CHORAL LITERACIES and STANDARDS

Level-Based Developmental Markers of
Performance and Musicianship

INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONS

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Easy How-To Use Introduction:
Choral Literacies and Standards *(CLaS)*

Please refer to specific details in the following document

CHORAL DIRECTORS: *follow this process*

1. SCAN Form 2 **All Levels Poster** to familiarize yourself with general goals
2. SCAN Form 3 **All Levels Poster Details** for specific details for all levels curriculum
3. READ Form 4 **SELF-ASSESSMENT TEXT** to determine the *general level* of your ensemble, *(15-20 minutes)*
4. CHOOSE from Forms 5-8 which **SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET** fits the *general level* of your ensemble's performance literacy
5. ASSESS MUSIC READING using Form 9 **MUSIC READING SELF-ASSESSMENT** *For sight-reading materials and information, go to* www.toolsforconductors.com
6. SELF-ASSESS using the **SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET** using the detailed descriptions of mastery of each literacy area. "How often does the ensemble demonstrate…?" *(15 minutes per ensemble)*
7. SCORE: Give a numeric score to all TEN areas of literacy and average
8. ASSESS: September, Pre-Adjudication, June at a minimum
9. ASSESS individuals as well as Ensembles

CONTEST and FESTIVAL COORDINATORS, ADJUDICATORS: *follow this process*

1. SCAN Form 2 **All Levels Poster** to familiarize yourself with general goals
2. SCAN Form 3 **All Levels Poster Details** for specific details for all levels curriculum
3. READ Form 10 **ADJUDICATION TEXT** to determine the *general levels* of ensembles that you will listen to *(30 minutes)*
4. COLLECT SELF-ASSESSMENTS: All participating ensembles will REPORT A SELF-ASSESSMENT to the Coordinator two weeks prior to the event
5. CHOOSE from Forms 12-15 which **PERFORMANCE EVALUATION and ADJUDICATION form** fits the *general level* of each ensemble's performance literacy
6. WRITE the Self-Assessment score from each school on the Adjudication form.
7. ADJUDICATE each area of literacy using the detailed descriptions of mastery of each literacy area. "How often does the ensemble demonstrate…?"
8. HIGHLIGHT areas of Mastery, CIRCLE areas needing attention, DRAW ARROWS from areas of strength that can help areas of need, providing a ROAD MAP for the next steps
9. SCORE: Give a numeric score to all TEN areas of literacy and average
10. ASSESS MUSIC READING using Form 15 **MUSIC READING EVALUATION and ADJUDICATION,** *For sight-reading materials and information, go to* www.toolsforconductors.com

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Introduction and Definitions

1. What is Choral Literacies and Standards, or CLaS?

CLaS is a curriculum guide made up of markers of development for all singers of all levels of ability. This curriculum guide gives teachers, districts and administrators a common language to build curriculum and collect level appropriate resources and repertoire.
CLaS defines vocal technique, musical technique, artistry, and music reading as literacies. As singers grow in these areas, they grow in musical literacy—literacy is defined in twelve areas of ability, not merely music reading.
CLaS is an Assessment tool for Ensembles and Individuals. Collecting reliable and useful data in the choral classroom is a challenge. This system allows teachers to track ensemble and individual progress throughout the year, as well as receive consistent outside feedback. Meaningful data can be collected, and administration can know exactly the learning goals and outcomes.
CLaS is an Adjudication tool. This process allows adjudicators to use the same language as is being used in the classroom, to focus their listening, and to give useful and reliable feedback, and provide a "road map" for future growth. Because the focus is on growth, *CLaS eliminates the I,II, III or Gold, Silver, Bronze method of adjudication. The subjective and inconsistent scoring on a 100 point scale or defining what a I means is solved.*
CLaS encourages Music Reading Skill Development. Levels of ability are defined as numbers, and through assessment, directors define their choirs as a 1.3, or 2.7, menaing that each level is a *range of ability.* CLaS has created music reading Assessment examples based at every level, 1.0-1.9, 2.0-2.9 etc. and provides reading samples for Treble Voices, Tenor Bass Ensembles, and Mixed Choirs. Music Reading teaching and Adjudication can easily meet every choir at their ability level.

2. What is Level-Based?

Traditional methods and attempts at building a graded choral curriculum, face challenges not shared in the band and orchestra worlds. In instrumental ensembles, students begin study at the same time and advance, ideally, by grade and year. For example, it is relatively easy for a junior high band director to find *Grade 3* resources and repertoire, and be fairly certain that these will meet their curricular needs.

Publishers have tried providing labels such as *Easy, Medium, Difficult*, or *Grade Level.* But these terms are indefinite and vary from publisher to publisher and between editors! Some adjudication forms have taken into account the varied abilities of smaller and larger schools, or younger choirs versus more advanced, by adjusting the scoring, allowing for a lower score to receive a higher grade. But the descriptors and scoring is still marking *down from a subjective perfect standard.*

CLaS is a Level-Based series of definitions of literacy and standards of excellence at every level of development. The markers of development are based on experience, technical development, and literacy. *It is not determined by age or school size!* Every choir and every singer can find *themselves* defined in this gathering of literacies. The list as a whole defines the *entire life* and *growth* of a choral singer.

CLaS encourages growth in many ways. It is a rare ensemble that will be assessed at the same level in all of the areas of literacy! If we consider our own artistry, we recognize areas of strength and areas that need to grow, our ensembles are the same and this system encourages us to build

on strengths and develop areas that need attention. For example, *Choir X* might be easily a 3.7 in areas of Tone, a 3.1 in areas of Breath, 2.9 in areas of Artistry, and 2.1 in Music Reading. Director of *Choir X,* can apply elements of their strength in Tone, to improve their Artistry, and then spend more effort on Music Reading. Each choir has their own road map to success.

3. Definitions of LEVELS

LEVEL 1 Entry Level Singers of All Ages. Regardless of gender or age, a senior citizen choir, a new church choir, a non-auditioned college choir, and many school choirs will benefit from teaching toward these standards or using them as a starting point in the year.

LEVEL II Elementary and Middle School Choir, emerging High School, Church, or Community Choirs, non-auditioned Collegiate Choirs. These markers assume LEVEL I knowledge and ability, or assume that the singers can be taught the literacies defined in LEVEL II without prior instruction. These skills are a great place to start in first rehearsals for many choirs.

LEVEL III Advanced Middle School, Junior High Choirs, many High School, Church, Community, and entry-level Collegiate Choirs. These mileposts and markers are ideal year-end goals for most of these ensembles. Some may even be exploring basic LEVEL IV techniques in some areas as well. LEVEL III skills are a great place to start for many excellent high school, college and community choirs.

LEVEL IV Advanced High School Choirs, excellent Church and Community Choirs, many Collegiate Choirs. Many of our finest high school ensembles and collegiate ensembles achieve high LEVEL IV literacy and technique. These skills and techniques are a great place to start for our most advanced collegiate and community ensembles.

LEVEL V High-level Collegiate, Church and Community Choirs, many Semi-Professional Choirs. These markers of development define the techniques of our finest collegiate choirs, as well as church choirs that employ professional singers or are highly auditioned, our best semi-professional ensembles also demonstrate these literacies.

LEVEL VI Top Professional and Semi-Professional Choirs, a Rare Collegiate Ensemble. These markers define the ultimate in vocal, musical and artistic technique, as well as the highest level of musicianship. Only our top professional ensembles demonstrate these literacies, and even at best, only some areas depending on rehearsal time, literature, or personnel. For this reason, this level is not included in the Assessment and Adjudication materials. But they are included on the ALL LEVELS CHART for the benefit of choirs and singers seeing how far they can grow.

4. Goals and Philosophy of CLaS:

This Level-Based Developmental Markers approach to Assessment and Adjudication allows teachers and adjudicators the chance to get **specific** and **accurate** assessment of **growth.** The chart clearly lays out the entire life of a singer as well as the development of ensembles throughout the world. The focus is *assessing accurately* where a choir or singer is in their development, and providing *clear and specific pathways* for growth.

Through Assessment the director can, first, more accurately determine the level of vocal and musical development of the ensemble in order to develop appropriate learning goals and choosing appropriate repertoire. Second, this assessment and specifics of the Markers of Development

provide a specific roadmap or process for teaching. Specific methodology is not defined in the CLaS markers.

Through Adjudication, the conductor can get accurate and helpful feedback to areas of real strength and those that need to be addressed. Most important, the highlighting of areas of strength and areas for needed growth can provide a specific road map with very clear goals to work toward.

Finally, **through Assessment, utilizing the curriculum, and Adjudication,** this process is developed to help us **accurately track growth and effectiveness of teaching and learning,** provide **necessary data** to administrators, and to provide **accurate and specific tools** for growth.

5. Advocacy, National Standards, and the Importance of CLaS

Many states require learning outcomes, standards, or other rubrics to be posted in the classroom each day. Since NAfME does not provide necessary standards for choral classrooms, and many State-level rubrics are either age or grade based, or are generic to the point that they do not reflect accurately our classroom environment, **CLaS provides specific learning outcomes suitable for posting.** Further, it is often impossible for a choir to address *every Marker of Development* for a particular LEVEL. This may be the best argument a director has to encourage administrators that students need to be in choir year after year, and that an upward moving curriculum must be in place.

Layout and Construction

The construction and language of the forms is an important aspect of the Basic Mileposts, Assessment forms, and Adjudication forms.

1. Layout of the CLaS Forms

Twelve Areas of Literacy and Six Levels of Development

The Forms are built on **TWELVE Areas of Literacy, TEN** providing Markers of Development in singing technique, application in performance, and Artistry, and **TWO** outlining development in Music Reading.

Technique and Performance Markers of Development:

Four define development in Tone production *(Vowels, Resonance)* and the application of tone in performance (*Blend and Balance, Facility and Independence, and Intonation).*

Four define development in Breath Management and the application of breath in performance *(Dynamics, Articulation, and Diction).*

Two define development in Artistry *(Rhythmic Elements, and Expression).*

Music Reading Markers of Development:

Two categories define development of Music Reading Literacy *(Rhythm and Music Markings, and Melody, Intervals, and Audiation.)*

All of the Areas of Literacy are defined in SIX LEVELS from beginner to professional.

2. Construction of the CLaS Forms

The General Literacy Area Titles are listed across the top: *Vocal Technique, Musicainship.* There are eight areas of literacy under Vocal Teachnique and four under Musicianship.

Sub-Groupings of Literacy Titles are listed across the top under the General Literacy Groups: *Tonal Technique and Breath Technique* under Vocal Technique, and *Artistry and Music Reading* under Musicianship.

The Twelve Literacy Area Titles are listed across the top under the Sub-Groupings.

The Six LEVELS of DEVELOPMENT are listed DOWN the side of the rubric. To avoid any visual sense that LEVEL I is lesser and LEVEL VI is better, LEVEL I was placed at the top. The image of "going deeper" into technique, or "growing roots" is reinforced by moving downward as the LEVELS go higher and technique grows.

The Detailed Markers or Descriptors of Each Literacy define the skills that an excellent choir of each LEVEL of development, or literacy, demonstrates. The language is written as *positive* goals to teach toward, and for *technique* to *assess*.

NOTE: Common challenges for singers of varied levels are also listed, so that a director does not unnecessarily spend time trying to "fix" something that is a natural part of development. Also, it helps an adjudicator not unnecessarily criticize a choir for demonstrating something that is a natural developmental challenge.

The CLaS Forms

1. Definition of the Forms

The CLaS Introductory Markers of Development Chart is a *simplified overview* of the general markers of development of all twelve literacies. It serves as an introduction for directors and choirs as to the general focus, or goal, for each literacy. These simplified goals may serve as a theme for a particular unit of study over the course of the year.

The CLaS Complete Markers of Development All Levels Chart serves as a *detailed collection* of Mileposts or Markers of Development within TWELVE areas of Literacy in performance related technique, and music reading skills. These specific descriptors serve as a *foundation for a curriculum* to build skills and technique for choirs of all levels. Verbs such as *introduces, develops, works toward*, *coaches,* are used.

These Descriptors or Markers of Development, are *goals to teach toward*, and serve as *specific outcomes* to listen for in assessment. For example, when a director first introduces a topic to a Level 2 choir, they will be at Level 2.0. As they begin to understand and repeat the concept they may *sometimes* be able to demonstrate skill so they will be a 2.3, the more often they are able to repeat and understand the topic, they grow to 2.9, and are ready to be taught 3.0 techniques. *(SEE: What the Numbers Mean, below).*

The CLaS Assessment Form is used to determine how *often* the choir performs each marker or mileposts, and what level of mastery is displayed. Words like *when coached, are developing, are handled individually, has been introduced* are important in assessment. The CLaS Assessment forms are published with TWO LEVELS on each. Level 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, and 4-5. This allows for larger printing, and focuses attention on only the Markers appropriate for each ensemble.

What the numbers mean:

The Assessment Form is similar to the All LEVELS Chart, with *added numbers* down the right hand margin of each set of descriptors 0-9.

The numbers represent literacy and technique, that is, repeatability of a particular technique.

X.0-X.3 EMERGING: Choir *has been Introduced to,* to *Sometimes* demonstrates when coached
X.4-X.6 AT GRADE LEVEL: Choir *Sometimes* demonstrates when coached to *Often* demonstrates
X. 7-X.9 MASTERY: *Understands and Applies* when coached to *Always* demonstrates

Example:

When a choir is introduced something, it is understandable that they will not be able to fully understand or repeat. Hence a level 1 choir will be a 1.0 they are EMERGING INTO the level. As the choir grows in consistency, or can apply from song to song, their literacy and technique grows, until they demonstrate *mastery*, or always doing a particular thing. Then they are a 1.9 and ready to emerge into Level 2.

The CLaS Adjudication Form is used by an outside adjudicator to assess level of mastery within each literacy area. Words like *choir demonstrates, or literacy is heard,* are important. **The areas of mastery are EXACTLY the same and in the same order as the Assessment Form**. Adjudicators will receive a Self-Assessment score from the Director of each choir. The Adjudicator will then assess the choir using the *same* LEVEL form as the Director. The CLaS Adjudication forms are published with TWO LEVELS on each. Level 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, and 4-5. This allows for larger printing, and focuses attention on only the Markers appropriate for each ensemble.

The CLaS Music Reading Form is used for Assessment and Adjudication. The Two Areas of Music Reading Literacy are *published separately,* from the Performance-based Literacies. As will be discovered later, Music Reading will be assessed **separately** from performance since the LEVEL of Literacy between the two areas is most often different, so the director will be best served to have a separate assessment score for reading than performance. In Adjudication, Music Reading is almost always assessed separately from performance.

Using the Forms

1. Assessment Forms

Ensemble Assessment Process: Director will Assess the Ensemble a minimum of three times during the academic year: 1) Early Fall Base-Level Assessment, 2) Pre-Adjudication Self-Assessment, and 3) End of Year Assessment.

Defining Ten-point Divisions of Levels for Self-Assessment and Adjudication

For Assessment, each Literacy area is divided into ten levels of mastery. Note the boxes to the right of the descriptors with the numbers 0-9. These numbers refer to the level of mastery of the techniques described within that Literacy box. If technique is understood as repeatability, then the numbers mean *how often* the choir demonstrates these techniques. When assigning a score for the choir, mark the appropriate box that most closely defines the *mastery and general repeatability* of the choir at this level.

X.0-X.3 EMERGING: Choir *has been introduced to,* to *Sometimes* demonstrates the Literacy
X.4-X.6 AT GRADE LEVEL: Choir *Sometimes* demonstrates when coached to *Often* demonstrates
X. 7-X.9 MASTERY: *Understands and Applies* when coached to *Always* demonstrates

How to determine the score: After reading the text or All Levels Chart, you assume your choir is a 2. As you read the Markers of Development, ask yourself "how often does the choir demonstrate mastery for each descriptor using the words": *Rarely, to Sometimes,* to *Often*, to *Understands and Applies,* to *Always*.
Scoring: The result will be a score with a decimal point, for example, if my Level 2 choir *Often* demonstrates Diction as described, I will score them a 2.6, if the *Sometimes* demonstrate then I may give them a 2.3 or 2.4.

2. Assessments through the year:

Early Fall BASE-LEVEL Assessment

1. Familiarize yourself with the Markers of Development of the various levels, using the CLaS ALL LEVELS LITERACY TEXT, or the **CLaS Complete Markers of Development All Levels Chart**.
2. Once you have read the text, ***Estimate*** one or two LEVELS that most closely define the skills of your choir. *This should take approximately 5-10 minutes*.
3. Assessment Forms that you will use for your choir are published with TWO levels: 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, 4-5. Choose the Self-Assessment Form that reflects the general level of your *estimated assessment*. For example, if you feel your choir is between Level 2

and 3, then choose the Level 2-3 Self-Assessment Form. Or, if your choir was mostly Level 1 with some Level 2, choose the Level 1-2 Form.

4. On each Assessment form, each Literacy Area has **Ten-Point Division boxes** of each level, SCORE your choir as to the level of mastery within each general assessment. (*See definitions above)*. *You will end up with a decimal point score,* for example, 2.1, 3.7, 1.0, etc. for each literacy.
5. **IMPORTANT:** Assess the TEN Performance-Based Literacies separately from the TWO Music Reading Literacies.
6. Total up the points of each of the TEN Performance Literacies and *average* the score by *dividing* by 10. Then, total up the points of the **TWO** Music Skills Literacies and *average* the score by *dividing* by 2. For example, Director X Assessed TEN literacy areas, the total was 22.4 points. Divide 22.4 by 10 and the choir average came to 2.2 *Emerging Level 2.* The same choir totaled 3.7 in the Music Reading Assessment, divided by 2 is 1.85 or *Advanced Level 1.*
7. **MUSIC READING LITERACY ASSESSMENT:** Using whichever sight singing or musicianship method available, refer the specific Rhythm, Music Markings, Melody, Interval, and Audiation Descriptors in the CLaS ALL LEVELS LITERACY TEXT, or the **CLaS Complete Markers of Development All Levels Chart** to determine the general Music Reading literacy of the ensemble.
8. For Assessment Examples, sight-reading materials, and information, go to **https://toolsforconductors.com/sightreading/**
9. ***NOTE****:* The variance of scores between each area of literacy will help determine the repertoire and teaching focus for the next months. Work to bring the weaker literacies up to the average level, and allow the strengths to continue to grow into the next level.

Spring PRE-ADJUDICATION Assessment

1. Familiarize yourself with the Markers of Development of the various levels, using the CLaS ALL LEVELS LITERACY TEXT, or the **CLaS Complete Markers of Development All Levels Chart**.
2. Use the same Self-Assessment Form used in the fall Base-Level Assessment, unless you have Assessed more recently. For example, in the Fall your choir was mostly Level 1 with some Level 2, choose the Level 1-2 and the tested out as a 1.8. Later in the Winter, you tested again and they scored a 2.4. Instead of using the Level 1-2 Form, use the 2-3 Form.
3. On each Assessment form, use the Ten-Point Division and score your choir as to the level of mastery within each general assessment. Total up the points of each and average the scores by dividing by the number of literacies. **Assess Performance and Skills Literacy Separately.**
4. Like before, total the points of each of the TEN Performance Literacies and *average* the score by *dividing* by 10. Then, total up the points of the **TWO** Music Skills Literacies and *average* the score by *dividing* by 2.
5. **REPORT SCORE TO FESTIVAL CHAIR two weeks prior to adjudication. *This is extremely important.***
6. If your contest has a sight-singing component, you must submit TWO Self-Assessment scores, one for performance, and one for skills.

Music Reading Assessment at Adjudication: Encouraging Words

1. The sight singing Adjudication Form, uses the same LEVEL-based series of music reading examples for each level.
2. For LEVELS 1-2 there will be TEN examples per LEVEL, which increase in

difficulty within the descriptors of that LEVEL. Examples will be marked 1.0-1.9, 2.0-2.9, etc. For LEVELS 3-4 there are TWENTY, to help assess more challenges.

3. If in your Pre-Adjudication Assessment your choir reads at a LEVEL 1.7, you will begin the Sight Singing Assessment at your contest *BELOW* at LEVEL 1.6.
4. You will coach the choir as you will in your classroom for the first example.
5. From then on the Adjudicator will coach and encourage the choir to go to 1.7, then 1.8 and share tips on how to succeed with increasingly difficult examples.
6. Throughout the year, use whichever sight singing curriculum and method you are comfortable with, all methods are welcome at the assessment.
7. Level-Based Assessment Examples, music-reading materials, and information, go to **https://toolsforconductors.com/sightreading/**
8. Each Assessment example is four measures long, and offered in TWO-PART TREBLE, TWO-PART MIXED, and for LEVELS 3 and 4, eight measure SATB.

End of Year Final Assessment

1. Repeat process for Pre-Adjudication Assessment.
2. Create data points for all of your Assessments as well as Adjudication scores.
3. Share with your administration the method, effort and results of effective teaching with specific areas of growth, by showing growth of the choir through the level(s).
4. Consider showing the trajectory of particular Literacies that grew more or faster than others!

Individual Assessments

1. After initial Ensemble Assessment, decide which literacies to focus on for the next weeks. Limit to just a few different literacies and then just one or two Markers within them.
2. Highlight what specific parts of each literacy you will focus on with the students, either by posting outcomes on the board as many states require, or more fun, highlight them on a Laminated CLaS Complete Markers for All Levels Poster. *(See: Printing instructions below)*.
3. Through warm-ups, method books and emphasis in rehearsal, focus on those specific techniques in the coming weeks.
4. After the "unit" or concert is complete, do a post-test with small groups of singers.
5. Using the same Assessment forms, highlight the few Markers you have focused on in your ensemble. Grade each student using the same descriptors of literacy, *how often do they repeat the technique and demonstrate mastery?* This will provide a score with a decimal. If the general ensemble is 2.2 and Student X scored 2.6 and student Y scored 2.1, you have specific data, with which to grade fairly, and objectively.

3. PRINTING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Print Self-Assessment forms TWO-SIDED on 11x17 Paper *with no borders*
    a. On **front** side are the TEN PERFORMANCE LITERACIES
    b. On the **reverse** side are the TWO MUSIC SKILLS LITERACIES
2. Print Adjudication forms TWO-SIDED on 11 x 17 Paper *with no borders*
    a. On **front** side are the TEN PERFORMANCE LITERACIES
    b. On the **reverse** side are Festival information and room for comments

NOTE TO ALL TEACHERS: The CLaS SIX LEVEL Introductory and Complete Charts of the Markers are POSTER SIZE! Many teachers choose to PRINT THIS POSTER SIZE, 22x34 or 44 X68 for the rehearsal room! LAMINATE and USE a WET ERASE HIGHLIGHTER PEN to

highlight current goals, and a different color to mark techniques accomplished! Great way to engage students in learning.

NOTES FOR ADJUDICATORS

Adjudication Assessment

1. Familiarize yourself with the Markers of Development of the various levels, using the CLaS ALL LEVELS LITERACY TEXT, or the **CLaS Complete Markers of Development All Levels Chart**.
2. You will be given an Adjudication Form with the Director's most recent Self-Assessment score taken within two weeks of the contest. Use this score as a starting point to *target your listening*. Determine if the level of demonstrated literacy as reported is above, at, or below the self-reported score.
3. The Festival Coordinator will provide you a **Two-Level Adjudication Form** based on the Self-Reported Score from the director. For example, if the Self-Reported score is 2.0-.5 you will get the LEVEL 1-2 Adjudication Form. This assumes that the score in the low 2's implies some literacies are still at level 1. Conversely, if the choir Self-Reports at 2.5-2.9 then you will be provided with LEVEL 2- 3 form assuming that some of their abilities will be emerging into LEVEL 3.
4. For Adjudication, each Literacy area is divided into ten levels of mastery. Note the boxes to the right of the descriptors with the numbers 0-9. These numbers refer to the level of mastery of the techniques described within that Literacy box. If technique is understood as repeatability, then the numbers mean *how often* the choir demonstrates these techniques.

   When assigning a score for the choir, mark the appropriate box that most closely defines the *mastery and general repeatability* of the choir at this level. Ask yourself "how often does the choir demonstrate mastery for each descriptor using the words": *Rarely, to Sometimes,* to *Often*, to *Understands and Applies,* to *Always*.

X.0-X.3 EMERGING: Choir *Rarely* to *Sometimes* demonstrates the Literacy
X.4-X.6 AT GRADE LEVEL: Choir *Sometimes* demonstrates when coached to *Often* demonstrates
X. 7-X.9 MASTERY: *Understands and Applies* when coached to *Always* demonstrates

Scoring: The result will be a score with a decimal point, for example, if a Level 2 choir *Often* demonstrates Diction as described, score them a 2.6, if the *Sometimes* demonstrate then possibly score them a 2.3 or 2.4.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

1. Highlight descriptors which are superior and model of excellence at their level. Circle descriptors which need attention.

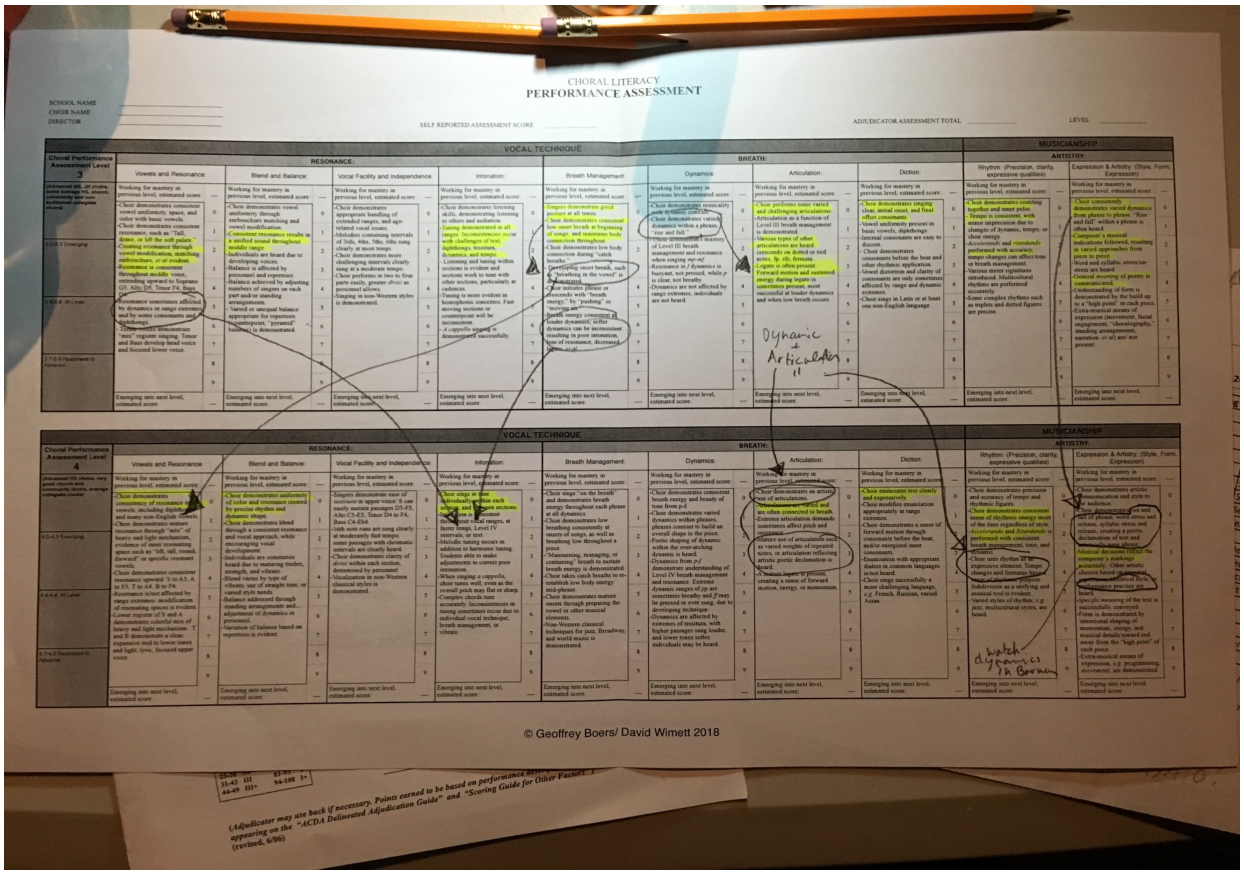
2. Note that the descriptors of the markers and mileposts of the literacies are *performance based*, rather than *repertoire focused*. Think of the adjudication in three parts:
   1)The *performance* of the repertoire is to be first assessed as it displays the strengths and weaknesses in the various literacies.

2) Once those numbers are assigned, with specific descriptors either highlighted or circled, then make comments specific to this performance of the repertoire.
3) Finally, offer suggestions for ways the director might *develop* literacies that are below the average level of the choir, and ways that each area might *advance* to the next level.
4) Total up the points of each literacy area and average the scores by dividing them by 10. *For example, if choir X total points is 37.2, divide by ten and their Performance Level is 3.7, or Beginning Mastery Level.*

NOTE: Performance Adjudicators will only assess TEN literacies, so divide the total points by 10, the Sight-Singing adjudicator will assess TWO literacies, so divide the total points by 2. REPORT SCORE(S) TO FESTIVAL CHAIR.

Comments or Providing a "Road Map" for Growth?

1. Through the process of highlighting and circling, you can provide an important pathway for the director to follow to maximize their growth.
2. Notice how many of the Literacies and Markers are interrelated. This is important to help Directors learn. "*If you take your strength in this area, you can address a concern in this other area!"*
3. Look at the example of the Adjudication form below. Notice how the Adjudicator drew arrows from one highlighted area to a circle, addressing a need with a strength. Notice that all arrows pointed toward growth and even emerging into the next LEVEL!



Music Reading Adjudication Process

1. There are TEN Assessment examples per LEVEL, representing developing skills within the level, 1.0-1.9, 2.0-2.9 etc.
   These examples are provided on Powerpoint slides, one example per slide. For Assessment Examples, sight-reading materials, and information, go to **https://toolsforconductors.com/sightreading/**

2. Explain to the choir the process and goals of the sight-singing assessment to diffuse any nerves.
3. Note the Choir's Self-Assessed score. Choose your starting example at least ONE POINT LOWER than their self-reported score. Project on the Screen.
4. The teacher will coach the choir for the first example. They are allowed to talk through *but not sing or play* with the choir. Hand signs, counting, syllables, all sight-singing methods are welcome. Limit this first experience to FIVE MINUTES
5. From then on you, the Adjudicator will coach and encourage the choir to go to each new exercise as time permits, and share tips on how to succeed with increasingly difficult examples. For example, choir Z reports a 2.3, begins at 2.2 and then increases difficulty.
6. If possible, use the method they are comfortable with to begin. Perhaps get them to try another method if appropriate. In every case, give tips and encouragement how to approach each new example, and give ideas for getting to the next LEVEL.

HAVE FUN!

NOTES FOR FESTIVAL CHAIR

Timeline

1. In all communications remind teachers to prepare their students for a growth-oriented adjudication.
2. Adjudication is still competitive, but each choir competes with themselves.
3. **Remind all directors that a Pre-Adjudication Self-Assessment will be DUE** TWO WEEKS prior to the event.
4. **Two weeks prior to the event send THREE Documents to the Adjudicators**:
    a. This PDF of Introduction
    b. CLaS ALL LEVELS LITERACY TEXT, or the CLaS Complete Markers of Development All Levels Chart
    b. Sample of a TWO-LEVEL Adjudication Form
5. Once you have gathered all of the Pre-Adjudication Assessments for all of the choirs, PRINT OUT the correct number of TWO LEVEL ADJUDICATION FORMS. *(See Instructions below).*

Printing Instructions

Forms

1. Print Adjudication forms TWO-SIDED on 11 x 17 Paper *with no borders*
    a. On **front** side are the TEN PERFORMANCE LITERACIES
    b. On the **reverse** side are Festival information and room for comments
2. Once you receive all of the Pre-Adjudication Self-Assessments print out the corresponding number of TWO LEVEL Adjudication Forms.
    a. If a choir Self-Assesses at LEVEL 2.0-2.5, then use the LEVEL 1-2 form
    b. If a choir Self-Assesses at LEVEL 2.6-2.9 then use the LEVEL 2-3 form.

Always include the level below if the choir assesses in the emerging category of a level.
Always include the level above if the choir assesses in the mastery category of a level.

3. Remember to provide each adjudicator the appropriate TWO-LEVEL form for each choir.
4. Music Reading Adjudicator will only receive the Music-Reading Assessment page.

Music Reading

1. Download the Music Reading Assessments from:
    https://toolsforconductors.com/sightreading/
2. Set up a projector, computer, and screen in the Music Reading room.
3. The size of the projection should be large enough so that all members of any size choir can easily read the examples.
4. You will need Levels 1-4 Treble, Bass, Mixed, and SATB versions *(Levels 3 and 4 only)*

Scoring

1. The Adjudicators will hand in the Performance Adjudication sheet with TEN areas of literacy scored. Have your Festival workers total up the points and divide by 10.

Example: Choir X has two Adjudicators

Adjudicator A submits: 3.7/3/3.2/3/3.5/3.8/2.9/2.8/3.2/3.3 Total is 34.4, Average score is 3.4

Sloppy in a hurry Adjudicator B submits: 3/3/4/4/4/3/3.5/4/2.5/3 Total 33, Average 3.3

Average the scores together and the choir receives a 3.35

2. In Festivals that include sight-singing, TWO scores will be awarded. The Music Reading Score will be totaled and divided by TWO.

3. **Do not average the sight singing score with the performance score**. Each choir will receive two scores.

Certificates and Awards

1. Each Choir will receive an Excellence of Literacy in Performance Certificate.
2. Each Choir will receive an Excellence of Literacy in Music Skills Certificate, when Music Reading is Adjudicated.
3. On Each Certificate will be a place for their score and signature of FESTIVAL CHAIR.
4. Adjudicators will submit signed assessment sheets for the teacher.
5. In the Event that a choir is assessed .2 of a LEVEL ABOVE self-assessed score, the choir will receive a **special commendation for Superior Demonstration of Literacy,** a space for which will also be on the form.

Competition

1. In the event the forms are used in State competition, any choir which receives a **Superior Demonstration of Literacy** commendation on their certificate, they may submit a recording of the choir to the State Competition Chair or Board
2. The State Competition Committee, upon reviewing any qualifying recordings, will subjectively pick the number of entries possible for State Competition.
3. Choirs from each level may qualify
4. State competition will be arranged by **LEVEL**, as opposed to **school classification.**
5. Rather than having all regions represented at the same level, if multiple LEVELS are represented, then multiple representatives might come from a particular area, whereas in present system only one can go. Also, rather than focusing on a SMALL SCHOOL or having every region represented, if Multiple Levels go to State, then each school and singer knows they have an equal chance to go.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. How long does the self-assessment take?
   Approximately ten to fifteen minutes per ensemble, once you are familiar with the process.

2. What if sections or members of my choir are at different levels?
   This is common. For example: In the box Resonance and Vowels: If your boys are a 1.7 and sopranos are 2.3 and altos 1.9, feel free to mark the rubric that way. Average those three scores together for your self-assessment score in that category. This can help you focus your teaching more accurately.

3. Can I use the CLaS to assess individuals?
   Yes! Merely highlight the individual statements on the rubric that you have been focusing on. For example, perhaps you've been working only on Breath Management and Articulation, and Blend and Balance. Highlight the comments that were worked on, and use those specific mileposts for your quartet or individual solo assessments.

4. The CLaS looks like a lot of information, do I have to cover it all every year?
   Each level of the rubric is a set or mileposts and markers that all together can provide an entire curriculum of skills to teach throughout the year. The goal is to turn the conductor's attention to building skills and individual technique and artistry through repertoire, rather than merely learning songs for performance. The less rehearsal time a choir has, the fewer mileposts can be addressed. Many choirs post this rubric and check of mileposts as they visit them!

5. Can my students use the CLaS?
   Yes! Many teachers are encouraging their choirs to use the self-assessment tool. Some ideas: have them listen to a recording of themselves together as a choir, and focus on one of the areas of literacy. Or listen with different groups focusing on different literacies and give themselves a rating. Lastly, talk them through all the descriptors of the rubric while thinking about what they have learned and how they have performed, and come to some consensus of a level rating. The students enjoy this process, and tend to give lower ratings than we do!

ADJUDICATION ASSESSMENT

1. How long before our league contest will I need to do my pre-contest Assessment?
   Two weeks prior to the contest, take the Self-Assessment, compare it with your beginning of the year assessment, and submit to the contest chairperson. Don't forget to show your principal how much the choir has grown in that time!

2. Will Music Reading be scored together with our performance?
   No. The ten performance literacies are assessed separately from the sight-singing literacies.

3. Will the adjudicators see my Self-Assessed score?
   Yes, this will help them listen in a more focused way, looking to hear your choir in the way you hear them.

4. What kind of comments will I receive?

Rather than corrective comments and suggestions about the repertoire you are singing, the adjudicators are asked to highlight skills that they hear demonstrated, and to circle areas that may need more attention. The highlighting and circling will be on a form that looks just like your Self-Assessment. Written comments will be fewer than you are used to, and will focus on specifically what to focus on and skills to practice to reach the next level. In addition, you may receive a road map that outlines a path forward for growth, highlighting your strengths and how you can address areas that need attention.

SIGHT SINGING ASSESSMENT

Important reminder:

This assessment is *not an exam* in the traditional sense. The desired outcome is to help the students succeed so as to assess and give accurate feedback to music reading literacy. In addition, it is hoped that encouragement, success, and suggestions by the clinician will help motivate the choir toward growth. Further, it is hoped that the clinic situation might encourage the choir to read *better* and at a more advanced level than in the rehearsal room.

1. What if my beginning choir is working on sight reading only in the key of C?
   Beginning exercises are in C, and move to F and G later in level 1.0

2. Will we be required to use solfege? What about a number system, Kodaly hand symbols or a syllable of choice
   Any method that is used in your rehearsal is acceptable. We want to encourage success.

3. Will the exercises we project on the screen look just like the samples page?
   Yes, there will be a treble, 2-part mixed version projected for levels 1 and 2. For level 3 and 4, and SATB version will be available as well.

4. Are we able to guide our students through and provide any coaching, or is the sight reading led entirely by the adjudicator?
   Yes, we want to recreate the classroom experience as close as possible to encourage success. Remember that this time is best spent getting an accurate assessment of reading level and some good suggestions for growth, so minimal talking is encouraged

5. Are there any rules about what we can/cannot say to our groups before they sing the exercise?
   The teacher cannot sing or count for the choir. If coaching them to look ahead, to sing to themselves or count sing, remind about intervals, etc. is your normal procedure, then that will be acceptable.

6. Will we be allowed to play the piano? What are the rules regarding giving pitches?
   The teacher can give the tonic, and then play the tonic triad to set the key. For exercises that do not begin on the tonic, the teacher can encourage the choir to audiate or sing aloud the starting pitch using any method used in the classroom. The teacher may not give the starting pitch by piano or voice.

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