

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT:

Making the “System” Work For You

presented by Dennis Granlie

dwgranlie@aol.com

•Music teachers hardly ever fail from lack of musical skills--your college/university will see to it you know your stuff. It is organizational and interpersonal skills that hold many new, as well as experienced teachers back. Classroom management is a combination of excellent interpersonal skills and masterful teaching. It takes time and consistent practice

IMPORTANT, BUT OFTEN OVERLOOKED REHEARSAL ELEMENTS:

TIME

Music must be rehearsed “in time.” The more time invested in performing the music, the more experienced and proficient the performers become. One minute of wasted time each rehearsal for an entire 180-day school year equals three hours of lost instruction. In most schools, that is nearly a week of instruction.

SILENCE

Silence is arguably the most important element in a rehearsal, yet few directors take time to establish it. Not only do students need to be taught to be silent, they need to be taught what to do during the silence.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is valid only in the perception of the receiver. You may be sending tons of information. The question is, “Are the students receiving it?” They aren’t if they are talking, distracted or otherwise off task.

GENERAL TENETS OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT:

MANAGEMENT PLAN MUST

- Set forth clear expectations
- Set forth clear consequences/rewards
- Be referred to and followed consistently

Expectations:

- Must be established the first day and reviewed as often as necessary
- Should be concise (expressed in five or fewer short statements)
- Can be as general as “I expect your very best” or as specific as “Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.”

Consequences and Rewards:

- Should be reasonable
- Should follow a progressing pattern
- Should be specific

Consistency:

- Must be key to any plan
- Takes time, energy, and practice!**

TOLERANCE LEVEL chaos ←————→ stifled

ROLE PLAYING

The adult role model

The caring professional

The GIC

The “fairness” barometer

The Manager

REMEMBER, THE SYSTEM IS ONLY AS GOOD AS THE OPERATOR

Common teacher faults:

- Low or unclear expectations
- Lack of consistency
- Poor planning/Pacing
- Poor modeling
- Poor directions
- Indifference or lack of enthusiasm
- Being a “buddy”
- Fear of being “mean”
- Allowing students to be in control

SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS:

ASSERTIVE DISCIPLINE PLAN: This plan gained popularity in the ‘80’s. It is based upon three-elements similar to those outlined above. Google or contact Lee Cantor and Associates, P.O. Box 2113, Santa Monica, CA 90407. (videos and books) Entire plan is posted for students to clearly see.

Rules (four or fewer);

- ex.:
1. Follow directions the first time
 2. Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself
 3. Participate in all class activities
 4. Show respect for classmates, teacher and guests
 5. Raise hand and wait to be called upon before speaking

Expectations (Cantor does not include expectations)

- ex.
1. Give your very best
 2. Contribute positively to class and fellow musicians
 3. Show respect to fellow musicians, instruments, equipment, music
 4. Work to improve yourself and the band (group)
 5. Treat others as you would like them to treat you

Consequences (progressive);

- ex.:
1. Verbal warning
 2. Name on board (in book is better)
 3. ✓ next to name and loss of privilege (recess/detention)
 4. ✓✓ next to name, greater loss of privilege, parents called
 5. removal from class, loss of credit
- Severe behavior: sent to office, parents called immediately

Rewards (not just goodies);

- ex.:
1. Praise
 2. Points
 3. Special time (be sure it relates to music)
 4. Tangibles (candy, stickers, donuts, etc.)
 5. Interesting, rewarding, and inviting classes/rehearsals
 6. Musical/intellectual growth
 7. Excellent performances

ASSERTIVE DISCIPLINE PROS AND CONS:

PROS-

- Establishes clear expectations, consequences and rewards and causes teacher to reflect upon the same
- Plan is posted in classroom for students/parents to see
- Follows progressive consequences
- Invites administration support because of documentation
- Can stand up in court

CONS-

- Requires significant amount of record keeping, especially early in implementation
- Gives attention to negative behavior (name on board gets attention)
- Limited flexibility if consistency is to be maintained
- Can motivate students to work for irrelevant goals if reward system is flawed
- Establishes rules, but not broader expectations for good behavior

BEHAVIOR INITIATIVE PLAN: Also known as MBI; Montana Behavioral Initiative, it is a broadbase plan that seeks to deter improper behavior at its earliest stage and teach the desired correct behavior

ESTABLISH PARAMETERS

Teacher establishes and posts class rule and/or expectations. Instead of punishing for rule infractions, the teacher accepts responsibility for teaching desired behavior, rather than faulting students for poor behavior. Teacher must expect to reteach behaviors on an ongoing basis.

DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS

Teacher and students may take class time to work together to define acceptable behavior. Relationship of mutual trust and respect is fostered. Teaching self-discipline, helping make good choices and having structure are important to all children.

CONSEQUENCES

Frequency of intervention increases, but the severity decreases. Students may be asked to provide specific reasons why their behavior was unacceptable, and for specific ways they can correct the situation. Poor behavior becomes a teaching and learning opportunity.

BEHAVIOR INITIATIVE PROS AND CONS:

PROS-

- Invites student involvement and buy-in
- Poor behavior addressed immediately
- Students made to reflect on behavior
- Provides a behavior model rather than “rules”
- Lowers teacher frustration

CONS-

- No clear-cut progression of consequences
- May require more involved follow-up from teacher
- Requires patience and frequent reteaching

“HARRY WONG” APPROACH: Harry Wong was a California teacher whose approach suggests separating classroom management from “discipline.” That means routine activities such as entering the room, getting materials, changing activities, etc., are all part of a routine. When the routine has been taught but not followed, all other activity stops while the class practices or reviews the routine. Learning expectations are communicated separately from behavior expectations, to the extent possible. “The Effective Teacher” videos or The First Days of School book: Contact Dr. Harry K. Wong, 943 N. Shoreline Blvd., Mountain View, CA 94043 www.harrywong.com

WONG ELEMENTS:

- Clearly Defined Classroom Procedures and Routines
- DISCIPLINE IS NOT PUNISHMENT!! (It's routine)
- Routines must be practiced. Failure to comply with routine indicates need for more practice.
- Effective teacher manages classroom; ineffective teacher disciplines classroom.
- Effective teacher plans for mastery.
- Inappropriate behavior is handled promptly and consistently.

WONG PROS AND CONS:

PROS:

- Works well for training large groups
- Works especially well for elementary level
- Can make learning procedures fun

CONS:

- Same as MBI

ACCOUNTABILITY:

- Ask administrator to review your plan/expectations prior to the start of school. Don't expect administrators to back your plan if they don't know it.
- Hand out written discipline plan/expectations on the first day along with a calendar of events
- Require parent signature:
"I/we have read and understand the expectations for our son/daughter's behavior in music classes. Further, we understand that there will be performances, and occasional rehearsals for which attendance is required as a part of the music class grade.

_____ date _____
parent/guardian signature

PROBLEM CLASSES, PROBLEM STUDENTS:

The BEST classroom management tool is a well-planned, well-run class. If you have a "problem" class, check first to see how YOU would like to be in the class.

Record classes (video if possible) and analyze for discipline as well as music. Maybe you're boring them to death - is your performance class at least 70% performing? Planning and pacing are at the root of MANY management problems.

Class is out of control; can't get them to be quiet:

- Stand quietly and raise your hand. Wait for silence.** Establish signal for quiet & practice.
- Insist on students' attention.** Eye contact is a good measure of attention. "Eyes up here," or "Eyes." (Are your eyes on them, or in the score?)
- Use names**
- Keep them busy** singing/playing. Have a "sponge activity."
- Divide and conquer:** Identify "infectors" and deal with them one at a time, outside of class. Separate them from the class as a first step. Call parents, or better yet, have them call the parents and hand you the phone after they have explained the purpose of the call. Use behavior contracts; document, document.. Remove from class when they are interfering with learning.
- Stop poor behavior as early as possible;** before it escalates. Ignoring poor behavior is tacit approval. Smart remarks become attention-getters. Ask, "What's the procedure for talking, Jeremy?"
- Beware of "button pushing."** "Put your instrument away and wait in my office until after class." Ignore or deflect "button pushing" behaviors if they don't interfere with other students' learning and don't show disrespect or noncompliance. Arguing is the most familiar form.

- NEVER argue with a student.** Arguing with an adolescent is like wrestling with a pig-- you get all dirty and the pig likes it!
- Ask for help.** Invite an administrator to observe and give specific management advice. Consult colleagues. Ask them to help identify “infectors.”
- Ask the kids** to establish the behavior standards (see MBI above)
- Be creative** (police whistle, humor)
- Use group punishment **ONLY** as a last resort.

Student is continual problem: (need for attention #1 cause)

- Minimize the attention** in front of the class; always try to de-escalate confrontation.
- Deal one-on-one** and put the responsibility on the student: “Help me understand your behavior today.”
- Separate the person from the behavior:**
“I really like you, but I don’t like it (or can’t accept it) when you...”
- Involve parents early.**
- Set up clear, measurable or observable consequences:**
(behavior contract, detention, loss of privileges, etc.)
- Involve administration before it is a crisis!**

TOP TEN CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT “SINS”:

- Lack of student understanding of expectations:**
Establish expectations on the first day -- you want their VERY BEST
- Down time:**
Plan more than you expect to have time for, and BE ORGANIZED.
- Teacher talks too much:**(another form of down time)
Students should be directly engaged in playing/singing at least 70% of the class
- Lack of focus**
Insist on silence and attention
- Innappropriate or unworthy literature**
Assess skills and pick music accordingly--try not to bore or frustrate
- Lack of clear goals for lesson/rehearsal:**
Approach each rehearsal/lesson knowing what you want the kids to learn, and tell the kids
- Failure to engage students immediately in lesson/rehearsal:**
Make sure warm-ups require students to focus on you. Maintain semi-silence.
- Over use of coercive, power, or setting consequences that cannot be fulfilled:**
The audience expects..., the music demands..., not “You better..., or else!”
- Leaving students unattended in classroom:**
An invitation to trouble and a lawsuit!
- Allowing interruptions to disrupt instruction:**
Don’t handle papers at the beginning of class. Handle individual questions/issues after class. Be careful not to devote too much time to one student or one section. Don’t be drawn into conversations having nothing to do with the lesson

GOOD DISCIPLINE DOESN’T COST A CENT and kids expect and want it.

Time invested in establishing classroom decorum and discipline is like money invested in the stock market; it costs up front, but pays big dividends later.

“The best time to plant a tree is thirty years ago. The next best time is today”

Chinese Proverb

Recipe for a Successful Choir Rehearsal (just add passion)

Ingredients

Warm-up (begins immediately as the bell rings and you are in charge) (8-13 minutes)

Goals: (kids should know these) gain mental focus, prepare physically, improve basic tone, improve pitch, expand range, practice rehearsal etiquette & prepare to rehearse

Sing a few arpeggios to get attention and let stragglers get into place

Stretching and breathing exercises, sizzles

More expanding arpeggios with variety of syllables

Exercises that take men into falsetto (sirens, Frisbees)

Sing some solfeg or scales by numbers

Fast, memorized song used for improving diction*

Sing some unisons and chords to unify vowels and improve pitch*

*(but be sure it improves)

Sight singing (3-5 minutes) (will not take place every rehearsal, but should be frequent)

Goal: help students become musically literate, able to read and make music on their own.

Sing a few sight reading exercises from “Patterns of Sound” or similar book. Start extremely simple and progress slowly. Ok to play the first few notes on piano to get them started. Make sure kids are interpreting the written music, both for pitch and rhythm (don’t tell or show them how it goes--they show you how it goes). Reinforce sight reading skill by singing melodies or parts on neutral syllables, rather than singing text at first--that brings attention to notation.

Work on literature (remainder of period)

Set expectations for literature rehearsal (what do you want to accomplish today?). Apply warm-up and sight reading skills to literature. Teach concepts as well as notes/parts. Diagnose both vocal and choral problems and prescribe solutions. Challenge students to listen critically at all times. Don’t let the piano become a crutch to the choir or to you. Insist on continual improvement from first reading to polished performance. Work on the SOUND--Intonation, balance, blend, tone quality should be addressed in every rehearsal--not just notes and rhythms.

Divide literature rehearsal time into two parts: 1) new, or difficult literature (15 min.) and then 2) review familiar or “fun” literature. Sing something you haven’t sung for a while. Sing something acapella that you’ve been accompanying. Ask students or point out what was learned/achieved today.

Four “biggies” of a successful choir :

1. **Tone** - all about breath support and projection ... Wimpy sound? do breathing exercises, check posture, sizzle, model examples, use hand/arm motion to promote projection, get mouths open
2. **Intonation** - almost entirely to do with critical listening and vowel unification
Out of tune? --check breath support, then vowels and vertical space
3. **Diction** - the “articulation” for the choir - all about consonants
Listen to your choir from the audience. Can’t hear the text? --overdo consonants, especially ending ones, lots of vertical space on vowels.
4. **A passionate, inspired, inspirational, animated, enthusiastic, musically-demanding, empathetic director/teacher/mentor**

Combine ingredients. Add kids, patience, hard work, caring, and preparation.

Let simmer for one school year. Enjoy!

(as with all recipes, ingredients can be changed, added or omitted to taste)

Choir Rehearsal Evaluation Tool

Warm-up

All students are engaged in warm-up within one minute of bell. Focus is excellent, work on basic skills (vocal technique) obvious.

Most students engaged within first two minutes. Most focused and on task. Work on basics is obvious.

Too much time elapsed before warm-up began. Many students unfocused. Warm-up lacks skill development or clear goals.

Warm-up ineffective because of lack of focus or content. Most students off task or unengaged.

Sight singing (will not take place every rehearsal, but should be frequent)

Group sings from notation without aid of piano and with little or no hesitation. Both teacher and students show understanding of sight singing process.

Most students show understanding of process and diligently apply themselves.

Many students show disdain or lack of effort to read music from notation--need piano.

Sight singing not a regular part of rehearsal routine, or ineffective because it is given little priority.

Literature rehearsal

Rehearsal includes stops to address advanced concepts such as balance blend, tuning, expression, beauty, nuance. Improvement is obvious during and between rehearsals.

Rehearsal includes stops to correct notes or "parts," but focus is only on notes/rhythms. Teacher does not prescribe specific techniques for improvement.

Most teaching by rote. Teacher seldom stops for correction or improvement, or fails to give specific prescriptions for improvement.

Teacher hardly ever stops to correct. Choir almost always sings each piece from beginning to end without stopping.

Sound Quality

Tone quality of group is warm & pleasant with all voices blending

Tone is pleasant, but individuals "stick out" because of poor tone quality or too much volume, or too little strength (breath support)

Tone is inconsistent because of little or no instruction concerning tone quality. Sound may be strident and unpleasant, or thin or weak at times

Choir is not pleasant to listen to. Students do not demonstrate understanding of basic choral tone

Tuning (intonation)

Group sings "on key." Sound is pleasant with almost no "sour notes." Much work on unifying vowels.

Group usually sounds "on key," especially as performance time grows near. Few "sour notes." Teacher works on vowel unification.

Many students singing "off key." Teacher seldom gives instruction for improving pitch/tuning/intonation.

Choir is not pleasant to listen to because few students sing "on key," and little or no instruction for improving.

Diction (clarity of words)

Words easy to understand with clear consonants at beginning and ends of words.

Words understandable most times with occasional difficulty hearing ending consonants.

Words often unclear because beginning and/or ending consonants not well pronounced.

Difficult to understand text because of lack of clear consonants

Efficiency

Students quickly engaged and show understanding for rehearsal routine and etiquette. Students are focused and attentive at all times. No down time. 75% playing, 25% teacher talk (rule of thumb)

Some students off task or not participating to best of their ability. Rehearsal lacks clear goals. Little down time. Some talking during instruction or while band is playing. 65% singing, 35% teacher talk

Improvement lacking because of poor planning or lack of focus and effort. Much talking and off-task behavior. Much down time. Rehearsal etiquette lacking. 50% or more teacher talk

Almost no improvement. Students lack understanding of rehearsal routine or goals. Rehearsal often noisy or chaotic. Rehearsal etiquette not used. Teacher talks too much.

Key words (circle key words heard during rehearsal)

support projection balance blend pitch/tuning/intonation vowels consonants listen (specific)

Other important elements to notice:

SILENCE posture musicality diagnose/prescribe approach established routines quality excellence

Recipe for a Successful Instrumental Rehearsal (just add passion)

Ingredients

Warm-up (begins from SILENCE within two minutes after bell rings and you are in charge)

Goals: (kids should know these) gain mental focus, prepare physically, improve basic tone, improve pitch, expand range, practice rehearsal etiquette & prepare to rehearse

Breathing exercises (winds)

Play long tones or slow memorized scale passages

Play interval exercises

Play chorales

Have percussionists play mallet instruments as much as or more than snare or bass drum

Create ways to force students to watch conductor--do NOT be predictable.

Technical studies:

Goals: improve finger facility, explore new keys, improve flexibility, expand range

Play etudes from method book

Play memorized scales with varying rhythm patterns, tempos

Play technical passages selected from literature

Rhythm studies:

Goals: understand and use rhythm interpretation system, increase rhythmic accuracy, internalize pulse, introduce new and/or complex rhythms

Read rhythms from method books verbally (use syllables or numbers)

Play rhythms on single tone

Play rhythms on scale degrees

Play rhythms from notation (method books)

Practice complex rhythms from literature

Be certain the STUDENTS are interpreting the rhythms, not the TEACHER

(don't tell them "how it goes," make THEM tell YOU how it goes)

Sight reading (may not take place every rehearsal, but should be frequent)

Goal: help students become musically literate, able to read and make music on their own

Start extremely simple and progress slowly

Use music which is easy enough to avoid frustration, but difficult enough to challenge

Develop a system for checking keys, meters, repeats, etc.

Work on literature (remainder of period)

Set expectations for literature rehearsal (what do you want to accomplish today?). Apply warm-up and sight reading skills to literature. Teach concepts as well as notes/parts. Challenge students to listen critically at all times. Insist on continual improvement from first reading to polished performance.

Work on the SOUND of the band--intonation, balance, blend, tone quality, artistry should be addressed in every rehearsal--not just notes and rhythms.

Use macro/micro/macro approach. Play through the whole piece (macro), then diagnose specific musical/technical problems (micro) and prescribe solutions. As performance approaches, put piece back together and play from beginning to end (macro).

Divide literature rehearsal into two parts: 1) work on new, or difficult literature and then 2) review familiar or "fun" literature. Play a piece from beginning to end without stopping (macro to end a micro rehearsal). Play something you haven't played for a while. Ask students or point out what was learned/achieved today.

**Combine ingredients. Add kids, patience, hard work, caring, and preparation.
Let simmer for one school year. Enjoy!**

(as with all recipes, ingredients can be changed, added or omitted to taste)

Band Rehearsal Evaluation Tool

Warm-up

All students are engaged in warm-up within one minute of bell. Focus is excellent, work on basic skills is obvious. Students know and follow the routine.

Most students engaged within first two minutes. Most focused and on task. Work on basics is obvious. Students need prompting to get instruments/music.

Too much time elapsed before warm-up began. Many students not ready or unfocused. Warm-up lacks skill development or clear goals.

Warm-up ineffective because of lack of focus or content. Most students off task or unengaged.

Sight reading (perhaps not daily, but often--at least twice per week)

Group plays from notation without aid of teacher and with little or no hesitation. Both teacher and students show understanding of sight reading process.

Most students show understanding of music symbols and are able to interpret music themselves without the teacher telling "how it goes."

Many students show lack of understanding to read music from notation. Group is not able to play new music without teacher aid.

Sight reading not a regular part of rehearsal routine, or ineffective because it is given little priority.

Literature rehearsal

Rehearsal includes stops to address advanced concepts such as balance blend, tuning, expression, beauty, nuance. Improvement is obvious during and between rehearsals.

Rehearsal includes stops to correct notes or "parts," but focus is mostly on notes/rhythms. Teacher often prescribes specific techniques for improvement.

Most teaching by rote. Teacher seldom stops for correction or improvement, or fails to give specific prescriptions for improvement.

Teacher hardly ever stops to correct. Band almost always plays each piece from beginning to end without stopping.

Sound Quality

Tone quality of group is warm & pleasant with all instruments blending. Volume level is controlled and dynamic levels vary with style and mood.

Tone is pleasant, but individuals "stick out" because of poor tone quality or too much volume. Band tends to play loud much of the time or with weak sound

Tone is inconsistent because little instruction is obvious concerning tone quality. Sound may be strident and unpleasant at times; often too loud with little variation.

Band is not pleasant to listen to. Students do not demonstrate understanding of basic tone quality.

Tuning (intonation, pitch)

Group plays "on key." Sound is pleasant with almost no "sour notes." Much work on tuning, both during warm-up, and literature work.

Group usually sounds "on key," especially as performance time grows near. Few "sour notes." Teacher makes reference to tuning.

Many students playing "off key." Teacher seldom gives instruction for improving pitch/tuning/intonation.

Band is not pleasant to listen to because few students play "on key," with little or no instruction for improving.

Style (articulation)

Band plays with variety of clear styles, based on note length and space between notes. Marches sound crisp, odes sound smooth.

Teacher addresses style or articulation, but results not always obvious. Marches sound "ploddy." All/most pieces sound the same.

Little attention to style. Teacher seldom addresses style differences between sections or different pieces. of literature.

Band plays almost everything the same way. No instruction about style or articulation.

Efficiency

Students quickly engaged and show understanding for rehearsal routine and etiquette. Students are focused and attentive at all times. No down time. 75% playing, 25% teacher talk (rule of thumb).

Some students off task or not participating to best of their ability. Rehearsal lacks clear goals. Little down time. Some talking during instruction or while band is playing. 65% playing, 35% talk.

Improvement lacking because of poor planning or lack of focus and effort. Much talking and off-task behavior. Much down time. Rehearsal etiquette lacking. 50% or more teacher talk.

Almost no improvement. Students lack understanding of rehearsal routine or goals. Rehearsal often noisy/chaotic. Rehearsal etiquette not used. Teacher talks too much.

Key words (circle key words heard during rehearsal)

balance blend pitch/tuning/intonation articulation/tongue/slur tone/air/support listen (specific)

Other important elements to see/hear

SILENCE good posture discipline musicality diagnostic/prescriptive approach established routines

quality

excellence

MUSIC CLASS STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION FORM

NAME _____ Place a check next to the number that best describes you

Responsibility

- 1.....I always have my instrument and music and am ready to go when rehearsal begins
- 2.....I am usually prepared and have everything ready to go
- 3.....I am sometimes late or not in my seat ready for rehearsal to begin
- 4.....I am often late or not ready to begin rehearsal on time
- 5.....I usually have to be reminded several times to prepare for rehearsal

Attentiveness

- 1.....I am always in my seat, music and instrument ready, and paying attention throughout the entire rehearsal
- 2.....I occasionally am off task, talking, or otherwise not paying attention
- 3.....I am often not ready to play at the downbeat because I am talking or looking somewhere other than at the teacher
- 4.....I am usually not ready to play at the beginning of each song
- 5.....I am rarely ready on time when the song begins

Contribution

- 1.....I always contribute positively to the class by working hard and making sure I have my music learned, and do not distract from others' learning
- 2.....I sometimes slow the rest of my fellow students down by not practicing, or by being distracting in class
- 3.....I just show up for class and don't show that I care about my fellow musicians or the quality of our performances
- 4.....I often detract from, instead of contributing to the success of the class
- 5.....I make no positive contributions to the success of the class

Posture

- 1.....I understand how important correct posture is to tone production, and I always use good posture and breath support
- 2.....I almost always use good posture and breath support
- 3.....I often use good posture, but only after being reminded
- 4.....I often forget about posture, and don't always correct my posture even when I'm reminded about it
- 5.....I hardly ever use good posture

Attitude

- 1.....I always come to class with a cooperative attitude, eager to learn
- 2.....I usually come to class with a cooperative attitude
- 3.....It is not unusual for me to display a poor attitude in class
- 4.....My attitude is often uncooperative or negative in class
- 5.....My attitude toward music class is poor

Respect

- 1.....I always show respect for the teacher, other students, instruments, equipment and property
- 2.....I usually show respect for the teacher, other students, instruments, equipment and property
- 3.....I sometimes show disrespect for the teacher, other students, instruments, equipment and property, but apologize and accept punishment, if necessary
- 4.....I often show disrespect and seldom apologize
- 5.....I show almost no respect or proper manners in class

REHEARSAL “TRICKS”

Start with silence, and maintain it when not singing/playing.

Use warm-up to gain focus, teach tone and intonation, not to build technique. Don't allow the warm-up to become predictable. Give them a reason to look at the conductor.

Design silent exercises for percussionist to stretch and loosen muscles. Make percussion folders for each piece, rather than for each player.

Make students tune themselves, but check for accuracy occasionally

NEVER allow singing/playing with bad sound (garbage in, garbage out)

Rhythm is the basis for music reading. Do daily rhythm exercises for all age/ability levels.

Divide group into twos, have one's tell or observe two's, then vice versa
ex. “Two's count line 8. One's listen. One's raise your hand if you heard the correct counting.”

The one doing the most work is the one learning the most. Don't tell students “how it goes;” make them tell YOU how it goes.

Remember, typically 90% of the information going to the brain is entering through the optic nerve. Find ways to minimize visuals and enhance the aural acuity.

Have the plan on the board and make the kids accountable. Transition between pieces should take only seconds.

Tell the students why you are rehearsing a particular section, or ask them why you stopped.

Have the students assess one another. ex. “Clarinets, listen to the low brass and tell us which section is playing their notes the longest.”

You MUST get beyond just note/rhythm learning and teach balance, blend, intonation, phrase shape, expression, nuance.

Use analogies to reinforce concepts.

DON'T REHEARSE MISTAKES! Have kids mark corrections in their music to avoid practicing the same mistake over and over. PRACTICE MAKES PERMANENT!

Diagnose and prescribe. When you diagnose a problem, give a prescription to correct it.

Use a macro/micro/macro approach. Notice EVERYTHING.

Be brief! Rehearsals should include at least 70% or more performing vs. 30% or less talking.

Zoom out. Take in the big picture visually, aurally and intellectually. Keep your head out of the score!

Play examples of professional groups that exhibit the kind of sound you are trying to achieve, but make sure the listening is guided.

Find ways to increase concentration, especially during rests.

Remember, a minute of time wasted in each of your 180 rehearsals equals a loss of three hours of instruction over the year. BE EFFICIENT!

Classroom management “tricks”

Primary grades:

- Create mystique about the “music room” or “music time.” It’s the magic place where we use our voices together, but must otherwise have quiet for the music to work. Meet the class at the door, or take them out to the hall if they’re in their own classroom, and set the scenario in their minds (implies listening, focus). Practice being quiet as you enter the magic place where music is made. If there is talking, go back and try again. Make it a big deal.
- Tell the kids what it is you want them to learn. “We’re going to practice our steady beat today using rhythm sticks.” Be sure music class doesn’t come off as just fun and games.
- Attention span rule of thumb: a child’s age is roughly equivalent to his/her attention span in minutes. Kindergarten lessons must be in several short segments.
- Stay simple! It is better for children at this age to experience music and participate in music making than to learn a lot *about* music and music symbols. Create lessons for ear training, not eye training.
- Use “sponge activities.” Do something that engages the kids the minute they have properly entered the music room. Have a CD ready (or already playing) for group singing, do a simple game involving music or singing.
- Have a non-verbal signal to gain attention and practice reacting to it. Praise for immediate compliance, chastise for slow reaction and try again for faster results.
- Do vocal warm-ups during which you teach focus as much as, or more than, technique. Ask for “eyes” when focus is not on you. Find ways to conduct the warm-up so that the students must watch you (cue scale degree changes or use Kodaly signals, change tempo, insert periods of silence with expectation no sound will happen until cue, echo sing or clap, etc.).
- Do mirroring exercises in time to music to develop steady beat (again, requires focus). Remember, mirrors can’t talk.
- Be sure materials are ready to go. Try to use singing time to get set for next lesson segment. Down time is management’s worst enemy.
- Monitor skill development with simple tracking and provide additional help to the individuals not “getting it.” If you know who the quick studies are, you may be able to enlist them to help the slower kids.
- Use a “time out” area for poor behavior. Be sure the area is where you can monitor it, but the student in “time out” cannot distract the rest of the class. Time out must be about equivalent to attention span, but student must show he/she is ready to rejoin the group.
- Give stickers for good class behavior. X number of stickers earns a reward, perhaps a music fun day or video (always having to do with music). The fun day could be just singing all the familiar songs they love, or watching part of a Disney musical.

Way to earn stickers: 1. no one sent to time out. 2. use three lines on the board (three rubber bands on your wrist, three marbles dropped one at a time into a coffee can, etc.), and erase all or

part of a line when behavior gets out of hand. There must be one full line (rubber band, marble) left at the end of class to earn a sticker.

- Invest time teaching Kindergartners to be the kind of citizens you would like to see them become in middle school.

Intermediate grades:

- See primary “tricks.”
- ”Time Out” place becomes the “Think Table.” Think Table has a tablet on which the student sent there writes 1. why he is there and 2. what he can do to make sure he doesn’t have to go there again. When finished, he/she may raise a hand and be invited back to the group.
- Set and enforce zero tolerance for instrument noise. Any unauthorized playing results in loss of the instrument for a time.
- In fourth grade, students move from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” Music students should be ready to “read to play.” Recorders make an excellent vehicle for teaching music reading.
- Reward day can include favorite music brought from home with the caveat that there be no offensive or even questionable language. If any shows up, fun day is over.
- Vocal warm-ups can become more complex.
- Sponge activities can include reading and writing.
- Be careful about worksheets. They can be of great help in reinforcing concepts, but are often abused as busywork in the upper grades because of kids’ ability to read and write.
- Be creative in involving kids in music making. Be careful not to teach more *about* music than actually making music. Boredom is another enemy of management.

Middle school:

- Discuss openly the hormonal changes that affect voice and mood.
- Learn about the adolescent child and try to provide **structure, empathy and trust**.
- Classes must be high energy, fast paced and engaging. Students don’t want to sing, but would rather sing than do worksheets.
- Invite guitar students to sing, but allow them to “sing in their heads.”
- Tie into current pop music, grammys, local music scene.
- Keep the “Think Table,” but do away with reward stickers. There may be other ways to earn rewards such as completion of a project, achievement of a benchmark or skill, etc.
- Never, ever argue!
- If religious, pray often!