

## **CSTP Standard #4: Planning Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for All Students**

### **Element 4.1: Using knowledge of students' academic readiness, language proficiency, cultural background, and individual development to plan instruction**

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One of the great benefits of choir class is that it draws a wide diversity of students together from different ages, interests, backgrounds and ability levels. Unlike most other classes at school, choir commonly places freshmen next to seniors, English learners next to GATE students, and beginning singers next to advanced ones to work collectively towards a common performance goal. In order to allow this diverse classroom situation to work, however, a choir teacher must carefully structure their activities to meet the divergent needs of all of these students. A variety of scaffolding levels must be used to provide the lowest-achieving students access to the curriculum and appropriate opportunities to develop their skills, while still challenging the more advanced students to further their own level of achievement. In consideration of different language proficiency levels, choir teachers must highlight common music vocabulary at different levels, and regularly use non-linguistic modes (such as gesture, vocal demonstration and imagery) to express their points. Teachers must also be sensitive to the different cultural backgrounds of their students, taking a multicultural approach to the music the choir sings and discuss (including different popular genres in the United States and around the world).

In my choir classroom I have found it particularly helpful to have an “ice-breaker” activity early on in the semester that asks students to share their backgrounds, interests and experience with the class. This activity serves a variety of purposes including building student camaraderie, affirming diverse characteristics and informing the teacher of potential strengths and weaknesses among the students. Perhaps most importantly, with this information I can choose music and plan activities that honor my students' particular backgrounds and individual characteristics while helping them build the skills and understandings set forth in the California state standards for high school music classes.

One of the “ice-breaker” activities I like to do focuses on my students' multiple intelligence abilities, as described by Howard Gardner. First, the students take a short quiz to see which intelligence areas they are particularly strong in. Then they are divided into groups according to one of the intelligence areas in which they scored the highest and are given a choir-related project to complete that uses that area. I have found that this activity not only gives me a better idea of the ways my students individually learn best, but it also is a revelation for the students themselves. They come to realize that though they may not be as strong in some areas, they all have strengths they can draw upon to be successful in school and in life.

Artifact: "Multiple Intelligence Quiz"

**Where is Your Intelligence?**

Mark true or false:

1. \_\_\_\_ I'd rather draw a map than give someone verbal directions.
2. \_\_\_\_ I can play (or used to play) a musical instrument.
3. \_\_\_\_ I can associate music with my moods.
4. \_\_\_\_ I can add or multiply in my head.
5. \_\_\_\_ I like to work with calculators and computers.
6. \_\_\_\_ I pick up new dance steps fast.
7. \_\_\_\_ It's easy for me to say what I think in an argument or debate.
8. \_\_\_\_ I enjoy a good lecture, speech or sermon.
9. \_\_\_\_ I always know north from south no matter where I am.
10. \_\_\_\_ Life seems empty without music.
11. \_\_\_\_ I always understand the directions that come with new gadgets or appliances.
12. \_\_\_\_ I like to work puzzles and play games.
13. \_\_\_\_ Learning to ride a bike (or skates) was easy.
14. \_\_\_\_ I am irritated when I hear an argument or statement that sounds illogical.
15. \_\_\_\_ My sense of balance and coordination is good.
16. \_\_\_\_ I often see patterns and relationships between numbers faster and easier than others.
17. \_\_\_\_ I enjoy building models (or sculpting).
18. \_\_\_\_ I'm good at finding the fine points of word meanings.
19. \_\_\_\_ I can look at an object one way and see it sideways or backwards just as easily.
20. \_\_\_\_ I often connect a piece of music with some event in my life.
21. \_\_\_\_ I like to work with numbers and figures.
22. \_\_\_\_ Just looking at shapes of buildings and structures is pleasurable to me.
23. \_\_\_\_ I like to hum, whistle and sing in the shower or when I'm alone.
24. \_\_\_\_ I'm good at athletics.
25. \_\_\_\_ I'd like to study the structure and logic of languages.
26. \_\_\_\_ I'm usually aware of the expression on my face.
27. \_\_\_\_ I'm sensitive to the expressions on other people's faces.
28. \_\_\_\_ I stay "in touch" with my moods. I have no trouble identifying them.
29. \_\_\_\_ I am sensitive to the moods of others.
30. \_\_\_\_ I have a good sense of what others think of me.

**Score Sheet**

Write a "1" next to each number you marked as "true" above. Add your totals in each column.

	<b>Linguistic</b>	<b>Logical/ Mathemat- ical</b>	<b>Musical</b>	<b>Spatial</b>	<b>Bodily/ Kinesthetic</b>	<b>Intra- personal</b>	<b>Inter- personal</b>
7	4	2	1	6	26	27	
8	5	3	9	13	28	29	
14	12	10	11	15		30	
18	16	20	19	17			
25	21	23	22	21			
<b>Totals:</b>							

A total of four in Linguistic through Kinesthetic indicates strong ability. A score of one or more in Intra-personal or Inter-personal means you have abilities as well.