



**Texas Bandmasters Association  
Convention/Clinic July 25-27, 2019**

**The First Years of Teaching - Making  
the Most!**

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**Sponsor: YBDT**

**HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

# The First Years of Teaching - Making the Most!

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- Introduction
- Clinic Purpose
  - To heighten young teacher's awareness of opportunities to excel
  - Avoid common pitfalls and mistakes
  - Suggest ideas for utilization of head directors and mentors
  - Offer insight from successful young directors, seasoned directors, band consultants, and fine arts administrators
- Quotes from interviewees regarding common mistakes from young teachers
  - *"They fail to connect with mentor teachers"*
  - *"They don't have a concept of what they want to hear when their band plays something."*
  - *"They don't teach the whole child."*
  - *"They sometimes just go through the motions of ensemble drill, not creating excellence."*
  - *"They don't know what to listen for"*
  - *"They don't teach everything with a sense of purpose."*
  - *"They don't establish clear boundaries in teacher/student relationships in that they focus on being cool and converse unprofessionally."*
  - *"They form and express opinions on teaching too early; they just need to sit back and listen."*
  - *"For many of them, it's just a paycheck."*
- Things they wish they'd done
  - *"I wish I had observed more, especially in a situation of similar cultural and socioeconomic environments."*
  - *"I should have networked with other directors more often."*
  - *"I never knew how beneficial it would have been to take private lessons on other instruments."*
  - *"We spent so much time in method classes making good sounds but we never experimented making bad sounds and how to fix them."*
  - *"Instead of waiting tables, I could have taught private lessons to make money and sharpen my skills."*
- Things you can do to improve your teaching
  - Observe
    - Observe as often as possible
    - Teach and observe summer camps, observe classes when you have days off, or take a personal day - you will be so glad you did!
    - Observe with people you know and people you don't know
    - Take physical notes, record if possible
  - Invite Mentors/Clinicians - Don't be afraid to ask questions!
  - Podcasts/Online Resources
    - After Sectionals
    - Crossing the Break
    - Band Directors Talk Shop

- Past TMEA/TBA Clinic Handouts
  - Actively participate in Region Band Rehearsals
    - Observe rehearsals and take notes
    - What does the clinician say to fix this problem? That problem?
    - What does the clinician actively listen for and how do they fix the problems in the ensemble?
    - How does the clinician prep students for their performance? E.g. What to eat before rehearsal, what to do during warm up, and how to maintain focus leading up to a performance
    - Write things down!
  - Volunteer
    - Region Band Organizer
    - Band Chairman
    - TMEA
    - TBA
  - Band Camps
  - Director Workshops
    - TMEA
    - TBA, TBA Workshops
    - The Midwest Clinic
    - Art of Teaching Music
    - Sam Houston Center for Music Education Workshops
    - TBA Workshops
    - YES Seminars
  - Hang around like minded people
  - Introduce yourself to other directors, or directors successful in similar situations or even invite experienced directors out in your area for a beverage or meal and talk about band
  - Take lessons on all instruments
- Pitfalls
  - Problems younger generations face
    - Expecting immediate success
    - More distractions than previous generations
  - It's ok to make mistakes - keep a list of things that happened the year before that you can be better prepared for next year
- Mentors
  - You must have a mentor!!
  - Benefits of having mentors
    - They help you with day to day activities
    - Help you when you run into problems
    - Talk to you often
    - Support you through the ups and the downs
    - Tell you what you're doing right and what you're doing wrong
    - Point out weaknesses in your program
    - Assess your teaching habits
    - Make you aware of deficiencies
    - Point you to other experts
    - Assist with classroom management
    - Point out whether or not your fundamentals are appropriate

- Give you advice on improving both professionally and personally
  - Advise your career path
  - Create a friendship
  - Point out future problems
  - Provide the benefit of their experience and mistakes
    - “A smart man learns from his mistakes; a wise man learns from others mistakes.” - Clyde Wilson
  - Find mentor you to trust and understand
  - Follow through on mentor’s critiques
  - Be willing to have an open dialogue with them
- Accepting Criticism
  - Stop making excuses on why you can’t and start figuring out how you can
- Developing Confidence in Teaching
  - Personality, Charisma, Charm
  - Mentors
  - Have mentors out early and often
    - It’s never too early!
    - Get help from top to bottom - Varsity Band to Beginners
    - Ask as many questions as possible - definitely the most underrated bit of advice
  - Record yourself
  - Constantly reflect and adjust
- Planning Instruction
  - Beginner planning to varsity band planning: all classes need a plan
  - Begin with the end in mind
  - Understand what can be taught in a class period and what needs to be a project
  - Effective rehearsals require effective score study
  - Maintain to-do lists
  - Bad rehearsals – learn from them!
  - Sectionals – they are a must, and must have a plan
  - “Give yourself a grade, give your students a grade” - Jason Finnels
- Classroom Management
  - Have clear procedures in place and provide some expectations at the beginning of the year
  - Praise students every day when they meet these expectations, remind them when they fall short
  - **PLAY EVERYDAY IN EVERY SINGLE CLASS!!**
  - Handle problematic kids away from the class
  - Personality is key. Rehearsal vs. Normal
- Parents/Administrators
  - Communication is key
  - You’re a salesman when you talk to parents and administrators
- Avoiding Burnout
  - Plan your teaching and have wise, attainable goals

- Get away from the band hall
- Talk to other directors, definitely mentors
- Excerpt from Anthony Rivera's graduate research paper:
  - Peers of mine that have left the profession often mention the competitive and political aspects of the profession as reasons for their departure. Competition and politics will always be there; however, if the focus is on beating everybody and not teaching the student, success will not come. Every single person interviewed said their teaching is motivated by the same two things: developing the student's love of music and doing everything possible to be the best teacher for their students. Those reasons listed should drive our teaching. As Rob Chilton says, "Focus on the student, and the success will follow."
- You do not have to be at the band hall all day to be successful
  
- Closing
  - Biggest advice from our pool of interviewees:
    - *"Don't be afraid to bring in experienced directors or to ask for help! The earlier the better! This is how we grow as educators."* - Corey Graves
    - *"Everything done in the classroom must have a purpose, it must count for something."* - Cody Myers
    - *"When something doesn't go right in the classroom, take a look in the mirror and reevaluate what you did or how you handled the situation. Put more on yourself, and less on everybody else."* - Robert Herrings
    - *"Get a job and stick with it for four years, it takes a long time to figure it out and staying somewhere helps that. Educate yourself on that school, teachers, and community"* - Rob Chilton
    - *"Plan the work and work the plan."* - Ryan Johnstone
    - *"Don't take shortcuts, take time to do it right. Teaching has nothing to do with awards, it is all about relationships."* - Cindy Bulloch
    - *"It's not teaching the music, it's teaching the child."* - Robert Rubio
    - *"Don't let common excuses get in the way: private lessons, their kids are better off financially, etc."* - Tyler Owen
    - *"You have to be a lifelong learner."* - Cindy Lansford
    - *"The greatest gift we can give our students is the gift of reading music."* - Gary Garner
    - *"Always be accountable and have your students be accountable."* - Bill Watson
  
- Special thanks to the following people:
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cindy Bulloch</li> <li>▪ Rob Chilton</li> <li>▪ Danny Detrick</li> <li>▪ Gary Garner</li> <li>▪ Corey Graves</li> <li>▪ Robert Herrings</li> <li>▪ Ryan Johnstone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cindy Lansford</li> <li>▪ Cody Myers</li> <li>▪ Tyler Owen</li> <li>▪ Robert Rubio</li> <li>▪ Russ Teweleit</li> <li>▪ Bill Watson</li> </ul>
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