Calibrate Your Sound

- Individual warm ups
    - Completed before rehearsal (and, preferably, daily to keep the voice strong and healthy)
    - Purpose: warm up the voice to reduce likelihood of vocal injury, improve vocal range, smooth out the vocal break, allow the individual to explore their own respiration, phonation, resonation, articulation, and artistry
    - Focuses on the needs of the individual
    - Examples
        - Semi-occluded vocal tract exercises:
            - Bubbling
            - Raspberries
            - Singing on v, z, oo, m, ng
            - Vocal function exercises
            - Straw phonation
        - Vocal warm up CDs/videos
            - Sing, Baby, Sing
            - YouTube videos
        - Exercises focusing on specific areas of need
- Group warm ups
    - Completed during rehearsal
    - Purpose: create the target unit sound ("calibrate" the group sound) and energy, improve the overall skill set of all of the singers, allow the quartet or chorus to explore their combined resonation and articulation
    - Focuses on the needs of the group while addressing needs of individuals
- Focus areas for group calibration
    - Alignment
    - Reducing tension
    - Respiration (breathing)
    - Phonation and Resonation
    - Articulation

    - Tuning
    - Dynamics
    - Physical and vocal energy
- Alignment
    - Remember to maintain good alignment throughout the vocal exercises
        - Find times throughout the exercises and your rehearsal to reset your alignment
- Reducing tension
    - Lip tension:
        - Bubbling
        - Monitoring lip placement, particularly upper lip
    - Tongue tension:
        - Raspberry
        - Tongue trill
        - Sing with tongue flat on bottom lip, monitor for tongue retracting, bunching up, becoming “pointy”
    - Jaw tension:
        - Don’t overextend the jaw (more on this later)
        - TMJ pain or stiffening of muscles around TMJ
    - Laryngeal tension:
        - Monitor for throat pain or discomfort when singing
        - Thyrohyoid space tightening
            - Circumlaryngeal massage
            - Monitor thyrohyoid space while singing
        - Goal: relaxed, low laryngeal position
- Breathing
    - Monitor:
        - Inconsistent breath support
        - Poor breath management
        - Strain in the sound
        - Sagging posture as the exercise progresses
    - Once notes are added to the exercise, also monitor tuning
    - Examples

        - 3D breath
        - 3-3-7 Sh
        - S-F-Sh
        - Any scales or arpeggios on a bubble or “v”
            - Bubble 123454321-5-1
            - “V” 1358531
        - Catch breaths
            - ABCs without planned breaths--take out a letter as needed
            - Repeated intervals or scales (i.e. 12121212 or 12345432123454321) without planned breaths, take catch breaths as needed
- Phonation and Resonation
    - Goal is never to “match” those around you. Find your optimal resonating space and it will complement the other singers
        - Creates a beautiful, unique sound
    - Avoid resonating in the nose, except for the sounds “m,” “n,” and “ng”
        - Touch your nose--if you feel vibration, there is air passing through the nose
        - Sing+vowel (i.e. “sing-oo” or “sing-ah” on 5-54321)
            - Feel vibration in the nose on “ng” of “sing” but not on the vowel
            - Feel the difference:
                - Overly nasal with the vowel resonating in the nose
                - Vowel resonating through the mouth
    - Examples
        - Me-o-e-o-e-o-e-o-e-o (forward, back, mixed)
        - Sing through all vowels to ensure consistent resonance, start with your “best” vowels and move to vowels that are more challenging
            - Ascending octave, break off by part when descend (tenor holds 8, lead moves to 6, bari to 4, bass to 2, then bottom three parts resolve to 5, 3, 1)

        - Loo lee | lah lay | luh lae | lih loh | leh lu (as in “look”)
    - Hey Jude with resonance spectrum
    - Use kinesthetics!
        - Narrow arms, wide arms, overlapping arms
- Articulation
    - Monitor jaw movement—don’t overextend the jaw
        - Altoid space
    - These are also good exercises for working on internal synchronization
    - Nursery Rhymes
    - Tongue Twisters
        - Red leather, yellow leather purse (1-5-1)
        - She sells seashells by the seashore (1-1-2-2-3-3-2-1)
    - Minnie x4, Ming x4, What a pity x2, What x4, Zoom x4, Zah (all on one note or on a chord)
    - Minnie (1-9-2), Mickey, Donald, Goofy, Chip, and Dale (1-5-1)
- Tuning
    - Focus on intervals, ascending and descending lines
    - Sing against the key note
        - A row/voice part sing the key note and the other rows/voice parts sing against it
        - A section or half of the chorus sing the key note
    - Four part exercises, “martini glass” exercise
    - Rounds (Alfred, Rose)
    - TE tuner
    - Opposing exercises (i.e. tenor/lead do one pattern, bari/bass do a different pattern)
- Dynamics
    - Add dynamics to all exercises!
    - Softs often lose resonance and become “brittle,” louds often lose resonance and become “shouty”
        - Goal: keep resonance consistent regardless of the dynamic level
    - Use kinesthetics to maintain consistent resonance and energy

throughout all dynamics

- Physical and vocal energy
    - Physical and vocal energy are intertwined
    - Energy must be *relentless*
    - Ideally want high energy from the very first exercise; however, you may need to slowly build it in depending on the level of the group