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Become the Expert

Roland Sandoval, 2019-20 TBA President Elect



Standing in front of a band in the heat of a rehearsal can be invigorating, intense, exhilarating, and humbling all at the same time. It is all cool though...I have studied the art form since my middle school, high school and collegiate days and as a direct result I am the EXPERT for my students. That's right, my students have me as the "expert" that will bring them on this musical journey. They sit in front of me waiting for information on fingerings, embouchure, music history, melody, harmony, rhythm, texture, dynamics, articulations, tempo, timbre, tone structure, form, intonation, scales, consonance, dissonance, ornamentation, and expression. That expertise can also lead to those young musicians improving their language skills, test scores, self-esteem, listening skills, math skills, stress relief and creativity. Whew...Oh my!

Well, I have been teaching for over thirty years and I am no expert. When I realized that (over thirty years ago) it got deep. I came across a quote by Epictetus. It went something like this: **"It is impossible for a man to learn what he thinks he already knows."**

The music education you offer your students is for improving the lives of others and leaving your community and musical world better than you found it. That means a constant investment in yourself first. ***Become the expert.***

Believe your students will succeed because you have invested in learning from mentors that have walked the path before you...no matter how many years you have been teaching. Drive across

town or across the county to

watch how that person you admire teaches beginning horn, jazz improvisation, marching fundamentals, or warms up their band and so on. ***Become an expert by observing then applying.***

Try new things! This models enthusiasm and energy. Get out of your comfort zone and teach a concept with a new technique and maybe a new technology. We all have our "routines" but challenging yourself and your students in a new way will keep the rehearsal exciting. Picture this: Your students walk into a concert band rehearsal and you are set up in a circle... they walk in and they must sit next to a different instrument...your marching band run through is just the girls and then just the boys and so on. ***Become an expert by trying something new.***

Be awesome, energetic and cool. What? Absolutely take the journey to build a program every student on campus wants to be a part of. How do those programs that have over a hundred beginners or several hundred in their marching band get to that point and maintain them? They probably have a leader that is awesome because of the INFORMATION they offer. The educational environment is rich with information. The energy is high because of the confidence that the curriculum will work because the concepts come from the highest possible resources and if it doesn't, you are willing to change. I can't tell you how many times I ask the college students I work with about their middle school and high school experiences

Become the Expert

and they say they thought you (their band directors) were cool. Cool being professional, respectful, fair, level-headed, funny, caring, organized, friendly, approachable and compassionate. ***Become an expert at being a teacher that kids just must be a part of your organization.***

Inspire by introducing them to musical heroes old and new in as many performance opportunities as you can. Play composers from every decade that had an impact on band literature. Play transcriptions, new composers, young composers, female composers, and of course the legends that continue to have an important influence on our repertoire. Make sure they are listening to world class artists and world class wind bands and orchestras as part of your curriculum. ***Become an expert at creating a comprehensive and diverse musical experience*** for every member of your band program from 6th to 12th grade.

Run a great organization that your parents and administration appreciate. They appreciate the fantastic ways you communicate and all the options of communication you use. You are willing to listen, adjust and see the big picture. You have worked hard to build caring relationships for the benefit of every student and support of your community. Those observing see a strong work ethic and excellent preparation for every event from social to performance. ***Become an expert at the behind the scenes of your band program.***

Teach your students “why” learning music is so important. You not only are sharing with them what to do and how to do it...you must share why we make music at all. The “why” is the game changer to creating a musician that supports the art form and the arts for the rest of

their lives. They are the future patrons of the Broadway stages, symphony halls, live music venues, and your band programs. ***Become an expert at creating that emotional bond and life experiences that music brings to your students' lives.***

That brings me to my point of investing in yourself and an organization like the Texas Bandmasters Association. I wanted to be an expert so I could stand bravely in front of my class and give them my all. The summers I spent with my peers, my mentors, my teachers, my role models at the Texas “Summer Music” Convention sure paved the way to that goal. I saved my money all year long as a young teacher so I could get to this incredible opportunity for growth and

development. That investment never changed over the years. The TBA tradition started to include my family as well. I have learned from the BEST in our state and country. My family will be very honored to see you making that investment this summer as we celebrate another fantastic TBA convention in our beautiful city of San Antonio. ***Become an EXPERT...I'll be sitting right next to you trying as well!***

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