

25 Critical Mistakes of First-Year Teachers

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1. Poor Programming

- ◆ Does your music selection match your ability?



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- ◆ Does your music selection match your ability?
- ◆ Programming for one member or small group of players
- ◆ Marching band show written mostly around visual ideas.



2. Lack of Organization

- Create a calendar of events and stick to it.
- Must work from home
- Classroom Management
- develop an efficient daily routine
- Lesson plans are a must

3. Not establishing relationships

- ◆ The principal
- ◆ The registrar
- ◆ Custodian
- ◆ The School Secretary

4. Lack of Daily Planning

- ◆ Don't leave your scores on the stand
- ◆ Score Study

5. Too much emphasis on competition

- Mastery of our music is our greatest challenge
- Concert Band must be focused on music and not chairs, challenges, etc...
- Marching Band: 3-4 competitions per year
- Find non-competitive options: TV, Newspapers, etc...



6. Too much emphasis on marching band

- ◆ Essentially 1/3 of the school term
- ◆ Try to avoid marching band class—many marching instrument parts are limited in range.
- ◆ Marching band is 75% Social and 25% musical
- ◆ Non-musical activities cause for lack of focus on music

7. Turning marching band completely over to a design team

- ◆ Band Director must be the CEO of the program (with veto power)
- ◆ Band director must learn the craft of show design
- ◆ You must be “chief musician”
- ◆ As staffs move on, you will be left to explain show failures

8. The use of clichés

- ◆ “Put your sound inside of the sound”
- ◆ “Bring out the moving notes”
- ◆ “Woodwinds, spin the air.”
- ◆ “Play with more expression here”
- ◆ “Stop rushing!!!”

9. Lack of development of chamber music



- Should start during the first week of school and not just for solo & ensemble festival
- Build a chamber music library. College faculty are good resources

10. Lack of time devoted to rehearsals away from classes

- ◆ 14 individual sections before you add percussion
- ◆ Rehearsal style: class vs. before/after school

11. Playing music to make the kids happy

- ◆ The director must make musical decisions
- ◆ Exposure is the key
- ◆ Play recordings before the first read
- ◆ Do your academic study
- ◆ Musical Style or intent
- ◆ Slow down the tempo

12. Lack of program creativity

- 💧 Think outside of the box
- 💧 Think “what” then “how”
- 💧 “if your mind can conceive it, you can achieve it” ~ Jesse Jackson

13. Lack of personal development

- ◆ What's on your iPod?
- ◆ Guide your own musical development
- ◆ Commencement : beginning, and not the end

14. Lack of leadership

- ◆ We lead our entire band/orchestra community, not a class.
- ◆ We're in the service industry
- ◆ Character development
- ◆ Develop leaders for tomorrow
- ◆ Relevance to popular culture can be good

15. Poor curriculum

- ◆ Develop a plan & stick to it
- ◆ Daily drills before literature
- ◆ “When are we going to play music?”
- ◆ Everyday warm-ups should be based on skill development
- ◆ Think comprehensive musicianship

16. Budget

Band Budget



- Educational
- Equipment
- Supplies
- Misc.

17. Delegation of responsibilities

- ◆ Train your students and parents to help
- ◆ Be specific as to what you need

18. Professionalism

- ◆ Attire
- ◆ Demeanor
- ◆ Avoid casual conversation with students and parents
- ◆ Teacher/Student Relationships
- ◆ Careful with Social Networking

19. Teaching bell-to-bell until graduation

- ◆ You do the math
- ◆ 180 days X 5 minutes or 25 minutes per week
- ◆ 1000 minutes of rehearsal
- ◆ 17 hours of rehearsal
- ◆ Three weeks in a traditional schedule!!!

20. Complacency

- ◆ “These kids....”
- ◆ “We can’t do this because.....”
- ◆ “I’m stuck in a rut”
- ◆ Avoid negative colleagues



LAZY

u have to, doesn't mean

21. Laziness

- Being the best musician in the room is not always very difficult
- Burned out - Get out
- “Don’t join the ranks of the mediocre, they’re already full” – William D. Revelli

22. Band Boosters

- ◆ Liaison to your students
- ◆ Always view boosters as a part of your team. They are not your enemy.
- ◆ Keep them informed
- ◆ Expound on your personal philosophy in meetings and writings.
- ◆ Table many decisions early: “Let me think about that”

23. Marketing your program

- ◆ Develop personal relationship with local media
- ◆ Develop a brand
- ◆ Make everything a big deal
- ◆ Market to your target audience

24. Issues with Ego

- ◆ It's not about YOU!

25. Don't make excuses

- ◆ Don't blame the kids for failure
- ◆ *Man in the Mirror*
- ◆ “We can't do that because.....”
- ◆ Demographics debate (don't buy in)