

Successful Classroom Management
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The Learning Area

Prior to the start of each class the room should be clean, well organized and safe. Stands and chairs should be set up and arranged to best accommodate the educational objective. The chairs and stands should be spaced so that the students and director can move through and around the area. In a band rehearsal the teacher must be able to close the distance between themselves and any student in the class. The band hall should be well lit and the temperature appropriate for the season.

The Teacher Image

The band director should be in the rehearsal area as the students come into the room, professionally dressed with a pleasant look on their face. Good teachers appear approachable, friendly and most importantly ready to start class. Make eye contact with the students as they enter the room and greet them by name.

Starting Class

Allow the students to warm up on their own using proper techniques. Check attendance during this time. Give a visual cue that you are ready to begin class. Deliver a brief welcome followed by immediate instructions for a group warm up. Change this warm up daily. The warm up should be played by ear, "sound before sight".

Teaching Pace

Effective teachers base the pace of instruction on the visual appearance of the students. Read their body language. Most of the time teachers speak too fast and are guilty of information overload. The pace of instruction should be in balance with the student's learning ability.

Teacher Preparation

Study all material (method books, scores, etc...) to be used in rehearsal. Put your score in your head and not your head in the score. You should be observing your students not the ink on the page. Do not simply allow the students to play until they make a mistake, stop the band and fix it. I call this the "seek and destroy" method. It is a very poor way to manage a rehearsal. The better time effective method of rehearsal is for the director to already be aware of the difficult (or challenging) areas within the music or exercise and start there.

Keeping Students Focused

Motivation and discipline are the primary elements in this area of the educational process. It is essential to understand that discipline deals with a person's ability to follow rules and procedures. Motivation deals with a person's desire to succeed. The objective is to maintain an educational environment where the teacher can teach and the student can learn. Effective teachers accomplish this objective through a wide variety of techniques too numerous to list on this handout. Some basic methods are: calling students by name, eye contact, voice level, consistent checking for understanding, teacher location, humor, holistic teaching and most importantly, the use of creativity.

Student Learning Styles

People learn in different ways. Basically there are three main identified methods by which an individual learns. These learning styles are visual, auditory and kinesthetic. We learn by seeing, hearing and touching. Effective teachers use all three of these learning styles when they teach. Each of us can learn using one or all three of these methods. However, each of us learns easier in one the three ways. We all have a dominant learning style. Teaching with this in mind helps us reach more students seated in the classroom.

Here are a few of my personal quotes that you may find interesting. These quotes are my own. Feel free to use them but please remember who wrote them. Thank you.

"Creativity is a joyful celebration of the mind."

"The ability to be creative is what separates us from the other animals in the forest."

"The true measure of a person's character is revealed on the last day of a job, not the first."

"Boredom is an excuse for a lack of mental discipline."

"A technician emulates. An artist creates."

"The educational process is only as good as the individual teacher standing in front of a group of students at any given moment in time."

"No one should expect you to reach every child you teach. But everyone expects you to try."

Wallace Dierolf