



**Texas Bandmasters Association
Convention/Clinic July 26-28, 2018**

Creating the Engaged Listener

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Creating the Engaged Listener

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Creating a sequential process allowing increased student aural awareness in a performance environment. Once awareness is heightened, we will discuss developing tools that allow the student to make informed performance decisions based upon their heightened awareness.

Listening is a difficult skill to assess:

- We all hear differently.
- Each of us has a unique sound in our head that we like.
- How do we know if the students are hearing what we want them to hear?
- How do we put into place assessment goals to aid us in evaluating?

What does “engaged listener” mean:

- How do the students listen when they are playing?
- What are the students listening to when they are playing?
- How do the students listen when they are not playing?
- What are the students listening to when they are not playing?
- What listening interaction is there between the players in the group?
- How can we have an impact on this?

The Engaged Listener Checklist (who)

- We first listen to ourselves.
- We then listen to the students playing in our section.
- We then listen to the same families of instruments (ex: sax/clarinet)
- We then listen to large families (ex: woodwind/brass/percussion)
- Finally, we listen to the whole and how each section interacts with the others.
- Individual / Regional / Global
- Micro – Macro

The Engaged Listener Checklist (what)

- Tone
 - Equipment
 - Breath Support
 - Descriptors for tone (bright, brilliant, dark, dull)
 - The main focus is matching sound and having each sound in the ensemble fit into the sound of the people around them.
 - Identify the characteristic sound you want to hear and then shape the sounds into it. BE PATIENT!
 - Once section sound is developed, then take this technique more to a macro level by discussing the ensemble sounds.
 - Talk about how each sound interacts and engages the others.

- Intonation
 - Energy & Air
 - Descriptors for tone (flat / sharp / sound waves)
 - Melodic vs. Chordal
 - Unison vs. Harmony
 - Idiosyncrasies of the Instruments
 - The Impact of Dynamics on Intonation

- Time
 - Pulse (internal / external)
 - Articulation (matching / clarity)
 - Note Length (front / middle / back)
 - Energy within each note

- Musicianship
 - Note Grouping
 - Phrase Shaping / Energy within the musical line
 - Performing with brain and heart
 - Working past the written page

- Recording
 - Used as a rehearsal tool
 - Used as an educational tool
 - Nurturing the desired sound through modeling (individual/ensemble)

- Programming
 - Selection of Literature
 - Pedagogical Programming: Creating opportunities to: