DEVELOPING AN ANNOTATED GUIDE

FOR COLLABORATIVE PLANNING OF CHORAL CONCERTS

BASED ON SAWYER'S EIGHT STAGES OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS

A DISSERTATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Many of us remember a particular time when choral music came alive to us. For some, the memory centers on famous people acting at historic times, such as Leonard Bernstein's performance of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* given to celebrate the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.[1] For others it could be a high school choir's performance in rural America, or a bunch of friends singing harmony around a guitar or piano. I remember a fully staged version of Randall Thompson's *The Nativity according to St. Luke* that captured the miracle of that story in a fresh way. Since then I have been intrigued by choral performances that remain in the heart and mind of audience members. When I have been privileged to be on a choral programming team, we invested in the process of collaboration, seeking to create a performance that was greater than the sum of its parts. However, not all performances rise to this level. When I first started programming, I wished there was a system guiding the design process that could aid people collaboratively planning choral concerts. The Oxford Dictionary defines *guide* as "a thing that helps someone to form an opinion or make a decision."[2] Choral programmers need information about the process of selecting choral music and ordering those selections so that they meet their performance objectives.

The purpose of this dissertation is to provide a two-page written guide of prompts to aid choral programmers in applying creativity theory as summarized in R. Keith Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process. The goal of the guide (appendix A) is to direct current and future choral programmers through a systematic planning process. Each of the eight stages of this guide is grounded in a different research-based principle. Each stage has prompts that are specific to

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[1] Klaus Geitel, "Exulting Freedom in Music," accessed April 24, 2016, http://www.leonardbernstein.com/hc_berlin.htm.
[2] Oxford Dictionaries, s.v. "guide," accessed April 24, 2016, www.oxforddictionaries.com.

choral music. Although annotations are provided to clarify the intent of these prompts, the main

creative work of this dissertation is the guide itself.

This dissertation has five chapters and two supporting appendices. Chapter 1 begins with

an introduction to the fields of creativity and concert programming. Chapter 2 reviews scholarly

literature about theories of creativity with many examples of studies that examine creativity in

the arts. Chapter 3 presents the methodology used to generate the annotated guide to choral

programming. Chapter 4 provides annotations for the specific prompts from the written guide.

Chapter 5 suggests limitations of the written guide and identifies topics for future study.

Before tackling the task of finding or developing such a guide, I will lay a foundation for

understanding the guide by defining concert programming and expressing the distinctive features

of choral music. Then I will explore the need for creative programming and explain how

collaboration could be one possible way to meet this need. The outline of this introductory

section in bullet form is as follows:

- Defining Concert Programming
- Defining Choral Music
- Exploring the Need for Creative Programming
- Proposing Collaboration as a Solution

Defining Concert Programming

Concert programming can be understood as a specific application of the creative process.

Therefore, insights from creativity research can direct the definition of concert programming.

Practitioners from many fields have written about creativity, such as the conceptual framework

postulated by theater designer and teacher Lynne Porter. Synthesizing the works of Graham

Wallas,[3] Alex Osborn,[4] and Kogberg and Bagnall,[5] Porter proposes delineating creativity into the following five separate actions:

1. Comprehend the problem.
2. Gather inspiration.
3. Invent solutions.
4. Develop the work.
5. Present the best solution.

Porter is quick to assert that these actions can occur in any order. Furthermore, when the creative process is used more than once in a given planning cycle, each stage in a given iteration may happen in a different order from another iteration.[6] Later in this dissertation additional taxonomies of creativity will be considered and R. Keith Sawyer's synthesis of several prominent researchers will be espoused as definitive. However, at this juncture Porter's Five Actions of Creativity provide a useful way to frame the topic of creativity. Porter begins the discussion of creativity with Action 1, **comprehend the problem**. Creativity often works best when a clear problem is presented. Therefore, take the problem apart to analyze the essential components or restrictions. Answers are often only as good as the question being asked. Next is Action 2, **gather inspiration**. Invest time to examine the ways other people interact with a similar problem. Often a greater variety of sources provides a wider diversity of possible design options. With Action 3, **invent solutions**, Porter urges at this stage to resist evaluation. The goal is to avoid waiting passively for inspiration but instead to generate multiple options. Action 4 allows evaluation to **develop the work**. Sorting, experimenting, and testing can all develop good ideas into better ideas and then best. Be sure to allow enough time to refine the ideas and not

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[3] Graham Wallas, *The Art of Thought* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1926).

[4] Alex F. Osborn, *Applied Imagination: Principles and Procedures of Creative Problem-Solving* (New York: Scribner, 1979).

[5] Don Koberg and Jim Bagnall, *The All New Universal Traveler: A Soft-Systems Guide to Creativity, Problem-Solving, and the Process of Reaching Goals* (Los Altos, CA: W. Kaufmann, 1981).

[6] Lynne Porter, *Unmasking Theatre Design: A Designer's Guide to Finding Inspiration and Cultivating Creativity* (Abingdon, UK: Focal Press, 2014), 65–67.

settle for those that seem merely good enough. Action 5 is **present the best solution**. Create a communication form that fits the setting. In Porter's domain of theater design, this could include a model of the stage to illustrate scenery or fabric samples to demonstrate possible costuming ideas. In concert programming, presenting the best solution could entail playing through the selected music in order. The demonstration of all of the connecting action such as video, commentary, or instrumental selections in such a play-through is beneficial. Porter emphasizes that the process of creativity does not have to be sequential, but often requires multiple iterations of each action that converge on the final product.

Before relating Porter's Five Actions of Creativity to concert programming, let us examine how researchers study concert programming from diverse times and contexts.[7] Mark Gotham, a University of Oxford graduate who researches a wide range of concert programs in the McCann Collection of the Royal Conservatory of Music, views programming as a creative discipline worthy of study.[8] He defines concert programming as a "creative art-form [since] most concerts involve several distinct items, the juxtaposition of which inevitably has an effect on how each is received and on the pacing of the event."[9] Gotham uses principles from sociology and aesthetics to analyze how programming choices affect the audience's perceptions of a performance.

Researchers also study the criteria used by decision makers for programming choices. These criteria have evolved since the advent of the modern concert. Before 1850, the sequence of

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[7] Samuel Gilmore, "Tradition and Novelty in Concert Programming: Bringing the Artist Back into Cultural Analysis," *Sociological Forum* 8, no. 2 (1993).

[8] "McCann Concert Programmes Database," Royal Academy of Music, London, England, http://www.concertprogrammes.org.uk/.

[9] Mark Gotham, "Coherence in Concert Programming: A View from the United Kingdom," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 45, no. 2 (2014): 293.

selections in a concert was often guided by a preference for miscellany.[10] The next trend was for many concerts to be arranged according to a common link between elements. More recently, concert programming choices show a preference for developing community partnerships. Additional criteria used by decision makers include integrating the expectations of consumers (sponsors and audiences). One last criterion may be the balance of the practical logistics of involving multiple performers with considerations that come from the conductor and other performers.[11] Concert programming is a series of creative choices of musical compositions arranged in a particular sequence with many variations possible concerning selection criteria, decision makers, and order preferences. Now that we have looked at how scholars study both audience's perceptions of concerts and decision-makers' criteria for concert flow, let us return to Porter's Five Stages of Creativity. Applying Porter's terms to the following concrete example of concert programming as a model may help expand our understanding of the process of creating concert programming.

Ball State University (BSU) requires a lecture recital to be given as part of the requirements for the doctor of arts degree. This scholarly spoken content is presented alongside a musical performance. I presented a lecture recital in 2014 about creativity that included some of Porter's actions of creativity. The context was developing a choral concert with the Ball State University Women's Chorus and dancers from the Department of Theater and Dance of Ball State University. To *comprehend the problem,* a collaborative team will often develop a brief. This term is often used by graphic designers in marketing.[12] A brief can define the artistic

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[10] William Weber, "From Miscellany to Homogeneity in Concert Programming," *Poetics* 29, no. 2 (2001).

[11] Mary Ann Glynn, "Chord and Discord: Organizational Crisis, Institutional Shifts, and the Musical Canon of the Symphony," *Poetics* 30, no. 1 (2002).

[12] Sharon Bending, "Design: Keeping on Point: Before Starting a Marketing Project, Develop a Strategic Document Outlining the Problem to Be Solved and the Message to Be Communicated. This 'Design Brief' (Also Called a

challenge and provide a proposed timeline. For the BSU chorus and dance partnership, the artistic challenge was preparing a performance of *Ceremony of Carols* by Benjamin Britten (1913–1976) that would include dancing, singing, playing harp, designing the set and lighting, and creating custom video. While I was a graduate assistant, I joined BSU professors Kerry Glann and Rebecca Pappas to develop this proposed brief. Students were involved in **gathering inspiration**. The student choreographers, in particular, spent time researching the movement styles of Martha Graham (1894–1991) to broaden the possible visual idioms available to this performance. Singers also influenced the design of the custom video, **inventing multiple solutions** to allow good options to be further revised throughout the rehearsal process. The final two weeks before the production were filled with moments when the dancers, singers, and videographers discussed how they were experiencing each other's work in the actual performance space. They were able to **develop the work** by refining the interaction of the various art forms so that the experience of the audience was heightened rather than confused. Finally, they **presented the best solution** in a public performance that included a lecture on the use of creativity in the choral setting. This concrete example illustrates how concert programming is a specific application of the creative process as described by Porter.

When concert programmers grow in their skill to implement these concepts, I believe that performers and audience members will treasure the connections made between people as well as their link with the music itself. The tasks of programming can be common between multiple musical genres. Skillful programmers can either highlight or obscure the boundaries between musical genres while implementing their craft. But the foundation needed for a written guide for

'Creative Brief') Acts As a Reference Point, Helping to Avoid Obstructive Debates Over What is 'Good Art,'" *ABA Bank Marketing* 42, no. 5 (2010): 26.

developing choral programming needs to define more than *programming*; what is meant by *choral* must be understood as well.

Defining Choral Music

Oxford Online defines choral music as "music written for a group of singers,"[13] most often with multiple singers on distinct parts, resulting in purposeful group vocal sounds. Scholars have studied the programming choices of orchestral concerts[14] and band concerts,[15] and even the programming for presentations in children's music education.[16] The recommendations of these studies may not directly influence choral programming due to fundamental differences that exist between choral and instrumental music. This is not to say that one is more aesthetically appropriate or significant than the other—just that a successful programmer can highlight the distinctive features of choral music organized in table 1.1.

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[13] *Oxford Music Online*, s.v. "choral music," accessed July 11, 2016, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.bsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2218820?q=choral+music&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit.

[14] Gotham, "Coherence in Concert Programming."

[15] Kevin M. Geraldi, "Planned Programming Pays Dividends," *Music Educators Journal* 95, no. 2 (2008).

[16] Shirley A. Brown et al., "Idea Bank: Attracting Audiences," *Music Educators Journal* 70, no. 9 (1984).

Table 1.1: Distinctive Features of Instrumental Music versus Choral Music

Distinctive Feature	Instrumental Music	Choral Music
Timespan of repertoire available for performance	Band music covers over 100 years Orchestral music covers over 250 years	Commonly programmed music includes selections from over 600 years of history
Average length of compositions performed	Preponderance of lengthy multi-movement works	Preponderance of shorter-length elements to place in a program structure
Use of culturally defined instruments	Instruments are products of particular cultures and often depend on music written for those specific instruments	Music using only voices does not require as many culturally defined supports such as instruments
Payment of performers	Often includes professional performers (particularly for orchestras)[17]	Largely volunteer or semi-professional membership[18]
Text	Text rarely used in instrumental-only music	Text is almost universally used in choral music to provide extramusical meaning.

First, the breadth of literature that is currently available distinguishes purposeful group vocal music from its instrumental counterparts. Orchestral literature follows the invention of the violin (1570s), with commonly played symphonic orchestra literature often beginning with Mozart (1756–1791).[19] Band directors typically include literature from John Philip Sousa (1854–1932) and later in their concerts.[20] But some scholars suggest the roots of commonly played symphonic band literature should be linked with the formation of the National Guard in Paris in 1789.[21] Additionally, it may be a bigger leap to perform older instrumental works than older vocal works because of the changes in actual instrument design since the compositions were

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[17] The difficulty of finding this data is explored in Dawn Bennett, *Understanding the Classical Music Profession* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008).

[18] Chorusamerica.org, "The Chorus Impact Study: How Children, Adults, and Communities Benefit from Choruses," https://www.chorusamerica.org/publications/research-reports/chorus-impact-study, 4.

[19] Jeffrey Pompe, Lawrence Tamburri, and Johnathan Munn, "Factors That Influence Programming Decisions of US Symphony Orchestras," *Journal of Cultural Economics* 35, no. 3 (2011).

[20] Frank Battisti, *The Winds of Change: The Evolution of the Contemporary American Wind Band Ensemble and Its Conductors* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2002), 14.

[21] R. F. Goldman, *The Wind Band: Its Literature and Technique* (Boston, MA: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon, 1961).

created. Presumably, changes to the human vocal mechanism over the same timespan have been more minor than those reflected by adding valves to French horns instead of crooks, for example, or changing from gut strings to steel string on a violin. In any case, some modern choirs still perform music dating back Guillaume de Machaut's iconic *Messe de Nostre Dame* (c. 1300–1377).[22] Repertoire common in modern choral performances dates back to the 16th century. Choral concert programmers could possibly include selections from over 600 years of compositions.[23] Highlighting this breadth of music in an accessible way offers distinct opportunities to the choral concert programmer.

Second, most choral concerts are made of up short works, with each composition often only between three and five minutes in duration. Orchestra concerts are frequently fashioned of lengthy multi-movement works whose duration influences the flow of a concert. An entire orchestra concert could be composed of just three selections: an overture, a concerto, and a symphony. A choral concert of equal length might feature 15 to 20 compositions. Balancing three orchestral works in fresh and yet significant ways requires programming skills. But generating a satisfying structure with a host of unrelated shorter choral works offers different challenges to those programmers. They must wrestle with finding a way to satisfactorily lead the audience through the collection of much smaller building blocks of compositions. Shorter works could be bundled into sets, so that the audience perceives the kind of flow that is built into a well-crafted symphony. Conversely, concert programmers can highlight rapid changes in the mood and character of the music in a way that resembles an orchestral work such as Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* more than a Gustav Mahler symphony. Crafting the flow of shorter works is an important skill for choral programmers.

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[22] Dennis Shrock, *Choral Repertoire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 10.

[23] David Dubal, *The Essential Canon of Classical Music* (New York: North Point Press, 2001).

Third, at some level performing choral music seems to transcend diverse cultural characteristics more easily than other genres. The unaccompanied patterns of African call-and-response songs perhaps can more easily be imitated by choirs accustomed to European a cappella singing than a symphony orchestra can play a musical composition conceived for a Gamelan ensemble. Making music without an external instrument influences the ability of music to transcend genres in a way that is not as readily available to creating music only through non-vocal instruments. Choral programmers can proactively include the embodied instrument of the voice to help distinguish choral concerts from other music performances.

Fourth, at least in American culture, post-educational choirs tend to be made up of amateurs or perhaps semi-professional members.[24] Post-educational symphonic orchestras and military bands are more often paid for their participation.[25] This has implications for the expectations of musicians in leadership roles such as programming choices. Using programming as a tool to retain members could vary depending on whether those members receive a paycheck or not. That is, for a professional, the monetary exchange can provide motivation to perform. For an amateur, that motivation may depend on some affinity for the repertoire selected. Choral programmers can help volunteers feel valued by including volunteers on the programming team. No matter who chooses the literature, hopefully the choices will honor the desires of those performing.

Perhaps more significantly, most vocal music (musical theater, opera, art song, and popular song as well as choral music) deals with text. The textless nature of instrumental music yields absolute music, or it requires extramusical materials to become program music. While text is not always the defining component of a choral concert, the prudent organizer considers this

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[24] Chorusamerica.org, "The Chorus Impact Study," 4.
[25] See Dawn Bennett, *Understanding the Classical Music Profession* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008).

characteristic component when generating a concert. To express this distinctive characteristic of choral music well, the concert programmer often answers questions such as:

- Is the text set well?
- Does the repetition of text by a composer aid or hinder comprehension by the audience?
- Should the vernacular language of the audience be a determining factor?
- Could all the texts in a concert be thematically related?
- Should the texts flow from one to another conversationally in the performance sequence?

The intentional use of text distinguishes the choral concert from the instrumental concert.

To review: the presence of materials from over 600 years of composition, the shorter standard length of compositions, the potential cross-cultural use of voice, the preponderance of volunteers, and the use of text can influence the design of a guide about programming choral concerts. These distinctive aspects can provide fertile direction for creativity in choral programming that is not easily accessible to those who include only instrumental music.

Adding the distinctive qualities of choral music to the process of concert programming provides some of the foundation needed to define a written guide for choral programming. But such a definition does not actually evaluate the need for such a guide. The need for creative programming in choral concerts is evident from societal observation.

Exploring the Need for Creative Programming

Several consequential issues face programmers of choral concerts in our society. Attendance to live arts events is declining.[26] Programmers need to carefully understand their role to avoid the danger of merely curating history instead of helping audiences engage with living music. Creative programming may be one method of linking choral music with the iPod

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[26] Bohne Silber and Tim Triplett, *A Decade of Arts Engagement: Findings from the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, 2002–2012*, Art Works: National Endowment of the Arts, 2015.

generation. Noted practitioners highlight the expanding gap between choral music and current society, but believe that different programming models could be part of the solution.[27]

First, the price of ineffectual programming must be acknowledged. Although positive memories of a concert often depend on the selection of compositions, the flow of the program, and collaborations between participants, certain programming choices may lead to negative responses. The audience may be bored by the empty repetition of content. The performers may lose interest when the concert seems to be a series of random events instead of a cohesive affair. Even conductors may struggle with motivation due to poor programming choices. Lackluster concerts may limit connections between participants and audience members who may express their dissatisfaction verbally. Other dissatisfied participants may quietly choose not to attend or not to perform in live music performances.[28] Thus, programming issues may exacerbate the declining support of performances. Ben Cameron, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation's program director for the arts, noted "the last ten years have witnessed a gradual erosion of performing arts support. . . . We read statistical analyses that described a populace marked by overscheduling and exhaustion."[29] Could creative programming provide a remedy for audiences in this condition?

Second, some programming misses the opportunity to surround choral works with context that helps participants and audience members engage. Choral programming can be primarily guided by balancing musical selections from historically significant eras, which does acknowledge one of the distinctive qualities of choral music listed above. Retired Arizona State

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[27] Kathy Romey, Emilie Sweet, and Shekela Wanyama, "Building Bridges: Choruses Engaging Communities," in *Wisdom, Wit, and Will: Women Choral Conductors on Their Art*, ed. Joan Catoni Conlon (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2009).

[28] Silber and Triplett, *A Decade of Arts Engagement*.

[29] Ben Cameron, "A New Era for Performing Arts," *One: One World, One Future, One School: Johns Hopkins Carey Business School* 4, no. 1 (2011), http://onearchive.carey.jhu.edu/2011/fall/a-new-era-for-the-performing-arts/.

University professor and conductor Douglas McEwen relates, "With an eye to chronology, I try to include most style periods in most programs."[30] But when historically-motivated programming fails to build bridges from historic traditions to present-day listeners, neither the music nor the audience are well served. The breadth of history that is possibly included in a choral concert mirrors the problems and opportunities found in presenting information located in art galleries, planetariums, and other scientific museums, as well as historical societies and buildings. Curators can focus on the collection of artifacts to the exclusion of relating these items to the people attending the museum.

This is hardly a new dilemma. John Cotton Dana, a museum designer, wrote a series of books beginning in 1917 called *The New Museum Series*.[31] He refuted the then-current practice of museums presenting inanimate collections without connecting them to the living community. Dana called this a curator model, focused on building a collection of artifacts unrelated to the viewers. Instead, Dana suggested an engagement model, dedicated to the construction of an active organization of people connecting with other people. He claimed, "Surely a function of a public art museum is the making of life more interesting, joyful and wholesome; and surely a museum cannot very well exercise that function unless it relates itself quite closely to the life it should be influencing."[32] Dana advised museums to learn from the then-new department stores. From this perspective, museums and other cultural entities that truly serve the population have elements in common: they are centrally located, they are open hours that match when patrons wish to visit, and they freely display the most attractive objects. Beyond these logistical considerations, the engagement model faces outward to connect with potential patrons instead of

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[30] *In Quest of Answers: Interviews with American Choral Conductors*, (Chapel Hill, NC: Hinshaw Publishers, 1991), 98.

[31] John Cotton Dana, *The New Museum* (Woodstock, VT: Elm Tree Press, 1917).

[32] Dana, *The New Museum*, 10.

inward to preserve the collection. Choral programmers may need to reorient their goals from

preserving a heritage to finding ways to connect that heritage with those not presently

participating as singers or audience members.

Third, there is a need to discover how to connect choral music with people who consume

music digitally. According to Cameron, the ability to watch a recording of a choir when and

where desired

> has created consumer expectations of personalization, customization, and convenience. These are expectations that live performing arts—bound by set curtain times, set venues, and attendant inconveniences of travel, parking, etc.—simply cannot meet. In an age where young people access culture-on-demand through YouTube and iTunes, and for little or no apparent cost, what happens when we ask them to pay $100 for a symphony, opera, or dance ticket? The arts are, in short, in a moment of profound redefinition and realignment; the financial pressure merely redefines the resources we bring to bear.[33]

Researcher and choral conductor Janine Dexter provides one answer through updating Dana's

thoughts to today's experience of the choral art form.[34] Just as museums could learn from

societal shifts such as department stores in the early 1900s, today's public musical performance

groups must face the reality that most consumers obtain music through iTunes and YouTube

more frequently than through live concerts. How should this influence concert programming?

Dexter offers the concrete example of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra whose

programming choices result in over 700,000 YouTube hits as opposed to most orchestras in the

20,000 range.[35] But where could the ideas come from that integrate iTunes culture with the

choral canon as opposed to orchestral? Part of the solution is finding an active platform for

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[33] Cameron, "A New Era for Performing Arts."

[34] Janine Dexter, "Making Music Matter: Social Relevance and Community Engagement as a Catalyst for Transformation through the Choral Arts" (doctoral dissertation, California State University, Los Angeles, 2014), http://janinedexter.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/MakingMusicMatter.pdf.

[35] Dexter, "Making Music Matter," 16.

choral music on social media, such as Eric Whitacre's virtual choirs.[36] But creative concert programming could seek to address these concerns within the setting of the live concert. In addition, just as the potential of social media is to connect people, choral programming could find new ways to help communities actually interact with each other. Museum director and professor Candace Tangorra Matelic suggests that organizations should strive to enable significant conversations between groups in the community, and thus improve the world through shared visions, plans, and outcomes.[37] Choral programmers could learn ways to move beyond the curator model to embrace new means of getting music into people's lives. Creative programming could meet this need.

Finally, a deeper consequence of some programming is discussed by Kathy Romey, director of choral activities at the University of Minnesota and artistic director of the Minnesota Chorale. Romey explains that "choral organizations throughout the United States [can] extend their performance activity beyond the concert hall to include a myriad of creative efforts that utilize music as a tool for community building and education. Yet current programming and outreach models are often ineffective in bridging the gap between art and twenty-first century society."[38] She suggests that the rehearsal process can illuminate what it means to be human and that performances can share this essence with audiences. She broadens the goal to include the entire community. The breadth of this vision of choral programming is much more than selecting a couple of songs and putting them in order to sing in a concert. Her vision is for creative programming to motivate us to more dynamically connect with the world around us, leading to transformation not only of the concert, but the community at large.

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[36] Eric Whitacre, "A Virtual Choir 2,000 Voices Strong," March 2011, http://www.ted.com/talks/eric_whitacre_a_virtual_choir_2_000_voices_strong.

[37] Doug Borwick, "Engagement Is," *Engaging Matters: Doug Borwick on Vibrant Arts and Communities* (blog), May 2, 2012, http://www.artsjournal.com/engage/2012/05/engagement-is/.

[38] Romey, Sweet, and Wanyama, "Building Bridges: Choruses Engaging Communities," 73.

In summary, choral music directors have the opportunity to respond to a variety of issues facing the art form. The declining interest by audiences and participants perhaps is caused by the fascination of programmers with history instead of building bridges from history to today. The new realities of music consumption demonstrate the need for new responses by those programming concerts. Creative programming should aim to fulfill the current needs of performing groups, audiences, and society at large.

Concert programming can be developed through the nonlinear work of creativity as presented by Porter. This concert programming can respect the history of the choral genre while making it accessible to today's audiences. Some of the issues facing choral music today were just explored, along with the suggestion that creative programming should be part of the response. Although one person can program concerts, understanding how collaboration interfaces with concert programming can potentially provide a process of developing the needed bridges between choral music and current society.

Proposing Collaboration as a Solution

Scholars have focused on a subset of the study of creativity called *collaboration*. Commentary and research includes a focus on songwriters,[39] scientists,[40] and educators.[41] Based on over fifteen years of research-based analysis of collaboration skills for school professionals, Marilyn Friend and Lynne Cook define collaboration as "a style for direct interaction between at least two coequal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a

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[39] Joshua Wolf Shenk, "The Power of Two," *Atlantic*, July 2014, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/07/the-power-of-two/372289/.

[40] Jane Maienschein, "Why Collaborate?," *Journal of the History of Biology* 26, no. 2 (1993).

[41] Charlie Sweet, Hal Blythe, and Rusty Carpenter, "Creative Collaboration," *The National Teaching & Learning Forum* 23, no. 6 (2014).

common goal."[42] Educational researcher Richard DuFour suggests that collaboration requires

teamwork and trust.[43] DuFour calls this kind of group a *learning community*, which is a great

label for a highly functioning choral programming team. Research on collaboration comes from

many fields and suggests both personal qualities and team roles for successful collaboration.

Currently this research includes some musical studies, but almost none about choral music.

Collaboration does have pitfalls of which concert programmers should be aware.

Management expert Patrick Lencioni categorizes some of the dysfunctions of underperforming

teams as the absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability,

and inattention to results.[44] Some people avoid collaboration because of psychologically unsafe

work environments.[45] Consequences can include broken relationships, lack of community,

depression, and squandering of artistic capital. In spite of these risks, the very nature of live

group musical performances requires interaction between multiple decision makers.

Research can lead to ways to solve the problems inherent in collaboration. This

dissertation focuses on the implications of creativity research to choral programming.

Specifically, the attention is directed toward the process of developing new solutions through the

work of teams. Then live musical performances based on true collaboration can successfully

integrate multiple decision makers.

When Gotham interviewed practicing programmers of orchestral concerts, he found that

"programmers are keen to emphasize the intuitive aspect to their work and the individual creative

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[42] Marilyn Penovich Friend and Lynne Cook, *Interactions: Collaboration Skills for School Professionals* (Boston: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon, 2007), 7.

[43] Richard DuFour and Robert Eaker, *Professional Learning Communities at Work: Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement* (Alexandria, VA; Bloomington, IN: Associations for Supervision of Curriculum, Alexandria, VA National Educational Service. Bloomington, IN, 1998), 275.

[44] Patrick Lencioni, "Dissolve Dysfunction," *Leadership Excellence* 26, no. 10 (2009).

[45] Amy Edmondson, "Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (1999).

vitality in responding to the particular calls of the context in which they are working."[46]

However, I believe that collaboration and creativity research can help us peer behind the veil called *intuition* to discover processes and actions that willing programmers can develop. For example, research from diverse fields suggests that team roles and personal activities can facilitate collaboration. Since musicians often successfully negotiate similar aspects of collaboration required in live music performances, choral programmers need not fear the negative consequences of collaboration. Rather, the literature reviewed in chapter 2 will illuminate proactive methods of collaboration which are built into a written guide for collaborative planning of choral concerts.

Summary and Transition

Collaboration is one way to successfully program choral music creatively. Concert programming includes selecting music and placing it in a particular performance structure. A positive process of designing the concert experience helps to avoid negative aspects of the current arts climate. Specifically, choral concert programming can capitalize on the distinctive features of choral music. Choral music is distinct from instrumental music because of the extended time period of notated literature, the preponderance of shorter compositions in many performances, the embodied nature of the voice as an instrument, the differences between volunteer and professional membership, and the use of text. Studies about creativity and collaboration can positively influence the programming process in order to highlight those distinctive aspects. For example, choral programmers can learn from research in museum design about how to respect the history of the choral genre while making it accessible to today's

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[46] Gotham, "Coherence in Concert Programming," 307.

audiences. Furthermore, principles gained from collaboration research can help choral

programmers to overcome possible undesirable outcomes of team planning.

A written guide directing this kind of programming should reflect the nonlinear nature of

creativity that analyzes the problem, accesses a variety of possible sources, generates multiple

options, refines those options, and communicates the best solution in a way that encapsulates its

uniqueness.[47] Further review of the literature provides a more complete understanding of

creativity than Porter's Five Actions. The following review of literature reveals broad principles

of collaboration and creativity that inform a written guide for the collaborative planning of choral

concerts. An additional purpose of the literature review is to analyze specific examples of

collaboration that demonstrate these principles applied specifically to artistic creativity.

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[47] Porter, *Unmasking Theatre Design*.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

A literature review provides the context for a research project such as this Annotated

Guide for Collaborative Planning of Choral Concerts Based on Sawyer's Eight Stages of the

Creative Process. After introducing the motivation for this review, a brief definition of both

creativity and collaboration supplies the foundation for understanding the work of R. Keith

Sawyer. His eight stages frame the rest of this literature review, with support from other

creativity scholars including discussion of collaboration and examples of collaboration.

In order to provide more context about the collaborative planning of choral concerts, this

literature review begins with these three questions:

- Who are the primary stakeholders in choral music?
- What does programming for choirs entail?
- What are some examples of choral programming among the canon of choral literature?

Who Are the Primary Stakeholders in Choral Music?

Stakeholders in choral music are influenced by current trends affecting all the performing

arts. Composers, conductors, and performers who create the art are impacted. Other stakeholders

are those producing the art (theaters, broadcasters, recording engineers, record labels, and video

companies) and those receiving the art (live audience members and consumers of recorded music

in audio and visual formats). Communities can be enlivened through vibrant art scenes. Future

generations may or may not have access to specific choral treasures if the amount of frequently

performed repertoire diminishes. Trends such as declining attendance,[1] decreasing revenue and

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[1] Silber and Triplett, "A Decade of Arts Engagement: Findings from the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, 2002–2012."

operating budgets,[2] and limited arts education[3] can touch all these stakeholders. Effective choral programming could help reverse these negative trends.

<center>*What Does Programming for Choirs Entail?*</center>

In chapter 1 some of the distinctive features of choral music were reviewed and then concert programming was defined as a process of putting musical selections in a particular performance sequence.[4] Often this process involves a series of choices that can be understood through creativity theory.[5] Let us consider some specific programming models for choirs.

Many textbooks about choral arts define two aspects of choral programming: making literature choices and creating the flow between musical selections. Walter Ehret, prominent educator and composer of over two thousand published choral anthems, suggests the criteria for choosing literature be based on the text, the music, and various other considerations.[6] Many other textbooks affirm selecting choral music based on textual and musical requirements.[7] Richard Cox, a retired choral professor from University of North Carolina-Greensboro, suggests that flow between musical selections should be like a "well-planned meal . . . with an appetizer, a main course, a salad, and a dessert."[8] Although writing in the context of a choral festival, Ramona Wis provides a similar flow for programming choral literature: a short, successful opener balanced with a longer closer that is challenging and exciting. According to Wis, a cappella music should always be included. In addition, she suggests including something fresh to the singers, such as

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[2] Jonathan Berr, "The Death of Classical Music in America," *Wall Street Journal*, May 1, 2011.

[3] Beer, "Death of Classical Music."

[4] Gotham, "Coherence in Concert Programming."

[5] Porter, *Unmasking Theatre Design*.

[6] Walter Ehret, *The Choral Conductor's Handbook* (New York: E. B. Marks Music Corp, 1959).

[7] Lewis Gordon, *Choral Director's Rehearsal and Performance Guide* (West Nyack, N.Y: Parker Pub. Co., 1989); *The ChoirBuilder Book* (Milwaukee, WI: Brookfield Press, n.d.); Kenneth H. Phillips, *Directing the Choral Music Program* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[8] *In Quest of Answers: Interviews with American Choral Conductors*, 93.

TTBB literature or a masterwork.[9] Choral programming can include other art forms, even if these are only simple oratory, choreography, costuming, or staging.[10] Flow (as discussed by Cox and Wis) and literature selection (Ehret) are all part of choral programming. Thus, choral programming is the selection of choral literature and the choices that sequence that choral music into a concert, sometimes integrating other art forms.

The rationale behind sequencing musical selections for a concert program has changed through the years. One way to review the changes in decision making is to look at when a particular programming order first appeared. This is not to say that the defining musical qualities of each historical era are linked to the order of music in a choral concert, or even that each era has exclusively one style of programming. Rather, connecting a programming style with an historical event may help us remember a variety of programming styles. Thus, a short survey of choral programming practices supplements the basic definition as given above. This way of remembering different programming styles is summarized in table 2.1.

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[9] Ramona M. Wis, "Redefine and Redesign the Choral Festival Experience," *Music Educators Journal* 89, no. 3 (2003), 49.

[10] Walter Lamble, "Choral Music's New Kid on the Block: The 'Swing Choir'," *The Choral Journal* 17, no. 3 (1976).

Table 2.1: Survey of Choral Programming Practices Arranged Historically

Era	Dominant Programming Style	Decision Rationale
Pre-Renaissance	Liturgical	Planning was governed by liturgical reasons, although planners did not always strictly follow them.
Renaissance	Secular Entertainment	In addition to sacred polyphony, composers wrote madrigals using secular texts.
Classical	Variety Show	Planners reveled in miscellaneous selections often including instrumental selections.
Early Romantic	Historical Survey	Concerts should include music from "the masters" as well as contemporary composers.
Late Romantic (Program Music)	Concept	Concerts relate to a theme which guides the audience's experience.
Contemporary	Social Activism	Concerts should build community and raise awareness of social reforms.

The earliest accounts of programming choices available to current scholars were kept by monasteries and churches. Although the people selecting music did not use the term *programming*, much of their rationale focused on liturgical considerations as the prime reason for repertoire choices. Eventually the aristocracy kept records of employment, so some information about secular music is available—including the madrigal craze that swept England, linked with the publication of *Musica Transalpina* in 1588.

Research about the shift to subscription concerts during the Classical Era provides additional information about choral programming. Perhaps one of the most famous concerts occurred the evening of December 22, 1808, when Beethoven (1770–1827) premiered four major works: his *Fifth* and *Sixth Symphonies*, the *Fourth Piano Concerto*, and the *Fantasy for Piano,*

Chorus, and Orchestra (Op. 80). This concert also included excerpts of his *Mass in C Major*.[11] This is a clear example of programming following the variety-show format, in which there is no intention of an overarching theme or music history review guiding choices.

Scholar William Weber traces the transition from miscellany—epitomized by the Beethoven concert—to the establishment of a preference for exhibiting the historical canon spanning the Baroque through Contemporary eras.[12] This programming style continues to this day as seen in the encouragement to public school teachers to include a breadth of historical periods when programming choral concerts.[13] Despite high school choral directors acknowledging the need to perform all eras, when they listed the music they actually programmed, not all eras were evenly represented.[14]

Concept programming is a later approach in which a common theme or specific link guides the selection of repertoire.[15] Holiday concerts such as those hosted by the New York City Radio Music Hall or the Purdue University Music Organizations are one example of themed choral concerts. The spirituals of the Moses Hogan Chorale or the new music commissioned by the Dale Warland Singers would be additional examples of possible themes. A concert could be linked by having all the lyrics be by one poet. Or the link could be cultural such as the choral music of Japan. The themed concert is still commonly used to organize the audience's experience.

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[11] Nick Strimple, *Choral Music in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Amadeus Press, 2008), 23.

[12] William Weber, "Mass Culture and the Reshaping of European Musical Taste, 1770–1870," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 25, no. 1/2 (1994).

[13] Gail Berenson, "A New School Year—New Repertoire Challenges!," *American Music Teacher* 58, no. 1 (2008); Emily Crocker, "Choosing Music for Middle School Choirs," *Music Educators Journal* 86, no. 4 (2000); Guy W. Forbes, "The Repertoire Selection Practices of High School Choral Directors," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 49, no. 2 (2001); F. Abrahams et al., *Teaching Music Through Performance in Middle School Choir* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2011).

[14] Rebecca R. Reames, "High School Choral Directors' Description of Appropriate Literature for Beginning High School Choirs," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 49, no. 2 (2001).

[15] David L. Brunner, "Choral Program Design Structure and Symmetry," *Music Educators Journal* 80, no. 6 (1994).

The last method of selecting and organizing choral literature in a concert to be discussed has already been mentioned through the work of people such as Kathy Romey[16] and Janine Dexter,[17] who view concert programming as a means of building community and social activism. Gotham would concur that creative programming can provide unexpected bonds between audiences and music.[18] All these programming styles can be used by the people programming concerts today, but each style reveals different values.

What Are Some Examples of Choral Programming among the Canon of Choral Literature?

History abounds with instances when the composer functioned as the choral programmer, selecting music and placing it into a concert sequence. Giacomo Carissimi (1605–1674) wrote fifteen oratorios mixing instrumental music, solo voices, and chorus.[19] Unlike his contemporaries who were bound by the conventions of setting the text of the mass, Carissimi set the texts of his oratorios in multiple ways that connected shorter musical movements into a unified composition of substantial length. Additional examples can be found in the passion settings by Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672)[20] and Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750).[21] Christian Friedrich Henrici (1700–1764), using the pen name Picander, wrote the libretti for several of Bach's works, and provides an example of how these choral masterpieces usually were the result of collaborative effort.[22] The history of the oratorio provides additional illustrations of collaborative planning of choral programming through works such as *Messiah* by George Frideric Handel (1685–1759), *The Creation* by Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809), *Elijah* by Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847),

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[16] Romey, Sweet, and Wanyama, "Building Bridges: Choruses Engaging Communities."

[17] Dexter, "Making Music Matter."

[18] Mark Gotham, "First Impressions: On the Programming and Concert Presentation of New Music Today," *Tempo* 68, no. 267 (2014).

[19] Homer Ulrich, *A Survey of Choral Music* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1973), 81.

[20] Shrock, *Choral Repertoire*, 253.

[21] Melvin Berger, *Guide to Choral Masterpieces: A Listener's Guide* (New York: Anchor Books / Doubleday, 1993), 27–31.

[22] Ian F. Finlay, "Bach's Secular Cantata Texts," *Music & Letters* 31, no. 3 (1950).

and *Belshazzar's Feast* by William Walton (1902–1983). It is a stretch to apply the definition of

programming to the compositional process of a single long-form masterwork; however, the same

principles composers used to group elements into scenes and even acts can guide the choral

programmer.

Not only do composers place choral music into sequences, they also craft specific works

that integrate other art forms with choral music. Examples of this practice include the brief

choreographic spectacle (including an unseen chorus) "Pavane" by Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)[23]

and the extended *Daphnis et Chloé,* which Maurice Ravel (1875–1937) called a *symphonie*

choréographique.[24] Other examples include the scenic cantata *Carmina Burana* by Carl Orff

(1895–1982);[25] *Mass: A Theatre Piece for Singers, Players, and Dancers* by Leonard Bernstein

(1918–1990);[26] and *Light: the Seven Days of the Week,* a multimedia opera cycle that includes

chorus by Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928–2007).[27]

In recent years, choral programmers "retrofitted" existing choral works with sets,

costumes, dance, and even sign language. The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus

produced a semi-staged "ritualization" of J. S. Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in Salzburg, Berlin,

and New York City.[28] Additionally, for the 250th anniversary of Handel's death, the German

group Theater an der Wien performed a controversial staged version of *Messiah* with a new plot

superimposed on the revered historical score—a prime example of how choral music can partner

with other art forms to create memorable moments for the audience.[29]

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[23] Shrock, *Choral Repertoire*, 433.

[24] Nick Strimple, *Choral Music in the Twentieth Century* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 2002), 55.

[25] Strimple, *Choral Music in the Twentieth Century*, 35–36.

[26] Berger, *Guide to Choral Masterpieces*, 67–68.

[27] Jonathan Harvey, *The Music of Stockhausen: An Introduction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

[28] Alex Ross, "Atonement," *The New Yorker*, October 27, 2014, 76.

[29] Chanda VanderHart, "Blurring Lines between Speech, Dance, and Musical Forms: A Staged *Messiah* at Theater an Der Wien," Bachtrack.com, https://bachtrack.com/review-messiah-guth-wien-apr-2014.

Summary and Transition

The context undergirding the collaborative planning of choral concerts is broad. Reviewing the stakeholders in choral music demonstrates the breadth of those impacted by the issues facing live performances. Historical evidence suggests a variety of types of concert programming, such as miscellany and historical survey. Additional programming principles can be gleaned from the historical examples of composers programming choral concerts, the examples of composers writing for more than choral music, and the retrofitting of existing choral works.

However, there is a gap in the literature concerning practical guidelines for the process of programming choral concerts. Without diminishing the scholarship about the innovation of these historical choral works, it can be difficult to find information focused on the process of how the composers created flow in their masterworks. For example, Melvin Berger explains Orff's pacing of the audience's experience of *Carmina Burana*.[30] But scholarship is more limited about the process Orff used to make those creative decisions. Anecdotal evidence displays some of Haydn's interactions with his librettist Baron Gottfried van Swieten, while composing *The Creation* and *The Seasons*.[31] But what collaboration strategies did Haydn and van Swieten use to resolve their differences that current programmers could also appropriate?

Creativity, Collaboration, and R. Keith Sawyer

Scholarship about collaboration can be added to the existing research about the types of concert flow (miscellany, chronological order, thematic choices, the desire to build community) in order to inform an annotated guide for the collaborative planning of choral concerts. Thus, choral programmers can learn about group decision making from collaboration research. Since

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[30] Berger, *Guide to Choral Masterpieces*, 232–33.

[31] Edward Olleson, "Gottfried Van Swieten: Patron of Haydn and Mozart," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 89 (1962): 71–72.

the process of choral programming is a subset of the study of creativity, a review of the scholarly

research on creativity will provide clarity to this discussion.

Creativity and Collaboration

An accurate understanding of creativity provides a foundation for how humans generate

new ideas, associations, and processes. To be creative requires doing or thinking something new

and then expressing it in the world where other people can interact with it.[32] Various journals

focus on creativity research, including the *Journal of Creative Behavior* (begun in 1967) and

Creativity Research Journal (begun in 1988).

A brief sampling of the historical study of creativity includes the following:

- in 1921, a longitudinal study of 1,000 gifted children (California)[33]
- in 1931, the first college course about creativity (University of Nebraska)[34]
- in 1937, the first corporate creativity training program (General Electric Corporation)[35]
- in 1948, brainstorming enters popular culture with Alex Osborn's book *Your Creative Power*[36]
- in 1952 and continuing to today, creativity research funded by the National Science Foundation[37]

In addition to studying creativity as a solo enterprise, some scholars focus on how

sociocultural factors influence creative undertaking.[38] Harvard Business School professor and

prolific author Teresa Amabile significantly expanded research beyond a purely psychological

grounding to understand creativity in a sociocultural context.[39] Whether discovered from

observing Fortune 500 companies or team-teachers, this experience-based research guides the

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[32] R. Keith Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity: The Science of Human Innovation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 7.

[33] Hamilton Cravens, "A Scientific Project Locked in Time: The Terman Genetic Studies of Genius, 1920s–1950s," *American Psychologist* 47, no. 2 (1992).

[34] Robert Platt Crawford, *The Techniques of Creative Thinking: How to Use Your Ideas to Achieve Success* (Hawthorn Books, 1954).

[35] Gary A. Davis, *Training Creative Thinking* (Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company, 1971), ix.

[36] Alex Faickney Osborn, *Your Creative Power: How to Use Imagination* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1948).

[37] Sidney Jay Parnes and Harold Friend Harding, *A Source Book for Creative Thinking* (New York: Scribner, 1962).

[38] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*.

[39] Teresa Amabile, *The Social Psychology of Creativity* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1983).

methodology of collaboration in a way that should be of help to choral programmers. The

frequency of collaboration is increasing, according to a meta-study from researchers Stefan

Wuchty, Benjamin Jones, and Brian Uzzi. Surveying 2.1 million patents and over 19 million

papers written across five decades, they discovered that

> teams increasingly dominate solo authors in the production of knowledge. Research is
> increasingly done in teams across nearly all fields. Teams typically produce more
> frequently cited research than individuals do, and this advantage has been increasing over
> time. Teams now also produce the exceptionally high impact research, even where that
> distinction was once the domain of solo authors. These results are detailed for sciences
> and engineering, social sciences, arts and humanities, and patents, suggesting that the
> process of knowledge creation has fundamentally changed.[40]

This study shows how people currently gain knowledge has changed to be more collaborative.

Studying collaboration—the sociocultural context of creativity—provides additional resources to

the choral programmer.

Although Porter's Five Actions of Creativity offer a helpful opening orientation to

creativity, other taxonomies are more complete. Reviewing the literature about creativity and

collaboration involves almost one hundred years of articles and books spanning multiple

understandings of how the brain works. This information can be synthesized in a way that

encompasses key thoughts by many scholars. But to avoid a lengthy chronological review that

does not directly impact the study of choral programming, this literature review about creativity

and collaboration arranges multiple sources in the order of R. Keith Sawyer's Eight Stages of the

Creative Process.[41] He distills decades of multidisciplinary research about creativity and

collaboration and adds the fruit of his own personal exploration in order to create a system that

highlights key components of models by significant psychologists. His Eight Stages provide a

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[40] Stefan Wuchty, Benjamin F. Jones, and Brian Uzzi, "The Increasing Dominance of Teams in Production of Knowledge," *Science* 316, no. 5827 (2007): 1036.

[41] R. Keith Sawyer, *Zig Zag: The Surprising Path to Greater Creativity* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2013), 88.

streamlined format to comprehensively review creativity and collaboration. Before expounding

on these stages, Sawyer's work merits detailed attention.

Sawyer's Research on Creativity and Collaboration

Dr. R. Keith Sawyer, both as academic researcher[42] and author for lay readership,[43]

exemplifies his own lifelong fascination with creativity. Currently he is professor in educational

innovations at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.[44] He has also served as professor

of psychology at Washington University in St. Louis.[45] He holds a computer science degree from

MIT, where he worked with artificial intelligence systems. In his first professional job, Sawyer

designed video games for Atari. He next worked as a management consultant on innovation

technologies for clients such as AT&T and Citicorp. He returned to school, completing a PhD in

psychology as a student of Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, who authored bestselling books such as

Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience.[46] Sawyer lectures and conducts creativity

workshops for universities and corporations worldwide. He has supplemented his academic

research through his performances as a jazz pianist with improvisational theater groups in

Chicago. These varied positions have served as autoethnographic research about creativity.[47]

Sawyer writes for both popular and scholarly outlets. His research has been featured in

Time[48] and on news outlets such as NPR.[49] In an episode of the CNN series *Genius* hosted by Dr.

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[42] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity.*

[43] Sawyer, *Zig Zag: The Surprising Path to Greater Creativity*.

[44] "University of North Carolina, School of Education," soe.unc.edu/fac_research/faculty/sawyer.php.

[45] "Dr. R. Keith Sawyer, Huffington Post," www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-r-keith-sawyer/.

[46] Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991).

[47] R. Keith Sawyer, "Keith Sawyer," www.keithsawyer.com.

[48] R. Keith Sawyer, "The Hidden Secrets of the Creative Mind," *Time*, January 16, 2006,
http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1147152,00.html.

[49] Laura Sydell, "The Behind-the-Scenes Partnership at Apple, Transcription of NPR Interview,"
http://www.npr.org/2010/12/30/132488837/The-Behind-The-Scenes-Partnership-At-Apple.

Sanjay Gupta, Sawyer explains group creativity through a visit to Chicago's IO Comedy Club.[50]

He maintains a YouTube presence[51] and a blog.[52] His popular offerings include the book *Zig Zag: The Surprising Path to Greater Creativity*[53] and *Zig Zag Creativity Cards*.[54] Other trade books include *Group Genius: The Creative Power of Collaboration*[55] and *Creating Conversations: Improvisation in Everyday Discourse*.[56]

Dr. Sawyer has published over eighty scientific articles. His research discusses many facets of creativity and includes interdisciplinary work concerning music with theater performance[57] and a qualitative study of the interactions within small-group jazz ensembles as compared to actors using improvisational theater games.[58] Other often-cited articles include "Creative Teaching: Collaborative Discussion as Disciplined Improvisation"[59] and "Distributed Creativity: How Collective Creations Emerge from Collaboration."[60] His article entitled "Improvisation and the Creative Process: Dewey, Collingwood, and the Aesthetics of Spontaneity"[61] explains how improvisations share features with the creation of art. He edits

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[50] Sanjay Gupta, "Genius: A CNN Primetime Special," (2006).

[51] R. Keith Sawyer, "Keith Sawyer," https://www.youtube.com/user/writer1990.

[52] R. Keith Sawyer, "The Creativity Guru," keithsawyer.wordpress.com.

[53] Sawyer, *Zig Zag: The Surprising Path to Greater Creativity*.

[54] R. Keith Sawyer, "Zig Zag Creativity Cards," (2015).

[55] R. Keith Sawyer, *Group Genius: The Creative Power of Collaboration* (New York: Basic Books, 2008).

[56] R. Keith Sawyer, *Creating Conversations: Improvisation in Everyday Discourse* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2001).

[57] R. Keith Sawyer, "The Interdisciplinary Study of Creativity in Performance," *Creativity Research Journal* 11, no. 1 (1998).

[58] R. Keith Sawyer, "Group Creativity: Musical Performance and Collaboration," *Psychology of Music* 34, no. 2 (2006).

[59] R. Keith Sawyer, "Creative Teaching: Collaborative Discussion as Disciplined Improvisation," *Educational Researcher* 33, no. 2 (2004).

[60] R. Keith Sawyer and Stacy DeZutter, "Distributed Creativity: How Collective Creations Emerge from Collaboration," *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* 3, no. 2 (2009).

[61] R. Keith Sawyer, "Improvisation and the Creative Process: Dewey, Collingwood, and the Aesthetics of Spontaneity," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 58, no. 2 (2000).

books about creativity,[62] writes chapters for books on collaboration,[63] and comments on the

creativity research of others.[64] The over two thousand citations by other researchers for just the

top three of Sawyer's research articles found on scholar.google.com demonstrate his position as

a primary researcher in the field.[65]

Sawyer's scholarly books include publications from Oxford University Press and

Cambridge University Press. A partial list of titles by this author demonstrates the range of his

competency:

- *Social Emergence: Societies as Complex Systems*[66]
- *Group Creativity: Music, Theater, Collaboration*[67]
- *Improvised Dialogues: Emergence and Creativity in Conversation*[68]
- *Pretend Play as Improvisation: Conversation in the Preschool Classroom*[69]

Most pertinent to this literature review is his book *Explaining Creativity: The Science of Human

Innovation.*[70] In the second edition of *Explaining Creativity* Sawyer includes helpful appendices,

including a creativity timeline, a selection of recommended creativity journals, and a listing of

influential books in creativity research. He reviews the research of others concerning creativity in

everyday life. He covers research that is specific to the domains of visual arts, writing, music,

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[62] R. Keith Sawyer, *Cambridge Handbook of the Learning Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); R. Keith Sawyer, *Structure and Improvisation in Creative Teaching* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[63] R. Keith Sawyer, "Emergence in Creativity and Development, " in *Creativity and Development*, ed. R. Keith Sawyer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 12-60.

[64] R. Keith Sawyer, "Improvisational Cultures: Collaborative Emergence and Creativity in Improvisation," *Mind, Culture, and Activity* 7, no. 3 (2000).

[65] "Scholar.google.com search," accessed May 13, 2016, https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&q=r.+keith+sawyer&btnG=&as_sdt=1%2C15&as_sdtp=.

[66] Robert Keith Sawyer, *Social Emergence: Societies as Complex Systems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[67] R. Keith Sawyer, *Group Creativity: Music, Theater, Collaboration* (Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates, 2003).

[68] R. Keith Sawyer, *Improvised Dialogues: Emergence and Creativity in Conversation* (Westport, CT: Ablex Pub., 2003).

[69] R. Keith Sawyer, *Pretend Play as Improvisation: Conversation in the Preschool Classroom* (Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1997).

[70] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*.

theater, and then the sciences. However, the bulk of the book integrates individualistic and sociocultural approaches to creativity.

Sawyer is a preeminent scholar in this field who combines many significant viewpoints in his revised edition of *Explaining Creativity*. In this book, Sawyer presents his Eight Stages of the Creative Process. I have adopted these stages to structure my literature review, which includes the work of many other significant scholars. Several other key researchers include multiple stages in their process models of creativity. Although these stages may be titled differently from Sawyer's summation, Sawyer synthesizes their most significant steps as presented in table 2.2

Table 2.2: Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process.

Sawyer's Stage	Simple Explanation	One Example of Supporting Research/Philosophy
1. Find and formulate the problem.	Problem solving requires problem finding. Recognize a good problem and refine the wording so that it can lead to creative solutions.	*Creative Problem Solving*: a process still being refined through qualitative study but initially built on the 1953 work of Alex Osborn.[71]
2. Acquire the knowledge relevant to the problem.	Combine mastery of existing information with significant practice of the given domain.	*Four Stages of Creativity:* proposed by cofounder of London School of Economics Graham Wallas and based on his own experience and review of the habits of polymaths.[72]
3. Gather a broad range of potentially related information.	Use your perception to notice new gaps as well as opportunities in the environment that are related to the problem.	*IDEAL Cycle*: a process approach to problem solving linked with research at Vanderbilt University.[73]
4. Take time off for incubation.	Take time away from the problem as Archimedes did, which led to his "Eureka!" moment.	*Creativity Classification System:* developed by prolific psychologist Robert Sternberg.[74]
5. Generate a large variety of ideas.	Free-associate hints and thoughts. Eliminate false assumptions and be open to "outside" suggestions.	*Possibility Thinking:* based on qualitative research in three early-childhood settings.[75]
6. Combine ideas in unexpected ways.	Understand that the brain works through refining iterations of unexpected combinations of existing ideas more often than a sudden single flash of insight.	*Creativity Training Programs:* quantitative meta-analysis of program evaluation efforts, based on seventy prior studies.[76]
7. Select the best ideas, applying relevant criteria.	Evaluate using a variety of criteria relative to the domain: Did someone else already do this? Is this interesting but trivial? Noteworthy or derivative? Resources required? Consequences for implementing?	*Synectics*: a problem-solving methodology developed in the 1950s and still being expanded through business coaching.[77]
8. Externalize the idea using materials and representations.	Take the preliminary vision and craft it into a complete product, often providing significant refinements during the process of making it.	*Innovation:* a case study of the design company IDEO, responsible for diverse items such as Apple's first mouse and the Steelcase's Leap chair.[78]

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[71] Scott G. Isaksen, K. Brian Dorval, and Donald J. Treffinger, *Creative Approaches to Problem Solving: A Framework for Change* (Williamsburg, NY: Creative Problem Solving Group–Buffalo, 2000).

[72] Wallas, *The Art of Thought*.

[73] IDEAL stands for the Identify, Define, Explore, Act, Look cycle. See John Bransford and Barry S. Stein, *The Ideal Problem Solver: A Guide for Improving Thinking, Learning, and Creativity* (New York: W.H. Freeman, 1984).

[74] Robert J. Sternberg, "Stalking the Elusive Creativity Quark: Towards a Comprehensive Theory of Creativity," in *New Directions in Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, ed. Leonid Dorfman, Colin Martindale, and Paul Locher (Amityville, NY: Baywood Publishing, 2006).

[75] Pamela Burnard et al., "Documenting 'Possibility Thinking': A Journey of Collaborative Enquiry," *International Journal of Early Years Education* 14, no. 3 (2006).

[76] Michael Mumford, Lyle Leritz, and Ginamarie Scott, "The Effectiveness of Creativity Training: A Quantitative Review," *Creativity Research Journal* 16, no. 4 (2004).

[77] William J. J. Gordon, *Synectics: The Development of Creative Capacity* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961).

[78] Tom Kelley and Jonathan Littman, *The Art of Innovation: Lessons in Creativity from IDEO, America's Leading Design Firm* (New York: Currency/Doubleday, 2001).

Many significant details from Sawyer's comprehensive study are not included in this very brief

summary. But he clarifies that

> the eight-stage model is a useful way of capturing all the cognitive processes involved in the creative act. The eight stages are domain-general; the creative process in all domains, from science to technological invention to fine art painting, involves these stages. But creativity rarely unfolds in a linear fashion. The mental processes associated with the eight stages can overlap, or cycle repeatedly, or sometimes appear in reverse order.[79]

Applying this to planning a choral concert means the process may actually start with any of the

stages and revisit them in any order. Textbook author and scholar Edgar Vinacke supports this

nonlinear understanding of the ordering of insights that result in a final creative work.[80] Sawyer

also used these steps to outline his book about creativity, *Zig Zag*, which was written for a lay

audience,[81] suggesting that documentation of scientific studies of creativity theory is not required

for successful implementation of these stages in creative acts.

These eight stages will structure the rest of this literature review. For each stage, the

presentation begins with support from other prominent creativity scholars related to Sawyer's

definition of that stage. Then an article or example about collaboration in any content area

amplifies that definition. Finally, an example of collaboration in the arts concludes each stage.

These artistic collaborations are drawn from more content areas than just choral research but they

demonstrate the use of the specific stage of creativity included by Sawyer. The research articles

can reveal specifics about the process of creativity and the methodology of teams that have

developed successful collaborative arts events. While the ethnographic nature of some of these

studies can limit generalizability, these specific case studies demonstrate that collaborative

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[79] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 138.

[80] W. Edgar Vinacke, *The Psychology of Thinking* (New York McGraw-Hill, 1974), 359.

[81] Sawyer, *Zig Zag: The Surprising Path to Greater Creativity*.

planning of interdisciplinary events exists in many physical locations and in a bewildering

variety of situations. In summary, each of the following sections follows this outline:

- Definition of the specific stage of creativity
- A collaboration example concerning the specific stage of creativity
- A collaborative planning example from the arts about the specific stage of creativity

All three provide depth to this literature review, linking choral programming with creativity and

collaboration research.

Stage 1: Find and Formulate the Problem

Definition: Find the Problem

Scholars who study the creative process agree that how someone **finds the problem**

affects their solution. Initially built on the 1953 work of Alex Osborn, Creative Problem Solving

calls this stage *framing problems*.[82] Solving problems first requires discovering, or locating, or

even uncovering problems. In this context the word *problem* does not have a negative

connotation. The word is synonymous to a puzzle or riddle that could be enjoyable to solve. As

part of the creative problem-solving process, stating a problem in a new way can sometimes

generate a new answer. In fact, studies suggest that the ability to take an ill-defined problem and

redefine it in terms of workable strategies for solutions is a key element of creativity.[83] Michael

Kirton, founder of the Occupational Research Centre, distinguishes between those who

find/define problems (innovators) and those who find solutions (adaptors).[84] Researchers Eileen

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[82] Isaksen, Dorval, and Treffinger, *Creative Approaches to Problem Solving: A Framework for Change*, 80.

[83] M. D. Mumford, "Where Have We Been, Where Are We Going? Taking Stock in Creativity Research," *Creativity Research Journal* 15, no. 2–3 (2003): 111.

[84] Michael J. Kirton, "Adaptors and Innovators: Problem-Solvers in Organizations," *Readings in Innovation, Greensborough, North Carolina: Centre for Creative Leadership* (1992): 47.

Jay and David Perkins would affirm that being a problem finder is the first step in succeeding as a problem solver.[85]

Collaboration Research: Find the Problem

Fred D'Ignazio, an early champion of the practice of authoring collaborative multimedia in the classroom in the 1980s (without MP3s or iMovie), modeled how to help people **find the problem**.[86] His workshops for teachers began with participants being immediately assigned to groups that brainstormed and created a curricular video production.[87] Without a designated resident expert, the team quickly learned to build confidence in one another, valuing each person's expertise. Because the workshop ended with each group presenting a collaborative multimedia project, they harnessed the power of deadlines to fuel their creativity. D'Ignazio asked them to create a curricular video production in one session with the resources at hand. Because D'Ignazio gave them enough parameters about this project, they were able to discover their specific curricular goal together. In this example, they found the problem when they selected their video's theme. Although the final product of a curricular video differs from a choral concert, his process freed the team to create in a manner that could be used by choral programming teams. Incidentally, his unofficial subtitle for his workshop, "Gee, I don't know— let's figure it out together," summarizes an openness to collectively defining problems.

Collaborative Planning Examples from the Arts: Find the Problem

Even though choral music was not utilized in the following events, these concerts display how creative thinkers asked new questions that ultimately led to new performance options. The original **find the problem** statement could have been something such as, "How do we give the

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[85] Eileen S. Jay and David N. Perkins, "Problem Finding: The Search for Mechanism," in *The Creativity Research Handbook*, ed. Mark A. Runco (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1997), 257.

[86] Gary Stager, "Where in the World Is Fred D'Ignazio?," http://stager.tv/blog/?p=335.

[87] Fred D'Ignazio, "Bringing the 1990s to the Classroom of Today," *The Phi Delta Kappan* 70, no. 1 (1988).

performer authority to select what notes to play in what rhythm and what order?" One solution could be demonstrated by Iannis Xenakis's work "Metastasis."[88] The problem could be revised to "How do we give the performer authority to select what is seen on-screen during the live music?" "Messa Di Voca"[89] offers an answer through real-time video animation on-screen that was generated from the changing locations of performers in the live concert. But what if a new problem finder asked, "How do we give the conductor the authority to select what notes to play and in what rhythm and in what order?" The response may be Earle Brown's "Available Forms 1"[90] and "Available Forms 2."[91] A final iteration of this kind of problem may be "How do we give this authority to the audience?" One answer is found in *No Clergy*,[92] in which music is generated using wireless networks through which the audience can affect the duration and pitch of notes. Another answer is given in *LiveScore*,[93] which uses different software than that used in *No Clergy* to allow audience control of real-time notation for the instrumentalists. These creative solutions model ways for us to understand how Sawyer's Stage 1 (**find the problem**) leads to new performance options. Even if inventive choral directors choose not to include these specific questions in their programming, the willingness to include this stage of finding the problem can result in greater creativity.

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[88] Iannis Xenakis, "Metastasis," (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1954).

[89] Golan Levin and Zachary Lieberman, "In-Situ Speech Visualisation in Real-Time Interactive Installation and Performance" (paper presented at the proceedings of the 3rd International Symposium on Non-photorealistic Animation and Rendering, Annecy Animation Festival, June 7–9, 2004).

[90] Earle Brown, "Available Forms 1: For Chamber Ensemble (18 Players)," (New York: Associated Music Publishers, 1962).

[91] Earle Brown, "Available Forms 2: For Large Orchestra, Four Hands," (New York: Associated Music, 1965).

[92] Kevin Baird, "Real-Time Generation of Music Notation Via Audience Interaction Using Python and Gnu Lilypond" (paper presented at the proceedings of the 2005 International Conference on New Interfaces for Musical Expression [NIME], Vancouver, May 26–28, 2005).

[93] G. Douglas Barrett and Michael Winter, "Livescore: Real-Time Notation in the Music of Harris Wulfson," *Contemporary Music Review* 29, no. 1 (2010).

Stage 2: Acquire the Knowledge Relevant to the Problem

Definition: Acquire the Knowledge

Graham Wallas, a cofounder of London School of Economics, studied his own experience of creativity and reviewed the habits of polymaths. He wrote *The Art of Thought*, which proposes four stages of creativity, including *preparation*,[94] which is linked with Sawyer's Stage 2 (**acquire the knowledge**). Although some creators prize spontaneity as the highest value, research suggests that much of creativity is predicated on acquiring the knowledge of both the craft and history of a particular domain. Researcher Vera John-Steiner calls this stage of creativity *apprenticeship*.[95] Most often an artist or a group of artists needs to gain facility in conventions and fluency in the mechanics before being able to combine existing elements in a new way. This is supported by the "ten-year rule," which suggests that lengthy apprenticeships are needed before mastering a particular domain. First discovered with expert telegraphers,[96] this has been confirmed in other domains.[97] Sawyer's Stage 2 (**acquire the knowledge**) is not domain-specific, but the actual knowledge required is specific to the area in which one is trying to be creative.

Collaboration Research: Acquire the Knowledge

Acquiring domain knowledge was critical to the creativity displayed in a series of concerts presented in the high-resolution digital planetarium belonging to the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Planetariums have a tradition of combining music and moving images, as seen in the over one hundred different *Vortex* concerts at the Morrison Planetarium in the late

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[94] Wallas, *The Art of Thought*, 80–82.

[95] Vera John-Steiner, *Notebooks of the Mind: Explorations of Thinking* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1985), 37–58.

[96] William L. Bryan and Noble Harter, "Studies on the Telegraphic Language: The Acquisition of a Hierarchy of Habits," *Psychological Review* 6 (1899): 358.

[97] Howard Gardner, *Creating Minds: An Anatomy of Creativity Seen through the Lives of Freud, Einstein, Picasso, Stravinsky, Eliot, Graham, and Gandhi* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 361.

1950s.[98] For the Denver concerts, composer Kenji Williams integrated live music to multimedia footage of the earth in the show *Gaia Journeys.*[99] Researchers analyzed how Williams and the planetarium team acquired necessary domain knowledge, such as how to track live music to existing photo-realistic virtual depictions, and how to spatialize audio output three dimensionally to immerse the listener in a multisensory virtual environment. Researchers also reviewed how knowledge from the domain of improvisation was included. Both the visual artist and the musician chose subtle differences during each concert that were performed *ad libitum*, a term referring to the performers' freedom to make performance changes at their pleasure. An important part of this process of creativity was the domain-specific knowledge of their content area that was gained before the project started. Choral programmers will benefit from a broad knowledge of choral music history, choral compositional technique, vocal pedagogy, and paradigms of concert flow.

A Collaborative Planning Example from the Arts: Acquire the Knowledge

Choirs are involved in the following arts research example of the **acquire the knowledge** stage. The NBC TV show called *Clash of the Choirs* partnered a choir with pop singers like Patti LaBelle. Conductor Steve Zegree served as choirmaster for singer Nick Lachey, whose choir won the competition. Zegree, an educator and published composer, provides extensive guidelines for choral programming in his book *The Wow Factor: How to Create It, Inspire It, and Achieve It.*[100] His book is mainly about how musical selections, overall length of performance, visual elements, and a balance of intellect and emotion can all work together to create memorable choral concerts.

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[98] Iotacenter, "Vortex Concerts," http://www.iotacenter.org/visualmusic/articles/moritz/Absolut/vortex.

[99] Ka C. Yu et al., "Gaia Journeys: A Museum-Based Immersive Performance Exploration of the Earth," *International Journal of Digital Earth* 2, no. 1 (2009).

[100] Steve Zegree, *The Wow Factor: How to Create It, Inspire It & Achieve It: A Comprehensive Guide for Performers* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2010).

In this book, when Zegree tells the story about how music was selected by each choir in the *Clash of the Choirs* competition, he specifically addresses Stage 2: **acquire the domain knowledge**. Even though most choirs performed popular songs associated with the pop singer, Zegree wanted a secret weapon for his choir. His understanding of the competitive domain provided the insight that singing something radically unexpected could help his choir win. Zegree claims his knowledge of the classical music domain provided a specific selection: in this case an arrangement of Rimsky-Korsakov's "Flight of the Bumblebee." Lachey trusted Zegree's investment in acquiring knowledge—years before the invitation to compete on NBC—to help the choir win the overall competition. Zegree's book provides this concrete example of the creative process principle of **acquire the knowledge** as demonstrated by choral programming choices.

Stage 3: Gather a Broad Range of Potentially Related Information

Definition: Gather Related Information

Scholar John Bransford and his colleagues in the 1970s helped form the cognitive understanding of psychology. They developed a five-part rubric for creativity, which they labeled the IDEAL Cycle. The *L* in that acronym stands for "look for the effects of your problem-solving strategies."[101] In other words, gather related information by being alert in profound ways to your task and surroundings. To be clear, Sawyer distinguishes **acquire knowledge** (domain-specific capability) from **gather information** (problem-specific content). Researchers Michele Mobley et al. show that the way people reorganize information influences the success of solving novel problems by allowing the need for additional information to emerge.[102] Part of creativity is noticing gaps in the current formulation of knowledge. Treating

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[101] IDEAL stands for the Identify, Define, Explore, Act, Look cycle as found in Bransford and Stein, *The Ideal Problem Solver*, 21–23.

[102] Michele I. Mobley, Lesli M. Doares, and Michael D. Mumford, "Process Analytic Models of Creative Capacities: Evidence for the Combination and Reorganization Process," *Creativity Research Journal* 5, no. 2 (1992).

these as opportunities instead of difficulties allows creativity to flourish.[103] Creative people are

better at using gaps and difficulties to propel them to gather related information.[104]

<center>*Collaboration Research: Gather Related Information*</center>

Digital artist George Legrady explores the collaborative making of art through

installations such as *Pockets Full of Memories* at Centre Pompidou, Paris. This project was

designed by a multinational interdisciplinary team. Visitors were encouraged to bring objects to

the museum where their objects would be digitally scanned. These digital photos were then

added to the exhibit. Legrady and researcher Brigitte Steinheider studied the methods that guided

this collaboration.[105] During the design timeline, the team resided in multiple countries and used

their far-flung locations to provide contributions to the creative task at hand. But to succeed,

members of the design team had to **gather additional related information** to overcome their

lack of familiarity with other disciplines. This was complicated by linguistic issues between

artists and scientists in the group. Finding information from both aesthetics and technology

provided the foundation for a truly unique collaboration.

Incidentally, the researchers also demonstrate the nonlinear nature of creativity by

discussing the difficulty of the participants in the **find the problem** stage (Sawyer's Stage 1)

throughout much of the design process. They noticed that the lack of an initial meeting of the full

team hindered completion because the team members did not develop a mutual understanding of

the project. The tight timeline between the award of the contract and the opening of the

installation aggravated this situation further. The problem's definition as well as the required

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[103] D. N. Perkins, *The Mind's Best Work* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 285.

[104] Colleen M. Seifert et al., "Demystification of Cognitive Insight: Opportunistic Assimilation and the Prepared-Mind Hypothesis," *Psychological Science* 17, no. 10 (1994): 119.

[105] Brigitte Steinheider and George Legrady, "Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Digital Media Arts: A Psychological Perspective on the Production Process," *Leonardo* 37, no. 4 (2004).

timeline both caused initial discomfort. However, this study shows that a team can overcome uncertainty through **gathering related information**, sometimes leading to unforeseen creativity.

A Collaborative Planning Example from the Arts: Gather Related Information

For most of this literature review, different situations for each subsection are being used. However, now let us continue using *Pockets Full of Memories*, which was further studied in the article "Perspectives on Collaborative Research and Education in Media Arts."[106] As his installations grew more complex, Legrady transformed from a solo artist to a leader of a team of artists. He explains that "implicit in such collaborative situations is the understanding that no individual can have all the necessary knowledge to fully realize a project."[107] Not only does the gathering of information <u>need not</u> be done by one individual, some projects are so complicated that they <u>cannot</u> be done by one individual. This admission gives permission for choral conductors to likewise acknowledge their limitations in collaboration. People programming choral concerts can bridge their lack of knowledge of other domains represented on their team through proactively enabling team members gifted in precisely those areas. While it can be tempting to act as if the team leader should have mastered all the various domains of knowledge represented on the team, this research suggests that the **gathering of related information** can be a team activity.

Stage 4: Take Time Off for Incubation

Definition: Incubation

Psychologist Robert Sternberg developed a taxonomy of creativity called the Creativity Classification System. It includes *redefine problems*, which is linked to Sawyer's Stage 1 (**find the problem**). Sternberg also included *know the domain*, which is equivalent to Sawyer's Stage

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[106] George Legrady, "Perspectives on Collaborative Research and Education in Media Arts," *Leonardo* 39, no. 3 (2006).

[107] Legrady, "Perspectives on Collaborative Research," 215.

2 (**acquire the knowledge**). Sternberg added several other activities, including *take time off*.[108]

This relates to Sawyer's Stage 4 (**incubation**), where changing tasks can let ideas incubate and in turn can result in a greater number of possible solutions being generated. Sawyer summarizes the stage this way: "Once you've acquired the relevant knowledge, and some amount of apparently unrelated information, the unconscious mind will process and associate that information in unpredictable and surprising ways."[109] Perhaps it was time away that led to the "Eureka!" moment apocryphally ascribed to Archimedes. Studies suggest incubation gives one a chance to stop thinking about the wrong solution[110] or gives time for the mind to gradually activate related concepts.[111] Understanding incubation by linking it with a biological cycle like hibernation may prove helpful.[112]

(Non)Collaboration Research: Incubation

Although no research was uncovered about groups being interrupted while completing a task, the role of incubation on creativity has been researched concerning individuals. Review of the literature shows some correlations between momentarily stopping work on a task and ultimately solving the problems presented by the task. To study this possible connection, many researchers have used some version of a Remote Associates Test (RAT), which is based on the premise that combining two ideas in a new way is creative. Researcher Andrew Patrick compared results of continuous RAT testing versus various kinds of interruptions to the RAT testing. He found that stopping work on the problem (interruptions) did help high-ability

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[108] Sternberg, "Stalking the Elusive Creativity Quark."

[109] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 88.

[110] Nicholas Kohn and Steven M. Smith, "Partly Versus Completely out of Your Mind: Effects of Incubation and Distraction on Resolving Fixation," *The Journal of Creative Behavior* 43, no. 2 (2009).

[111] Ut Na Sio and Elisabeth Rudowicz, "The Role of an Incubation Period in Creative Problem Solving," *Creativity Research Journal* 19, no. 2 (2007).

[112] Shauna Paytner, "Conscious Creativity: The Art of Incubation," shaunapaynter.myefolio.com, http://shaunapaynter.myefolio.com/Uploads/Conscious%20Creativity.pdf, accessed July 19. 2016, 8.

subjects.[113] Professors Flora Beeftink et al. used RAT tests to conclude that when people could switch tasks at will, they solved more problems with fewer impasses than when continuous work or the switching of tasks was imposed on them.[114] Finally, Donald Wells tested the link between the productivity of college professors (defined as total number of publications in a set time frame) and those professors who deliberately delayed finishing a manuscript to allow incubation time. He found a positive correlation between those who purposefully postponed and those who were most productive.[115] Although these studies are not focused on groups taking breaks, they suggest that programming teams can build **incubation** into the schedule to allow for its positive benefits on creativity.

Collaborative Planning Examples from the Arts: Incubation

The Bridges Program of the Minnesota Chorale thrives on collaborative planning of choral concerts. Although their work models much more than only the power of **incubation**, Minnesota Chorale director Kathy Romey explains how those creating and rehearsing concerts can build waiting periods into their work with community organizations.[116] For over twenty years, the Chorale has developed a multi-month-long theme with guest artists, such as a partnership with African-American inner-city church choirs. During this specific partnership, weekly study sessions focused on sacred African-American songs, culminating in a concert called "Lift Every Voice" that included audience participation. The partnerships are distinguished by the expectation that both guests and Chorale members will mutually teach and learn, which Romey calls *in-reach*.

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[113] Andrew S. Patrick, "The Role of Ability in Creative 'Incubation,'" *Personality and Individual Differences* 7, no. 2 (1986).

[114] Flora Beeftink, Wendelien Van Eerde, and Christel G. Rutte, "The Effect of Interruptions and Breaks on Insight and Impasses: Do You Need a Break Right Now?," *Creativity Research Journal* 20, no. 4 (2008): 362.

[115] Donald H. Wells, "Forced Incubation," *Creativity Research Journal* 9, no. 4 (1996).

[116] Romey, Sweet, and Wanyama, "Building Bridges: Choruses Engaging Communities," 78-82.

This two-way communication and learning demonstrates collaboration at the deepest levels. The consistent approach of the Bridges Program through multiple seasons has included other community partners such as Habitat for Humanity and a Health and Wellness Center influenced by Eastern disciplines of body and mind.[117] I believe that part of the success of the Bridges Program was the multiple rehearsal cycle that allowed genuine relationships to develop. Rather than only one rehearsal, the time was purposefully invested through many rehearsals together. Meeting weekly for several months resulted in a regular coming together and then being apart before coming together again. This ensured **incubation** was part of the creative cycle.

Stage 5: Generate a Large Variety of Ideas

Definition: Generate Ideas

Research suggests that those hoping to be creative should not only incubate, but should add conscious attention to the problem and generate a large variety of ideas. Cambridge professor Pamela Burnand and colleagues conducted qualitative research in three early childhood settings and summarized their findings in a rubric they call Possibility Thinking. Their multistage model includes *being imaginative*: that is, asking "what if" questions in order to **generate ideas** and scenarios.[118] Researchers DeYong, Flanders, and Peterson found that generating potential avenues to explore requires both divergent and convergent thinking.[119] They also discuss the strategy of *breaking frame*, which is putting aside assumptions about the problem that actually inhibit finding solutions. Schooler and Melcher suggest that generating ideas may include

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[117] Mnchorale.org/pro-bridges, "The Bridges Program of the Minnesota Chorale," mnchorale.org/pro-bridges.htm.

[118] Burnard et al., "Documenting 'Possibility Thinking': A Journey of Collaborative Enquiry."

[119] Colin G. DeYoung, Joseph L. Flanders, and Jordan B. Peterson, "Cognitive Abilities Involved in Insight Problem Solving: An Individual Differences Model," *Creativity Research Journal* 20, no. 3 (2008).

restructuring the problem to overcome impasses.[120] Additional related research discusses the

difficulty of generating ideas with participants working with differing domain-specific

perspectives. For example, theoreticians Biranda Ford and John Sloboda consider how the

differences between rehearsal practices of actors versus musicians affect collaboration.[121] This

suggests that understanding domain-specific content may be critical to the success of

interdisciplinary teams generating ideas. Ideas can be generated through various cognitive

thinking styles and discipline-unique terminology.

<div align="center">Collaboration Research: Generate Ideas</div>

Likoebe Maruping and Massimo Magni identify factors that affect how teams interact

with new technology.[122] Their research concludes that **generating ideas** in a culture of inquiry

drives innovation. Their field study of 56 work teams with 268 employees focuses on how teams

of people explore new technology. While this is a very specific method of generating new ideas,

their research suggests ways that team interactions can lead to innovative concepts. They found

that learning-focused teams explore new ideas more effectively than empowerment-centered

teams. Empowerment encourages individual team members to perform based on managing

oneself. A learning-focused climate is marked by members who use questions and dialogue to

manage the risk-taking required to generate new ideas. These researchers also offer additional

insights into the effect that gender roles produce in teams. Successfully **generating ideas** in

teams depends on practicing collaborative skills, such as developing a learning culture. Those

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[120] Jonathan Schooler and Joseph Melcher, "The Ineffability of Insight," in *The Creative Cognition Approach*, ed. Steven M. Smith, Thomas B. Ward, and Ronald A. Finke (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 118.

[121] Biranda Ford and John Sloboda, "Learning from Artistic and Pedagogical Differences between Musicians' and Actors' Traditions through Collaboratative Processes," in *Collaborative Learning in Higher Music Education*, ed. Helena Gaunt and Heidi Westerlund (Burlington, VT; Farham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2013).

[122] Likoebe M. Maruping and Massimo Magni, "What's the Weather Like? The Effect of Team Learning Climate, Empowerment Climate, and Gender on Individuals' Technology Exploration and Use," *Journal of Management Information Systems* 29, no. 1 (2012).

seeking to collaboratively program choral concerts can invest in understanding how their team interactions either stifle or enable the generation of ideas.

A Collaborative Planning Example from the Arts: Generate Ideas

Composer and teacher Diana Blom provides an autoethnography of a two-day improvisatory collaboration between collegiate students enrolled in the music, dance, and theater degree programs at the University of Western Sydney, Australia.[123] The 53 students were gathered into interdisciplinary groups and tasked to present a ten-to-fifteen-minute improvisation to peers. One music professor, one theater professor, and two dance professors shepherded the teams through exercises and student team development that resulted in a final performance of singing, dancing, and drama. This study reflects on ways that these students **generated ideas**. Data was collected by students filling out a written questionnaire designed to capture what communication facilitated the generation of concepts. Additional data collection focused on the role of the individual in the collaborative process. A recursive analytical process correlated the data that had been coded from the student statements. Blom asserts that the students benefited from laying a foundation of the differences and similarities of existing knowledge in each content area. Students also reflected on their differing experiences of **generating ideas** when led by an acknowledged leader or when each participant helped guide the process. These results suggest that teams generating ideas may benefit from preliminary discussions about how decisions will be made (by hierarchy or collaboration).

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[123] Diana Blom, "Inside the Collaborative Inter-Arts Improvisatory Process: Tertiary Music Students' Perspectives," *Psychology of Music* 40, no. 6 (2012).

Stage 6: Combine Ideas in Unexpected Ways

Definition: Combine Ideas

Researchers Ginamarie Scott, Lyle Leritz, and Michael Mumford conducted a qualitative meta-analysis of seventy prior studies about training programs on creativity.[124] They found more successful programs focused on at least seven stages of creativity, including *problem finding*, *information gathering*, and *idea generation*. One of the strongest unique contributions to effective training they called *conceptual combination*. This matches Sawyer's Stage 6 (**combine ideas**) so that unexpected combinations of existing ideas expand creativity. Combinations can be linked through linguistic means such as analogies[125] or visual imagery.[126] A nonmusical example of an analogy-based solution is how the design of the clothing fastener Velcro was developed from noticing the same mechanism that causes a burr to be stuck in a dog's fur.[127]

While working on concert flow, some choral programmers may find solutions to design problems through relying on related problems (analogies). While studying how people solve problems visually, researcher Ronald Finke found that people were most creative when they were given a task, combined ideas, and then had to reinterpret their own combinations based on a revised statement of the problem.[128] This final stage of Finke's study sounds like Sawyer's Stage 1 (**find the problem**). Counterintuitively, combining ideas and then finding the problem produced the most creative ideas as assessed through Finke's study. This finding supports the idea that Sawyer's Eight Stages can furnish effective results when approached in any order.

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[124] Mumford, Leritz, and Scott, "The Effectiveness of Creativity Training," 16.

[125] Keith James Holyoak and Paul Thagard, *Mental Leaps: Analogy in Creative Thought* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 186–88.

[126] Ronald A. Finke, *Creative Imagery: Discoveries and Inventions in Visualization* (Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1990).

[127] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 120.

[128] Finke, *Creative Imagery: Discoveries and Inventions in Visualization*, 83–108.

Choral programmers can build time into their planning process to allow for surprising permutations of existing ideas to refine the initially proposed concert design.

Collaboration Research: Combine Ideas

Using data from a three-year study of 197 large US-based companies, Peter Koen et al. focused on the so-called *fuzzy front end*, defined as the unpredictable beginning part of new product development.[129] They found that 29 percent of the variance in front-end performance for incremental and radical innovation was based on *opportunity identification and analysis*, *idea enrichment*, and *concept definition*. Their term *idea enrichment* describes Sawyer Stage 6 (**combine ideas**). The researchers measured ways that business units shared, captured, and assessed ideas. Often this included a specific focus on the connections between research/development and the production sides of a company. If these connections were strengthened through specific structures in the company, collaboration was enabled.

Unfortunately, the structures of some companies actually limited the needed communication between interested parties. It was not enough for research and development to generate ideas; they found that production staff needed to participate in the process of **combining ideas** for successful implementation. Although businesses focus on products and services they can sell, the researchers' description of the *fuzzy front end* process could be used to describe the **combining ideas** stage of collaboratively developing a choral concert. Understanding how particular structures can either aid or ruin the process should help choral programmers enable the combining of ideas into the process of concert planning.

A Collaborative Planning Example from the Arts: Combine Ideas

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[129] Peter A. Koen, Heidi M. J. Bertels, and Elko J. Kleinschmidt, "Managing the Front End of Innovation–Part 2," *Research Technology Management* 57, no. 3 (2014).

Flautist Renée Bond authored an autoethnographic study focused on five American works written for flute and dance.[130] This case study discusses combining ideas through collaboration. She explains how dialogue between the dancer and the flautist led them to **combine ideas** about costuming. Additional analysis focuses on how the musician and dancer unified their ideas about tempo, rhythm, and dynamics. This study demonstrates how dance and music diverge in use of notation versus oral instruction to train. Dance and music also have distinct assumptions about how space will be used in performance. These differences require deeper communication skills and rehearsal strategies in order for the collaborators to **combine ideas** in a way that reach a shared vision. Since dancers often rehearse and perform to recorded music, new skills may be required by both musicians and dancers to successfully enjoy the subtleties of performing live. In particular, "if the music is too fast or too slow, it becomes apparent physically in the dance."[131] Bond also gives specific examples of how either the musicians or dancers changed their interpretation to allow ideas to combine. She entitled her closing section "Fundamental Elements of the Collaborative Process Interpreting Music for Dance, a Performance Guide." Choral conductors working for the first time with a dancer or choreographer (particularly outside a Broadway musical setting) should find this concise rubric particularly helpful when negotiating the combination of ideas.

Stage 7: Select the Best Ideas, Applying Relevant Criteria

Definition: Select Ideas

Generating a large variety of ideas and then combining ideas in unexpected ways can result in a plethora of possibilities. Sorting through these to find effective solutions is an essential part of the creative process. Synectics, a problem-solving methodology developed in the 1950s,

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[130] Renée Ellen Bond, "Reflections on the Collaborative Process in Five Contemporary Works for Flute and Dance" (doctoral dissertation, University of Arizona, 2001), ProQuest (304684581).

[131] Bond, "Reflections on the Collaborative Process," 46.

speaks of selecting an elegant solution.[132] This relates to Sawyer's stage **select the best ideas**, which requires a grasp of the relevant criteria that will guide participants to choose the most effective solution from the many possible choices. Researchers Gary Frankwick et al. studied the decision-making processes concerning a Fortune 500 company's strategic choices.[133] Their longitudinal study design included collecting data at three distinct times. They found that **selecting the best idea** may itself be a creative task in which selection melds with reshaping the idea to safeguard eventual adoption. Devin Lonergan et al. studied how 148 undergraduates chose the best ideas of advertising campaigns to see if the students' selection of ideas is a creative act.[134] The researchers found that the process consists of forecasting, appraisal, and revision, which improved the design to make it more successful.

Collaboration Research: Select Ideas

Educators Richard West and Michael Hannafin used several master's-level studio design courses to research how students participate in a community of innovation.[135] Across the course of a semester, thirty-two students all participated in weekly large group sessions that then broke into three separate groups focused on different skills. Classroom requirements included peer critiques, informal and formal interactions, reports on required mentoring relationships, and project demonstrations. Data collection was limited to four students chosen as specific case studies whose responses were coded according to an evaluation rubric. The most commonly coded principle critical to the success of the participant's design within the studio community was *collaboration*. The researchers included further analysis about *learning through critiquing*,

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[132] Gordon, *Synectics: The Development of Creative Capacity*, 12.

[133] Gary L. Frankwick, Beth A. Walker, and James C. Ward, "Belief Structures in Conflict—Mapping a Strategic Marketing Decision," *Journal of Business Research* 31, no. 2–3 (1994).

[134] Devin Lonergan, Ginamarie Scott, and Michael Mumford, "Evaluative Aspects of Creative Thought: Effects of Appraisal and Revision Standards," *Creativity Research Journal* 16, no. 2 (2004).

[135] Richard E. West and Michael J. Hannafin, "Learning to Design Collaboratively: Participation of Student Designers in a Community of Innovation," *Instructional Science* 39, no. 6 (2011).

which relates to Sawyer's Stage 7 (**select the best ideas**). They found that students gained

insight about possible improvements to projects when tasked with selecting the best idea. This

validates the research of Franwick et al. that claims that selecting is a creative task.[136]

Furthermore, West and Hannafin gave specific examples, such as how one student selected what

she initially thought was the best idea but through collaborative work revised the entire template

for that project. This resulted in a stronger submission. Collaborating to select the best idea

provides space for positive modification of ideas even through the selection process.

<p align="center">*A Collaborative Planning Example from the Arts: Select Ideas*</p>

Carol Reed-Jones, a music educator and author of children's books, presents an

autoethnographic study of a collaborative concert that included choral music.[137] The study

examines a live performance of avant-garde works in theater, dance, and choral and instrumental

music. The producers sought to have the audience engage with the question "What makes

something art?" The production team selected the best ideas based on providing ways for the

audience to interpret this art. A one-person Greek chorus that appeared and disappeared in

various locations with varying lengths of monologues provided continuity to the evening. Later

informal discussion revealed that the audience found this staging device effective.

Supplementary criteria for **selecting the best ideas** included pacing and flow. Early in the

collaboration process, the faculty resolved to feature *Poeme Symphonique* by György Ligeti

(1923–2006) with its one hundred metronomes as a central way to address their key

programming question of "What makes something art?" As the team discussed the pacing of the

evening, they decided something needed to happen before the composition by Ligeti. They

selected the choral piece entitled "FOUR2" by John Cage (1912–1992) and choreographed it for

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[136] Frankwick, Walker, and Ward, "Belief Structures in Conflict."

[137] Carol Reed-Jones, "But Is It Art? A Community College Collaborates to Produce an Evening of Avant-Garde," *Journal of Performing Arts Leadership in Higher Education* 4 (2013).

this performance. This choice led to a discussion of how to meaningfully set dance to an aleatoric (chance) musical composition. A composer-approved recording facilitated the dance rehearsals, but ultimately the production team solved this dilemma by having the movements of the dancers cue the next choreography instead of relying on auditory cues.

Another example from this performance of **selecting the best ideas** is how the performance of the choral work *Miniwanka* by Murray Schafer (b. 1932) included the score on-screen to help the audience see the graphic notation for the various choral and vocal effects. The article summary included how students reported that they most enjoyed performing *Eyze Schleg!* from *Five Hebrew Love Songs* by Eric Whitacre (b. 1970). Participants' perceptions can be useful in evaluating the best ideas to influence future programming choices. **Selecting the best ideas** requires domain-specific criteria that may not initially have a clear hierarchy of significance. Collaboration can help choral programmers discern an appropriate order of evaluation criteria for a given concert.

Stage 8: Externalize the Idea Using Materials and Representations

Definition: Externalize Ideas

The last stage discussed by Sawyer is using materials and representations to **externalize the idea**. He clarifies that "creativity isn't just having an idea; creative ideas emerge, develop, and transform as they are expressed in the world."[138] Stephen Sondheim (b. 1930) summed this up in *Sunday in the Park with George* by saying, "Having just a vision's no solution, everything depends on execution."[139] The design company IDEO, responsible for such diverse items as Apple's first mouse and Steelcase's Leap chair, calls this *rapid prototyping*. Early in the process, the making of an actual physical object that will go through multiple iterations enables

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[138] Sawyer, *Zig Zag: The Surprising Path to Greater Creativity*, 90.

[139] Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine, *Sunday in the Park with George: A Musical* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1986).

developers to **select the best idea**.[140] The meaning of rapid prototyping is linked with Sawyer's

stage of externalizing ideas. This stage is part of the nonlinear work of creativity and should not

be thought of as the last stage to be done. Other evidence of externalizing ideas happening early

in the process is described in *Creative Cognition: Theory, Research, and Applications*. Authors

Ronald Finke et al. discuss "pre-inventive forms" as a kind of prototype that can be interpreted in

different ways, leading to a more clearly defined problem-finding stage.[141] For choral

programmers, externalizing the idea often involves hearing the entire concert program in order to

find the parts that need revision based on flow and other considerations.

<div align="center">

Collaboration Research: Externalize Ideas

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Jason Freeman (b. 1977) and Mark Godfrey composed *Flock* (2007) for saxophone

quartet, dancers, audience participation, electronic sound, and video in order to blur the

distinction between composers, performers, and audience members.[142] During live performance

the video animation seen on-screen depended on input from the audience and performers. This

input was collected using motion-capture software that scanned the changing physical locations

of performers and audience members. The audience input not only influenced screen content, but

also was used to generate musical notation for the real-time musical score used by the

instrumentalists. Thus, even though the musicians created the pitches, the audience influenced

the music being improvised. Presented nine times total, early performances produced data from

externalized ideas that ultimately refined the later performances. For example, selected

performers were tasked with guiding the audience's input that helped create the video and score

content. The actual actions of these performers changed from early performances to later

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[140] Kelley and Littman, *The Art of Innovation,* 101-114.

[141] Ronald A. Finke, Thomas B. Ward, and Steven M. Smith, *Creative Cognition: Theory, Research, and Applications* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 75–86.

[142] Jason Freeman and Mark Godfrey, "Creative Collaboration between Audiences and Musicians in Flock," *Digital Creativity* 21, no. 2 (2010).

performances, culminating in a cheerleader-like job that is substantially different from the roles of many performing artists. The performers' refined activities helped the audience understand how the audience could collaborate in this interactive setting.

For those designing collaborative choral concerts, the findings of Freeman and Godfrey are worth remembering. In particular, when directing audience participation proactively, programmers can set audience expectations through pre-concert dialogue and guide the audience's actions and position through gifted prompters (dancers, in this case). These insights were discovered through **externalizing ideas** in early performances and taking the time to refine the later concerts based on those insights.

A Collaborative Planning Example from the Arts: Externalize Ideas

Musical theater often has a process of read-throughs, workshop performances of works being developed, out-of-town productions, and previews prior to opening night. This sequence clearly exemplifies the creative importance of **externalizing ideas** as a means of refining them. The practices of composer, lyricist, and performer Lin-Manuel Miranda (b. 1980) offer additional interesting insights into the role of externalizing ideas when developing musical theater. Miranda, composer of the Tony-Award-winning *In the Heights*, presented a first iteration of the opening song to his current hit musical *Hamilton* as a rap at a White House performance in 2008. This presentation clearly externalized some of his musical ideas that resulted in *Hamilton*, offering a venue to explore the viability of this creative project. The YouTube video of this White House performance has over 1.5 million views,[143] a sign that a rap musical about Alexander Hamilton could be sustainable. Miranda was influenced by the biography of Hamilton

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[143] The White House, "Lin-Manuel Miranda Performs at the White House Poetry Jam," accessed May 13, 2016, https://youtu.be/WNFf7nMIGnE?list=PLTG2l-x20yqtJ0XMtYfZKul8jkuoKjfnv.

written by Ron Chernow, who became one of his collaborators for the musical. It took six years

to bring the project to Broadway. Miranda explains,

> The fun for me in collaboration is, one, working with other people just makes you
> smarter, that's proven. And this is not a singular art form—it's 12 art forms smashed
> together. We elevate each other. And two, it's enormously gratifying because you can
> build things so much bigger than yourself.[144]

Reviewer Jeff MacGregor summarizes it this way: "Miranda's genius lies in his willingness not

to *behave* like a genius—an outlier, a singularity—but rather to dissolve himself into the group,

the collective in which ideas and improvements are argued on their merits."[145] In fact Miranda

calls his creative team "the cabinet," and they worked with him on both of his Broadway

musicals. Whether first externalizing the ideas for a Broadway musical on YouTube, or working

through the collaborative sequence of getting a musical to Broadway, Miranda's example

embodies Sawyer's principle. This offers much to those people learning to program choral

concerts concerning the investment in **externalizing ideas** before accepting the final product.

As a side note, many of the illustrations used in this literature review could actually

exemplify one of the other stages. This fact demonstrates the significant overlap between the

stages. The processes of creativity may seem mystifying to participants, but using Sawyer's

stages can help teams frame their discussions on how to succeed. Realizing the nonlinear nature

of the stages provides insight into the untidiness of the categories.

Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process provides a useful way to group a review of

literature about creativity. Scholarly articles can help elucidate each of the stages of creativity.

Case studies and other research from the subfield of collaboration provide practical examples of

how groups model the core concepts. Sawyer carefully crafted these Eight Stages not to depend

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[144] Jeff Maggregor, "The Maestro," *Smithsonian* 46, no. 8 (2015): 84.

[145] Maggregor, "The Maestro," 86.

on specific information from particular domains of learning. But research and analysis drawn from examples of art events connect Sawyer's general stages to a specific realm of artistic collaborations.

Conclusions from the Literature Review

Choral programmers ought to glean principles from historical and contemporary examples about the selection and pacing of concert literature. The art of choral programming should reveal treasures from the rich repertoire that can be arranged in different patterns, several of which have historical precedents. Scholars have written about the types of concert flow, yet scholarly review of the mechanics of creating programming is limited. This gap in the literature can be addressed through a series of prompts that make explicit the kinds of questions to be addressed in programming a choral concert.

Understanding the process of choral programming as a subset of the study of creativity provides access to nonmusical sources that can benefit the choral programmer. Research about creativity provides methods to understand how to encourage new thinking and doing in the realm of programming. Few studies directly address the process of planning of choral concerts. Furthermore, scholarly investigation about collaboration could guide programming teams concerning the influence of sociocultural factors on a creative undertaking. But the scholarly literature has few case studies specifically about how choral concerts are produced by teams. Based on interviews and assessments from consultations in K–12 educational settings, Jay Dee and Alan Henkin claim that "teachers grow so accustomed to working on their own that often it is difficult for them to imagine the possibilities of collaboration."[146] However, choral programmers can apply the research behind Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process to the

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[146] Jay R. Dee and Alan B. Henkin, *Smart School Teams: Strengthening Skills for Collaboration* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001), 2.

practice of collaborative planning of choral programming to overcome the limitations of working

alone. A written guide of prompts is contained within this dissertation (appendix A) and is

designed to offer prompts to aid in applying creativity research to the choral programming

process. Annotations to this guide aim to benefit both novices and veterans.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Group singing has been part of many cultures throughout human history.[1] Although the intersection between choral music and contemporary society continues to fluctuate, the 2009 study published by Chorus America claims that more choristers currently participate in choirs in the United States than at any other time measured.[2] This positive trend in choral music could be strengthened by developing creative programming that retains current involvement and builds future participation.

Although choral programming for a particular concert can be developed by a group of people or by a single person, this dissertation focuses on people programming concerts as a group activity. Here the term *collaboration* means the working together of people in teams. Descriptions of choral music, when combined with other art forms such as dance, will be referred to as *choral music integrated with other arts*.

Statement of Problem

Numerous scholars have published studies about the fields of collaboration and creativity. R. Keith Sawyer's summary alone includes over 1300 sources.[3] However, almost no creativity research is applied specifically to programming choral music. Certainly no known literature provides a written guide for the process of collaboratively planning choral concerts. Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process provides a robust foundation for a useful structure to direct teams programming choral concerts. Rather than ascribing programming choices solely to intuition, the written guide presented in this dissertation can provide scaffolding for choral

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[1] John Potter and Neil Sorrell, *A History of Singing* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[2] Chorusamerica.org, "The Chorus Impact Study: How Children, Adults, and Communities Benefit from Choruses," https://www.chorusamerica.org/publications/research-reports/chorus-impact-study.

[3] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*.

programmers to aid in their goal of creating choral experiences that enchant performers and audience alike.

A vibrant connection can be forged between audience and performers, helping ensembles to be financially secure and audiences to be engaged. Investment in programming—that is, selecting compositions, developing community partnerships, finding the best flow of elements, and implementing these concepts well—has the potential to position choral music to be a gathering place for positive change in our world, as demonstrated by the community-building work by the Minnesota Chorale discussed in chapter 1.[4] While some directors intuitively use creativity in the process of concert programming, existing research about both creativity and collaboration has been applied in this annotated guide to help collaborators explicitly develop or strengthen the skills of effective programming.

Diverse sources suggest best practices on how to influence the attitudes and actions of those involved in various forms of creativity. Some of that research specifically addresses musicians. But limited sources have researched the impacts of creativity and collaboration on the process of programming musical concerts. Furthermore, I believe that the distinctive aspects of choral music offer specific opportunities to focus on how planning events with text differs from programming purely instrumental concerts. Limited implementation of the process of choral programming tends to lead to undifferentiated concerts. Repeating uninteresting programming offers little opportunity to expand the current influence of choral arts in our society. However, as researcher Kristy Juliano suggests, choral concerts can "rise above the usual and expected path

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[4] Romey, Sweet, and Wanyama, "Building Bridges: Choruses Engaging Communities."

of vision, technique, and programming to a heightened level of music-centered, student-driven [i.e., performer-driven], and audience-engaging experiences."[5]

Rationale for Dissertation

This dissertation presents and describes a written guide of prompts for teams of people who are programming choral performance events. Including all of Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process in such a guide integrates the contributions of many leading creativity scholars. There is a need for clear application to choral programming of these stages, which are: finding the problem, acquiring the knowledge, gathering related information, waiting for incubation, generating ideas, combining ideas, selecting the best idea, and externalizing ideas.

There is a lack of existing integration between the needs of choral programmers and resources that could be provided by current creativity and collaboration research. First, there are limited research resources focused on the product of choral programming. While some researchers have studied the product of concert programming, the dearth of scholarly work focused on historical and contemporary choral programming reveals a gap. Second, the lack of articles and other written resources focused on the process of programming choral concerts suggests that attention to the best practices of those generating creativity could be beneficial. This dissertation provides new scholarly work about both the process and the product of choral programming.

The annotated guide central to this dissertation provides prompts and proposes actions that can aid those seeking to transition from solo programming to collaborative programming. The guide can also help those just beginning to design choral concert experiences. In the choral realm, with the need for advocacy both in education and funding —in addition to the

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[5] Kristy Lynn Juliano, "Facilitating Transformative Music Experiences: A Whole Hearted Approach for Choral Leaders" (master's thesis, California State University, 2014), 5.

requirements of actually making choral music—collaborative programming could seem like just one more item on an exhausting to-do list. However, this guide could be enough of an invitation for practitioners to grow in their skills.

Statement of Purpose

If the choral arts are to significantly participate in positively impacting society, then we must work to reverse our culture's marginalization of live performances as shown in the analyses by Cameron[6] and Dexter.[7] Creative programming may be one way to build audiences for live choral performances. The annotations of chapter 4 and the two-page "Guide for Collaborative Planning of Choral Concerts Based on Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process" (appendix A) are designed to assist current and future choral programmers in an effective collaborative planning process. Each stage of the written guide is based on a research-based principle that is applied specifically to choral programming. Further explanation of each stage includes illustrations drawn from actual examples. The annotations include examples of how current practitioners of this craft intuitively or proactively use creativity theory in the process of programming choral concerts. Research about creativity and collaboration is applied specifically to the process of programming choral concerts, yielding a written guide that can be used by new and experienced practitioners.

As an aside, some of the stories used to illustrate this guide include teams that develop concerts in which choirs are supplemented with at least one other art form such as dance, set design, and/or the visual arts. However, the guide provides general instructions applicable to both concerts of only choral music and concerts with choral music integrated with other art forms. Whether with or without other art forms, this guide can empower collaborative planning

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[6] Cameron, "A New Era for Performing Arts."

[7] Dexter, "Making Music Matter."

of choral concerts that bridge the gap between the iPod generation and their perceptions of the established choral canon.

Research Questions

The primary research questions that influenced the design of the annotated guide can be categorized as follows:

- *Current Research.* Do existing studies of collaborative planning of art include examples of the principles behind any of Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process? How could these studies inform a guide utilized by choral programmers working collaboratively?

- *Current Practice.* Are there practical examples of how practitioners of choral programming already use the principles behind any of Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process, even if they don't identify them as such? How could these examples illustrate a guide utilized by choral programmers working collaboratively?

- *Developing the Written Guide.* How can these stages and best practices be summarized in a helpful guide to direct programmers of choral concerts? What practical applications could shepherd implementation of this guide?

Overview of Supplemental Research Design to be Utilized

Scholarly research was consulted and included when relevant and available. However, not all illustrations for the applications and recommendations for using the written guide were drawn from peer-reviewed articles and influential books. Illustrations from the author's experience as well as anecdotal remarks gathered from a variety of choirs provided additional depth to the annotations of the written guide. This supplemental information should not be construed as qualitative evidence for the generalizability of this written guide. It is included to provide context for understanding a given prompt in the written guide. Indeed, the eventual need for qualitative evaluation of these prompts is clear. However, this guide merely articulates how Sawyer's stages could be applied to the specific domain of collaboratively planning choral

concerts. Now that this guide has been constructed, additional scholarship could test the validity of its application.

The annotations to the guide include illustrative stories featuring current practitioners who work with a variety of programming teams associated with choral performance groups. These teams work with community choirs, collegiate choirs, or religious choirs. These practitioners were selected based on the relevance of their activities and availability to the author.

The reflections of current practitioners about their programming experience in light of Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process help the annotations of the guide reflect a broader field of experience. Discussions with current practitioners were held with the approval of the Ball State University Institutional Review Board.

Institutional Review Board Approval

The Ball State University Institutional Review Board approval requires the researcher to review ethical considerations concerning research involving humans. The subject matter of this study precluded the study causing physical danger or mental/emotional harm on participants. This study sought to add knowledge about how creativity works through credible research derived through ethical behavior. Ethical considerations included the ideas of honesty, beneficence, and accurate disclosure. Honesty in research design means information was not altered or suppressed to prove a presupposed point. Beneficent design sought to avoid doing harm to groups and individuals whether through fault finding, degrading thoughts and feelings, or generating conflict. Participants were truthfully given information about participation in this project before signing a consent form to inform them that their participation should not lead to additional discomfort or risk. (See appendix B.) Of course, common courtesy required gaining

consent from appropriate authorities in order to approach potential participants. Before

conducting any research, the proper procedures for an Institutional Review Board Review were

followed in order to protect any human subjects participating in this study. Although the

dissertation proposal mentioned a *One-on-One Interview Protocol*, through field testing it was

found that the protocol was not needed for the type of information that was actually collected for

the final written guide.

Summary

The original contribution to the field of choral programming found in this dissertation is

an annotated guide for collaborative planning of choral concerts. The purpose of this dissertation

is to present a two-page written guide with prompts to aid choral programmers in applying

creativity theory as summarized in Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process. This carefully

constructed guide (appendix A) offers prompts for teams to creatively gather, combine, select,

and implement ideas for a choral concert. The accompanying annotations as found in chapter 4

provide the context for understanding and using prompts that can aid collaborative programming.

The rationale for this dissertation includes overcoming the lack of existing integration between

creativity research and choral programming. Furthermore, the guide provides clarity about how

creativity research can positively influence the task of choral programmers. IRB-approved

protocol governed the use of the research questions, which directed the development of this

guide.

How can programmers access creativity to avoid concerts where the director may become

weary, the participants disinterested, and audiences may disappear? This dissertation focuses on

how to design concerts in a way that integrates the distinctive characteristics of choral music

with the best practices of both creativity and collaboration. It can be that neglecting the

interpersonal relationship aspects of collaboration can stifle the life-giving potential of making music together. Should the distinctive features of choral music be ignored, consequences could include the loss of cultural heritage as well as the decline of contemporary relevance. Although some people design memorable concerts without knowingly acting according to the best practices of creativity, I believe there is value to summarizing creativity research into a written guide so that others can improve their own programming skills. Gotham sums it up this way: "It strikes me that we are in the curious position of having a reasonably well-established set of modern methods and practices, as well as a fascinating array of contemporary creative projects, but failing to communally engage these ideas through more formal and theoretical discussion."[8] Therefore, I have worked to integrate findings from scientific study about both creativity and collaboration in an annotated guide for choral programming.

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[8] Gotham, "Coherence in Concert Programming," 308.

CHAPTER 4: ANNOTATIONS FOR THE
"GUIDE FOR THE COLLABORATIVE PLANNING OF CHORAL CONCERTS
BASED ON SAWYER'S EIGHT STAGES OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS"

Introduction

R. Keith Sawyer, eminent researcher and synthesizer of creativity research, has

developed a taxonomy concerning creativity he entitles the Eight Stages of the Creative Process.[1]

This chapter provides annotative support for the Guide for the Collaborative Planning of Choral

Concerts Based on Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process (appendix A). Concert

programming results from the series of creative choices[2] of selecting and ordering elements in a

musical concert. Collaboration, the art of individuals working together, supplies one possible

way to make programming choices about choral music. Sawyer defines *creativity* as "a new

mental combination that is expressed in the world."[3] Table 4.1 summarizes Sawyer's Eight

Stages. For each stage, table 4.1 includes the name Sawyer uses, a brief definition by Sawyer,

and one representative example.

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[1] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 88-89.
[2] Porter, *Unmasking Theatre Design*.
[3] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 7.

Table 4.1: Summary of Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process

Sawyer's Stage	Sawyer's Definition	Example of Sources from the Fine Arts
1. Find and formulate the problem.	Problem solving requires problem finding. Recognize a good problem and refine the wording so that it can lead to creative solutions.	Educational guru Fred D'Ignazio demonstrates how stating the problem affects the ability of groups to successfully collaborate.[4]
2. Acquire the knowledge relevant to the problem.	Combine mastery of existing information with significant practice of the given domain.	Conductor and composer Steve Zegree demonstrates the power of domain knowledge in successful choral programming.[5]
3. Gather a broad range of potentially related information.	Use your perception to notice new gaps as well as opportunities in the environment that are related to the problem.	Digital artist George Legrady reflects on seeking significant input while creating new installations.[6]
4. Take time off for incubation.	Take time away from the problem to allow the unconscious mind to work.	The Bridges Program of the Minnesota Chorale includes proactive waiting as part of their community partnerships.[7]
5. Generate a large variety of ideas.	Free-associate hints and thoughts. Eliminate false assumptions and be open to suggestions.	College professor Diana Blom analyzes how students produced ideas for an interdisciplinary concert.[8]
6. Combine ideas in unexpected ways.	Understand that the brain works through refining iterations of unexpected combinations of existing ideas.	Flautist Renée Bond analyzed the implications of combining dance and flute in her autoethnographic study.[9]
7. Select the best ideas, applying relevant criteria.	Evaluate using a variety of criteria related to the domain and connected to your problem statement.	Music educator Carol Reed-Jones examines the criteria used for programming decisions at a collegiate concert.[10]
8. Externalize the idea using materials and representations.	Craft a draft of the product that exists in the world. Include any revisions that come from the embodying of the idea.	Composers Jason Freeman and Mark Godfrey used feedback from early performances to influence later performances.[11]

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[4] D'Ignazio, "Bringing the 1990s to the Classroom of Today."

[5] Steve Zegree, *The Wow Factor*.

[6] Legrady, "Perspectives on Collaborative Research."; Steinheider and Legrady, "Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Digital Media Arts: A Psychological Perspective on the Production Process."

[7] Romey, Sweet, and Wanyama, "Building Bridges: Choruses Engaging Communities."

[8] Blom, "Inside the Collaborative Process."

[9] Bond, "Reflections on the Collaborative Process."

[10] Reed-Jones, "But Is It Art?."

[11] Freeman and Godfrey, "Creative Collaboration between Audiences and Musicians in Flock."

Sawyer highlights that the creative process is not linear but actually cyclical.[12] Each of the stages in the above chart may follow any other stage in an effective creative process.[13] The prompts in this choral guide are arranged according to Sawyer's Eight Stages.

This guide seeks to answer *How can creativity research be applied specifically to programming choral music?* by providing a series of specific prompts in the form of questions. Some of the prompts could be useful in the actual team meeting. Other prompts are designed to aid the team facilitator when preparing for a meeting or planning cycle. These prompts can direct current and future choral programmers through a well-balanced planning process. Each of the prompts used in the written guide is based on a general research-based principle, but includes specific application to choral programming. Further explanation of each prompt includes an example drawn from actual scenarios. Several terms are used in specific ways in this chapter. Here are some orienting definitions and comments about the *prompts* and *action steps* for designing choral concerts found in an *annotated guide*, including using *timelines* and *task lists.*

Comments on Key Terms

The Merriam-Webster.com definition of *prompt* could be paraphrased as a "reminder" for a person "to move to action."[14] In this guide, a prompt is a question inviting reflection on how a team can apply a particular facet of one of Sawyer's Eight Stages to choral programming. Each prompt is designed to have more than one helpful answer to enable application in a variety of actual scenarios programming teams face. When implementing the guide, it is not necessary to answer all the prompts. It may be that one prompt more clearly fits a given situation or may generate more useful responses. In fact, most likely it would be detrimental to the final product

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[12] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 138.

[13] For further studies supporting Sawyer's claims, please reference his many articles and books listed in the bibliography.

[14] Merriam-webster.com, accessed April 20, 2016.

of a specific concert should a team try to use a multitude of prompts in one meeting.

Possible *action steps* for each prompt are listed in italics on the guide. These action steps are included to help clarify the intent of the prompt question. In this way a team has a practical action to implement each particular stage of the creative process. It is not required to use all these action steps. Perhaps the team can implement Sawyer's stage more easily with a different action. The goal is to structure team time in a way that truly accesses creativity, not just to interact with as many action steps as possible. Please also note that although these *prompts* and *action steps* were developed for teams of people designing choral concerts, many of the prompts could be effective for individual programmers also.

A *guide* is "something that provides a person with guiding information . . . explaining points of interest"[15] Other guides found in a literature review include "Approaches for Vocal Music Teachers"[16] and *Guide to Choral Masterworks*.[17] The "Guide for Collaborative Planning of Choral Concerts Based on Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process" (appendix A) provides prompts that can influence the design process of those collaboratively planning choral concerts. This choral programming guide explains points of interest helpful to applying the cyclical stages of creativity to the process of choral programming.

The word *annotated* means "a note added . . . as a comment or explanation."[18] Examples of other annotated guides include *The Piano in Chamber Ensemble: An Annotated Guide*[19] and *The New Broadway Song Companion: An Annotated Guide to Theatre Literature by Voice Type*

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[15] Merriam-webster.com, accessed February 25, 2016.

[16] Xia Dan, "Approaches for Vocal Music Teachers to Guide Students to Form Their Own Singing Styles," *Cross-Cultural Communication* 11, no. 2 (2015).

[17] Berger, *Guide to Choral Masterpieces*.

[18] Merriam-webster.com, accessed February 25, 2016.

[19] Maurice Hinson and Wesley Roberts, *The Piano in Chamber Ensemble: An Annotated Guide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

and Song Style.[20] The annotations to the guide in this dissertation are provided to assist the reader in applying the "Guide for Collaborative Planning of Choral Concerts Based on Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process" (appendix A). For each stage below, a story illustrates the intersection of collaborative choral programming and that particular stage of creativity. These annotations also provide a concise definition and discussion for each prompt associated with Sawyer's Eight Stages.

The *annotations* that follow include stories from discussions with active practitioners. The interviews followed the guidelines approved January 12, 2016, by the Ball State University Institutional Review Board. These stories are included to provide context for understanding a given prompt in the written guide. They have not been developed under a rigorous scientific protocol and thus are not generalizable to a wide variety of settings. They are provided just to help the reader understand a way the particular prompt could be applied.

Generating creativity does not always follow the same procedures, so the annotations do not demand particular actions. Often a *timeline* and a *task list* can help a team implement many of Sawyer's Eight Stages to the process of choral programming. Since Sawyer's synthesis makes it clear that creativity is a cyclical process, enforcing a restrictive timeline is antithetical to the research on creativity. Instead a timeline can be a tool that helps programmers include key discussions in a timely way. The proposed guide is most likely to be of greatest help when used in the context of a planning process well in advance of the start of rehearsals. A timeline offers a way of managing that process.

It may aid those responsible for programming choral concerts for the first time to see a hypothetical *timeline*. The actual times applied to each element in a sequence of events begun

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[20] David P. DeVenney, *The New Broadway Song Companion: An Annotated Guide to Musical Theatre Literature by Voice Type and Song Style* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009).

five months before an annual concert would be quite different from the times applied to those same elements used to prepare weekly choral concerts. Therefore, the following hypothetical timeline does not include actual times so that it can model a variety of situations. Let us call the following sequence of events a timeline for ease of nomenclature even though no time designations are provided in table 4.2, "A Sample Timeline."

Table 4.2: A Sample Timeline

Meeting Number	Programming Activity	Sawyer's Stage	Hypothetical Example
1	By the end of the meeting have crafted the goal of the desired concert.	Sawyer's Stage 1: Formulate the problem.	Problem Statement that was developed: a sixty-minute pops concert at a local high school with the theme of responding to bullying.
2	Bring song suggestions and possible transitional material to the meeting, and design the first iteration of the concert flow.	Sawyer's Stage 3: Gather related information. Sawyer's Stage 5: Generate a variety of ideas. Sawyer's Stage 7: Select best ideas.	Songs selected could include "Fighter" (Christina Aguilera), "Rude" (Magic), "One of These Days" (Tim McGraw), "Mean" (Taylor Swift), and "Lean on Me" (Bill Withers).
3	After time for additional solo brainstorming, revise the first iteration based on a live "read through" of the proposed order.	Sawyer's Stage 3: Gather related information. Sawyer's Stage 4: Incubation. Sawyer's Stage 6: Combine ideas. Sawyer's Stage 8: Externalize the idea.	Before this third meeting assign individual team members to review the following musicals: *Stand Up, Stand Out*; *The Bully: The Musical; The Victim: A Musical about Bullying*; and the opera *Stickboy* (Weisensel).
4	Confirm access to desired content and finalize programming order.	Sawyer's Stage 3: Gather related information. Sawyer's Stage 7: Select the best ideas.	Find existing choral arrangements or purchase rights to arrange desired songs.

Although the actual details used for a specific concert will vary from table 4.2, this table illustrates some of the steps that may prove beneficial to include for the entire group. Other

helpful content for a timeline could be listing due dates, such as printing deadlines for programs or reservations for performing spaces. The complexity or simplicity of a timeline should serve those involved.

Similarly, an explicit *task list* can help organize the work of individuals concerning discussions in a way that facilitates timely decision making. Each task can be linked to one of Sawyer's Eight Stages to help the team embed creativity theory into the process. For example, a task for Stage 3 (**gather information**) may be to assign a due date for suggesting choral literature for a particular concert. Do not overwhelm team members with too many tasks. Be strategic in defining ways to access creativity research when assigning tasks to individual team members.

Of course there is overlap between a *timeline* and a *task list* since timelines can order tasks. Also, descriptions of tasks can use deadlines linked to a timeline. Whatever method a programming team chooses to organize their work, they can proactively enable the ready implementation of Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process.

Additional Framing Comments

Layout of actual guide. The written guide seeks to direct current and future choral programmers through an effective planning process. Appendix A contains the two pages of the actual guide. The names of each stage are taken directly from Sawyer's writing. Anything in quotation marks on the guide is a direct quote from Sawyer. The column labeled *Prompt* is a question to guide people programming choral concerts to reflect on a specific intersection of one of the stages and the process of collaboratively planning choral concerts. The column entitled *Possible Action Points* offers at least one possible action that could be taken in response to the question in the prompt. Other valid applications are possible and even encouraged. Some of the

action points could be part of an individual's task list. Other action points are best placed on the group's timeline since they must be collaboratively addressed.

More than busy work. Only answering these prompts is not the goal. The prompts serve as tools to craft an engaging concert. Furthermore, once practitioners have facility with the underlying stages of the creative process, they may be able to generate additional prompts that better serve a specific particular programming situation instead of using the given prompts. To be clear, the prompts are not a checklist where creativity is reduced to a "paint-by-numbers" system; they are a series of questions that help the choral programmer draw on the breadth of creativity research to consider ways to include many stages of creativity in the process of collaboratively designing a choral concert.

Relationship of the guide to the annotations. This guide includes multiple prompts for each of Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process. The guide provides Sawyer's Eight Stages in a two-page format, useful for a team leader preparing for a meeting. Team members could also benefit by referencing the guide in a meeting. While it may be possible to use the guide without the annotations, more likely the two-page guide is a mnemonic device to help a facilitator or an entire team to remember a variety of ways of using creativity research in their planning. The annotations most likely are too extensive to be read completely in a meeting dedicated to actually programming a concert.

The rest of this chapter provides the actual annotations to the "Guide for the Collaborative Planning of Choral Concerts Based on Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process" (appendix A). Referring regularly to the two-page summary in appendix A will aid the reader in following the annotations to the guide. Each of Sawyer's Eight Stages will be reviewed one at a time and will be specifically applied to the context of designing choral programming.

Then a prompt will be given, defined, and discussed, culminating with an anecdotal example of the prompt. This will be repeated for additional prompts as needed for a given stage. Finally, a summary statement will review the intersection of the programming task and Sawyer's particular stage of creativity.

Stage 1: Find and Formulate the Problem

Sawyer started his Eight Stages of the Creative Process with a charge to "formulate the problem in such a way that it will be more likely to lead to creative solutions."[21] People programming choral concerts can apply the research behind this stage of creativity by carefully identifying the distinctive needs of the particular concert and formulating them into a problem statement. Investing time and attention to **find and formulate a specific problem statement** often prepares the way for successful solutions. Although the word *problem* may carry negative connotations, it is a neutral term in this guide. Sawyer's use of the word *problem* can be applied to any element in the concert that still requires a solution. Of course there can be more than one problem when designing a specific concert.

<div align="center">*Encore Vocal Arts*</div>

An example of **finding and formulating the problem** comes from John Perkins, assistant professor of music at Butler University and artistic director of the Encore Vocal Arts ensemble in Indianapolis, Indiana.[22] This community choir performs its own season of concerts and also partners with other groups such as the Indianapolis Symphony orchestra. For the 2015–2016 season, they sought to continue their tradition of "building deep emotional connections to

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[21] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 88.

[22] John Perkins (professor of music, Butler University), in a face-to-face interview and electronic correspondence with the author, from November 2015 through March 2016.

great choral music for multiple generations of singers."[23] While this is a laudable goal, it may be too broad of a problem statement to engender creativity in programming a particular concert.

Problem statement for specific concert. For the first concert of the 2015–2016 season they were able to **find and formulate the problem** by refining this purpose statement to stimulate creative solutions. Perkins explained that the choir wanted to honor the presence of immigrants in Indianapolis, and thought of the Hispanic celebration of the *Dia de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) as a possible intersection of this goal and choral music. The refined statement of their problem could be understood as "How can Indianapolis use great choral music to honor the Hispanic immigrants here?" Formulating this question as the programming problem for this choral event provided many creative ideas that came to fruition at the concert. Encore Vocal Arts performed arrangements of Hispanic folk tunes and compositions by Latino composers on November 1, 2015, at the Indiana State Museum. The choice of this choral literature in turn prompted those programming the concert to imagine that right before the concert, audience members could be coached to write commemorations of the dead. Then the idea was added that choristers could read these freshly written commemorations during the concert. Formulating a more specific statement of the problem refined the general purpose statement of "providing emotional connections to great choral music" into "building connections to specific Hispanic heritage via choral music." In this case, the refined statement of the problem enabled music selection, audience participation, and new roles for the choir. Perkins shared that many who attended the concert reflected how these commemorations provided a deep emotional connection—a goal from the choir's broader purpose statement! By framing the programming problem in a new way (how can Indianapolis honor the traditions of the many Hispanic

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[23] "About Us," Encore Vocal Arts, accessed April 20, 2016, http://www.encorevocalarts.org/about-us/.

immigrants already locally present), existing universal themes such as love and death found in much of the choral canon obtained fresh connections between choir and audience.

Macro-level and micro-level. Encore Vocal Arts models how to **find the problem** when they included formulating macro-level problems, such as choosing which community partners should and could be featured at this event. Encore Vocal Arts ultimately chose to partner with a Latino dance group and a local mariachi band because their participation addressed Encore's statement of the programming problem of this particular concert. Once these groups were confirmed for participation in the concert, decision making shifted to identifying micro-level problems such as choosing the specific ways to integrate each group into the concert. For example, those programming the concert could formulate a question: "How could one of the community partners authentically display Hispanic culture and also allow audience members to actively join in?" The answer: the Latino dance group helped reach multiple generations of audience members by offering dance lessons before the concert. Audience members who participated in the pre-concert lesson had an opportunity to dance in the final choral selection of the actual concert. Another micro-level problem formulated was how to proactively include child-friendly elements. One solution was the pre-concert opportunity for children to make candy skulls—a tradition for *Dia de los Muertos*—while the adults were writing the commemorations. These skulls were then used to decorate the performing space. A final implementation of this refined problem statement included partnering with local high schools. High school teachers of academic subjects such as social studies included a unit related to the concepts of the concert in their classes. A problem statement from the choir more narrowly focused on music most likely would not have engendered partnerships with non-music classes in the local high schools. The choirs from these high schools performed some selections with the Encore Vocal Arts ensemble

at the concert. Both macro-level and micro-level problem statements resulted from formulating

the initial provocative question of "How could Indianapolis honor Hispanic immigrants in

2015?"

How did Perkins and other decision makers identify these problems? What kind of

questions can other programming teams ask to arrive at such an evocative program? What kind

of participation by planners would be required to emulate the Encore Vocal Arts decision-

making process? Should some decisions affecting the concert only be addressed outside of

programming meetings? These are the kinds of questions that the following prompts seek to

address. Although many prompts could help those who are programming choral concerts to **find

and formulate the problem**, table 4.3 summarizes three different prompts related to Sawyer's

Stage 1.

Table 4.3: Prompts for "Find and Formulate the Problem"

1A	How can the specific problem statement of the choral concert be framed so it is likely to stimulate creative solutions?
Action Point	*Discern a specific target (for the performers or audience) to find criteria that will successfully guide the process.*
1B	How will the planning process identify both macro-level and micro-level problems?
Action Points	*Find macro-level problems, such as how concert flow impacts the audience. Distinguish from micro-level ones such as specific transitions between songs.*
1C	What considerations should NOT be addressed when formulating your problem statement?
Action Points	*Decide if a particular problem should be addressed at a different time. If needed, delegate to a different decision-making group.*

Prompt 1A: How can the specific problem statement of the choral concert be framed so it is likely to stimulate creative solutions? *Discern a specific target (for the performers or audience) to find criteria that will successfully guide the process.*

Define. By formulating a theme centered on *Dia de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead), the

Encore Vocal Arts ensemble provided clarity in their specific statement of the problem. A

definition too specific may stymie the creative process. For example, if Encore Vocal Arts limited their performance to music from the California missions before 1800 relating to *Dia de los Muertos*, the concert may have categorically been too brief. On the other hand, having too broad of a problem statement, such as designing a concert that uses only songs sung in Spanish, does not easily enable the creative process either. I believe Encore succeeded because they found a unique way to **find and formulate the problem** that helped engender creativity.

Discuss. The Encore Vocal Arts example models that an organizational purpose statement such as "building deep emotional connections to great choral music"[24] may be re-formulated to generate a problem statement for a specific concert. For another choir, the formulation may be as basic as defining a "good concert." For example, is a good concert in a given setting one that included teaching music literacy to the performers throughout the rehearsal process, or will music literacy be assumed? A concert in an educational setting often views attaining musical literacy by the performers as a valued goal. Conversely, a community oratorio chorus may assume literacy and evaluate programming according to other criteria such as emphasizing social justice or including repertoire from the choral canon. The Encore Vocal Arts ensemble in this concert sought to give voice to the Hispanic community of Indianapolis. This led to investing time to develop specific partnerships that may not have otherwise been incorporated into the 2015–2016 concert season. A well-formulated problem statement includes criteria that can be used to develop, perform, and evaluate the concert. A specific problem statement is the result of the programming team **finding and formulating the problem** in a way that highlights the distinctive features of a particular programming situation.

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[24] "About Us," Encore Vocal Arts, accessed April 20, 2016, http://www.encorevocalarts.org/about-us/.

Prompt 1B: How will the planning process identify both macro-level and micro-level problems? *Find macro-level problems, such as how concert flow impacts the audience. Distinguish from micro-level ones such as specific transitions between songs.*

Define. The process of programming choral concerts can include multiple iterations of **finding and formulating problems**. For the Encore Vocal Arts ensemble, finalizing the repertoire for this particular concert depended on identifying the community partners. A macro-level problem was selecting community partners. A micro-level problem was selecting music they would perform together, and was dependent on the collaboration of the community partners once they were chosen.

Discuss. According to Perkins, the Encore Vocal Arts ensemble desires to interact with the Indianapolis community about issues such as immigration reform. Perhaps this could be understood as a vision-level formulation of the problem. Addressing that aspiration led them to **find and formulate the problem** at the macro-level, such as choosing concert partners that included immigrants. Once this was set, they could define micro-level problems, such as "What choral music would support particular community partners at specific moments in the concert?" The clear statement of macro-level problems may help the programming team wrestle with deeper societal issues such as race or immigration. However, including micro-level problems such as selecting specific literature or discerning optimum concert length is often necessary in the creative process as well. More than one problem will probably need to be defined (and ultimately solved) to completely plan any given concert. Thus, a team can access the cyclical nature of creativity to first clearly state one problem at a macro-level, which may lead to stating additional problems at the micro-level. The best creativity can often be generated through programming teams using multiple levels of problem statements instead of setting up an either/or dichotomy while **finding and formulating programming problems**.

Prompt 1C: What considerations should NOT be addressed when formulating your problem statement? *Decide if a particular problem should be addressed at a different time. If needed, delegate to a different decision-making group.*

Define. When creativity theory is followed and a team seeks a problem to be formulated, often choosing what <u>not</u> to include can be as significant in the ultimate solution as choosing what to include. Defining the wrong problem leads to solutions that do not actually help the programmers craft a convincing choral event. While direct political action is a worthy task for community members, it may not be the best use of the resources of the Encore Vocal Arts ensemble. Their actual approach highlighted the value of immigrants by building bridges through choral music. It can take time to consider what should <u>not</u> be addressed while programming a given event. But investing the time to appropriately limit the scope of the problem is part of **finding and formulating the problem** that allows the programming team (or individual) to generate solutions that hit the real target.

Discuss. Another example of this prompt comes from a community chorus in Indianapolis, Indiana, that hosts a winter solstice event that involves singing by audience and choir, drumming, and selected narrations. While planning for the 2015 event, Pam Blevins Hinkle facilitated a programming meeting involving several other leaders in the event.[25] Her actions demonstrate that knowing when to address particular considerations was critical to the success of her programming team meeting and ultimately the actual concert. While the team was meeting to **find and formulate the problem**, one member raised the need for parking at the standing-room-only event. Hinkle wisely chose to table this topic because it did not directly affect the selection and ordering of elements at this concert. If the logistics team chose to brainstorm and implement ideas, that would be an appropriate use of their investment in the

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[25] Pam Blevins Hinkle (community choir director, Indianapolis, IN), in email discussions with the author, November 2015 - February 2016.

event. But the programming team did not need to do so. Another problem raised was availability

of a meal for the significant others of choir members during the final warm-up before the

concert. While this is only tangentially connected to programming decisions, it did impact the

ability to recruit choir members and thus ultimately affected literature decisions. A short sidebar

meeting (held live and via text during the main meeting) resolved that a local charity would most

likely host the meal so that choir members would be able to continue to participate. Blevin was

then able to refocus the team on formulating programming problems and ultimately making

programming decisions. The wisest course of action for another programming team in a different

setting may be to table a similar nonmusical discussion to be addressed at a different time. Both

of these examples from the solstice concert-planning meeting illustrate the need to carefully

evaluate what considerations should <u>not</u> be addressed in specific programming meetings in order

to adequately **find the problem** (Sawyer's Stage 1).

Stage 1 Summary

Whether seen through the example of the solstice community choir or the Encore Vocal

Arts ensemble, collaborative planning of choral events can be more creative when the people

involved **formulate the problem** in a way that is more likely to lead to a creative solution.

"What should we sing at the fall concert?" is less likely to engender creative programming than

something more specific, such as "How could the students coach their peers to prepare for their

participation in the local history reenactment this fall?" or "At this concert, how can we access

the students' love of vocal a cappella singing as embodied by the popular music group

Pentatonix?" Problem solving requires problem finding. This may include distinguishing

between macro-level and micro-level problems. Finding the problem may include deciding that

particular considerations should <u>not</u> be addressed in a given programming meeting. Finding a

good problem and formulating the words into a clear statement can lead to creative solutions in programming choral concerts. Sawyer's Stage 2 (**acquire the knowledge**) builds the basis for creative solutions.

Stage 2: Acquire the Knowledge Relevant to the Problem

Sawyer explains "creativity is always based on mastery, practice, and expertise."[26] This echoes the words ascribed to Martha Graham: "a lifetime of discipline for a moment of freedom." When applying Sawyer's Stage 2 to choral programming, the word *knowledge* does not refer to details about the specific requirements of a particular concert, but to an understanding of foundational topics such as choral literature, pacing of concerts, rehearsal techniques, and logistical expertise. People must typically **acquire general domain knowledge** before being able to solve the specific problems formulated by applying Sawyer's Stage 1. Many practitioners use a mixture of means to gain foundational knowledge through seeking formal education, conducting research, gaining experience in front of groups, and investing in personal practice coupled with private instruction.

Ball State University Holiday Concert

The planning process for the Ball State University (BSU) holiday choral concert illustrates one way to apply Sawyer's Stage 2 (**acquire the knowledge**) to choral programming. A team of professors and graduate students invest in multiple planning meetings across several months to collaboratively plan an event that is performed twice each December in Sursa Performance Hall (Muncie, Indiana). Kerry Glann, associate director of choral activities,

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[26] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 88.

conducted *Gloria* by John Rutter (b. 1945) in the 2015 concert.[27] Rutter's *Gloria* is a twenty-two-minute work and is well known within the choral canon.

The BSU planning team is comprised of members with various levels of mastery of the domain knowledge of choral programming. Some members bring a comprehensive understanding of logistics learned from hundreds of live performances. Others may have more in-depth knowledge of existing choral literature. Some may sense program flow more quickly, while others have expertise in efficiently preparing large groups of people to perform together in a restricted number of rehearsals. While none of this domain knowledge is specific to a particular holiday concert, it demonstrates how the team collectively **acquired the knowledge** relevant to the problem. For the BSU planning team there was value in having at least one member competent in key areas such as the breadth of choral literature available, the pacing of concerts, rehearsal techniques, or logistics. Let us look at each of these domain areas in more detail.

Domain area 1: The breadth of choral literature. One of the distinctive features of choral music is the breadth of choral literature available (see chapter 1). A programming team would be well-served to include members who have **acquired the knowledge** of a large number of works. In particular, the domain knowledge about the relative difficulty of different literature choices needs to be acquired before the meetings if it is to be of help in the meeting. For the BSU team, it was helpful to already know the difficulty level of Rutter's *Gloria* in order to compare it to other possible choices.

Domain knowledge about the breadth of choral literature impacts choral programming choices in other ways, too. For example, the conductors at the meetings chose literature for a concert earlier in the semester that could be repeated at the holiday concert in order to allow

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[27] Kerry Glann (associate director of choral activities, Ball State University), in a face-to-face interview with the author concerning the 2015 Holiday Concert, February 29, 2016.

sufficient rehearsal time to rehearse the *Gloria*. The literature used at both the fall and holiday

concerts was selected to represent genres beyond the English cathedral tradition of Rutter's

Gloria, such as the setting of "There Is No Rose," (Z. Randall Stroope) sung by the Ball State

University Women's Chorus. Other literature was chosen to contrast texture (a cappella versus

accompanied), voicing (SSA or TTB instead of SATB), or difficulty level (based on tessitura or

use of polyphony). For example, the BSU Concert Choir also used "Hodie Christus Natus Est"

(Niels LaCour) to provide an a cappella chant-like contrast to the Rutter. Applying creativity

research to choral programming suggests that *a priori* acquiring domain knowledge (such as

understanding the breadth of choral literature) facilitates gaining the information needed for

planning specific events.

       <u>Domain area 2: Concert pacing.</u> For choral programmers to be successful at the BSU

holiday concert planning meetings, they needed to have **acquired the domain knowledge** for

arranging the choral literature in a meaningful concert order. While pacing decisions are concert

specific, their success often depends on programmers who can forecast how audiences may

experience the flow of a concert. The same literature placed chronologically may highlight

certain elements while a thematic order may create a difference experience for the audience. The

wise programmer skillfully paces the concert for the audience.

       Chapter 1 highlights another distinctive feature of choral music: the preponderance of

shorter works. This significantly affects concert flow. Some groupings of selections expand the

enjoyment of the audience; other song orders diminish it. Much of aesthetic design is concerned

with the balance of similar and different elements, whether in architectural structure, painting

layout, or musical form. The foundational principle of aesthetics can take time to master in any

field.

Another consideration about concert pacing is helping singers manage the physical stamina required to sing certain literature selections. Thus, the wise programmer finds ways to sequence musical elements that enable the performers to successfully manage their personal physical reserves. Choral programmers can acquire the foundational knowledge of successfully pacing a concert for both audience and performers.

Domain area 3: Rehearsal techniques. Each of the six curricular choirs at Ball State usually participates in the annual holiday concerts. To effectively involve each choir in the *Gloria* performance required the planners to already have **acquired the domain knowledge** about this aspect of choral programming. Because *Gloria* requires a skilled ensemble of choir, brass, and organ, the average university-aged performer will benefit from significant rehearsal time. The choral parts required facility in singing a considerable amount of Latin text. Both the choir and instrumentalists needed competence to perform constantly changing meter in extended passages. During the planning meetings leading up to the 2015 performances, Glann needed to already have the domain knowledge of how to prepare a chorus of over two hundred college students in a timely way even though each ensemble had a different rehearsal schedule. One ensemble rehearsed daily and another weekly. Glann needed to effectively evaluate how much time would be required for individual choirs and for combined choir rehearsals to prepare this iconic selection from the choral canon. Based on his acquired knowledge relevant to the problem, he could then be creative in a meeting that focused on selecting complementary literature.

Domain area 4: Logistics. Planning for this kind of event requires **acquiring the domain knowledge** about ways to transition over 200 participants in six ensembles between concert elements. At this concert the *Gloria* was performed by five of the choirs. Logistical expertise

was needed at the programming meetings to evaluate if the auditorium's stage had enough space for the physical layout of risers and the instruments. The team worked to ensure that the organ console would not have to be moved during the performances. The flow of the program was organized to minimize the time needed for physical transitions between ensembles. Creative planning resulted because some team members had already acquired the knowledge relevant to logistics and could speak wisely in meetings.

Often domain knowledge about choral programming is a combination of knowing the breadth of choral literature drawn from the choral canon, concert pacing, rehearsal techniques, and logistics. Members of BSU holiday concert planning team used each of these areas when they evaluated the wisdom of including Rutter's *Gloria* in a particular concert. The leader of the programming team of the BSU holiday concert assembled a team who had combined mastery of this foundational knowledge about choral programming. This story illustrates the multiple ways a programming team can incorporate Sawyer's Stage 2 (**acquire the knowledge**) as identified in both of the prompts mentioned in table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Prompts for "Acquire the Knowledge Relevant to the Problem"

2A	Do you have adequate knowledge of choral literature, the pacing of concerts, and the managing of events to offer relevant ideas? If not, how could you deepen your mastery, practice, and expertise?
Action Points	*If needed, find a mentor to teach you to accurately assess the difficulty level of the music. Take time to practice how multiple kinds of transitions are experienced. Develop your expertise in handling nonmusical considerations.*
2B	What steps can you take to assemble a team that has mastered foundational knowledge about choral programming?
Action Points	*Find team members who have already invested in gaining expertise in the choral canon, concert pacing, rehearsal techniques, and logistical concerns. Be willing to supplement your team with experts who will join for short stints.*

Prompt 2A: Do you have adequate knowledge of choral literature, the pacing of concerts, and the managing of events to offer relevant ideas? If not, how could you deepen your mastery, practice, and expertise? *If needed, find a mentor to teach you to accurately assess the difficulty level of the music. Take time to practice how multiple kinds of transitions are experienced. Develop your expertise in handling nonmusical considerations.*

Define. Sawyer is careful to distinguish between knowledge in a content area (Stage 2) and information needed to solve a specific statement of a problem (Stage 3). In Stage 2, the prompts center on acquiring domain knowledge instead of seeking solutions to specific concert details. As a group, the people planning the holiday concert at BSU had expertise in choral literature, concert pacing, rehearsal techniques, and event logistics. For other teams working on planning choral concerts, one person on the team does not have to solely **acquire the knowledge** needed from the choral programming domain. The combination of all the members of the team can provide the needed mastery, practice, and expertise relevant to choral programming. Collaboration, the art of working together, encourages team members to have different strengths to offer the team. If knowledge is lacking, team members can grow in their mastery or new team members with existing expertise could be recruited. Let us discuss each of the four domain defined mentioned above.

Discuss. <u>Domain area 1: Choral literature.</u> Choral programmers need to **acquire the knowledge relevant to the problem** concerning repertoire for various concert settings and sizes of ensembles. To thrive as a choral programmer requires a broad understanding of the kinds of literature, whether grouped by genre, voicing, or historical category. The knowledgeable programmer not only knows these classifications, but also the difficulty level of concrete examples of each so that a particular choir is well matched with literature for a specific concert. Wise programming requires a foundation of knowledge that is broader than the new

titles marketed by a publishing house or the best hits from the most recent American Choral

Directors Association conference.

Domain knowledge of choral literature also includes being able to understand how

musicological research on performance practices of a specific musical period could influence the

interpretation of a specific work. Programmers should acquire the mastery of discerning how the

elements of music in a written score influence performance. Conductors need facility in

communicating tempo, dynamics, articulation, rhythm, and pitch to their performers. Being able

to accurately evaluate the difficulty level of a given choral selection aids the choral programmer

in selecting pieces that the assigned choir can perform well. The professors involved in the BSU

holiday concert proactively train student conductors in this domain knowledge. Because this is

an academic setting, educational readings with group discussions to follow are already part of

required courses. In other settings, team members may need to seek a mentor to help them gain

deeper mastery of score selection and preparation.

Domain area 2: Concert pacing. Choral programmers need to **acquire the knowledge**

relevant to the problem so they are able to balance familiar and novel elements. Repertoire can

be balanced in terms of various tempos and lengths of selections. Repertoire choices can reflect a

contrast in the emotional content of the music. Other elements in concerts that require balancing

the familiar and novel include staging and flow. The domain knowledge to be acquired includes

how to creatively transition between musical selections. Gaining and retaining audience attention

is a required skill for choral programmers. According to informal comments heard after concerts,

in the last four years, the BSU holiday concert has improved in the pacing of concerts, due in

part to skills developed in choral programming meetings. Other planning teams can take steps to

acquire the mastery relevant to this domain if needed. Short-term solutions include various ways

of targeted training on this topic in the context of planning meetings. Long-term solutions could include training provided by professional organizations such as the American Choral Directors Association or Chorus America, schools such as a local university, or coaching from a personal trainer. Nancy Beach, former program director at Willow Creek Church, affirms that "mentors and coaches provide specific, frequent feedback, as well as strong doses of encouragement."[28] Growing in expertise in concert pacing is one of the ways programming teams can **acquire the knowledge** relevant to their craft.

Domain area 3: Rehearsal techniques. Choral programmers can **acquire the knowledge relevant to the problem** so they can apply several different scholarly fields to the art of preparing for live performance. Choral programmers may need to consider issues of classroom management; that is, the connections between psychology and the interactions of groups. Choral programmers can make decisions in order to develop singing voices in the group context. The choral programmer may not employ any of these rehearsal techniques during a programming meeting, but the ability to effectively select the best programming option among multiple ones being considered may come down to the varying rehearsal needs of the literature being considered. In the BSU holiday concerts, including the Rutter *Gloria* required the other concert selections to be simpler musically in order to allow the extra time needed for the *Gloria* rehearsals. Evaluating the adequacy of the team's knowledge of rehearsal techniques can be one way to employ Sawyer's Stage 2 in choral programming.

Domain area 4: Event logistics. Finally, wisdom about logistics is another area where programmers can **acquire the knowledge relevant to the problem.** What variety of ways do concert producers use to move groups of singers on and off stage? What activities (and in what

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[28] Nancy Beach, *An Hour on Sunday: Creating Moments of Transformation and Wonder* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 155.

order) help performers comfortably prepare on the date of the concert? What are the audiovisual

requirements of the assigned performance space(s)? In what ways can ticketing support the goals

of a given performance? What ways can people handle food logistics? Being able to evaluate the

need for these kinds of questions demonstrates the depth of domain knowledge that this prompt

suggests is needed for true creativity. The BSU holiday concerts included logistics such as

balancing the space requirements of the dancing show choir with the layout needed by other

performers such as the handbell choir. Acquiring the domain knowledge of event logistics before

meetings allows for greater wisdom to be shown in the meeting decisions concerning logistics.

Another way to grow in all four of these areas is to include debriefing in the

programming cycle. Those programming the BSU holiday concert debrief the event afterward in

order to add to the "institutional memory" about what logistical choices eased the stress for the

performers in the given situation and what could be changed for the next year. Details as simple

as having the same stagehands at each of two performances are logistical choices that wisely

helped the performances run more smoothly. Concert by concert, those involved in choral

programming can improve the structures they use to handle choral literature, the pacing of

concerts, techniques for rehearsing, and the managing of events. Thus, they will have acquired

the needed domain knowledge to be truly creative.

> **Prompt 2B**: What steps can you take to assemble a team that has mastered foundational
> knowledge about choral programming? *Find team members who have already invested in*
> *gaining expertise in the choral canon, concert pacing, rehearsal techniques, and*
> *logistical concerns. Be willing to supplement your team with experts who will join for*
> *short stints.*

Define. While a person can design interesting choral concerts alone, many of us find that

a collaborative team approach has the advantage of supplementing our own strengths with the

abilities of others. **Acquiring the domain knowledge** relevant to choral programming does not

need to be a solo effort. The team leader can assemble a well-informed team as a method of acquiring the relevant domain knowledge. Look for other people who have already acquired the domain knowledge linked with choral programming, such as choral literature, rehearsal techniques, concert pacing, and event logistics. The process of application for inclusion on a planning team, whether informal or formal, may target particular skills in order to populate the choral programming meeting. Take time to talk through the expected investment of time and energy to produce one concert together. If that concert is successful, then discuss a longer working relationship that combines everyone's mastery, practice, and expertise relevant to choral programming. The wise leader of a programming team takes steps to assemble a team that collectively has already acquired the domain knowledge needed to succeed in choral programming.

Discuss. In a team setting, it can be helpful for both the team leader and team members to have an accurate perception of the competencies of each team member concerning each person's knowledge in each of the choral programming competencies. While people who have not yet invested in learning occasionally have profound insights, according to Sawyer, "creativity is based in deeper understandings that result from a focused and active form of learning."[29] Careful observation may help team members identify one another's strengths. Of course, gracious use of this information is more conducive to long-term success as a team! A team leader can look ahead to future challenges and assemble a team that collectively has the ability to overcome them. In addition, knowing the depth of learning of each team member in a particular facet of choral programming can give added weight to their evaluation of particular programming ideas.

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[29] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 406.

Although Prompt 2A focuses on four different facets of foundational knowledge in choral programming, additional areas of **acquiring the knowledge relevant to the problem** may be useful for a particular programming team. For example, one distinctive feature of choral music is the ability of a cappella singing to transcend cultures perhaps more easily than instrument-dependent music. For the BSU holiday concerts, the programming team values multicultural elements. In the 2015 edition, an a cappella Romanian carol was conducted by one of the graduate assistants who spoke fluent Romanian. This conductor already had acquired the knowledge relevant to the problem of coaching a cappella choirs performing in Romanian. Skillful use of a team member's strengths helped make this portion of the BSU holiday concert memorable because the team assembled had mastered foundational knowledge about choral programming.

A wise leader may recognize a deficiency in an area due to the current participants on the team. Expertise can be borrowed. Invite a person who is knowledgeable about a particular musical genre to join the team for a single session or a planning cycle. Ask online communities such as ChoralNet.org for specific repertoire suggestions. Have coffee with someone whose concerts have the flow you desire to emulate. Additional training in areas such as basic audio design, sound effects, script writing, costume and stage design, and promotion of arts events may be beneficial as well. Through targeted activities, choral programmers move from borrowing expertise to practicing needed skills that enable them to gain mastery. Thus choral programmers can obtain sufficient grounding in the foundational knowledge areas needed, independent of knowledge required for a specific concert event.

Because membership in the BSU holiday concert programming team meetings is partially based on the awarding of graduate assistantships in any given year, the need to evaluate team

members is an ongoing process. Creativity in the choral planning process is enhanced when team

members have an accurate perception of the current level of domain knowledge in each team

member. This may require diplomacy on the part of the team leader to enable a safe

environment. A wise leader takes steps to assemble a team with mastery and expertise in

knowledge of the choral programming domain, thus accessing the creativity inherent in Sawyer's

Stage 2.

Stage 2 Summary

The above prompts provide ways to assess and acquire the domain knowledge required to

program choral concerts. Self-reflection can guide individual team members to evaluate their

own knowledge of choral literature, how to pace concerts, rehearsal techniques, and the

managing of events. If needed, team members can choose to grow in these domain areas through

mentors, personal practice, and the investment needed to gain mastery. Team leaders can also

apply Sawyer's Stage 2 (**acquire the knowledge**) to programming choral concerts by assembling

a team that has mastered foundational knowledge about choral programming. Much of the

creativity evidenced in memorable choral programming rests on a solid foundation of domain-

specific knowledge about choral programming.

Stage 3: Gather a Broad Range of Potentially Related Information

Sawyer explains that "creativity often results from alert awareness to unexpected and

apparently unrelated information in the environment."[30] Sawyer clarifies that "the third stage of

the creative process is to remain constantly aware of your environment, and to absorb

information from a wide variety of sources."[31] Sawyer's Eight Stages are meant to apply to all

domains of knowledge. Thus, in Stage 2 Sawyer focuses on foundational knowledge of a

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[30] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 88.
[31] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 96.

particular domain; in Stage 3 he refers to **gathering a broad range of potentially related information** regarding a specific problem in that particular domain. In this dissertation applying Sawyer's Eight Stages to the domain of choral programming, Stage 2 focuses on acquiring choral programming knowledge applicable to all concerts; Stage 3 refers to absorbing information from a wide variety of sources that is potentially related to a particular concert. To implement Stage 3 is not to learn more about creativity theory or general choral domain knowledge, but rather to allow content related to a particular concert to coalesce, saturated with information from multiple resources. However, because of the breadth of choral literature and choral formats available, when applying Sawyer's Stage 3 to choral programming, it is helpful to have some kind of magnet that gathers potentially related information. In this setting let us use *magnet* to reference an idea, a concept, or statement that elicits other related information or ideas, gathering them together in the way a magnet draws iron to itself. This guide will focus more on magnets to use while **gathering a broad range of potentially related information** from the 600 years of choral literature, than solely how to absorb information from a wide variety of sources.

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Musica in Situ

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The music and architecture performance project entitled Musica in Situ provides a choral programming example for the creative stage of **gathering a broad range of potentially related information**. The Musica in Situ Choral Program in Muncie, Indiana, was developed as part of the Ball State University focus on the Immersive Learning process. At the conclusion of each Musica in Situ experience a community choir performed a themed concert multiple times in architecturally significant locations in Indiana and Ohio. The locations and themes varied from year to year. The first step in the planning process was to find a community partner such as

Temple Beth El in Muncie, Indiana. Next, a spring academic course was populated with student musicians, architects, and other majors. The creator and sponsoring professor, Andrew Crow, led the class through multiple ways to **gather a broad range** of potentially related information.

Performing sites. The class began with a trip to the community partner's building where the class learned to analyze architectural space with guidance from the professor. The students learned to recognize architectural features such as the cube shape, overall small size, and the use of wood as a finishing material in Temple Beth El. The analysis of this one place by the group served as a model that each member of the class could follow on their own. Each student critiqued other architectural spaces that potentially could serve as possible concert venues. Eventually the information that the class gathered about potential concert sites influenced the concert design. Crow helped the class through a process that included a sequence of assignments consisting of solo research, group discussion, further solo review of the group discussion, online voting, consensus building, and finally visiting actual sites. Although many different kinds of magnets could help the programming team **gather a broad range** of potentially related information related to a specific concert, Musica in Situ focused on architecturally significant locations. The class used architectural significance as a magnet to collect a broad range of potentially related information from a variety of sources, while avoiding being overwhelmed by extraneous ideas.

Concert themes. After finalizing a list of preferred concert locations, the class next worked on gathering a broad range of information related to possible concert themes for that year. To develop a theme required finding a way of using words to describe how architecture intersects with music. Some years the class used very concrete words such as "stained glass" as

the theme. The 2015 cohort of Musica in Situ included student Austin Hamang.[32] He explained

how they chose the more abstract concept of "solemnity" to guide the selection of additional

concert venues that would complement the synagogue. They selected this word through another

iteration of solo and group work assigned by Crow to the class. Hamang related how the

assignment schedule included various specific tasks for students alone and the class as a team to

gather a broad range of potentially related information while working to select the performing

sites, concert themes, and musical selections. Both personal reflection and group discussion

helped them notice noteworthy elements that could help them gather potential themes for this

particular choral event.

Choral literature. Third, the class worked on selecting concert literature, again using a

multiple-step process to **gather a broad range** of potentially related information. While

gathering ideas of specific music to perform, the organizational mission statement of Musica in

Situ provided guidance on what types of music to even include.[33] The mission statement

expresses the value for a variety of architectural locations beyond performance halls. This often

means a piano is not available. To fulfill the organizational goal of multiple locations meant that

the information gathered ahead of time should focus on a cappella repertoire that could be

performed in locations without a piano. Music appealing to an intergenerational choir was

another criteria developed from the mission statement that influenced collecting a broad range of

information. As previously mentioned, the project selects a new theme each year. This theme is a

kind of magnet, helping the programming team to collect potential musical selections that are

significantly different from year to year. The class, functioning as a programming team, was able

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[32] Austin Hamang (undergraduate music education major, Ball State University), in a face-to-face interview with the author, March 2, 2016.

[33] Musica in Situ Facebook page, accessed April 20, 2016, https://www.facebook.com/MusicaInSitu2012/info/?tab=page_info.

to use the mission statement of Musica in Situ as another magnet to attract a broad range of
potentially related information to program this particular concert series.

The structure of the planning process coupled with prompts from the professor allowed
Stage 3 to flourish in the Musica in Situ program. Architecture as found in performance locations
helped the team **gather a broad range** of programming options. Concert themes were used to
locate potential noteworthy concert elements. The organizational mission statement was an
effective magnet to help the programming team gather information related to the specific
concerts. This example provides illustrations for three prompts about gathering a broad range of
potentially related information, as presented in table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Prompts for "Gather a Broad Range of Potentially Related Information"

3A	What performance opportunities/limitations for this specific event could help you gather a broad range of programming suggestions?
Action Point	*Consider the programming possibilities of the performance location(s), size of the choir(s), number of performance(s), availability/ability of personnel, access to desired content, and preexisting resources.*
3B	What noteworthy elements could guide the gathering of ideas related to this particular choral event?
Action Points	*Locate unique personnel available for this concert event. Notice any calendar observance at hand. Reflect on what other themes could connect audience and performers.*
3C	How can the mission statement of your organization influence your information gathering for this choral event?
Action Points	*Help your concert portray the distinct goals of your organization as they may differ between community, educational, and religious choirs. Include administrative-level impacts such as funding.*

Prompt 3A: What performance opportunities/limitations for this specific event could
help you gather a broad range of programming suggestions? *Consider the programming
possibilities of the performance location(s), size of the choir(s), number of
performance(s), availability/ability of personnel, access to desired content, and
preexisting resources.*

Define. As mentioned earlier, gathering information about choral music can be
overwhelming based on the quantity of existing and new music. This prompt focuses on

providing some magnets to attract a range of information potentially related to a problem

statement for a particular concert. One possible magnet could be the confirmed details of the

concert being programmed. Are there distinctive features about the concert location(s), choir(s)

involved, or numbers of performances that would guide what information is gathered so it is

actually related to the concert problem statement (Sawyer's Stage 1)? Other possible concert-

specific parameters include the availability and the ability of personnel, access to musical scores

if needed, or the necessity to use particular resources at a particular time. Thinking about the

limitations imposed or opportunities afforded by a specific concert can serve as a magnet while

teams seek to **gather a broad range of potentially related information**.

Discuss. Even the title *Musica in Situ* guides the gathering of a broad range of potentially

related information. "Music on location" or "Music uncovered in the place created" might be

ways of translating the Latin. Designing choral concerts around links between place and music

can give concert programmers new ways of thinking about what information could be potentially

related. Although contemporary American culture might easily find music interchangeable from

place to place, other cultures have valued music that has a distinct sense of place. Music in Situ

allows those gathering information about the choral programming process to grapple with these

issues. The opportunities offered based on the size of the performing stage or other limiting

factors may serve as a magnet for other programming teams that seek to **gather a broad range
of potentially related information**.

The group programming Musica in Situ used the magnet of performing locations to guide

their choral programming process. First, they located potential performance locations for a

particular tour. To gather information about potential choral selections they used specific facets

of those buildings to focus their search. A cappella singing was one such limitation. Those

locations also suggested opportunities, such as the possibility of singing about stained glass in

rooms where the windows would glow with light at the suggested performance time. It could be

that preexisting resources exist, such as choral scores or a beautiful instrument that could help

the team gather potential opportunities. Still other programming teams may use a magnet such as

the ability of singers or something distinctive about the audience to collect helpful information

and leave behind unsuitable ideas

For other choral concerts there often are choices specific to a particular event that will

govern the success of a particular concert, whether choral programmers have explicitly defined

them or not. For example, the skills of a guest conductor will either aid a concert or inhibit it.

Choral programmers ignore such limitations at their possible peril. Discovering such factors

could guide the information gathering about literature options and potential transitions. The

information gathering of the Musica in Situ project focused on opportunities provided by the

multigenerational choir and the overall architecture. Other choir programmers may **gather a**

broad range of potentially related information based on how choirs sound depending on their

physical location relative to the audience. The physical performance area may be a steeply raked

stage, a sunken section of the room, or the end of a flat conference space or gym. Information

gathered could focus on music originally written for a similar physical staging. Or the acoustics

of the performance space may have long reverberation times across the sound spectrum, or they

may have problem frequencies. Long reverberation time could positively affect the performance

of some genres of music, such as a cappella motets from the Renaissance. Conversely, long

reverberation time could make the text less intelligible for the audience. Using reverb time as a

magnet could prompt choral programmers to gather a different range of potentially related

information than a team that ignores this physical influence.

Is there a way at this concert to feature the unique skill set of the regular personnel?

Gathering other programming ideas may be influenced by the ability to gain access to desired

repertoire based on copyright limitations or financial situations. However, programmers may

have access to extensive preexisting resources such as print copies of sheet music, choral risers,

or theatrical sets. Using these items as magnets may help the team collect more latent

possibilities, which is at the center of Sawyer's Stage 3. This prompt helps a choral programming

team to examine the specific context of a particular concert as a way to **gather a broad range** of

information potentially related to a particular concert.

> **Prompt 3B:** What noteworthy elements could guide the gathering of ideas related to this particular choral event? *Locate unique personnel available for this concert event. Notice any calendar observance at hand. Reflect on what other themes could connect audience and performers.*

> *Define.* Prompt 3A focused on elements intrinsic to a particular performance. Prompt 3B

expands to ask what noteworthy element could be added to the problem statement of a

performance that would help **gather a broad range** of potentially related information. In other

words, add something distinctive that will help the team gather information that relates to a

specific concert. Some concerts have elements that are unique because the event happens close to

some kind of historical anniversary. Other concerts are newsworthy because of the performers

involved. A community partner who is only available for one performance date could encourage

different literature ideas from those regularly performed by a given ensemble. The concert may

be held in close proximity to a holiday that many people desire to celebrate, such as Veteran's

Day or Valentine's Day. This could guide the gathering of a broad range of potentially related

information. (See the Stage 1 illustration about *Dia de los Muertos* earlier in chapter 4 for an

example of integrating both community partners and a calendar observance.) Other themes such

as texts by one poet or a composer's anniversary could also guide the collection of related

information. Those programming choral concerts can access creativity theory by letting

noteworthy elements direct the assembling of information related to their problem statement.

Discuss. A distinctive feature of choral music mentioned in the discussion of Stage 2 is

the preponderance of short works that are often programmed together to form a choral concert.

While extended choral-orchestral works are a staple of public performance, more often those

programming choral music must find ways to effectively place many short selections in a concert

order. This aspect of choral music could be one example of a noteworthy element that could

guide the **gathering of a broad range of potentially related information**. First, the larger

number of shorter works included in many choral programs means that the gathering of

information must include many possible song titles. In contrast, people programming a typical

symphony concert often will ultimately select only three to five works to fill a full concert.

Those programming choral concerts can leverage the need for many shorter works as a magnet to

gather needed information related to the length of composition. Second, people programming

choral concerts can use many ways to group shorter choral works, with the most obvious being

themes. The information gathering is then guided by a preselected theme serving as a magnet

externally imposed on a concert. For example, some of the potential ideas for the 2015

programming for Musica in Situ were gathered because it related to the theme of "solemnity."

Current events, favorite items, literary themes, or musical genres are other examples of

noteworthy elements that could guide a programming team to gather related information. Choral

concerts can be shaped by a particular composer, new compositions, or commissioned texts.

There may be a new connection to a geographical location. The audience may have a way to

impact the literature choices, or there may be other stakeholders who influence programming

choices, such as a philanthropic foundation giving grant money. Each of these potential

noteworthy elements could guide members of a programming team in their search to accumulate

potential content related to the concert they are programming. This prompt invites choral

programmers to **gather a broad range** of information related to some noteworthy element that is

added to the concert being designed.

> **Prompt 3C:** How can the mission statement of your organization influence your
> information gathering for this choral event? *Help your concert portray the distinct goals*
> *of your organization as they may differ between community, educational, and religious*
> *choirs. Include administrative-level impacts such as funding.*

Define. Choral groups exist for different reasons. Choral programmers can use the

distinct purpose of a particular choral organization as a magnet to attract a broad range of

potentially related information. Even if they do not have a formal purpose statement, the implicit

motivation of a choir could provide a way to organize which information is gathered. For

example, programmers for educational choirs might pull together information on best

educational strategies in the choral classroom. Community choirs might find social activism,

whether explicit or implicit, as a profitable magnet that gathers information related to their

concert programming. The carefully delineated goals for the Musica in Situ choir provided

factors such as a cappella singing that served as magnets for the class as they collected related

information. Religious choirs can leverage the power of theological distinctions as a kind of

mission statement to guide how they accumulate information related to the choral music they are

programming. An implicit or explicit purpose statement can serve as a magnet that **gathers a**

broad range of potentially related information beyond ideas based on performance

opportunities (Prompt 3A) or noteworthy elements (Prompt 3B) of a particular concert.

Discuss. The information gathered by the people programming choral concerts can be

influenced by unspoken purposes as well as official mission statements. Although not always

explicitly stated, the membership of a choir can serve as an organizing principle for the

repertoire. For example, another distinctive feature of choral music is the volunteer status of many participants (see chapter 1). The purpose of this kind of choir could be stated as facilitating the involvement of volunteers. When **gathering a broad range of potentially related information**, it may be helpful for choral programmers to consider that paid singers can often sing more difficult literature with shorter rehearsal time allocated. However, a volunteer chorus may have a purpose statement of performing difficult literature. In that case, successful implementation of programming choices (those informed by the purpose statement) requires increasing the resources available to participants to help them be successful. This support may be a more extensive rehearsal schedule, rehearsal tracks for outside individual practice, or a paid quartet to guide the volunteers. The purpose statement can help the choral programmers be aware of what information is potentially related to their specific situation.

A practical application of how mission statements influence the **gathering of a broad range of potentially related information** can be seen in the very different kinds of motivation for including the use of multiple languages in a choral setting. Those programming for a Roman Catholic church may require Latin at a high mass even if the congregation does not understand the text. Perhaps that programming team would gather information about Latin settings composed post-Vatican II. Those planning for a school organization may include a song sung in Latin while providing a translation to educate the audience. That programming team might absorb information about historically significant Latin settings. Those creating a community chorus concert could include singing in Latin to symbolize solidarity with those persecuted for their faith throughout history and even today. That programming team might focus on Latin settings written by oppressed people. But this could go deeper than the use of language. Use of rehearsal time, performance venues, and words used to transition between selections in a concert

can all reveal the underlying goals linked to a particular choir's purpose statement. The purpose statement can be used as a kind of magnet to **gather a broad range of potentially related information**.

Extra-musical implications of a mission statement can influence how information is gathered for choral events. Religious choirs, primarily associated with Jewish temples or Christian churches, often use the sermon or homily text as a sort of changing mission statement for a choir. The sermon text could influence what information is accumulated in their programming meetings. For example, the Grace Worship Choir sings at both campuses of Grace Community Church, located in the Indianapolis area. Choir director Kendra Kirby is part of a thirteen-member worship arts team that holds weekly service design meetings.[34] Kirby explains that the outline of the upcoming sermon for a given Sunday functions as a purpose statement for the planning of that date. This sermon outline guides the collecting of potentially related ideas. Kirby adds that since the sermon topics change from week to week, new creative ideas can emerge from the team's awareness of a different focus for each sermon. At each meeting ideas are specifically evaluated based on how closely they fit a particular sermon summary. While many choral events do not include a sermon, there could be a different kind of changing purpose statement that can provide helpful criteria when **gathering a broad range of potentially related information**.

Alchemy Project. As an aside, these prompts are not the only way to integrate this stage of the creative process. Some purpose statements are formed alongside the rehearsal process of a new choir. Rather than being fully formed so that the purpose statement is a kind of magnet for **gathering a broad range of related information**, it is as if the collecting of information leads

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[34] Kendra Kirby (choir director, Grace Church, Indianapolis, IN), in a face-to-face interview with the author, March 23, 2016.

to the actual purpose for the choir. As a graduate student at University of Minnesota, Emilie

Amrein founded the Alchemy Project to promote community and individual health through

multidisciplinary arts programming. Amrein was initially intrigued by how Benjamin Britten's

Rejoice in the Lamb and Tarik O'Reagan's *The Ecstasies Above* portrayed the connection

between creativity and mental health.[35] The Alchemy Project's purpose became facilitating

conversations about mental health between the community, students, mental health professionals,

and scholars; choral music became a tool to address these non-musical concerns. Sawyer's Stage

3 was worked out in a different way in this example, showing that the prompts are not the only

way to integrate the Eight Stages with choral programming.

Stage 3 Summary

Prompts such as those above can help the people responsible for programming choral

concerts to **gather a broad range** of potentially related information. Sometimes the magnet for

collecting ideas comes from something innate to a particular performance. Sometimes a

noteworthy element outside of the concert can be helpful in collecting information potentially

related to the problem statement. The purpose statement of a particular choir can also be a

helpful magnet to gather related information. Choral programmers can use their perceptions to

notice new gaps as well as opportunities in the environment that are related to the problem. Thus,

those planning a choral concert can **gather a broad range** of potentially related information

from a variety of sources, which can lead to creative elements in concerts.

Stage 4: Take Time Off for Incubation

Sawyer continues his Eight Stages of the Creative Process by explaining that "once

you've acquired the relevant knowledge, and some amount of . . . [additional] information, the

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[35] Emilie Amrein (assistant professor of choral studies, University of San Diego), in a face-to-face interview with the author, March 21, 2016.

unconscious mind will process and associate that information in unpredictable and surprising ways."[36] He calls this time off **incubation**. Since many of the fifty-plus studies of the incubation effect use clinical testing that interrupts the creative process for seconds or minutes instead of days,[37] Sawyer asserts "it is impossible to study authentic, real-world creativity under controlled experimental conditions."[38] However, he claims that incubation is helpful when conscious effort precedes and follows it. For people programming choral concerts, this time off can take planned or unplanned forms. Often the work of programming a choral concert can be arranged in a timeline for the group that contains gaps to give the unconscious mind the space to create. The design of specific tasks for individuals can proactively include this stage of creativity so that incubation fuels the imagination.

<div align="center">*Tales of Christmas*</div>

An example of including **incubation** in the choral planning process is found in the production entitled *Tales of Christmas,* the 2003 edition of a multi-year string of sold-out ticketed events. Each year multiple performances were produced by a church choir in Valparaiso, Indiana, that programmed the event through multiple collaborative planning meetings. The performances included choirs, instrumentalists, and actors, as well as dancers from a local dance studio. Each year the choir selected a new theme for its Christmas program. Some years the church used existing musicals, but the year *Tales of Christmas* was produced, the program included a first act that was custom-written by the church's drama writers.

Timeline. The team's planning timeline included deadlines for basic concepts, for choosing musical selections, and for finalizing program flow. Team member Debbie Wietzel

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[36] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 88.
[37] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 100.
[38] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 104.

remembers that before the first meeting about basic concepts, team members were assigned to actively watch classic holiday movies to help locate familiar songs that could be used in the concert.[39] The time between watching several movies, such as *White Christmas* and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, and the actual meeting allowed the unconscious mind of each member of the group to sift through options and make potential connections. Then at the first meeting, team members brought ideas generated from their pre-meeting assignment. At this meeting they were guided through the idea-generation stage (Sawyer's Stage 5), where the incubation between solo work and team work hopefully facilitated creativity. Because the timeline included multiple team meetings before the "basic concepts" deadline, downtime for the group was included between meetings. Those programming choral concerts can also design a timeline with enough margin to provide time off for the group between sessions to allow for **incubation** to fuel the creative process.

  <u>Task list.</u> The instrumental arranging needed for this event provides an opportunity to observe **incubation** in the workflow. While selections such as "You're a Mean One, Mister Grinch" were commercially available, some other songs needed instrumental parts written. After a group meeting in August, the orchestrator received an assignment for a particular work. After referencing the original recording, a first draft of the parts was written in September. Because they were not played until November, the orchestrator had time to work on other projects, allowing both the conscious and the unconscious mind time to imagine refinements to the Christmas scores. Before the holiday parts were needed in rehearsal, creative revisions were generated because of the incubation time. Assignments were given to other individuals as well, such as developing choreography, arranging vocal/instrumental parts, and designing sets. For

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[39] Debbie Wietzel (administrative assistant, First Church of the Nazarene, Valparaiso, IN), in electronic correspondence with the author concerning the 2009 performances, March 18-28, 2016.

each person, incubation time was built into the cycle: conscious thought during individual work, incubation time after solo work but before the meeting, and conscious thought during a group session. People programming choral concerts may find it advantageous to build a sequence of conscious work, unconscious reflection, and then conscious work into the task list for individuals participating on teams.

Both the timeline for group work and task lists for individuals are ways of including Sawyer's Stage 4 of **taking time off for incubation**. While the actions of other programming teams may vary from those listed by the Valparaiso team, the following prompts invite choral programmers to access this stage of creativity as presented in table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Prompts for "Take Time Off for Incubation"

4A	How can a proposed timeline for the group include the reasonable allocation of downtime within or between programming sessions?
Action Point	*Use foresight and planning so the programming schedule can include incubation gaps that allow for more creativity and stronger concerts.*
4B	How can a proposed task list include individual brainstorming, incubation, and then discussion with others?
Action Point	*Have team members complete solo assignments before the group meets, allowing for incubation after the assignment is finished but before actually meeting.*

Prompt 4A: How can a proposed timeline for the group include the reasonable allocation of downtime within or between programming sessions? *Use foresight and planning so that the programming schedule can include incubation gaps that allow for more creativity and stronger concerts.*

Define. When people programming choral concerts wish to proactively include **incubation** in their process, they can craft a timeline that separates important deadlines with enough margin of time to provide the opportunity for incubation. Building downtime into their four-month timeline helped ensure the creativity of the *Tales of Christmas* programming team. Other teams with different cycles of planning, such as a religious choir with weekly performance obligations, may need to find a different rhythm of planning, executing, and evaluating of choral

concerts to include the incubation of ideas. Sometimes the unconscious mind associates

information in helpful ways even if incubation is not formally placed on an agenda. However,

applying the scholarship behind Sawyer's Stage 4 can benefit planning teams who proactively

include incubation in the concert programming timeline. Since seemingly sudden flashes of

insight can follow periods of downtime when the brain is not actively pursuing solutions,

allowing time for the unconscious mind to make connections can lead to creativity.

Discuss. Successful teams purposefully scheduled more than one meeting to build in

downtime between meetings. The team planning *Tales of Christmas* used foresight to invest in a

longer timeline of meetings that allowed for **incubation**. Some teams build incubation time into

their programming cycle by combining tasks in any given meeting such as: debrief the previous

event, fine-tune the next event, and brainstorm the following event. Thus the unconscious mind

can be working on a later meeting assignment as the conscious mind is finalizing the current

meeting assignment. Even during meetings, facilitators could allow some amount of discussion

governed by free association to occur as a chance for members to have individual ruminations as

needed. For some, meal breaks serve this function well. An individual or group programming a

choral concert to access the power of incubation in developing creativity can employ many

different kinds of planning structures.

In addition to downtime, the group timeline may benefit from including non-task

activities that may feed the creative possibilities of the unconscious. For example, hearing other

choirs perform can nurture the unconscious mind to be a fertile source of creative programming

ideas. While the following ideas are not directly supported by research cited by Sawyer, many

people in the arts find hikes out of doors,[40] relaxed meals,[41] and trips to cultural centers[42] help

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[40] J. Piirto, *Organic Creativity in the Classroom: Teaching to Intuition in the Arts and Academics* (Waco, TX: Prufrock Press, 2013),xxi.

maintain or revive their creativity. Instead of defining incubation solely as passively waiting for inspiration, allow incubation to include solo and group enrichment activities that broaden perspectives or remind practitioners of what they already know. People who do not understand the role of the unconscious mind in nurturing creativity may describe these activities as frivolous. Creativity author Gordon MacKenzie, in *Orbiting the Giant Hairball*,[43] tells a parable of an accountant who questions the efficacy of letting cows chew their cud when they should focus on being in the barn producing milk. Of course, making milk requires the cud-chewing time spent in the pasture before having productive time in the barn hooked up to a milking machine.[44] Choral programmers should include **incubation** during the creative process to avoid starving the creative imagination.

> **Prompt 4B:** How can a proposed task list include individual brainstorming, incubation, and then discussion with others? *Have team members complete solo assignments before the group meets, allowing for incubation after the assignment is finished but before actually meeting.*

Define. While trying to include downtime to allow the unconscious mind to associate information in surprising and useful ways, it may be helpful for programming teams to include **incubation** on the task list for individuals. Rather than beginning all brainstorming activities in a group setting, find a way to have individual assignments followed by time off before a group session. Even without explaining the scientific research to the group, this provides a systematic way to apply Sawyer's Stage 4. The orchestrating example from *Tales of Christmas* shows one way individuals can use a task list to proactively apply this insight. For other choral programming teams, the meeting facilitators can assign a task for individuals to finish on their

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[41] Beach, *An Hour on Sunday: Creating Moments of Transformation and Wonder,* 113.

[42] Rory Noland, *The Heart of the Artist: A Character-Building Guide for You and Your Ministry Team* (Zondervan, 2009), 148.

[43] Gordon MacKenzie, *Orbiting the Giant Hairball: A Corporate Fool's Guide to Surviving with Grace* (New York: Viking, 1998).

[44] MacKenzie, *Orbiting the Giant Hairball*, 63-64.

own during an actual meeting before reporting back to the group in the same meeting. The brief time between solo work and returning to the group may provide space for incubation so that new ideas could emerge and then be reported in the group session. A leader could remind participants about the value of incubation when sending other correspondence like a meeting reminder email. Also, if the tasks of individual team members are spread out chronologically, as shown in the *Tales of Christmas* example, the inclusion of incubation happens almost by default. This is one reason to avoid trying to do too much creative work in one sitting.

Discuss. When the term *brainstorming* entered the lexicon of strategies to solve problems through the work of Alex Osborn in the 1950s,[45] it was most often used for a group session to generate ideas when members deferred judgment about the ideas being created. Osborn's method did not stress any preparation work by individuals before the group meeting. Subsequent research has not completely confirmed this hypothesis that useful ideas can be obtained without preparation work. Instead, additional studies, such as that of researcher MaryAnne Gobble,[46] have found value in having individual brainstorming followed by group interaction. Gobble explains that "having team members work individually before they come to group brainstorming can provide fuel for the team's collaborative process and avoid some of the dangers of group thinking, peer pressure, and cognitive fixation."[47] People programming choral concerts can use the findings from this kind of research to include **incubation** when designing the timeline for their concert preparation.

A hybrid of the group timeline and individual task list is possible. Some church choirs sing fifty-two times a year and choose to plan these occasions through collaborative meetings.

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[45] Osborn, *Applied Imagination: Principles and Procedures of Creative Problem-Solving*.

[46] MaryAnne M. Gobble, "The Persistence of Brainstorming," *Research Technology Management* 57, no. 1 (2014).

[47] Gobble, "The Persistence of Brainstorming," 66.

Those programming weekly events may not have the luxury of a four-month planning process such as that used by *Tales of Christmas*. However, regular **incubation** can be built into other planning processes. First Baptist Church of Muncie, Indiana, places a monthly meeting on their group timeline. At least one week in advance of the proposed meeting, as group facilitator I will send an email with the coming lectionary readings, sermon topics, and other church year observances. Each team member uses an individual task list to actively prepare for the meeting by finding possible resources. But team member Lydia Burton mentions how serendipity also allows team members to make unexpected connections that help keep the choral programming fresh.[48] Whether serendipity, or a case of information being "on the tip of my tongue," I believe it can be attributed to a clear statement of the problem offered by the email, coupled with incubation time between the email and the actual meeting. Then, in the meeting people may have a hunch that a particular lyric is a good fit, even if they cannot quote the exact line. Surprisingly, when the source is located, often there is a line that fits the situation. This seeming intuition could be a result of including incubation in the proposed group timeline. I believe creativity, at times, requires a side door to allow ideas in when a frontal approach does not result in the desired result. Whether through a group timeline, an individual task list, or some combination, teams can plan to include downtime to help develop creativity unconsciously.

Stage 4 Summary

The above prompts are only a few examples of ways to proactively use **incubation** as part of the planning of choral concerts. The timeline for the group can be built to include breaks between conscious work to allow the unconscious mind to make surprising connections. Tasks for each team member can include individual brainstorming before, during, or after the group

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[48] Lydia Burton (team member, First Baptist Church of Muncie), in a face-to-face interview with the author, March 9, 2016.

sessions. Activities that deepen the creative reservoir can also be part of planning to use

incubation as part of the creative process of designing choral concerts. These are only some

examples of how to include incubation as part of the creative process. While the exact moment

of sudden insight cannot be forced, timelines can be developed that allow for incubation.

Stage 5: Generate a Large Variety of Ideas

"Unconscious incubation supports the generation of potential solutions of the problem,

but conscious attention to the problem can also result in potential solutions,"[49] relates Sawyer

when discussing Stage 5. This stage centers on developing a plethora of possible solutions to the

problem statement generated in Sawyer's Stage 1. For people programming choral concerts, the

strategic use of meeting time can focus attention on **generating a large variety of ideas** relating

to the statement of the problem. Often the quantity and variety of solutions generated can be

linked to the eventual success of the concert. Creativity research reveals specific principles

whose application can help programming teams produce a greater number of ideas. Incorporating

Sawyer's Stage 5 can include reiterating these kinds of principles of idea generation at the

beginning of meetings. Also, the planning group can invest energy during the meeting time to

adjust the problem statement if needed to allow for a fresh line of inquiry that may generate

many more ideas. The rationale for **generating a large variety of ideas** is to produce potential

solutions.

Evening with Friends

A team planning approach to choral concerts used at a local church in Chesterton,

Indiana, illustrates some of the specific principles from creativity research that help programmers

produce a greater **variety of ideas**. Worship associate Carol Hazen recalls holiday presentations

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[49] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 88.

from the 1990s, called Evening with Friends, which were held multiple nights each December with gourmet desserts served before the actual concert.[50] The programming team associated with this event met multiple times with specialists in music, drama, dance, and video. Members of the team had received some training in group brainstorming techniques from the arts conferences of the Willow Creek Community Church (highlighted in Stage 2 above). During that training, principles such as "umbrella of grace" and "hold your idea loosely" were explained as pithy ways to remember how creativity flourishes when judgment is withheld during the idea generation phase. To **generate a large variety of ideas** the team was encouraged to go ahead and mention incomplete or extravagant ideas because there is an umbrella of grace protecting the idea giver. Furthermore, if teammates are too possessive of ideas, then others may be unwilling to participate. Holding ideas loosely can give others permission to generate a large variety of ideas.

Best practices. One year the transitional content between choral numbers focused on modern day interpretations of the Magi who visited the Christ Child. Early on in the brainstorming, it was suggested that one of the Magi should be a comic relief character, a suggestion that required an "umbrella of grace" to even mention due to religious sensibilities! The premise of "holding your ideas loosely" led to the original concept being refined so that this character could be a BMX-style biker with prerecorded video of him with his bike at notable landmarks in Chesterton. Because the team was able to "withhold judgment" while **generating a large variety of ideas**, the production ultimately featured a live performance of the Beach Boys "I Get Around" culminating in the actor riding the bike up the center aisle of the performance

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[50] Carol Hazen (worship associate, Liberty Bible Church, Chesterton, IN), in electronic correspondence with the author, March 26, 2016.

space. Using the best practices from creativity research allowed the programming team to generate a large variety of ideas, some of which were incorporated into the performance.

Fresh lines of inquiry. During the team meetings the group also refined the problem statement they were trying to solve. At some point, they shifted from solving the problem of comic relief and sought to actively involve the audience during this sequence. Since the team was willing to invest the time in refining the statement of the problem, they found fresh lines of inquiry that helped **generate an even larger variety of ideas**. Although multiple ideas were presented in the meeting, the idea selected (Sawyer Stage 7) was the audience tossing beach balls during "I Get Around."

Choral programmers can incorporate specific actions into their planning process to include best practices of idea generation. Sometimes revamping a problem statement can help a team to produce a larger variety of ideas. Those seeking to **generate a large variety of ideas** in their programming of choral concerts could choose to use either of the prompts from table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Prompts for "Generate a Large Variety of Ideas"

5A	How can your planning process reinforce best practices of generating a large variety of ideas?
Action Point	*Reiterate principles such as* withhold judgment at this stage of the creative process *at the beginning of a session.*
5B	How could adjustments to the problem statement allow for a fresh line of inquiry that generates a large variety of ideas?
Action Point	*Be willing to invest the time to refine the statement of the problem as an impetus to generate a larger variety of ideas.*

Prompt 5A: How can your planning process reinforce best practices of generating a large variety of ideas? *Reiterate principles such as* withhold judgment at this stage of the creative process *at the beginning of a session.*

Define. Whether the team meets only once or multiple times, the task list for planning can explicitly include reviewing best practices of **generating a large variety of ideas**. Don't rely on

the false assumption that brainstorming is a free-for-all that produces world-class ideas no matter what process is followed. Instead proactively implement strategic application of creativity research. Take time in meetings to affirm the value of withholding judgment in this stage of creativity. Find humorous ways to reinforce the "umbrella of grace." Some teams have a Nerf football ready to throw at a team member who too quickly evaluates the efficacy of a proposed idea during the idea-generation stage.[51]

Discuss. Some people find it easy to generate a seemingly endless array of different ideas. Many of us benefit from participating in a team structure that makes it safe to suggest an idea that is not yet completely formed. Although selecting the best ideas must be part of the creative process (Sawyer's Stage 7), effective programming teams find ways to reinforce the value of just **generating a large variety of ideas** as possible solutions to the problem statement of a particular concert. Here are some mantras that summarize some of the best practices of idea generation.

- Allow for an umbrella of grace.
- Withhold judgment at this stage of the creative process.
- Hold your ideas loosely.
- Great things can happen when people don't worry about who gets the credit.

Allow for an Umbrella of Grace. If an idea has to be perfect the first time it is presented, then fewer ideas may be shared. An umbrella of grace allows for those who process externally (instead of inside their own head) to begin sharing an idea that then is actually developed by the group through conversation. The Evening with Friends team entertained the idea of comic relief before any completely explained concert element was presented in the meeting. In colloquial terms this idea could be expressed as "No idea is a bad idea during brainstorming."

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[51] Carlos Whittaker, "5 Brainstorming Techniques I Stole For You," accessed May 15, 2016, http://carloswhittaker.com/2012/02/stolebrain/.

Withhold judgment at this stage of the creative process. Although evaluating ideas is a critical part of the creative process, evaluation is a separate stage according to Sawyer[52] and other researchers.[53] Evaluating the possible financial or personnel requirements of a potential idea too quickly can short-circuit the generation process. This potentially eliminates the possibility of refining an idea to make it possible. You can imagine how members of the team could have been offended by imagining a BMX-biker in the sanctuary during Advent. However, delaying evaluation during this phase of the team meeting allowed time to generate a larger number of potential ideas. It may be that the BMX idea would not be appropriate in all settings, but evaluation of ideas is covered in Sawyer's Stage 7: **select the best ideas, applying relevant criteria**.

Hold your ideas loosely. Although brainstorming requires participants to speak up, spending time to defend the idea instead of developing ideas can short-circuit idea generation. For Evening with Friends, this principle was demonstrated in the process of developing the comic relief character which occurred because team members allowed their ideas to be altered. A gracious spirit while generating ideas helps others engage in the process without fear, often resulting in generating a large number of ideas.

Great things can happen when people don't worry about who gets the credit. In the limited time environment of generating ideas, any time spent arguing about who created the great idea is time lost to actually improving the idea or generating additional ideas. It was interesting talking with team members during the dissertation writing as they remembered this concert from almost 20 years ago. The creative ideas were still fresh in the mind; however, the team found it difficult to attribute complete ideas to specific team members.

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[52] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 88.

[53] Feirong Yuan and Jing Zhou, "Differential Effects of Expected External Evaluation on Different Parts of the Creative Idea Production Process and on Final Product Creativity," *Creativity Research Journal* 20, no. 4 (2008).

While there are other principles available to those who program choral concerts, these are some useful reminders concerning generating ideas. Reviewing such principles at the beginning of a session dedicated to generating ideas reminds participants of the mental orientation that can lead to a multiplicity of possible ideas.

Prompt 5B: How could adjustments to the problem statement allow for a fresh line of inquiry that generates a large variety of ideas? *Be willing to invest the time to refine the statement of the problem as an impetus to generate a larger variety of ideas.*

Define. When the goal is to **generate a large variety of ideas** that could be potential solutions, sometimes it helps to adjust the problem statement in some way to facilitate additional idea generation. For choral programmers, the initial problem statement may be broadened to include other art forms. Or it may become clear in a programming meeting that the initial goal may need to be refined; a hypothetical example problem of finding Renaissance madrigals may need to then be additionally narrowed by particular content of the lyrics. Reframing the problem statement may help a team allow for fresh insight, thus generating ideas that could potentially be the best solution. The additional volume of ideas from a slightly different problem statement could lead to greater variety in the ideas.

Discuss. Sometimes people programming a choral concert can be so focused on a particular statement of the problem that they ignore generating acceptable solutions because the wording leads them to discount certain types of solutions. During the brainstorming of ideas for the Evening with Friends event, too narrow of a focus on comic relief by the performers may have blinded the planning team from exploring actual audience participation. By adjusting the problem statement being solved, a larger number of ideas were generated, including using beach balls. When that idea was selected and implemented, the planners noticed the audience was visibly engaged. Ultimately that was the goal behind the discussion of comic relief anyway: How

do programming choices reengage the audience multiple times through this modern-day interpretation of the Magi who visited the Christ Child? It was hard to be passive as an audience member when beach balls land near you! Being willing to invest the time to refine the statement of the problem can help choral programmers **generate a large variety of ideas.**

Stage 5 Summary

Generating a large variety of ideas may be helped by following the above prompts. Best practices from brainstorming can help teams generate a large number of ideas. Other team members offering grace as one person struggles to articulate a not-yet-fully-formed idea is one such principle. Reformatting the statement of the problem can lead to more potential solutions when choral programmers produce additional free-associated hints and thoughts. When able to suspend judgment, programmers can give conscious attention to generate many more ideas than will ultimately be used. This prepares us for Sawyer's Stage 6: **combine ideas** in unexpected ways.

Stage 6: Combine Ideas in Unexpected Ways

Sawyer explains that "many creative ideas result from a combination of existing mental concepts or ideas."[54] For people programming choral concerts, this stage may seem obvious since so many choral concerts combine existing choral works into new concert orders. But often, to succeed at Sawyer's Stage 6, it may take several iterations of possible combinations to actually find a viable option. Discipline is often required to invest the time and effort needed to work through multiple iterations of combining particular ideas. Those new to implementing this stage may be surprised at these costs, but creativity generally requires hard work. Rather than counting on having a sudden flash of insight, Sawyer recommends understanding creativity as a

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[54] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 88.

process where "the mind seems to gradually get closer to the correct solution."[55] In choral

programming, **combining ideas in unexpected ways** may look like stacking details on top of

each other—such as discovering a new pairing of choral works. Possible combinations may

come in a programming team meeting, or may be developed when one collaborator builds on an

existing an idea during a rehearsal.

Fairfield, Connecticut, 2007

While there are many ways to apply Sawyer's Stage 6, this concrete example is drawn

from a holiday dessert and interdisciplinary concert presented by a local church's arts groups

performed in Fairfield, Connecticut, in 2007. Scenes from a drama were interspersed with choral

and instrumental music. The physical stage incorporated separate areas for the music and for the

acting, joined by a narrow platform with a large projection screen used for lyrics and visual

content. The programming team in Connecticut valued separate meetings to first generate ideas,

then to **combine ideas**, and finally to select the single idea that best fit a particular moment.[56]

Combining ideas to hit the target. The target for much of choral programming is simply

that the audience enjoys the performance. But when choral music is presented in partnership with

drama, the songs may need to also advance the action of the plot. The 2007 Connecticut

performance was plot driven and had a scene change built into the script. An up-tempo choral

number was selected to cover the physical action of changing the set from the exterior of a

shopping mall to an interior jail cell. The programming team sought to **combine ideas in**

unexpected ways to provide possible content to appear on a screen while the choir sang.

According to Judith Dann, drama director, several ideas of possible visuals to combine with the

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[55] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 114.

[56] Judith Dann (drama director, Trinity Baptist Church, Fairfield, CT), in electronic correspondence with the author, March 26, 2016.

choral music were suggested by various members of the team.[57] During the team meeting, ideas were first combined in incomplete ways, requiring group discussion to pin down distinct possibilities. Ultimately, humorous "mug shots" of the characters were chosen to be shown on the screen. According to the plot, these characters had just been arrested. The adoption of this combination of ideas helped the choral song more closely hit both targets of entertaining the audience and propelling the plot.

Explore unexpected combinations. When the lighting designer saw this scene in rehearsal, he explored ways to **combine ideas in unexpected ways**. He suggested supporting the screen content with a new lighting cue. He could have discounted this combination because the lighting plot did not include this special effect. However, he explored options without too quickly evaluating their efficacy. Through the help of some crew members, he was able to add red-and-blue lights flashing at the beginning of the instrumental introduction to the up-tempo choral number to imitate the lights of a police car. An acceptable idea (give the audience something to hear while the set is being transformed) was modified into a better idea (propel the plot forward while the set is being transformed) during a planning session. Additional combinations of ideas led to the final production idea (use multiple medium of live choral performance, custom video content, and live lighting cues to propel the plot while the set is being transformed).

The programming team was able to combine production ideas in unexpected ways so that the choral music more fully hit the target for this particular concert. The lighting designer was able to avoid short-circuiting the creative process by withholding evaluation criteria during the idea combination stage. Furthermore, this example demonstrates one way to **combine ideas in**

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[57] Judith Dann, March 26, 2016.

unexpected ways. The programming team considered adding something from another artistic discipline to an existing choral element. These illustrations highlight several possible ways to implement the research concerning this stage of creativity, such as the prompts listed in table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Prompts for "Combine Ideas in Unexpected Ways"

6A	What idea(s) can be combined with the idea being discussed so that it more closely hits the target?
Action Points	*Take the acceptable idea and refine it to make it good. Take the good idea and refine it to make it great.*
6B	How can you explore unexpected combinations without too quickly evaluating their efficacy?
Action Point	*Remember that applying evaluation criteria too quickly can short-circuit the creative process.*
6C	What unexpected combinations are produced when you consider adding something from another artistic discipline to an existing choral element? Would these improve the concert flow?
Action Point	*Value how even simple additions, such as spoken words or a change in how the choir is standing, can reenergize a concert for the audience.*

Prompt 6A: What idea(s) can be combined with the idea being discussed so that it more closely hits the target? *Take the acceptable idea and refine it to make it good. Take the good idea and refine it to make it great.*

Define. Sawyer's Stage 6 suggests **combining ideas in unexpected ways** since creativity often results from the permutations of existing concepts. Choral programmers can invest in creativity by making the effort required to continue beyond the idea-generation stage (Sawyer's Stage 5) and to enter the idea-combination stage (Sawyer's Stage 6). Choral programmers may combine a pair of choral pieces in a particularly apt way so that the sum becomes greater than the parts. Other times verbs such as *refining* or *modifying* might label the actions of this stage of creativity as well. The addition of police lights in the Connecticut example could be seen as a refinement of the arrest sequence more than the combination of two unlike things. In any case, creativity includes the process of combining ideas so that they more closely hit the target provided by the problem statement.

Discuss. The collaborative planning team for the 2007 Connecticut concert invested the time required to not only generate new ideas (Sawyer's Stage 5) such as covering the transition with music, but how to **combine ideas in unexpected ways** that added value (Sawyer's Stage 6), such as including the mug shots and lighting cues. The cycle of generating, combining, and selecting best ideas took multiple meetings. As the team wrestled with flow, they realized the initial solution of this programming problem was incomplete. When they suggested possible additions to the up-tempo choral chart, they sought to more closely hit their target of entertaining the audience. This is one method of **combining ideas in unexpected ways**.

Sometimes the first idea has the basic kernel of success but needs refinement to open into a fully grown idea. Creativity in Sawyer's Stage 6 includes any action that adds a new life to an existing idea. Adding the right twist or even taking away the extraneous parts can help make the idea better. This is not to say that complicated is better than simple. The "added value" could be reducing something to its most essential form, similar to the way sap from a maple tree is reduced to make maple syrup. The Connecticut planning team did not need to have an actual police car on stage to propel the plot along. Showing the actual fingerprinting while the characters were being booked would have been extraneous. Humorous mug shots shown with energetic music succeeded in hitting the target of entertaining the audience while propelling the plot forward. Value was added because members of the team **combined ideas in unexpected ways**.

> **Prompt 6B:** How can you explore unexpected combinations without too quickly evaluating their efficacy? *Remember that applying evaluation criteria too quickly can short-circuit the creative process.*

Define. It can be easy for a group to vacillate between combining ideas and evaluating how well those ideas may fit in a particular situation. But greater creativity is engendered if these

tasks are clearly differentiated. Remind the team that the current task is combining ideas and later the ideas will be evaluated. Even though the short summary given above does not include them, many untenable or boring ideas were suggested as well as those ideas eventually selected and mentioned above. When the team withholds evaluation during Stage 6, it is often easier to **combine ideas in unexpected ways**.

Discuss. This is similar to Prompt 5A. While that prompt was concerned about withholding judgment while ideas are generated, this one focuses on delaying evaluation while combining ideas. It requires the team to invest time to take ideas already generated and **combine them in unexpected ways**. To amalgamate ideas may require character strengths such as courage, curiosity, and confidence from the team. Exploring combinations can call for courage to voice ideas that are not completely formed or totally possible. In the Connecticut example, the initial brainstorming of adding screen content was not a fully developed idea. Furthermore, suggesting combinations can require curiosity to wonder how things could be better. Tenacity uncovers the steps it would take to make the combination happen. The lighting technician in the Connecticut example did not have flashing lights installed in the lighting rig. But his curiosity helped him generate and combine ideas that were ultimately implemented. Combining ideas can also require confidence to navigate connections that others have not yet made. Confidence allows space for ideas to be nurtured and combined into memorable contributions to the creative process.[58] In Stage 6, confidence, curiosity, and courage all help programming teams combine ideas without evaluating them. Premature evaluation short-circuits the creative process.

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[58] Beach, *An Hour on Sunday: Creating Moments of Transformation and Wonder*, 172-76.

Prompt 6C: What unexpected combinations are produced when you consider adding something from another artistic discipline to an existing choral element? Would these improve the concert flow? *Value how even simple additions, such as spoken words or a change in how the choir is standing, can reenergize a concert for the audience.*

Define. If the goal is to formulate **unexpected combinations of ideas**, consider how adding another art form to the choral performance might spark new concepts. The implied purpose statement of the Connecticut event was to include multiple kinds of performing arts.[59] So right away the team discussed what could be combined with the choral number that was selected to cover the change of scenery. This team did not need encouragement to add multidisciplinary elements, but some teams might. Prompt 6C helps focus the discussion to enhance the experience for the audience.

Discuss. Although the Connecticut example highlights more complicated combinations, even in music-only concerts there are almost always opportunities for spoken transitions. Speaking can be cross-disciplinary when it includes oratory, poetry, or excerpts from plays, which provides a way to **combine ideas in unexpected ways** in performance. Spoken selections can be enhanced by the addition of some simple aspect of staging such as location or physical posture. Another simple way to include multiple art forms in a music-only concert is to create simple staging changes. Moving between multiple positions on stage does not have to require particular talent or financial resources, just the investment of time to create and teach the transition. Teams can also seek to **combine ideas** in unexpected ways if they implement more complicated cross-disciplinary dimensions. Although many different kinds of collaborations between art forms are possible, table 4.9 includes ten categories in summary.

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[59] Judith Dann (drama director, Trinity Baptist Church, Fairfield, CT), in electronic correspondence with the author, March 26, 2016.

Table 4.9 Ten Ways to Incorporate Cross-Disciplinary Elements with Choral Music

Cross-Disciplinary Elements	*Additional Notes*
Choral Movement And non-choral-member movement	Solos or groups utilizing dance, banners, gymnastics.
Architecture And nontraditional performance spaces	Blocking on stage and in auditorium. Outdoors, museums, catacombs. Audience seated or standing?
Live Fine Artist	Painter, potter, or other visual artist onstage.
Oratory/Dramatic/Storyteller	Monologues, scenes, extended segments on stage. Preconcert talk and spoken transitions.
Screen Content: illustration driven Or story driven	Still photos or videos of paintings, computer graphics. Content from existing movies or new custom content.
Cultural Artifacts	Crafts, food, language, costume.
Costuming, Set Design	Thematic or stylistic.
Technical Arts	Use of sound reinforcement and sound effects. Architectural and theatrical lighting.
Olfactory and Tactile Elements For Audience	Fresh bread baking or incense. Miniature flags for patriotic concert, glow sticks.
Audience Participation	Sing along, conga lines, technology-enabled.

Stage 6 Summary

The above prompts offer suggestions on how to **combine ideas** in unexpected ways.

Existing ideas from Stage 5 can be combined so they have value added to more closely hit the

target. Withholding evaluation in this stage can help the exploration of unexpected combinations.

Looking for ideas beyond just choral music can also provide fertile opportunities to program

memorable choral concerts. Those responsible for programming choral concerts can apply

creativity research to their process of choral programming by including the step of refining

iterations of unexpected combinations of existing ideas.

Stage 7: Select the Best ideas, Applying Relevant Criteria.

According to Sawyer "the creative process typically results in a large number of potential solutions. Most of them will turn out not to be effective solutions; successful creators must be good at selecting which ideas to pursue further."[60] While this may seem obvious upon reading a clear statement such as this one, unfortunately, many of us have sat through a choral concert where the winnowing down of ideas did not successfully occur before the concert started. The relevant selection criteria for people programming choral concerts can change from choir to choir and perhaps even from concert to concert. **Selecting the best ideas** may rely on relevant criteria like the time, talent, and financial resources available for a particular concert. Alternately, ideas may be sorted by more esoteric criteria, such as displaying the "wow" factor, creating audience goose bumps, or reaching desired organizational goals. Aesthetic criteria can influence what is perceived as the best or most authentic idea. The audience, performers, and other stakeholders may impact the relevant criteria as well. Stage 7 creativity is where the programming team selects the best ideas by applying relevant criteria.

BSU Spectacular

An example of Stage 7 is gleaned from the Ball State University Singers from Muncie, Indiana, who present an annual "Spectacular Show" that combines live vocalists and instrumentalists with sound and lighting, and often includes novelty acts to engage the audience. Portions of the concert are brainstormed almost a year in advance. Alan Alder, director of the Ball State University Singers, guides the team in programming the concert.[61] Their programming team uses weekly meetings across multiple months to **gather** (Sawyer's Stage 3), **generate** (Sawyer's Stage 5), and **combine ideas** (Sawyer's Stage 6). Then they **select the best ideas** to

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[60] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 88.

[61] Alan Alder (director of Ball State University Singers), in a face-to-face interview with the author, February 29, 2016.

generate a full two-hour show by applying the relevant criteria (Sawyer's Stage 7) to decide which ideas are ultimately implemented in the rehearsal and performing process.

Clearly switch from generating to selecting ideas. Often the second half of the concert includes some kind of novelty act. For the 2015 show, team members brainstormed repeating the "Hoedown" novelty feature from the year before since it had been well received. Alder led the team in exploring other possibilities (Stages 5 and 6), including a Superhero medley. Four months before the concerts, Alder helped the team negotiate the shift from generating ideas to evaluating them. The mantra while generating ideas is "no idea is a bad idea," but selecting the best ideas requires using evaluation tools. A skilled facilitator can help avoid inadvertently offending team members, which can result when some people are still working under the other mantra but the rest of the team has moved on to **select the best ideas**. Alder felt strongly that repeating the hoedown was not as robust as including a new feature, such as the Superhero medley. The popularity of movies produced by Marvel Comics provided a strong incentive to use this music as a bridge to the audience, particularly for the matinee performance attended by students from local public schools. Since the BSU Singers aim to live up to their description as Indiana's goodwill ambassadors, highlighting the positive nature of crime-fighting superheroes seemed to be a good fit! The Superhero medley was selected as the best option for the novelty-song slot of the 2015 Spectacular.

Use statement of the problem to provide selection criteria. Although the specific problem statement for this concert could be understood as "be spectacular," other criteria such as flow, finances, and the availability of costuming influenced which ideas would be implemented. All of these considerations were used together when **selecting the best ideas**. With the decision that the vocal medley was to feature Batman, Wonder Woman, and Spider Man, assignments for the next

brainstorming session included pricing costuming and discovering the availability of the music copyright clearances. When the team gathered again, they used all these considerations to choose the best option. In the performance, the medley was positioned after a high-energy gospel-style selection and before the climatic closing number. The team affirmed that the audience would be familiar with the songs in the Superhero medley. This was a strong benefit because it balanced the closing number that was probably not known to many in the audience. Another criterion developed from the concert problem statement was "consider the financial implications." The team found out that the music performance rights were within budget, but costuming all twenty-six singers as their own superheroes was too expensive.

Balance easy and hard ideas. Alder led the team in balancing the selection of concert solutions that were easily achieved and solutions that required more investment. Further brainstorming about costuming provided the assignment of pricing themed T-shirts for the backup singers who would form a separate entourage for each of the soloists. The soloists would wear the iconic costume for each theme song. That research came back within budget. Next, the costumers supplemented the T-shirts with clothing that the choir already owned—such as Wonder Woman boots. Costuming the soloists in full superhero garb required significant financial investment; using T-shirts and existing costuming for the backup singers was more easily achieved. The costuming of the Superheroes medley illustrates how selecting the best idea sometimes comes from balancing solutions that are easily achieved and solutions that require more investment. Incidentally, this story supports Sawyer's contention that creativity is cyclical, since this team went from brainstorming to evaluation to further brainstorming to final evaluation. Idea selection for the BSU Spectacular demonstrates one way to **select the best ideas** by applying relevant criteria.

Other programming teams can learn ways to clearly end the idea-generation stage and begin the idea selection stage. A well-crafted statement of the problem can provide criteria for selecting the best ideas. A helpful strategy for those programming choral concerts is balancing solutions that are easily achieved with solutions that require more investment. Although many possible prompts could help people programming choral concerts, table 4.10 provides three ways to implement Stage 7.

Table 4.10: Prompts for "Select the Best Ideas, Applying Relevant Criteria"

7A	How can you clearly end the stages of generating/combining ideas and begin the stage of selecting ideas?
Action Point	*Help team members move from the brainstorming stage when "no idea is a bad idea" into evaluating ideas (selection stage).*
7B	How well does your statement of the problem provide criteria for selecting the best idea? If needed, refine the problem statement to offer clearer criteria.
Action Point	*Take time in the meeting to review the statement of the specific problem to help simplify choosing the best option.*
7C	How could this concert achieve a balance between solutions that are easily achieved and solutions that require more investment?
Action Points	*Restate that picking the easiest solution does not always benefit the participants and audience. Always picking the hardest solution can stress participants and audiences.*

Prompt 7A: How can you clearly end the stages of generating/combining ideas and begin the stage of selecting ideas? *Help team members move from the brainstorming stage when "no idea is a bad idea" into evaluating ideas (selection stage).*

Define. At this point in the creative process the guiding principle changes from "no idea is a bad idea" to "let's select the best idea." Strong leaders help people make this transition in a way that moves the process along without alienating creative thinkers. While productive brainstorming can require suspension of evaluation, this stage depends on participants using wisdom to **select the best ideas by applying relevant criteria**.

Discuss. Because creativity is cyclical, clarifying which stage is currently the team's focus is essential. To successfully put on a concert, at some point the multitude of ideas must be

winnowed down to the ones to be actually implemented. At that point the football should be put away, and a clear transition by the facilitator should help participants switch gears so they begin to **select the best ideas**. Alder modeled this with the programming team so they knew when they went from generating possible novelty songs to selecting the Superheroes medley. Other programming teams have found it beneficial to make the idea generation/combination stage a separate meeting from the idea selection stage.

Prompt 7B: How well does your statement of the problem provide criteria for selecting the best idea? If needed, refine to offer clear criteria. *Take time in the meeting to review the statement of the specific problem to help simplify choosing the best option.*

Define. It can be a wise investment of time to review the decision-making criteria for a particular concert before embarking on Sawyer's Stage 7. If the determining factors are clear, then consensus about the best idea is often easier to obtain. A clear statement of the problem can often directly or indirectly provide the criteria for **selecting the best ideas** for a given concert.

Discuss. If one member of the group is mainly evaluating based on financial resources, and another is focused on the need for a "wow" moment in a concert, there may be difficulty in initially coming to consensus on selecting the best alternative because the evaluation criteria is so different. If the BSU Singers focused solely on spectacular effects they could jeopardize financial solvency. Instead they chose to understand that the Superheroes medley had a finite budget that should be allocated so that money was spent on what most affected the audience. Having only the soloists in full superhero garb actually focused the audience's attention better than having eight Wonder Woman–clad singers onstage together anyway. Often the best decision merges multiple criteria in a creative way.

Different programming teams in other settings can **select the best idea** using criteria in ways other than the programming team of the BSU Singers did. A strong leader can identify the

criteria, or can help the team itself define the criteria. In Stage 7 the leader then guides the team to use whatever criteria are appropriate in a given situation to help **select the best idea**. Then the structure of the planning process can provide ways for discussing the reasons behind the decisions so that fruitful conversation may ensue. Sometimes, seemingly diametrically opposed viewpoints can unite for a third option that embodies the best of both sides while avoiding the unintended consequences.

Wise programmers learn that, among competent participants, dissention most often is not a power play between team members, but a sign that the idea is not yet ready for implementation. Glen Berger wrote the book for the musical *Spiderman: Turn Off the Dark* with members of U2 providing the music. While discussing the genesis of that musical, Berger explains that U2 realized "long ago that if they were arguing over a song, then that was an instant indication to the defenders that the song wasn't good enough yet. 'Because,' Bono said, 'when something is good, truly good, there is no arguing.'"[62] A good statement of the problem (see Sawyer Stage 1) can provide language to defuse power plays while allowing ideas to become fully realized.

> **Prompt 7C:** How could this concert achieve a balance between solutions that are easily achieved and solutions that require more investment? *Restate that picking the easiest solution does not always benefit participants and audience. Always picking the hardest solution can stress participants and audiences.*

Define. Programming teams can help each concert achieve a balance in many areas. For example, an ebb and flow to the musical demands on the audience and the performers can be beneficial. Another example of balance is how the BSU Spectacular team discovered equilibrium when selecting ideas that considered financial resources and musical selections. Other programming teams may need to balance the opportunities for community partnerships with the costs in terms of rehearsal time and convenience. When using criteria to select programming

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[62] Glen Berger, *Song of Spider-Man: The inside Story of the Most Controversial Musical in Broadway History* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013), 254.

elements, the wise programming team balances easy and hard options when **selecting the best ideas**.

Discuss. A realistic reflection about many concerts is that all elements in the concert were not of equal difficulty for the ensemble to successfully perform. While some directors regularly err on the side of too simple or too complex, most choral conductors select a variety of difficulty levels for their ensembles. People who program choral concerts can wisely make balanced repertoire part of the evaluation of different programming ideas. While repeating one work from a previous performance event potentially allows the group to focus on other details, I find too many repeated elements affect audience enjoyment and member retention. Conversely, some conductors sense that too much new difficult music negatively affects audiences and members as well. A balance is needed when **selecting the best ideas**.

It may take time, but a programming team can learn how to help the choir they serve to regularly balance the current skill level and the challenge level of the music being performed. That balance can be the place of maximum enjoyment. This kind of decision making can allow choirs to include readily-performed literature on the concert to allocate extra rehearsal time to the musically difficult selections. In addition, books such as *Now, Discover Your Strengths*[63] also champion regularly doing what you are best at. While it may seem elementary for your choir to thrive at a certain genre type, that does not mean you should avoid it and try to succeed in public performance only in genres you are still learning. The BSU Singers balance literature similar to Antonio Vivaldi's *Gloria, RV 589*, with the danceable covers of popular music that are the Singers' trademark. Select the best programming elements based on balancing known strengths with realistic challenges.

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[63] Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, *Now, Discover Your Strengths* (New York: Free Press, 2001).

Marion Easter Pageant. Another example of selecting program elements that balance easily achieved and more difficult ideas is found in the revival of the Marion Easter Pageant. Established in 1937, and currently presented biannually, the Marion Easter Pageant is an hour-long presentation of 300 singers, 100 orchestra members, and over 200 costumed actors. Presented in the Memorial Coliseum in Marion, Indiana, this community event involves many local businesses, churches, and educational institutions. Todd Guy, musical director and Indiana Wesleyan University professor, talks about restarting the Marion Easter Pageant tradition in 2012.[64] The pageant had not been held for some years due to renovations at the Coliseum, among other reasons. In order to gauge the community's continued interest in this project, the programming team decided to use live music played and sung to a video of the drama. This choice allowed the recruiting to focus on musicians instead of actors for the first year back and to build momentum for community involvement in other areas in subsequent years. In 2014, a full production of actors, sets, and live music was mounted. But some simpler solutions were still included musically. The Indiana Wesleyan University Chorale formed the backbone of the community choir. They presented one of the scenes without involving community actors or singers, allowing for a balance between solutions that were easily achieved by the entire cast and solutions that required more rehearsal time performed only by the Chorale. The goal for the 2018 performances is to have all the chorus members be costumed and participate in all the scenes. The programming team for this community event understood that a large number of potential solutions were possible. They **selected the best ideas** by balancing solutions that required more time, talent, and financial resources to achieve with solutions that were achievable in a given year based on the level of community participation.

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[64] Todd Guy (chair, Division of Music, Indiana Wesleyan University), in a face-to-face interview with the author, March 23, 2016.

Stage 7 Summary

Sawyer's Stage 7 is focused on selecting the best ideas. After generating a large number of potential elements for a given choral concert, the programming team must transition to **selecting the best ideas** and flow of those best ideas. Effective leadership helps programmers shift from brainstorming to evaluation. The criteria for selecting best ideas can be found through good statements of the problem. Wisdom requires us to balance solutions that are easily achieved and those requiring more time, talent, and money. People programming choral concerts can evaluate options using a variety of criteria broadly related to performing and specifically connected to the particular problem statement. This leads to Sawyer's final stage of externalizing the idea by using materials and representation.

Stage 8: Externalize the Idea Using Materials and Representations

Sawyer clarifies that "creativity isn't just having an idea; creative ideas emerge, develop, and transform as they are expressed in the world." [65] The typical process for launching a Broadway musical demonstrates the externalization of ideas through composer sessions, group workshops, and theater previews. Mirandal's White House performance[66] was a different kind of **externalization** of an idea. Discussions around the piano between composer and conductor offer yet another way that the performing arts can externalize ideas as part of the creative process. People programming choral concerts would also benefit from exercises that externalize their ideas.

For choral programmers, **externalization** can be as simple as playing in order a series of recordings of potential literature. Choral programmers can invite a smaller group of singers to sight read the music in the performance space. It can be more effective to use this step before

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[65] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 90.

[66] The White House, "Lin-Manuel Miranda Performs at the White House Poetry Jam," accessed May 13, 2016, https://youtu.be/WNFf7nMIGnE?list=PLTG2l-x20yqtJ0XMtYfZKul8jkuoKjfnv.

rehearsals start because the programming team has already experienced the concert before

singers learn a note. Then rehearsals can focus more on the implementation of ideas instead of

using rehearsals to generate ideas. But even when a concert is run-through in order during the

rehearsal process, it can still provide useful information that impacts the final concert design.

While major revisions may not be wise by the time the dress rehearsal arrives, part of the

creative process could be tweaking transitions even at the dress rehearsal when the run-through

reveals that something is not yet hitting the target.

Taylor University (TU) Atrium Concert

An indirect example of **externalizing ideas** comes from JoAnn Rediger, Taylor

University professor of music, who conducts the Chorale and the Taylor Sounds in a variety of

performance spaces.[67] One of the newest spaces on their Upland, Indiana, campus is the lobby of

the Euler Science Complex. This lobby has free-standing staircases linking multiple levels of

atrium space. Because of renovations in the auditorium where the concert would normally be

held, the TU December 2015 holiday concert was held in this lobby space. The Taylor Sounds

had already performed in this lobby, so the director and student programmers had some

experience in ways to use the space. These earlier experiences were not totally successful.

During the previous concert they underestimated the amount of time it would take for performers

to move from location to location. This resulted in a more lethargic concert flow than desired. In

the first performance in this space, there were also questions about the best location for the

audience and about how many singers it would require to fill the space with sound.

Learn from running through the concert. The insights gained from **externalizing the**

ideas during the previous concert influenced the ideas proposed for the 2015 holiday concert.

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[67] JoAnn Rediger (director of choral ensembles, Taylor University), in a face-to-face interview with the author, March 1, 2016.

Although the TU programming team pursued Sawyer's Stage 8 more accidentally than purposefully, I recommend that choral programmers proactively run through the concert to incorporate externalization as a key stage of creativity. New programming decisions for the 2015 concert included placing the audience at the lowest physical level of the space. The instrumentalists were preset at other levels, and included a bell choir, string quartet, and brass quintet. Since there was no piano easily accessible to the Science Complex, much of the choral literature chosen was a cappella, which fit this resonant space well. The concert began with two choirs singing as they faced each other; they were located at the highest level in the atrium, and were singing text that spoke of the heavenly hosts. As the concert progressed thematically, the performers used lower and lower performance spaces within the atrium, mirroring the descent of the Christ Child from heaven to earth. The positive benefits of the physicality of creating music in such a diverse performance space could be accessed by a programming team purposefully externalizing ideas. One form of externalization is running through the concert music imagining how the physical location could positively influence the audience's experience. This run through may be viewed through the mind's eye, or physically in the room. Either way creative ideas can be strengthened and advanced as they take shape in the physical world.

Storyboarding. There are other ways to **externalize ideas** about programming choral concerts. Some come from the basic techniques of storyboarding. For example, flow ideas can be refined through using visualization techniques such as placing movable index cards listing each performance event on a corkboard. Whether through physically singing through the concert or using some form of storyboards, choral programmers can externalize ideas so that creativity emerges as these ideas are expressed in the physical world. Specific ways of implementing this stage of creativity are presented in table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Prompts for "Externalize the Idea Using Materials and Representations"

8A	What insights are gained about programming choices and transitions when you run through the concert repertoire in the proposed order?
Action Point	*Instead of talking about music or transitions, get up and do them. Clarity about the best choice between ideas can come from physically doing multiple choices in the performance location.*
8B	How can the basic techniques of storyboarding help refine the selection of programming elements? What graphic representation facilitates reordering the programming elements to enrich flow?
Action Point	*Use storyboarding, originally developed to previsualize animated movies, to visually experiment with the pace of the experience of the audience.*

Prompt 8A: What insights are gained about programming choices and transitions when you run through the concert repertoire in the proposed order? *Instead of talking about music or transitions, get up and do them. Clarity about the best choice between ideas can come from physically doing multiple choices in the performance location.*

Define. When a programming team **externalizes ideas by using materials and representations** of the chosen elements in a particular flow, they access a powerful tool for creating memorable choral concerts. The simplest version would be to sing through the entire concert in program order in the performance space. When it is not possible to externalize the whole concert, choose just a shorter set of works that comprise a portion or a representative subset of the concert. The choral music can be played live with a few voices, or recordings could be used. If the actual performance space is not available, even a small office or room could be used. The key to Stage 8 is to reflect on how the creative idea could be developed or transformed based on experiencing them as the audience would instead of through ink on paper.

When cross-disciplinary elements are included, this can take more of an investment in time and energy to gather all the videos, dancers, instrumentalists, and singers. This kind of **externalization** can still be beneficial. Often the flow can best be evaluated by experiencing the proposed order in real time. Elements whose length need to be modified, or their location changed, can be identified when the concert is experienced as a unit. The planning team for the

TU Atrium concert used lessons learned from a previous concert. Other choral programming

teams could include a run-through before rehearsals start on their timeline. Finding a way to

externalize may be a new step for choral programmers, but it is based on Sawyer's synthesis of

existing creativity research.

Discuss. Often people producing choral concerts work in a space different than the

performing space for various reasons. However, taking the time to have the planners **externalize**

the ideas by experiencing different elements in the performing space can reveal strengths or

weaknesses of an idea in a way that no other technique will. This could be the producer sitting in

the audience space imagining transitions while literature is still being selected. Or the

programming team could sing through all the elements and transitions in order, commenting

along the way about their experiences before rehearsals start. It could be as late as the rehearsal

when choral blocking is physically realized for the first time. More opportunities to proactively

involve the physicality of performing music could be found as part of the process of evaluating

program elements and their performance order.

In some settings, there are significant obstacles to implementing this prompt. The Science

Atrium at Taylor University is in use every school day serving its primary function as a lobby for

a thriving school of science. Other more traditional performance spaces may be highly

scheduled. There may be resistance by the administration or participants to change. The potential

cost of **externalization** may be perceived to outweigh the benefit. The demands on the

conductor's time may limit the time available for additional administrative tasks such as

scheduling the choir in the performance space ahead of time. However, creativity in choral

concerts can significantly be affected by the architectural parameters of the performance space.

By evaluating the flow of some of the elements in the actual performance space, planners are

using creativity theory to externalize ideas in a way that could benefit the audience and

participants.

The next prompt is not connected with the Atrium Concert story above, but it provides

specific action steps that may help some choral programmers **externalize the ideas** so that their

creativity process includes the benefits of being expressed in the world.

> **Prompt 8B:** How can the basic techniques of storyboarding help refine the selection of programming elements? What graphic representation facilitates reordering the programming elements to enrich flow? *Use storyboarding, originally developed to previsualize animated movies, to visually experiment with the pace of the experience of the audience.*

Define. Although some ascribe the first use of storyboards to animation pioneer Winsor

McCay, storyboarding is commonly associated with the animators of Disney movies. Key panels

are sketched and put on a corkboard, allowing for easy reordering of the elements in order to tell

the story better.[68] This clearly is a method of allowing creative ideas to emerge and transform as

they are expressed in the world. Since music elements are not primarily visual, but aural, the

application may be somewhat different. One way to use storyboarding to externalize choral

programming is to evaluate concert flow by putting song titles and other elements on a white

board. However, it may be easier to rearrange ideas if ideas are placed on paper and pinned to

corkboard. Song titles and other element descriptors can be externalized as words on three-by-

five index cards that can be reshuffled as needed. The method can become elaborate with

different colors of ink or paper representing different categories that may need to be balanced in

a specific concert. The connections between selections can be notated visually—such as the

amount of time needed to cover a staging change or the need for particular spoken elements.

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[68] Francis Glebas, *Directing the Story: Professional Storytelling and Storyboarding Techniques for Live Action and Animation* (Boston: Focal Press, 2009), 47-48.

Another approach to **externalizing ideas** using materials and representations would be to create diagrams of the use of space by choirs and performers. Storyboarding techniques can be used with hand drawn "snapshots" of stage layout and specific choir formations to help those programming choral concerts. For concerts that involve multiple choirs in multiple locations, this can be a profitable use of time since the visual nature of the concert is highlighted. Even for programmers of choral concerts with only one choir, drawing on cards pictures of different standing positions can help programmers evaluate how the visual element either engages the audience or discourages the audience enough to disengage. Choral programmers do not need to produce concerts with relentless movement in order to benefit from investing time and energy in this practice. Even those programming a simple SATB concert can benefit from taking time to craft different stage positions to vary the visual presentation.

Discuss. The pacing of choral masterworks demonstrates that they often have some structural organization analogous to the acts in a spoken theatrical work. In addition, Broadway musicals have their own standard flow, including the up-tempo chart called the "11:00 number" that usually precedes the final climax of the production. In a similar way, choral selections can be placed into sequences that create an emotional flow, leading the audience in a particular way between tension and release. Some kind of **externalization** through visualization, either pictures or song titles placed on a whiteboard, can provide an easily manipulated tool for choral programmers to work on the flow of a concert. Editor Jeremy Harley provides additional guidance in the use of storyboards, highlighting the benefit of initially avoiding naming elements by their sequential designation. Instead of labeling an element "first," allow it to be moveable based on surrounding choices.[69] His sequence of prompts, while designed for website

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[69] "Storyboarding," https://multimedia.journalism.berkeley.edu/tutorials/starttofinish-storyboarding/.

development, could offer people programming choral concerts advice in using storyboards to

externalize ideas concerning the concert.

   Wicked. Although drawn from Broadway instead of choral music, the process of

developing the musical *Wicked* is an easily understood demonstration of the storyboard

principles of **externalization**. Composer Stephen Schwartz's use of storyboards in developing

the musical *Wicked* is described in the book *Defying Gravity: The Creative Career of Stephen

Schwartz from Godspell to Wicked*.[70] Schwartz, librettist Winnie Holzman, and producer Marc

Platt worked for months adapting Gregory Maquire's novel into a musical. They found that

storyboarding allowed them to notate on a card each shift in the action or emotion. They

> attached white and blue 3" by 5" cards to a simple white foam-core board about four feet
> wide by three feet tall. Using their homemade storyboard, they could rework their
> configurations as needed. White cards were for story moments, blue cards for songs, with
> a sentence or a song title on each . . . the card text described the action. "By doing music
> numbers in a different color," Schwarz explains, "you see if there are too many white
> cards in a row. It really works."[71]

People developing choral concerts can analyze the shifts in action or emotion and use

storyboarding strategies to **externalize the idea** in order to balance music and transitions of the

concert. Storyboarding is one way to visually experiment with the pace of the experience of the

audience.

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Stage 8 Summary

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   Sawyer's Stage 8 directs people creating new things to include **externalizing the idea

using materials and representations** as part of the process. Perhaps people programming choral

concerts fear that taking time to externalize an idea suggests that their conceptual abilities are

limited. However, people programming choral concerts do not need to apologize for deciding to

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[70] Carol De Giere, *Defying Gravity: The Creative Career of Stephen Schwartz, from Godspell to Wicked* (New York: Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, 2008).

[71] De Giere, *Defying Gravity*, 296-97.

experience the music in the physical context as part of developing the concert. Many creative domains do not limit creativity to ink on paper, but use externalized ideas as a vital part of the creative process. While some people developing choral concerts do not include Sawyer's Stage 8 in their planning process, I have found it to be a significant step in creating a memorable choral concert. For example, the lecture recital I referenced earlier benefited from the externalizing of ideas by the dancers in the actual performance space. Practicing in the performance space can also provide ideas and feedback for choral programmers. Storyboarding, the use of visual prompts that are easily rearranged, is another way for choral programmers to externalize ideas. Although there are additional ways to use this principle, the two prompts discussed provide avenues for choral programming teams to explore.

Summary

These prompts, developed from creativity research and based on application of Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative process, are offered to broaden the resources that are available to choral programmers. These prompts can be used one at a time by leaders preparing for programming meetings; they could be of use directly in some kinds of programming meetings; a team can cycle through them systematically; or these existing prompts can become stepping stones to new prompts that are more useful in a specific situation. Seeing the seemingly infinite ways that people sing together in public performance, a wide variety of prompts can be generated.

The stories illustrating all of these prompts are not meant to scientifically support the efficacy of these applications of Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process. Rather, they provide anecdotal access to the core concepts through concrete examples. Readers will necessarily need to discern how these prompts based on Sawyer's Eight Stages could apply to

other specific situations in beneficial ways. These stages, as applied to choral programming, are 1) finding a problem statement for the concert, 2) acquiring the knowledge of the choral domain, 3) gathering information related to the specific concert, 4) taking time off from programming tasks for incubation, 5) generating ideas related to the problem statement of that particular concert, 6) combining those ideas in unexpected ways, 7) selecting the best ideas according to the criteria for that particular concert, and 8) externalizing those ideas.

It may be helpful to remember the cyclical, non-linear nature of creativity when applying these prompts for Sawyer's Eight Stages. Almost all the examples given could also have illustrated another prompt in some way. Likewise, the definition and discussion of each prompt could reflect influences from other stages of creativity. Allowing creativity to flow instead of rigidly enforcing the use of a particular prompt wisely implements Sawyer's principles. Furthermore, planning can include a timeline that includes specific meeting agendas, each with different assigned prompts. But, again, a wise leader leaves space for serendipitous insights outside of meetings. When needed, choral programmers can revise the flow even during the dress rehearsal if participants can successfully negotiate the change at that point. Careful investment early in the process helps avoid last-minute changes for the performers.

Although this guide is offered to help people programming choral concerts apply creativity research to the process of crafting choral concerts, it is clear that a better process does not guarantee a better product. Sawyer's analysis of creativity does provide scientifically researched ways that creativity has worked in many domains of learning. However, the analysis of past performance does not assure that the effort invested in the future will produce creative results. Thus, the implementation of these prompts does not guarantee compelling choral concerts. This guide provides a framework that encourages success in the creative process that

can benefit new and current practitioners of this art form. Be encouraged! Each of these stages is based on one or more skills. People who practice wisely improve their skills and develop excellence. This is true for the craft of choral programming. This guide provides some prompts that, through repeated application, can help transform an apprentice into a journeyman, and a journeyman into a master.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, SIGNFICANCE TO THE FIELD,
LIMITATIONS, AND TOPICS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Introduction

For many people, choral music has the ability to positively influence their quality of life. When people sing, both performers and audience members can choose to discover a place where the spirit can be nurtured, where the body can be restored, and where the mind can be cultivated. James Jordan, conductor and professor at Westminster Choir College, describes this metaphysical place: "where the day-to-day issues of life are kept in perspective . . . where one's inner voice speaks and can be heard . . . where trust in self resides . . . where profound human love and care are always in residence. . . . It becomes the place from which one creates all music."[1]

Access to that metaphysical space does not come from slavishly following a formula, but I believe there are steps in the planning process that can help choral concerts become one place (among many) where people experience Jordan's description. The goal of this dissertation is to help choral programmers understand how collaborative programming can access stages of the creative process to craft this kind of choral concert. Researcher R. Keith Sawyer defines creativity as "a new mental combination that is expressed in the world," as well as "the generation of a product that is judged to be novel and also to be appropriate, useful, or valuable by a suitably knowledgeable social group."[2] Understanding what drives the creative process can help programmers recognize the impact of the planning process on choral concerts.

The unique contribution presented in this dissertation is a two-page guide for collaborative planning of choral concerts based on creativity researcher Sawyer's Eight Stages of

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[1] James Mark Jordan, *Evoking Sound: Fundamentals of Choral Conducting and Rehearsing* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 1996), 19.
[2] Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*, 7-8.

the Creative Process (appendix A). This chapter will present limitations of the written guide and associated annotations, significance to the field, and topics for further study. But first I will briefly summarize the content of the document so far.

Dissertation Appendix: The Written Guide. The primary contribution of this dissertation to the field of choral programming is the two-page document of prompts to help musicians who program choral concerts. In this guide, prompts are given for each of Sawyer's Eight Stages. These pragmatic prompts provide tangible ways to guide programmers in implementing each stage. Most often the guide can be used by a team facilitator in planning an agenda before the meeting. Whether ahead of time or in an actual meeting, programmers should select the best prompt to use in any given context or meeting.

Chapter 1: Statement of Problem. Our culture marginalizes live performances, as shown in the analysis by researchers Ben Cameron[3] and Janine Dexter.[4] To achieve Jordan's vision as stated above, I believe the choral arts need to revitalize the connection between audiences and live music. One possible way is to make choral concerts intersect more directly with current culture, potentially through creative concert programming. I developed the annotated guide presented in this dissertation to address the following question: How can specific prompts guide choral programmers to be more creative when collaboratively programming choral concerts? These prompts inject creativity into tasks such as selecting repertoire, partnering in substantive ways with communities, and ordering the flow of elements. Thus, this written guide provides scaffolding for choral programmers who seek to craft choral experiences that engage and rejuvenate the whole person. Such a guide is not known to exist elsewhere in current scholarly literature.

[3] Cameron, "A New Era for Performing Arts".
[4] Dexter, "Making Music Matter."

Chapter 2: Literature Review. The active application of creativity theory provides benefits to those programming choral concerts. Keith Sawyer synthesized the scholarly work of many other creativity researchers into his Eight Stages of the Creative Process. Chapter 2 of this dissertation defined and illustrated each of Sawyer's stages with additional studies from other researchers in the arts and other fields. The following list summarizes one major example reviewed in chapter 2 for each of Sawyer's stages as applied specifically to choral programming.

- Stage 1: Find and formulate the problem.
  Education guru Fred D'Ignazio demonstrated how problem solving requires problem finding, which provided a model choral programmers could follow when they find and formulate a problem statement.[5]

- Stage 2: Acquire the knowledge relevant to the problem.
  Conductor Steve Zegree provided an example of how the mastery of existing information positively affects creativity in the choral planning process.[6]

- Stage 3: Gather a broad range of potentially related information.
  Digital artist George Legrady showed ways that gathering related information influences creativity in the visual arts, which influenced the design of the prompts for choral programmers seeking to gather information.[7]

- Stage 4: Take time off for incubation.
  The Bridges Program of the Minnesota Chorale modeled how to include incubation in the choral programming process.[8]

- Stage 5: Generate a large variety of ideas.
  College professor Diana Blom analyzed how students collaboratively generated ideas for an interdisciplinary concert, which led to idea generation strategies embedded in the prompts for choral programmers.[9]

- Stage 6: Combine ideas in unexpected ways.
  In her autoethnographic study, flautist Renée Bond reflected on ways to combine ideas about flute and dance performance, which provided insight into best practices of combining that choral programmers can implement.[10]

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[5] D'Ignazio, "Bringing the 1990s to the Classroom of Today."

[6] Zegree, *The Wow Factor*.

[7] Legrady, "Perspectives on Collaborative Research;" Steinheider and Legrady, "Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Digital Media Arts: A Psychological Perspective on the Production Process."

[8] Romey, Sweet, and Wanyama, "Building Bridges: Choruses Engaging Communities."

[9] Blom, "Inside the Collaborative Process."

- Stage 7: Select the best ideas, applying relevant criteria.
  Children's author and college professor Carol Reed-Jones examined how teams select the best ideas in the context of programming decisions at a collegiate concert that included choral music.[11]

- Stage 8: Externalize the idea using materials and representations.
  Composers Jason Freeman and Mark Godfrey externalized ideas when they used feedback from early performances to influence later performances in a way that demonstrates externalization for choral programmers.[12]

Although examples of collaboration in the arts exist that support Sawyer's Eight Stages, there is a gap in scholarly work connecting each of Sawyer's Eight Stages with the tasks of choral programming. The literature review provided examples of other creative artists implement the stages into their processes. In turn, I applied them to choral programming in order to aid those seeking to connect audiences with live choral music.

Review of Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Questions. In order to craft a written guide to direct current and future choral programmers through an effective collaborative planning process, I selected Sawyer's synthesis of the creative process as a profitable way to include many facets of creativity. The guiding questions for this research balanced aspects of current research and practice with the desire for clarity in a short guide. Supplementary interviews to acquire anecdotal illustrations of the choral programming process from professionals in that field were conducted with approval from the Ball State University Institutional Review Board (appendix B).

Chapter 4: Annotated Explanations to the Written Guide. This chapter defined, explained, and illustrated how each of Sawyer's Eight Stages could be applied specifically to developing choral concerts. Annotations for each of the prompts in the written guide were based

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[10] Bond, "Reflections on the Collaborative Process."

[11] Reed-Jones, "But Is It Art?"

[12] Freeman and Godfrey, "Creative Collaboration between Audiences and Musicians in Flock."

on the author's experience and existing print resources. Additional anecdotes come from remarks

from practitioners gathered through interviews held in person and through digital

correspondence. These annotations offer helpful context but not qualitative evidence for the

validity of this guide. The supplemental information to the guide highlights actual collaborations

of programming choral concerts. The annotations offer new and experienced practitioners ways

to better understand the prompts.

Overview of Chapter 5. In this final chapter of the dissertation, discussion, limitations,

and topics for further study will be presented in the following order:

- Discussion of Answers to Research Questions
- Discussion of Additional Discoveries
- Significance to the Field
- Limitations of the Written Guide
- Topics for Further Study

Discussion of Answers to Research Questions

While generating the two-page guide, I made discoveries that impacted the development

of this creative work. Several were linked to the research questions from chapter 3, which were

categorized according to current research, current practice, and developing the written guide.

> **Research Questions about Current Research:** Do existing studies of collaborative
> planning of art include examples of the principles behind any of Sawyer's Eight Stages of
> the Creative Process? How could these studies inform a guide utilized by choral
> programmers working collaboratively?

Scholarly work on the process of generating choral programming is limited. During the

writing of this annotated guide, however, I uncovered techniques from the experience of others

who collaboratively planned arts events. Many of these techniques are included in the prompts.

For example, storyboarding (used in pacing of the audience's experience of the musical *Wicked*)

informed a prompt for Stage 8 in the annotated guide for programmers collaboratively working

to design choral concerts. This prompt about externalization is supported by the Creativity

Training Programs, a quantitative meta-analysis conducted by Michael Mumford et al., who referenced this stage of creativity in what they called the *finding solutions through development and the implementation* phases.[13]

However, some valuable scholarly work did not easily fit into the guide. Director Peter Sellars worked with the Berlin Philharmonic on the 2010 and 2014 performances of the *St. Matthew Passion* by J. S. Bach. Sellars sought to create a "transformative ritual reaching across time and space" through staging the soloists and choir in a simplistic set, who all performed by memory.[14] This effort clearly demonstrates the ability to reconnect audiences with the choral canon through creative programming. A DVD of the production is worth review and discussion by those programming choral concerts.[15] However, material readily available to this researcher does not reveal much of the process he used to create more original ideas and higher-quality combinations of those ideas.[16] Thus, this example did not easily fit into a dissertation focused on articulating the process of creation. While some existing studies of collaborative planning of art informed this choral programming guide, I discovered a need for additional research specific to the intersection of Sawyer's Eight Stages and the field of choral programming.

> **Research Questions about Current Practice:** Are there practical examples of how practitioners of choral programming already use the principles behind any of Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process, even if they don't identify them as such? How could these examples illustrate a guide utilized by choral programmers working collaboratively?

Finding answers to these questions included having conversations with current practitioners. They revealed practical examples of how they use many principles inherent in

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[13] Mumford, Leritz, and Scott, "The Effectiveness of Creativity Training."

[14] As quoted by Tim Ashley, "Prom 66, St. Matthew Passion Review, Astonishing Immediacy," *The Guardian,* September 8, 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/music/2014/sep/08/prom-66-st-matthew-passion-review.

[15] Johann Sebastian Bach, *St. Matthew Passion*, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and Rundfunkchor, Sir Simon Rattle and Peter Sellars. Performed April 11, 2010. Berlin, Germany: Berliner Philharmoniker, 2010. Digital Video Disc (DVD), 246 minutes.

[16] Mobley, Doares, and Mumford, "Process Analytic Models of Creative Capacities."

Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process. It is true that many people did not identify them according to Sawyer's terms. This is not surprising since creativity research is seldom required reading for many choral conductors. However, these examples were used to illustrate the prompts presented by this guide. For example, clarity in understanding Prompt 7A[17] was provided by the story about the Superheroes medley in the 2015 Spectacular performance by the Ball State University Singers. This prompt about selecting the best ideas is supported by the work of William Gordon, who included Selection as part of the understanding of creativity he called *synectics*.[18]

Other discoveries made through this study highlighted the typically solitary nature of choral programming. Anecdotal information gathered during the writing of this dissertation suggests there are practical examples of individual current practitioners implementing Sawyer's Eight Stages in a noncollaborative manner. Even practitioners who utilized teams for some of their decision-making processes readily admitted that significant decisions were often made solely by the choral conductor. While this choice does not impact Sawyer's Eight Stages, it does suggest that the annotated guide could apply to solo decision-making as well as team planning processes.

Research Questions about Developing the Written Guide: How can these stages and best practices be summarized in a helpful guide to direct programmers of choral concerts? What practical applications could shepherd implementation of this guide?

While crafting concise yet clear prompts that link Sawyer's Eight Stages with the best practices of existing programmers of choral concerts, I generated several iterations of the two-page guide. Although initial drafts had three prompts for each stage, I found that not all stages needed three prompts to provide scaffolding for programming choral concerts. Some prompts

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[17] How can you clearly end the stages of generating/combining ideas and begin the stage of selecting ideas?

[18] Gordon, *Synectics: The Development of Creative Capacity*.

were discarded as worded too vaguely to be of use in a large variety of circumstances. Other prompts were revised to more specifically apply to choral programming. Summarizing best practices required careful attention to clearly articulating the intersection of choral programming and Sawyer's Eight Stages.

I discovered that knowledge of the process does not guarantee successful accomplishment of the process. While talking with actual practitioners about their planning process, I noticed that even though their knowledge level concerning choral programming was high, for me, their choral performances did not always display great creativity in programming choices. An insightful reviewer suggested that the perfect planning process still might not lead to authentic creativity in performance. In answering these research questions about developing the written guide, I discovered a potential difference between programmers who focus on the process and those who focus on the final product. In the first case, programmers can be motivated by the quantity of ideas generated, combined, and ultimately selected. In the second case, the effect on the audience of the quality of the ideas drives the creative process. Both groups can claim they "successfully" integrated Sawyer's Eight Stages, but it appears the first focused on the process to the detriment of the final product. Ineptly applying any cycle of creativity to choral programming may result in a performance that fails to engage the audience. To acknowledge this is not to negate the guide, but rather to say that the guide in and of itself does not guarantee original ideas will emerge. It can only provide the scaffolding that may allow creativity to flourish. A practical application of this discovery would be for choral programmers to remember that the guide is a tool that can be used effectively or unproductively. It is not a magic wand that will instantaneously produce perfect concerts. Instead, choral programmers can use the prompts of the guide to provide and maintain the space needed for the hard work of creativity to flourish.

I also discovered that time and energy must be invested to truly be creative. Often the choral conductor has many legitimate responsibilities that could limit the time available for developing programming. However, acknowledging the detrimental cost of uncreative concerts may motivate some to choose to implement more of these stages in their planning. Greater value will result from deeply embracing even a few of the concepts than attempting to check off most of the prompts just for the sake filling in the blanks. For example, completely responding to Prompt 8A[19] might require enough effort by the team that no other prompt should be used in a particular planning/performing/evaluating cycle. Researchers with IDEO demonstrate that **externalizing ideas** (Sawyer's Stage 8) is one of the key differences between average and exceptional creativity and thus worthy of substantial effort.[20] Implementing each stage of creativity requires time and energy. While this guide has been carefully crafted to help programmers create, any of the prompts will help only to the extent that effort is invested in answering the prompt.

Discussion of Additional Discoveries

Some of the discoveries made in the study and writing of this dissertation do not neatly fit into the three categories of questions just reviewed from chapter 3. While exploring current practices and their possible inclusion in specific prompts, it became clear that a wide variety of meeting structures and personnel configurations is used when programming choral concerts. The differences between structures and configurations do not affect the actual prompts given in the annotated guide, but they do impact the actual experience of programming.

Variety of Structures Used to Plan Concerts. This annotated written guide seeks to assist people programming choral concerts as they carry out the process of selecting literature and

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[19] What insights are gained about programming choices and transitions when you run through the concert repertoire in the proposed order?

[20] Kelley and Littman, *The Art of Innovation*.

placing it in a performance order. Throughout my career, I have talked about programming with a variety of choral directors, including those of community choruses, educational choirs, and church ministries. These conversations provided anecdotal information that suggests choral programmers use widely varying timelines and planning protocols. Some directors mentioned that they do not follow the same process for each of their concerts. A written guide to assist programmers should reflect the variety of methods available that result in a choral concert. As just one example, Prompt 6A[21] does not specify either the process or the product, but it does build on the work of Mumford et al.[22] to remind choral programmers that true creativity may require combining ideas in unexpected ways. The open-ended nature of the prompt allows application in a wide variety of choral settings. I honed each of the prompts to ensure that they could be flexibly applied in a variety of planning structures and timelines.

Correlation of Actual Practices and Sawyer's Eight Stages. This dissertation does not assess whether actual practices by people planning choral concerts would consistently benefit from implementing Sawyer's Eight Stages. The two-page guide and accompanying annotations could provide implicit tools for practitioners to evaluate why some concerts were more successful than others in implementing creative ideas. For example, Prompt 7B[23] could help programmers look back and evaluate how they applied criteria during the selection process. This action references Wallas's term *verification*.[24] Then programmers could subsequently make a conscious choice to emulate what before may have been a more intuitive yet positive choice during the planning cycle. This systematic implementation could lead to regular programming success.

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[21] What idea(s) can be combined with the idea being discussed so that it more closely hits the target?

[22] Mumford, Leritz, and Scott, "The Effectiveness of Creativity Training."

[23] How well does your statement of the problem provide criteria for selecting the best idea? If needed, refine the problem statement to offer clearer criteria.

[24] Wallas, *The Art of Thought*, 80-81.

In summary, exploring the intersection of creativity research and the current practices of active practitioners revealed several discoveries. Choral programmers can learn from collaborators such as the team who wrote the Broadway musical *Wicked*. They used tools such as storyboarding to help frame the creative process. Practitioners can view choral programming as both an individual exercise and a collaborative venture. The explicit use of a creativity paradigm does not guarantee creativity. I encourage choral programmers to use the structures and timelines that help them create memorable choral concerts. Current practitioners already use many of Sawyer's Eight Stages, even if they do not label their activities according to his taxonomy.

These discoveries were generated by research questions about current research and practice of choral programming. Examples of additional findings discovered during the development of the written guide include an acknowledgement that the process does not guarantee successful accomplishment of the process, and time and energy must be invested to truly be creative. Finally, discoveries were made that do not neatly fit into the research questions such as the variety of ways used by actual programmers to plan concerts.

Significance to the Field

By proposing this topic, I hoped that filling this gap in the scholarly literature would not only provide new discoveries but also offer assistance to the choral programming field. I believe that this dissertation and other recent research about choral programming[25] highlight an emerging field of scholarly literature that other researchers may choose to study. Furthermore, based on conversations I have held with music educators and the directors of community musical organizations, it would be easy to find candidates for future case studies involving collaborative planning of concerts. Not only are current practitioners interested, but I found significant

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[25] See Dexter, "Making Music Matter;" Juliano, "Facilitating Transformative Music Experiences."

curiosity by future conductors while I was presenting the basic findings of this research to the student chapter of the American Choral Directors Association at Ball State University.

Overcomes Current Lack of Existing Integration. This guide is significant to the choral programming field because the guide overcomes the current lack of assimilation of creativity theory with choral planning practices. The annotations to this guide give specific ways that people programming choral concerts could effectively incorporate creativity theory. Current literature about programming concerts ignores details of the creative process, such as how to generate new mental combinations and the value of evaluation of ideas by a knowledgeable social group. This guide integrates creativity research by providing a series of prompts based on scholarly work about creativity and collaboration. In order to be flexible enough to apply to a variety of situations, the prompts consist of questions with clarifying comments. For example, Prompt 1A[26] puts research such as that found in Alex Osborn's Creative Problem Solving[27] into a format that hopefully will provide choral programmers a useful step in crafting creative concerts. Answering the prompts from the guide could provide concrete action steps that are helpful in a particular situation, thus providing precise integration exactly at the point of need. Each of the prompts seeks to be the application of the best practices of creativity theory to the process of programming choral concerts.

Provides Guidance for Those New to Collaboratively Programming Choral Concerts. This guide can help new practitioners to consciously choose to incorporate each of Sawyer's Eight Stages into their programming structure. This proactive stance could help them develop timelines and plans of action that enable them to succeed. Current models in higher education often focus on other necessary skills, such as conducting and classroom management. Although

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[26] How can the specific problem statement of the choral concert be framed so it is likely to stimulate creative solutions?

[27] Isaksen, Dorval, and Treffinger, *Creative Approaches to Problem Solving: A Framework for Change*.

the importance of programming effective concerts is presented, practical steps on the collaborative planning of events may receive insufficient attention. For example, Prompt 4A[28] suggests that the tyranny of the urgent should not overcome the truly important—such as scheduling time for incubation during the creative choral programming process. This prompt reflects Robert Sternberg's work in "Stalking the Elusive Creativity Quark."[29] The guide found in appendix A could be one tool used by people new to choral programming as a way to incorporate creativity theory so that they are effective in both the process and final product. Thus, an annotated guide for new programmers provides a significant contribution to the field of choral music.

Invites Scholarly Review of Current Methods. The review of literature (chapter 2) revealed that currently there is a limited amount of scholarly activity about the process of choral programming. Although several textbooks and articles offer prescriptions for balanced repertoire and descriptions of themed concerts, there is little available that systematically analyzes how people actually program choral concerts. This dissertation provides a systematic approach of planning creative choral concerts. For example, Prompt 3B[30] might introduce people to the concepts found in research such as the IDEAL model, which solves problems through the Identify, Define, Explore, Act, Look cycle.[31] (Prompt 3B is linked with Explore.) The two-page guide associated with this dissertation can be a source for scholarly review of current methods. Future scholars could build on this dissertation to research the impact of applying Sawyer's work to how people creatively plan choral concerts.

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[28] How can the proposed timeline for the group include the reasonable allocation of downtime within or between programming sessions?

[29] Sternberg, "Stalking the Elusive Creativity Quark."

[30] What noteworthy elements could guide the gathering of ideas related to this particular choral event?

[31] Bransford and Stein, *The Ideal Problem Solver*.

This annotated guide is significant because it overcomes the current lack of existing integration between choral programming and creativity research. It also provides guidance for those new to collaboratively programming choral concerts. The guide provides an invitation for scholars to review current programming methods. However, there are limitations to the use of this annotated guide.

Limitations

One limitation is that the document advocates for the application of a process but does not validate its generalizability. Also, Sawyer's Eight Stages fuse significant theories from the broad field of creativity research, but his synthesis is not exhaustive. Therefore, the guide built on his work will have the same limitations. For example, one limitation of applying Sawyer's Eight Stages becomes apparent in the different methods employed by teams in the process of making decisions.

Decision Making. The prompts of this guide are designed to help choral programmers structure their decision-making process, hopefully in a way that that enables greater creativity. That is, the prompts can help people make new combinations that are expressed in the world and judged to be useful by stakeholders of choral music. However, the prompts do not directly address the nature of decision making. Conducting, and by extension the selection of literature for a concert, has often been perceived as being governed by an autocratic power structure. For some, true collaboration requires a different mind-set. The prompts in the guide allow for various kinds of hierarchical structures to be in place while implementing the guide. However, the degree of teamwork found in the interpersonal relationships on a planning team will affect the level of creativity sustained through the decision-making stages. Cultural influences can impact decision making as well. Such influences at the micro-level appear in the implicit assumptions of each

member of a particular programming team about how power is used. At the macro-level, one group might value individuality while another group values consensus; one group might value appeasement while another values forthright conversations. When applying this guide, team leaders would be wise to understand existing power differentials currently active in their specific group.

Use of Sawyer's Model. Although Sawyer's Eight Stages was carefully selected because he synthesized the work of many other researchers of creativity, it is a finite model. As future scholars refine our understanding of creativity, it could be that Sawyer's Eight Stages will be revised to more closely match how creativity actually works. New research may add stages or combine existing ones. In that case, the prompts offered in this document could be refined to more completely reflect the current state of creativity research. Additionally, Sawyer's claim that generalizable stages in the creative process are not domain specific could be inaccurate. We may discover that some portion of the creative work of programming choral concerts is actually unique to that domain. A prompt to help people succeed in this unique content would then need to be developed independently of Sawyer's model. As basic instructions, this guide assuredly contains many helpful ways to apply creativity research to choral programming even if this guide is not exhaustive in the areas covered.

Generalizability. This guide seeks to organize ideas about how to program choral concerts, offering specific prompts that include a variety of stages of the creative process. Because this guide has not been scientifically researched, the prompts are not yet generalizable to a wide variety of choral planning situations. The reader must carefully evaluate what could be of use in a particular situation and then choose to employ it on a trial basis. More generalizable

information about the creative choral programming process could lead to more creative concerts that better connect audiences and participants to choral music.

Topics for Further Study

While researching the intersection of choral programming and creativity theory, many interesting topics were identified for further study.

Qualitative Research. Future qualitative study could provide data helpful in evaluating which of Sawyer's Eight Stages were best implemented through the prompts provided. Internal validity could be improved through pilot testing any testing instruments included in the study. A sample size including multiple kinds of choirs or multiple concerts by the same choirs would enhance external validity. Additional research could be undertaken to contrast the methods and effectiveness of solo practitioners versus a team approach to choral programming. This kind of interaction with practitioners and experts in the field could provide significant evaluation and even improvement to this initial iteration of the guide. Additional questions could include the following: Are there roles such as facilitator that significantly impact the success of teams programming together? Are there collaboration skills that differ from creative skills? Are there actions that successful planners of choral concerts perform that do not fit Sawyer's Eight Stages? Furthermore, qualitative research could be designed to access the engagement of the audience in particular concert settings. Those results could be cross-examined with techniques of designing programs to see if some methods of programming correlate with higher levels of audience engagement.

Qualified Facilitator. Sawyer's description of the Eight Stages does not directly comment on best practices of collaboration. In his book *Explaining Creativity: The Science of Human Innovation*, Sawyer does synthesize research about collaborative creativity. Even though my

literature review of Sawyer's work did not highlight the influence of a team leader, in my experience, successful collaborative planning requires a skillful team facilitator. Future study could focus on the best practices of successful facilitators in choral programming settings. I believe that some facilitators inhibit creativity in a team setting by their actions or comments. Future research could identify methods that would steer the team toward greater efficacy in creative endeavor. The aspect of helping a team shift from stage to stage in the creative process merits special consideration.

Collaborative Skills. In a related topic, not only is the role of team facilitator significant, but the actions and attitudes of the other collaborators could be significant factors in the success of applying this guide. Collaborative creativity can involve different skills than solo creativity. Some of those skills may be encapsulated in general teamwork theory,[32] but others may be more specific to the choral arts. The annotated guide has some references to team members, such as Prompt 2B,[33] but applying the best practices of teamwork to choral programming teams could be a topic for further study. Additional research could clarify what approaches made by individual team members significantly impact success in this applied area. Such research might also clarify needed roles for team members specific to the choral domain.

Potentially Missing Elements. Although the experience of a variety of choral planning groups was used anecdotally, only qualitative research would uncover the breadth of methods actually used by current practitioners. That research could identify missing actions among the prompts by using a variety of questions, such as: Which possible action points listed on the guide are actually used by active practitioners? Are there specific activities not mentioned on the guide

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[32] "Teamwork Theory: Tuckman's Stages of Group Development," accessed May 16, 2016, http://the-Happy-Manager.Com/Articles/Teamwork-Theory/.

[33] What steps can you take to assemble a team that has mastered foundational knowledge about choral programming?

that could help a variety of choirs successfully program choral concerts? What do actual

practitioners identify as the best way to achieve a particular stage of the creative process? The

answers may include items identified in the annotations but missing on the actual two-page

guide, such as debriefing previous concerts as an application point for **acquiring domain**

knowledge (Stage 2). More significantly there may be types of activities that have been omitted

from the possible action points listed on the guide. If so, how could the prompts and action

points be revised to help practitioners include those activities in their timeline? Further study

could uncover missing elements in the guide as well as missing elements in Sawyer's Eight

Stages.

Application to Other Kinds of Concert Programming. The prompts created for this guide

were designed to help in designing choral concerts. However, similar prompts may assist people

programming many other kinds of musical performances—from orchestral or wind band

concerts, to art song recitals, and even to the design of talent or variety shows. Future research

could apply the creative process outlined by Sawyer to programming for many other kinds of

musical groups by modifying the current guide. While the wording of some prompts may need

adjustment, the basic ideas could prove beneficial to many people who put programs together.

Conclusions

This dissertation focused on integrating the principles of creativity with the process of

choral programming. The primary contribution of this dissertation to the field of choral

programming is the two-page guide that provides practical steps to collaboratively plan choral

events. Those using the guide do not need to understand the intricacies of Sawyer's Eight Stages

since the prompts provided in the annotated guide scaffold the process of generating and

implementing choral programming ideas. Using this process of creative programming is one way

to address issues facing choral music today. Instead of weary conductors, bored participants, and disappearing audience members, we must aim to construct choral concerts that build bridges between live music and its audience.

Some of those issues include the hard-to-measure but nonetheless real negative costs of ineffectual programming. Participants may choose to spend their time and energy in other activities. Audiences may invest their time and money elsewhere. Since 1982, the National Endowment for the Arts has tracked adult attendance at "benchmark" activities (museums, ballet, plays, opera, and classical music performances). The 2015 NEA report entitled "A Decade of Arts Engagement: Findings from the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, 2002–2012" shows a decline from 39 percent of adults in the United States attending a live event in 2002 to only 33 percent in 2012. Many other measures of arts participation in 2012 exceeded the 33 percent of adults who attended a benchmark arts event. For instance, 71 percent of Americans used electronic media to watch or listen to art and 44 percent created, practiced, performed, edited, or remixed art.[34]

Why is it that only one in three American adults attended a live event but almost three in four connected with art digitally? People clearly still connect with the arts, but fewer and fewer attend live performances. Could a change in concert content increase future attendance? I believe that the prompts in the guide provide a way for willing programmers to move beyond curating relics to actively making the kind of perspective-giving and trust-building musical space James Jordan described in the quote at the beginning of this chapter. That kind of concert could build bridges that connect people of the twenty-first century with choral music—perhaps even those who currently believe that the soundtrack of their lives only exists on their iPods.

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[34] Silber and Triplett, "A Decade of Arts Engagement: Findings from the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, 2002–2012."

Appendix A: Guide for Collaborative Planning of Choral Concerts
Based on Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process
(For annotations to this guide, see chapter 4 of the dissertation.)
Quotations on the guide are from R. Keith Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity: The Science of Human Innovation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pages 88-90/

	Prompt	*Possible Action Points*
Stage 1: Find and formulate the problem.		"Formulate the problem in such a way that it will be more likely to lead to a creative solution."
1A	How can the specific problem statement of the choral concert be framed so it is likely to stimulate creative solutions?	*Discern a specific target (for the performers or audience) to find criteria that will successfully guide the process.*
1B	How will the planning process identify both macro-level and micro-level problems?	*Find macro-level problems, such as how concert flow impacts the audience. Distinguish from micro-level ones such as specific transitions between songs.*
1C	What considerations should NOT be addressed when formulating your problem statement?	*Decide if a particular problem should be addressed at a different time. If needed, delegate to a different decision-making group.*
Stage 2: Acquire the knowledge relevant to the problem.		"Creativity is always based on mastery, practice, and expertise."
2A	Do you have adequate knowledge of choral literature, the pacing of concerts, and the managing of events to offer relevant ideas? If not, how could you deepen your mastery, practice, and expertise?	*If needed, find a mentor to teach you to accurately assess the difficulty level of the music. Take time to practice how multiple kinds of transitions are experienced. Develop your expertise in handling non-musical considerations.*
2B	What steps can you take to assemble a team that has mastered foundational knowledge about choral programming?	*Find team members who have already invested in gaining expertise in the choral canon, concert pacing, rehearsal techniques, and logistical concerns. Be willing to supplement your team with experts who will join for short stints.*
Stage 3: Gather a broad range of potentially related information.		"Creativity often results from alert awareness to unexpected and apparently unrelated information in the environment."
3A	What performance opportunities/limitations for this specific event could help you gather a broad range of programming suggestions?	*Consider the programming possibilities of the performance location(s), size of the choir(s), number of performance(s), availability/ability of personnel, access to desired content, and preexisting resources.*
3B	What noteworthy elements could guide the gathering of ideas related to this particular choral event?	*Locate unique personnel available for this concert event. Notice any calendar observance at hand. Reflect on what other themes could connect audience and performers.*
3C	How can the mission statement of your organization influence your information gathering for this choral event?	*Help your concert portray the distinct goals of your organization as they may differ between community, educational, and religious choirs. Include administrative-level impacts such as funding.*
Stage 4: Take time off for incubation.		"Once you've acquired the relevant knowledge, and some amount of apparently unrelated information, the unconscious mind will process and associate that information in unpredictable and surprising ways."
4A	How can a proposed timeline for the group include the reasonable allocation of downtime within or between programming sessions?	*Use foresight and planning so the programming schedule includes incubation gaps that allow for more creativity and stronger concerts.*
4B	How can a proposed task list include individual brainstorming, incubation, and then discussion with others?	*Have team members complete solo assignments before the group meets, allowing for incubation after the assignment is finished but before actually meeting.*

	Prompt	*Possible Action Points*
Stage 5: Generate a large variety of ideas.		"Unconscious incubation supports the generation of potential solutions to the problem, but conscious attention to the problem can also result in potential solutions."
5A	How can your planning process reinforce best practices of generating a large variety of ideas?	*Reiterate principles such as* withhold judgment at this stage of the creative process *at the beginning of a session.*
5B	How could adjustments to the problem statement allow for a fresh line of inquiry that generates many ideas?	*Be willing to invest the time to refine the statement of the problem as an impetus to generate a larger variety of ideas.*
Stage 6: Combine ideas in unexpected ways.		"Many creative ideas result from a combination of existing mental concepts or ideas."
6A	What idea(s) can be combined with the idea being discussed so that it more closely hits the target?	*Take the acceptable idea and refine it to make it good.* *Take the good idea and refine it to make it great.*
6B	How can you explore unexpected combinations without too quickly evaluating their efficacy?	*Remember that applying evaluation criteria too quickly can short-circuit the creative process.*
6C	What unexpected combinations are produced when you consider adding something from another artistic discipline to an existing choral element? Would these improve the concert flow?	*Value how even simple additions, such as spoken words or a change in how the choir is standing, can reenergize a concert for the audience.*
Stage 7: Select the best ideas, applying relevant criteria.		"The creative process typically results in a large number of potential solutions. Most of them will turn out not to be effective solutions; successful creators must be good at selecting which ideas to pursue further."
7A	How can you clearly end the stages of generating/combining ideas and begin the stage of selecting ideas?	*Help team members move from the brainstorming stage of "no idea is a bad idea" into evaluating ideas (selection stage).*
7B	How well does your statement of the problem provide criteria for selecting the best idea? If needed, refine the problem statement to offer clearer criteria.	*Take time in the meeting to review the statement of the specific problem to help simplify choosing the best option.*
7C	How could this concert achieve a balance between solutions that are easily achieved and solutions that require more investment?	*Restate that picking the easiest solution does not always benefit the participants and audience. Always picking the hardest solution can stress participants and audiences.*
Stage 8: Externalize the idea using materials and representations.		"Creativity isn't just having an idea; creative ideas emerge, develop, and transform as they are expressed in the world."
8A	What insights are gained about programming choices and transitions when you run through the concert repertoire in the proposed order?	*Instead of talking about music or transitions, get up and do them. Clarity about the best choice between ideas can come from physically doing multiple choices in the performance location..*
8B	How can the basic techniques of storyboarding help refine the selection of programming elements? What graphic representation facilitates reordering the programming elements to enrich flow?	*Use storyboarding, originally developed to previsualize animated movies, to visually experiment with the pace of the experience of the audience.*

Appendix B: Consent Form for One-on-one Interview or Observation of Team Meeting

Study Title: Developing an Annotated Guide for Collaborative Planning of Choral Concerts Based on Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process

Study Purpose and Rationale: The purpose of this research project is to develop a written guide to direct current and future choral programmers through an effective planning process for choral performances.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria: To be eligible to participate in this study, you must be over the age of 18 and currently participating in a team that programs events that include choral music, such as choral concerts or religious services.

Participation Procedures and Duration: For this project, you will be asked to reflect on how your experiences on a planning team mirror or do not mirror R. Keith Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process: Find the problem, acquire the knowledge, gather related information, incubation, generate ideas, combine ideas, select the best ideas, externalize ideas. The researcher may observe a team meeting to provide nonqualitative background to the interview.

Audio or Video Tapes: No taping will be used.

Disclosure of Alternative Procedures: This study is not a treatment study. This study does not offer extra academic credit or research credit.

Data Confidentiality or Anonymity: All data will be maintained as confidential data. No identifying information such as names will appear in any publication or presentation of the data without written permission.

Storage of Data: Paper data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office for three years and will then be shredded. The data will also be entered into a software program and stored on the researcher's password-protected computer for three years and then deleted. Only members of the research team will have access to the data.

Risks or Discomforts: There are no perceived risks for participating in this study.

Benefits: There are no perceived benefits for participating in this study.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw your permission at anytime for any reason without penalty or prejudice from the investigator. Please feel free to ask any questions of the investigator before signing this form and at any time during the study.

IRB Contact Information: For one's rights as a research subject, you may contact the following: For questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact the Director, Office of Research Integrity, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, (765) 285-5070 or at irb@bsu.edu.

Consent: I, _____, agree to participate in this research project entitled, "Developing an Annotated Guide for Collaborative Planning of Choral Concerts Based on Sawyer's Eight Stages of the Creative Process." I have had the study explained to me and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have read the description of this project and give my consent to participate. I understand that I will receive a copy of this informed consent form to keep for future reference.

To the best of my knowledge, I meet the inclusion/exclusion criteria for participation in this study.

_____   _____

Participant's Signature   Date

Researcher Contact Information

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