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The Agile Classroom

Teaching self-driven student inquiry, problem solving, collaboration, and accountability to encourage lifelong music learning and participation.

Core Values and Terms

Agile Rehearsal Values

(adapted from the [Agile Manifesto](#))

1. Teacher and student-to-student collaboration over the traditional director-led rehearsal.
2. Individual choir members' interactions over the performance-based music instruction.
3. Students' individual musical growth over the presentation of a performance.
4. Rapid, planned, short, small group sectionals (sprint) over the full ensemble rehearsals.
5. Responding and adapting to change over following a specific lesson plan.



Marcellus High School Select Choir

The Agile Classroom Terms

- Backlog List**
A non-prioritized list of specific concepts or skills to be mastered.
- Burndown Chart**
The purpose of this chart Created from the Backlog Lists is to prioritize the needed skills, track the group's progress, and document the remaining work to be done.
- Give-way Groups**
When a specific Sprint Group has the floor presenting a section of music for assessment, the other sprint groups (called Give-way Groups) yield their observations and feedback until the end of the assessment.
- Production Backlog**
A non-confrontational way to label events, behavior, and situations that can stop or stall the progress of a Sprint Sectional.
- ScrumMaster**
A student facilitator selected by the teacher who is responsible for helping the team members communicate, coordinate, and focus during a Sprint.
- Sprint Group**
A Sprint Group membership can range from a full choir, voice part sectionals, or small mixed ensemble.
- Sprints (Iterations)**
Short rehearsal events led by students (or the director) that can last from two minutes to a class period. Sprints focus on one specific element listed in the Burndown Chart.
- Sprint Retrospective**
After each Sprint Sectional, each Sprint group answers the following questions and shares them with the full choir:
 1. What went well during the Sprint?
 2. What did not go well during the Sprint?
 3. What could be improved?
- Subject Matter Expert (SME)**
This title is held by each choir member in realization that each individual has a unique gift and or talent to share with the group.
- Timebox**
An agreed upon specific period during which the sprint group works toward its goal.

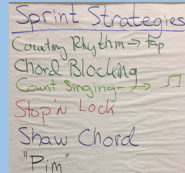
"The paradigm for music education classrooms many of us were trained in thirty years ago, and that we entered during our earliest years as music educators, is not necessarily going to be what teachers face in the next thirty years."
[Anton Armstrong](#)

References:
 Ackles, Brian O. 2018. Agile Development Instructional Framework (ADIF): A New Strategy for Student-Centered Music Education. Choral Journal, September 2018, Vol. 59, No. 2
 "Recruiting, Training, and Mentoring Choral Music Educators to Make a Difference: An Interview with Anton Armstrong and Lynn Brinckmeyer." *ChorTeach*, Fall 2014, 4-9

Laying the Foundation as a Classroom

Before the ADIF Sprint process is implemented, the director:

- Models, labels, and practices the skills needed for successful ADIF implementation.
- Sets up classroom behavior, requirements, expectations, and the individual students' responsibility to the performing ensemble.
- Communicates to the choir during every rehearsal the day's plan, labels strategies while working on music, and reinforces the criteria needed to show the skills/concepts are attained.
- The director and choir create a list of the rehearsal strategies on a flip chart to be used during rehearsals. This list is kept in plain view and referred to as needed.



Sprint Planning

- Students are placed into a Sprint Group consisting of the full ensemble, SATB Sections, SATB mixed formation, or as an individual.
- As an audio or video clip of the song is presented, each member lists his/ her top five challenges and observations in their music or using the handout below.

Sprint Planning Form

Name _____ Section _____
 Date _____ Folder _____

Selection _____

Individual Backlog List - What five challenges do you see in performing this selection? (Page # or Measure #)

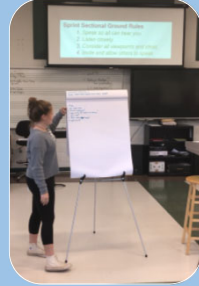
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Sectional Sprint Planning Retrospective: After the Sectional Sprint Planning, answer the following questions:

1. What went well?
2. What did not go well?
3. What can be done better?

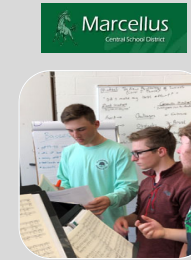
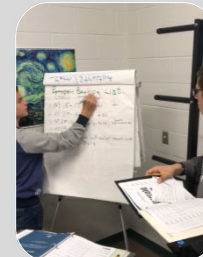
This process can be used for a full ensemble, sectional, or individual sprint

Sprint Planning Presentation



- Each Sprint Group presents their sections Burndown Chart to the class.
- The Burndown Chart is kept for reference or posted in the classroom for future Sprint Sectionals.

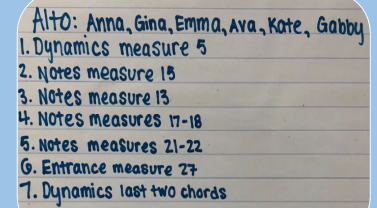
[Video Link](#)



The Marcellus High School Select Choir bass section discussing their individual Backlog List and creating the sections Backlog List

Creating a Backlog List

- Each Sprint Group brainstorms together and annotates challenges and observations for the selection, creating a specific Sectional Backlog List.



This process can be used for a full ensemble, sectional, or individual sprint

Burndown Chart

- Each student prioritizes their Backlog List and creates an individual Burndown Chart.

Burndown Chart - prioritize challenges/concerns (please use specific page and/or measure numbers)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

[Video Link](#)

Sprints

- Each student-directed Sprint Group now begins its short Sprint Sectionals.
- A ScrumMaster is selected by the director (this can be planned or random).
- The first specific concept/skill listed on the Burndown Chart is identified, clarified, and selected.
- A Timebox is set.
- The timed Sprint begins.
- During the Sprint, students are encouraged and empowered to adapt and make changes as needed in accordance to the timebox and the material they are responsible to complete.
- During the Sprint, the instructor serves as an observer, documenting good practices and areas for future growth.
- When the time limit has been reached, the sprint is concluded, and assessment begins.

Sprint Retrospective and Assessment

- After a Sprint has ended, each Sprint Group performs the selected item from their Burndown Chart, answers the following questions, and shares their responses with the choir:
 What went well during the Sprint?
 What did not go well during the Sprint?
 What could be improved?
- During the assessment, the Give-way Groups give their attention to the other Sprint Groups and participate only as observers.
- At the end of the sprint retrospective, the instructor and other Sprint Groups may ask for clarifications and offer suggestions.
- If the Sprint was successful, the group continues to the next item on the Burndown Chart.
- If the Sprint was not successful, then:
 Adjustments are made
 A new ScrumMaster is selected
 A new timebox is chosen
 The new revised sprint begins.

Distance Learning with ADIF

