

Meet Them Where They Are: Tiered Teaching Strategies for the Concert Band

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CLINIC SUMMARY

This clinic explores a tiered approach to rehearsal techniques, offering practical applications and demonstration videos from three levels of bands at Red Mountain High School (Mesa, AZ).

With thirty years devoted to teaching high school bands, Mrs. Hamilton offers proven rehearsal and teaching strategies to elevate musicianship across all ability levels.

A free set of her developing band warm-ups will also be included.

A TIERED APPROACH TO:

- **CULTURE**
- **TONE DEVELOPMENT**
- **INTONATION**
- **ARTICULATION**
- **ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES**

CULTURE

COMMUNICATE YOUR EXPECTATIONS:

- classroom management & expectations
- rehearsal procedures & habits
- instrument & music organization

RE-EVALUTE AND REMIND

- self reflect
- refine
- reinforce

ORGANIZATIONAL SUGGESTIONS

- utilize nametags to:
 - support behavior
 - assign responsibilities
 - isolate sections as needed

OTHER CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT TIPS

- circulate to maintain engagement
- empower students as leaders
- experiment with seating set-ups

TONE DEVELOPMENT

DEVELOPING

air support & completing the warm-ups

FOCUS:

endurance, range building

INTERMEDIATE

connection & flow between notes

FOCUS:

consistent & controlled sound

ADVANCED

extended range, fluidity, higher technical demands

FOCUS:

flexibility & greater command

IMPORTANT REMINDERS FOR TONE

- reinforce embouchure, posture & hand position
- monitor air, flow and continuity
- provide daily focus
- knowing when to progress to the next level

Video & Music Examples of 3 Levels of Warm-ups performed by developing, intermediate and advanced bands from Red Mountain HS

INTONATION

DEVELOPING

3 Basic Steps of Tuning

- Take ownership
- Play slightly softer
- Adjust

INTERMEDIATE

Foundations & Ideas

- Encourage active listening
- Track note tendencies & annotate parts
- Assign and / or Create tuning exercises

ADVANCED

The path to accountability

- Extended range & dynamics
- Individual Accountability
- Peer teaching

Video of Tuning Demonstrations with 3 levels of bands

HOW TO TEACH TUNING

PRELIMINARY STEPS:

- pitch bending
- flat vs. sharp (visuals & assessments)
- locate main tuning slide

REVIEW THESE STEPS:

- reading the tuner
- warm up and tuning pitch
- how to adjust
- apply and integrate in the music

HOW TO BUILD TUNING EXERCISES FROM THE REPERTOIRE

DEVELOPING

begin with a unison

INTERMEDIATE

count 1 & 3 exercise

ADVANCED

march as a chorale

Video of Musical Demonstrations of Tuning Exercises

IMPORTANT REMINDERS FOR INTONATION

- rinse & repeat
- your students will become a reflection of your priorities in rehearsals
- the more advanced they are, the higher level of accountability you can expect

ARTICULATION

DEVELOPING

block style notes, start notes
with tongue

INTERMEDIATE

increasing definition
and refinement

ADVANCED

encouraging autonomy
in the process

Video of Musical Demonstrations of Articulation Exercises

HOW TO TEACH ARTICULATION

- use descriptors for sound & feel
- reinforce with visuals

WHAT BOB ROSS TEACHES US ABOUT BAND

Tone, articulation and style are your “musical brushes”

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

- student input
- provide practice strategies & sightreading materials
- pacing & sequencing the class
- mixed level application

CREATING A CUSTOMIZED FUNDAMENTALS ROUTINE

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| • WARM-UPS | • RHYTHM SHEETS | • CHORALES |
| • SCALES / SCALE PATTERNS | • ARTICULATIONS EXERCISES | • SOMETHING SLIGHTLY ABOVE THEIR LEVEL |

CLOSING THOUGHTS

- every student matters, explore strategies to improve every musician
- foster individual accountability from the students
- your students become a reflection of you & your priorities over time
- Be relentless about “the right things”