

The Snowball

Building and Sustaining Success in the First Years

Synopsis

Four Pillars of Success

- **Plan and Work Towards a Vision**
Develop an understanding of the culture and history of a community, school, and music program. Use this understanding to generate an appropriate, achievable concept of success. Develop goals which progressively drive better structure, involvement, performing, and ultimately, elevated learning.
- **Connect with Support**
Typically the only content area teacher in the building for their chosen discipline, new music educators often experience severe isolation. Finding the right combination of support through mentors, professional organizations, and resources is key to a teacher's continued growth.
- **Build Relationships**
Strong relationships underlie everything positive that happens in a music program. Successful teachers build strong relationships with students, families and community, administration, and school colleagues.
- **Practice Patient Determination**
Patience and determination are both critical, but only help new teachers when fused together. Determination without patience is a path towards burnout and patience without determination is a recipe for stagnation.

Incorporating these four principles, successful music educators generate success through incremental, systematic development. Much like a snowball, the teacher continually develops momentum for a music program by altering the learning environment to meet student needs, improving instruction, and fostering a stronger artistic community. Each step forward is introduced progressively, much like a snowball growing in volume and energy.

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Resources

Mentoring Resources

- Facebook Groups: [https://www.musicteachers.org/mentoring/Facebook groups](https://www.musicteachers.org/mentoring/Facebook%20groups)
- National Band Association: <https://nationalbandassociation.org/mentor/>
- Music Education Alliance: <https://www.musicedalliance.org/mentorship/>
<https://www.musicedalliance.org/william-p-foster-project/>

Contact your state's MEA to inquire about mentoring programs available in your area.

Online Resources for Directors

- **NafME Webinars:**
<https://nafme.org/my-classroom/nafme-online-professional-learning-community>
- **Louisiana Music Educators Association:**
<https://www.lmeamusic.org/resources/handbooks-for-new-teachers/>
- **Band Director.com:** <https://banddirector.com>
- **High School Band Directors National Association:** <https://hsbdna.org>
- **Orchestra Teacher.net:** <http://www.orchestrateacher.net/>

Online Articles

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<https://www.edutopia.org/article/biggest-lesson-my-first-year-teaching>

Cross, K. (2016). *How's Your Balance?: TMEA members offer their strategies for how to prevent burnout and increase balance between work and life*. TMEA.

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<https://www.edutopia.org/article/how-burned-out-are-you-scale-teachers>

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<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/04/first-year-teaching/477990/>

Santa, L. G., & Thompson, S. K. (2019). *How the Busiest People Alive Thrive: Consider these strategies for improving your overall wellness*. TMEA.

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Books

Howard, J. R., Milner-McCall, T., Howard, T. C., & Cruz, M.C. (2020). *No More Teaching Without Positive Relationships* (Duke, N. K., Ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Press.

Lautzenheiser, T. (2006). *Everyday Wisdom for Inspired Teaching*. Chicago: GIA Publications.

Lautzenheiser, T. (1993). *The Joy of Inspired Teaching*. Chicago: GIA Publications.

Lautzenheiser, T., & Tellejohn Hayes, P. (2000). *Essential Elements: Orchestra Director's Communication Kit*. Milwaukee: Hal Leonard.

Moffat, L. (2021). *Love the Job, Lose the Stress: Successful Social and Emotional Learning in the Modern Music Classroom*. Las Vegas: Lifestyle Entrepreneurs Press.

Peterson, B. (2011). *The Music Teacher's First Year: Tales of Challenge, Joy and Triumph*. Des Moines: Meredith.