

**Habits of a
SUCCESSFUL
Music Education
Student**

Preview

Also by Scott Rush
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Habits of a Successful Band Director

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Habits of a SUCCESSFUL Music Education Student

A Comprehensive Curriculum
for Band and String Methods

Mary Land
Scott Rush

WITH A FOREWORD BY

Richard and Cheryl Floyd



GIA Publications, Inc.

*This book is dedicated to all music education students
for their unwavering pursuit of teaching excellence,
and to all band and orchestra teachers, past and present,
who commit themselves to enriching the lives of their students through music.*

Habits of a Successful Music Education Student

Mary Land

Scott Rush

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Introduction



Being a music educator is the greatest profession on the planet! We get to provide **musical** and **personal** significance while being a champion for our students' success. Our passion for music should be infectious with the goal of creating an environment where students ultimately fall in love with music and music making. This should all be done in a classroom/rehearsal space where students feel loved and cared for. All students need a place that is safe and inclusive, where they feel they belong.

Collectively, we have over 50 years of experience teaching in the classroom: Mary with 29 years (mostly in middle school with a few years in high school) and Scott with 22 years (mostly in high school with a few years in middle school). Since that time, Mary has transitioned into higher education and Scott's *Habits* series materials have been used in college methods classes around the world. We have experienced pedagogical, musical, and cultural significance with our students in tremendously successful and comprehensive programs. We want the same for you.

Habits of a Successful Music Education Student is a useful blueprint that is informative to music education students and can also be used as a reference throughout one's career. Most music education majors chose this profession because they had a teacher who made a difference in their life. That teacher was a game changer. *Habits of a Successful Music Education Student* is a game changer, too, for music teacher preparation.

Habits of a Successful Music Education Student covers important topics such as:

- Band Pedagogy
- String Pedagogy
- Curriculum
- Recruitment and Retention
- Beginner Method Books
- Technology in the Classroom
- Concert Programming for High School and Middle School
- Organization and Communication

Marching Band, Jazz Band, and Percussion Ensemble
Repertoire for Multiple Ensembles and Soloists
Supplemental Method Books
Making Music
Score Study
Creating a Culture of Excellence
Goal Setting
Classroom Scenarios
Being in the MUSIC and PEOPLE Business
Social/Emotional Learning
Student Leadership
Diversity, Equity, Access, and Inclusion in the Music Classroom
Quality of Life Issues
Tips from Master Teachers
Beyond Student Teaching
Leaving a Legacy
AND MUCH, MUCH MORE!

This book is designed to be used as a two-semester curriculum for instrumental music education majors to include both orchestra and band instruction. Most importantly, this book will provide future band and orchestra teachers with practical material presented in a sequential format that follows a secondary school calendar.

Each chapter ends with “Successful Habits to Take with You” and a place for you to reflect and synthesize your thoughts about the recently read material. These bulleted points should serve as discussion items. You may also elect to introduce some of the “Classroom Scenario” vignettes contained in Chapter 15 to further enhance classroom dialogue.

Students, you are entering a most wonderful and rewarding profession. You will make a difference in the lives of your students and their families through your teaching and the power of music education. You are the leaders of tomorrow. This book is intended to create the very best music educators possible. Keep your passion for teaching students and your passion for teaching music sparked and ready to ignite. Find your teacher voice and spread the joy of music to all of your students.

As Zig Zigler said, “If you love what you do, you’ll never work a day in your life.” You will have a career-long vacation if you teach students to fall in love with music, while helping them be the best versions of themselves through musical and personal significance.

—Mary Land and Scott Rush

Foreword

Richard and Cheryl Floyd



Think about it. As music educators, we are all on a journey that builds on what we currently know and the knowledge the future holds in store for us. And, trust us, we know there is a lot of knowledge out there. But what should one learn next? How does one benefit from and build on their experiences and their interactions with others?

Let's look at it another way. Failure to realize what we don't know can be a dangerous or, at the very least, a very intimidating thing. If we don't know it or at least have an awareness of it, how do we know we need to learn it or seek mastery? That's a scary thought. The bottom line...how does one know what is most important to learn next?

You see, we ignite our life's musical journey the moment we sit down at a piano keyboard or open an instrument case. The music flame is lit. Then as our primary and adolescent years unfold, our band, choir, and orchestra experiences inspire us, and we begin to consider the notion that perhaps sharing our love for music might be our life's calling. The notion that we wish to find our place in the wonderful world of music education gradually comes into focus.

Then we graduate from high school. Our undergraduate years at a university of our choosing await us. That's another scary thought. What do we hope to learn? Are we up to the task? Are we remotely aware of the boundless facets of both the art and craft of teaching music that awaits us?

Cheryl was the product of an outstanding, vibrant high school band program. Her heart was set on becoming a band director. This is what she recalls about her first year at Baylor University.

In 1976 and as a senior in high school, I really had no idea what majoring in music education might entail. But I was deeply attracted to that notion because of my love of music and the human interactions my high school musical experiences afforded me. The next step was the quest for a university home. On a spring day, I will never forget receiving a phone call from Helen Ann Shanley, the flute professor at Baylor

University, informing me I had been accepted into her studio and my dream of becoming a music education major would soon be coming true. That fall, I was off to Waco, Texas, to be a music major equipped only with my passion for music and my Haynes flute.

Wow! Was I in for a shock. I had no idea how complex music theory could be. Yes, music history was interesting, but there were so many dates to remember and so many projects to complete! My collegiate piano lessons were very different from my sessions with the Methodist pastor's wife back home. Then I discovered a plethora of courses under the headings of pedagogy, methods, conducting, and educational philosophy. So even though I truly loved playing flute and making music in an ensemble, I arrived on campus without much of an idea of what I was doing or how I would survive with nothing to guide me but a course catalog.

For example, my first semester, on top of those traditional freshman music courses, I opted to enroll in the clarinet professor's music education clarinet methods course. Trust me, the professor took this class seriously. We were expected to learn reed care and adjustment, the chromatic scale the entire range of the instrument, and perform a simple solo that might be appropriate for a young clarinetist. Many considered this class the washout course for budding music educators. For me, it almost did the trick!

But as my horizons expanded, I quickly discovered that much of what I needed to learn was not about the activity of band but rather the broader world of music education.

How helpful it would have been to Cheryl, or any new music education major for that matter, to have a template to serve as a guide and source of reference during this challenging new chapter of life. The pages of this book are exactly that. Think of the content as a compendium of all things essential to the successful navigation of life as a university music education student. Each chapter offers comprehensive insights into not only what we need to learn but also sequentially how we need to apply that knowledge once we acquire it.

And let's be clear. It is not only about the craft of teaching instruments and the mechanics of music. It is also about the artistry and musical culture that we envision for our students. It references the artistry that we hope to share.

I vividly remember a conversation with a Fine Arts Director several years ago who was responsible for the hiring and placement of music educators in a large school district. Many of these new directors would be working with middle school and beginning band students. I found his interview protocol fascinating. After the obligatory pleasantries that began the interview, he would open a clarinet case, hand it to the applicant, and simply say, "I am a beginner, show me how to begin learning to play the clarinet."

What transpired in the next ten minutes or so told him volumes about the skill sets that future teacher brought to the table in terms of pedagogy and communication skills. But for this Fine Arts Director, this was just the opening hurdle. Once that level of competence was revealed, it was easy to segue into discussions of rehearsal philosophy, repertoire selection, and the countless facets of creating a positive, educationally focused musical culture orchestrated to enrich each student's musical journey. There is a powerful message here. Instrumental music is not only about teaching instruments and learning songs. Yes, that is a necessity, but it is only the tip of the iceberg.

There is a caveat here as you begin your journey. As educators we never stop learning.

Here are some thoughts from Cheryl based on 35 years of teaching and making music. She is the eternal student.

- Run with the big dogs. Make friends with the outstanding directors near you. Ask permission to observe their classes. Take notes. Copy what they do. Ask questions.
- Find a mentor. A trusted friend who will observe your classes and be honest with you about your tone of voice, your methods, what your students really sound like, what direction you should take next.
- Be willing to admit what you don't know. This is hard to do. Don't wait until your music is near perfect...share the process with your mentor. Show them your dirty laundry!
- Study scores above your current instructional level. Remember that your comfort zone is a very safe place to be, but nothing ever grows there.
- Keep playing your instrument! Find a community group to play with. Remember what it feels like to be on the other side of the podium.

Let me give you an example. I was reminded of this reality during a conversation with a mentor from my early years. It was a brief chance encounter, and we were just "catching up." He was in his 70's. Suddenly, his eyes light up and he started sharing with me his excitement about discovering a new, effective way to address bowing technique on the violin. This man was in his fifth decade of teaching and was still learning!

Finally, and this is important, be prepared every day to encounter someone who changes your life or redirects your focus, vision, or dreams. Those people are out there and those days will happen. Embrace them.

Let us leave you with the words of Bruno Walter. On the eve of his 80th birthday, he was interviewed on NPR Radio. This was the final question from the interviewer. "Maestro, on your 80th birthday, what are your thoughts about the future?"

Walter responded. "I do not consider what is coming for the future. I love to go on learning. But whatever comes, I accept it very willingly. I have full patience and full willingness to accept what life still will give. And, I go on learning, that's all."

And that is what Cheryl and I ask of you. Go on learning.

More Praise for Habits of a Successful Music Education Student

Mary Land and Scott Rush have provided the profession with a true gift dedicated to the next generation of music educators; a gift that will make a profound difference to the future of music education. *Habits* would have been a constant companion throughout my undergraduate days as an instrumental music education major as well as my first years of teaching. This is an invaluable resource that tells the rest of the story.

—Craig Kirchhoff, Professor Emeritus,
Director of Bands Emeritus, The University of Minnesota

Habits of a Successful Music Education Student is a fantastic and important addition to the series and a much-needed resource for the collegiate music education curriculum! Scott Rush and Mary Land provide a wealth of materials, knowledge, and wisdom for prospective instrumental music teachers while including a sequential curriculum and valuable topics for discussion for an instrumental methods course.

—Stephen Meyer, Director of Bands,
Northern Arizona University

Having been a high school band director for 30 years, I experienced firsthand the “learning on the job” syndrome that music educators encounter. From effective rehearsal strategies to repertoire selection to class scheduling to what to teach when, Mary Land and Scott Rush have provided a valuable resource to supplement our music education curriculum. *Habits of a Successful Music Education Student* contains a wide array of essential information that all music educators should know before they start teaching!”

—Alex Kaminsky, Director of Bands,
VanderCook College of Music

The *Habits of a Successful...* series is now a bit richer with this new addition for music education majors. College students often ask, “What should I be doing now to be the best teacher I can be?” and this book has the answers. From life as a college music education major to specific information about assessment, curriculum, pedagogy, communication, repertoire selection, and making music — this book is divided into several sections featuring information for teaching middle school and high school instrumental music. I highly recommend this book for the young music teacher to add to their library—or as a required methods course text.

—Beth Peterson, Associate Director of Bands,
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Chapter One

Habits Music Education Students Need for Success



Welcome to *Habits of a Successful Music Education Student*. You're entering a profession that is transformational in the lives of your future students. As you are in your final year of music teacher preparation, take advantage of the resources surrounding you. Do not depend on a music education degree preparation program to cover all aspects of a successful band or orchestra career. There are many habits you can take ownership in and begin **now**.

Participating in Large Ensembles After Requirements Are Met

Most university music education curriculum plans have a set number of required semesters of large ensemble participation. All too often university students will check off their degree requirements and not continue to participate in bands or orchestras after they have fulfilled the degree conditions. If the cost of registering for the ensemble is the problem, check to see if you can audit the course. At this point in your education, you are in training to be a leader of such large ensembles. This is the time in your training in which you can learn the most about the transfer from ensemble performer to ensemble leader. You also will want to use your directors as references for future employment. They need to know your commitment to your education and to the profession. Choosing not to participate in large ensembles after degree requirements have been met might send the wrong message to the stakeholders in your future career in addition to missing out on valuable learning opportunities.

Being Highly Skilled on Secondary Instruments

There is so much to learn in order to become a successful band/orchestra director and not everything can be taught in your music education curriculum. There is not enough time in your degree program. You will need to take the initiative to dig deeper into

areas where you are not proficient. Your future students are depending on you. You are expected to be the expert in the room.

You have to know how to play secondary instruments – this is not just for those who plan to be middle school beginning band or orchestra directors. Knowing how to play an instrument and knowing why certain phrases will be difficult for the instrument will help you score study and be able to predict problems before the students play the music. This does not mean just producing a tone on the instrument, but knowing the true mechanics of the instrument. When the person in front of the students is modeling how a musical passage is supposed to sound, it creates “buy in” to you and the band or orchestra. You have formed a stronger connection within your program.

Truly knowing how to play all instruments you teach will also help when you are programming for your ensemble. You will be able to look at the score and know if this piece is one your students are ready to play at this time. For example, do your trumpets have the endurance to make it to the end of this piece loaded with notes consistently above the staff? Have your clarinets mastered their alternate/chromatic fingerings in order to play the descending sixteenth notes at performance tempo cleanly?

More importantly, you will always have students who need instrument-specific pedagogy help. You are going to know so much better what advice to give your students if you have experience on the instrument.

You are surrounded by fellow students who professionally play all instruments while you are in college. You can also play in your university’s non-major ensembles and in community bands on secondary instruments to build your knowledge. Becoming skilled on secondary instruments will positively impact your future teaching. Coordinate with your university colleagues and take advantage of this time to learn.

Observing Master Teachers in All Settings

Get out of your college setting and start observing master teachers at every opportunity. Find the directors in your area who are your band/orchestra inspirations. If you do not have a mentor yet, now is the time to begin to figure out who you want to pattern yourself after. You need to have an idea of what is a good band/orchestra director. How they teach, how their ensembles sound, how they dress, how they present themselves, and how they interact with their students all play important roles as a master teacher.

You need to know what you are going to be looking for when you observe. Why did the director stop? What do you hear that is wrong? What is the director saying to the students? Bring your iPad or notebook and take notes. Watching a master teacher pick things apart and seeing how the master teacher reacted to mistakes is paramount in your development. What do they pause to isolate for? What are they looking for in how to fix the problem you just heard?

Respectfully ask questions of the master teacher. Be considerate as to when you ask questions. Do not inundate them with questions between classes when they are drinking water, running to the restroom, and moving chairs. Narrow your questions down to no more than five and email the teacher at the end of the day. Begin your email with, “Thank you for allowing me to observe your class and learn from your expertise.” One follow-up question to ask the master teacher in your email may be, “What was the program like when you first started here (or started your career) and what were the steps you took to get it to what I observed today?”

Learning How to Teach New Concepts

- How are you going to introduce a new skill to your beginner class?
- How will you present the new skill so that your students are successful?
- You are standing in front of your band/orchestra on your first day, how are you going to teach the new piece?
- How are you going to break down difficult concepts?
- What types of warm-ups should you use to connect to the new piece?

Student teaching is a controlled environment. You didn’t start those students. You don’t have the relationship with the students. You will move from a controlled experience to the “real world” in a matter of months and you will instantly think, “How do I teach students to do this task?” A good way to step into teaching is by teaching one-on-one private lessons while in college. You do not need a large number of students – anywhere from 3-6 students per week will provide you the opportunity to gain experience and build a resume. Teaching one on one will also help build teaching confidence by helping you learn to break down a skill in sequential steps. Teaching private lessons on secondary instruments will force you to know these instruments and how they work.

Observing in the Fall

You need to go see what the band directors are doing when the students know nothing. Seeing the early steps of getting the students from nothing to something is important. Fall is a time when you will see huge steps happening every day. Make a point to get out into the band/orchestra rooms and see how you balance 50 or more students on 5-10 different instruments. Volunteer to help during the first days with instruments. Most college schedules will allow you to spend weeks in public schools before the college calendar begins. This is also a time to observe marching band camps.

Starting Your Student Teaching Early and Staying Beyond the Required Time

University/College semesters tend to be shorter than secondary school semesters. Technically, most student teachers are not required to begin their student teaching until the university semester begins. By waiting until the university begins, you will miss so much. Attending school-wide professional development, faculty meetings, and class planning sessions is very beneficial to your development. Contact your cooperating teacher and arrange your start time. You will develop a stronger relationship with your cooperating teacher and with your students. By staying until the end of the secondary school year, you will have the opportunity to conduct more concerts and learn how to prepare for the next year or semester.

Being an Active Member of Your University's CNAfME Organization

The collegiate branch of the National Association for Music Education provides additional resources and information for music education students. As a member of CNAfME, you are connected to music education nationally. This is the time to become familiar with the wealth of support available to you through your membership. You can invest in your collegiate chapter by assisting in planning meetings and discussions on topics not covered in the curriculum. This is a chance to build your network.

Being in a University Choir

Take advantage of the opportunity to become comfortable with your voice and to learn proper vocal technique. You will sing instrumental parts **every day** as you teach band and orchestra. Aural skills and ear training are fundamental knowledge that will make a strong musical difference in your ensemble teaching.

Keeping a Teacher Planner

Your planner will serve as a journal when you begin to plan for the next year. You will be able to look back and see what worked and what did not work so well. Make notes in your planner to remind yourself of skills that were more problematic to master than you were expecting. You will grow, learn, and reflect through the help of your planners. Having notes to look back on will remind you and help you develop better plans. Having your plans written down will help you begin to memorize the different stages of growth your students will experience. Reflection is key to growth and building teacher confidence.

Attending Professional Development Events

Professional development training can help teachers and future teachers to become better organizers and improve their skills to become more proficient at their jobs. Attendees at professional development events discover innovative teaching strategies and resources to better suit the needs of their students. The more professional development a pre-service teacher undergoes, the more knowledge and understanding of the profession they will gain.

There are many forms of professional development available to pre-service band and orchestra teachers:

- State Music Educators Conference
- Summer Music Institutes
- Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic
- Conducting Symposiums
- Instrument Repair Conferences
- Instrument-specific Conferences: PASIC, International Trombone Association, International Tuba Euphonium Conference, etc.
- ASTA: American String Teachers Association Conference
- NAFME: National Association for Music Education Annual Conference

Music teacher-specific professional development generally consists of a large variety of clinic sessions on topics designed to address specific challenges facing the music teacher. These conferences also include performances of student groups and exhibit halls loaded with resources for use in the music class. An added bonus of attending professional development events as a student is the discounted student registration fee.

When attending professional development opportunities, we learn from others on so many levels. In fact, we can even learn what **not** to do. Being an effective band or orchestra director has many components, but it all starts with you. Never stop learning! Professional development keeps your teaching relevant and fuels your passion for teaching. Start the habit of attending professional development events now and continue this habit throughout your career.

Building Professional Connections

As a young professional, it is vital for your success to develop good relationships with professional colleagues (including your cooperating teacher) and all those who impact a band and orchestra program. Strong, respectful relationships with those within your profession are essential to the success of your program. Now is the time to build your network, your support system, your personal board of directors.

Your board of directors are people you trust to guide you in making professional decisions. They will also provide you with honest assessments of your work. Your board of directors may consist of your cooperating teacher, peer teachers, your university directors and professors, and music industry members. Building the relationship with your board of directors before you officially begin your teaching career will provide you with a network of support as you start to apply for your first job and as you continue your journey throughout your career. We all know the importance of a solid foundation in our ensemble sound and in the building blocks of life; likewise, our professional connections will create our foundation for future growth in the profession.

Habits and benefits of building professional connections:

- Be respectful to your professional colleagues, **especially** in front of others.
- Your board of directors can recommend and support you in your job search.
- Welcome your board of directors into your rehearsal room...and put them to work!
- Celebrate the successes of your professional colleagues – brag **for** them on social media.
- Create combined performance opportunities with other schools.
- Invite members of your board of directors to offer comments when preparing for performances and to assist in beginning band/orchestra activities.
- Your board of directors are a trusted sounding board for you, ready to offer a supportive ear and listen when needed.
- A valued relationship between music directors within your school system (from elementary to high school) promotes better recruiting/retention between all levels.

Professional connections create a family atmosphere in which you can grow and develop into a responsible music educator. Begin now creating your board of directors who can help supervise your decision making and who can support you throughout your journey as a music educator.

Preview

Preview

SEMESTER ONE / MIDDLE SCHOOL CONTENT



Preview

Preview

Chapter Two

Curriculum



First-Year Curriculum

The first year of instrumental music study is the most crucial for long-term musical success for your students. The concepts and skills taught at this level will either foster quicker musical growth down the line or hinder a young musician's progress for subsequent years. Attention to detail at this time is extremely important. It is far better to put some thought into how to best teach these concepts for long-term mastery early in the process than to have to break bad habits and re-teach later.

Some teachers tend to be beholden to their chosen method book and create their curriculum by simply “going through the book.” This is not enough. It is a disservice to your students and inhibits your own teaching ability. Get creative and resourceful. Find a multitude of varied sources to draw your lessons from that are each designed to teach a “Component of Playing.” Method books are an essential part of a successful beginner curriculum, but a comprehensive beginning band program needs more material.

We have solved many beginning issues by writing a very comprehensive beginner band method titled *Habits of a Successful Beginner Band Musician*. It addresses the Components of Playing as well as other technical and artistic issues. We highly recommend using this beginner band method. We will discuss various methods later in the text.

Here are possible materials to consider:

- Method books (*Habits of a Successful Beginner Band Musician* in year one and *Habits of a Successful Middle School Musician* in year two) to include warm-up and fundamental training
- Sight-reading examples (either from published sources or written on programs such as Finale)

- Rhythm study books with **hundreds** of rhythm reading examples to include: *Habits* resources, *101 Rhythmic Rest Patterns*, *Teaching Rhythm Logically*, etc.
- SmartMusic
- Habits Universal Interactive on MusicFirst (video-in-video technology)
- Theory exercise books
- Class handouts
- Concert music

First-Year Curriculum Template

Note Denominations and Rhythm

- Quarter note
- Half note
- Dotted-half note
- Whole note
- Single eighth notes
- Grouped eighth notes
- Introduction to sixteenth notes
- Dotted-quarter note
- Introduce syncopation
- All corresponding rests

Timing

- The use of the metronome and how it works
- Timing and pulse control
- Time and tempo adjustments: fermata, ritardando, rallentando, accelerando
- Establish a consistent counting system including kinesthetic and visual evidence
- Begin teaching an inherent sense of time

Articulations

- Tenuto
- Staccato
- Accent
- Slurs

Range

- Flute: Low D or C to High F
- Oboe: Low E \flat (D) to High B \flat
- Clarinet: Low E to High C, functional in music to G top of staff
- Bass Clarinet: Low E to fifth line F
- Saxophone: Low B \flat (C) to High D

- Bassoon: Low F to 1st ledger C
- Trumpet: Low G to 4th space E
- French Horn: Low G to 4th space E \flat
- Trombone: Low F to 1st ledger D
- Euphonium: Same as trombone
- Tuba: Low F to 3rd line D

Embouchures and Playing Set-Up

- Head position
- Mouthpiece placement
- Chins, corners, and apertures
- Posture
- Tongue placement

Tone Production

- Breathing exercises
- Correct buzzing for brass or sustaining correct pitch on woodwind mouthpieces (head joint/mouthpiece and barrel/mouthpiece and neck, etc.)
- Ear development for a characteristic instrument sound through listening to recordings
- Embouchure development
- Pitch centering

Tuning

- Basic understanding of intonation (being able to recognize flat and sharp and know adjustments)
- Proper use of the tuner to improve musical accuracy
- Introducing the idea of matching pitch to a stationary pitch or using drones

Other Concepts

- Dynamics: *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *mf*, *f*, *ff*, crescendo, decrescendo, diminuendo
- Air control: posture, breathing, air speed adjustments, phrase lengths
- Proper tonguing technique
- Good practice habits and record of progress
- Training students to set goals, deadlines, and objectives
- Understanding and demonstrating enharmonics
- Key signatures: B \flat , E \flat , A \flat , F, and C
- Time signatures: all simple duple meter except cut time
- Introduction and definition of a musical phrase
- Singing

Technique

- Phrasing (using four-measure phrasing by end of year)
- Terrace dynamics
- Crescendo and decrescendo
- Chromatic scale throughout required range for first-year student
- Scales: minimum of 3 major scales based on the most suitable range for each instrument
- Sight-reading ability at Grade 1 to Grade 1.5

Vocabulary

al fine	decrescendo	pianissimo
allegro	fermata	piano
andante	forte	rallentando
chromatic	fortissimo	ritardando
coda	legato	segno
crescendo	mezzo	solo
da capo	moderato	staccato
dal segno	molto	tempo

Theory

- Treble and bass clef notes
- Multi-measure rests
- Ledger line note reading
- Order of flats and sharps
- Key signature
- Time signatures (anything with a 4 on the bottom, including odd meter)
- Musical roadmaps (including repeats, multi-measure repeat signs, codas, dal segno, etc.)
- Chromatic scale
- Accidentals
- Major scale building
- Establish a numerical counting system, evidenced by counting written rhythms
- The teaching of diatonic solfege

Balance and Blend

- Basics of balance and blend. Introduce pyramids of balance. Begin teaching the concept of “matching” (getting sound inside your neighbor’s sound).

Common Hand Position and Posture Issues

Flute: There are three contact points for holding the flute. The flute should rest on the big knuckle of the left-hand index finger. The left-hand index finger should “crunch” around the flute to help hold it. The pad of the right-hand thumb should be placed under the flute between the first and second fingers. There are three balance points for the flute. The flute should balance between (1) the chin and lower lip, (2) the base of the left-hand first finger, and (3) the right-hand thumb.

Oboe: Watch the angle of the instrument. Often, oboe students play too close into their body and close off the reed. Sometimes, they also lower their head, which decreases lower lip pressure, resulting in unfocused tone and flat pitch. Their fingers need to stay low and close to the keys. Also, watch the pointer finger on the left hand. Encourage students to not bite down, which closes off the reed. You should teach the correct combination of corner firmness and open reed akin to drinking a thick milkshake.

Bassoon: It’s important for students to “bring the instrument to **you**, not you to the bassoon.” Sometimes, students struggle with holding the instrument and it’s important that the angle of the instrument be over the left shoulder. Watch the hand position for the whisper key F – students should keep the hand position flat and horizontal, not angled.

Clarinet: The top teeth should be on top of the mouthpiece and the teeth should be at the fulcrum, the place where the reed meets the mouthpiece. Most clarinetists don’t put enough mouthpiece in the mouth. Focus heavily on a flat chin. Make sure the fingers stay curved as if holding a tennis ball, and the fingers should be straight across, not angled (students like to angle their fingers to rest on the side keys). If they angle, the ring finger on each hand will not cover the entire tone hole and they will not get a sound. You can also place the mouthpiece cap over the left-hand side keys to help create curved fingers. Watch the thumb position on the thumb rest – it should be on the nail (cuticle), not the knuckle. Students do this for comfort, but it’s actually a bad habit and creates a poor hand position. A great exercise is to ask the clarinets to hold the instrument with only their right thumb and embouchure. They must firm the corners to control the clarinet. Clarinets, like oboes, tend to drop the head, which makes anchoring toward the top teeth next to impossible. They will play very flat when this happens.

Saxophone: The most common problem for saxophones is posture. They must sit straight and not **lean** into the sax in the “jazzy” position. “Bring the sax to **you**” by adjusting the neck strap appropriately. Sometimes, students will turn the neck and mouthpiece at weird angles, which keeps the octave key from closing properly. Like clarinets, saxophones tend to use too little mouthpiece and/or sometimes take more mouthpiece than needed, which produces an unfocused honking tone. Watch hand

positions and stay away from resting the fingers under the side keys to distribute weight. Often, this will open a side key and the student won't be able to produce an appropriate sound.

Trumpet: Don't allow trumpet players to tuck their arms into their side. This forces the trumpet into a downward angle and puts too much pressure on the bottom lip. Also, "no chicken wings" (arms locked near parallel to the floor); there should be a relaxed "inverted V" in the arms. Fingers must stay curved over the valves, not flat. Flat fingers extended over the valve caps force the valve down at an angled position, which slows technique (and sometimes results in valve issues). Trumpets should play with the pads of the fingers pressing directly down. Keep the right pinky **out** of the ring on top of the trumpet. Gently rest the pinky on **top** of the ring (in the ring creates a bad hand position for beginners). We call that ring the page-turning ring because that is the only time the pinky can go in there! Watch the hand position with the ring finger that controls the third valve slide; students often put too much of their finger in it and it creates technique problems.

French Horn: Horn players should sit with both feet flat on the floor and at the front edge of the chair with a flat back. Their upper torso posture should be lifted, but relaxed. "The horn should come to **you**, not you to the horn." Once the angle of the leadpipe is established at about a 55-degree angle, the bell should be lowered onto the right leg. To maintain the correct posture, students may need to bring the right leg out further than normal (this lowers the horn) – there may need to be a wider "V" in the legs and the right foot should always stay directly under the right knee. The leadpipe should be pointed directly toward the center of the music stand. The leadpipe should be angled down. If it's too horizontal, the result will be a reverse pivot with the head, which is a major problem to overcome. Since the bell should be stationary on the right leg, the pivot is not a good habit because it will cause range and registration issues later in the students' development. Horn players' heads must remain straight (not tilted) and the angle of the instrument should be like the right hand, when forming an X with the hands (not straight up and down). The bell should not face straight into the body, but at the angle of this right "X" plane. Also, don't allow the left arm to collapse when holding the horn because this will result in the angle of the head tilting with it.

Trombone: Be very aware of the angle of the slide to the bell. **Never** allow trombone players to "feel" third and fourth position by touching the bell. Also, trombone players need to hold the slide with the meaty pads of the tips of the fingers only. We prefer thumb/index and middle fingers for lighter touch. Never wrap the full hand around the slide guide. This creates terrible slide technique, which is too harsh and jerky. Always check the left thumb position around the bar on the bell or trigger. You will see some crazy stuff if you watch for it. Don't let trombones hold the horn severely angled down

due to weight. A good exercise is to have them hold the trombone with only the left hand to learn a balanced position on the shoulder. It is also worth mentioning that the bell goes on the left side of the head! When putting the outer slide back on, the water key should be at the bottom.

Euphonium: Don't allow students to set the euphonium in the chair and adjust their posture to that height. Hold it in the correct manner at the correct height. The proper holding posture/position is like giving your euphonium a gentle hug. Watch the finger position on the valves. Euphoniums and tubas (more than anyone) love to flatten fingers and do not use proper curved finger position. Same tricks work as the ones for trumpets.

Tuba: Most tuba problems come from issues with controlling the size versus the student's height. Use tuba stands when possible. If not, use duct tape around folded towels to get the proper mouthpiece height. Keep curved fingers over the valves. The correct holding position is like giving a gentle hug. Tubas often play way too high due to not being able to relax the embouchure. The center of the lips needs to be slightly pooched and loose, while the corners stay firm. Try having students say *OH* and then immediately *OOH* to pull the corners in to loosen the center of the lips – then buzz. The loose center of the embouchure from the *OOH* syllable will drop the pitch and the *OH* will drop the jaw, allowing them to get down into the lower register.

Percussion:

Check Posture

- Feet: shoulder-width apart
- Hips: square to the instrument
- Shoulders: relaxed and down
- Stand straight, no slouching

Check the Grip

- Matched grip only
- Fulcrum: no **gap** between thumb and hand (Y and Reverse-Y)
- Palms down
- Fingers in contact with the sticks
- Heads of sticks together
- Sticks form a 90-degree angle
- Sticks point slightly downward
- Grip engaged even when the hand isn't playing

Check the Stroke

- “Play on your dots” (the two places where the sticks make contact with the surface)
- Motion from the **wrist**
- Fingers: “contact without pressure,” only there for support
- Arms are relaxed, but do not contribute to the stroke, so they wiggle as a response to the wrist. (Hold a stick on the student’s arm, just above the wrist to remind them that the arm shouldn’t move up and down; the wrist does the work.)

When critiquing rudimental patterns with accents, taps, double-strokes, etc.:

Listen AND See Their Sound

- Do they **sound** like the music **looks**?
- Do they **look** like the music **sounds**?
 - Example: Accents should look and sound like accents
 - Example: Both hands should have the same quality of sound
- Remind them of the 2 people in our audience:
 - (1) The Blind Person: only **hears** and decodes the part
 - (2) The Deaf Person: only **sees** and decodes the part
 - It should be **obvious** to both people

Mallets

- Marimba mallets are generally built to play four-mallet music, so they are sometimes **too long** for a “normal” gripping point for beginners
- Grip the mallets far enough up to have control without hindering motion (like choking up on a baseball bat)
- Play in the center of the bars
- Avoid the **node**, where the strings go through (it produces no tone)
- Piston stroke: Start **UP**, End **UP**
- Relax the muscles not needed to play
- Hips square to the keyboard
- Keep wrists as low to the keys as you can, without touching them

Timpani Playing

- Piston stroke with natural rebound
- Play approx. one-third of the way between the rim and the center of the drum
- Single-stroke rolls **only**
- Listen for the best **sound**

Second-Year Curriculum

We are feeling the “back to school angst” and a sense of urgency to get the ball rolling on a new year, especially with second-year students. So, how do we begin? In the words of Stephen Covey, “Begin with the end in mind.” What is the goal? Let the familiar objective phrase, “The student will be able to...,” guide your planning.

Step 1: Reinforce/Re-teach List

Reflect on the previous year. What concepts do you feel that your students did not fully master the first year? Work these skills back into your teaching inventory sheet.

Step 2: Concept Mapping

Now that you have your list of skills, begin grouping them on a timeline for the year. For example, group content by: first semester/second semester, then by first/second/third/fourth quarters, then by weeks/days if you wish. Do this with your school and personal calendar in hand. Be sure to consider school holidays, concert placement, and audition/event dates.

Step 3: Goals for the Year – Life Lessons

Always begin with the end goal in mind. Create your own list of personal goals for the program. Share these with your students and teach a lesson on goal setting. Have them list at least 3 individual musicianship goals and 2 ensemble goals. Give appropriate examples and explain that goals must be tangible. Students should also list actions they will perform along the way to ensure they reach their goals.

Compile a master list of concepts that should be taught during the second year of instruction. You should create your own list, and when reviewing the content, keep in mind that each year, every class of students is different. You may find skills included that you already taught in year one or that you may not reach until year three. This list can be adjusted each year based on a number of things. What skills did this class of students master? What skills need reinforcement? What will the pacing for this group be? That is why it is important to go through these planning steps each year.

Note Denominations and Rhythm

- Syncopation
- Sixteenth notes
- Sixteenth note patterns that go into one beat (including dotted-eighth and sixteenth, eighth and two sixteenths, etc.)
- Eighth note triplets

Timing

- The ability to establish a pulse and stick to it
- The Ed Lisk palms up/down exercise
- Continue various exercises to establish an inherent sense of keeping time

Articulations

- Marcato
- Staccato
- Tenuto
- Different types of accents
- More advanced slur patterns (and lip slurs)
- Legato

Range

- Flute: Low C to High A \flat
- Oboe: Low D to High C
- Clarinets: Low E to High C
- Bass Clarinet: Low E go top of staff G
- Saxophone: Low B \flat to High D
- Bassoon: Low F to High F
- Trumpet: Low F \sharp to High G
- Horn: Low G to High F
- Trombone: Low F to High F
- Euphonium: Low F to High F
- Tuba: Low F to second space F

Embouchures and Playing Set-Up

- Continue to develop characteristic looking embouchures
- Introduce syllables for brass (e.g., OH, AH, EE on slurs)
- Appropriate voicing and tongue placement

Tone Production

- Introduce breathing exercises
- Listen to recordings
- Use warm air for brasses and flutes; explain the speed of air as “energetic”
- Pat Sheridan warns about simply saying “warm air” – warm air has more to do with oral cavity formation; check pharynx engagement – we don’t want tension in the throat at all

Tuning

- Proper use of the tuner
- Develop listening, as opposed to relying on the tuner

- Identify out of tune from the standpoint of “beatless” or beat-based tuning
- How the instrument works (including tuning end plug on flute, bore sizes, etc.)
- Things that affect pitch: reed strength, temperature, different volumes of playing

Other Concepts

- Phrasing: four-bar phrasing, musical contour
- Key signatures: B \flat , E \flat , A \flat , D \flat , G, C, and F
- Time signatures: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/4, easy 6/8, and cut time
- Sight-reading procedures and practice
- Effective use of practice records
- Very basic solfege

Technique

- Articulations such as slur-two, tongue-two
- Up 8/Down 8 crescendo/diminuendo studies
- Controlling pitch on dynamic changes
- Chromatic patterns and full chromatic scale for stated instrument range
- Scales (minimum of seven) B \flat , E \flat , A \flat , D \flat , G, C, F concert
- Sight-reading ability to Grade 2.5

Vocabulary

a tempo	decrescendo	piano
accelerando	diminuendo	pianissimo
al fine	dolce	poco a poco
allegro	etude	presto
andante	fermata	rallentando
cantabile	forte	ritardando
chromatic	fortissimo	solo
coda	largo	solì
crescendo	legato	staccato
da capo	maestoso	tacet
dal segno	mezzo	tempo

Theory

- Style
- Form
- Historical and cultural background
- Key signatures
- Difference between concert pitch and their pitch
- Enharmonics: call and response

Balance and Blend

- Blending and matching tone within sections
- Train ears to hear different sounds within the ensemble, i.e., melody, harmony, bass line, moving lines
- Continue with pyramid balance and playing softer than the next lowest instrument
- Other than accounting for the melody, bring out lower parts within sections
- Match everything, e.g., note lengths, articulations, tone, pitch, etc.
- Don't ever stick out of the ensemble (have them name ways that they can stick out)

Third-Year Curriculum

It's the beginning of year three, and you will notice that students are maturing into fine young musicians. As previously stated, start the year's planning by writing your Teaching Inventory Database (covered in Chapter 4) and be aware that all the information previously presented in years one and two are cumulative. You may want to review all components in the previous templates as a beginning-of-the-year project. Once you feel that students have mastered the material that was previously presented, it's time to move forward with year three.

Note Denominations and Rhythm

- Quarter note triplets
- Basic mixed meter
- Continued focus on rhythm reading in cut time
- Rhythms in triple meter (including easier uneven divisions such as 5/8)
- More sophisticated syncopation
- Focus on sixteenth note entrances **not** occurring on the downbeat
- Introduction to swing style

Timing

- Continued use of the metronome, including subdivision pulses and missing beat internal timing (having the metronome click every **other** beat or beat 1 of the measure **only**)
- Mastery of the count/clap/tap exercises
- Bopping (an exercise that focuses on the timing of the front part of the note, but does not sustain the sound for full value)
- Focus on self-timing or playing together through internal pulse and listening with no conducting

Articulation

- Agogic weight
- Bell tones
- Sforzando
- Jazz styles
- Introduction to double tonguing for appropriate instruments

Range

- Flute: Low C to High A
- Oboe: Low D to High C#
- Clarinet: Low E to High C
- Bass Clarinet: Low E to High C
- Saxophone: Low B \flat to High E \flat
- Bassoon: Low F to High F
- Trumpet: Low F# to High A
- French Horn: Low F to High G
- Trombone: Low F to High G
- Euphonium: Low F to High G
- Tuba: Low F to High G

Embouchures and Playing Set-Up

- Continued corrections to mouthpiece placement, chins, corners, and apertures as needed
- Be aware of distortions in embouchure due to increased range demands
- Voicing and tongue placements for different ranges
- Work for matching sound qualities throughout the ensemble (the word “matching” should apply to many concepts at this point)

Tone Production

- Vibrato on appropriate instruments
 - Flute, Oboe, Bassoon: Diaphragmatic
 - Saxophones: Jaw
 - Brass: Diaphragmatic
 - Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, French Horn: **no** vibrato
- Balloon breathing exercises
- Chorales in higher registers

Tuning

- Embouchure development as it relates to intonation in extremes of range
- Correct tuning of trombone F attachment
- French horn tuning of both the F and B \flat sides of the instrument

- Tuning your trio (the three-person rule: tuning to the person on your right and left)
- Learn some inherently bad notes on the instrument and how to fix them
- “Just” intonation for major chords; lower the third 14 cents, raise the fifth slightly

Other Concepts

- Proper use of triggers, fourth valves, B \flat side of the horn, alternate fingerings
- Understanding of 3/8, 9/8, 12/8, simple mixed meter, and some odd triple meter
- Focus on playing with musicality and not just technique
- Phrasing: Playing to and away from arrival points in music
- Focus on sight-reading procedures and practice
- A clear understanding of transpositions
- A practice record of substance
- Intermediate solfege on diatonic intervals

Technique

- Various combinations of slur/tongue patterns
- Controlling long crescendo/diminuendos
- Controlling pitch throughout dynamic ranges
- Register control in regard to pitch
- Sight-reading to Grade 3/3.5
- Add A and D major concert scales to major scale requirements

Vocabulary

a tempo	dal segno	moderato
accelerando	decrescendo	molto
al fine	diminuendo	pianissimo
allegretto	dolce	piano
allegro	etude	poco a poco
andante	fermata	presto
andantino	forte	rallentando
animato	fortissimo	ritardando
cantabile	grazioso	segno
chromatic	largo	solì
coda	legato	solo
con brio	maestoso	staccato
con spirito	marcato	tacet
crescendo	marziale	tempo
da capo	mezzo	tenuto

Theory

- Increased exposure to different styles (march, overture, fanfares, chorales, dance styles, etc.)
- Understanding of form in music (being able to identify sections such as ABA form)
- Historical and cultural context of music being performed
- Thorough understanding of major key signatures and introduction of minor keys
- Transposing between concert pitch and instrument pitch
- Understanding enharmonics
- Basic chord identification, spelling, and voicing
- Blues scales

Balance and Blend

- Understanding and hearing the pyramids of balance in relation to the section and ensemble
- Identifying melody, counter-melody, harmonic accompaniment, and rhythmic patterns in music
- Matching tone and style of your trio within the context of blend
- Focus on hearing timbre in music and the uniqueness of different instrument blending

Successful Habits to Take with You


- Sequencing and pacing are important to allow students to truly grasp and master technical and musical concepts.
- Use the curriculum templates in this chapter to create a comprehensive plan for student growth.
- Create lists of concepts to teach in each year of instruction.
- Lesson plans should reflect the goals and concepts needed to be taught, and should mirror your Teaching Inventory Database, which is covered in Chapter 4.
- Teachers should know common hand position and posture issues on all instruments.

Preview

Preview

Chapter Three

Assess for Success



Next, we will move on to a very important principle: assessment and demonstration mastery. Effective assessment should be designed to do two things. The first thing effective assessment should do is move students from point A to point B within the sequence of learning designed for them. **Formative assessment** is an in-process measurement or evaluation of student comprehension. Effective assessment should free students to be able to make mistakes and learn from them within a safe learning environment. This learning is the mechanism by which students will improve their work.

The second thing that effective assessment should do is define that “Aha” moment when students get it – mastery (or demonstration of mastery). **Summative assessment** is a measurement at the end of the learning process to determine student comprehension. Teaching for mastery allows students to feel that they are learning concepts on a permanent basis and that they can use the information any time, as needed. In a performance-based class, effective assessment causes students to want to become better on their instrument and provides valuable information to the teacher as to the appropriate skill level of each player. “Aha” moments should not yield a reaction of, “Now I have it,” but rather, “Now that I have it, teach me more!” Another way of stating this principle: the “old” way of teaching was, “I taught it, but it’s their problem if they don’t learn it.” But today’s mantra is, “We haven’t taught it until they’ve learned it.”

In most school settings, teachers are encouraged to set benchmarks for students, which means once they master a concept, the rigor of the benchmark increases. This process of improvement sometimes comes in the form of an SLO, or Student Learning Objective, which is a way to measure progress for individual students and includes a Pre-Test/Post-Test.

We have many opportunities in a band or orchestra class for students to demonstrate mastery, and our students’ proficiency (or lack thereof) is constantly on display. Ultimately, appropriate assessment should motivate students to practice. Although this concept is not solely musical, it is a necessary step.

Different Types of Assessment

Following is a list of the various types of assessments to utilize in a performance-based class:

- Rubric (both student and teacher rubric)
- Rating scale
- Checklist
- Verbal critique
- Written critique
- Written tests
- Recorded performance
- Student self-assessment
- Live performance reports
- Flipping assessment model
- Student-centered assessment

The above list contains a plethora of assessment strategies, each of which can be tailored to fit specific needs within your program. Regardless of which strategy you use, students need feedback regarding their work – this is one of the most important components of performance-based assessment. It can be in the form of returning a teacher generated rubric, a verbal critique, a written critique, or a teacher response through a technology-generated assessment program. The attention given to each student is what will allow them to move forward, and there are times when the teacher needs to find creative ways to help a student progress. Having an accurate picture of where each student is and where each student needs to go in their development is critically important. In addition, it's imperative to listen to individuals play in class on a random basis as well as in planned auditions and chair placement exams.

Students need aural examples (exemplars) of exceptional work (especially tone quality and other musical concepts) prior to giving a performance-based playing assignment. This can be in the form of recordings, demonstrating appropriate criteria, or providing a checklist that would deem work as exceptional. One of the huge benefits of a computer-based program is its ability to have students submit assignments online and send an audio recording of the example. This gives the director unlimited examples of individual playing for assessment, provided the director appropriately assesses all components, not just right notes and rhythms. You can also use a program like FlipGrid, which allows for video technology. Using a pre-made rubric with FlipGrid (it's free) is a great way to assess students.

Here is a brief explanation of each assessment model:

- Rating scale – The rating scale we are most accustomed to using is a numbering system (e.g., 1 to 10) or terms (e.g., Superior, Excellent, Good, Fair, and

Poor). Essentially, a rating scale is a modified rubric with points attached on a continuum. In a performance-based class, teacher-generated rating scales can be effective if exemplars are provided.

- **Checklist** – A checklist is used when the teacher is listening for predetermined skills. For instance, you may generate a checklist that includes right notes, correct rhythms, steady pulse, printed dynamics, and all articulations. There would then be five components on the checklist. If students demonstrate each of the components, they receive points and a grade based on the criterion.
- **Verbal critique** – A teacher critique is used as a response to a student performance. Typically, verbal critiques do not involve giving a grade, but they can be in response to using a rubric, which would involve reinforcing a weighted grade. This can also be simple verbal feedback during rehearsal.
- **Written critique** – A written critique can be teacher or student generated about a performance they are evaluating. Grades may be assigned for written critiques provided the teacher gives students a predetermined checklist of skills or components to evaluate.
- **Written tests** – Written tests really need no explanation. Written tests are fact-gathering assessments where the students' knowledge is evaluated based on their ability to reproduce what they know.
- **Recorded performance** – It is so easy for students to record themselves these days and submit their work to the teacher in various ways. When listening to student work, follow the recommended guidelines for using a rubric to evaluate, exemplars to provide high benchmarks, and post-performance critique and evaluation.
- **Student self-assessment** – Student self-assessments are very similar to written and verbal critiques, except that students are evaluating their own work. A predetermined checklist, set of skills, or rubric may be used for student self-assessment. Teachers usually use student self-assessments to measure a comparison between what a student hears and what the teacher hears.
- **Live performance reports** – Live performance reports are more informational in nature. A student includes the location, ensemble, individual, genre, and observations about the performance. These reports usually generate a grade of "100," provided the student takes the assignment seriously.

Example:

A student attends a clarinet recital at the local university and provides “big picture” information about the performance. The teacher gives the student a grade of “100” for attending and for doing an appropriate and enlightened evaluation of what the student heard.

Student-Centered Assessment

The term “student-centered assessment” means that the assignment is constructed through student/teacher collaboration. Student-centered assessments involve the teacher and student working hand in hand to devise a specific curriculum for the student, by the student. It’s much like working with a college professor on a doctoral thesis topic. This approach takes away the idea that we are just putting up hoops for them to jump over, but instead, collaborating on ways for improvement. Students will typically work extremely hard on an assignment or project in which they have a say in how they can improve. When you use this type of assessment, you typically tell the students, “Everyone is going to get an A, you just have to collaborate with me on how you’re going to achieve it.” It opens their minds to the possibility of what defines their best work, and it is generally geared specifically to each student, not set up to compare them with other students.

Student-centered assessment means that the director’s role is to try and find the best within each individual student and bring it out. The teacher’s job is to work with students to get their best musical product, not set up obstacles. This type of assessment model works because of the pre-work and training done prior to giving the assessment.

This type of assessment works really well, but it is only one type of assessment. We don’t believe it can be used exclusively as the sole means to evaluate. In a performance-based class, you cannot totally abandon the idea of providing teacher feedback about a student’s performance. Rubrics and teacher feedback allow students to troubleshoot their own playing and provide tangible information on how to improve. In addition, student comparison through auditions is part of our culture. However, wouldn’t it be nice if all students had a logical say in what constituted their “A”? They might be willing to work a little harder if they could see and hear tangible results as part of the improvement process.

In Ben Zander’s book, *The Art of Possibility*, he refers to student-centered learning as “giving everyone an A.” He states:

The practice of giving the A allows the teacher to line up with the students in their efforts to produce the outcome, rather than lining up with the standards against these students...the freely granted A expresses a vision of partnership, teamwork, and relationship. It is for

wholeness and functionality, in the awareness that for each of us, excess stone may still hide the graceful form within.

Rubrics

Rubrics, by themselves, do not make students better musicians, although they can provide feedback on musicianship. If used correctly, they should ensure student progress. Rubrics are used to measure student performance against a predetermined set of standards. When rubrics are used, you should provide your students with a copy of the rubric so you and your students are aligned with what is expected. Your students need to comprehend the terminology and understand what you're listening for in their performance. Prior to the assignment, it is important to provide an example of a recording that received an "A" and explain and discuss what components lead to the exceptional performance, thus scoring higher on the rubric. After the assignment is submitted and graded, it is critical that you provide written or oral commentary so your student musicians learn from what you heard from the performance so they can apply that information toward improvement.

Utilizing Technology for Assessment

Music is an old art form, and nothing takes the place of *live*, authentic music making. The good news is there are increasing numbers of music technology resources available for us to use to enhance our instruction. In this digital age, technology must be incorporated in our instructional process and it should be effective and innovative.

Refer to the technology presented in Chapter 7 and continue to explore new ways to supplement instruction with cutting-edge technology.

Successful Habits to Take with You

- Rubrics should be clear and concise.
- Students should be encouraged to create self-assessments before or after concerts.
- The teacher should provide effective feedback based on an established standard, with exemplars provided – be detailed with students on areas needed for improvement.
- Find quality recordings of repertoire to also serve as exemplars for student growth.

Preview

Preview

Preview

Chapter Four

The Components of Teaching



When young music students begin their musical journey, there is a natural progression that takes place, starting with fundamentals, moving to transfer and application, and then to an intuitive response to music. Successful band and orchestra directors have a methodology for how they teach this evolution. It's not necessarily a system, per se, but their students can count on the fact that when the school year begins, there are certain things that are going to be taught and reinforced that lead to a deeper understanding of music. Middle school directors start with basic concepts to begin the process of filling their students' musical toolboxes.

The Components of Playing

In this chapter, we are going to present an overview of basic instrumental pedagogy – teaching strategies that will lead to success in the rehearsal room. These strategies will serve as a framework for effective teaching. Its journey is a logical path from the Components of Playing to the artistry of inspired music making.

The initial Habits model is based on four main principles:

1. What to teach – Curriculum
2. How to teach it – Instructional Teaching Strategies
3. How to know if they've learned it – Assessment and Mastery
4. All roads lead to music making – Musicianship

Ultimately, the most important principle in this model for students is falling in love with music and developing the skills to make music. The band or orchestra director's responsibility is to take students on a journey from new beginnings to the ability to artistically state who they are and how they feel through the language of music. All four principles will be covered in this book.

When we consider making a list of **what** we are responsible for teaching, there are two categories of information we should draw from to make an effective list. The first

category comes from the Components of Playing. These are terms that appear on a judge's scoresheet or performance assessment evaluation that are performance-based. They are also the components individual players constantly troubleshoot as they perfect their own playing. If you were to make a list of the Components of Playing, it may look something like this:

- Tone
- Timing
- Tuning
- Listening
- Dynamics
- Phrasing
- Articulations (staccato, marcato, legato, slurred, various accents)
- Rhythm
- Balance
- Blend
- Attacks
- Releases
- Duration of notes
- Range
- Control
- Technique
- Tone color (intensity, color spectrum, sonority)
- Precision/Clarity/Accuracy
- Style
- **MUSICIANSHIP** (expression, artistry, etc.)

The second category is a list containing other things we are responsible for teaching that may not appear on a performance evaluation but are certainly within our curriculum. They include skills such as:

- Scales
- Key signature recognition
- Time signature comprehension
- Stretching exercises
- Breathing exercises
- Bow technique
- Embouchure set-up and development
- Proper hand positions
- Good posture
- Oral cavity syllables (brass players) and voicing

- A counting system
- Sight-reading strategies
- Enharmonic notes
- Instrument assembly
- A procedure for starting class/rehearsal
- Instrument care and maintenance
- Proper upgraded equipment (mouthpieces, reeds, bows, instruments, etc.)
- Technology to enhance instruction
- Appropriate behavior in a managed classroom
- Concert etiquette
- High expectations
- Basic music theory
- Historical context
- Musical terms
- Good practice habits

These lists could go on and on, and neither is designed to be comprehensive, but they certainly illustrate that there is much to learn and teach. These lists reaffirm that having an organizational plan is paramount to success.

Teaching Strategies

Successful directors have a keen knowledge regarding instrument pedagogy.

- They know how to fix embouchure issues.
- They know the right things to say to make the ensemble sound better.
- They know how to transfer fundamental concepts into the literature they are performing.
- Their pedagogical knowledge ranges the spectrum across the woodwind, brass, and percussion families, and their string pedagogy is strong within all four string instruments.

They also have a wealth of knowledge when it comes to style and interpretation.

- They know specific musical characteristics that make each composer unique.
- They know what stylistic features are characteristic of a march, as well as other genres.
- They possess historical perspective and context and provide analogies that reflect the origin of a work or circumstances that surround the writing of a work.

- They create stories and analogies to serve as catalysts for musical understanding to make the music come to life.
 - They know that we are what we consume; therefore, their literature choices are selections of high quality.
 - They know the literature, both in terms of classical works that have stood the test of time and new works that provide musical depth.
 - They know how to craft great sounds and watching their pursuit of excellence on the podium is like watching a master craftsman build a bassoon or violin.
- For additional research: <https://cml.music.utexas.edu/online-resources/habits-of-musicianship>

Successful band and orchestra directors also have multiple solutions for teaching the same concept. If a student doesn't get it the first time, they have a back-up plan. Their teaching toolbox is filled with many teaching strategies, and their teaching style is positive and energetic. Successful directors will not hesitate to pick up the phone and call a fellow director, an applied faculty member at a university, or a respected private teacher and ask, "How do I troubleshoot this problem?"

Successful directors know how to teach the Components of Playing, but it doesn't stop there. All the qualities that come under the heading of "knowledge" are valued and treasured, but they are just the beginning. As you move through the remainder of this book, you will discover "the rest of the story."

The information provided in the following sections should help fill gaps with regard to appropriate teaching strategies. When completed, you should be well on your way to developing a blueprint that will transform your teaching and bolster your knowledge of teaching and instrument pedagogy.

Timing

It would be awesome if all students came to us with an inherent sense of time and the ability to internalize pulse. Although some young students do have an incredible internal metronome, most don't comprehend the extent to which they should be obsessed with its exactness. It is vitally important that from the beginning stages of instruction, students are taught just how important internalization of pulse must be.

When we reference timing, we are dealing with both the issue of steady tempo (or playing in time) and the issue of rhythm within time (or fitting rhythms into the time continuum). Even the best musicians must work at this skill.

Joe Alessi, principal trombonist of the New York Philharmonic, presented a workshop several years ago in which he played several orchestral excerpts on audiotape for the audience. He explained that the recorded examples were audition tapes for acceptance into the trombone studio at The Juilliard School. He played the first excerpt and asked the audience for feedback on the component of timing. The room

of musicians indicated that we thought the timing was pretty solid. He then showed us that he was using a variable speed tape recorder and said, “Can we all agree that if the timing is correct at the indicated tempo, then it should also be perfect at a slower speed?” We all indicated this was, indeed, true. He then slowed the speed considerably and had us listen a second time. Upon listening, it was obvious there were several places with significant timing problems.

This is an example as to the degree in which we should insist on timing as a precise component. Much like tuning, timing is an exact science. A metronomic interpretation of music is not the goal. Students must be able to play precisely in time before the music can start to breathe, ebb and flow. Directors of young ensembles have all had the experience of students rushing on a piece of music in the concert and having to go into “holding on for dear life” mode.

The best strategies for addressing timing issues involve the use of a metronome, some type of rhythm sheet (or rhythmic vocabulary), the kinesthetic use of the body, and exercises that teach an inherent internalization of time. Many directors have success with some form of clapping, tapping of the foot, and saying either the subdivisions of the beat or the rhythm itself. Kinesthetic movement (including foot tapping) for younger students is vitally important. However, as students get older and better at internalization, the foot tapping should stop.

Here are some other strategies for addressing timing issues:

- Use a metronome and give a count-off of beat 1 only. Have the students audiate (hear) internally beats & 2 & 3 & 4 & and come in on the next downbeat. This establishes the need to always subdivide.
- When students are counting, have them move their hands/arms in a gesture that indicates down and up in an imaginary plane in front of them. Choral directors refer to this as *patsching the beat*.
- Have students play the subdivisions of the beat using the pitches of the note itself. An easy example would be the rhythm of dotted-eighth/sixteenth. Students should play the sixteenth subdivisions of the dotted-eighth (three sixteenth notes) aloud followed by the written sixteenth to demonstrate their understanding of subdivision. This concept can be applied to full phrases of music, as well.
- Use a metronome and divide the tempo marking in half or, if possible, even further. **Example:** Take a work written in four and provide two beats per bar with the metronome. Then provide only one beat per bar with the metronome. All missing beats are to be internalized and audiated.
- Ask students to play the attack, but not the sustain, of the note. (Some refer to this as “bopping.”) This approach forces students to feel the inner beats and is great for ensuring that attacks are together and things line up. Another telling

part of bopping is the tone quality that happens on the attack. Many students find they don't work hard enough to produce a good sound when playing short notes. It is important that good sounds are produced when using bopping as a teaching tool for evaluation time.

- Have 2 students stand with their backs facing each other (like the beginning of a duel in an old western film). Then separate them by approximately 8 to 10 feet. Tell them you are going to give them a count-off of 4 beats (quarter note between 54 and 60). Explain that they are to keep time to themselves (be very independent), and when they reach count 32, they should raise their right hand. Tell the rest of the class to watch the exercise very quietly, internalize and audiate the pulse themselves, and remain quiet until both students have raised their hands. This exercise usually yields a great teachable moment, and you will also notice that students who are watching will audiate along with the participants.
- Ask students to figure exactly how many beats they are allotted in a piece of music. Most students don't realize that if they are given a metronome marking, a time signature, and the total number of measures, they can calculate exactly what moment in time (on the time continuum) the piece should end.
- Give students a short example of 8 measures. Turn the metronome on (then off), provide the downbeat, and have the students indicate when the piece should end. **Example:** An eight-measure piece of music at quarter note = 60 with a time signature of 4/4 would last 32 seconds and have its final release exactly 33 seconds from the time the piece started (notwithstanding any ritard or rubato marking).
- The Ed Lisk audiation exercise: In this exercise, students are asked to count from 1 to 8 slowly. When they get to 8, they go back to 1, etc. To begin, face the class with your palms up. While your palms are up, students should count out loud. When you turn your palms down, students should audiate (or hear internally without speaking aloud) with no audible sounds. Initially, this exercise can be done with three or four beats being audiated at a time. The more you do this with your students, the longer you will be able to go with your palms down. This is a great exercise for reinforcing the internalization of pulse.

The metronome is a wonderful tool to demonstrate to students when they are not keeping time. It is also a great practice tool if students need to learn something slowly before moving to a faster tempo. Metronomes are a natural part of our instructional process, but we cannot emphasize enough that students must learn to develop an internal sense of pulse. We must teach students to be obsessed with keeping impeccable time; this skill must be developed through a keen awareness of one's internal clock.