

Total Program Success

Jeff Young

People laugh when I talk about what I do “for a living”. I teach high school. I judge. I write drill. I co-founded Dynamic Marching. I shoot video. I teach marching band. I do clinics and consulting all over the country.... but what I love doing the most is teaching! I am a teacher first.

Because I get a chance to travel all over, I see and hear the fears, frustrations and hang-ups that keep other teachers up at night. I don't know every band director, but I know a TON of them who want things like... Less stress. More organization. Greater creativity. More time for other stuff including family and social life. Better communication skills. A better team around them. Increased audience engagement. Etc. One of my goals this year is to help band directors with these things. So Dynamic Marching recently launched an online class called “*Dynamic Design for Total Program Success*”.

I used to think design was all about rules and principals of art or following judging sheets to the letter, but I now understand it is a holistic system of planning and organization with some storytelling mixed in. It's about Evaluation, Organization, Communication, Planning, Design, and Details. These six concepts are covered in

our course, and also in our TBA convention clinic presentation this summer. Before we launched our class, Bobby Lambert wrote the following piece to explain to our fellow teachers what we mean by Designing total program success.

Total Program Success

A director and his or her staff are the only ones who can define TOTAL program success. What may constitute success in one community may be completely different twenty miles down the road. However, complacency is one of the worst attributes for many music programs today. It is critical to avoid this complacency and work toward higher levels of achievement. Defining and discovering success for any program is much like planning for a trip. There are many different destinations but there are two things that always constitute a good trip—momentum toward the destination and a destination that is worthwhile. Once a destination is determined, one must then acquire provisions and supplies and finally, plot out the landmarks in between (to mark forward progress).

Determining a Destination / WHAT is success?

Each program should have a *one/three/five/ten* program in place. Essentially, this is a list of goals and wishes for the program over the short-term, medium-term, and long-term. No goal is a “one day” type of project but rather larger tasks or achievements that will take us weeks, months, and

even years to meet. These are our “destinations”.

When defining a “successful program” one should try to be very concrete. For example, anyone can say, “All students will learn to love

music.” While this is significant, it cannot truly be measured and is not as tangible. That goal is not one to ignore but should be accompanied by “We can measure their love for music by our retention rate and by volunteerism for extra playing responsibilities.” This sounds dangerously close to various assessments mandated by several districts across the country. While directors often roll their eyes at the latest pedagogical fad, this one precept is pivotal to program health and growth.

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**Sponsored by
Marching Show
Concepts,
Jeff Young will present
“Designing Total
Program Success”
on Friday, July 24
at 2:45 p.m.**

Total Program Success

Gather provisions and supplies / WHAT is necessary for this achievement?

After a *one/three/five/ten* plan is in place, this list of tangible growth and accomplishments can help one to formulate the things necessary for their achievement. This is essentially a “wish list”. Bobby Lambert (Wando High School and Dynamic Marching Partner) recalls this story about Bob Buckner, retired director of athletic bands at Western Carolina University:

Bob made a list that hung right beside him in his office at the university. The first time Bobby met him, he asked about the list which contained words such as, “semi-trailer” and “second assistant”. Bob told him they were his “wish list” that he started for WCU when he began teaching the program (with only 82 students in the marching band). At that time, the band did have one semi-trailer and were poised to break 170 in the band.

When Bob left WCU, almost every item on the list was attained and the band had over 500 members. Do not limit yourself. State the things that are necessary for the healthy growth of the program. Focus on WHAT is needed first and worry about the HOW in this next step.

Plot landmarks and routes for the journey / HOW will we go from our current state to a new state of “success”.

In an age of GPS and smart phones, it can often be heard, “Siri, plot the shortest route to...” We are always in such a hurry that we miss landmarks and vistas that may be “off the beaten path”. For those whose *one/three/five/ten* plan only consisted of WINNING something, they are surely missing something along the way and will find it difficult to retain students. While creating this roadmap, directors should plan for destinations along the way that are fulfilling musically, emotionally, and physically. He or she should ask a few sincere questions concerning the goals:

1. How can I make this more educational?
2. How can I impact the community?
3. How can I make myself more healthy/happy?
4. How can I engage the students more?
5. How can I make this more fun?

There are many ways to define success, determine the necessary materials, and plot a direction but the one thing that is pivotal is a beginning. Nothing goes anywhere without direction and momentum. In sailing, course changes are always necessary and storms are an expectation for travel. Do not be surprised or knocked off course for very long.

Jeff Young teaches science at Carmel High School in Carmel, IN. He has a degree in Biology from the University of Notre Dame and a Masters degree in Curriculum & Instruction from Indiana University. He has been teaching since 1996 and involved with marching band and drum corps since 1988. Jeff's pageantry experience comes from various areas including: trumpet, gymnastics, dance, movement, and design.

He is currently the visual caption head for the 2005 & 2012 Bands of America Grand National Champion Carmel High School Marching Band. Jeff has been the marching band track division head for the Bands of America Summer Symposium since 2009. In addition, Jeff judges for Drum Corps International, Bands of America, designs drills, and frequently teaches clinics on marching and movement. Jeff is President / CEO of Dynamic Marching & Music.