

PREPARING YOUR ENSEMBLE FOR EXPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE

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1) *Expression is the key!*

- ♪ Tension and Release
- ♪ Pacing
- ♪ Color
- ♪ Vibrato
- ♪ Dynamics
- ♪ Cause and Effect
- ♪ Tone and Presence

2) **Music Selection**

- ♪ Most important element of programming
- ♪ Expressive statement you want to make
- ♪ Difficulty level
- ♪ Concepts you want to teach
- ♪ Craftsmanship
- ♪ Selection process

3) LEARNING PACKETS

- ♪ Sequential teaching
- ♪ Booklet for each student
 - ♪ *Information on the piece and composer*
 - ♪ *Musical elements such as rhythms, melodies, form, terminology, articulations, scales/keys, phrasing*
 - ♪ *Student Conducting*
 - ♪ *Student Composing*
 - ♪ *The actual piece of music is the final page*

4) **Rehearsal Planning**

- ♪ Six-week cycle
- ♪ Time allowed for sight-reading, conducting, arranging, theory, sight-singing
- ♪ Rehearsal Schedule
 - ♪ *Detailed planning of pieces and measures covered each day*
 - ♪ *Other important information such as performances, sign-ups, registrations, challenges, fund raising, activities, etc.*
 - ♪ *Great for homework guide and lesson plans*
 - ♪ *Percussionists appreciate equipment information for set-up*
- ♪ Three weeks for fundamentals and technique
- ♪ Three more weeks for cleaning and expression
- ♪ Be sure to allow time for having some fun!

5) **Cleaning the Music**

- ♪ Divide and Conquer
- ♪ Balance and Phrasing
- ♪ Fix it NOW
- ♪ Great recordings for students

6) **ASSESSMENT**

- ♪ Evaluate continuously
- ♪ Record rehearsals
 - ♪ *Make a list of things to fix*
 - ♪ *This is your lesson plan for tomorrow!*
- ♪ If it is seen in the score you MUST hear it clearly
- ♪ Get off the podium to walk around group – watch and listen
- ♪ Video tape group and study YOUR gestures
- ♪ Compare interpretations
- ♪ BECOME the music!

Tone Quality Basics
Creating that perfect sound on the field and on the stage.
Lance Nielsen – Director of Bands, Lincoln East High School
NSBA Summer Convention Clinic
July 6, 2006

How do you get that big full band sound?
DAILY FUNDAMENTALS

Warm-ups

Routine (pros and cons)

- + Creates a daily practice routine for the students
- + It develops skills and strength
- + Aids in classroom management
- Brains shut off
- It can become boring if there isn't some variety
- If the teacher is not actively involved, students will practice things wrong

Successful warm-ups will

- Be the most teachable part of your rehearsal
- Perfect Musical Skills
- Develop a well rounded musician

The anatomy of a good warm-up

1) Breathing Exercises - Without Air There Is No Tone!

The Breathing Gym exercises
Air is Your Friend !!

2) Tone Exercises – Apply what you do in #1 to long tone exercises

Besides playing, have the student's listen. They must have a concept in their mind and ears. Play recordings of great bands, solo recordings, invite in guest artists / clinicians.

3) Flexibility Exercises

Woodwind considerations – correct embouchures, finger exercises, chromatics
Brass considerations – properly placed embouchures, lip slurs, using mouthpieces only for variety and accuracy.

4) Articulation Exercises

Steal patterns from the music you are playing.

5) Range Exercises

Develop not only the upper range, but the lower range as well.

6) Chorales

This is the time to focus on the ensemble sound – balance, blend, intonation, musicality.

Keys to the success....

- Have a plan (routines) and stick with it.
- Never sacrifice the warm-up time because you are concerned about getting to the music or marching show.
- Evaluate the needs of your ensemble – focus the warm-up to help your ensemble.
- Be creative – have some variety in your warm-up sequence.
- Keep the students thinking and active at all times. Talk to them during the warm-up, ask questions, make them listen to other parts of the band and evaluate.
- YOU as the DIRECTOR will need to be actively listening, evaluating, and fixing as the warm-up sequence happens.

Resources

“State of the Art” Ensemble Techniques
Jack Meehan and Wayne Downey
Jenson Publications

“Alternative Rehearsal Techniques”
E.S. Lisk, Publishing
R.D. #7 Box 334
Oswego, New York 13126
Mitchell Printing Co.

“Function Chorales”
Stephen Melillo
91 Carol Street
Ramsey, NJ 07446-1919

“The Breathing Gym”
Sam Pilafian and Patrick Sheridan
Focus on Excellence
829 Lawrence Drive
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46804
www.focusonex.com