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**Planning Every Rehearsal for
Maximum Effect - If It's Not Written
Down, It Won't Happen**

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Planning Every Rehearsal for Maximum Effect – If It Isn't Written Down, It Won't Happen

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Sponsored by Phi Beta Mu International School Bandmaster Fraternity

Clinic Description: Rehearsals that produce maximum efficiency and productivity come from thoughtful, effective planning. This session will focus on using the tools available to help directors develop a method for producing written rehearsal plans to help their students, programs and themselves stay on track for continued growth.

Lesson Plan vs. Rehearsal Plan

- Lesson Plans, for some, are dirty words. Something you are required to do and turn in. In general these are often vague and directors often copy and paste in a program to fulfill a requirement. A Lesson Plan can encompass a large amount of time: day, week, or month. These plans may not address rehearsal pacing. Generally, this will address the “What” (Goal/Objectives) and some of the “How” (Guided practice). Encouraged to use educational terms: Instructional strategies, Guided Practice, List TEKS, List Technology,
- Rehearsal Plans are the result of a process of assessing student, ensemble or program weaknesses or growth areas and setting out steps to attain achievable improvement. These plans tend to be more specific than lesson plans. Well written rehearsal plans help with rehearsal pacing.
- For some people these are synonymous. Tomato/Tomato
Lesson Plans or Rehearsal plans that are developed for student growth and have detailed sequencing and scaffolding will help you have more effective rehearsals.

Types of Rehearsals

Presentation of New Material
Excellence

Goal Oriented
Run through

Effective rehearsals work to include multiple rehearsal types in the rehearsal plan. You can be having two types of rehearsals at the same time. Ex. Goal Oriented/Excellence. The key is traveling from type to type and knowing what you can combine and what you cannot.

Tools for Effective Rehearsal Planning

Curriculum Guide

TEKS

Sightreading Exercises

Tempo Chart

Fundamental Exercises/Books

Score

SmartMusic

Recording Acquisition Software

Historical content/context

Technology

Director created exercises

Why write it down?

How to get started.

- Identify individual or ensemble growth areas (Skill Development).

Posture	Hand Position
Characteristic Tone	Key Identification
Sightreading Proficiency	Just Intonation Tuning
Listening Skills	Ensemble Balance
Range (Extremes)	Technical Facility
Breathing Capacity	Breath Control (Inhalation and Exhalation)
Dynamic Range	Watching the Conductor
Transposition	Analysis (Peer)
Individual/Ensemble Pulse	Rhythmic Understanding
- Use the building blocks for your rehearsal plan.

Breathing Exercises	Tone Building Exercises
Interval Exercises	Scales
Rhythm Books or Sheets	Chord Tuning Exercises
Air Flow Exercise	Air and Articulation Exercise
Sightreading Exercises or Selections	Assessment of Listening Skills
Student Peer Assessment	Performance Repertoire
- Identify Specific Exercises or resources that fit with your rehearsal building blocks to address the growth areas.
 - Characteristic Tone-Tone Building Exercise
 - Repeating Concert F, Remington Exercise, F Descending Exercise (Ascending), Chicowicz Exercise, Chromatic Exercises

This process will help to organize the rehearsal. It will also begin the process of how the director will structure the feedback to refine the skills that are the focus.

- Identify two goals for each exercise.

It is important to limit the number of goals that are given to the performers to direct their focus. Students cannot accurately assess more than two goals. This also helps them focus their thoughts on the specific areas of growth as determined by the director.

Ex. Repeating F Concert Exercise (4 or 8 count F Concert)

 1. “Focus on a full relaxed inhalation. Like we worked on in our Breathing Exercises”
 2. “Focus on creating a pure vibration at the beginning of the note without any noise or interruption.”

If you want a focused sound, use the word “focus” in the description of your goals. Begin your assessment feedback by addressing the performance as it relates to the two goals the students were focused on achieving.
- Identify specific material in your performance literature to be the focus or “Theme” for your rehearsal plan. Embed the “Theme” in as many areas of the rehearsal as possible to reinforce the concept while keeping the students engaged through a variety of experiences (exercises)
 - Ex. balance, rhythmic challenges, difficult intervals, chord structure, textures

- Build your rehearsal plan systematically, with the previous ideas, to have a consistent flow and approach to your rehearsals. Learning is enhanced when the students are in a comfortable environment. One way to build student comfort is to have the structure of the rehearsals be similar from day to day with slight variations to maintain interest. The slight variations prevent “auto pilot”. Keep it a cognitive process. Set the expectation that when students enter rehearsal they must be ready to listen, think, assess and respond.

Rehearsal Pacing

Effective rehearsal planning should improve rehearsal pacing. It is important to include timing expectations in the rehearsal plan. Setting timing parameters for each component of the rehearsal will help the director reach the desired goals for each rehearsal. It can also help the director understand and accept progressive/incremental development of skill and not allow the rehearsal to stagnate and become monotonous.

Organized Listening

One issue for directors is determining a plan of attack for correcting fundamental and musical problems. The rehearsal plan should be used as a tool to help directors organize their own listening of their ensemble’s performance. By having a set plan with predetermined questions and/or answers, directors can target their assessment and responses to the skill development or performance goals being rehearsed. As with the students, directors should limit their listening/assessment to one or two issues. Increase the repetitions to assess more issues, not assess everything at one time. **YOU WON’T CATCH EVERYTHING AND YOU WILL OVERWELM YOUR STUDENTS WITH MORE INFORMATION THAN THEY CAN PROCESS.** Again, targeted development with one or two goals will help with incremental and sustained growth.

Portfolio

Keeping these rehearsal plans creates a portfolio of rehearsal strategies. Adding comments on the rehearsal plans effectiveness is a great way to use your own work as a professional development tool. Make note of what worked well and what needs to be adjusted for future plans. Organize portfolios by skill area or literature content. These can be very useful when working on these items or pieces in the future. Over time directors will be able to determine the most effective ways to address specific skill development or be able to help new staff members with plans that can help them develop their planning and assessment skills at a faster rate.