

# *“If I Could Start Over Again, I Would...On the-Job Lessons from Young Teachers”*

The Midwest Clinic: *An International Band and Orchestra Conference*

Thursday, December 19, 2002 – 11:00 a.m.  
Windsor Room – Congress Plaza Hotel

## *Panel...*

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### ▣ *You're Hired - Managing the Classroom*

Establish a set of rules at the beginning of the year

Set rules that you can live with

Be consistent, follow through and be firm

Quick ideas to help classroom management

- play more – talk less
- move around the room – proximity (visit the students in the back)
- have a plan
- students will mirror your behavior
- give exact directions – the younger the group the simpler the directions (ie. louder, softer, longer, shorter...)
- give directions only one time

Kids smell fear and will test you – you are the **BOSS**

Sending kids to the office is a last resort – at the moment it may seem like the best thing... think twice

Days to avoid changing the routine

- the day before a long break – winter & spring break
- the day of a school dance
- the first day it snows

Group dynamics, the age level and how to have a WIN WIN program

If the kids really “hate” a piece of music... select another one

Even the best-planned lesson can backfire

Kids want to know they are appreciated and liked

Classroom management will improve with time and constant reflection

❑ **Where is my desk? All I see is paper!!!!!! Getting Organized**

Not being organized will create much self-inflicted stress

The start of the year will be filled with paperwork – take care of it ASAP

Have a place for paperwork to be dealt with – inbox

Getting organized and staying organized

- to do list
- post-it notes are good – but don't let your desk be overcome with them
- find one system and stick to it
- throw out the junk mail before you leave the mail room
- binders, file folders, planners
- create a place for students to turn things in – classroom mail box

Find out what method the schools wants for collecting \$\$\$\$\$

Clean classroom = clean performance

Return phone calls and e-mails within 24 hours

Have boundaries to your office – remember it is your office, not a “hang out”

❑ **Just what is making that sound????**

Be familiar with school instrument rental procedures

Get to know the music dealer(s) in town

You support them = they support your program

Music catalogs may be cheaper, but when an instrument breaks right before your first concert the catalog company will not come running to help you. A good music dealer will.

Teaching Instruments – Quick tips from the real world

- put tape on the keys of flutes and saxes
- check to make sure students have all the required equipment
- pick brands that you want to use
- not all companies have good instruments
- model for the students
- use non-musical devices to improve fundamentals

Other schools in the district may have school owned instrument that you need

The amount of time between concerts and skill level of the group will drive what is to be programmed. Harder is not always better, but it can be.

❑ **Playing in The Sandbox**

Secretaries know everything – treat them like angels!

Get to know your custodians

Getting along with other teachers

Eat lunch with other teachers

Workers compensation procedures

Finding common ground with other faculty members

- incorporating reading, writing, math, science, social studies..
- some schools require documentation that you are incorporating these subject in your lessons

Be part of the school – coach, sponsor a club, lunch duty, bus duty, non-music event chaperone

❑ **Battling the First Year Teacher Blues**

- Balance, Balance, Balance...
- Looking for the small success with the students vs. looking for major milestones
- The history of the program will determine how things go at first
- Research the background of your students
- The word “change” puts students, parents and administrators on the defensive- use “improve”
- Make improvements to the program in small steps
- Constantly keep administrators in the loop- they love to hear good things
- It takes at least four years to really see what you have done or not have done
- Be professional in what you do- dress, talk, actions
- Call home to parents for positive things
- Working with students who feel the director does not like them
- No book has all the answers – talk with other teachers
- If a certain grade level is difficult, talk with other teachers to find out if they are having similar problems
- Find someone who you can talk to and vent with when things don’t go so well
- Take time to observe other teachers, rehearsals and performances
- Don’t be afraid to steal ideas from other teachers -just make sure it’s okay with the other teachers
- Be prepared to put in many long hours
- How to use your booster group, but don’t get used by your booster group
- Be concerned when students quit-but know that some will not continue
- It will take time to find what works the best for you – you can’t teach like someone else
- Positive & Negative attitudes are contagious

**Ten Things That "Freak" Out  
Parents and/or Administrators**

1. Changing the date of a concert multiple times.
2. Informing a parent that their child is failing at report card time.
3. Pulling students out of class at the last minute.
4. Sending out information with grammatical errors.
5. Forgetting to acknowledge the students’ efforts at concerts.
6. Sending numerous students to the office for behavior issues.
7. Making major changes to the uniform that students wear to concerts.
8. Constantly ending class late.
9. Arriving late to school and then leaving early.
10. Forgetting to order the busses.

# ***First Year Check List***

## **Start of the Year**

- ❑ Keys to your classroom
- ❑ Selecting a method or warm-up book for class
- ❑ Setting/Revising performance dates and checking that you have a place for the concert
- ❑ Class list
- ❑ Class schedule
- ❑ Yearbook from last two years - you will have plenty of names and faces to match
- ❑ Meet with music dealer
- ❑ Budget
- ❑ Creating a handbook with grading policy
- ❑ How will parents meet you - first concert, meet the director night, open house, newsletter?
- ❑ Selecting music
- ❑ Instrument and music storage areas
- ❑ Request time off for attending the Midwest Clinic (December 16 - 20, 2003)

## **During the Year**

- ❑ School system for submitting grades
- ❑ Updating or creating a music library
- ❑ Selecting music for upcoming events
- ❑ Sending in forms for solo & ensemble contest, or any other festivals - ON TIME
- ❑ Newsletters - how often?
- ❑ Record the group - audio and video
- ❑ If you walked into your classroom as a stranger what would be your first impression?  
Is this the impression you really want?
- ❑ Recruiting for the next year - this should never stop
- ❑ The deadline for making changes to next year's curriculum
- ❑ Attending live performances

## **End of the Year**

- ❑ Setting the calendar for next year
- ❑ Collecting school-owned instrument and sending out ones that need repair
- ❑ Budget for the following year
- ❑ Putting away all loose music
- ❑ Adjusting the schedule to best benefit the students or advocating to keep it the same
- ❑ Complete inventory of all equipment and the condition which it is in
- ❑ Signing up for a summer class to improve your teaching skills

## **First Day of Classes - it is usually a short class period**

- ❑ Set TWO alarm clocks and pick out your clothes the night before
- ❑ Introduce yourself - practice it in front of a mirror
- ❑ Assigned seats with nametags over the stands to help you match names with faces
- ❑ Go over class rules, expectations, supplies needed and plans for the year
- ❑ Set the date for the first time that all the students will play as a group