



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

**Creating a Successful Band Program  
in a Rural Community**

**CLINICIANS:**

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

TBA  
2019

# CLASS STRUCTURE/ BEGINNER INSTRUCTION

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## CLASS STRUCTURE

- Team Teaching- How to best utilize all directors for all periods of the day and how to delegate responsibilities to staff members so that everyone is contributing equally
  - Helpful Apps for communication and time management
  - Strategies for discipline and classroom management especially for large band classes
  - Managing attendance and testing for large classes
  - Sectionals
- How to be productive with a less than ideal class situation
  - Get creative with your space- how to find ways to have two classes at once in your band hall
  - SmartMusic- how I have utilized smartmusic in my 6th grade classes to give more individual feedback to my combined woodwind and high brass classes
  - How to talk to your administration regarding the reasoning for your ideal class structure

## BEGINNER INSTRUCTION

- Beginner Instruction
  - Limiting Instrumentation at the start
  - Get them playing as much as possible
  - Develop a testing schedule that you are comfortable with and stick to it
  - DTR or Down the Row
  - Objectives instead of practice cards why this works for us and how we do it
- Incentive programs to encourage practice outside and inside the band hall
  - final exam material for sixth grade
  - Pass off charts
  - "100 Club"
  - Getting ready for combined concerts when you don't have all of your students in the same class period

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# REHEARSAL STRATEGIES

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## DEVELOPING FUNDAMENTALS

Your students more than likely will not take lessons or even have an option for private lessons. A one or two director program must become their private lesson instructor to ensure proper technique development! Approach the warm-up as a private lesson and design it to work on fundamentals your students need.

### Ex 1: "Traditional" Warm Up

5 Minutes- Tone production

5 Minutes- Technique (Scales/ Clarke Studies/ Lip Slurs)

5 Minutes- Articulation drills

### Ex 2: 45 "Combination" Warm Up

5 Minutes- Scales in half notes then quarter 8th

Combines tone, technique, articulation, and timing

5 Minutes- Chorale

Combines listening, intonation, and balance

Make sure to have a variety of exercises for each fundamental you plan to address. Would you want to play Long Tone 1A every single day? Do you really want to listen to Long Tone 1A every day?? Find a way to make the warm-up engaging for both you and the students.

Guide your students through the warm-up and address issues as they come up. Are they all starting, sustaining, and releasing together? Is it in tune? Ask yourself these questions and then give them the feedback, but also explain your process to them. Eventually, they will begin to self diagnose.

**Always continue to address fundamentals- even in the middle of concert/ competition season!**

## SELECTING MUSIC W/LIMITED INSTRUMENTATION

Knowing your instrumentation is key for deciding what music you should play.

What do you have and what do you need?

- No tuba? Try bari sax and bass clarinet
- No horns? alto/ tenor sax or euphonium
- Not enough trumpets? Add clarinet or alto sax
- Missing a few percussion parts? Use members from larger sections

Covering all of the parts is your biggest priority so become familiar with Finale, Sibelius, or MuseScore. Rewriting parts will be your best friend!

**When selecting music for your group take the time to research pieces that will make your group sound great!**

Ask yourself these questions:

- How many parts are there per section and do I have enough students to cover them?
- Are there any exposed sections that will exploit our weaknesses?
- How long is this piece?
- Will this piece make my group more musical?
- Can my group really perform this piece or is it just for me?

Remember, you are not judged on what you play but by how well you play it.

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## REHEARSAL STRATEGIES

Study the score for more than just harmonic structure and musical interpretation. Try to anticipate where your group is going to struggle and make your lesson plans accordingly.

**Make a plan, stick to it, and modify as you go along!** Your preparation is the key to successful rehearsals and to a successful performance.

### Phase 1- Planning

Look at when the end result is needed (concert, contest, etc) and work backward

Budget your rehearsal time carefully (remember to account for announcements)

Have weekly goals and daily goals

Write out your lesson plans or rehearsal schedule and share it with your students and parents

Clearly communicate your rehearsal process and schedule to anyone you team teach with

Have a plan on how to explain every rhythm, articulation, phrase ending, etc.

Know when your students will be out for sports, FFA, field trips, etc.

During marching season talk with your coaches about field use/ practice schedules

You can never be too prepared for rehearsal!

### Phase 2- Macro- Micro- Macro

Week 1- Sightread through the whole piece, start going through large sections, polishing not necessary yet

Week 2- Work large sections at a time, if possible connect matching sections

Week 3- Slowly narrow your window of focus, 10-20 measures at a time

Week 4- Continue refining little details but now start to increase the length of each section

Week 5- Back to larger sections, working transitions and tempo changes

Week 6- Working up to full runs of the piece and fine-tuning dynamics, etc.

Design warm-up exercises or rhythm sheets to improve the more difficult sections of your music.

If you have stronger players or students on leadership that are capable of running a sectional use them to help you.

When rehearsing, don't tell your students to do something, make them do it!

# TBA 2019

## COMMUNITY BUY-IN

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## THE PLACE OF SMALL SCHOOL BANDS

In many small communities, the school band program is the largest arts organization in the town. Residents of your community are all connected to the band in some way as alumni, parents, friends, and family. This is enormously powerful in respect to harnessing support and making meaningful connections.

## STRATEGIES

### COMMUNICATION WITH COMMUNITY

- Local Newspaper and radio
- School Website / Band Website
- Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
  - Utilize local pages for news and alumni to direct your post
- Remind messages about meetings and concerts

### RECONSIDER PERFORMING VENUES

- Find ways to get the band in front of new audiences
- Concerts in the park, Churches, Performing in the downtown area, local community club meetings, and local building big enough or outside.
- Christmas caroling brings the concert right to the front door of community members.
- Pair concert with event, movie, meal, or community festival

## MARCHING SHOW THEME

- Judges and the community want the same thing from a show... they want it to be good.
- Choose appropriate music for your group size and ability level
- Electric bass guitar, and we orchestrated music can help
- Consider combining pop and classical music in the same show

## CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

- Expect 1st division in non-musical settings. Cleaning up the bus, arrival times before rehearsals, uniform inspection etc.
- Give the students some buy into excellence. Let them help choose the path so that it is truly their victory. Excellence is non-negotiable, but the path is flexible.
- Monitor grades weekly and hold them accountable. Use their sections for tutoring.

## BONUS: HISTORY PROJECT

Consider learning the history of your band program. Find and reach out to previous band directors. Highlight and celebrate significant events and alumni. Find out who in the community used to be in the band and get their stories. Bring them back into the program as supporters!