

“Teensy Band? Solutions/Suggestions for Small Bands”

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Advantages of Having a Small Band

What IS a “small band?”

Celebrate what you have! Encourage, promote, and teach!

Flexibility in seating arrangements- Easy access to each student- Get OFF the podium!

Easy to travel

Individualized instruction/ Peer teaching (student to student)

Treat as a small ensemble rather than a “band” until it grows.

Best Practices

Get control of your feeder/ Control instrumentation for best balance. Switch some players if needed

Never give up on hammering FUNDAMENTALS of approach to instrument & music

Teach like you would any other band! Posture, hand positions, tone quality, in tune

“Play what’s on the page!” Be a nag. It’s OK to repeat yourself.

Correct Notes (key signatures), correct rhythms, musical markings. Ta-DA~

Don’t be afraid to ask for HELP! Bring in clinicians, retired teachers, college students etc.

Teach and control rehearsal etiquette. Establish a routine and stick to it.

Literature

Be honest in assessing your band’s abilities. Most common mistake is to play music that is too HARD!

Use a method book, warm-up series, even for a more advanced band. Have counting system.

Don Hanna “Daily Warm-Ups for Young Bands” Scales (Stick to 4: Bb, Eb, Ab, F + chromatic)

Use a METRONOME and tuner- phone apps (iStroboSoft, Metronome) I use a McAdams in class

“Use of technology”, “Classroom procedures” Domain 2

Suggestion: Warm-up as a group, no individual chaotic warm up. Sets a chaotic tone.

Become familiar with Grade 1-2 level. Nothing higher! Ask colleagues for suggestions. Search websites.

“Band Directors Group” Facebook page is a FANTASTIC resource for all things “BAND”! (PLC)

JW Pepper for recordings and some score images, Publisher CDs, concerts, contest programs

Invest in collections of music “Concert Favorites” “Ensembles for All”

“Christmas Favorites” EE/Sweeney, “Patriotic Favorites”

Don't be afraid to re-write for available instrumentation. Finale, Sibelius, BY HAND!

Percussion- Cover the 4 basics: Snare, Bass Drum, Bells, then cymbals. Simplify parts.

Use musical common sense. AGAIN: Ask someone to listen. Email/text short sound files.

Short-cuts

Pencil on every stand. I use duct tape and string. THIS IS THE BEST SHORTCUT **EVER**!!!!

Mark music, mark music, mark music! DO NOT PROCEED until music is marked! Observe.

Clarinets cover trumpet parts and vice-versa. Contact me for list of substitutions

No double reeds (too exposed)

Percussion: Other players cover accessories (ONLY if important for color)

Tympani BD w/tuba @pp Toms and/or old BD, tuned to most exposed pitches

Chimes: Borrow just the one(s) you need.

If too many percussion parts DO NOT PLAY THE PIECE AT CONTEST/MPA. **Duh!**

Got a talker? Move them to back of room with their own chair, stand. Keep integrated in rehearsal.

Record! Pieces, segments, sections, individuals, video hand positions/posture and share

Incorporate your phone in your daily teaching! I use the Video function or Voice Notes.

** Professional Evaluation- Upload recordings to Teachscape as artifacts. Demonstrates "Showing GROWTH". Pics of scatter charts etc. as understandable "data." (Easier to do this with fewer students!) ☺

Befriend and work with/communicate with coaches, other teachers & the principal in your school.

They are your ALLIES. Share your students. Don't be a jerk. Write thank you's.

Involve as many professionals as possible; band directors love helping others! Will work for peanuts.

Seek opinions/mentors for yourself as well as for your students- OFTEN. Have a "team"

**K.I.S.S.

"Keep it Simple, Stupid!"

(3 Clarinet parts? Don't play it.)

You attended this clinic!

What a great start!