



Teaching...“With Liberty and Justice for All”

Don Haynes

This is the first in a series of articles addressing inclusion, awareness and social justice.

The summer 2020 annual Texas Bandmasters Association Convention/Clinic featured many outstanding artists and educators. I write this article having served as the moderator asked to navigate the six marvelous speakers on the topic of social justice, inclusion, and awareness in music education. The two sessions were designed to inspire and guide music educators to begin substantive talks with their students on this topic.* My hope is that this article will help band directors and classroom teachers of all grade levels to have meaningful conversations in their classes.

Opening Statement:

I begin with the key question – “Where is the hatred and ugliness that is on display coming from, America? Has this kind of national polarization been brewing but perhaps dormant and simply hiding out of sight in places all along? The pain and tears are deeply unbearable when the human spirit and our country’s communities take such a crushing blow like we have seen recently. I cry and I feel deep pain seeing the ongoing ugliness evident during the spring and summer of 2020. I imagine you experienced horror and pain watching in real time just how awful and inhumane Americans can treat one another. How did we get here? What’s going on? How do we get out? How do we heal? I do not know the definitive answers to those questions, but we music educators must do our part to address this ugliness with our children that we have now in the classroom.

In normal times, each morning of the school day in Texas public schools students and teachers are asked to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag...and to the republic for which it stands...with liberty (Google defines liberty as “the state of being free with society from oppressive restrictions imposed by authority on one’s life, behavior or political views.”) ...and justice for all. Think about that. Every day that Pledge of Allegiance is recited by children, teens, and adults in the classroom. I point us to the last three words—“justice for all”. Really? Your conversations with your children could start there.

I am ready to dive right into this dilemma. Let’s jump in the “shallow end of the pool” first. My goal is to help teachers start the conversation. Getting

**Replays of all the 2020 Virtual Convention sessions will be available to registered attendees through December 31, 2020 and online registration will remain open as well. Let your friends know they can still register for \$100 and have access to all the replays.*

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started is indeed like jumping into a swimming pool—it may be uncomfortable for a few seconds, but then the body adjusts. Once you begin your interactions with your students, you will become a guiding source, a teacher that will help your students to process and ultimately become more respectful, and truly become better people. The key ingredient of justice is respect. I believe that having these special talks will be life changing. The students of today are part of an upcoming generation, our future leaders, who need us now to teach them how to embrace justice for all.

Day One – the teacher begins the journey

Teacher: “Ok class, I’m going to write two things on the board:

(1) All comments must be respectful.

(2) All comments must help us become better people. Today will be Day One of conversation and sharing things we say or do that can uplift a person or hurt them.”

Teacher: “When I ask you a question, you must raise your hand and wait for me to call on you before you contribute your comments. Remember your comments must follow the two items on the board.

“My first topic is NAME CALLING. I think people sometimes use words and name calling to deliberately make someone feel bad. Raise your hand if you can think of reasons people (kids or adults) deliberately hurt someone’s feelings?”

The students will raise their hand and the teacher calls on them to share their thoughts.

Teacher: “How many of you have been called a name anywhere on campus here at school? Don’t tell us the name you were called because that’s not the focus.”

Student hands go up!

Teacher: “Ok, hands down. How did that make you feel?”

The teacher calls on a few individuals. Give the students the opportunity to share their (short) responses.

Teacher: “A point I want to make here is—no matter how tough and strong you think you are inside, being called a name really hurts. Being called a name damages a person’s self-worth, and their confidence in themselves.

Also, being laughed at can hurt a person’s spirit. Right? This is the exact opposite of someone giving you a glowing compliment. That really feels great! I love compliments just like you. We all love it when people show kindness and compliments.”

Teacher: “For my next question, I want you to close your eyes and raise your hand without talking. Raise your hand if you have ever called someone a name. Keep your eyes closed!”

Students respond with raised hands.

“Thank you, class, for being honest...hands down and open your eyes. I know that question may have been uncomfortable for you, so again, thanks for your honesty.”

Teacher: “The main lesson I want to drive home with you today is that being unkind and calling others a name hurts! But what you don’t know when you do that is HOW MUCH pain you cause that person. You don’t know if that person is having a tough time in their life such as a grandparent illness or may be dealing with some serious issues at home. Even if that’s not the case, you have caused them pain. It’s like sitting in the cafeteria with your friends and someone mean sneaks up behind you and pours a cold glass of water on your head. That would be humiliating, hurtful, embarrassing, and a horrible feeling that will stay with you for a very long time. That mean person damaged your dignity and your self-worth. I think something that mean and cruel hurts very much, just like name calling.”

Teacher: “Think about this, how would you describe how that might make you feel? Raise your hand and I will call on a few responses.”

The teacher calls on a few students.

Teacher: “Well, all those things you just identified are exactly how people feel when someone calls them an ugly name.”

Teacher: “Class, I want you to memorize this easy definition of the word justice. You have been hearing this word quite a bit over the past several months. Let’s give a meaning to the word. **Justice means that we treat people the way you want to be treated.** Say it with me, ok? Treat people the way you want to be treated. I truly hope you

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will let those words guide you throughout every aspect of your life. Let's say it one more time...Treat people the way you want to be treated.”

Closing Thoughts

Directors, teach your children that it is important to do these eight ways to SHOW JUSTICE:

1. Take turns
2. Tell the truth
3. Play by the rules
4. Think about how your actions will affect others.
5. Listen to people with an open mind
6. Don't blame others for your mistakes
7. Don't take advantage of other people
8. Don't play favorites.

Social justice. A working definition of social justice that may help teachers and students: *Social justice is defined in terms of distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.*

Solutions: Social justice is often achieved through institutions or services that work to make sure people can equally access the benefits of social cooperation and guard against socio-economic inequality.

Teachers, please do not hesitate to begin these conversations about how we treat each other in our society. There is a strong need for your guidance in the emotional learning and developmental stages. The above script is a guide that will help you begin conversations in your classroom. I believe your students will not only remember their interactions with you and with each other, but will no doubt spark their value system. We teach music, math, language arts, and physical education. I believe it is just as vital that we step out of our comfort zone and enhance the traditional, daily curriculum in such a way that you include the guidance of how we can all be better to one another.

Don Haynes served as the Director of Bands at LBJ High School in Austin, Texas for 40 years performing across the globe including ambassador trips to Beijing, China, London, England, Paris, France, and Rome, Italy. Under his leadership, the Jaguar Band list of awards and accomplishments are numerous. The band consistently won sweepstakes honors at UIL marching and concert performances. Mr. Haynes is often invited to adjudicate regional and area competitions and serve as guest conductor. Mr. Haynes was awarded the Texas UIL “Denius Award” in 1994 and his colleagues selected him “Teacher of the Year” four times. In 2015, he was recognized as the Outstanding Community Leader in Austin, Texas. Mr. Haynes is past president of the Board of Directors for TBA. He presently works with Texas State and Texas Tech universities as supervisor of student teaching. In 2018, he was named to the Phi Beta Mu Texas Band Director's Hall of Fame.

TBA Resources

Take advantage of these TBA Resources available at www.texasbandmasters.org.

Under the Publications Tab, you will find:

- Past online issues of *Bandmasters Review* magazine
- Individual articles from *Bandmasters Review* (2002 to present)
- Convention/Clinic handouts (2002 to present)

Under Homepage News, Announcements, and Resources Section:

- Access information for Back to School and Online Instruction
- Access information on COVID-19 topics