

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY
2005 Faculty Development Grant Application
FORM 1

Applicant name: **Moya L. Nordlund and Kathryn L. Fouse**

School: **School of Performing Arts**

Department; **Division of Music**

TITLE OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY:

Sight Singing and Aural Skills Development: An Instructional Manual

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY:

See attached

Estimated timetable for project:

Two to three years for initial research and pilot test; completion of entire text may take longer.

Total cost of proposed activity: **\$2,000.00**

Signed: _____
Applicant

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Applicant

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Dean

Date: _____

FORM 1 (continued)

**Sight Singing and Aural Skills Development
An Instructional Manual**

A Proposal

PURPOSE

- To develop a manual for systematic instruction in sight singing and aural skills
- To be field tested with Freshman music majors in the School of Performing Arts in the MUSC 101L - 102L sequence
- To explore the possibility for publication and dissemination

THE PROBLEM

- Music students in the School of Performing Arts frequently struggle with aural and sight singing skills, the laboratory section associated with Freshman Theory classes. It is also a universal problem among music students in general.
- The problem appears to be fundamental, stemming from the “disembodiment” of music in our culture, where there is seldom any connection between an event and the music that is ancillary to the event (Titon, 1992).
- Therefore, students often enter into specialized music training without prerequisite experience with functional musical meanings.
- Existing texts are not helpful in the sense that they often adopt an “expert” approach, beginning with generalizations that are not supported with ample sensory experiences. Additionally, existing texts frequently consist of musical examples without pedagogical instruction.
- There is disagreement among instructors regarding the criteria for a meaningful and logical approach in students’ development of aural and sight singing skills due to the fact that instructors often “teach the way they were taught.”

HYPOTHESIS AND ITS UNDERLYING RATIONALE

- There exists an instructional approach that is based on the epistemological implications of conceptual change within learners.
- Such an approach emphasizes a shift from “scientific” ways of knowing (generalizations as a result of skills already acquired) towards one that positions the learner for the next step (Duschl, 1991). In other words, it will be a more “bottom up” rather than “top down” approach.
- Such an approach would be modeled after the Kodaly philosophy of musicianship development that begins with the total experience and moving towards symbolization of that experience.

- Such an approach will enable music students to construct meaningful relationships within varying musical syntaxes, and to give meaning to notations, rather than to extract meaning out of symbols (Gordon, 1989).

METHODOLOGY

- Systematic review of existing texts that are widely used in universities around the country
- Survey of systems employed in university level sight singing instruction, e.g. solfege with fixed “do”, solfege with moveable “do”, numbers, note names, etc.
- Analysis of the *implicit rationale behind each approach
- Comparison of *implicit instructional sequencing
- Construction of a text for the sequential instruction of sight singing skills based on the Kodaly philosophy, with explanations on how each step is related throughout the learning sequence.
- Field test the manual with SU School of Performing Arts Music Majors.
*implicit because most existing texts consist of exercises without explanation of the sequencing logic and expected learner outcomes for each section of the text. The acquisition of these skills necessitates transformational rather than additive learning.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Duschl, A, and Gitomer, R. (1991). Epistemological perspectives on conceptual change: Implications for educational practice. *Journal of Research in Science Education* 28 (9): 839-858.

Gordon, E. (1989). *Learning Sequences in Music: Skills, Content, and Patterns*. Chicago, IL: GIA.

Titon, J.T. (Ed.). (1992). *Worlds of Music: An Introduction to the Music of the World's People* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Schirmer Books.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT GRANT APPLICATION
FORM 2

1. RELEVANCE OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The problem is well known; few music professionals, however, have attempted an investigation from the approach of fundamental research, as the prevailing sentiment is “what works for me must work for others.” Constraints of time and resources are also significant factors in the profession’s failure to address these skills. This project attempts to compare the practices that are “out there,” and seeks to formulate a unified approach in the form of a sequence of instructional strategies that are based on research with human cognitive constructs and current theories associated with “learning.”

2. SCHOLARSHIP

- The immediate goal is to improve or enhance student skills attainment in the MUSC 101L-102L sequence at Samford University’s School of Performing Arts.
- The principal investigators are also submitting proposals to educational conferences to report on research progress, including but not limited to the International Society of Music Education Conference in Kuala Lumpur in July 2006.
- The ultimate objective of the principal investigators is to publish a comprehensive textbook on musicianship development, based on a holistic approach that integrates keyboard skills, aural skills and sight playing/singing skills.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT GRANT APPLICATION
FORM 3

Description	Total dollar estimate
• Travel to research in Sibley’s Music Library (Eastman School of Music) – Nordlund	\$600.00
• Travel to research in *OAKE headquarters in Minnesota – Fouse	\$600.00
• Acquisition of in-print materials and resources (see attached list)	\$300.00
• Develop survey instrument for universities and colleges in US and possibly in UK and Australia (survey will be conducted via email)	\$250.00
• Initial printing of manual and instructional material for in-house use	\$250.00
	<hr/>
	\$2,000.00

*OAKE = Organization of American Kodaly Educators

All dollar estimates are under projected costs. It is the investigators’ intention to supplement the cost of research with personal funds, as this is a project about which the investigators are passionate. It is also a project that has been under discussion for over two years.