Program 4: Choosing Instructional Approaches

Music

SEGMENT 1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Janice Hunton
14 years teaching

About the School

Arts High School
Perpich Center for Arts Education
Golden Valley, MN

Type:
Statewide residential program/
Arts-focused public high school

Grades:
11-12

Students:
300

Very mixed socio-economic status

Majors:
Dance, Literary Arts, Media Arts, Music, Theatre, and Visual Art

About the Music Program

Faculty:
5 (2 full-time, 3 part-time)

Students:
75-80

Facilities:
Above Average in the Area
- Performance hall
- 2 music classrooms
- Choir rehearsal room
- 10-station keyboard/midi lab
- 14 soundproofed rehearsal rooms
- Recording studio
- Sound booth with 3 isolation rooms

Audition:
Admission involves both academic and artistic evaluation.

Required Courses:
Participation in four seminar classes per year including Electronic Music, Theory, Interdisciplinary Studies, World Music, Composition, History, Technique, Improvisation, Vocal Performance, and the Role of Music in Culture. Students also must participate in four ensembles and one interim class lasting three weeks.

Elective Courses:

About the Featured Classes

Ear-Training:
Students develop the ability to hear musical patterns of pitch and rhythm and reproduce them through singing and notation in this daily skill-building class. Students must take three quarters of ear-training a year.

Course Requirements:
Students take a pre-test each year to place them in one of four ear-training levels.

Student Motivation:
Mixed. Those who will pursue music in college understand that ear-training is a necessary evil, while others consider it a waste of their time. This perception changes throughout the year, as students gain more skills and understand how those skills can enhance their music understanding and performance.

Student Level:
Mixed

Student Ensembles:
All music students participate in four ensembles per year, choosing their members, their style of music, and specific pieces of music to prepare for concerts.

Student Motivation:
High. Students are motivated by accountability to their fellow ensemble members.

Women’s Choir:
The Arts High School choir is the school’s only large, conducted ensemble. Students volunteer to participate in it and do not earn extra credit for doing so. The choir offers students a chance to develop rehearsal techniques and problem-solving strategies that they can carry into their own ensemble rehearsals.

Student Motivation:
High

Student Level:
Mixed

In the Teacher’s Words

What do the numbers on the chalkboard refer to?
The series of numbers are scale degree numbers and refer to the placement of notes in the scale. They are similar to “do-re-mi,” but I use 1-2-3 instead.