be convinced to see themselves as singers and therefore accept all the positive beliefs, capabilities, and behaviours that follow? Are we performers? Are we tuners? Are we

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[3] O'Connor, Joseph and John Seymour. *Introducing Neuro-Linguistic Programming*. Mandala, 1990

musicians? Teachers can use the assumptions behind the identities to motivate and empower.

Whether or not you, as teacher, believe in your ability to inspire others will largely determine whether you do. If you believe you can improve, you will. If you believe that you can achieve, you will find the resources and commit the time necessary. If you believe you have the time and energy to accomplish your goals, you will. **Beliefs** are self-fulfilling prophecies and result in the mustering of resources that result in success. Whatever one holds in one's mind, even subconsciously, tends to occur in one's life. If we dwell on problems, we find more problems, if we dwell on successes, we experience more successes. Such beliefs are self-reinforcing, whether for good or ill. This may be so for two reasons. It may be that our brains operate like computers that take input quite literally and, as a result, affect our behaviour subtly. It also may be that in hearing suggestions from authorities or even from ourselves, we consider those suggestions and maintain them without internal dialogue, thereby influencing our behaviour in the directions suggested

Capabilities are applicable in many different situations. They may not be used, but the possibility is there. When we generalize and develop widely applicable skills, we generate capabilities: fluid singing, word sound connection, vowel formation, balancing chords. Eventually capabilities might be generalized into empowering beliefs about ourselves. When that happens our capabilities are applied to each similar situation that we encounter, and we begin to transfer our behaviour to those like situations.

When we specifically learn to balance a chord, tune an interval, connect two syllables, move a certain way, learn a lyric, we are learning **behaviour** specifically useful in a certain situation. From there we may learn to generalize. Sometimes in working on a certain song, for instance, there may be "one of a kind" behaviours to master. Fine. It would be useful for everyone to recognize the general in the specific and develop the behaviour into a general capability, but that may not always be practical. Or perhaps that's a limiting belief! In any case, there is a necessity to regulate the environment to provide the best possible conditions and then work to overcome other environmental constraints.

When we relinquish responsibility for our own learning and blame someone or something outside ourselves, we impugn our **environment**. It is useful to believe that we usually have control only over ourselves; that we can only change ourselves directly. When we change, things change around us. It's not useful, however tempting, to blame the singers or the arranger or the weather or the government. We need to learn that continuing to do the same things we've always done will probably mean that we'll get the same results we've always gotten! It's tough to change the world, unless we realize with Pogo, "We has met the enemy, and he are us!"

Sometimes it makes more sense to teach capabilities or even skills than to teach to a higher level. Let's say you'd like a group to sing a particular song with a jazz feel, emphasizing beats 2 and 4, using a flatter, jazzy vocal quality and

moving with a jazzy attitude. Some members of the group won't have awareness of some of these components and you won't be able to change their sense of musical identity without major work and increased awareness of the component parts. For others who have listened to jazz and watched it performed, asking for a jazz feel will be an easy shortcut to the kind of performance you want.

Planning for Success[4]

Reflections

The key to getting what you want is to know what you want. Seems simple. But it isn't. Too often we get bogged down in the minutiae of now and forget about the greater context. As a teacher of a barbershop chorus, you are in a position of influence. Your spirit will affect the chorus members. Your identity will exist powerfully for each of them. Your beliefs will be expressed to them in myriad ways. You will bombard them with your capabilities, act upon them with your behaviour, and become an important factor of their barbershop environment.

After you have spent years with a group, they will reflect a lot of what is you, the things you're proud of and the things you think you are hiding from them. How do you want them to be after twenty years? How do you want them to be different as a result of spending more than a hundred hours a year with you as a person, a friend, a musician, a singer, a director, a teacher? They are in the process of exchanging time for experience. What kind of experiences do you want them to have? They will remember your attitude, your way of being with them, long after they have forgotten any individual instruction. What would you have them remember of you when they look back from the future?

For all of these reasons it is useful for every teacher to formulate his vision for the group and continue to refine and clarify it. Without clarity of vision, we do not have a benchmark for determining our own behaviour in front of the group. What spiritual qualities do we want to demonstrate? What identities do we want the members of the group to take on? What beliefs should form the background of our work and play together? What capabilities do we want to foster? How can our behaviour reflect the elements of our vision? Address these questions below. If you need to answer tentatively and them come back to them, that's a fine approach. After addressing them, write a conditional version of your own personal vision or mission as a teacher. Refinement and clarification should be an ongoing process that continues until you give up the mythical baton.

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[4]O'Connor, Joseph and John Seymour. *Introducing Neuro-Linguistic Programming*. Mandala, 1990

As a teacher, I would like to demonstrate the following qualities of spirit, identity, and belief, and these capabilities and behaviours:

Qualities of spirit, identity and belief

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Capabilities and behaviours

_____

_____

_____

_____

Needs Assessment

Most teachers get lots of practice listening and watching their chorus, deciding how to make useful changes, intervening with the group, asking for changes, teaching, reteaching, eventually meeting the need. Unfortunately, from time to time, teachers get carried away with this process because the need they perceive from their point of view is not the only need to which they must respond. Nobody ever said it was easy!

A strategy that has many benefits is to deliberately observe the situation from several points of view. This can be done in imagination (virtually) as well as in fact (actually). We can imagine what it would be like to experience the situation from the chorus member's point of view. We can also imagine what the situation might be like from an observer's point of view: a guest, a spouse of a chorus member, a member of an audience in performance. Each of these points of view is different and valid, and tells us something else about the situation.

While our own point of view is most near and dear to us, it is obvious that the members on the risers have a point of view that matters a lot. How might they feel about spending 20 minutes on a particular three bars that needs corrective attention? How can you therefore modify what you are doing in order to keep everyone involved and interested? How might they feel about spending

a whole evening working on only one song? What can you do to maximize the benefit from the time you spend and, at the same time, keep the level of attention and interest high? We tend to learn very little while exercising our negative feeling states. How can we keep everyone feeling good and enthusiastic about what they are doing?

It's possible to take a third point of view, that of the impartial observer. If this is difficult, a video camera running during the rehearsal may be instructive! What would an observer say about your relationship with the singers? What can be seen of maturity and wisdom? Is there caring and patience? Is everyone being respected? Are you practising efficient techniques for getting and maintaining attention? Is the time, minute by minute, being well used? Does the rehearsal move quickly and regularly towards improvement? Does the time drag or pass quickly?

Looking and listening from second and third person positions is a useful addition to your own point of view. As the teacher, you take everyone's point of view into consideration as you plan and preside over the process of learning and improvement.

Fashioning a Well-formed Outcome[5]

A well-formed outcome has a much better chance of being realized than an outcome that is not well-formed. This is so whether the outcome or goal is a minor one like balancing a chord or a major one like choosing substantial achievement goals for the chapter. A well-formed outcome is:

- **Positively Stated**
- **Owned by the Group**
- **Specific and Measurable**
- **Evident as Described**
- **Resourced Adequately**
- **Sized Appropriately**
- **Ecologically Sound**
- **Acted Upon**

Let's consider each of these conditions for a well-formed outcome. Of course most of this will happen unconsciously, especially in minor decisions. But the elements are there even so!

Well-formed goals are always **stated in the positive**. If you hear tension in a singer's voice, the goal is stated in a way that allows the singer to visualize and

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[5] O'Connor, Joseph and John Seymour. *Introducing Neuro-Linguistic Programming. Mandala*, 1990[5]

internally experience the desired state. If you say that you're going to get rid of the tension, the singer must think about (internally experience) the state of tension. If your goal is stated using words like "...achieve a freely produced sound, relaxed and open...", the singer internally experiences the state that is desired. Our brains are not designed to "not" do things. We can not "not think" of an elephant. In order to consider not doing something, we must first see ourselves doing it. "Don't fall down those stairs!" invites a person to visualize themselves doing just that.

Goals must be **owned** by those who are to be affected by them. People have to *buy in*; they must have made a commitment in order for the outcome to be effective for them. It isn't sufficient for our chapter leadership to set goals. The whole group must be involved in the process and decide to opt in. When the group says, "We're in!", you're off to a great start!

Goals need to be **specific and measurable**. *The who, what, when, where, how and why* need to be clear, and the context needs to be specified. Often teachers comment on things that need improvement without specifying particularly enough. Think of the front row performer who doesn't get specific feedback about the rigid hands, stiffness of movement, lack of fluidity or lack of attentiveness that interfere with his performance. Without criteria that can help measure progress, without specific feedback, there is less chance of learning.

Specific criteria also make it possible to know what achievement will look, sound, and feel like. The more fully success can be described in such concrete terms, the more likely it is to be achieved. The future time/look/sound/feel of success constitutes the **evidence** of achievement. It gives clarity to the process of learning and means for measurement.

Particularly when working with major outcomes, **resources**, internal and external, need to be assessed. A problem with resources turns around to become another goal: that of locating and using a needed resource. Resources are needed both to initiate and to maintain an outcome. Sometimes resources to initiate an outcome are different from those needed to maintain it.

A well-formed outcome needs to be of the right **size** for the situation. If the goal is too large to be achieved in a reasonable time, *chunk it down* to smaller goals that are both clear and believable. If the outcome is too small to be inspiring, *chunk up* by asking, "If I got this, what would it do for me?" Some chorus singers might not be inspired by learning to project a certain mood, or understanding the background of a song's composition. But if these bits are tied into being able to perform well enough for standing ovations, that goal might be big enough to inspire.

The **ecology** of an outcome, its relationship to everything around it, must be checked out. Suppose a group waxes enthusiastic about learning many songs and chooses a very ambitious program of new music learning. It may well be possible to meet most of the requirements of a well-formed outcome, yet at the same time put the rest of your program in jeopardy for lack of time and

attention. Some choruses choose to put all their effort into choral singing and ignore quartetting. The ecology check serves to determine if the consequences of the choice are going to be acceptable to the group as a whole.

Finally, **act**! Get on with the actions that will bring the outcomes.

Aligning Missions, Projects and Goals

Personal Mission

We know that choruses need to define their mission and articulate their vision of the future. Unless a group knows where it wants to go, it is very unlikely to get there. Motivation becomes haphazard as well because it is difficult to paint a big, bright, colourful picture of the future to present to the group that is unclear about the future it wants.

Individuals need to be clear about their missions too. If you are a barbershop chorus director, you have made a commitment to a chorus that involves untold hours of work and significant levels of energy to be expended for relatively insignificant financial remuneration. There is obviously more in it for you than the money!

There are usually three general areas of reward that are important to barbershop directors. There is, of course, the kick of being the leader, of being able to call some of the shots. It's good for the ego and most directors have a healthy ego. A director with wisdom has ego under control and is able to be confident, remaining open to information and input from others. An arrogant director is closed to input and has an ego out of control.

Most directors are also interested in the teaching process and want people to learn from them. They have something to offer and enjoy sharing with the chorus. The chorus is generally thankful and appreciative. The director gets a lot of personal satisfaction from being of service to the group.

Finally, the director may be there for the music: to create an artistic performance. The opportunity to *play* such a musical instrument is both humbling and exciting. Audiences can be transported by songs artistically sung, but the director gets to be the maestro, interpreting the music as well as refining the instrument.

So, how about you? Why do you direct a chorus or teach a group of barbershoppers? In a sentence or two, write down your personal mission as a barbershop teacher.

_____

_____

_____

Your Mission for the Group

The group you teach, the instrument you play, is comprised of individual people. Each of them has many other ways to spend their time. Our society provides a multitude of choices, and the group that makes your mission possible has chosen to spend its time, energy, and significant other resources in pursuit of satisfaction in barbershop. As a result of the time and energy they spend with you, what do you want them to gain? How do you want them to be changed as a result of the time they spend with you? As they exit the rehearsal hall or classroom after working with you as their teacher, director and leader, what would you have them feel and think? Ideally, what should their experience have been? In a sentence or two, write down your mission for them.

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Projects and Goals

Missions don't usually change very much. They may become refined over time or be expressed differently, but they're about the things that give us lasting personal satisfaction and meaning in life.

Projects change with time. As one project is finished, we find another to take its place. The nature of the project changes with the group, but may include contest placings, contest scores, improved skills, levels of knowledge, a road trip, an overseas tour, a successful show, a campaign to support youth, a financial contribution to charity, an entertaining show package, a successful camping event, or even a specified bank balance.

Projects have to fit with the group that undertakes them and should conform to the criteria for "well-formed outcomes". List some projects you think would fit the group you direct or teach.

1.

2.

3.

4.

Each project relates to the group's mission for itself and is ecologically sound. It also generates goals that will be further subdivided into smaller goals that will be achievable in the short term and eventually result in meeting the larger goal. Suppose a group decides to adopt as a project the achievement of middle "B" scores in a particular contest. The group currently scores in the high "C" area and is committed to musical improvement. Goals may include weekly performance skill development using videotaping and self-evaluation of performance skills with individual instruction for everyone once a month, and an emphasis on individual vocal production using a focussed warmup and small group instruction session each week for the first 30 minutes of each rehearsal. The vocal production goals could be subdivided into a goal to improve general singing posture on the risers, improved awareness of tuning, development of a freer, more resonant tone for everyone, and an improved sense of unity in the ensemble. Sounds like a program that would result in the achievement of the goal and eventually the project.

Choose one of the projects that you thought appropriate for your group and that you could be instrumental in working towards. What goals need to be met in order for the project to succeed? Keep in mind the criteria for "well-formed outcomes".

Project:

Goals:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Rehearsal Planning

It's About Time

One of the most significant challenges to successfully directing a barbershop chorus is the task of balancing the time allotted to the things that must be done. This balance will reflect your values and the values of the chorus. To further complicate matters, time spent on any particular endeavour is a clear – but often unconscious – indicator of its relative importance. So if you want to make something important to the group, you must spend time at it or they won't really believe it is important. Also, saying that something is important doesn't result in others believing it is important. Only spending time is convincing.

There are many demands. How much time is to be spent reviewing repertoire? How much time will be spent improving it? How much repertoire can be sung in an evening? How long does it take to sing it all? How will new members learn it? What kind of quality control should be exercised? How much time will that take?

These kinds of questions and their answers need to be dealt with by the team of people responsible. Similar questions can be asked about introducing new repertoire: how many, how often, learned to what level of skill, etc. We also need time for rehearsing performance, skill building, leader development and various other things that make demands upon the time available. Obviously, the time available for rehearsal is also an issue and is a reflection of the values of the group.

Noting the time available for each week and expanding your vision to include four rehearsals, divide the time among the activities that are important to you and your chorus. Work on finding a balance that will come closest to satisfying your mission for yourself and for the group. Calculate the four-week totals for each of the activities demanding time. Do your values and the time spent line up?

Scheduling a Month's Time

Activity	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total
1.Warmup					
2.Vocal instruction					
3.Performance instruction					
4.Other skill building					
5.Leader development					
6.Repertoire review					
7.Repertoire development					
8.Performance preparation					
9.					
10.					
11.					
Total time spent:					

It's About Variety

We are made to notice differences in our environment. The longer something stays the same, the less we notice it. In teaching, we recognize that if we wish to maintain the attention and interest of the learners, we must provide for variety. There is also a need for routine because routine provides a comfortable base from which to vary. But routine is not usually lacking at rehearsals and variety often is. Consider this list of things that can be varied at a rehearsal:

- The song being rehearsed
- The type of song
- The emotional content of the song
- The focus of interest: tonality, stance, quality, unity, balance, volumes, etc.
- The visual, auditory, or kinesthetic emphasis of the instruction
- The group's size and membership
- The teacher providing instruction
- The teacher's voice and body language
- The tempo of instruction and energy level
- The emphasis on learning or performing
- The level of group involvement in instruction

It's About Organization

Finally, with all these things in mind, organization is crucial. Without organization, many of the things you care about won't get done. The time will be eaten up by the new songs or the polishing of old ones, and you won't get to the teaching of performance skills or the development of musical leadership in the group.

Organization is also all about time and all about variety. Eventually the time allotted for every rehearsal is spent, minute by minute. So in order to include every repertoire song often enough, in order to ensure that the assistant director has enough front line time to direct in your absence, in order to get everything taught in time to perform well at the annual show, planning must be done, minute by minute.

In my experience, a spreadsheet or a grid like a spreadsheet is the best tool for this kind of detailed planning. It allows an easy check on whether there is indeed time to add the extra song that the show chairman asks you to learn at the last moment. It lets you know whether the group will be likely to learn the new repertoire song for which there is only an available 90 minutes of rehearsal time over the next month. It allows you to track the review of the repertoire and all the other issues which are important to you. And it is best done in cooperation with the other members of the music team organization. Take a look at the following example and notice how the time is spent.

Example Spreadsheet for Program Planning

Date----> Activity	Sep 14	Sep 21	Sep28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec7	Total Time
Warmup	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	195
Quartet Development	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	195
Business & Break	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	390
Craft			30	30	30	30	30							150
Gospel Package			15		15		15	30	30	30	30			165
Broadway Package	15				15			15			15	15		75
Memories Package	15	15		15			15			15			15	90
Extra Repertoire			15						15		15	15		60
Christmas Package								30	30	30	30			120
Contest Package		15		15		30								60
CD Rehearsal	30	30										30	30	120
Beginning to see the Light	Ch	30	10	10	10	15	10							85
Standin' on the Corner			Ch	30	20	15	10							75
Steal Away Medley	15	15s												30
Christmas Medley	15		10		20s		20							65
Gloria	30	15	10			15s	10							80
Mary Had a Baby			30	20	10	15s	10							85
Christmas Carols								45	45	45	45			180
They All Laughed												60	30	90
Million $ Baby													30	30
Total Time:	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	2340

Key: ch: choreo   s: section practice

Giving Positive Feedback

Encouragement[6]

People feel encouraged when they clarify their direction, when they recognize progress along the way, and when they accomplish their purposes. Comments that help them recognize their direction, progress, and accomplishment are encouraging and have the effect of energizing further goal-directed improvement.

Sometimes we intend to encourage but wind up discouraging people. One error that is often made is to set up unreasonable expectations. When the expectations are perceived to be unreasonable, the goal unreachable, the result is discouraging. When dealing with a chorus, it is important that the improvements they are asked to make are small enough to be attainable. This means that we often must *chunk down* to smaller goals.

People are discouraged when they do not make progress towards their goal. It is important to make progress available by asking them to progress in identifiable increments and to make sure they see their progress relating to the main goal. Often we ignore the movement towards the goal and fail to recognize improvement. Cheerleading is needed. It can be done without interfering with the momentum a good teacher establishes as the group moves towards the main goal.

When the main goal is achieved, it is time to be enthusiastic, to celebrate! There should be happiness spread over the teacher's face. There should be rituals of success to perform. Useful rituals of success can have a practice component: "Yes! That's it! That sounds fantastic! Now let's repeat that twice more quickly so that we have our three successful repetitions! Well done! Give us the pitch again please. Start at the same place everybody!"

The Positive Feedback Loop

Positive feedback is similar to encouragement and should remain encouraging. Any positive feedback must be perceived as genuine and honest or it will have a discouraging effect and be experienced as being insincere. It also should be specific. A general positive comment might set a useful tone, but its potential for engendering improvement is short-lived. Much better to be more specific, saying, "You've got good quality on that high "F", baritones!" than to say, "That's great, baritones".

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[6] Dinkmeyer, Don and Lewis E. Losoncy. *The Encouragement Book.* Prentice-Hall, 1980.

The positive feedback loop begins with providing a clear context for improvement. You inform the group, make them aware of the improvement that is needed, perhaps mention the steps that are to be taken, and get their agreement, preferably enthusiastic agreement. This is done speedily, not impeding the flow of the rehearsal.

Next, you specify the first increment of change. It may merit only a quick word, it may require a visual aid or a vocal demonstration, it may require a physical demonstration. Now you ask the group to make the change that have asked for.

As the group works to make the change, recognize improvement that individuals or the group accomplishes. Notice movement towards the immediate, short-term goal. Ignore lack of improvement at this stage. If some require further awareness, point out again the change you are asking for. Some people may wait to listen until after they've discovered that they aren't doing what is requested. Continue to notice improvement until all have accomplished the goal or the group as a whole is competent.

Now enthusiastically recognize the achievement of the group, practise the achievement, and return either to the next small improvement on the way to the goal or to the step of contextualizing the next major goal. Each small improvement can be a discreet step achieved and celebrated. Each major goal achieved is a reason for celebration and practice. The group and the individuals can spend the whole time moving towards improvement and enjoying their progress. People will recognize that they are having fun. The work will not feel like drudgery! You will have a group experiencing and noticing success after success!

Congruency

It is important to remain believable and real as you move your group towards improvement. When you ask for improvement, or are in explaining mode raising the awareness of members of the group, you may approach them with a certain seriousness. If you approach them seriously, you project certain physical, facial, verbal and emotional characteristics. These must agree with each other. Aligning your body language, facial expressions, voice tone, language and mood makes you believable. If you often kibitz and joke, it may be more difficult for you to get the serious attention of the group. If you fulfill their expectations and come out with a one-liner, you may prejudice the group against attending to the improvement you want. If your voice tone is angry or your mood is upset, there will be similar difficulties. The teacher must be aware of possible incongruities and their effect upon the learning situation.

To improve effectiveness, believability and congruity, it is useful to periodically take stock by adopting the "third person" point of view. Another possibility is to get feedback from others in the group or to utilize video feedback. Incongruities are often transparent to us and cause great perplexity.

We don't know what isn't working, but it isn't working! Often we need outside help to recognize incongruities in our teaching behaviour.

Pacing for Maximum Interest and Learning

Maintaining Involvement

Happy chorus singers are involved chorus singers. As a teacher, an important part of your teaching is to keep everyone productively involved all of the time. When the whole group is singing together, this is not a problem. But when a single voice or a voice part needs particular attention, what should the others be doing? If you don't give them something to do, they will make their own choices, and some of those choices will interfere with the outcomes you have for those who are getting your attention. How can you involve the others and still work effectively with individuals or sections of the whole? The strategy of choice when faced with difficulty is to **decrease complexity** so that you can attend to the specifics of the difficulty. How can that be done and involve everyone too?

If extensive work has to be done with an individual, don't do it in the large group. Ask a section leader or other competent person to take the person aside and work with them specifically or have an assistant director take over for you while you work with the person or small group.

If a part section needs work that requires everyone else to be singing, keep your instructions to the section very short so that everyone gets to sing with only short interruptions. Sometimes, everyone can sing the part that needs work. Sometimes everyone can sing lead with the single part group getting attention. Get the other parts to duet a short section with the group being corrected. Shift quickly from part to part. Have them all do the choreography but not sing. Perhaps have the others hum, loo, dut, or sing on some other neutral syllable. The over-riding consideration is to keep everyone occupied and to keep the instructions to the part group short and succinct. As soon as possible, get back to the whole; integrate the changes into the whole.

Talking Time - Singing Time

Clearly we ought to spend most rehearsal time singing. There is probably a direct relationship between the amount of singing time and the amount of improvement. Some of us spend too much time talking to the group. Usually if we need more than 20 seconds to give our instruction, the instruction need restructuring. An appropriate instruction is one that keeps the interest of the group, is clear, unambiguous, and asks for one change only. Speeches and exhortations should be saved for special occasions. If the group is regularly interrupted by long involved instructions, the group will learn very little. They can quickly fix one thing at a time and move on to another quick improvement. This is the way of progress: single, small, short steps that are realistic and achievable and that are consistently reinforced as each is achieved.

It is periodically useful to get someone to record the amount of talking time and singing time. You can do it yourself with a videotape of the practice. A reasonable goal is to get the talking time down to less than 30% of the total rehearsal time. To do that, the teacher has to learn to give concise, useful, short instructions, give one instruction at a time, and save the speeches for particularly useful moments. That's a huge responsibility, but it's worth it to everyone for teachers to have these skills.

Rhythm and Tempo in Teaching

Remember the story of the boiling frog. A frog dropped into hot water will immediately struggle to get out. A frog put into cool water and then heated slowly on the stove will not notice the change in temperature and will happily swim around until it expires and is cooked.

People are more responsive to their environments than frogs. We would probably notice the water getting hotter, although we would not be able to notice changes in temperature degree by degree. But the longer our environment stays the same, the less noticeable it is to us. If the chorus members are consistently exposed to the same level of energy, the same level of intensity, the energy and intensity become less noticeable as time passes. People notice and respond to *changes* in conditions around them. A teacher may be a terrific speaker, but if his voice is heard for long periods of time, time and time again, the group becomes largely deaf to him. They're like the boiling frog, *content* and not noticing the *content* of the situation.

The answer, of course, is to vary conditions and/or the method of instruction. Perhaps it is time to quickly move all the members of the chorus into groups of three to listen for the correction of a specified problem. Perhaps a humorous example can make a useful point. Maybe the group can sing the section of the song to a neutral syllable, thus emphasizing their ability to attend to rhythmic difficulties. Cultivate and utilize many instructional options.

A group should seldom be asked to attend to one thing for more than 15 to 20 minutes. If in doubt, watch for the first yawn. If you're working on an uptune, change to work on a ballad. If you're attending to singing skills, use the next time period to focus on choreography or unity or expressiveness. Find someone else to talk to the group from time to time so that they get a break from your voice. Have someone else teach the next thing, direct the next song, lead the next activity. If your teaching tempo is characteristically upbeat and fast-paced, treat the group to a change of pace and spend five minutes working at a more leisurely, relaxed tempo.

The **Uptime** *Teaching State*

We find ourselves in a variety of physical/mental/psychological states as we move from activity to activity in our day. Each state has its own set of

characteristics and is useful for its purpose. Our state differs, for instance, as we move from a relaxed "put-your-feet-up-and-read-the-paper" time to a "quick-let's-hide-the-mess" scurryfunging time to prepare for unanticipated guests. Our internal state while having a shower differs from that of a problem-solving state as we adjust the lawnmower carburetor.

When we consider our future, examine our level of stress or think about what we ought to change about our way of relating to others, we move into a *downtime* state. We *go inside*, examine our feelings, listen to our bodies, talk to ourselves, and other similar things.

In *uptime* our attention is entirely outward. We're pretty much unaware of internal sensations, we entertain no self doubts. Rather we are noticing the responses of those around us, listening to sounds we hear, planning strategies to improve what we see and hear, working with the questions and concerns of those around us, remaining alert to the cues that indicate confusion or understanding. This is the state a director or teacher needs to take on. All the bits of attention we have available are focussed not on ourselves, but on the elements of the teaching situation and the responses of the learners.

The route to the *uptime* state includes preparation to allow us to do most things unconsciously. The planning, determining the emotions in the song, the ability to encourage, the ability to choose useful interventions are all unconscious competencies or accomplished tasks. If we're missing skills that we need, we have to temporarily ignore our limitations or spare just a little attention for the purpose of personal improvement or skill practice. After preparation comes decision. Decide to spend all of your available attention on the group and the task. Watch how each person responds to an instruction or to the practice you request. Expand your awareness to encompass the whole group. Focus on watching and hearing. Put yourself in decision-making mode. Resist movement into the *downtime* state until after the rehearsal time when reflection and planning once again become appropriate.

Achieving Vividness

The Learning Curve - Planning for Retention

Sometimes a learning experience can be so impactful that there is no need for review or relearning of any kind. Fortunately, this one-time learning often happens on the level of belief or identity. However as a chorus member works through the many things that must be learned to convert written music into performance, a certain amount of forgetting is to be expected.

If a first exposure to a body of material is impactful, most of the material can be learned in one session. After a week, however, a lot of what could be demonstrated as learned has been forgotten. It is relearned much more quickly in the second session, and more will be retained until the next time. Once again, at the third session, some will be forgotten. But it is relearned even more quickly and even more is retained until the next time.

As we plan our rehearsals, we keep the learning curve in mind and patiently and knowingly build in sessions of reteaching to follow initial learning experiences. The difficulty of the material will determine the number of learning sessions needed for mastery. After mastery is achieved, periodic review is sufficient to maintain the high level of accomplishment.

Sometimes it is helpful to make strategic use of the capacity of the group to forget. If you wish to make major changes to an arrangement or performance plan, it is often helpful to leave a song unsung for a while. Then keep in mind that the group will have to **unlearn** what they knew. It is best to provide extra practise time to replace learned material with new material. Groups find the process of relearning very challenging and often frustrating. Be prepared to respond with extra patience and very detailed instruction.

The Learning Curve
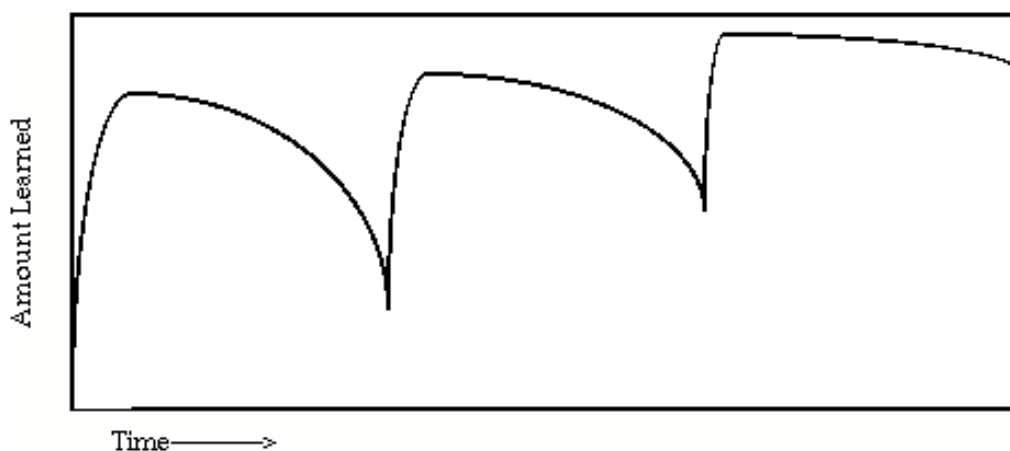
Recency and Primacy - Positioning for Retention

It's helpful when planning your rehearsal time to remember the laws of *recency* and *primacy*. People tend to remember the first (prime) and last (most recent) events in a series. Take advantage of that. If something crucial must be learned quickly, work on it both first and last. Things elsewhere in the learning sequence then need particular attention to vividness. What can you do to make the middle events stand out and acquire characteristics that will be memorable? Consider using visual or kinesthetic strategies, a different tempo, something written, a blackboard, another voice, a different teaching strategy.

Multimodal Teaching - Building Vividness

People are obviously not all the same and they don't all learn best in the same way. Many teachers learn best by **hearing** and therefore have a tendency to talk and expect people to learn from them that way. But most people in our culture learn better by visualizing and by acting. Our teaching is much more powerful for them if we encourage **visualization** and expect **action** in the learning process. We need to overcome the limitations of verbal communication and the minimum movement involved in standing on risers in assigned places.

Visual learners can be helped in a number of ways. Music and choreo sheets are somewhat visual. Diagrams are useful. Demonstrations can be seen. But probably more productive is the use of visual metaphor and colourful images that the teacher uses to describe the effects he would like to hear. Singers respond wonderfully to requests for sounds that soar and float like an eagle poised on a thermal, or a voice quality that suggests the color purple. Our imagination is our best source of inspiration.

Nearly everyone finds **movement** useful in learning, although many men in our culture are not used to this kind of learning. Strutting around the practise hall to ingrain the rhythm and tempo of a song is a powerful learning activity. Waltzing to a rubato ballad can teach the concept of forward motion as well as teaching the rhythmic variations in such a song. But again, metaphors of action and feeling are probably more generally useful. We understand what it means to sing with a sound that is warm and vibrant. We can express emotions vocally in song much as we do in speech. The phrase "Sing this as if..." and a metaphor of action or feeling can be one of our most useful tools.

Because learning barbershop is largely concerned with sound, it requires a lot of auditory skill. Visual skill is also required. Emotional and physical (kinesthetic) skill is also very important. Fortunately, most people have skill in all of these areas. However, people tend to have a primary learning mode - **auditory, visual,** or **kinesthetic** - which works best for them and to which they retreat when under stress. As teachers of barbershop, it is useful to be aware of these differences in learning styles and to utilize teaching strategies that are effective for all learners. It's also important to make the learning situation as stress free as possible so that people can use all their learning modes.

Only a small proportion of the population uses **auditory** learning as their prime learning mode. You can find auditory types standing in the hallway beside their conversational partners making only occasional eye contact. For the auditory learner, having to look at a speaker is distracting. It's best to concentrate on listening. Conversational distance is determined by ability to hear in the current environment. His characteristic posture is to stand with his weight on one foot, arms crossed, head tilted to aim an ear at the speaker. Usually the voice quality is widely modulated, almost musical and lilting with pitch changes. The **auditory** learner records sounds and can recall them in detail. Chances are that tag teaching is a strength with him, although he may have to sing a part through from the beginning to get it right. His internal sound recordings tend to be in time sequence and it's hard to start the recording in the middle for playback.

He will find learning music relatively easy but may need extra attention in order to master physical moves and may pay little attention to his appearance. You may have to straighten his tie and remind him to polish his shoes. He's probably a competent student. Our school system has traditionally served **auditory** learners best.

The **kinesthetic** learner is the second most common in our culture. About 20% of the population has this learning strength. It encompasses both physical and emotional strengths. These are closely related. The **kinesthetic** learner prefers to be within touching distance when in conversation. He would like to reach out and connect. Eye contact is important, but closeness is required. Two body types are common: the person concerned with fitness and body shape and also the slightly overweight pear-shaped person who will probably be expert at sorting and accessing emotions. The voice quality tends to be pitched low and resonant with a chesty quality. Deep breaths and sighs are common.

This man needs to **feel** the rightness of what he learns. Extra time may be needed to learn notes and words unless they are linked to emotional movement in the song or to choreography. He has no difficulty singing from the heart!

Most people in our culture are **visual** learners. The visual learner needs to be making eye contact in order to feel like he is being heard. He prefers a conversational distance that allows him to see his conversational partner from head to toe. A **visual** learner tends to wear brightly coloured, fashionable clothing and takes care with his appearance. There is no typical body type, but a forward tilt to the neck and head is common. **Visual** people often breathe shallowly and speak with little resonance and a nasal quality.

Visual anchors are needed by this group of learners. Teaching by rote with no music or visual plan to follow makes learning difficult. Learning is enhanced for them by providing a written agenda, a bulletin, a bulletin board, handouts, etc. Such visual aids are often ignored by other learners, but not those whose primary mode is **visual**. Visual metaphors are powerful. Paint the scene, invite them to see a picture of the action, show them the choreography, describe things colourfully in vibrant detail, form shapes with your hands and arms as you help them picture the scene.

Skillful teachers find ways to make their lessons powerful for all learners. A powerful lesson has **auditory, visual** and **kinesthetic** elements. Emotions are suggested, movement encouraged, pictures suggested at every stage of the learning process. The learning environment is kept as friendly and safe as possible in order to make it possible for every learner to function well in all learning modes.

Nonverbal Chorus Management[7]

Discipline on the risers is a concern of many chorus directors or teachers. The behaviour of the chorus members can be influenced by a great many things, most of which are under the director's direct control. They include director behaviours like the level of eye contact between the singers and director, positive reinforcement skills, smiling and frowning, talking time and singing time, pacing, and the level of preparation for the rehearsal or lesson. Behaviour on the risers can also be influenced by directing motions that seem abrupt and dismissive, directing with too much detail, giving confusing messages, general body language that contradicts verbal messages, and many other factors.

One of the confusions that causes difficulty is the constant need to switch between performance and instruction modes. This is difficult because during instruction people tend to take a disassociated point of view to enhance their ability to learn, and during performance people need to take an associated point of view where they have direct access to emotional states. The usual result for most of our chorus members is that they remain disassociated in both instances and we complain about the lack of emotion and "heart" that we see and hear in their performance. Or the singers get frustrated with having their heartfelt performances constantly interrupted with instructional information.

The goal for performance is that the chorus will sing from the heart utilizing their highest level of skill unconsciously, skills transparent to the listener, while the song and its message and emotions are communicated artistically with no interference. How are skills brought to the level of unconscious competence? By the intent to do so through practise and repetition. How does artistry become the essence of performance? By the intent to do so through rehearsal unsullied by instructional interference.

By deliberate use of the space in front of the chorus and with appropriate body language, the director indicates non-verbally whether the group is to be learning skills or performing. By appropriate positioning in the instructional space, questions can be answered in ways that include the whole group. By paying attention to volume levels and pauses while speaking, the director can teach a group to be uniformly attentive. By isolating emotional outbursts and negative messages and removing them physically from the areas of instruction and performance, the instructional and performance areas can remain unpolluted by negative feelings.

Most directors get angry from time to time, and some even behave periodically in ways that are very like tantrums. This usually indicates a need for power over a particular situation and a lack of other more respectful strategies. If the director must exercise this option, there are some important effects to know about. First of all, the brains of all affected members of the group will be flooded with biological chemicals

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[7] Grinder, Michael. ENVoY, A Personal Guide to Classroom Management. Michael Grinder and Associates, 1995

that will make both heartfelt performance and learning quite impossible for ten to twenty minutes depending upon the length and severity of the negative experience. Secondly, the director and all things associated: voice, face, space, etc. will be polluted by the event. The director should move away from any space used for instruction or performance and realize that the next ten to twenty minutes will be unproductive.

This diagram illustrates positions from which a director can effectively manage the learning and performance of a chorus.
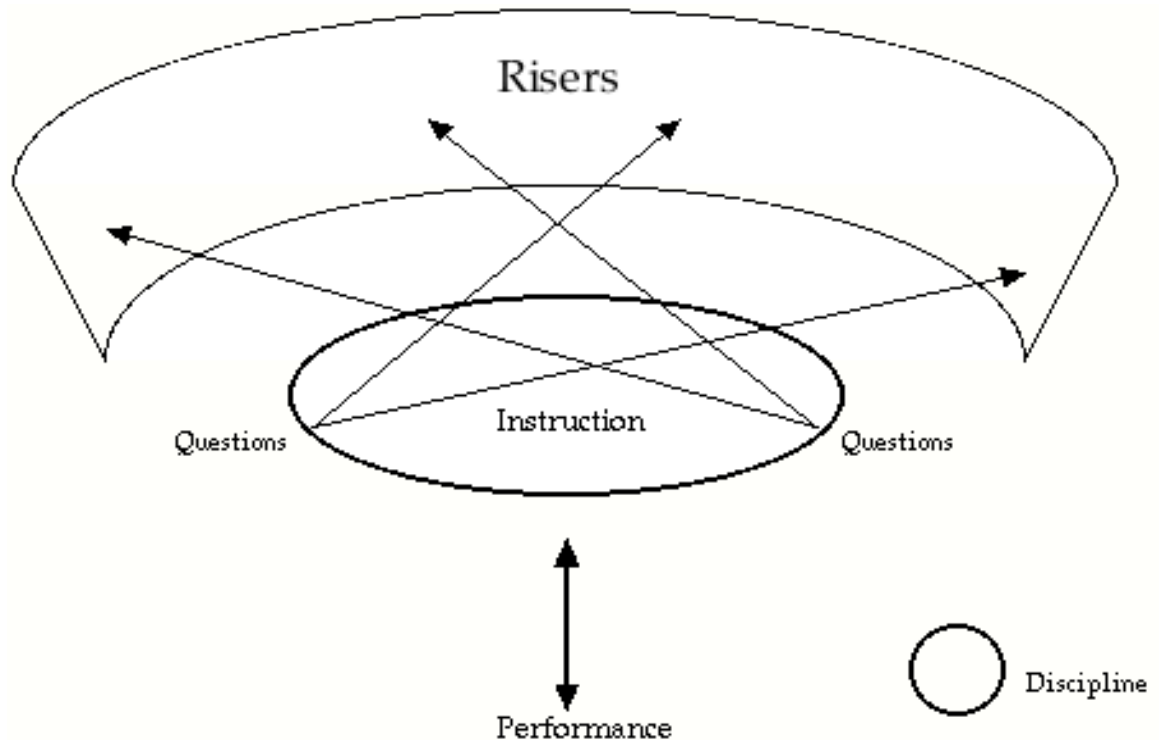
Additional Anchors

The following additional strategies also help to manage the learning and performance states of a chorus.

- Attention / Pause and breathe / Whisper
- Stillness for attention to instruction
- 20 seconds from instruction to performance
- 20 minutes from anger to productivity
- Chair for "heart-to-heart" discussions

Planning for Peak Performance

Everyone experiences a peak performance once in a while. The ideal for a group is for everyone to experience it at the same time.

A peak performance is not going to be the same for everyone, however. Ideally, each person should be able to associate entirely into a song and sing it completely from the heart. There will be no conscious thought given to skill use. Everyone will be engaging all of their skills at the unconscious level. Skills must be previously built and practised until they are unconsciously available. But everyone can have a peak performance using all of the skills they currently command. The first requirement is to eradicate nervousness as a factor.

How to Kill Butterflies

This exercise to eradicate nervousness relies on the fact that body and mind are not exclusive entities. It is used to help children who experience heart palpitations. What happens with the body affects the mind. Nervousness is a mental state with very strong physical manifestations. It includes such characteristics as negative self talk, visualization of imagined scenarios, and sick feelings in the stomach area. It also includes shallow, rapid breathing, an elevated heart rate, and cool sweaty skin. If you can get rid of the physical manifestations of nervousness, you also get rid of the mental ones. Of course, a persistent person can always get back to nervousness if they choose to. Fortunately the exercise can be learned ahead of time so that the body has experienced the physiology of calmness and can get back there again.

Relaxation Exercise

1. Stretch (optional)
2. Massage diaphragm (optional)
3. Breathe deeply and hold it
4. Relax neck and shoulders
5. Self-administer coupage (optional)
6. Fold arms under rib cage
7. Exhale against tightly pursed lips in three short, pressurized, spaced bursts
8. Throw arms up to inhale quickly and deeply
9. Throw arms down to exhale quickly and completely
10. Walk around and notice the pleasant sensations
11. Massage jaw muscles and clear Eustachian tubes (optional)
12. Notice enhanced hearing acuity (optional)

Common Peak Performance Characteristics

People experience their "zone" of peak performance in ways that are unique to them. Each person sees, hears and feels different things. However, there are some characteristics of the peak performance state that are more commonly experienced and which can serve to help us find our own particular route to peak performance. Once we know four or five characteristics of our own peak state and take those on with deliberate intent, the other, perhaps more unique characteristics will flood in upon us and make the state complete.

To begin, think of a time when you personally experienced a peak performance. Once you have recalled such an event, deliberately step into that experience again and relive it. Make sure you live it from the inside out, totally associated into the event. Now, mentally step back and notice what you see, what you hear, and what you feel while you are in this state. If you visualize something, how do you visualize it differently than usual. Is there a change in clarity, brightness, position in the visual field, colour quality...? If you hear something, how does it sound? Is there a difference in position, vocal quality, instrumentation, volume, closeness...? What about feelings and body awareness? What differences do you notice? Particularly, notice which characteristic comes first and tends to lead you into the rest. This "lead characteristic" will be useful in initiating deliberate movement into peak performance

Peak Performance Characteristics

Visual Characteristics
- Elevated visual focus
- Clearer, better focussed vision
- Enhanced colour definition

Auditory Characteristics
- More resonant voice
- Resonant, respectful, validating self-talk
- Enhanced auditory acuity

Kinesthetic Characteristics
- Slower time sense
- "Matter-of-fact" feeling
- Continuous whole-body awareness
- Relaxed, easily-moving abdomen
- Sense of increased warmth, space, size and height
- A sense of enveloping aura
- Sense of being grounded, connected, stable, secure

- Continuous, supple relaxed body motion

Linking Relaxation and Peak Performance

Now that everyone can achieve a relaxed state and has identified the characteristics of their peak performance state, practise achieving the first as a group and then moving as a group to peak performance state. At that point, it will be time to perform!

Here's the routine:

1. Do the relaxation exercise, perhaps with some of the optional items a couple of times.
2. As the repetitions of the exercise end, each person deliberately associates into their best performance state, deliberately taking on the characteristics that are the strongest for them by first taking on the "lead characteristics" that begin the movement into the peak performance state.
3. Intensify those feelings, sights and sounds, making them familiar.
4. Notice your energized body, elevated gaze, enhanced sense of space, your confidence, poise and calm. Notice your profound sense of pleasure in accomplishment.
5. Feel the sense of dominating the stage and audience with your generous presence.
6. Notice and strengthen your intention to magically create the songs anew, to perform freely and generously, to let go and soar carefree.
7. In a way that works to enhance the state of the group, take the pitch and sing with all your intentions focussed and active.
8. Between songs, breathe deeply and renew your intentions, revisiting the characteristics of your peak performance state. Between songs in the performance, strengthen your intention to perform at your peak. Persist in maintaining the state.
9. As the curtain closes, notice the energy, the good feelings, the sense of wonder and accomplishment. Give thanks!

Planning Future Personal Learning

Directing a chorus is an experience full of challenge and opportunity. There are many constituencies to satisfy and many difficult choices to make. The chapter board has expectations and concerns, the music team requires leadership, the chorus members deserve to use **their** time productively, audiences will make their opinions known, and you have goals, hopes, concerns and expectations of your own.

Teachers give a lot. It's in the giving that much satisfaction is gained. All the constituencies appreciate the efforts and the positive results. Some, but by no means all of them will let you know. You will be held in high regard for the things you contribute. That feels good.

Teachers get to learn a lot. It's almost a survival skill. There is no end of useful things to know and no end to helpful improvements in directing or teaching skills. It's useful to take on the task of directing as a life-long learning experience and enjoy the challenges, changes and accomplishments.

In return, the chorus learns music, improves its performance, improves its singing skills, and benefits in many ways from what you do. The music leadership team members improve their teaching skill and hone their leadership abilities. They contribute to you and to the chorus. The chapter board engages itself in activities that support you and the improvement of the chorus.

Our intentions are all wonderfully positive. Our egos are healthy, we appreciate being appreciated, and we recognize our limitations and desire to improve. An always useful question is, "What can I do to be more effective?"

The Buddy System

It is useful to have a buddy in the chorus who will give you structured feedback about your directing and teaching skill. Find someone whose expertise you appreciate as a director, a teacher, or even as a careful observer. The person you choose must be willing to give honest, sensitive feedback, both positive and negative. He or she must also understand that you will welcome the feedback and be willing to listen objectively and share your intentions for improvement. The relationship must be one in which both of you feel safe and respected, and where improvement is being sought.

Plan to have your buddy give you feedback once or twice a month on **one thing only** that you have decided to make your focus for that evening. Just as the members of the chorus can improve only one thing at a time, so it is with you, especially because most of you attention needs to be with them, not with you. Your buddy should sit out of the chorus observing and writing pertinent observations that will be the basis of discussion later. There should be enough

detail in the written observations so that the context will be clear to both of you when you discuss it later in private.

Your focus of improvement might be:

• scheduling rehearsal activities
• improving the clarity of instructions
• communicating well-formed outcomes
• improving positive feedback and recognition of movement towards goals
• improving believability and removing incongruities in your behaviour
• investigating talking time and singing time spent in rehearsal
• improving instruction with kinesthetic and visual activities
• planning and sequencing learning activities
• noticing the level of attention of the learners
• checking the degree to which respect is present between you and the chorus

Teaching is very much an art. Have courage and try to learn how to be more effective. Trust yourself and your buddy to make sense out of the observations and decide upon useful directions for change.

Video Feedback

Video is a useful medium for feedback, but it is not the whole answer. It is at the same time capable of giving you more information than is useful and also not focusing on the information that you specifically need or want. It is just another point of view.

To maximize effectiveness, have a focus of observation determined ahead of time and have the camera man aware of the focus and search out the most useful subject to record. From time to time, have the camera man record the chorus and note their responses to your teaching. At other times a view or yourself from the side or from the risers would be useful information.

Video feedback is useful, but it does not replace the observational skills of a trusted partner giving feedback.

Guided Self Analysis

The study instruments you will find in Appendix A form the basis for the next phase of the work to become an excellent teacher of barbershop. They are meant to become part of the unconscious background that accompanies you as you teach. They are also meant to be used at least once every two months and shared at least once a year.

Once every two months, have someone videotape your chorus rehearsal. If you just let it happen, you will be able to ignore the camera after a short time.

Take the tape home and guide yourself through an analysis of your teaching using the "study instruments" provided. Invite your "buddy" to join you and share in the experience. It will be useful to have someone to talk to about it. View, analyze, and decide to do one or two things differently. Put it away, let your subconscious work on it, and carry on. Look again in another two months.

In eight months or so, it will be useful to get feedback from someone else who has experience using guided self analysis. Fill out the study instruments for a 45-minute rehearsal segment and send the completed study instrument with the videotape to someone who can give you feedback on your own observations. They can offer a different point of view and perhaps some insights that will be of value.

Some time in the future, perhaps at another Director's College, take "The Master Teacher". With the background and skills you gain in taking "How To Teach What You Know" and doing a year of guided self analysis, you will be ready to deepen your understanding of the teaching process and undertake some more exciting growth as a teacher of barbershoppers!

Guided Self Analysis Study Instruments

Study Instrument 1: The Learning Process

Study Instrument 2: Levels of Change and Learning

Study Instrument 3: Three Points of View

Study Instrument 4: Well-formed Outcomes

Study Instrument 5: Giving Encouraging Positive Feedback

Study Instrument 6: Pacing

Study Instrument 7: Achieving Vividness

Guided Self Analysis - Study Instrument 1 - <u>The Learning Process</u>

- Give a key word or phrase for each new awareness you communicate to the group.

- Give a key word or phrase for the motivation you offer them.

- Give a key word or phrase for the kind of instruction you use.

- Note the words of positive feedback used.

- Note the number of times the new awareness is practised.

	Awareness	Motivation	Instruction	Feedback	Practise
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

Is there anything in this data that would suggest a useful change?

_____

_____

_____

Appendix A

Guided Self Analysis - Study Instrument 2 - <u>Levels of Change and Learning</u>

Give a key word or phrase for each new awareness you communicate to the group.

Note whether the awareness offered to the group is intended to be effective at the level of spirit, identity, belief, capability, behaviour, or environment.

	Awareness	**Level of Effectiveness**
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Is there anything in this data that would suggest a useful change?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Guided Self Analysis - Study Instrument 3 - <u>Three Points of View</u>

Observe rehearsal segments lasting about five minutes each.

Note a key word or phrase that characterizes the activity of the segment.

Note the concerns that were evident to you as the director.

Note concerns that might be evident to a member of the chorus.

Note concerns that might be evident to an impartial observer.

	Activity	Your concerns	Singer's concerns	Observer's Concerns
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

Is there anything in this data that would suggest a useful change?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix A

Guided Self Analysis - Study Instrument 4 - <u>Well-formed Outcomes</u>

Note an outcome towards which you were working during a rehearsal segment.

For the conditions that were met for each outcome (**positive, owned, specific, evident, resourced, sized, ecological and acted upon**) place a check mark in the column indicated. For the conditions not met, place an "X" in the column. For any conditions not met, make suggestions in the "comments" section.

Outcome	P	O	S	E	R	S	E	A
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								

Comments:

Guided Self Analysis - Study Instrument 5 - <u>Giving Encouraging Positive Feedback</u>

   With a key word or phrase, note the circumstance in which positive feedback is given. Code the remark with an "s" if it recognizes something specific and with a "g" if it is more general. Use a "√" to indicate that the remark was genuine and an "x" to indicate a lack of genuineness. If the remark was in a conversational tone, mark its level of enthusiasm with a "1", if enthusiastic a "2", if very enthusiastic a "3". Code with an "i" if the remark recognizes improvement, and with a "a" if it celebrates achievement.

Circumstances of positive remark	s/g	√/x	1/2/3	i/a
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

Is there anything in this data that would suggest a useful change?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix A

Guided Self Analysis - Study Instrument 6 - <u>Pacing</u>

For a recorded session of 30 to 45 minutes, clock the amount of time speaking and the amount of time singing.

Talking time: _____   Percent talking: _____

Singing time: _____   Percent singing: _____

Total time: _____   100% _____

For the time spent singing, clock the time the whole group is involved and the time spent with only part of the group singing.

Whole group: _____   Percent whole involved: _____

Part group: _____   Percent part involved: _____

Total time: _____   100% _____

For each 5-minute segment of the practice, record the general pace as "f" for fast, "m" for medium or "s" for slow.

1. _____   4. _____   7. _____

2. _____   5. _____   8. _____

3. _____   6. _____   9. _____

For each 5-minute segment of the practice, code a "u" if you are primarily in uptime, focusing on the group, or a "d" if in downtime, focused inward.

1. _____   4. _____   7. _____

2. _____   5. _____   8. _____

3. _____   6. _____   9. _____

Is there anything in this data that would suggest a useful change?

_____

_____

_____

Guided Self Analysis - Study Instrument 7 - <u>Achieving Vividness</u>

For 45 minutes of rehearsal, note a key word for each separate activity. Code each activity for its purpose: "1" for an introduction, "2" for a follow-up, "3" for a later follow-up, "4" for review.

Rank each activity as to its importance: "1, 2, 3, 4, 5, ...

Code each activity "v" for including visual and "k" for kinesthetic components.

	Activity	1/2/3/4	1,2,3,.....	v / k
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				

Is there anything in this data that would suggest a useful change?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Visualization

Visual constructed images

Visual remembered images

Constructed sounds

Remembered sounds

Kinesthetic
(Feelings and bodily
sensations)

Auditory Digital
(Internal dialogue)

NB. This is as you look at another person
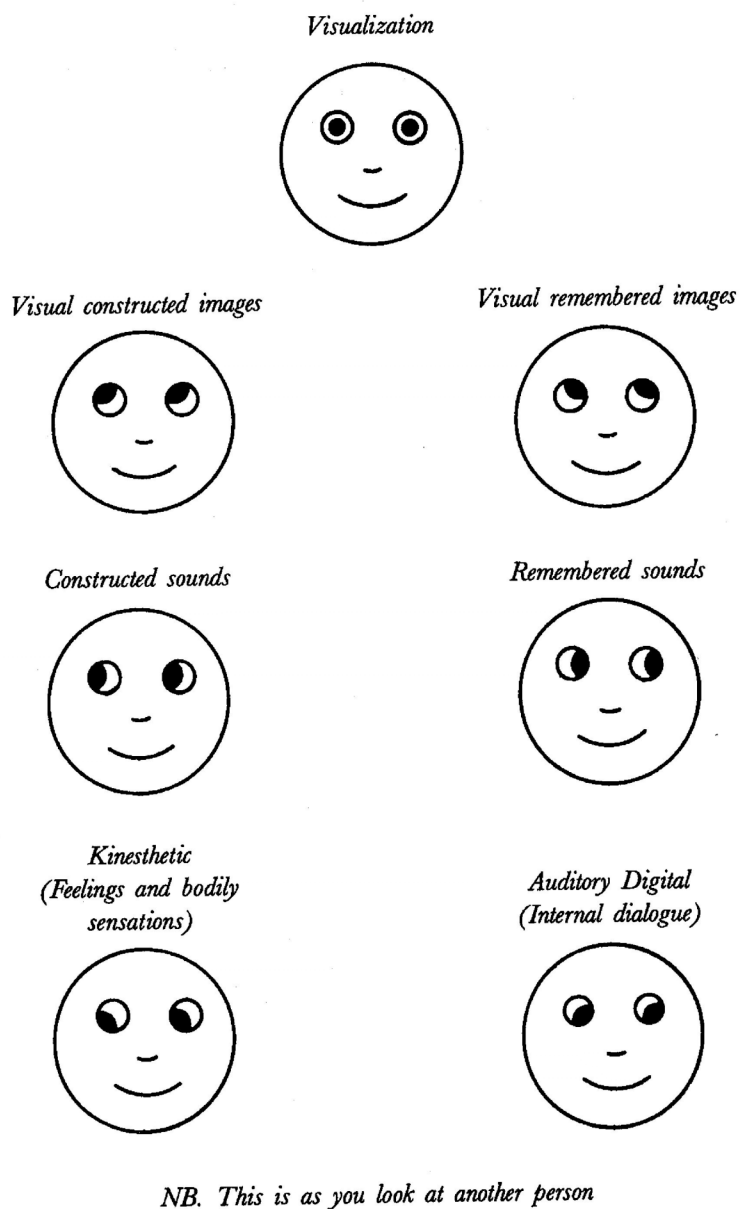
Thinking and Eye Motion

Examples of Sensory-Based Words and Phrases

Visual

look	blank	examine	notice	survey
picture	visualize	eye	outlook	vision
focus	perspective	focus	reveal	watch
imagination	shine	foresee	preview	reveal
insight	reflect	illusion	see	hazy
scene	clarify	illustrate	show	dark

Auditory

say	sound	audible	ring	dissonant
accent	monotonous	clear	shout	harmonious
rhythm	deaf	discuss	speechless	shrill
loud	ring	proclaim	vocal	quiet
tone	ask	remark	tell	dumb
resonate	accent	listen	silence	

Kinesthetic

touch	warm	sensitive	gentle	heavy
handle	cold	stress	grasp	smooth
contact	rough	tangible	hold	
push	tackle	tension	scrape	
rub	push	touch	solid	
solid	pressure	concrete	suffer	

Neutral

decide	meditate	evaluate	motivate
think	recognize	process	change
remember	attend	decide	conscious
know	understand	learn	consider

Olfactory

Scented	fishy	fragrant	fresh
stale	nosy	smoky	

Gustatory

Sour	bitter	salty	sweet
flavour	taste	juicy	

Visual Phrases

I see what you mean.

I am looking closely at the idea.

We see eye to eye.

I have a hazy notion.

He has a blind spot.

Show me what you mean.

You'll look back on this and laugh.

This will shed some light on the matter.

It colours his view of life.

It appears to me.

Beyond a shadow of doubt.

Taking a dim view.

The future looks bright.

The solution flashed before his eyes.

Mind's eye.

Sight for sore eyes.

Auditory Phrases

On the same wavelength.

Living in harmony.

That's all Greek to me.

A lot of mumbo jumbo.

Turn a deaf ear.

Rings a bell.

Calling the tune.

Music to my ears.

Word for word.

Unheard-of.

Clearly expressed.

Give an audience.

Hold your tongue.

In a manner of speaking.

Loud and clear.

Kinesthetic Phrases

I will get in touch with you.

I can grasp that idea.

Hold on a second.

I feel it in my bones.

A warm-hearted man.

A cool customer.

Thick skinned.

Scratch the surface.

I can't put my finger on it.

Going to pieces.

Control yourself.

Firm foundation.

Heated argument.

Not following the discussion.

Smooth operator.