



Teaching Techniques for Young Teachers

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Teaching Techniques For Young Teachers:

Greet them at the door

Stand at the door when the students enter and shake hands or bump knuckles with every kid. This is your chance to briefly say something personal to every student. You might comment about their clothes, hair, mood, or some may have a special nickname you have given them. i.e. Itzel might be “Pretzel” or your 8th grade, 200 lbs; trombone player might be “Capitol T”. Kids like this – and it is from the Capturing Kids Hearts philosophy. (Be sure your assistant is in the band room making sure all is under control as you do this)

Lesson plan everyday

With time, you will improve by doing these in the way they are written and the expectations you have for the performers. Your improvement will parallel that of the students. You work on the plan and the plan will work on you. Plan for warm-up and focus, retention of previously learned material, improvement, non-verbal learning, and a musical moment everyday. Let the students know at the beginning what will take place. Have an outline on the board so they can be ready when the bell rings. Make eye contact, interact, make them feel welcome as they begin the rehearsal. Focus begins as they enter the room and continues throughout each section of the rehearsal. Classroom procedure eliminates all questions and discipline issues. Plan to monitor and hold accountable each performer during the rehearsal. If planning saves one minute of rehearsal it is worth doing. Time is your enemy. Learn to maximize every minute.

Record your lessons

Record with cassette, CD or MP3 that you can use in your car. Listen to and from school. Multi-tasking is what we have to learn to do. Videotape from the rear of the room. It is amazing the new stuff you will hear from the back of your band or sectional. Study your non-verbal skills. Get others to study your tape and make comments.

Identify the problem -- Find the Positive –Three Positives for every Negative

Almost everyone is great at saying what is wrong with something. Very few know how to fix it or find what is right. The first step to improvement is identifying what needs to improve. Identifying something that is positive and creating a receptive, emulative, reinforced environment for that action or outcome to happen again. In your lesson plan, make a list and put them in priority order. Long range and short-range goals need to be created for the day, week, month, semester, and year. A specific, focused, one at a time approach to problems allows you and the students to see progress and reap the rewards.

Remember...you work on the plan and the plan works on you! It is a win -- win!

Solutions: Plan A and B

General Schwarzkoff said, “Never go to war with a best case scenario”
Here is your opportunity to make every problem solvable. Find the solutions that will solve multiple issues. Most students learn differently so present solutions to different modes of processing. Ex. Tension-release – give examples

Experience the solution- this is when the learning takes place. They demonstrate.

Eat a large pizza one bite at a time

There is no problem we cannot handle as long as the solution is presented in a manner where the students will stay motivated and are successful. To remain motivated one must experience success. Give your student’s the tools to be successful for every problem of music and life.

TRIADS Use this acronym for all aspects of musical preparation

Tone
Rhythm
Intonation
Accuracy
Definition- is there too much of me or not enough
Style

Sequence of events

Building blocks must be placed in the correct order for maximum effectiveness.
Refine your teaching skills so your awareness is heightened in the order of events.
Master teaching involves working on the correct problem first and then progressing so that each element builds on the success of the previous one.

Research your weaknesses

Visit with other teachers that are experts in the instrument in which you are weak.
Acquire from master teachers handouts, warm-ups, exercises, etc. that will improve the fundamentals of your section (teaching responsibility).

Master Teachers don’t know everything but they know where to find it

Become a champion at resources. Have them organized and at your disposal for daily access. Every TBA and TMEA clinic has a handout that you have filed for your reference. i.e. find out why Region 9 has the best flutes at All-State.

Stay one day ahead of the kids

Don’t fear teaching an instrument that is not your forte. Study each night and just stay ahead of the kids. Pick up that flute and play with them. You will really learn

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how to make a great sound once you can do it yourself. There is a reason Dr. Revelli studied with each principal player in the Chicago Symphony. He wanted to be the best at teaching his students.

Stop watch your rehearsal recording

Time how much you play.
Time how long your explanations are
Time how many times you repeat your instructions
Time how little the kids actually demonstrate what you are telling them.
Remember-until they demonstrate-no teaching has taken place.

Bloom's Taxonomy (See attachment)

Theses are the six steps that give you the answers to overachieving.
Conscious and sub-conscious levels of thinking.

Avoid Clichés and Avoid Generalizations

Wrong note
Too loud
Tune it
Watch
Listen
Try-Avoid using **try** during any rehearsal (It is an excuse to not correct)
Luke said to Yoda, "I will Try".
Yoda said to Luke, "Try Not.....Do or Do Not"--Yoda was a wise man
Identifying is not solving the problems. Be specific but give the solution in a manner that applies to all. "Who – What – Where – When – Why"
If done properly, specifics don't have to embarrass an individual.

College rehearsal strategies have little to do with what you are doing now

Education involves constant and positive behavior change. This calls for a wide spectrum of teaching techniques. Moreover, they must be regularly reviewed and reinforced by the teacher. What worked in the past or with a different level group may or may not work in your situation. You must determine its effectiveness

Concepts transfer

After each class, students should feel that they have learned something new about music, about performance, about their instrument, about how they can be better individuals in society. Any piece of music will be attainable if you teach them the elements and concepts within the piece. Technique, range, tone, intonation, articulation, nuance, expressiveness, balance and style are just individual elements of music. Master these and the music is easy.

Notebook on every class

All teachers can benefit by keeping a daily diary or notebook of teaching techniques for each of their classes. This record should be used later as a daily reference in teaching. It should be regularly supplemented with reference materials from periodicals and clinical sources. This notebook becomes the teacher's richest source of ideas and a constant reminder and reference. Be specific. i.e. French Horn weekly sectional Notebook. Monday Oct 3rd French horns learned stopped horn technique and how to use it in their district music.

Marching band notebook: On Monday Oct 3rd Put closer on the field for Westlake Festival on Sat. (next year have it on the field a week earlier)

Score Study

Study scores for harmonic content, form, balance and style is only the beginning. Mark fingerings, articulation and intonation problems and general teaching techniques. Compiled data for each of these issues should become a regular reference source before each rehearsal in order to anticipate the countless problems that arise. Use reference notebooks daily; you need regular reminders of successful past techniques, as well as new ones, to keep our teaching fresh and inspiring. However, if the material hasn't been well organized from the outset, it probably will never be used. Use "post its" to mark issues.

Often, teacher's scores and other materials never leave their desks other than to be used in rehearsal. It should be obvious that a score cannot be effectively analyzed during the confines of a five-or six- period school day.

Know the harmonic analysis of every piece you teach. Even etudes and exercises have chord progressions and awareness of them will allow you to make more musical sense in their performance. Clark's Technical Studies #2 is I, IV, V7, I in every major key. Bach unaccompanied solos are better when you know the chords.

Teach what you know

Some teachers teach only one way and use the same techniques year after year; others teach differently each year, using new ideas to augment workable techniques already proven to them. However, some teachers are constantly changing to a new approach. Think in terms of concepts. Concepts transfer and teaching strategies are refined in all master teachers. Stay with your plan but improve it and refine it. Some teachers are given yearly suggestions at festivals as to how their groups can improve. However, the suggestions fall on deaf ears. Just like some of our students-- they don't listen. No learning takes place unless behavior and results change. I learned this the hard way from Dick Floyd. I asked him to clinic my group when he was Director of Bands at Baylor. He declined and I asked why. He said, "You never listen to my suggestions". Wow! That hurt! The concept of a lesson plan frequently evokes a negative response from teachers (it did in me when I started) as evidenced by the nonexistent lesson plans of so many music teachers. Teaching is a 24-hour job. However, you can have a life!

Remain a performer

A music teacher is always considered to be a teacher-performer, so use your performance skills for demonstration at every opportunity. A verbal explanation plus a performance demonstration maximizes the teaching experience. Your students still learn well by rote. Sound, musicality, nuance etc. are better demonstrated than explained. Right-brain items can never be explained in left-brain verbiage. This dual technique also enhances the teacher's prestige in the eyes of the students. Superior teachers give fully of their skills.

Record for your students

Dub sections of music by the world's greatest performers, bands, and orchestras. Find sections that relate to the music you are currently working on. Record sections of your student's district music, solo, important part in concert selection etc. so they can study, analyze, evaluate and compare.

Great Teachers are made. It is something that is within the grasp of everyone

You decide – Expect the same of yourself that you expect of your students.

What else do you bring to the party?

What do you bring to rehearsal everyday that is not just music-related? Remember we are teaching about life. Every one of your students has multiple interests and each of those interests allows them to bring heightened passion to their music making. The essence of tension-release is never more present than sailing your boat on a starboard tack and you are maximizing your boat speed with how close to the wind you are pointing. The sailboat will not move without tension to the wind -- Or-- How about the tempo of your golf swing as you make that perfect shot at the flag to win the tournament. It was just like you visualized.

Superior communications skills

They are better than superior musicality. Become a better public speaker and presenter and your ensemble will improve. The message is not as important as the delivery. Focus on these items.

Your body language

Your voice and speaking rhythm

The story you tell

- 1. Control your breathing.** If you do not breathe fast you cannot be nervous.
- 2. Practice, practice and practice some more.** The more you practice your lesson plan, and presentation the more comfortable you will be when you give it.
- 3. Concentrate.** Just like an elite athlete, clear your mind before the rehearsal.
- 4. Shift Your Focus from You to Them.** You usually will ask your friend "How did I do?" switch your concentrate on the group and keep making eye contact.
- 5. Focus on specific students in the ensemble.** Whether there are three students in your sectional or 70 students in your band, or you are speaking to a room of 250 band parents, you need to visually focus on one person at a time.

Bloom's Taxonomy

I. Knowledge:

Remembering of previously learned material; recall (facts or whole theories); bringing to mind. **Terms:** defines, describes, identifies, lists, matches, names.

II. Comprehension:

Grasping the meaning of material. Interpret, explain, summarize, predicting outcome and effects, estimating future trends. **Terms:** explains, distinguishes.

III. Application:

Ability to use learned material in a new situation; apply rules, laws, methods, theories. **Terms:** changes, computes, demonstrate, operate, show, uses, solves.

IV. Analysis:

Breaking down into parts; understanding organization, clarifying, concluding. Identify parts; Relationships; Clarify. **Terms:** distinguish, outlines, relates, breaks down, discriminates, subdivides.

V. Synthesis:

Ability to put parts together to form a new whole. Understand abstract relations. **Terms:** combines, compiles, composes, creates, designs, rearranges.

VI. Evaluation:

Judge the outcome. Use criteria. Support judgment with reason. (No guessing). **Terms:** appraises, criticizes, compares, supports, concludes, discriminates, contrasts, summarizes, explains.