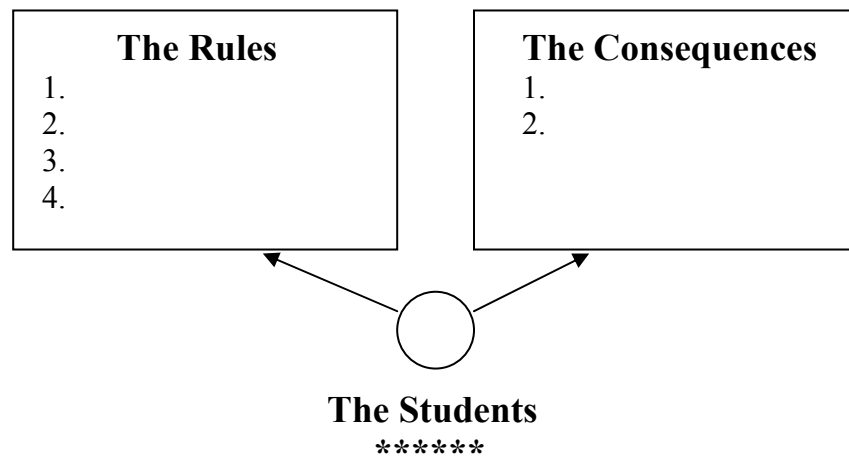


**MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES and MUSICAL SKILLS:
THE TWIN FOUNDATIONS
of
"PIN-DROP-QUIET" BAND and ORCHESTRA
REHEARSALS**

by David Newell

MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

The Rules and The Consequences: The Two Boxes of Classroom Management



The Rules

- Students entering any new class wonder "What's it like in here?"
- Teachers need to begin answering this unvoiced question immediately.
- As few rules as possible (4 or 5) recommended.
- Highly recommended Rule #1: *No talking when I'm on the podium!*
- Other important rules to be suggested.
- One, maybe two rules discussed a day --- not one, long "lecture."
- Students deserve to know the reasons for all rules.

Students tend to "buy into" the rules if they understand the reasons.

All rules should be based on musical considerations.

"We do it this way so that we can achieve musical excellence."

The Consequences

- Consequences refer only to the way this particular class is run.
- Only one or two consequences recommended; keep it simple.
- School discipline administrator must approve consequences.

Administrators do not like, nor do they deserve surprises.

Informed administrators will be more likely to back us up.

- **Lowering Band/Orchestra Grades as a Consequence Can Be Justified!**

Students are highly motivated by grades.

Grade card says "Band" or "Orchestra" -- not "Clarinet" or "Violin."

Disruptive student is hampering the musical progress of the group.

May be a fine clarinetist, but is being a poor band student.

Therefore, "Band" grade can be lowered.

Caution: Grading must consist of more than just behavior.

"Band" behavior can justifiably lower the "Clarinet" grade.

Grading policies must be clearly spelled out to both students and parents.

Written classroom policies need to be signed by both students and parents.

- **"Discipline by Pencil" During Rehearsals**

Without talking, teacher picks up pencil, puts mark in grade book.

All students understand that someone has just had their grade lowered.

All students naturally wonder if it was them.

Offending student is not identified publicly during class.

Flow of the class is not interrupted; nothing is said.

Student is denied the notoriety s/he may have been seeking.

A set number of "pencil demerits" (3?) per grading period lowers grade.

To be fair, students about to have grade lowered are privately informed.

The Students

- The students understand that there are only two "places" to be in the class.
- There is no third box!
- Every day **the students place themselves** in one of the two boxes.
The students are either in the "Rules" box or in the "Consequences" box.
Responsibility for behavior is where it belongs -- on the students!

Teachers as Impartial and Unemotional Observers

- Students understand that teachers simply observe which box students are in.
- Teachers **calmly and impartially** notice when students leave the "Rules" box.

Teachers who raise their voices in anger do more harm than good.

There is no reason for anger, emotion, or raised voices.

Teachers have simply noticed students changing boxes.

Teacher shouting encourages student shouting.

The louder teachers yell, the less respect they command.

Our mothers always told us to "watch out for the quiet ones!"

Students wonder what would happen if we ever "lost it."

Teachers can maintain strict discipline without ever raising their voices!

First Rehearsals Are Critical

- The first rehearsals must be exact models of what has been described.
- Teachers must be **Firm, Fair, and Consistent**.
 - Teachers who are firm show that they respect themselves.
 - Teachers who are fair show that they respect their students.
 - Teachers who are inconsistent can be neither firm nor fair.
- Teachers who do not run their rehearsals exactly as was described in the discussion of "Rules and Consequences" for the class will not be successful!
 - Saying one thing and doing another is perhaps the biggest mistake we make.
 - Students learn that we are all talk and no action.
 - All of the groundwork that has been laid has been a waste of time.

MUSICAL SKILLS

Management Techniques Eventually Need to be Replaced by Musical Skills

- The techniques described above will get the year off to a great start.
- Through experience students learn that the rules and consequences that are in place enable the group to quickly and efficiently make musical progress.
- The foundation has been laid upon which a house of music can be built.
- To maintain this setting long-term, rehearsals must be musically invigorating.
 - Student attention to rules will be replaced by student interest in the music.
 - Students who are making beautiful music have no interest in misbehaving.

A Suggested Rehearsal Format that Minimizes Management Concerns

- Students join bands and orchestras to play their instruments.
 - Students do not join our groups to sit and listen to others play.
 - There is a great deal of sitting around while we work with small groups.
- One study names "boredom" as the #1 reason students drop band.
- The more students play, the more likely they are to stay in the program.
- Most students cannot play and talk at the same time.
- Playing students are happy students; playing students improve.
- **Rehearsal Format Maximizes Student Playing and Learning**

The Basic Philosophy

The process of instrumental music education at the secondary level is a process of teaching 100% of the students a series of basic musical skills, which are logically arranged from the simple to the

complex and which are then applied to the body of appropriately graded literature for the purpose of aesthetic pleasure.

THE TWO-PART REHEARSAL

- **Part One: The Teaching Part**

100% Unison Teaching of various musical skills begins all rehearsals.

Skills taught are those that will be required in the second part of the class.

Unison is the most efficient way to teach and to learn.

The "Teaching Part" of the rehearsal is like a "group private lesson."

Any literature that contains unlearned skills is not handed out.

Required skills are first taught to 100% of students until mastered.

Once the skills are learned, the literature is handed out and rehearsed.

- **Part Two: The Rehearsing Part**

Students encounter only new settings of learned skills in the literature.

Far fewer stops to teach notes, rhythms, and so forth.

Students have been taught them in the first parts of the rehearsals.

"Rehearsing Part" deals more with the MUSIC rather than the notes.

- **The One-Way Bridge Connecting the Two Parts of the Rehearsal**

Once in the "Rehearsing Part" of the class, cannot go back to teach a skill.

Deficient skill needs to be the focus of another day's "Teaching Part."

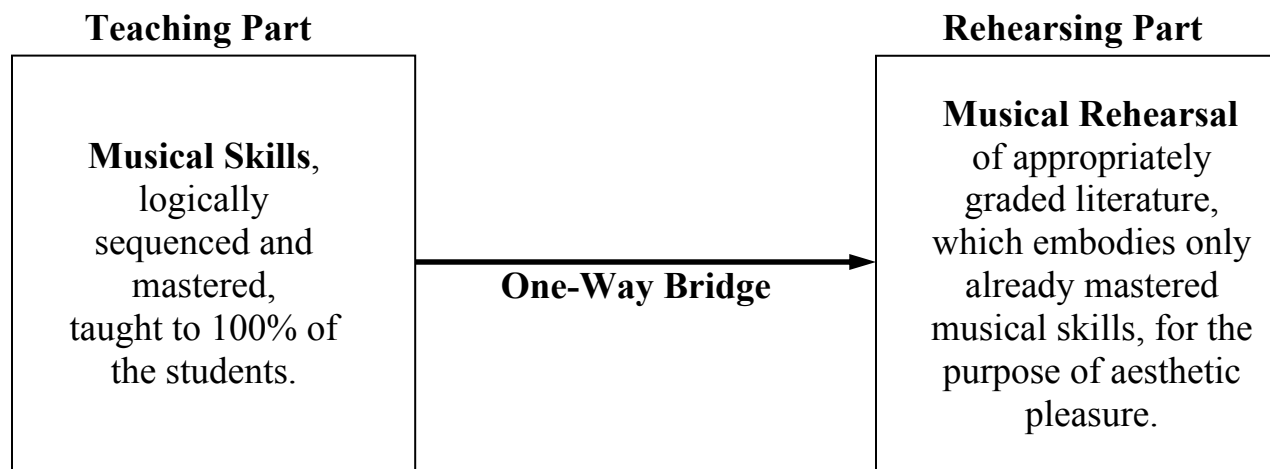
Must avoid having the majority sit while a few learn the required skill.

100% of students need to master the skill in question.

Must not stop the music-making momentum of the rehearsal.

All students deserve to make beautiful music everyday.

Students touched aesthetically everyday will stay in our classes.



Summary: The *Two-Part Rehearsal Format*

- **Students play their instruments a great deal more.**
 - 100% are playing and learning in the first part of every rehearsal.
 - Students do much more playing as the literature is being explored.
 - No stops to teach a few students a specific skill.
 - Far less boredom for individual students.
 - Playing students are happy, engaged, and learning.
 - Playing students have few opportunities for off task behavior.**
- The emphasis in the second half of every class is on the MUSIC.
 - An aesthetic momentum is established in every class meeting.
 - Students are touched emotionally everyday.
 - Band and Orchestra rehearsals literally become MUSIC classes.
- The Two-Part Rehearsal Format enables us to be music teachers rather than policepersons.

CONCLUSIONS

Much like individual human beings, bands and orchestras can be thought of as living organisms. Each one is truly unique with its own personality. Each is born and processes through childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, and then it ceases to exist. Although each is different, all can be molded to react in specific ways to their own, unique environments.

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|--------------|---|
| Birth: | The first day of any given school year. |
| Childhood: | All direction comes from outside the organism, from the parent figure. The <i>Do's and Don'ts</i> are clearly laid out and the consequences specified. Behavior and compliance are carefully monitored. |
| Adolescence: | Group starts to become more independent of authority figure, begins to monitor its own behavior. "Grounding" (detention, lowered grade) by the parental figure is occasionally necessary. |
| Maturity: | The mature ensemble's reason for being is to make music. MUSIC replaces "The Rules" as the disciplining force in the classroom. The rules are seldom thought of or referred to; they have become second nature to the organism. They are simply the way things are done in order to make music. |

Death: The final day of the school year. This exact organism, with its many individual parts, will never exist again.