

## Assessment in the Choral Classroom

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Questions to ponder:

What is the current educational atmosphere in your state/district/school/department?  
How do we stay relevant and avoid being the Choir Director Left Behind?

WHAT -

“the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there”

### 5 Principles of Assessment for Learning

1. The provision of applicable feedback to students.
2. The active involvement of students in their own learning.
3. Adjusting teaching to take account of the results of assessment.
4. Recognition of the profound influence assessment has on the motivation and self esteem of pupils, both of which are critical influences on learning.
5. The need for students to be able to assess themselves and understand how to improve.

### The Instructional Time (Where the magic happens!)

- Teachers spend 35% – 50% of instructional time asking questions

#### What are you asking?

What are you asking?

On average 60%-70% of the questions asked are on a lower cognitive level requiring rote learning or memorization  
ex: What's the key signature?, Are you using good posture?

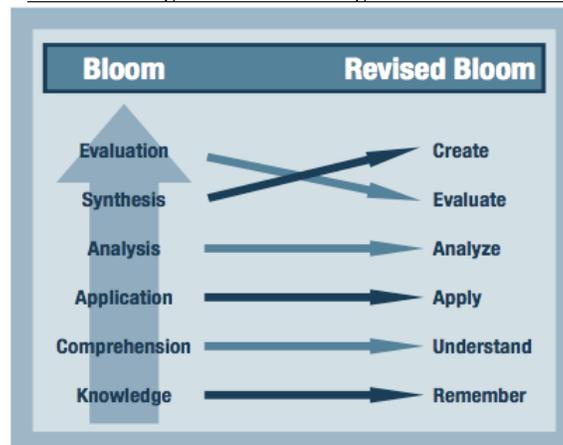
Balance our instruction with learning concepts and learning processes (Higher Cognitive)

ex. Explain the process to find the key signature of this piece? What are the benefits of having good posture?

Fostering learning through questions:

- think of questions ahead of time (score study)
- look for questions that might promote deeper investigation (text painting)
- balance factual (rote/memory) with inferential/synthesis questions

### HOW: Strategies for Maximizing Instructional Time



Source: A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, 2001.

## Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (RBT): Application in the Choral Rehearsal

### **Remembering:**

Recalling Information: (recognizing, listing, describing, retrieving, naming, finding)

Question:

- Define dynamic?
- Name the key signatures?

### **Understanding:**

Explaining ideas or concepts: (interpreting, summarizing, paraphrasing, classifying, explaining)

Questions:

- Identify the melody as it is transferred through each voice.
- Can you explain the meaning of the text in your own words?

### **Applying:**

Using information in another familiar situation: (Implementing, carrying out, using executing)

Performance tasks

- singing exams
- sight-reading

### **Analyzing:**

Breaking information into parts to explore understandings and relationships: (comparing, organizing, deconstructing, interrogating, finding)

Questions:

- Outline the form of a piece
- Compare sections of a piece (ex: A vs A')

### **Evaluating:**

Justifying a decision or course of action: (checking, hypothesizing, critiquing, experimenting, judging)

Questions:

- What elements contribute to measure X being the climax and why?
- Use your state audition rubrics to evaluate a concert performance.

### **Creating:**

Generating new ideas, products or ways of viewing things: (Designing, constructing, planning, producing, inventing)

Activities:

- Video program notes (students create)
- Technology implementation/Composition opportunities (finale, garage band, audacity, etc...)
- Improvisation (in warm-ups)

## Explore Different Types of Assessments

### **Closed Tasks (RBT – Remembering)**

Types of Test

- Multiple – choice items
- True – false items
- Fill in the blanks
- Solve (without showing process)

Benefits:

- Useful for assessing content-based standards, not useful for process-based standards
- Assess students' knowledge of facts, skills or concepts
- Take less time, thus allowing time for performance tasks

### **Open Tasks and Constructed Responses (RBT - Understanding and/or Analyzing)**

Types of Tests

- Tasks with different possible answers
- Tasks with different possible processes

Benefits:

- Uses processes of strategies
- Ability to interpret
- Ability to apply information
- Ability to communicate thinking

**Performance tasks** (RBT – Apply)

Types of Tests:

- Integrative tasks that yield specific results
- Extended projects

Benefits:

- Ability to synthesize and apply information and skills

**Informal Assessments** (RBT – Creating)

Types of Tests:

- Observations, Checklists
- Work samples, portfolio
- Conversation (class or individual)

Benefits:

- Understanding of a topic or concept
- Ability to communicate or collaborate

**Self-Assessment** (RBT – Evaluating)

Types Tests:

- Group reflection (class discussion about performance)
- Self evaluations

Benefits:

- Develop awareness of strengths and weaknesses
- Helps teachers and students identify goals

**Getting Started**

1. Choose 1 or 2 types of assessments to implement
2. Be consistent in your implementation
3. Avoid negative use of assessments
4. Professional Organizations
  - ChorTeach (online)
5. Colleagues
  - teacherspayteachers.com
  - sharemylesson.com
  - betterlesson.com
6. Textbooks
  - Voices in Concert (Hal Leonard)

**Where Does This Lead?**

- Improved curriculum implementation
- Pathway of understanding for non-musicians, administration and parents about your contributions to the overall development of each student in your class.
- Better singers
- Lifelong music appreciators