

DICTION FOR SINGERS: IMPLEMENTING FLIPPED LEARNING INTO THE DICTION
CLASSROOM

by

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To My Love

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Importance of Diction for Singers

Our goal as voice teachers and singing artists is more than just creating a beautiful sound. There is no question that achieving a resonant, expressive, and efficient singing voice is a primary aim of vocal study, but meaningful communication through music is the ultimate goal. Without lyrics, a singing voice loses the most distinctive characteristic of the instrument: the ability to convey meaning through text. “The human voice, more than any instrument, has the power of conveying feeling to the soul of another, and in order to take every advantage of this important quality, the voice should be emitted with a full and sustained sound taking care, however, not to sacrifice the clear articulation of the words to mere sonority of voice.”¹ Having good diction can also improve tone production: clear diction revitalizes the energy of the voice and can aid in the ease of the sound.²

During his commencement speech at Juilliard in 1998, Terrence MacNally shared that “Words on a page only exist in two dimensions, as do notes in a score... We need you to bring them to life.”³ Effective diction is a key factor necessary to create this heightened experience that exists when text and music are combined.⁴ It is a tool to enhance the communicative musical experience; clear diction delivers the text and is used as a rhetorical device to convey the story.

1. Francesco Lamperti, *The Art of Singing* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1890), 15.

2. Manuel Garcia, *Garcia's New Treatise on the Art of Singing: A Compendious Method of Instruction, with Examples and Exercises for the Cultivation of the Voice* (Boston: Oliver Ditson Company, 1900), 43.

3. Kathryn LaBouff, *Singing and Communicating in English: A Singer's Guide to English Diction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), viii.

4. Gerald L. Phillips, “Diction: A Rhapsody,” *Journal of Singing* 58, no. 5 (May/June 2002): 405.

Through effective diction, performers can add a variety of colors to the music, which allows them the freedom to interpret stories in unique ways. Renée Fleming wrote that the efficient use of diction has the power “to bring a text to life and to be able to negotiate all of the sounds of the language with the least amount of effort.”⁵ Diction is inseparable from tone in singing,⁶ and when words are not clear in a performance, the musical communication with the listener becomes limited as well. David Adams, the author of one of the most widely-used diction textbooks, states that “for a singer, having inadequate language skills is equivalent to having inadequate intonation,” and explains that poor diction could result in a negative perception from the audience.⁷ The tone of the voice and the delivery of the text should be emphasized equally.⁸

According to the National Association of Schools of Music 2017-2018 Handbook, a diction course is an essential part of music education.⁹ But why is it crucial to include diction courses in a degree program? Adams explains that diction instruction “develops an ear for the cadences, modulations, and phrasings of a language.”¹⁰ Through studying the sound and rules of different languages, individuals begin to notice the similarities and differences in their innate rhythms, nuances, and colors. Understanding those characteristics will guide singers to create a more authentic and natural delivery of the text. The trained ear acquainted with the nuance and

5. Renée Fleming, foreword to *Singing and Communicating in English: A Singer's Guide to English Diction*, by Kathryn LaBouff (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), v.

6. Richard Miller, *On the Art of Singing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 27.

7. David Adams, *A Handbook of Diction for Singers: Italian, German, French*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), xii.

8. Thomas Grubb, *Singing in French: A Manual of French Diction and French Vocal Repertoire* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1979), xiii.

9. “National Association of Schools of Music Handbook 2017-2018” (Reston, VA: The National Association of Schools of Music, 2017), 101-173, accessed March 15, 2018, <https://nasm.arts-accredit.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2017/12/M-Handbook-2017-2018.pdf>.

10. Adams, xi.

the flow of a language will also become a tool to transfer the expression of the text to the lyrical line of music.¹¹

The most common languages studied in diction classrooms in higher education are English, Italian, German, and French. Learning to use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is a significant part of diction study and also the most efficient tool to utilize when learning to sing in various languages. As the name suggests, IPA is an alphabet system that represents phonetic sounds. Similar spellings of words may have different phonetic sounds as in the English words “rough” pronounced as [ɹʌf] and “bough” as [baʊ]. These are spelled exactly the same way after the initial letter but have very different vowel and consonant sounds. On the contrary, some phonetic sounds can be spelled in multiple ways such as “sought,” transcribed as [sɔt,] and “taught” as [tɔt]. Despite their varied spellings they both sound the same—“ought” as [ɔt]—after their respective first letters. Within IPA, each character has a unique corresponding sound that can be transcribed across different languages, and this can be used to eliminate the confusion between the spelling and sound. IPA increases the efficiency in learning and singing in languages in which singers are not fluent¹² and enables students to communicate with other musicians more effectively. With the use of IPA and learning the rules and sounds of different languages, singers gain much more freedom in choosing their repertoire and develop more independence.

Common Challenges in Diction Classrooms

Some of the common challenges that occur when teaching diction courses include limitations in class time, number of students, and multiple levels of experiences with the language

11. LaBouff, viii.

12. Joan Wall, *International Phonetic Alphabet for Singers: A Manual for English and Foreign Language Diction* (Freeland, WA: Pacific Isle Publishing, 1989), 3.

being studied.¹³ Time limitations are often the biggest issue when determining the structure of the course. While some institutions are able to allot a semester for each of the four standard languages (i.e., English, Italian, German, and French), many have to combine two to five languages (Latin and/or Spanish is included at some institutions) into a single semester. In diction classrooms, students learn IPA and the individual corresponding sounds within a language. Rules of pronunciation are introduced and practiced, and, if the schedule allows, many curricula include a performance portion to apply the knowledge. Common assessments include quizzes and/or tests on IPA, rules of pronunciation, transcription, and oral demonstrations of poems or songs. Based on how much time the courses can allot to each language, teachers often have to compromise and prioritize the most important information and utilize activities and assessments that are most efficient in each respective situation.¹⁴

Purpose of This Document

Diction courses involve developing the awareness of movements of the articulators through guided practice.¹⁵ For diction classes with multiple languages and larger class sizes, having an abundance of material to cover in a limited amount of time becomes a challenge; moreover, it becomes very difficult to include any application components within the course. Students retain information much better when it is practiced and applied immediately. De’Ath’s diction course covers five languages, and he feels strongly that “[a] diction class that has few enough students and sufficient contact time to allow for a ‘lab component’ that puts into

13. Leslie De’Ath, “Materials for Teaching a Lyric Diction Class, Part One,” *Journal of Singing* 62, no. 1 (September/October 2005): 61.

14. David Adams, “On Teaching an Italian Diction Class,” *Journal of Singing* 91, no. 2 (November/December 2004): 177.

15. Joan Wall et al., *Diction for Singers: A Concise Reference for English, Italian, Latin, German, French and Spanish Pronunciation* (Dallas, TX: Pst...Inc., 1990), 1.

immediate practice for each student the principles discussed in class is indeed fortunate.”¹⁶

However, even with an entire semester dedicated to one language, there is never enough time to cover all the material and practice the principles adequately. At the core of the diction curriculum, the goal is to teach students to understand the rules of pronunciation of languages so that they can apply that to repertoire.

The application component of the curriculum helps students implement given concepts into practice immediately and use diction efficiently under the guidance of the instructor. Richard Miller emphasizes that “clean diction is produced not by exaggerated consonants, but by quickly occurring consonants which do not impede the connected flow of well-defined vowels.”¹⁷ If teachers do not guide students through the use of the sound in singing, how can teachers expect them to know that clean diction does not come from exaggerated consonants? Lamperti poses this question from a different angle: “Without the necessary study, how would one emit, with equal clearness of tone and pronunciation, those notes on which one does not speak?”¹⁸

Musicians learn to phrase for the purpose of expressivity. They develop the aural skills to hear and refine techniques to be able to swell, to create musical directions, and to shape musical gestures as ways of adding colors. Just as these musical skills are taught through study or experience, singers need to learn how to use proper diction. As students build knowledge of the rules of pronunciation, they should also be equipped with the tools that expand their singing artistry. In other words, they should produce a proper and efficient musical sound that delivers the text in a communicative manner. Students need to develop the evaluative skills necessary to properly shape and utilize consonants and vowels within the music. This process is covered to

16. De’Ath, 61.

17. Richard Miller, “Diction and Vocal Technique,” *Journal of Singing* 38, no. 3 (January/February 1982): 43.

18. Lamperti, 4.

some degree during the applied lessons. When students implement the knowledge into practice immediately the retention rate is much higher, and the lesson and coaching times can be spent more efficiently working on other important aspects of singing.

Current literature in teaching and learning includes discussions of different class structures that allow teachers more time for class activities or interactive learning experiences. One of these structures is the "flipped classroom" model and examining how this model might apply to the diction classroom can prove extremely valuable as a means of creating more space in the curriculum for singers to apply diction fundamentals.

The purpose of this project was to create an interactive curriculum that considers the characteristics of 21st-century learners. Through interviews with experts, examination of learning traits of 21st-century students, reviews of curriculum development strategies and consideration of teaching approaches associated with the flipped classroom, I created a diction course that reflects on the experience of established diction teachers while also utilizing the applicable benefits of strategies related to a flipped classroom approach to course design. The characteristics of a flipped classroom model are applied to this course in order to provide students a more experiential learning environment. This document begins with a review of the learning styles and important traits of 21st-century students as well as instructional designs and methods used in non-vocal fields in higher educations. Current course details of selected master teachers of diction and their teaching philosophies are then discussed, and possible uses of the flipped classroom model in a diction classroom are introduced. A sample course syllabus that reflects these concepts is also included. The goal of this project is to share teaching strategies from master teachers that have been effective in diction classrooms while also emphasizing and expanding spaces for active, hands-on learning experiences.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter includes an overview of literature related to 21st-century student characteristics and curricular approaches that could be utilized in an undergraduate diction course for singers. The first part of this chapter includes a discussion of the characteristics of 21st-century students, 21st-century skills and their possible relationship to Diction courses, and motivation types. This is followed by a discussion of engaged learning environments, the flipped classroom, and curriculum development theories and techniques.

21st-Century Learners/Generation Z

The continuous, rapid shifts in technology, lifestyle, economy, global relations, and dynamics in social life affect how individuals think, understand, see, and learn.¹ In contemporary society, it is not the learning process that is different, but rather the environment in which students learn that has changed drastically.² Generation Z is defined as the generation born from 1995 through 2010, who grew up experiencing and internalizing constant changes from very young ages, and who have adapted to rapid change that necessitates an ability to multi-task.³

1. Rachel Bolstad et al., *Supporting Future-Oriented Learning and Teaching: A New Zealand Perspective* (Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education, 2012), 2, August 5, 2017, http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/109317/994_Future-oriented-07062012.pdf.

2. Eric C. Sheninger, *Uncommon Learning: Creating Schools That Work for Kids* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2016), xi.

3. Corey Seemiller and Meghan Grace, "Generation Z: Educating and Engaging the Next Generation of Students," *American College Personnel Association and Wiley Periodicals* 22, no. 3 (2017): 22, <https://doi.org/10.1002/abc.21293>.

Because of this background, Generation Z is “qualitatively different in its orientation to learning and personality than previous populations.”⁴

Members of Generation Z have grown up in a digital world where information can be gathered through the use of computers and digital media. They are sometimes characterized as the least patient generation because they expect to see similar processes and results in different areas as well.⁵ The society and education they experienced equipped them with distinct characteristics. Twenty-first-century students are goal-oriented multitaskers who value group activities, teamwork, and encouraging and supportive learning environments.⁶ They are also realistic, possess a problem-solving nature and want to be part of creating solutions.⁷ Instead of leaving a problem for others to solve, they desire honesty and want to voice their thoughts and work on a given issue. Being practical is an important value for Generation Z. Naturally, they want to excel in their work and are willing to invest the time and energy as long as they feel the work is relevant.⁸ They appreciate technology, sharing and exploring new ideas, and connecting with others. The accessibility to online materials and the use of social media are inseparable to

4. Jessalyn I. Vallade, Matthew M. Martin, and Keith Weber, “Academic Entitlement, Grade Orientation, and Classroom Justice as Predictors of Instructional Beliefs and Learning Outcomes,” *Communication Quarterly* 62, no. 5 (2014): 497-498, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01463373.2014.949386>.

5. J. Brett Lemly, Gary Schumacher, and Winona Vesey, “What Learning Environments Best Address 21st-Century Students’ Perceived Needs at the Secondary Level of Instruction?” *NASSP Bulletin* 98, no. 2 (2014): 102, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0192636514528748>.

6. Angela Proviterra McGlynn, “Teaching Millennials, Our Newest Cultural Cohort,” *Education Digest* 71, no. 4 (2005): 14.

7. Corey Seemiller and Meghan Grace, *Generation Z Goes to College* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2016), 193.

8. Garin Horner, *The Photography Teacher’s Handbook: Practical Methods for Engaging Students in the Flipped Classroom* (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2016), 2q [sic], ProQuest Ebook Central.

21st-century students. Educators should not consider technology as an innovative tool, but rather “a vehicle to *connect students to what matter[s] to them.*”⁹

Twenty-first-century students were raised during the Great Recession and witnessed their parents’ financial struggles.¹⁰ They understand that security in life is not guaranteed and grew up with concerns about their careers and future. They feel that they do not have time for a “typical” education, but “they want to be involved with ‘real life’ issues that are practical.”¹¹ This also means that motivation does not come easily if students do not see the value of work from the very beginning. For students in the classroom, a goal-oriented mindset frequently becomes grade-oriented. In some regards, this may create a barrier for them to see how the content they learn could be meaningful to their long-term goals.¹² This causes a serious dilemma in teaching and learning at times. Educators know that the learning process is often a long journey. Assigned readings or tasks may not be immediately relevant, but through time and experience students see and understand the value of their efforts. The struggle that students in the 21st century encounter is that they have difficulty investing their time into work if they do not think the subject matter or assignments will bring the immediate result they anticipate. Chip Espinoza succinctly asserts: “students expect guarantees.”¹³

9. Eric M. Carbaugh and Kristina J. Doubet, *The Differentiated Flipped Classroom: A Practical Guide to Digital Learning* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2016), 60.

10. Claudine McCarthy, “Prepare for Changes on Campus by Gaining Insight into New Generation of Students,” *Disability Compliance for Higher Education* 23, no. 2 (September 2017): 8, <https://doi-org.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu/10.1002/dhe.30341>.

11. McGlynn, 15

12. Vallade et al., 500.

13. Chip Espinoza, “Millennial Values and Boundaries in the Classroom,” *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 131, (Fall 2012): 34, <https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.20025>.

“Generation Z students are the observers.”¹⁴ Parents have played a very important role in shaping the characteristics of 21st-century students. These parents were assistants and collaborators in their children’s daily activities and academic responsibilities. “Attention, praise, help, and expectation” were commonly found throughout their childhoods.¹⁵ The learning environment from primary and secondary education has changed as well. Many schools have moved away from competitions and negative reinforcement, focusing instead on encouraging, differentiated, and collaborative settings that emphasize positive feedback. Students benefit and gain assurance from watching a teacher or another student solve a problem first before they try for themselves.¹⁶ Without help and approval from someone, however, students lack confidence in their work or ability to tackle a problem on their own.¹⁷ Silence in classrooms is often caused by the fear of being wrong or being judged. This environment influenced students to have less self-initiative and self-direction, but more appreciation for group work and collaboration. Due to this environment, the students in the 21st century can be seen as the most dependent generation to date.

Paradoxically, while 21st-century students are in a way the least independent group, at the same time they are also the most independent. The digital world they grew up in provides them with the tools to find information within seconds. “They are comfortable with and like being able to learn independently and at their own pace... [They] prefer to use learning methods that require

14. Seemiller and Grace, “Generation Z: Educating and Engaging the Next Generation of Students,” 22.

15. Espinoza, 32.

16. Ibid., 23.

17. L. Dee Fink, *Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), 5.

self-reliance.”¹⁸ They see the role of instructor as a facilitator rather than a lecturer.¹⁹ They are less likely to ask questions to a teacher in problem solving, but rather feel more comfortable going online and seeking the answers for themselves.

21st-Century Skills and the Diction Classroom

In recent years, the interest in developing 21st-century skills has grown across many disciplines in higher education. According to Lemly, these skills include, “creativity, innovation, communication, collaboration, teamwork, critical thinking, decision making, research fluency, and problem solving”²⁰ These dispositions are thought to prepare students for the complexities and rapid changes in contemporary society.²¹ As reflected in the history, the social and industrial changes in speed and intricacy will only intensify. The competencies included in the 21st-century skills, however, are not new. The importance of these traits has been stressed for many years.²² Teachers in both the past and present time have strived to foster these skills and have been successful in equipping and preparing students to thrive in their careers. What seems to be unique in the present is that there has been an increasing number of students in higher education who lack some of these skills.²³ Students can develop these competencies during their undergraduate coursework, and diction classrooms are another setting in which 21st-century skills can be developed and applied.

18. Seemiller and Grace, *Generation Z Goes to College*, 178.

19. *Ibid.*, 179.

20. Lemly, 102.

21. “Framework for 21st Century Learning,” <http://p21.org/our-work/p21-framework>.

22. “What Are 21st Century Skills?” Thoughtful Learning, accessed January 15, 2018, <https://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/FAQ/what-are-21st-century-skills/>.

23. Kathleen F. Gabriel, *Teaching Unprepared Students: Strategies for Promoting Success and Retention in Higher Education* (Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2008), 1-2.

Critical thinking requires the ability to approach problems in thoughtful, deliberate ways with logic and reasoning.²⁴ In other words, it is a process of building a rational solution when problem-solving while being flexible and open to other ideas.²⁵ In a diction classroom, this is a crucial part of mastering diction paired with critical listening. Critical listening and thinking enables students to listen analytically for the subtle differences in sounds and to produce authentic diction. Creativity, innovation, and communication are large parts of artistic singing closely related to diction that brings the music to life, and many teachers incorporate the idea of collaboration and teamwork by solving problems together through strategies that include group worksheets or team-based in-class games. Through years of experience, master teachers have fostered these “21st-century skills” in diction classrooms. These proficiencies encourage students to develop the tools and correct habits to become more self-reflective about how they approach music and deliver the text.

Motivation in Learning for 21st Century Students

Learning happens most efficiently when one is motivated. Motivation in learning is the desire to seek knowledge and find answers. There are two different types of motivation that influence all individuals: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation comes from inner interest, curiosity, and enjoyment; extrinsic motivation is influenced by a possible outcome or reward.²⁶ For example: A student taking piano lessons solely for the enjoyment of playing and learning

24. Edward M. Glaser, *An Experiment in the Development of Critical Thinking* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1941), 5.

25. David Starr-Glass, “The Acrobatics of Flipping: Reorienting the Learning Experience of the First Accounting Course,” in *Flipped Instruction: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice*, ed. Information Resources Management Association (Hershey, PA: IGI Global, 2017), 53.

26. Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, “Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions,” *Contemporary Educational Psychology* 25, no. 1 (January 2000): 55, <https://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.1999.1020>.

would be intrinsically motivated. Should that same student agree to take lessons because his parents have promised him an X-Box in return, his motivation becomes extrinsic.

“Intrinsically motivated behaviors are the prototype of autonomy. They are undertaken out of interest and sustained by the spontaneous thoughts and feelings that emerge as one performs the activity.”²⁷ Intrinsic motivation is the natural and powerful type of motivation that enables individuals to learn, explore, evolve, develop, socialize, and be creative.²⁸ Curiosity and interest are some of the most valuable triggers of intrinsic motivation in learning; they fuel the desire to seek answers to questions of what, why, and how.²⁹ When curiosity is embedded within a learning environment, the students learn more efficiently and retain information for a longer period of time.³⁰ Through fostering and guiding curiosity, teachers can help students grow interested in the subject matter and become actively engaged in the learning process. Curiosity is also linked to many beneficial “adaptive behaviors, including tolerance of anxiety and uncertainty, positive emotions, humor, playfulness, out-of-box thinking, and a noncritical attitude” which are all crucial 21st-century skills.³¹

Digital natives is another term used for Generation Z. This nickname originated due to their immersion in technology and information from their youth. Stimulating curiosity and encouraging motivation for these digital natives can be challenging. “Learning for Generation Z is likely going to be more than just about the content they access, but also about the process in

27. A. E. Black and E. L. Deci, “The Effects of Instructors’ Autonomy Support and Students’ Autonomous Motivation on Learning Organic Chemistry: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective,” *Science Education* 84 (2000): 741.

28. Ryan and Deci, 56.

29. Susan Engle, *The Hungry Mind: The Origins of Curiosity in Childhood* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015), 7.

30. Marilyn Price-Mitchell, “Curiosity: The Force Within a Hungry Mind,” *Edutopia Blog*, February 17, 2015, accessed October 29, 2017, <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/8-pathways-curiosity-hungry-mind-marilyn-price-mitchell>.

31. Ibid.

which they learn and comprehend it.”³² In a digital world, information can be accessed at any moment within a matter of seconds. Students can look up information on their cell phones, laptops, or tablets even while they are taking notes during class. Due to the almost instantaneous accessibility of information, learning and memorizing data may seem unnecessary to them; frequently they feel it is a chore rather than necessity. Students struggle to find motivation and are more frustrated if they do not see the immediate practical use of their effort. Marc Prensky notes, “more and more of our students lack the true prerequisites for learning—engagement and motivation” and explains the urgent need of finding ways to engage students in learning.³³

Star-Glass argues that self-efficacy and self-empowerment play a very important role in motivation; they “determine levels of motivation, engagement, and the utilization of available learning resources.”³⁴ Self-efficacy is the belief in oneself that s/he has the ability to be successful in a situation;³⁵ this belief is also the key factor in enabling self-empowerment which encourages one to take actions when opportunity rises.³⁶ As mentioned earlier, 21st-century learners value a learning environment that includes group activities, an emphasis on teamwork, and an encouraging and helpful attitude among peers. Through a positive and inclusive learning setting, students feel more encouraged to participate without worrying about criticism or being wrong. Self-efficacy can be fostered through positive feedback as well. Providing such feedback helps assure students that they are getting closer to achieving their goals.³⁷

32. Seemiller and Grace, *Generation Z Goes to College*, 175.

33. Marc Prensky, “Learning in the Digital Age,” *Educational Leadership* 63, no. 4 (December 2005/January 2006): 9.

34. Starr-Glass, 52.

35. Albert Bandura, *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control* (New York: W.H. Freeman, 1997), 37.

36. *Ibid.*, 477.

37. Bob Sullo, *Motivated Student: Unlocking the Enthusiasm for Learning* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 2009), 33.

The Importance of Engaged Learning

The process of learning and teaching is not one-sided. Students with high motivation and skills may learn a great deal from a teacher who is still a novice, and a master teacher with years of experience and tools may not reach students who are unmotivated or whose goals are unrelated. While there are many students who respond well to classroom settings that are lecture-based, many students struggle to learn in a traditionally-structured learning environment. They may seem unmotivated and uninterested, but this may be due to having a different learning style. Growing up in an environment characterized by rapid growth and change, they have trouble sitting still and trying to learn in a passive manner. They want to take active roles in learning just like they want to be part of problem-solving, and this tendency causes resistance to traditional lecture styles. Ironically, this resistance creates a lack of participation, and the students are viewed as passive and inactive in the classroom.³⁸ Bob Sullo explains that students will comply and follow the guidelines because they want to receive good grades. When students are not enjoying the process or lack innate inspiration, this resistance may develop. He states that “students are internally motivated, but not necessarily in the way we would like them to be.”³⁹ Instead of requiring students to work within the teacher-centered structure, Lemly argues for the importance of realizing that there is a need to change and suggests considering different perspectives. The new generation is “a very different type of learner than schools have been accustomed to serving, hence schools will have to adapt to these students in order for [their students] to succeed.”⁴⁰

Grace and Seemiller describe the ideal learning environment for 21st-century learners as one in which the learning is experiential and students are able to voice their ideas within an

38. Horner, 2q.

39. Sullo, 21-22.

40. Lemly et al., 102.

engaging and supportive setting.⁴¹ For this generation, the acknowledgement of their contributions, both intellectual and physical, is very important, and this desire can be fostered through the autonomy support system. Black and Deci describe autonomy support as a concept where the students' opinions and ideas are acknowledged and guided by the instructor to be shared with others.⁴² Experienced teachers are often skillful facilitators in creating such support systems. Autonomy-supportive teachers begin as attentive listeners and create student-centered and student-initiated learning atmospheres. Nurturing intrinsic motivation and promoting values and logic are also an important part of building an autonomy-supported learning environment.⁴³ This atmosphere allows students to feel more respected, and their ideas are reflected directly in problem-solving activities.⁴⁴ For 21st-century learners, this aspect of practicality and applicability can become a great stimulant for learning.

Logic-based and experiential learning are a few of the learning styles today's students have grown up with and value. Logic-based learning focuses on the synthesis of information into solutions and applications, and hands-on experience is used as a tool to achieve this.⁴⁵ These methods enable students to take greater roles in learning. Students are not treated as passive receivers but progressive participants. Hosek and Titsworth describe teachers in this setting as "the content experts" that engage students in active learning experiences that allow them to become co-consumers/owners of the knowledge.⁴⁶ The knowledge becomes more meaningful

41. Seemiller and Grace, *Generation Z Goes to College*, 183.

42. Black and Deci, 742.

43. Candice R. Stefanou et al., "Supporting Autonomy in the Classroom: Ways Teachers Encourage Student Decision Making," *Educational Psychologist* 39, no. 2 (2004): 99-100.

44. Black and Deci, 742.

45. Starr-Glass, 52.

46. Angela M. Hosek and Scott Titsworth. "Scripting Knowledge and Experiences for Millennial Students," *Communication Education* 65, no. 3 (2016): 358, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2016.1177842>.

through their own experience; creating meaning is also beneficial to engage long-term memory as opposed to simply memorizing the content.⁴⁷

Curriculum Development

“Youthful teachers,” as Jorgensen labels them, may feel overwhelmed with the idea of teaching and the expectations of a given educational program.⁴⁸ Certainly, there are teachers who inherently possess a better understanding of effective teaching and learning; however, these skills can be also acquired.⁴⁹ Jorgensen sees teachers as artists,⁵⁰ and Wiggins and McTighe call them designers.⁵¹ Just as *artists* practice and polish their works to become better musicians and *designers* craft skills to bring chaos to artistic order, *educators* can better their skills through training and planning.

Curriculum planning is a critical component of effective learning. Having clear goals and objectives are essential, but without a carefully designed structure, the list of goals plays a limited role in student learning.⁵² Successful design does not happen with a new technology nor a new teaching method, but “it is about learning to be more thoughtful and specific about our purposes and what they imply.”⁵³ Many curriculum design experts suggest that teachers start by investigating how they think about the nature of the profession and the specific goals of a given

47. McGlynn, 15

48. Estelle R. Jorgensen, *The Art of Teaching Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 1.

49. Kenneth E. Eble, *The Craft of Teaching: A Guide to Mastering the Professor's Art*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1988), 5.

50. Jorgensen, 1.

51. Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, *Understanding by Design*, 2nd ed. (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2005), 13.

52. Lowman, 9.

53. Wiggins and McTighe, 14.

course before thinking about assessments, activities, textbooks, lecture notes, and other curricular elements. The details of the class structure will be used as a means to establish comprehension more efficiently, and it will be clearer how those specific instructional elements can be utilized within the course after the desired outcome is determined.⁵⁴ This sequence of building curriculum from broad-to-specific is based on Wiggins and McTighe’s “backward design” and has been adapted by many teachers, researchers, and institutions.

When developing goals and objectives, educators must consider various stages of learning and how to develop assessments to achieve the mastery of content knowledge at different levels. “Bloom’s Taxonomy” presents six categories of learning: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. These categories demonstrate varying degrees of understanding of the knowledge necessary to show the stages learning and synthesizing the information.

The idea of “significant learning” takes Bloom’s Taxonomy⁵⁵ and expands the categories to be more inclusive for students of today.⁵⁶ Significant learning includes areas that are not necessarily content-related but that foster students’ skills for their studies, careers, and lives such as “learning how to learn, leadership and interpersonal skills, ethics, communication skills, character, tolerance, and the ability to adapt to change.”⁵⁷ These additional categories are helpful when designing courses in order to resolve some of the common struggles educators face. For example, for unprepared students, teachers may include reasons for the students to prepare before coming to class; for unfocused students, the course can be structured to utilize an active learning

54. Wiggins and McTighe, 14-15.

55. Benjamin Bloom’s Bloom Taxonomy suggests a hierarchy categories of learning objectives and goals. For example, acquiring the knowledge and understanding are at the foundation of learning goals, and evaluating and synthesizing are at the top of the hierarchy system of the learning goals.

56. This idea is the premise of Fink’s research. See Fink, 2001.

57. Fink, 34.

environment; and to improve content retention, teachers may encourage an experience-based approach to bridge meaning and content.⁵⁸ There are six categories in the taxonomy of significant learning as seen in figure 1: foundational knowledge, application, integration, learning how to learn, caring, and the human dimension. The last three groups, newly added, encourage students to build independence as they increase motivation and gain an understanding of the purposes behind studying a given subject.⁵⁹

This system encourages the focus of the learning environment to shift to being student-centered rather than teacher-centered. Creating a student-centered curriculum, however, is not a new idea. There have been numerous discussions related to creating a student-centered educational experience, and many institutions have already adapted this into their curricula. Barr and Tagg describe teacher-centered education as the action of providing instruction (instruction paradigm) and student-centered as producing learning (learning paradigm). They suggest the learning paradigm stimulates instructors and institutions to evolve in order to improve instruction.⁶⁰ Caulfield and Aycock also compare these two approaches and label them as pedagogical and andragogical principles.⁶¹ In the pedagogical principle, the teacher takes an active role directing the learning process through lectures, exams, and memorization of course materials while students participate as receivers of the information. The andragogical principle increases the role of the students. The teacher in the andragogical principal helps to facilitate students to become self-directed learners and provides opportunities for problem-centered

58. Fink, 27-29.

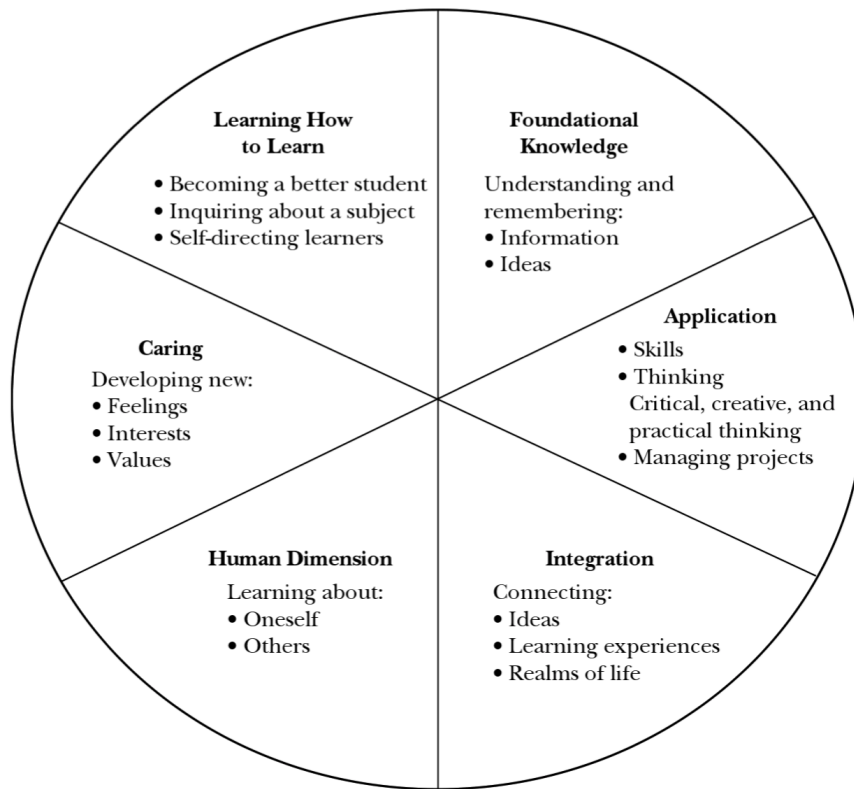
59. Ibid., 36-37.

60. Robert B. Barr and John Tagg, "From Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education," *Change* 27, no. 6 (November/December, 1995): 13-14, <https://doi-org.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu/10.1080/00091383.1995.10544672>.

61. Jay Caulfield and Alan Aycock, *How to Design and Teach a Hybrid Course: Achieving Student-Centered Learning Through Blended Classroom, Online and Experiential Activities* (Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2011), 9

application rather than subject-centered.⁶² Fink divides these two principles into old and new paradigms.⁶³ Educational theorists explain that in the learner-centered paradigm, students are given more responsibilities and authority in their own learning and work as team members together with teachers. The atmosphere of the classroom is cooperative rather than competitive, and group work and activities are valued. Fostering motivation is one of the most important

Figure 1. Taxonomy of Significant Learning.⁶⁴



62. Geraline Holmes and Michele Abington-Cooper, "Pedagogy vs. Andragogy: A False Dichotomy?" *The Journal of Technology Studies* 26, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 2000): 51.

63. Caulfield and Aycock, 20.

64. Fink, 35.

aspects to consider within the structure, and the focus on the quality of education and applicability in a holistic manner is emphasized as well.⁶⁵ Shifting from the traditional structure to student-centered, however, can be a difficult transition. Change means letting go of some control. Instead of being the leader of a classroom, a teacher becomes a facilitator allowing students to take charge of their own learning.⁶⁶

Once the goals of a given course are developed, teachers need to determine how they will measure and assess learning in order to know that goals have been met. In the process of establishing assessments, the instructor develops ideas on how student performance can be measured and evaluated, and ways of providing feedback.⁶⁷ Bloom's Taxonomy can be a valuable tool in creating valid and reliable assessments during this stage. The questions instructors may ask during this stage include, "What kinds of proof indicate that students have achieved such goals?" "What assessments suggest students have acquired proficiency?" or "How are different levels of mastery of the knowledge measured?" Assessments go beyond conventional written exams. They may also include in-class quizzes, projects, or homework that validates the knowledge or skills learned through the course.⁶⁸

The objectives and assessments lead instructors to organize specific teaching and learning activities working towards building knowledge and skills to accomplish a desired outcome. Fink emphasizes the importance of reflecting backwards during this stage to make sure the details are aligned and integrated with goals and objectives. Table 1, suggested by Fink, shows an example

65. For detailed survey, see Barr and Tagg, 13-20, Caulfield and Aycock, 9-12, Fink, 20-23.

66. Johnson and Marsh, 61.

67. Ibid., 93.

68. Wiggins and McTighe, 18-19.

of how different components can be compared and evaluated. This guides how to organize and construct teaching and learning activities.⁶⁹

Table 1. An Example Table of Integrating Stages.⁷⁰

Learning Goals for Course	Procedures for Assessing Student Learning	Learning Activities
Understand and remember key concepts, terms, relationships, and the like		
Know how to use the content		
Be able to relate this subject to other subjects		
Understand the personal and social implications of knowing about this subject		
Care about the subject (and about learning more on the subject)		
Know how to keep on learning about this subject after the course is over		

Organizing content into appropriate pedagogical sequences is also a key part of curricular development, along with creating teaching strategies that lead to effective learning experiences. For example, in a diction course, the organization of learning vowels, alphabets, and consonants may differ based on how the instructor envisions the learning process. Understanding the difference between the teaching strategies and techniques is essential in this step. The teaching strategy is how teachers connect or plan individual activities; on the other hand, the teaching technique is the activity itself.⁷¹ Examples of teaching strategies used in the flipped classroom model are problem-based learning, logic-based learning, team-based learning, experiential

69. Fink, 114-117.

70. Fink, 139.

71. Ibid., 144.

learning, and accelerated learning. The techniques or activities utilized may include presenting and explaining concepts using either outlines or a summary of information, class discussions, group discussions, group projects, peer evaluation, writing, observation, listening, performing, and analyzing.⁷²

Developing a grading system, writing a course syllabus, and planning teaching evaluations are the final steps in a backwards-designed curriculum. By utilizing an approach to course design that moves from broad goals to specific course outcomes and activities, it becomes easier to understand how to work with students and respond to their needs. Many educators who adopted this design reported that it allowed them to be more intentional during class preparation and make the educational environment more learner-focused.⁷³ This system of building curriculum is not the only way to structure a course, but one of many options available to educators today.

The Flipped Classroom

The idea of the flipped classroom is not new. In a flipped classroom, students are first introduced with the subject matter prior to the class, then the processing of the information is stimulated through in-class activities in which students synthesize, analyze, and problem-solve.⁷⁴ Educators are attracted to flipped learning due to pragmatic concerns they have: budget, time, efficiency of class structure, creating a more active learning environment, addressing different learning styles, and engaging students actively.⁷⁵ Though the term flipped classroom may have

72. Fink, 114-117.

73. Ibid., 165.

74. Cynthia J. Brame, "Flipping the Classroom," *Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching*, 2013, accessed February 27, <http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/flipping-the-classroom/>.

75. Starr-Glass, 48.

been initially used around the turn of the 21st century, the idea of flipped learning has been utilized by teachers of many different disciplines for years. For example, students are expected to read books prior to their literature class so that the class time could be devoted to discussions or analysis of characters, background, or social influence. In voice lessons, teachers anticipate that their students are already familiar with notes, rhythms, words, and synopses so that their face-to-face time can be used for refining technique, expression, presentation, and musicianship.

The common misconception of “school work at home and homework at school” used to describe flipped learning comes from oversimplifying its structure and overlooking its crafting which focuses on a student-centered, active learning environment.⁷⁶ The Flipped Learning Network (FLN) offers a definition that is more inclusive: “a pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter.”⁷⁷ A course structured using the flipped classroom approach goes beyond watching videos or reading textbooks at home and doing homework in class. This approach allows the instructor to rearrange the typical lecture and assignments. The reorganization process provides new perspectives on the subject matter and encourages creative thinking. In a flipped classroom, effective rearrangement of the class materials and activities is essential; however, other significant considerations are appreciating the new perspectives of the learning elements and creating more effective ways of using the learning space.⁷⁸

76. Jessica Yarbro et al., “Extension of a Review of Flipped Learning” *Pearson and the Flipped Learning Network* (2014), accessed October 15, 2017, https://www.pearson.com/content/dam/one-dot-com/one-dot-com/global/Files/efficacy-and-research/he/fl-4-613_A023_FlippedLearning_2014_JUNE_SinglePage_f.pdf.

77. “Definition of Flipped Learning,” Flipped Learning Network, last modified March 12, 2014, accessed September 15, 2017, <https://flippedlearning.org/definition-of-flipped-learning>.

78. Starr-Glass, 49.

The coordination of pre-class engagements and in-class activities is essential in creating an effective flipped learning experience. These two elements should be connected and coherent to enhance the learning experience. This relationship encourages student engagement in the classroom and increased motivation in their private study.⁷⁹ During the pre-class preparation time, students familiarize themselves with lecture materials and concepts using well-organized instructions from the teacher. This helps students to preview topics and vocabulary, review lessons, pose questions, study the background of a given topic, and learn at their own pace. This guidance is especially helpful for students who struggle with reading assignments or study skills. Without specific guidelines, these learners may easily feel overwhelmed and confused. In-class time is used to affirm, exercise, explore, expand, and apply the knowledge through hands-on learning experiences under the teacher's guidance. During the private study time, students have their first experience with course content prior to class, but they "are not simply requested to explore subject matter before the lecture; there is a deliberate, consistent, and systematic repositioning in which learners are *required* to cover subject matter independently."⁸⁰ In the group space, the instructor prepares the environment and structures the time in order to increase students' level of understanding and ability to apply the material. The role of the teacher in this setting is to serve as a facilitator, supporter, and guide. This does not mean there is no direct instruction during class, but the goal is including activities that will help students digest the content and apply it in meaningful ways. The flipped classroom is a model that encourages students to be more engaged in learning and be in charge of their own learning.⁸¹

79. Starr-Glass, 58-59.

80. Ibid., 51.

81. Jon Bergmann, "The 'Flipped Classroom' Starts with One Question: What Is The Best Use of My Face-To-Face Class Time?" *Daily Edventures*, May 22, 2012, <http://dailyedventures.com/index.php/2012/05/22/the-flipped-classroom-starts-with-one-question-what-is-the-best-use-of-my-face-to-face-class-time/>.

Common concerns in implementing a flipped model include accessibility to learning materials, lack of skills or tools in creating lecture videos, utilization of the additional classroom time, and preparation time for the faculty.⁸² With advances in technology, institutions of higher education are able to utilize convenient methods of sharing and assigning materials. External web-based programs are also available for faculty and student use. There are many ways that teachers can guide pre-class study sessions. The content is introduced individually through specific assignments such as lecture videos, handouts, webpages, guided readings, presentation slides (animated and/or interactive), online modules, quizzes, and flashcards. It is true that using this model requires the teacher to plan thoroughly and invest time at the initial stage. The instructor also needs to be equipped with knowledge of technologies and various in-class strategies and methods in structuring the activities and teaching tools. The teacher does not have to implement this model in its entirety at the outset of a course. Gradual implementation of this approach allows instructors to have more time to plan and prepare thoroughly, and also provides a chance to employ various strategies, methods, and technologies. Leading class activities is a skill that needs to be practiced and learned as well. Student accessibility and motivation are essential elements to consider during course design, and the instructor has to be comfortable varying the teaching methods and facilitating activities.

Flipping the classroom transforms the learning environment to be more student-centered which encourages “constructivist epistemologies, learner self-efficacy and self-empowerment, active learning as opposed to passive learning, social and cooperative learning, deep learning as opposed to surface learning, the promotion of critical thinking, and an emphasis on problem solving and higher-order cognitive levels.”⁸³ The interactive classroom aligns with constructivist

82. Yarbrow et al., 15.

83. Starr-Glass, 51.

theory in which an instructor “present[s] new information within a framework, or scaffold” and promotes construction of the knowledge.⁸⁴ The relationship between the pre-class and in-class activities helps students to see the connection between the expanding their background knowledge applying that knowledge creating patterns of evolving learning experience. This combination also provides opportunity for Generation Z to make the learning experience more unique and individualized for them.⁸⁵ This offers them opportunities to be independent and take charge of their own learning as they collaborate with their colleagues through in-class activities.

84. Ibid., 52.

85. Seemiller and Grace, *Generation Z Goes to College*, 205.

Chapter 3: INTERVIEWS WITH MASTER TEACHERS

A critical component of this document involved personal interviews with experienced master teachers of diction at colleges and universities throughout the United States and Canada. The following questions were assembled by the author in order to provide insights into the structure, methodology, philosophy, and assessments of such a course. In this chapter, the list of questions and biographical information on each interviewee is provided. A summary of answers for each question are examined in order to ascertain the structure of these courses, similarities and differences between each course, and suggestions from these experts for educators planning to design a diction curriculum. Specific ideas for application and sample instructional techniques in relation to diction curriculum are introduced.

Interviews

Most interviews were conducted during the 2017-2018 academic year via phone, e-mail, and/or in-person, and each interviewee was given the same questions. The questionnaire was designed to evaluate the different in-class activities utilized to encourage student involvement as well as effectiveness of instructional methods used as a part of the course. Prior to the interview, the author sought out and received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and interviewees gave their permission to include their names and use the information they shared for the research. The list of questions is as follows:

- How many students do you have in your diction class on average?
- How often does your class meet? For how long? And how many languages do you cover?
- Based on your experiences, what is the maximum number of students allowed to enroll and still maintain an effective class?

- Do you have special activities or assignments/assessments for your classes to encourage learning or participation?
- Which activity is the most effective and why?
- Which activity is the least effective and why?
- Which assignment/activity is most favored by students?
- What are your class policies: attendance, participation, grading, or any other?
- As an expert teacher of diction, do you have anything you want to share with novice educators?

Below is the list of interviewees (alphabetized) with participant names, titles, institutions, and interview date.

Table 2. Interviewee Information and Interview Date.

Name	Title / Institution	Interview Month, Year
Gary Arvin	Associate Professor of Music (Voice) Indiana University	August, 2017
Leslie De'Ath	Professor Wilfrid Laurier University	August, 2017
Joseph Li	Assistant Professor of Vocal Coaching Baylor University	September, 2017
Cheri Montgomery	Adjunct Senior Lecturer of Vocal Diction Vanderbilt University	August, 2017
William Odom	Professor of German University of Southern Mississippi	January, 2018
Debra Scurto-Davis	Adjunct Assistant Professor Rider University	August, 2017
Deborah Williamson	Associate Professor in Voice Baylor University	September, 2017

Question 1. How many students do you have in your diction class on average?

The class size varied from 5 to 25 students with an average of 15 students per class.

Question 2. How often does your class meet? For how long? And how many languages do you cover?

Most classes were 50 minutes in length, two to three times a week. Four teachers offered one language per course while two covered two languages. One instructor offered four to five languages in a course.

Question 3. Based on your experiences, what is the maximum number of students allowed to enroll and still maintain an effective class?

Responses on the ideal number of students ranged from 12 to 25, with 15 students being the mean and the median, and the standard deviation being 4.6. These ideal class sizes were suggested based on the belief that it would lead to an increase in student participation and opportunities to apply course material. Respondents also felt that this number allowed more time for the instructor to focus on each student. While the focus of this question related to the maximum number of students, one interviewee shared his experience of working with an exceptionally small class one semester, and stated that in order for a class to run efficiently and actively, there is also a *minimum* number of students needed, which was at least five in his opinion.

Question 4. Do you have special activities or assignments/assessments for your classes to encourage learning or participation?

Due to the nature of the course, participation is a requirement rather than an option. The master teachers in this project had developed several techniques to encourage active participation. Several indicated that they used exercises which created friendly competition among the students, while others focused on developing an environment for students to feel safe and confident in any given circumstances. Deborah Williamson shared, "It is important for the students to know that

no question is a stupid question,” and developing different classroom management skills to lead discussions was essential for teachers to create a safe classroom atmosphere.¹

Of the activities and assignments/assessments described, the most common tools included board work, repetition, in-class or take-home worksheets, in-class performances, in-class quizzes, written exams, and oral exams. Board work, repetition, worksheets, and performances often increased student participation and were used to practice direct application of the content and to enhance the retention of new information. In-class quizzes and written/oral exams were common assessment tools in learning that helped students to organize and remember important information within the material discussed. Additionally, most master teachers had other evaluation methods to track student progress. Group singing, an end-of-semester recital, IPA scrabble, IPA assignments with listening segments, and online modules were a few commonly used examples.

Question 5. Which activity is the most effective and why?

Many interviewees agreed on the importance of studying the fundamentals and promoting retention of the information. Gary Arvin calls this the “boot camp” segment of the course which includes learning the rules and regulations, drilling the sounds, and transcribing in IPA. Teachers described various instructional methods that they utilized to teach these fundamentals that included: reading assignments, worksheets, board work, repetition, group singing, and performance presentations. This stage of learning may be the most demanding for both the student and teacher, but three of the respondents emphasized that the work and was most valued at the end both by the students and the instructor.

To make this stage of learning more engaging and effective, the experts used various techniques and strategies. Cheri Montgomery adapts Moore’s method into her classroom and

1. Debora Williamson, in-person interview by the author, September 19, 2017.

provides opportunities for the students to present their homework.² Moore's method was originally used in mathematics courses and was later adapted in various other subjects. The system engages students in individual or small group projects and presentations. Montgomery modified this method for her diction classroom and gives her students time to present their homework through singing. During this process students share the answers of the worksheet with melodies instead of simply reading the answers. Deborah Williamson, in her French diction class, creates study sheets with excerpts from operas to practice and reinforce the concepts discussed. For example, students are asked to underline specific letter groups learned in class. Debra Scurto-Davis developed fun ways to practice identifying and recognizing IPA of different languages. On IPA message day, students come to class and share messages in IPA, and everyone is given a chance to read the messages. Dr. Seuss's Day is another fun activity she has for her students to practice their knowledge of IPA. Students transcribe in IPA a page from one of Dr. Seuss's books chosen by the instructor and work together as a class.

Question 6. Which activity is the least effective and why?

For this question, the answers varied. Two teachers agreed any activity that drew student's attention from the content was ineffective. For example, while some teachers found in-class performances, a recital, or peer analysis based on performance in diction curriculum important, several teachers thought that these assessments distracted from analyzing diction. Although students enjoyed the performance aspect of the course, their tendency was to focus more on the voice and singing technique. Some of the experts interviewed also felt that group performances were ineffective at times. When students sang together as a group, it became

2. Moore's method was originally implemented by Robert Lee Moore (1882-1974) for his mathematics course. This method is highly learner-centered and consists of presentations of solutions by students. The instructor's role here is as a facilitator providing guidance but at the same time encouraging discovery-based learning.

difficult to work on the authentic pronunciation carefully. Mastering the diction requires subtle tuning of vowel/consonant sound; however, when the sound is produced as a group it is naturally more difficult to work on the refinement of the sound. Activities that detracted from the organization and structure of the class also proved to be ineffective. For example, boardwork is one of the most common activities in diction courses. Students come up to the board and write specific words using IPA and the class is able to check their answers. It is fun and provides opportunities for students to be out of their desks and be active, but if the students are not able to follow the order within the structure, the classroom atmosphere becomes too hectic to achieve effective learning.

Planning lectures and activities was an important part of avoiding an ineffective classroom, a view shared by five of the seven interviewees. This is especially crucial when an instructor has a broad range of languages to cover within one or two semesters. Examples include structuring lectures based on the similarities and differences between languages and prioritizing the most important content first. Keeping the balance between lectures and activities is also important so that students receive a firm foundation of knowledge while applying the content to make it their own. Four experts suggested that a teacher needs to strive to avoid lecturing all the time. Students need to be engaged and be part of the classroom instead of sitting still and receiving a large amount of content without time to digest.

Question 7. Which assignment/activity is most favored by students?

Students appreciated activities that were engaging and allowed them to receive individual attention and feedback. Examples offered were individual coaching(s), in-class performance(s), interactive and hands-on in-class work, and individual counseling session(s) with the instructor.

Question 8. What are your class policies: attendance, participation, grading, or any other?

Four teachers factored attendance into the course grade while others did not include an attendance policy. Especially for the class covering multiple languages in a semester, the instructors assumed that students would know that it would be difficult to learn the material independently if they missed classes. Participation was an important part for all interviewees but was not always reflected in the final grade. The grading varied depending upon the course activities and assessment methods. When examining classroom policies, two interviewees had a no cell-phone rule. One mentioned that he promises to dismiss the class on-time in exchange for no use of electronic devices during the class period, and this resulted in a positive and attentive classroom atmosphere. A common thread throughout all the teachers' policies was the attitude they required for their students. Many emphasized encouraging and helpful dispositions in the classroom that were necessary for collaborative learning.

Question 9. As an expert teacher of diction, do you have anything you want to share with young educators?

All suggestions were mentioned multiple times with the exception of one comment regarding technology. The most frequently shared advice mentioned by five teachers was to have a very specific plan for the course, lecture, and activity. The teacher needs to have a detailed lesson plan for each day and familiarize and memorize students' names as quickly as possible. Two interviewees emphasized that having a thorough syllabus would help in leading the class. The syllabus should include clear expectations and guidelines for the course. This is not only helpful for students, but also it will allow teachers to stay more objective when dealing with issues on grades, student attitudes, or assignments. For courses that had to cover multiple languages with limited class time, two master teachers suggested that the instructor needs to be systematic and have a clear idea of what would be the most effective way to deliver the information when structuring the course and planning lectures. Two teachers felt that young

educators should pay attention to different learning styles and provide opportunities for students to learn in various ways that included: seeing, hearing, writing, drawing, speaking, and through movement. It was also recommended that students have opportunities to apply what they have learned: through speaking, worksheets, singing, coaching, and competitive in-class group activities.

Three of the experts interviewed mentioned the need for a diction teacher to understand the differences related to lyric diction and be consistent in their teaching in order to avoid confusion. For example, although it may seem very similar at times, the *schwa* in each language differs from others, and often languages have multiple schwa sounds. Recognizing and knowing its distinct quality and tendency is important before presenting it to students. Respondents felt that the foundational elements were the most essential part of the course for both the teacher and students. Professional singers recognize that sung diction and spoken language are often very dissimilar. As a result, master teachers felt that young teachers should thoroughly review resources and identify those that address authentic lyric diction rather than a modern spoken style. One interviewee suggested listening to or working with native speakers who understand lyric diction or professional singers with good language training. This will provide opportunities for students to hear authentic sounds, either in person or through media.

Two teachers identified the importance of having the skills to lead classroom discussions and activities. Students are easily distracted from the main topic if the teacher is not guiding them efficiently, so knowing how to answer topical questions, refocus discussions, and enable students to participate are important. This will help to foster a better learning and classroom environment. One interviewee also emphasized that a teacher must create a safe atmosphere yet keep it professional and honest. An experienced teacher knows a mistake in the classroom often leads to a great learning experience. Students need to understand that making mistakes is part of the process.

Technology can be an effective classroom tool, but one teacher argued that it could also be inefficient. She recommended one specific app called *Doceri* to annotate over a presentation using a tablet. Other useful tools are digital flashcards, online quizzes, interactive testing in the classroom, and interactive presentations/games/whiteboard usage.

Chapter 4: APPLICATION TO A DICTION COURSE

In this chapter, the specific application of methods and examples of goals, objectives, and instructional techniques selected are presented as well as other possibilities for future use. In order to foster a highly interactive classroom, I selected ideas from the master teachers and utilized techniques commonly found in courses designed based on the flipped classroom model. From the interviews with diction teachers, there were many unique and fun activities that engage students in an active learning environment. Several of their ideas are modified and implemented in my course including Cheri Montgomery's timed transcription races and Debra Scurto-Davis's discussion of side-by-side comparison of video examples as well as 16-bar pieces chosen by students to work on in-class. Such activities provide very practical experiences for the students while they are receiving more personal attention related to developing to their skills. A sample syllabus, lesson plans, and handouts for those lessons can be found in Appendices A and B.

Language classes frequently use the flipped classroom model, and although the goals are very different between diction and language classes, there are many ideas from language education that can be applied to diction courses. There are many discussions in early treatises about singing with clear diction such as Caccini's *Le nuove musiche* (1601); however, the history of lyric diction curriculum is rather brief. The first NATS journal article about diction was published in 1947, three years after the initial publication of the *Journal of Singing*. In this article, Sharnova discussed the need to create a course dedicated solely to diction for singers.¹ On the other hand, the history of foreign language instruction goes back hundreds of years, and the pedagogues who wrote appropriate curriculum for language instruction date back to the mid-

1. Sonia Sharnova, "Diction," *Journal of Singing* 3, no. 6 (1947 Jun/Jul): 4.

1800s. Because there are more publications and pedagogical ideas related to language instruction, these ideas were considered when developing my course.

Following is a list of characteristics for the optimal language classroom revised by Johnson and Marsh.²

- 1) Learners interact in the target language with an authentic audience.
- 2) Learners are involved in authentic tasks.
- 3) Learners are exposed to and are encouraged to produce varied and creative language.
- 4) Learners have opportunities to interact socially and negotiate meaning.
- 5) Learners have enough time and feedback.
- 6) Learners are guided to attend mindfully to the learning process.
- 7) Learners work in an environment with an ideal stress/anxiety level.
- 8) Learner autonomy is supported.

Considering the curriculum goals for a diction classroom and the information gained from master teachers of diction and research, these ideas were modified to be more appropriate characteristics for the diction course and are reflected in the methods and activities of my course.

- 1) Learners are guided by the diction teacher through their work covering rules and pronunciation and also interact with an authentic audience such as a language coach or the language department.
- 2) Learners practice rules and enunciation with useful words in singing and combine diction and singing on the task.
- 3) Learners experience authentic pronunciation through performances sung by native singers and have opportunities to compare and contrast.
- 4) Learners are encouraged to look for rules learned in their own scores.
- 5) Learners have opportunities to practice pronunciation in groups and share feedback.
- 6) Learners have designated times for practice and feedback.
- 7) Learners are actively engaged in the learning process.

2. Christopher Johnson and Debra Marsh, "The Flipped Classroom," in *The Cambridge Guide to Blended Learning for Language Teaching*, edited by Michael McCarthy (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 55. For the original research that this list is derived from, see Quentin L. Dixon, Jung Zhao, Jee-Young Shin, Shuang Wu, Jung-Hsuan Su, Renata Burgess-Brigham, Melike Unal Gezer, and Catherine Snow, "What We Know about Second Language Acquisition: A Synthesis from Four Perspectives," *Review of Educational Research* 82, no. 1 (March 1, 2012): 5-60, <https://doi-org.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu/10.3102/0034654311433587>.

- 8) Learners are guided to participate in a safe, encouraging learning environment.
- 9) Learner autonomy is supported.

Course Goals

- 1) Students will become familiar with IPA and rules and demonstrate understanding of the proper diction of the languages covered.
- 2) Students will identify, recognize, listen critically, analyze, and produce authentic diction appropriate for singing.
- 3) Students will gain confidence singing in foreign languages through exercises and practice.
- 4) Students will apply diction skills to new repertoire using the tools learned throughout the course.

The course goals will be realized via these specific course outcomes:

- 1) Students will acquire the knowledge and understanding of proper diction through identifying and recognizing IPA and rules of pronunciation.
- 2) Students will partake in the take-home assignments such as lecture materials, online modules, online quizzes, worksheets, and guided readings to familiarize themselves with concepts, rules, symbols, and sounds.
- 3) Students will listen to various recordings and live examples of sung and spoken diction to develop ears for listening critically and analytically.
- 4) Students will exercise diction through in-class activities and apply in their own singing.
- 5) Students will participate in group activities and discussions to increase the retention of knowledge and their ability to listen critically in a supportive environment.
- 6) Students will prepare one new song in each language according to the guidelines to develop independence in their own learning.

Pre-Class Learning

Diction teachers encounter similar challenges as language teachers. The reality of time constraint limits the opportunities for the students to practice and actively engage in the learning process despite the teacher's continuous effort to create a more effective learning environment.³

3. Johnson and Marsh, 56.

Inevitably, students enter the course with various levels of experience, and many teachers assign suggested readings prior to the class to build context and background knowledge of the new material. Oftentimes, however, the effort of trying to develop the background knowledge becomes ineffective due to lack of students completing the reading assignments or reading without thinking critically.

As discussed earlier, 21st-century students need to feel their work is practical and has clear purpose. Structuring pre-class materials helps students to be mindfully engaged during their personal preparation time. New information is introduced through pre-class study, but students are not expected to master this information. This pre-class exposure does allow students to think and bring questions to the class. In order to encourage effective pre-class preparation, Hsieh suggests instructors provide well-defined learning objectives for all home study material. One other important aspect in creating pre-class materials is the amount of material given to students.⁴ Providing manageable objectives accompanied with opportunities to learn at their own pace is an essential point for successful private study. For language courses, the pre-class time is used to introduce new grammar and simple phrases with brief explanations. For diction classes, pre-class study sessions can be used to introduce new IPA symbols with sound examples, spellings, terminology, and simple grammar.

The first instructional idea used in my course designed to structure the pre-class learning is presenting materials through video recordings. Video recording is one of the more commonly used tools in a flipped classroom model for building knowledge prior to in-class activities. In this diction course, video recordings are used to introduce the symbols and sounds of IPA. Videos are recorded through screen recording technology with the audio recorded simultaneously over the

4. Betina Hsieh, "Step by Step, Slowly I Flip," in *The Flipped College Classroom Conceptualized and Re-conceptualized*, ed. by Lucy Santos Green, Jennifer R. Banas, and Ross A. Perkins (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing Switzerland, 2017), 15-19.

screen using recording software/extensions such as Screencast-O-Matic or Screencastify. This offers opportunities for students to become familiar with challenging IPA symbols and practice sounds at their own pace. Because one of the issues educators face with 21st-century students is the fear of being wrong, this experience of initial exposure of the information privately encourages students to gain confidence by allowing additional practices before joining activities in class.

Providing videos, however, is not a requirement in a flipped classroom setting and is not the only method that would be an effective teaching tool for all teachers and courses. The use of video in flipped learning is not a simple delivery of material via lecture. Through the video, students need to be engaged in learning and thinking rather than watching the content in a passive manner. The material needs to be planned thoroughly and must have connection to the in-class activities. It is important that the instructor feels comfortable producing the video and have a clear purpose of the video within layers of the course structure. When generating video lessons, the length and conciseness of the content are very important. Many teachers involved with flipped learning recommend 5 to 15 minutes in length of material.⁵

Instructional videos can be produced using various tools. The use of screencasting programs seems to be favored by many instructors. Screencasting allows the teacher to capture the computer screen, voice, and annotations in real time which has the benefit of students shadowing the thought process of the teacher as the new concept is explained.⁶ Another popular method is recording with the interactive whiteboard/Smartboard and document camera. Powtoon, Vyond, ExplainEverything, OfficeMix, and Hippo Video are some examples of popular programs. Pre-existing videos made by other teachers may be also available through online

5. Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams, *Flip Your Classroom: Reach Every Student in Every Class Every Day* (Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education, 2012), 44.

6. *Ibid.*, 37.

streaming sites such as YouTube or Vimeo. These can be helpful resources that can be used as supplemental materials during the pre-class learning.

Other methods used for at-home study sessions include handouts, guided readings, online modules, quizzes, and flashcards. Handouts are designed similar to the traditional use of assignments or worksheets but with new information and simple exercises so that students learn to organize information. Additionally, guided readings coordinated with existing textbooks and supplemental readings is another great way to teach students important information in addition to furthering their study skills. In my course, the elements of handouts and guided readings are combined so that students are reading assigned materials and find specific information necessary to be actively engaged in learning.

The purpose of the online module is to organize the learning progression of a specific topic. The teacher may create the order of tasks for students to complete systematically in each module, and many modules allow the facilitator to track students' progress and completion.⁷ For example, in the Italian diction portion of my course, a module is created to cover the Italian vowels. In the module, there are listening files, a quiz, handout, or a link to an external webpage that provides supplemental information on the topic. The module is created in a certain order that moves from introducing the vowel sounds and IPA, then listening to vowels, and finally spelling words. Each exercise/lesson is marked after completion. The learning module as a learning tool places the focus on the learner and allows students to review materials at their own pace and enables them to take charge of their learning. The module can be made available through various Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Blackboard, Canvas, Moodle, Sakai, and Cengage Learning. LMS are widely used online-based database tool that assists teachers in structuring course materials, sharing resources, assigning homework or quizzes, creating a space for

7. Canvas Doc Team, "What are Modules?" *Guides: Canvas, Canvas*, April 19, 2017, accessed October 28, 2018, <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10735>.

communicating, giving feedback, and organizing grades, and the online learning module is one of the features offered.

Quizzes have been used in classrooms for many years for various reasons. It is a great device to check students' understanding of the concept or to find out which areas need additional explanations or activities. Quizzes are also used to recall information, build a logical hierarchy, assess memorization, provide feedback, and practice testing.⁸ Coordinated with reading, video lecture, handouts, or any other instructional guidance, quizzes ensure that students engage in the pre-learning experiences with specific goals and allow the teacher to determine the effectiveness of the materials.⁹ Allowing multiple trials or assigning only a small percentage of the semester grade for each quiz also increases the efficiency of the system. This makes the process “low-stakes,” and students are able to participate without the pressure of a grade.¹⁰

In this course, quizzes are assigned as a part of the online module or as a follow-up requirement after readings or lesson videos. Feedback is an important part of this process as it increases the effectiveness of learning and helps students recognize important learning points and develop a better understanding of the content. The online form of quizzes is helpful and enables the ease of providing simple feedback and student access to the outcome immediately. There are several online quiz creators which allow for tracking student progress and offering feedback on each question. The question types are varied as well: multiple choice, questions with the audio/video, true/false, short answer, checkbox, and some options to transform the quiz into games. Quizlet, SurveyMonkey, Google Forms, and most LMS include applications that offer

8. University of the Western Cape, “Using Formative Quizzes for Continuous Learning and Assessment,” *Teaching and Learning*, accessed November 25, 2018, <https://www.uwc.ac.za/TandL/Pages/default.aspx>.

9. Brian R. Cook and Andrea Babon, “Active Learning through Online Quizzes: Better Learning and Less (Busy) Work,” *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 41, no. 1 (2017): 26, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2016.1185772>.

10. University of the Western Cape.

production and distribution of online quizzes. These programs allow teachers to track student completion as well as statistics on how well students are doing on each question and quiz set.

Flashcards are another set of helpful tools used to guide active and self-regulated at-home study. Traditional use of flashcards includes questions, terminology, or concepts on one side, and answers, details, definitions, images, or subordinate concepts on the other side. Flashcards are frequently used by students and teachers in learning and teaching, and their benefits include reinforcing retrieval practice, increasing learner's metacognitive accuracy, and building coherence with the information.¹¹ The flashcard method also allows information to be divided and sectionalized easily, encouraging the spacing effect. Through repetition of information over the several periods of time, spacing effect allows learners to generate a more contextualized form of understanding and can enhance the retention rate.¹²

In this course, both digital and hard copies of flashcards are used throughout, and students are required to make their own flashcards as an assignment to encourage memorizing certain letter combinations and IPA symbols. As part of the private study, students create flashcards or complete online flashcard modules, and during the class, flashcards are used in group settings. For many years, flashcards have been one of most widely-used study methods, and during the interviews, several diction teachers referenced their use of flashcards. Learners are also recommended to utilize flashcards along with other study tools including quizzes, readings, videos, handouts, or any other that will aid in reinforcing their understanding. Quizlet, Cram, StudyBlue, and Brainscape are some of popular websites that provide digital flashcard creation programs, and digital flashcards can be conveniently shared with students. Although these digital

11. Chelsea Lin, Mark A. McDaniel, and Toshiya Miyatsu, "Effects of Flashcards on Learning Authentic Materials: The Role of Detailed Versus Conceptual Flashcards and Individual Differences in Structure-Building Ability," *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition* 7, no. 4 (2018): 530, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jarmac.2018.05.003>.

12. Nate Kornell, "Optimising Learning Using Flashcards: Spacing Is More Effective Than Cramming," *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 23, no. 9 (2009): 1297, <https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.1537>.

flashcards are convenient and fast, there are different reasons for creating hard copies of flashcards as one of the assignments. Handwriting and physically flipping the cards are advantageous in learning and recognizing information due to increasing the concentration of the visual attention combined with the motor skill rather than the separation between keyboard and screen as in typing.¹³ Through this extra stage of processing the information, students learn as they create the stack and the knowledge is reinforced as students review the cards.

Other tools for consideration are the use of webpages and presentation slides (animated and/or interactive). Webpages or links to specific video/audio examples are used to support existing materials for introducing new concepts, different perspectives, and as examples. Throughout the semester, there will be several video examples used as part of in-class activities.

Though presentation slides will not be used in my course, there are many benefits to this approach to instruction. The advancement of technology enables many different forms of the slide presentation including animated and interactive designs which help students' engagement and communication with the materials provided. Along with Google Slides and Keynote, PowerPoint is one of the most popular presentation applications used in education and business; however, many newly developed add-ons and online-based applications have gained popularity in recent years. A few examples of web-based programs include Canva, Prezi, and FlowVella. These sites allow presentations to be made directly through their website using their web-based slide builders. Makeofy, Motagua, Cavale, and Spectacular are some examples of PowerPoint add-ons that offer templates which can be tailored to the preferences of users.

These various tools and methods are helpful in guiding students, but to increase the effectiveness of pre-class sessions, it is essential to train students how to use the provided

13. Anne Mangen and Jean-Luc Velay, "Digitizing Literacy: Reflections on the Haptics of Writing," in *Advances in Haptics*, edited by Mehrdad Hosseini Zadeh (London, United Kingdom: InTech, 2010): 386.

medium(s) effectively.¹⁴ At the beginning of the semester, clear expectations and instructions must be developed and described by the instructor. Though the strategies described previously can be used independently, combinations of different ones and modified methods based on need can be utilized to enhance the learning experience and also teach students various ways of studying. Teaching students how to learn and study is an important issue in contemporary higher education and incorporating diverse learning tools improves a student's ability to study.¹⁵ Handouts and quizzes are coordinated with readings to help students study key points and contextualize this knowledge. Understanding and finding important information can be challenging for some students, and handouts or quizzes may enhance the aptitude of learning core concepts.¹⁶

In-Class Learning

Using pre-class learning to introduce and familiarize new material is efficient, but this does not mean that private study sessions replace the lecture entirely. After the initial introduction of the content, it becomes necessary to clarify the information before applying the content to exercises. In a fully-flipped course, this assessment is often done using quizzes or surveys. For my diction course, however, a partially flipped structure is used, and this design offers greater benefits due to the nature of the course content and goals. The rules, IPA symbols, and sounds

14. Edwige Simon, "The Flipped Classroom," *Blog, The FLT MAG*, June 25, 2013, <https://fltmag.com/the-flipped-classroom/>.

15. Daniel Willingham, "A Telling Experiment Reveals a Big Problem Among College Students: They Don't Know How to Study," *Answer Sheet, The Washington Post*, September 14, 2016, accessed November 26, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2016/09/14/a-telling-experiment-reveals-a-big-problem-among-college-students-they-dont-know-how-to-study/?utm_term=.f1b054ee2987.

16. Jon Bergmann, "Why Student Centered Learning Is Only Half Right," *Blog, Flipped Learning Simplified with Jon Bergman*, November 20, 2016, http://www.jonbergmann.com/why_student_centered_learning_is_only_half-right/.

can be introduced through the pre-class materials. The process of forming and executing proper diction is a more complex level of learning, and, as a result, the demonstration and guidance of the instructor is required. In-class lecture materials are tailored to the needs of students and the complexity of the content and inserted at various points during the class based on the lesson structure. This portion of the lecture is an extension, rather than a repetition, of the pre-class learning. Students may use this in-class time to raise questions or additionally to build upon this knowledge through synthesizing material under the instructor's guidance. Similar to developing a network of knowledge, through this activity students will be able to organize information upon the framework created through the individual study session. The partially flipped learning model also allows flexibility in managing preparation time. While the effectiveness of the flipped classroom model is evident, the investment of time at the initial stages can be challenging.¹⁷ By slowly shaping the course through partial flipping, the preliminary preparation can be more manageable, and this offers opportunities to make any adjustments if needed.

The flipped classroom model is an active learning structure, and it is most effective when students feel peer support and have a sense of safety in a given learning community. Though most students may already know each other from their applied studios or through other classes, it is important to build a supportive environment at the beginning of the semester. Teachers are facilitators but also participants at this stage. Students may not have had a given instructor prior to the course, therefore, building a trust between the teacher and the students, as well as among students, is crucial in order to create a successful interactive classroom. There are several strategies that can be used to expedite this phase, and based on the class size and student classifications, an appropriate method can be chosen at the beginning of the semester. Ice

17. Stephanie Burgoyne and Judy Eaton, "The Partially Flipped Classroom: The Effects of Flipping a Module on "Junk Science" in a Large Methods Course," *Teaching of Psychology* 45, no. 2 (2018): 154, <https://doi-org/10.1177/0098628318762894>.

breakers are one of many common techniques used to encourage people to learn about their peers and work together collaboratively. In this type of an activity, students are asked to introduce themselves and to share one personal idea about themselves. In a diction course, these could relate to singers, repertoire, or other course topics that students find meaningful. Speed dating is another fun and fast-paced activity in which students can learn about their peers. Every student is actively engaged during the process, and the movement of switching seats energizes the space. Within a timed session, students get to know each other and their musical or language backgrounds, and once the time is up, students rotate for the next pair. Another strategy is to have students fill out a background card. This may include information about their majors, course goals, voice types, classification, languages studied, applied teachers, or something more personal such as their favorite singers/songs or nicknames. These cards can be used only for the instructor or can be shared with other students in class.

IPA is the singer's most useful tool when learning new repertoire in an unfamiliar language. The system is efficient and convenient, but the initial stages of learning IPA can be challenging for young singers. After the introduction of IPA, repetition and review of information are necessary in order to master the system, and classroom activities can be used to foster student motivation and retention. One activity that will be used in my course is IPA drills. The exercise can begin with simple and similar items such as writing students' own names in IPA. This can develop into more complicated examples of song text from an art song. Flashcards will be used during at-home study sessions to become familiar with the IPA symbols, but students will utilize the flashcards for in-class activities as well. Flashcards are beneficial in both recalling and repeating information. Both hard-copy or electronic flashcards will be used for in-class activities, and students will answer verbally or in writing on their individual whiteboards. The electronic flashcards will be used in a similar fashion for quizzes or competitions through programs such as Quizlet, Kahoot, or Mentimeter. These programs also offer live results as students play and are easily made into games the entire class can play together.

Individual whiteboards are popular in language classes, and this is one of the more frequently used tools for in-class activities. Individual whiteboards function like regular boardwork, but the main difference is that everyone has the opportunity to participate in the exercise from their own seats. There is another benefit to this as well. The experience of handwriting the information enhances the learning process and retention.¹⁸ When familiarizing or recalling IPA and its sounds in the early stage, combining handwriting and aural practice is advantageous. Along with the more common methods of boardwork and worksheets, game-based activities are used in my course to promote memorization and identification. Examples include transcription races, IPA Scrabble, IPA hangman, a spelling bee, IPA bingo, Guess-the-Title with 16-bar pieces, and error identification. Error identification is especially beneficial since it requires students not only to recognize but also to analyze the problem. Other possible activities to promote recognition and the use of IPA are IPA message day and Dr. Seuss's day for English diction introduced in the previous chapter. IPA message day is another fun group activity to practice transcribing in IPA. Each student brings their daily messages and write in IPA and share with the class. As a group or in a pair, other students transcribe back to English and guess what the message is.

Learning the rules of diction is undoubtedly the most important part of a diction course. The most common strategy to introduce and practice this is using worksheets. As mentioned in the previous chapter, many diction teachers have additional methods for achieving better understanding. Worksheets are used throughout this course in conjunction with other activities. Similar to IPA activities, boardwork, individual whiteboard, flashcards, and error identification are effective strategies in memorizing and identifying the rules, and these activities will be

18. Pam A. Mueller and Daniel M. Oppenheimer, "The Pen is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking," *Psychological Science* 25, no. 6 (June 2014): 1166, <https://doi-org/10.1177/0956797614524581>.

combined with specific worksheets created for each targeted topic. Error identification can be performed as a whole class or in pairs. When modified from the error identification method, the tutor-student simulation, speed dating, and think-pair-share are also possible exercises for the recalling and analysis of information. The basic format of speed dating is the same setup as the “regular” speed dating known in pop culture. In the diction course, each table will have a specific rule/case, and as students rotate, they discuss the rules and examples. Through working together and finding the solution and explaining in their own words, students naturally participate in the critical thinking, retrieval practice, and reflective learning.¹⁹

Finding letter combinations or specific rules using song examples is another method used to engage and exercise the identification of the rules. The examples will be pulled from opera libretti, song texts, or poems. The activity is suitable for individuals, small groups, or as a class. If the examples are driven from a simple song, after completion of the exercise, singing through the song would also offer benefits such as satisfaction and seeing the practicality of their work. Incorporating class games such as a timed transcription race or flashcard-battles are other activities included to enhance retrieval ability in a fun and active atmosphere.

After covering the theory of diction, many curricula offer application opportunities such as individual coaching, group singing, video comparison, song presentation, and even a semester recital. Based on the interview results from the previous chapter, these activities were favored by most students. The main concerns regarding performance-based activities, however, were twofold: creating a distraction from the diction itself and focusing on the singing techniques and ineffectual time spent on mastering authentic pronunciation. Offering constructive criticism also proved challenging for many underclassmen. For this course, the performance portion will

19. Aloysius Wei Lun Koh, Sze Chi Lee, and Stephen Wee Hun Lim, “The Learning Benefits of Teaching: A Retrieval Practice Hypothesis,” *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 32, no. 3 (May/June 2018): 406, <https://doi-org/10.1002/acp.3410>.

continue to be included, but prior to the performance segment, there will be a comparison of two video recorded performances, and students will acquire a vocabulary appropriate for constructive criticism. Within the performance portion, there will be specific analytical rubrics to keep the focus solely on diction. Students will create this rubric together as a class contributing suggestions in a supportive manner. By placing students in charge of building and evaluating specific criteria, they will learn to listen, think, and analyze critically, and think as educators rather than as learners.

Chapter 5: CONCLUSION

Students of the 21st century live in an environment filled with transitions. Their strengths and weaknesses differ from their predecessors, and institutions and teachers strive to enhance their learning by tailoring instruction to their needs. The diction classroom is not an exception in this endeavor. There have been many great teachers in the field of diction instruction, and they have shaped and refined their instruction in an effort to provide more meaningful learning for students. Although there may not have been a diction course structured as a “flipped” or “partially-flipped” classroom, many of these successful teachers have already incorporated elements of flipped learning.

The goals for this project were to study the characteristics of contemporary students, examine their learning styles, and identify elements of effective teaching used by experienced diction teachers and other academic areas. Separately, a review of literature was conducted to gain insight into effective teaching practices and techniques, course structures, and technologies applicable for today’s learning environment. The intent was to combine these components into a compelling and efficient way of teaching diction outside of the realm of the traditional teaching setting. Due to the innate course goals and objectives of a diction course, the possibility of applying the flipped learning model into a diction curriculum seems natural. The partial flipped structure provides effective and efficient ways to create a more interactive learning environment as well as additional class time for activities in which students apply information.

As stated in the introduction, only a limited amount of literature on diction course design exists. The findings and examples developed certainly are not the only effective approaches used in diction courses, but it is hoped that they provide some new ideas that can work effectively. Given the importance of a diction curriculum for musicians, it is exciting to think about the

potential innovative ways of the curriculum. Future scholarly work might include various course structures using different instructional models, but it would also be interesting to see the possibility of an online-based course structure using interactive course content and audio recognition systems as used in language courses (e.g., Rosetta Stone). As a fellow musician and educator, I feel the responsibility to continue creating meaningful educational experiences to pass on the art and knowledge to future generations. Additionally, we must not cease to revise and renew our teaching, for soon it will be our students continuing the tradition of music and education.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE COURSE SYLLABUS

The following is a sample syllabus of the second semester of two consecutive semesters of diction courses covering Italian and French diction.

Italian and French Lyric Diction

Sample Syllabus

Description:

Throughout the course students will develop skills to enhance artistry in singing through efficient and expressive diction. Students will learn and utilize the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) for Italian and French and use IPA as the guide for understanding different sounds and application. Emphasis is placed upon the application and practice of knowledge through in-class activities, discussion/analysis, and presentations.

Goals:

- Students will become familiar with IPA and its rules and demonstrate understanding of the proper diction of Italian and French.
- Students will explore the characteristics of sounds and be able to identify, recognize, listen critically, analyze, and produce authentic diction appropriate for singing.
- Students will gain confidence singing in Italian and French and develop critical listening skills through exercises and practice.
- Students will be able to work on the language of a new repertoire using the tools learned throughout the course and apply the diction skills in their own singing.

Objectives:

- Students will acquire the knowledge and understanding of proper pronunciation through identifying and recognizing IPA and rules of Italian and French lyric diction.
- Students will partake in the take-home assignments such as lecture materials, online modules, online quizzes, worksheets, and guided readings to familiarize themselves with concepts, rules, symbols, and sounds.
- Students will exercise their diction through in-class activities and develop skills articulating and recognizing the rules of lyric diction for the clarity and authenticity of the text by considering the syntax and word stress.
- Students will listen to various recordings and live examples of sung and spoken diction to develop ears for listening critically and analytically.

- Students will participate in group activities and discussions to increase the retention of their knowledge and ability to listen critically in a supportive environment.
- Students will prepare one new song in each language according to the guidelines to develop independence in their own learning.
- Students will gain confidence in singing in Italian and French without any tension allowing vowels and consonants to flow smoothly.

Required Textbook and Other Materials:

1. Textbook

Wall, Joan, Robert Caldwell, Tracy Gavilanes, and Sheila Allen. *Diction for Singers: A Concise Reference for English, Italian, Latin, German, French, and Spanish Pronunciation*. 2nd ed. Redmond, WA: Diction for singers.com, 2012.

Six of the most common languages for singing are included, and this book will be very useful in your journey as a singer and teacher. The IPA chart for each language is organized clearly and will be a great study guide for assignments and exams.

2. **One Standard Italian Songs and Arias Anthology:** Any of standard Italian song anthologies will be acceptable. If you don't have one, the recommended anthology is listed below, but if you already own or prefer a different anthology that is similar, you may use the one of your choice. Please discuss with your applied teacher to decide which version (high; medium high; medium; medium low; low) is appropriate for your voice.

Walters, Richard, ed. *28 Italian Songs and Arias of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. New York: G. Schirmer, 2008.

3. **The French Song Anthology:** Please discuss with your applied teacher in regard to high or low versions.

Walters, Richard and Carol Kimball, eds. *The French Song Anthology*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2001.

4. Folder/Binder (to keep all handouts in one place)
5. Stack of Blank Index Cards (to make flashcards)

Course Requirements:

- Flashcards:
 - Students will make hard-copy flashcards for Italian and French vowel and consonant sounds.
- In-Class Performance and Song Transcription:
 - Each student will submit their choice of two songs for each language they would like to perform in class. Once the repertoire list is complete, each student will be assigned one song from the list for each language.
 - Each student will create a performance evaluation rubric for grading the in-class performances. This will be turned in online at the end of week 4 and will be

discussed as a group before the performances. As a class, we will create a rubric based on the criteria submitted and discussed, and the performance will be graded with the rubric created.

- On the day of the performance, students will submit the IPA transcription, a word-for-word translation, and a poetic translation of the selected piece.
 - The performance is graded by not only the diction but also the preparation. The song does not have to be memorized, but students are expected to know the assigned piece well enough to be expressive through the words.
- Daily Assignments:
 - There will be daily assignments for at-home study sessions throughout the semester. Each assignment is due before the next class, and late assignments will not be accepted.

Attendance:

Due to the nature of the class (i.e., participatory), attendance is mandatory at all times. In-class activities include discussions, going over assignments, and analysis of listening examples and performances. Each student will be allowed one unexcused absence. To be excused from the class, students are expected to notify the instructor at least a week in advance. In the case of illness and emergencies, proper documentation is required. Attendance will be checked at the beginning of the class, and any tardiness of more than 10 minutes will be counted as half of one unexcused absence

Grading:

	Percentage
Attendance & Class Participation	20%
Flashcards	5%
Performance Evaluation Rubric	5%
In-Class Performance & Transcription (2)	20%
Daily Assignments	25%
Mid-Term Exam	10%
Final Exam	15%
Total	100%

Letter Grade Equivalents			
90 or above	A	70 or above	C
88 or above	B+	68 or above	D+
80 or above	B	60 or above	D
78 or above	C+	Below 60	F

Tentative Weekly Calendar and Topics Covered

Week	Topics Covered
1	Introduction to the class and go over syllabus in class; The International Phonetic Alphabet for Italian Stress and syllables
2	Vowels
3	Vowels and vowel modification
4	Consonants
5	Consonants IPA Drills Critical listening: connecting the dots
6	In-class performances and analyses
7	In-class performances and analyses
8	Mid-term exam Overview of French sound and IPA Structure of French: Syllabification, Stress
9	Vowels
10	Vowels
11	Consonants
12	Consonants
13	IPA Drills Critical listening: connecting the dots
14	In-class performances and analyses
15	In-class performances and analyses
Final	Final exam

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE LESSON PLANS

The following are sample lesson plans including assignments for at-home study sessions prior to the class.

Sample Lesson Plan 1

Week 4, Class 2: Italian Consonant Clusters

Purpose: Being able to produce proper Italian consonant sounds is an essential part of Italian lyric diction. Students will be introduced to various combinations of consonants and familiarize themselves with rules and authentic diction.

Learning Outcomes:

- Recognize and identify proper sounds of Italian consonant clusters.
- Differentiate double consonant sounds from single consonant sounds.
- Distinguish and execute sounds of consonant clusters within the context of musical text.

Class Materials: Flashcards, personal whiteboards (provided by the instructor) or whiteboard apps on personal devices (cell phone/tablet)

In-Class Objectives:

- Using PowerPoint slides, examine the sound of double consonants: bb, cc, dd, ff, gg, ll, mm, nn, pp, rr, ss, tt, vv, and zz.
- Continue with PowerPoint slides to recognize and identify proper sounds within the context of lyrics from songs and arias.

- “Speed-dating with consonant clusters” - using the flashcards students created as part of their at-home study assignment and PowerPoint slides, students examine consonants of smaller groups and compare examples: ch/cch/cqu, gh/gli/gl/gn, ng [g]/nc [k], and sc/sch.
- Using personal whiteboards or whiteboard apps, students practice transcribing projected words in IPA. The words are chosen from common Italian songs and arias.
- Identify consonant clusters in musical texts and exercise pronunciations and syllable divisions with the music.

Conclusion: As a class, create a list of five clusters that are tricky and then inspect together.

Resources for Class Preparation:

Adams, David. *A Handbook of Diction for Singers: Italian German, French*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Wall, Joan, Robert Caldwell, Tracy Gavilanes, and Sheila Allen. *Diction for Singers: A Concise Reference for English, Italian, Latin, German, French, and Spanish Pronunciation*. Dallas, TX: Pst, 1990.

Walters, Richard, ed. *28 Italian Songs and Arias of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. New York: G. Schirmer, 2008.

Pre-Class Assignment:

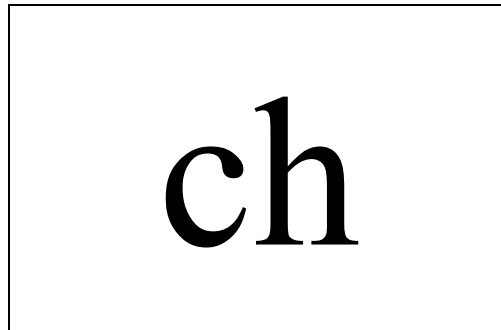
Assigned: after week 4, class 1

Due: before week 4, class 2

Using the textbook (pp. 77-92), create flashcards of 10 consonant clusters below. On the front side, write a combination of consonants. On the back side, write specific rules for sounds in IPA as well as provide two example words found in the Italian songs and arias anthologies with translations and transcriptions in IPA. Bring flashcards to class.

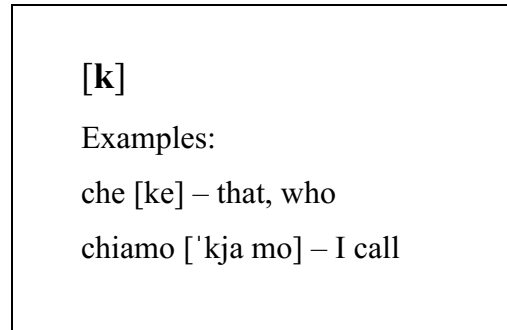
ch, cqu, gh, gli, gl, gn, ng [g], nc [k], sc, and sch

Example:



Front side:

Letter combination



Back side:

- Rules/pronunciation
- 2 Examples – IPA and translations

Sample Lesson Plan 2

Week 10, Class 1: French Vowel Letter Groups, Liaison and Elision

Purpose: The French language has a built-in legato line. Multiple vowels in a syllable may seem complicated, and the application of liaison and elision may seem confusing. When the French pronunciation rule is applied, however, the sound itself is much simpler and flows with ease. Through constant exposure, memorization, and exercise, students will be able to recognize letter groups and successfully identify and demonstrate proper sounds.

Learning Outcomes:

- Recognize and identify proper sounds of French vowel letter groups.
- Recognize vowel letter groups in text and be able to divide into syllables.
- Distinguish between liaison and elision as well as identify exceptions.
- Sight-read text applying liaison and elision.

Class Materials: Personal device (cell phone/tablet/laptop) for Kahoot

In-Class Objectives:

- Using adaptation of Moore's Method, discuss in small groups the rules and sound of each letter groups: ai, au, ay, eau, eu, il/ill/ille, oeu, oi, oin, ou, oy, and ueil/ueille.
- As a class, the rules and sounds are examined. Each group presents one letter group with their own explanations and examples.
- Compare the letter groups to find similarities and dissimilarities.
- Using PowerPoint slides, recognize and identify letter groups within the context of song texts from *The French Song Anthology*.

- Personal whiteboards or whiteboard apps are used in transcribing projected words in IPA. The words are chosen from *The French Song Anthology*.
- Along with PowerPoint slides, discuss definitions of liaison and elision and introduce the rules and exceptions.
- Run Kahoot! race on liaison and elision.

Conclusion: Revisit the letter groups and their sounds.

Resources for Class Preparation:

Adams, David. *A Handbook of Diction for Singers: Italian German, French*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Wall, Joan, Robert Caldwell, Tracy Gavilanes, and Sheila Allen. *Diction for Singers: A Concise Reference for English, Italian, Latin, German, French, and Spanish Pronunciation*. Dallas, TX: Pst, 1990.

Walters, Richard and Carol Kimball, eds. *The French Song Anthology*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2001.

Pre-Class Assignment:

Assigned: after week 9, class 2

Due: before week 10, class 1

Using the textbook (p. 198-217), find the description of the letter groups listed below and fill out the appropriate information.

Letter Group		
ai	Sound in IPA: Spellings:	Exception:
au	Sound in IPA: Spellings:	Exception:
ay	Sound in IPA: Examples:	Exception:
eau	Sound in IPA: Spellings:	Exception:
eu	Sound in IPA: Rules:	Exception:
il/ill/ille	Sound in IPA: Examples:	Exception:
oeu	Sound in IPA:	
oi	Sound in IPA: Examples	Exception:
oin/oim	Sound in IPA: Examples:	
ou	Sound in IPA: Rules:	
oy	Sound in IPA: Examples:	
ueil/ueille	Sound in IPA: Examples:	

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