

Everything They Never Taught You in College: But It's OK to Ask

**MENC Northwest Division Conference
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Focusing on the Classroom: Some questions to consider

1. What does a music teacher do?
 - Teach
 - Share Love of Music
 - Communicate
 - Develop Curriculum
 - Prepare Lesson Plans
 - Assess Student Progress
2. How can we help students reach their full potential?
 - Be genuine
 - Be enthusiastic
 - Keep things moving
 - Be fair to all students
 - Take an interest in what students are doing outside of your class
 - Be professional
 - Communicate clearly and often
 - Praise in public, discipline in private
 - Ask for help
 - Be a good listener
 - Communicate with other new teachers
 - Develop a support network
 - Develop your own teaching style
 - Build students' confidence
 - Be consistent, yet flexible

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- Expect students to respect others and model this
 - Be prepared for **EVERY** lesson
 - Get a calendar and record all deadlines
 - Select music that teaches
 - Order extras of everything
 - Keep accurate records (budget, inventory, uniforms)
 - Promote your program
 - Stay informed
 - Stay current
 - Enjoy yourself
 - Always do and be your best
3. What do my students need to know and be able to do?
- Sing
 - Play
 - Improvise
 - Compose
 - Read and notate
 - Listen, analyze, and describe
 - Evaluate
 - Understand relationships among the arts disciplines
 - Understand music's place in relation to history and culture
4. What must I do to recruit and retain students?
- Publicize the nature and benefits of participation
 - Organize and distribute relevant information
 - Be sure your program competes with other student options
 - Remember that students join music programs and stick with it if . . .
 - The director is enthusiastic and makes learning fun
 - The parents, community, and school board support the program
 - The program is visible
 - The job of the music teacher is also to . . .
 - Foster student interest
 - Inform parents
 - Develop a continuing program for nurturing the support of the school, the administration, and the community
 - Actions that help retain students include. . .
 - Developing group pride
 - Improving communication with parents
 - Being creative
 - Evaluating yourself on a continual basis

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- Understanding each student as an individual
 - Being positive and enthusiastic
 - Providing engaging lessons consistently
 - Schedule the first performance ASAP
 - Preserve your most valuable resource – your students
 - Make aesthetic pleasure the top priority
 - Foster pride and group recognition
 - Give credit to individual accomplishments
 - Show interest in the music they like
 - Make sure all instruments are in excellent playing condition (don't forget to tune all of the pianos!)
 - Make instrument care an important part of your program
 - Seek help when you have a problem
 - Use testimonials from students—especially to reach other students
 - Get your message out as far and wide as possible
 - Get parents involved in your program
 - Show parents how they can help their child practice at home and point out that even Mozart had to practice
 - Put on a First Performance Demonstration Concert
 - Communicate regularly with parents using brief, well-timed emails highlighting group successes and proven social and academic benefits
5. What are the traits of the successful teacher?
- Well-prepared, organized
 - Open, non-threatening
 - Clean and well-kept
 - Professional
 - Good sense of humor
 - Understands student likes, attitudes
 - Active professionally
 - Willing to admit mistakes
 - Supportive of all students
 - Cooperates with staff
 - Open to new ideas
 - Respects students time
 - Knows his/her craft
 - Maintains discipline
 - Works to improve the musical experiences
 - Organizes class time with a variety of activities
 - Maintains high standards for self and others
 - Doesn't bore students by talking too much

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- Maintains interest for all students
- Recruits all year
- Communicates clear goals
- Maintains positive relationships with fellow teachers
- Communicates with parents and guardians
- Performs in school and community often
- Maintains a professional look and attitude in all performing ensembles
- Develops connections among school, parents, and community
- Advocates for music education

Colleges cannot teach it all so what else do we need to know?

The following list includes items which music educators must do on an ongoing basis.

- Encourage positive behavior
- Plan concerts and festivals
- Develop relationships with administrators
- Develop relationships with colleagues
- Organize Booster Groups
- Make Advocacy a Part of Everyday Operations
- Raise Funds Successfully
- Organize Field Trips
- Create a Handbook
- Expect the Unexpected

Some final thoughts.

- Remember—YOU were probably the BEST music student in your class. Most of the students you will teach are NOT like you so use all of the tricks in your bag.
- **MOTIVATION**—You are in sales – practice your art. If you can motivate, you **WILL** be successful.
- **FUNNELVISION** – Thank-you, Eph Ehly
- **MENTOR**: Seek out and work with one! NO MATTER WHAT!!! We all need someone to share the “ups and downs” with. You’ll have lots of bad days but the good ones are the “comeback” days (like golf)
- **NETWORK**: Create one if you don’t already have one.

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- **INVOLVEMENT:** Involve everyone in your program including:

Principal(s)	Mayor
Secretaries	Town Council
Custodians	School Board
Teachers	Superintendent
Librarians	_____
Counselors	_____
Nurses	_____
Parents	_____

- **AVOCATION:** Get one! You'll need the break in your routine.
- **INVEST IN YOUR RETIREMENT:** It will be here tomorrow!

Resources:

A Practical Guide for Recruitment and Retention, [http://www.musicachievementcouncil.org/First Performance](http://www.musicachievementcouncil.org/First%20Performance), <http://www.musicachievementcouncil.org/tools.htm>
Teacher Success Kit, <http://old.menc.org/publication/books/teacherskit.html>
Tips for Success, <http://www.musicachievementcouncil.org/tips.htm>