

Choral Connections

Enhancing Choral Experiences from a Distance



Choir Evaluation Project

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 **Books**

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A stylized rocket ship with a dark blue body and a green-to-yellow gradient cone representing the engine exhaust. The rocket is positioned on the right side of the slide, pointing upwards. The background is dark blue with several yellow four-pointed stars and a brown curved shape in the top left corner.


01

Rationale

Rationale



The premise of a choral festival or contest is for choirs to perform two to three contrasting pieces of music and receive an overall rating on their musical and technical performance elements. In these events, choirs do not compete against each other, but against a standard set by music leaders in the state.



While choir members know they want to receive the highest rating, they often do not truly understand all the elements involved in evaluation. Therefore, we believe there is value in experiencing the process as an adjudicator. This project will allow students to listen with expanded ears, making it more fun and engaging than simply writing a concert review!

A stylized illustration of a rocket ship in a dark blue space. The rocket is dark teal with a lighter teal gradient on its body and a bright yellow-orange flame at the base. It is surrounded by several yellow four-pointed stars and a large, faint, light blue oval shape. The background is a dark blue gradient with a brownish-orange curved shape in the top left corner.

02

Project How-To

Step 1

Analyze

Beginning Choirs

Pick your state's adjudication form or pick one from other state.

Advanced Choirs

Pick two forms to compare. Vote on the preferred form.

Most Advanced Choirs and Collegiate Students

Compare several state forms and then design your own form.

Sample State Forms



Florida

https://fva.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/adj_choral_performance_yellow.pdf



Michigan

<http://www.msvma.org/Resources/Documents/District%20Choral%20Festival%20Performance%20Rubric.pdf>



Missouri

<https://www.mshsaa.org/resources/pdf/lggrpforms.pdf>



Ohio

<https://omeapdc.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/pdcpgrubric.pdf>



Pennsylvania

<https://www.pmea.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Chorus-MPA-Assessment-Form.pdf>

Guided Discussion

Analyzing an Adjudication Form

What system do adjudicators use to evaluate? Is it a number system or a rating system?

The answer can be both. Adjudicators may use a number system when first evaluating and then give an overall rating.

What musical criteria is the adjudicator rating?

Answers may include pitch, rhythm, tone, technique, overall presence, etc.

What specific differences exist between the highest rating and the lowest rating?

Asking students to compare differences between the highest and lowest ratings will help them have a deeper understanding of what they will listen for.

Do I understand the terminology used on the form? What words are new to me?

Students may not understand all the vocabulary. Use this as an opportunity to teach them new concepts!

[Click here for a printable student worksheet](#)

Guided Discussion

Comparing Adjudication Forms

What are the systems adjudicators use to evaluate? Is it a number system or a rating system? Which do you feel is more relatable to choir students?

Push students to discuss the differences, even among different numbering systems. Do students think it would be better to receive a high or low number to mark excellence?

Do I understand the terminology used on the form? What words are new to me?

Students may not understand all the vocabulary. Use this as an opportunity to teach them new concepts!

What criteria does each form evaluate? Are all criteria in the same categories on each form? Do you agree with one more than the other?

Answers can include: pitch, rhythm, tone, technique, overall presence, etc. See if one evaluation has more or less criteria.

Look at the descriptions of the highest and lowest ratings on each form. What distinguishes them? How are other forms similar and different?

Direct students to see how language varies among and between forms.

Try to create descriptions of sounds that would be distinguished by some of the vocabulary. For example, what is the difference between a “healthy, vibrant tone” and an “energized tone?”

Asking students to articulate images of sounds they have already heard will help them understand some of the nuance between the vocabulary words.

Where is a choir when they first start a piece? At what point are they at a middle rating? Why do some choirs never achieve the highest rating??

Asking students to create an aural image of sounds they have already heard for each category will help them distinguish the ratings.

[Click here for a printable student worksheet.](#)

Guided Discussion

Create Your Own Adjudication Form!

Step 1: Review the comparing adjudication forms questions.

Step 2: Decide on your rating scale

Step 3: Pick your categories and subcategories for evaluation (Pitch, rhythm, stage presence, etc.)

Step 4: Write your rubric giving descriptive criteria for each category and rating differences.

Step 5: Bring all of this together in a table using a word document or a google document.

[Click here for a printable student worksheet](#)

Step 2

Listen & Evaluate

Beginning Choirs



Listen to/Watch two different recorded songs your choir has performed. Evaluate them on the rubric you've chosen.

Advanced Choirs



Listen to/Watch two different recorded songs. Compare ratings with other choir members (and the director) to see how they differ. Take the average of all individual ratings to see the group rates overall.

Collegiate/Choral Methods

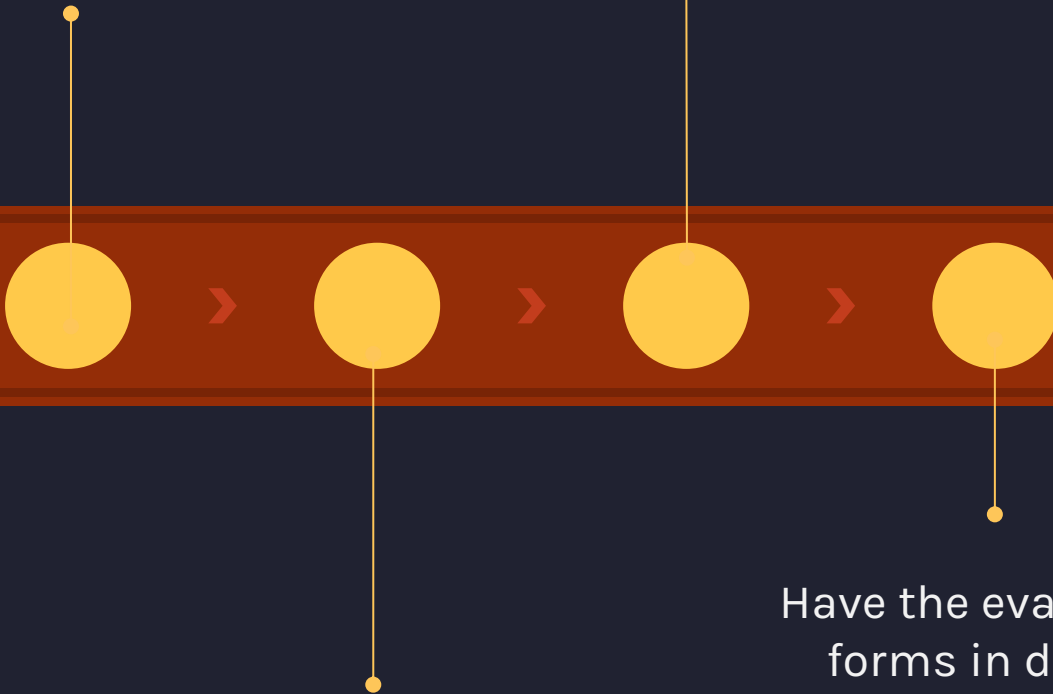


Listen to a single choir performing two different selections. Evaluate them on your rubric. After evaluation, design three clinic activities you could try with them to help work on different musical and technical elements.

Tips

Evaluate a performance together as a class.

Make a model project for your students.



Have half of the class complete an evaluation on one form and the other on a second form. Reflect and compare the ending result.

Have the evaluation forms in digital format so students can type comments and highlight the boxes for their ratings.

Step 3

Reflect

Project

Complete a podcast project



Online

Hold a synchronous online discussion through zoom or google classroom



Creative

Sing repertoire a different way to try and change a rating or improve a category.



Traditional

Write an essay or fill out a worksheet



Reflection Questions

How has taking on the role as an adjudicator motivated you to change your participation in the ensemble?

Which criteria were the hardest to rate? Why do you think that happened?

Why do you think class members had different ratings? What could we do to make them more uniform?

What do you wish you could tell adjudicators about the evaluation process?

[Click here for a printable student worksheet](#)

Step 4

Celebrate Findings



Create an "Awards Ceremony"

What categories would we use?
Who would we judge?
How would the rubric influence our decision?
Vote on winners!



Design Creative Swag

Make t-shirts that express choir strengths.
Design a class moto.



Highlight at Concert

Let students inform listeners at the concert.
Do a sample adjudication process in the concert.
See PROGRAM PROJECT for other ideas.

Awards Ceremony



And the Award goes
to the **SONG** with the best....

Facial Expressions:



Physical Connection
to the Music:



Vowels:



Tone:



Musical Expression:



Accurate Technique:



[Click here for a printable student worksheet](#)

A stylized rocket ship with a dark blue body and a green-to-yellow gradient cone representing the engine exhaust. The rocket is positioned on the right side of the page, pointing upwards. Several yellow four-pointed stars are scattered across the dark blue background. A thick orange horizontal bar is at the bottom of the page.

03

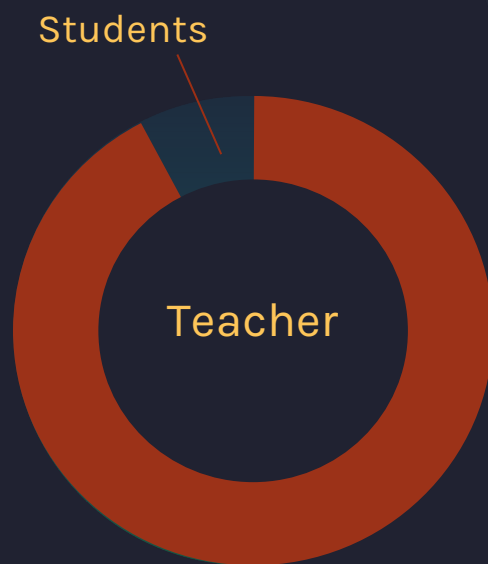
✧ **Expanding
Ideas**



Who really is receiving the score during adjudications?

Director Centered

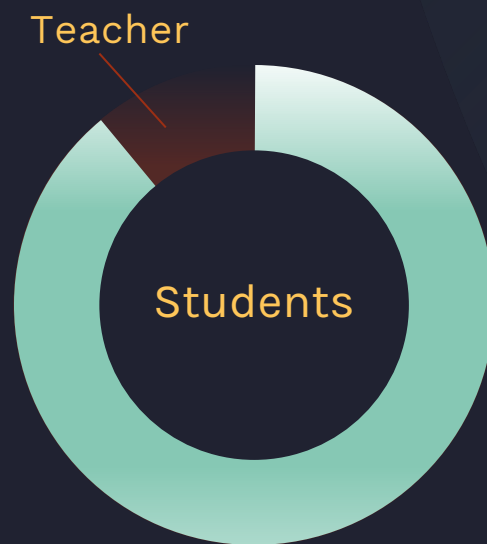
State evaluation rubrics are assessing the affect the choir director has on a group of students. Specifically, how well has the director instructed the students? How effectively did the director teach the correct notes, rhythms, dynamics, and phrasing? Did they instruct students how to appropriately stand and act? The state evaluations do not consider how hard the students worked, how much progress they made, or how much initiative they took in their own learning.



The teacher models and instructs students, allowing little opportunity for student engagement in the process.

Student Centered

How would state evaluation rubrics look if evaluation happened during the process? What adjustments should be made to the evaluations to have the students at the center this process? How can we help students connect the adjudication score to motivations and how can we engage students more in the process of learning?



Students are at the center, understanding the evaluation form and making motivated, informed decisions. The teacher serves as a facilitator in this process.

Expanding the Rubric

Consider making new categories that put the responsibility back on students.

*Follows Director and/or matches student markings in score regarding:
(Circle Answer)*

Articulation

Seldomly

Infrequently

Sometimes

Frequently

Consistently

Dynamics

Seldomly

Infrequently

Sometimes

Frequently

Consistently

Phrasing

Seldomly

Infrequently

Sometimes

Frequently

Consistently

Diction

Seldomly

Infrequently

Sometimes

Frequently

Consistently

*This example can be given throughout the year to show growth during the rehearsal process.

[Click here for a printable evaluation.](#)

Expanding the Rubric

Work Ethic: Are we... (Circle Answer)

Motivated?

Seldomly

Infrequently

Sometimes

Frequently

Consistently

Focused?

Seldomly

Infrequently

Sometimes

Frequently

Consistently

Supportive?

Seldomly

Infrequently

Sometimes

Frequently

Consistently

Prepared
for rehearsal?

Seldomly

Infrequently

Sometimes

Frequently

Consistently

Improvement: Are we... (Circle Answer)

Reflecting?

Seldomly

Infrequently

Sometimes

Frequently

Consistently

Challenging
Ourselves?

Seldomly

Infrequently

Sometimes

Frequently

Consistently

[Click here for a printable evaluation.](#)



04

Assessment

Beyond the Rubric

The best kind of assessment for a project like this is not a grading rubric that shows a student learned one or two concepts or completed one or two tasks. Rather, students should complete a portfolio that shows growth and learning over time through understanding, reflection, and change.



Beginning Choirs

Portfolio Checklist

Analyze:

- ☐ Completion of Analyzing an Adjudication Form Handout

Listen/Evaluate:

- ☐ Completion of an evaluation rubric with comments

Reflect:

- ☐ Completion of reflection project

Celebrate:

- ☐ Completion of Awards Ceremony Handout

[Click here for a printable student checklist](#)

Advanced Choirs

Portfolio Checklist

Analyze:

- ☐ Completion of Comparing Adjudication Forms Handout

Listen/Evaluate:

- ☐ Completion of an evaluation rubric with comments

Reflect:

- ☐ Completion of reflection project

Celebrate:

- ☐ Completion of Celebrate Findings option

Expanding Ides:

- ☐ Complete “Expanding the Rubric” Handout

[Click here for a printable student checklist](#)

Collegiate Methods Classes

Portfolio Checklist

Analyze:

- ☐ Completion of Comparing Adjudication Forms Handout
- ☐ Creation of new evaluation form

Listen/Evaluate:

- ☐ Completion of an evaluation rubric with comments
- ☐ Design three rehearsal techniques

Reflect:

- ☐ Completion of reflection project

Celebrate:

- ☐ Design celebration projects for three levels of choirs

Expanding Ides:

- ☐ Position Paper: Who does the adjudication process really judge?

[Click here for a printable student checklist](#)

Thanks!

Do you have any questions?

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Meet the Authors

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