

The Education Planning Process
Developing and implementing plans:

1. Assess needs of the region. Where is the region now, and what is **your** vision for the future of the region?
2. Choose regional faculty. Take into consideration their attitude, knowledge base, teaching skills and rapport with regional members. Strive for a variety of strengths to complement visiting Int'l. faculty.
3. Use the judges' comments as part of your guide for planning.
4. Develop a long-range strategic educational plan. Base it on the needs of the region (#1). Use input from regional faculty. Questions to ask – Where are we now as a region? Where do we want to be? What classes do we need to offer? What faculty? What events?
5. Select visiting faculty members. Who fits the region and its needs? Consider their strengths. If you have two outside faculty, they should complement each other, for example, one specializes in showmanship and the other in vocal production.
6. Figure all the components and people you need to educate. Events should provide education for all interest areas – directors, arrangers, DCP, section leaders, quartets, judging, visual performance, general membership, leadership, coaching. Separate events: director school, quartet school, leadership school, small chorus coaching day with judging categories, arrangers retreat, director mentor program.
7. Have the faculty brainstorm ideas/events to be added. Then have the faculty break up into smaller groups to decide how the ideas can be proposed to the RMT and how they can be implemented. Each group comes back and presents to the whole group.
8. What is the financial status of the region? How much can be spent for education?
9. Consider frequency of events. How often do you hold educational events? What time of the year?

10. Where do you want to hold events? A central location for easy accessibility to all members? Move it around within the region?
11. Develop a multi-year calendar. Plan who you will have for visiting faculty years in advance, so you have an ongoing schedule of who is teaching each event.
12. Publicize the event to the region. Use e-mail, flyers and personal contact to reach members. Every chorus should have a “regional events chair”. This person keeps chorus members informed about the event’s date, times, location and acts as a “cheerleader” for the event.
13. During the event, meet with visiting faculty and regional faculty to get their input on the needs of the region, or any other observations they might have.
14. Make the event fun as well as educational. The Education Coordinator sets the tone for the events. If you want participants to enjoy themselves, you need to make it your goal to ensure their happiness. Other RMT members should also contribute to the positive climate of the event.
15. Make sure you are on target with your plan. Refer to your long-range strategic plan and constantly reassess the region’s progress.
16. Be proactive about issues. Pay attention to the grapevine and try to nip any problems in the bud.

Assessing chorus needs:

1. Hold “State of the Region” meetings with an RMT buddy. Divide the choruses among RMT members and have them contact each chorus to set up a meeting at the regional event. The chorus can send any member they’d like to the meeting – director, president, financial person, new member. Have designated, specific questions for the group when you meet. This meeting helps to bring out issues the chorus might have in a non-threatening way, and it opens the door for future discussions. Have these meetings at least once a year.
2. Have regional faculty buddies for each chorus. They should periodically contact the chorus to see how everything is going. (This should be done especially prior to and after contest time).

3. Assess chorus progress and identify weaknesses and strengths. Use contest scores to provide an overall picture of the region. Compare scores from year to year. If a chorus hasn't competed in awhile, go and visit them to assess them.
4. Devise a questionnaire for chorus members. This gives you an idea of what happens from week to week and the needs of each specific chorus.
5. Keep in touch with choruses. Anyone who works with the chorus in any manner should report back to an RMT member or the chorus's RMT buddy. The buddy keeps track of who has visited and when, what they worked on, what issues came up, etc. If you learn of issues through the grapevine, do a "forced visit" and tell them you want to come for a visit.

Evaluating your success:

1. Use comment sheets from regional meetings to evaluate what you're been offering educationally.
2. Give the choruses surveys, or ask them in person how things have been for them.
3. Encourage all choruses to fill out the RMT Survey sent out by International. Once complete, read the RMT survey comments from International once they have been compiled.
4. Obtain input from regional faculty members after the event.
5. Evaluate long-term strategic plan – see if you've been addressing what you have written there.
6. If things are going well in the region, everyone will be happy – attendance at events will be up, etc. Competition scores will improve.

Networking:

1. As Education Coordinator, I tried to establish a list of what each Education Coordinator or region had developed. Example: I had developed a section leader guide, quarteting within a chorus guide, quartet guide, etc. By having someone overseeing what others had developed, there could be one big list of what was available rather than everyone “reinventing the wheel.”
2. Exchange ideas with other Education Coordinators.
3. Read the International RMT Survey results that are given to all regions from all regions. You will see what other regions have done and what seems to work and what doesn't.
4. Go and visit another region that you think has top educational events and observe what they do.
5. Bring in a faculty member to help you develop an educational plan for your region.

DISCUSSION:

QUESTION AND ANSWER:

CLOSURE:

Feel free to contact me with any questions that might arise. Heidi