

Texas Bandmasters Association Convention/Clinic 2005

Spending Time to Save Time

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Dick Clardy is Director of Bands and Department Chair of Fine Arts at Klein High School in Klein, Texas. Mr. Clardy is a native Texas, having begun his musical career under the direction of J. R. McEntyre in the Permian High School Band and Orchestra. Mr. Clardy received the Bachelor of Music Education Degree from West Texas State University, The Master of Music Degree in Applied Trumpet from The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and has done Doctoral work at The University of North Texas.

Mr. Clardy performed as principal trumpet with the United States Army Field Band in Washington, D.C. in 1972, and in 1976 was selected to perform on a national tour with The United States Armed Forces Bicentennial Band along with musicians from all Washington, D.C. Bands.

In 1977, Mr. Clardy began his teaching career in his hometown of Odessa, Texas, with Bill Dean at Odessa High School. In 1978, Mr. Clardy was invited to serve on the trumpet faculty at The University of North Texas for a one-year appointment as a colleague, and finally a student of Professor John J. Haynie. Mr. Clardy taught at Strickland Junior High School in Denton, Marcus High School in Flower Mound, and started the band program at Griffin Middle School in 1982.

Prior to his appointment to Klein High School, Mr. Clardy spent fifteen years developing the band and orchestra program at The Colony High School in The Colony, Texas. Bands under Mr. Clardy's direction have performed at The Midwest Clinic in 1994, at the TMEA Convention-Clinic as the TMEA Class 5A Honor Band in 1997, at the Tournament of Roses Parade in 1997, at The Midwest Clinic in 1998, at the American Bandmasters Association Convention in 2000, and at Carnegie Hall in 2001. The John Philip Sousa Foundation honored The Colony Band with The Sudler Flag of Honor in 1994. Bands under Mr. Clardy's direction have been named *Best In Class* at every major Concert Band Festival in the country and have been consistent participants in the Texas State UIL Marching Contest since 1988 and a top 5 finish in the TMEA Honor Band process since 1986. The Klein Wind Symphony performed in Symphony Hall in Chicago in 2004 and will perform in Carnegie Hall in 2006. Klein recently competed in the 2004 Texas State UIL Marching Contest.

Mr. Clardy is an active performing musician, clinician and adjudicator. He was named Teacher of the Year in 1988-1989 and also honored by the Parent Teacher Association as a Lifetime Member. Mr. Clardy served as the President of the Texas Music Educators Association and on the TMEA Executive Board as the State Band Division Chair in 1998-2000 and as the TMEA State Audition Chair from 1993 to 1997. Mr. Clardy is an elected member of The American Bandmasters Association and Phi Beta Mu and currently serves on the ABA/Ostwald Band Composition Adjudication Committee.

Develop a philosophy/mission statement for your band program

Do you have a philosophy? Develop a philosophy that fits your vision for your student's musical growth.

My philosophy is: The band should provide *A Place* for all interested students. Each band member deserves my consistent *Musical Best* every day. I am the musical leader of our program and therefore I am ultimately responsible for what is in the best interest of our student's time and musical growth.

Your philosophy will determine what and how you spend your time.

The philosophy that you choose will probably change and it should. As you grow in your repertoire as a teacher, you will find new and better ways to do things. Your thinking about music will change and so your goals will also change as you grow as a music educator. Create both long and short-range goals every year. Do not be afraid to rethink or revise your goals as the situation dictates.

Create the learning environment that works for you

The classroom should be well organized with chairs, stands and equipment already set for the rehearsal. **The student's procedure for entering the rehearsal should be clearly stated and understood.** The attitude that I strongly encourage my students to have emphasizes a friendly yet business like atmosphere. **The director always sets the tone for a successful rehearsal.** When my rehearsal is less than successful – it is usually my fault. How I present myself or react to my students is generally the problem. **The goals and objectives** for the rehearsal are listed on the blackboard. **Well-defined and consistent rehearsal procedures are critical to a successful band program.** All students should be mentally active in the rehearsal at all times. **The procedures are taught by the director.** List your procedures on the blackboard. The list should include all aspects that you think are important for the rehearsal. Preparation, materials and rehearsal expectations - I recommend a very short list. The goal is again to save time.

Be able to communicate to staff and students your expectations

A band staff moving in the same direction is a great asset. Staff planning and communication should be about involving everyone in the process. Setting calendars, making schedules and dividing staff responsibilities is very important. Deciding on the curriculum and on pedagogical philosophy for the entire program is critical – that should include a counting system that is taught from the beginning. Communication to the students should be clear and consistent with a minimum number of rules. Have a plan for each rehearsal for both the staff and the students. **The most useful tool that is available to each teacher is that students look and listen to you and that they be respectful of the learning process.** To be successful you must insist that their attitudes support those conditions.

Have a counting system and use it

I believe in the Eastman Counting System. You can count everything with it and it is very simple. I have included a sample of the Eastman Counting Sample at the end of the packet. I like to have my students counting out loud. I insist on a foot tap. We also clap the beginning of each note and verbalize the note durations with our voice. Counting and fingering with a foot tap is also desirable. Be careful to tap the toe not the heel. I believe the physical movement of an accurate foot tap with an accurate upbeat is very important in developing an accurate sense of innate rhythm. **There are band programs that do not teach or require students to count rhythms – this is a mistake.** The lack of confidence in being unable to count rhythms stunts each student's musical growth. It is very easy to develop some basic rhythm sheets that can be easily utilized on a regular basis in all classes. The rhythm sheets can be easily utilized when practicing style unisons. A well-understood counting procedure will save you a lot of time. The secret is to follow through, monitor and be consistent in its use.

Study the music before rehearsal

Too few people really do this. Look at Frank Battisti's book on score study. It will give you some great ideas. **Have a mental picture of what you want the music to sound like.** Any additional information that you can learn about the composition and composer is very helpful. **After study** - assign parts and **note** or outline important information in the score and on the individual parts. Take the time to teach your specific markings to your students. Pass out a sheet detailing the markings to your students. I would strongly recommend that you mark the most significant markings on the parts before you pass

them out to your students. Students numbering measures is a given. Demand that each student have a pencil – check the students periodically for their markings and pencil.

Be able to model what you want musically

Be able to count, sing or play in style and with good pitch. Be able to model all of the parts of a piece of music. This is a marvelous time saver to get the musical style across to your students. Count in-tempo and in-style and also demand that the students do that. Modeling on an instrument is a great tool. Music is really exact imitation. Encourage singing in your students by being able to sing yourself. Practice by singing anything. Even having the class sing a Remington F exercise while having one student play. Sing chromatic and major scales. By being more accurate with the elements of the music you will save time. Again - modeling is a marvelous time saver.

Work to be concise, efficient and direct in your instructions

Many teachers are not direct and/or loud enough in their instructions to their students. Teach the band to stop and listen when you are ready to instruct. Be direct and have something to say. Students normally have an attention span of about 6 seconds. Have a reason for stopping and be able to give instant feedback. I like my students to sit in their chair strongly and I define a ready position for their instruments during instruction. I also define a playing position and a relaxed position. Horns come up immediately when my arms come up - no delay. Rehearsal procedure is very important. You are working for a minimum of talk – the goal is too to be less verbal in your rehearsal. Less talking and more learning by playing and listening saves time.

Teach them how to watch and how to follow the conductor

For many of our young teachers today – this is a lost art form. We have become slaves to the metronome. The metronome is a great tool but we need to be able engage our students to be independently rhythmical. The preparatory beat gives the tempo, style and dynamics. They can understand that if we teach them. Why do we need a full measure of preparation to start a concert ensemble? We do not need that. Make them practice with you as you give one preparatory beat and they can respond with a voice downbeat of “dah”. Continue with counting, clapping and/or playing consistent notes in style, tempo and dynamics with your beat. This will require practice and proper preparation by you and the students. Observe and make them breathe in-tempo. This ensemble skill will save a great amount of time. You are trying to get the ensemble to where everyone feels that it is important to start together and correctly the first time. It always amazes me when I work with a Region Band and they are unable to do this. Spend time to save time!

Get your head out of the score and look at the students

The lack of this skill is another of our bad habits. You as the director need to be able to direct and teach with as much eye contact as possible. **Your job is to give direction and to get as much feedback from your students.** They need your mind and your body so that they may respond with musical confidence. Again your direct attention to them will give you immense feedback so that you can make the rehearsal more efficient. **Working to watch and listen to what students are doing in the rehearsal will save time.**

Study and know the instruments

You need to have a very good understanding of each instrument’s mechanics and intonation tendencies. A director cannot know too much about the instruments. Basic

sound production requires good posture, breath control and embouchures. I have included a couple of sheets on basic instrument tendencies. It is very concise and was prepared by Dr. Gary Garner. I have found it to be very helpful.

Separate pedagogical jargon from truth

Make sure that you decide what truths that you believe in as far as the pedagogy of teaching the instruments. I am sure that you have been to clinics and/or master classes and have been exposed to pedagogical thought that is incorrect. Be wary of gimmicks and tricks.

Find and identify colleagues that you respect who are sound pedagogues on each instrument and then develop a professional relationship with them as a resource for that instrument. Certainly learning to play each instrument is very important. Clarinet and trumpet are critical instruments to study and to understand.

Most embouchures are similar

Most embouchures have minimum pressure and a relaxed openness. They also require good contraction of the lips. A lot of emphasis on soft bodies and on a natural face is desirable. The center of the lips should be soft. An open, in time and relaxed inhalation and exhalation will help to create the correct feel and look. You are looking for the least amount of tension. Firmness of the corners and a natural flat chin is also desirable. For example the flute embouchure is as flexible as any brass embouchure.

Isolate and practice with each individual on correct breathing, correct posture and correct hand position

These fundamentals are **on going** in the life of your students and your band program. It is important to teach each fundamental correctly and as early as possible. The correct fundamentals must be reinforced and improved on a daily basis. **Breathing exercises** can be done everyday as part of the warm-up. Visually help them take a four-count breath by using the hand and arm to show the duration of a breath. The exhalation should be smooth and sustained. The entire torso should be balanced and relaxed allowing the diaphragm to move naturally and the lungs to displace the organs and muscles of the lower torso. Let the rib cage expand and rise – do not let the chest cavity to collapse. Exhalation – the process reverses. The torso needs to be aligned and straight so that the breathing muscles are not having to work to keep the torso upright but are working on breathing. I like the terminology of organizing your inhalation and exhalation to be sustained, continuous and consistent to the end of the phrase. **Good posture** can be attained by having the students stand with their feet shoulder width apart and then having them sit in their chair without changing their head, their upper body and their feet. The body weight should be equally balanced on the two **sit bones** that are at the bottom of our pelvis and the feet. The feet are flat on the floor. You can find the **sit bones** when you sit in a chair and shift your weight from side to side. The **sit bones** are the feet that support your upper body. Students should feel their weight on the **sit bones** and the lower spine should be curled forward and up. The upper body should feel tall and forward. The feet should be flat on the floor to balance the upper body. **Hand positions** should be natural to the contour of each instrument. Check thumbs for roundness, firmness and correct angles. No wrists bent to the forearms. Arms should be natural and away from the torso. Bring the instrument to the head – not vice versa.

Create a performance atmosphere in each rehearsal

I emphasize that all rehearsals are performances. The quality of focus and attentiveness in the rehearsal will determine how the group performs in a concert. **Rehearsals should be no different than the performances.**

Structure all of the warm-ups and technical exercises to relate to your learning of the music

What you do with fundamentals should be structured so that the exercises and terminology that you use can continually be related to the music that you are learning. The goal of any warm-up is to create awareness. Warm-ups should also include breathing and relaxation. Emphasize Remington exercises and/or scale type matching exercises that include brass lip vibrations, matching of pitch, consistent tone quality, note starts, matching of energy, style consistency, resonance awareness, ensemble recognition and matching. **Warm-ups and technical exercises that are routinely used in a mindless way have little value.** The director needs to ask open-ended questions about what is happening when they play. Direct the questions so that they you are steering them toward listening, evaluating and correcting things. The students should be engaged in the rehearsal in a technical and musical way. Thinking individually and collectively about what we are doing is the goal. We directors need to talk a lot more about how we start a sound, what it sounds like, what is the shape and then where and how we end it. The transfer of concepts and fundamentals in the warm-up into the body of the rehearsal is critical. The ultimate goal is to make the fundamentals become automatic when you are learning your music.

I like to use two octave major and chromatic scales. We work going up by half steps on each scale from lowest E major to D Major. We play all articulation patterns and work on evenness and quality of sound.

Learn to isolate and talk about the musical parts

A director needs to be able to isolate parts, prioritize them and then balance the parts in an organized and musically meaningful way. Fundamentals to teach would be: octave balance, who we listen to or balance to, shapes of notes, energy matching, dynamics and stress of musical line, breath phrasing, evenness within the musical line and technical problems within the tempi.

Teach the correct musical terms, styles and forms

Take the time to teach basic musical terms and forms. Do your students know style and tempi markings? Do they know the terms syncopation, hemiola or cadence? This should be part of their music education. A general historical and theoretical understanding by each student is very helpful to the understanding of the music, the composer and the idiomatic style.

Do not be afraid of using a metronome

Do not be afraid of not using a metronome

Work on matching a pitch

An electronic sound source is a good way to teach matching pitch. Pitch moves around in an ensemble – so it is critical that you work on pitch match everyday. Matching not only the pitch but also the energy of each player is critical. You need to talk about it and

demonstrate with electronic tuners what a pitch match sounds like. F around the room is a wonderful way to quickly check pitch, how and when they start a note, the follow through or duration of the note, the quality, the energy match and how they end the note. You can quickly check everyone in the room and give them feedback as they play. Individual tuners should be encouraged for each student. The tuners are inexpensive and can be used in individual practice and in the ensemble. Students should be encouraged to check their pitch visually and then to develop the listening skills to match what they see. Spend time to save time.

Practice styles and rhythms on unison pitches

It is very easy to incorporate different note lengths and styles in your F around the room exercises. Notes should start and end together, they should be square and not move around, should respond quickly, they should have a good center or core, they should match how they start articulation-wise between individuals and sections and they should match energy, length and pitch.

Stick to a regular rehearsal and sectional schedule

It is very important that you schedule regular sectionals. The initial scheduling should take into account all important factors to eliminate as many conflicts as possible. Student input is important when planning the schedule. After the schedule is set, it is very important that you be consistent in day and time of the sectional, rehearsal or individual listening.

Structure the rehearsal and be consistent in your expectations

If our expectations are inconsistent, we convey that to our students and they become inconsistent in rehearsing and performing correctly. Be careful to not have unrealistic expectations. A rehearsal structure should plan for consistency, maintenance and growth.

Assume that everyone can do it

Have high expectations for each and every player. I rarely cut people out of the music because they can't play it. Being unable to play their part should not be an option for the student.

Work to have a high point in the rehearsal

It is okay to have high expectations - there are times in rehearsal where there will be tension. There also should be a release. A planned musical high point is an excellent idea and a great way to end a rehearsal.

End the rehearsal with the students wanting more

Encourage rather than discourage

Do not be inflexible – be flexible when you need to be

Start and end rehearsals on time – end early if possible

Individual listenings are great

This is a wonderful way to grow soloists and to help all players – especially the less advanced player. Each student has different strengths and weaknesses – this is the only way to address the needs of every student. A twenty to thirty minute session at least every two weeks is manageable and very desirable.

Isolate players with other staff members

A schedule of playing-off required music by individual players and/or individual lessons is a great time saver.

Pass-off music of some kind every week,

Record the ensemble and evaluate the recordings on a regular basis

Communicate with your parents, faculty, staff and administration

Use Band Handbooks, Calendars, Newsletters, Websites

Return phone calls and emails

The 17 Essential Qualities of a Team Player

John C. Maxwell

Adaptable

If you won't change for the team, the team will change you

Collaborative

Working together precedes winning together

Committed

There are no halfhearted champions

Communicative

A team is many voices with a single heart

Competent

If you can't, your team won't

Dependable

Teams go to Go-To players

Disciplined

Where there's a will, there's a win

Enlarging

Adding value to teammates is invaluable

Enthusiastic

Your heart is the source of energy for the team

Intentional

Make every action count

Mission Conscious

The (Big) picture is coming in loud and clear

Prepared

Preparation can mean the difference between winning and losing

Relational

If you get along, others will go along

Self-Improving

To improve the team, improve yourself

Selfless

There is no "I" in Team

Solution Oriented

Make a resolution to find the solution

Tenacious

Never, never, never quit

The Mastery of Music

Ten Pathways to True Artistry

Barry Green

Communication, Courage, Discipline, Fun, Passion, Tolerance, Concentration, Confidence,
Ego/Humility and Creativity