

# Creating a Culture of Excellence

NMMEA Summer Workshop

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What regular support do you need? (Admin, Boosters, Student Aides/Student Leaders, etc.)  
What does your ideal rehearsal look/sound like?

Have high expectations. Don't just talk about them, enforce. Make them known. Be honest.  
IF there is a problem, consider that the issue MAY BE YOU.

## Procedures

Have a process and stick to it. Students thrive in STRUCTURE.  
Breakdown rehearsals to all components. Figure out your weaknesses & GET HELP!  
Time management- Be aware.  
Discipline ("Kids today...")  
Details matter.  
Be professional.

## Best Practices

Teach and control rehearsal etiquette. Establish a routine & maintain it.  
Never give up on hammering FUNDAMENTALS of approach to instrument & music:

### **Posture, hand positions, tone quality, intonation**

1. Don't shy away from *teaching slowly* and with purpose.
2. "Play what's on the page!" Be a nag. It's OK to repeat yourself. (7x)
3. Correct Notes (key signatures), correct rhythms, musical markings.
4. Teach how to mark music- See that they do it ~ Get off the podium.
5. Remove talkative students to a chair and stand in back of room, away from others.

Let students know that they are progressing. Write rehearsal plan on the board. (Principals love this.)  
Include warm up and technique exercises. Check off each as mastered. (Younger students LOVE this)  
Never stop complimenting and encouraging.

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

## Literature

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

1. Use a method book, warm-up series, even for a more advanced band. Have counting system.
2. Teach scales. Play scales CORRECTLY.
3. Use a METRONOME and tuner- phone apps (iStroboSoft, Metronome) I use a McAdams in class  
Domain 2- "Use of technology", "Classroom procedures"  
**\*\*Suggestion:** Warm-up as a group, no individual chaotic warm up >Sets a chaotic tone.
4. Sight-read often, throughout the year, even if lines from a method book. Format as you would in SR room.

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

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

### **Short-cuts**

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

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

Record! Pieces, segments, sections, individuals, video hand positions/posture and share with them immediately.

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

\*\* Professional Evaluation- Upload recordings as artifacts: 1<sup>st</sup> reading vs concert. Demonstrates "Showing GROWTH". Use pics of scatter charts/sectionals etc. as understandable "data."

### **Build Relationships**

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 (or beer).

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

### **Bottom Line**

Before you can accomplish ANYTHING with your ensemble, you must establish discipline in your classroom. Students must behave appropriately & respectfully. Period. Do not attempt to teach over an unruly class. Stop. Wait. Continue. *This takes patience, perseverance.* Work to establish a relationship with your principals, counselors etc. so that if you HAVE to remove a student from the class, you can do so. Your life will become easier. Never give up.

Self-evaluate/ Self-reflect. This is crucial and difficult.

Be professional: Actions, dress, speech.

Be human.

***You attended this workshop! What a great start!***