

Supplemental Materials

“Beyond the Attendance Sheet: Addressing Assessment in the Choral Classroom” by Skyler Bluemel

Choral Journal, October 2025 | acda.org/choraljournal

Melody or Rhythm “Drag/Drop” Journal Example Slide

Melody Journal: January 17th, 2025



Sample Rubric: Improvised Warm-ups

CRITERIA	Not Proficient	Some Proficiency	Approaching Proficiency	Proficient
Creativity & Expression	Little or no evidence of creativity; excessive repetition or lack of expression.	Sometimes creative; some expressive or original choices are made.	Mostly creative; improvisation is expressive and intentional.	Demonstrates appropriate or advanced creativity; improvisation is original, expressive, and reflects risk-taking and musical intent.
Demonstration of Musical Elements	Improvisation lacks appropriate rhythm/pitch; frequent errors and/or interrupted flow.	Uses some correct musical elements; occasional errors or confusion.	Uses appropriate musical elements for most of the improvisation.	Consistently uses appropriate musical elements such as rhythm, pitch, and form.
Technique	Lacks appropriate vocal and/or musical technique.	Inconsistent appropriate vocal and/or musical technique.	Mostly accurate appropriate vocal and/or musical technique.	Displays consistent and appropriate vocal and/or musical technique.
Engagement	Off task, minimal or no participation; reluctant to engage.	Limited participation; hesitancy or lack of confidence evident.	Participates with confidence; listens/responds some of the time.	Engages fully; actively listens, responds to others (if group), and performs with confidence and appropriate body language

Sample Rubric: Small Group Performances - Teacher

CRITERIA	Not Proficient	Some Proficiency	Approaching Proficiency	Proficient
Vocal Technique & Intonation	Weak support; persistent intonation problems.	Occasional issues; inconsistent support/intonation.	Good support and intonation; minor lapses.	Rich tone, supported singing, precise intonation throughout.
Expression & Interpretation	Lacks expression, unclear interpretation.	Limited expressive intent or inconsistent interpretation.	Expression mostly clear; dynamics and phrasing appropriate.	Expressive, musically engaging performance; clear phrasing, dynamics, and meaning.
Ensemble Balance & Collaboration	Disregards ensemble dynamics; not in sync.	Basic group skills; blend and synchrony inconsistent.	Good blend, attends to others, mostly in sync.	Consistent blend, attentive listening, synchrony, and positive group interactions.
Accuracy	Frequent, major errors; disrupt performance.	Noticeable errors; affect musical flow.	Few minor errors; mostly accurate.	Consistently correct rhythms, pitches, text, and dynamics.
Stage Presence & Professionalism	Not prepared, lacks focus or etiquette.	Somewhat prepared; hesitant or slightly off-task.	Prepared, minor issues.	Fully prepared, poised, confident; respectful, follows performance etiquette.

Sample Rubric: Small Group Performances - Student

*May be used to assess self or others.

CRITERIA	Not Proficient	Some Proficiency	Approaching Proficiency	Proficient
Vocal Technique & Intonation	Poor support, frequent issues with pitch/tone.	Sometimes supported/accurate, some tone/pitch errors.	Mostly accurate and supported, minor pitch issues.	Consistently well-supported, accurate pitch, clear tone
Expressiveness & Communication	Lacks expression; mood unclear or absent.	Some expression; mood not always clear.	Expressive; mood/meaning usually clear	Highly expressive; conveys clear mood & meaning, connects with audience.
Ensemble Skills/Teamwork	Little or no blend or listening to ensemble.	Sometimes blends; listens only part of the time.	Good blend; mostly listens/adjusts, some cues	Excellent blend; listens and adjusts to others; cues/interactions evident.
Accuracy (Rhythm, Words, Dynamics)	Frequent errors; accuracy lacking.	Some errors in rhythm, words, and/or dynamics.	Few minor errors; mostly accurate.	Nearly flawless; precise rhythm, text, and dynamics.
Professionalism & Preparation	Not prepared; inattentive and/or disruptive.	Some signs of nervousness and/or unpreparedness.	Well-prepared; minor lapses.	Fully prepared; attentive, confident, respectful.

Listening Journal Example with Scaffolding and Prompts

HAIL, QUEEN OF HEAVEN

By Rihards Dubra

Mr. Bluemel's thoughts are in green.

Your thoughts are in red. Feel free to add, edit, delete, adjust, whatever, just keep the lyrics.

Some spots have prompts for you to respond to, also in red. You can delete the prompts and replace then with your own thoughts. Keep the red.

This song comes from a Catholic prayer to Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. Jesus is someone recognized in Christianity as a prophet, wise teacher, and a savior who "paid the price" for all sins (wrongdoings). In the Catholic religion, there is an accepted belief that we, as imperfect humans, rely on Jesus and His teachings to live in Heaven after we die. The religion also believes in praying to a number of holy people (called saints), asking for guidance, help, blessings, good fortune, etc.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is considered to be one of the holiest saints. In fact, she is thought to be so holy and pure that she reigns in Heaven alongside God.

Lyrics are in blue:

Hail, Queen of Heav'n, the ocean Star, (Queen of Heaven/ocean Star = Mary, the mother of Christ)

Guide of the wand'rer here below! (just one wanderer... me?) (This section repeats a lot) (Reminds me of an ocean, calm then busy. Dangerous?)

Thrown on life's surge we claim thy care, (Like cries among the chaos of life)

Save us from peril and from woe. (gets desperate)

Mother of Christ, Star of the sea,

Pray for the wanderer, pray for me (Pleading for salvation)

O gentle, chaste, and spotless Maid,

We sinners make our prayers through thee (This section represents a dance. If pleading won't work, maybe dancing will!)

Remind thy Son that He has paid

The price of our iniquity. (Would her son really forget? Why might He need to be reminded?)

Virgin most pure, Star of the sea,

Pray for the sinner, pray for me. (This sounds familiar... but different.)

Sojourners in this vale of tears, (What might this section represent?)
O thee, blest Advocate, we cry,
Pity our sorrows, calm our fears,
And soothe with hope our misery. (This was a fast section.) (When this line repeats, it sounds like everyone is ascending into Heaven... did we all die? How?)
Refuge in grief, Star of the sea,
Pray for the mourner, pray for me. (Why does this part come back 3 times, but slightly different words and music each time?)

Hail, Queen of Heav'n, the ocean Star. (The first line repeats to end the song).
(Maybe we're coming back full circle to represent... something.)
(What could that represent? Why do you think that?)

(How does the ending section compare to the very beginning section with the same words?)

This is not included in the song, but is the end of the poem.

And while to Him who reigns above,
In Godhead One, in Persons Three,
The source of life, of grace, of love,
Homage we pay on bended knee;
Do thou, bright Queen, Star of the sea.
Pray for thy children, pray for me

This song is about a lowly and sad sinner/wanderer (me) asking a higher power for help and comfort. They try pleading, dancing, fighting, and praying all the way until they die and ascend to heaven. Could that mean asking for help in life is futile and nobody will help? Maybe. If not, could it mean asking for help in life needs to be a continuous practice instead, one that lasts our entire life? Do they ever receive the help they need? Maybe they do, but they don't realize it... I mean, they end up in heaven at the end, so maybe it worked, but they never recognized it while they were alive...?

(Any other thoughts? Comments?)

Self-Reflection Assessment Example

*Please add more or take away according to the needs and goals of your students.

First & Last Name: _____

Period: _____

Date: _____

Choir Concert Reflection/Self-Assessment

Please answer the following questions using 2-3 complete sentences each:

1. What was your favorite song (from your choir) of the concert, and why?

2. If different from above, which song was your favorite from **any** choir, and why?

3. What was your least favorite part of the concert, and why?

4. What was your most favorite part of the concert, and why?

5. What is something else you would like to share with me about the concert?

Please circle how you feel you are doing in each area:

1. Poor 2. Decent 3. Great 4. Excellent

Rhythm 1 2 3 4

Posture 1 2 3 4

Identifying Notes 1 2 3 4

Behavior 1 2 3 4

Reading Music 1 2 3 4

Enjoying Class 1 2 3 4

Solfeggio 1 2 3 4

Hand Signs 1 2 3 4

When is our upcoming concert? _____

Please circle **your** overall performance in the concert:

1: Poor

2: Decent

3: Good

4: Great

5: Excellent

Create **2** measurable goals in choir, music, or singing you can achieve before the next concert:

Suggested Reading Related to Assessment Practices

Cecilia Ferm Almqvist et al., “Assessment as Learning in Music Education: The Risk of ‘Criteria Compliance’ Replacing ‘Learning’ in the Scandinavian Countries,” *Research Studies in Music Education* 39, no. 1 (2017): 3–18, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X16676649>

Colleen Conway and Timothy Jeffers, “Parent, Student, and Teacher Perceptions of Assessment Procedures in Beginning Instrumental Music,” *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 160 (2004): 16–25

Elizabeth R. Hearn, “Assessment in the Choral Classroom: A Case Study of a Secondary Choral Program,” *International Journal of Research in Choral Singing* 9 (2021): 41–67

Seung Hong, “Review of A Descriptive Study of Learning Assessment and Grading Practices in the High School Choral Music Performance Classroom by Alan C. McClung,” *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 150 (2001): 75–80

Benjamin Kambs, “Assessment Practices and Beliefs of Secondary Choir Teachers,” *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* (2024): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.1177/875512332412366>

Edward J. Kitora, “Assessment Practices in the Choral Music Classroom: A Survey of Ohio High School Choral Music Teachers and College Choral Methods Professors,” *Contributions to Music Education* 32, no. 2 (2005): 65–80

Julie A. Russell and James R. Austin, “Assessment Practices of Secondary Music Teachers,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 58, no. 1 (2010): 37–54, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429409360062>