

LITTLE THINGS, BIG DIFFERENCES, ALL LEVELS

GMEA In-service Conference

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- 1) **HAVE A PLAN**
 - Without some kind of plan, much time is wasted and productivity cut
 - Lesson plans as we know them are not always needed; a plan is
 - Do not attempt to rehearse without pencils for students
 - Utilize a measure numbering system for use in rehearsals
 - Classroom management/discipline must be utilized consistently
 - Start and end rehearsals on time
 - Help students to understand the importance of rehearsal time

- 2) **DON'T ATTEMPT TO REHEARSE EMPTY CHAIRS**
 - Visually extra chairs are a distraction
 - Aurally extra chairs affect the ensemble sound
 - Aesthetically empty chairs can be a discouragement to others
 - Band directors and preachers tend to focus too much on empty chairs

- 3) **REMOVE CHAOS/DISRUPTIONS FROM THE REHEARSAL SETTING**
 - Students should know order and expectations of rehearsal setting
(when to play, how to prepare for rehearsal, how to respond to director)
 - Remove non-musical items from rehearsals, if at all possible
 - Rehearsals cannot be effective with lack of classroom order, constant disruptions, and student inattention
 - Please...no candy money, fruit sales or trip money during rehearsal
 - There MUST be structure and design to rehearsals

- 4) **POST REHEARSAL ORDER AND TRY TO FOLLOW IT...EVERY REHEARSAL**
 - Expect students to follow posted order
 - Train students that posted order is what will be rehearsed and they should prepare for that plan
 - Rehearsal with efficiency and purpose
 - Don't feel every tune must be rehearsed/played completely every day

- 5) **STUDY SCORES FOR PRACTICAL REASONS FIRST**
 - Comprehensive score study, as we know it, is not always needed initially
 - There must be specific plans to rehearse trouble spots in order to offer solutions/alternatives to existing problems
 - Study scores for possible better approaches to problem solving/part changes
 - Every time the band is stopped, assignments should be given
 - Learn to identify sections where the "Four Rules" can be applied
(Volume, crescendos, line identification, "it" spots)

- 6) **WORK TO IDENTIFY PROBLEMS 1, 2, & 3**
- Definition of each problem to students
 - Wisdom is in identifying which problems are present
 - Involve students in identifying problems whenever appropriate
 - Don't allow students to "practice at getting worse"
 - Try to work on concepts rather than symptoms as much as possible
- 7) **COME TO REHEARSAL EXPECTING GOOD THINGS TO HAPPEN**
(You can find them if you look hard enough)
- One of our challenges is to find some good in each rehearsal
 - Make certain something is accomplished in every rehearsal
 - Our students believe what we tell them, provided we have established "believe-ability" with them
 - To some of our students, rehearsal may be the best part of their day
 - Sometimes the fact that a rehearsal is held is a success
- 8) **LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT EACH OF YOUR STUDENTS**
- Don't spend too much time on a few problem students
 - Most of your students are great kids who want to do the right things.
 - Students had rather do well than poorly. It is our job to help them.
 - Students don't always know...but they know
 - Our student want to please us. In many ways, they want to be like us.
- 9) **BE FLEXIBLE**
- There is no such thing as a "Normal School Day" – deal with it.
 - Don't let your students see your discouragement – deal with it
 - There is no such thing as an ideal rehearsal – accept it/deal with it
 - Make things work for you rather than allowing circumstances to control your opinion of your work
 - Things hardly ever are as good or as bad as they initially seem – prepare for it
 - A rehearsal can happen only once – make the most of it.
- 10) **IT HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH THE PERSON ON THE PODIUM**
- You control the pacing, productivity, and climate of every rehearsal
 - Your students will reflect what they see in you from the podium
 - Be careful what you say and how you say it – our students are very likely to misunderstand our best intentions
 - Profanity of any kind is **TOTALLY** unacceptable around students
 - Our students depend on us for "all things musical"
 - Our students choose us – we must never forget that fact.
 - To each of our students we represent something different, and to each one we provide something special they possibly do not get anywhere else in their lives.