

Perspective Makes a Difference!

George Little, 2019-20 TBA Treasurer



I always enjoy when the seasons start to change. I love the first cold snap in the fall, and I love the first bits of warmth in the spring. However, I often find myself complaining when in the middle of a season. When I was a child and would complain about being too hot or too cold, my grandpa would always recite the same poem to me.

**As a rule, man's a fool.
When it's hot, he wants it cool.
When it's cool, he wants it hot.
Whatever it is, man wants it not.**

Grandpa was a very wise man. How true do those words ring in the ears of band directors?

"I'm sick of marching season!"

"I can't wait for solo and ensemble to be over with!"

"Another weekend of all-region/area/clinics and concerts!"

You get the idea.

What if we change the internal dialogue?

"I need to make sure that my marching band playing rehearsals are setting my students up for success after marching season!"

"Even though I am super busy, I am going to really focus on tone and consistency with my students during solo and ensemble prep!"

"I am so glad that my advanced students have an opportunity to learn quality literature and give a performance at this region clinic!"

My grandpa would be so proud of us!

I would like to encourage all of us to remember that the busy December, January, and February schedule is a crucial time in the scope and sequence of the band curriculum. What we do during the "off months" is paramount to the level of success we hope to achieve at UIL Concert and

Sight Reading in the spring, and even during marching season next school year.

Here is a checklist of a few things that will hopefully help you to plan your concert band rehearsals during the early part of the spring semester.

- Use daily drill to teach and reinforce important concepts at the beginning of each rehearsal. Daily drill is a great time to review the basics of tone production, balance, intonation, flexibility, articulations, etc. Vary your daily drill from day to day to keep things interesting.

- Make time to study your scores.

Can you sing every part, count every rhythm, and cue every entrance? The more you know before rehearsal, the more effective you will be in front of the band.

- Learn the pedagogical tendencies of each instrument. Start by learning the notes that are innately out of tune and solutions to fix those notes. Then, teach those tendencies and solutions to your students! (*Note my shameless plug for the TBA Professional Development clinic in February!*)

- Focus on teaching students to hear the problems with the music. It doesn't matter how well a teacher hears if their students can't hear issues and fix them as they perform.

- Record your band and make a list of things to fix based on what you hear from your recording. Oftentimes we struggle to hear problem spots in real time. Send your recording to a trusted mentor or colleague and ask them to make a list as well.

- Don't be afraid to ask questions! Call an experienced mentor, call a friend that plays an instrument you struggle to teach, eat lunch with your co-workers and talk shop!

- Invite guest clinicians to your band hall. Don't wait

Come to Tyler Junior College on Saturday, February 29 to learn pedagogical tendencies and solutions from Fred J. Allen in his TBA regional clinic, "Pedagogy from the Podium".

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until your students “know all of their notes and rhythms” to invite a guest. Bad habits form early in the learning process and take quite a while to correct.

- Don't forget to work on sight-reading. Count rhythms out loud often. Use previous years' UIL sight reading pieces to hone your skills at delivering instructions and to hone the students' skills at actively participating in the process.

- Plan for each rehearsal by writing down what you would like to work on ahead of time. To quote Benjamin Franklin, “By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.”

- Make sure that you are listening to your students individually. Having students pass music off one at a

time for a band director or going down the row during sectionals is very important.

Through all the preparation and expectations, remember that students are human beings with needs and feelings. We all have bad days and we all need encouragement. We all mess up (band directors included) and we all need reminders. Try not to let the process affect the relationships that so many of our students need far worse than they need a trophy.

Enjoy the upcoming break and good luck with your spring semester!