

Conducting Your Way to Better Classroom Management

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Jacob Kounin's Group Management Techniques

- With-it-ness
 - Knowing what is happening in all areas of the class, at all times
 - Students knowing that the teacher knows everything that is going on
- Overlapping
 - Dealing with two matters simultaneously
 - Keeping the lesson moving without becoming sidetracked
- Momentum
 - Keeping the pace of the class appropriately fast
 - Avoiding "overdwelling" and "fragmentation"
- Smoothness
 - Transitioning between activities seamlessly
 - Avoiding "stimulus-boundedness", "thrusts", "dangles" and "flip-flops"
- Group Focus
 - Keeping students on their toes
 - Holding students accountable for tasks
 - Classroom activities work towards satisfying teacher objectives without boredom or disengagement

Demonstrating Conducting With-it-ness

- Eye-contact with the ensemble
- Confident posture when speaking and conducting
- Impulse of Will when speaking and conducting
- Relay musical decisions to the ensemble that are not in the students' parts
- Cue and rehearse inner parts and percussion, not just obvious melodic content

Demonstrating Conducting Overlapping

- Conduct with Hand Independence
 - Time in one hand, shaping in the other
 - Shaping a different line with each hand
 - Responding to a past sound with one hand as the other hand continues in the present
- Rehearse different sections of instruments, in different places at the same time when they have similar parts
- Train groups to keep playing when there is a distraction

Demonstrating Conducting Momentum

- Approach teaching cycles non-verbally
- Be familiar with the score to minimize time wasted when the group is stopped
- Have multiple solutions for anticipated ensemble issues
- Have a macro/micro/macro rehearsal style
- Avoid jumping around or cycling back in a piece when possible

Demonstrating Conducting Smoothness

- Approach teaching cycles non-verbally
- Close all teaching cycles (nonverbally if possible)
- Warm-up using exercises related to the lesson
- Have a feel good moment before changing pieces or ending rehearsal

Demonstrating Conducting Group Focus

- Train your group to react to your gesture
- Vary your gesture and rehearsal techniques
- As much as possible, run your rehearsal nonverbally
- Have high standards for your group's musical achievement on a daily basis
- Rehearse smart
 - Plan rehearsals
 - Look for shared material
 - Relate warm up to main class objective
 - Anticipate problems
 - Plan your concert cycle
 - What days will you rehearse what pieces? What part of pieces?
 - Build in run-through days

Preparing to Demonstrate Conducting Group Management Techniques

- Score Study
 - Hear how the music should sound in your head before you step on the podium
 - Make interpretive decisions before you begin rehearsing a piece
 - Anticipate problems (both logistically and musically) and think of possible solutions
- Listen to Recordings of Your Group
 - Make a plan for the next rehearsal(s)
 - Assess yourself. Are your interpretive decisions and rehearsal strategies working?
- Watch Video of Yourself
 - Are you saying (verbally and nonverbally) what you think you are?
 - Do you look like the music sounds?
 - Are you wasting time? How can you be more efficient with your time?
- Practice Being Visually and Aurally Observant
 - Practice error detection of notes, rhythm, intonation, style matching, etc.
 - Critically think about other interpretations you hear
 - Observe rehearsals and concerts and be consciously visually and aurally assessing