

Middle School Observation Report

1. Prepare some interview questions in advance of the field visit and report on the interview. Review the suggested questions on p.33 for the middle school teacher and p. 98 for the high school teacher. (BT 2-2/ 6-5 p.33/ p.98)

What is the “pass-off”?

This is a type of individual examination system that pushes the students according to their individual abilities and turns it into a creative testing situation. Each student receives his or her own specific progress and tasks to perform for the teacher.

How do you deal with the problem of students going through the pubescent voice change period?

She pushes the guys to continue singing in falsetto as much as possible, and also has an all-boys chorus class where all the boys can sing high without fear of being laughed at by others. She makes sure to acknowledge that this situation is happening and does not try to cover it up or ignore it.

2. Observe warm-ups used by the teacher and notate them. Analyze the apparent objective for each exercise and if you think it is achieved. Include what worked and why, and what you might do differently. (BT 3-3/ 7-2 p.50/ 112)

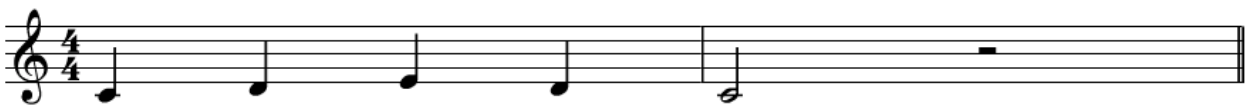
Standing and stretching

- Help the students physically relax and be ready to produce a good tone

Sirens

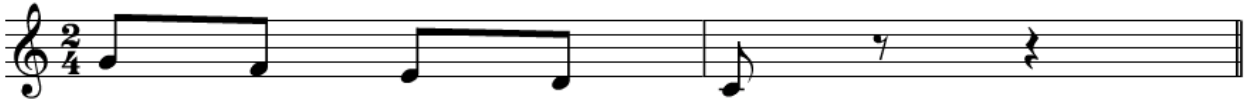
- Start the voice going, make use of entire vocal range and get the energy flowing

Notated Warm-up #1



- Starts with having students hum this warm-up
- Moves up by half steps
- Has students find an area of the room where they are away from other students
 - Focus on their own personal sound and to learn to listen to themselves
- Goes through many different consonants, including “v”, “z”, “th”
 - Has students start with a closed consonant and move to a vowel, “nn” to “ah”
 - Starts with “dwah” and ends with “suh”
 - All of these work on different ways to start a word, last activity works on the shortness of the consonants

Notated Warm-up #2



- Uses vocable “bi”, very short and fast
- Descends by half-step, starting from the highest pitch of previous warm-up
- Break between each eighth note
- Works on breath control, creating a good, focused sound right from the start, and also being able to stop the sound with the diaphragm

Harmonic minor scales

- Allows students to pick the starting pitch
- Sing using solfege, starting on “la”
- Two octaves ascending and descending, also using solfege hand signs
- Reminds students to watch posture
- Helps students become flexible with keys, also gives them a chance to control the warm-up process

Notated Warm-up #3



- Has students do this exercise as they walk back to their chairs, keeping the class flowing and efficient
- Allows usage of consonants and vowels in quick succession
- Allows quick change of pitches in ascending and descending patterns

Extra Warm-ups from the other class:

- “Head, shoulders, knees, and toes” song to wake up the younger boys chorus
- Doing arpeggios and having the students pick the starting pitch

3. Observe the choral rehearsal to analyze the overall plan and learning objectives, as well as steps to achieve each of the objective and its assessment. (BT 5-5 p.84)

The teacher began by placing an exercise on the screen, and students went through it individually using solfege and hand signs. She had them give a thumbs-up when they were ready to sing it. After counting off with the starting pitch, she had the students sing it while conducting themselves, which allowed them to keep themselves in time. The teacher made a note that they should always observe the time signature during the count off.

The teacher then went through the songs. She made sure that the students were in a good singing posture and had them hold the first note before beginning a piece. She also made

sure to ask if certain parts still needed to sing in solfege, showing that she went through these steps for all the parts; she made sure each student was comfortable singing with solfege before moving to the written words.

She had individual parts stand up when she wanted to work with them, and also reminded the other parts to be audiating their own parts. She was very good with providing immediate feedback, and was very specific in what she wanted to work on, and would repeat sections if necessary.

She also had students work individually on parts that seemed a bit newer, and sometimes even to work in partners. This allowed the students to try to discover how to do something on their own instead of simply having the teacher say it.

After going through the planned songs, she did an activity called “sudden death”, in which all the students would stand up while the teacher ran through short rhythms on the screen, page by page. They would get more complex over time, and when one student made a mistake, he or she would have to take a seat. Eventually, the final students standing would continue until a mistake was made or all the pages were completed, and a prize would be given to the winner(s).

4. Any other observations?

The teacher also almost stood very near the students during the rehearsal, and only moved to the podium during a piece that was ready to be performed. She moved around constantly to assess each of the students, and would move back at times to give her the ability to move forward when she wanted to emphasize something.

She was also very good with providing facial expressions while still maintaining a very calm demeanor. She had good control of the class, and did not need to do very much to quiet the class down other than just telling them to stay quiet.

The rhythms were done using the “takadimi” method, which was very good at helping the students differentiate between the different note lengths, and it was also very clear where in the measure the students were, depending on which part of “takadimi” they were saying.