

Additional Information

Philosophy of Education

In a handwritten letter from a former student, in remembering her band experience, wrote that, *“It is more than just about music.”* She attributed the life-skills she learned in band (time management, team building, respect for authority, commitment, self-discipline....) to have been major factors in her success in college, medical school and life.

In a Facebook message, a Music Education major at Ball State wrote;

“I just wanted to take a moment to thank you again and again for steering me in the right path, MUSIC! You are one of the greater influences in my life... If it was not for you acquiring the scholarship for me to take lessons ... then I would not be in the position I am in now. I would not be the player I am today nor would I have had all of the musical experiences and opportunities that I do have. YOU did that for me, YOU! How do you properly thank someone who changed the course of your life? I can't...there is no way I will ever be able to give you the thanks that you really deserve, for the potential you saw in me, for the care you gave me, for the trust you put in me, and for the time and energy you invested in me! That is absolutely amazing and something I will NEVER forget. I hope you realize how special, unique, and loved you are by so many. ...you changed a life...MINE. You will always have a very special place in my heart for what you've done.”

In a blog comment to a post I called, “I Want To Trust You”, another former student wrote;

I'm remembering a little white lie that Tina and I told you just to get out of class for a minute or two.....Unfortunately, you found out about it. I've never felt so guilty as when I was caught tricking YOU! You were the TEACHER to go to when things weren't going ok. And a trusted teacher.....I was SO sorry!”

Four days before Christmas, I received a text message from a then senior,

“G, I just got kicked out of my house. Please help me!”

I share these correspondences to make several points. I utilize a variety of technologies in communicating, informing, teaching and mentoring. I have earned my students' trust and they are comfortable coming to me in times of crisis outside the subject I teach.

A major role of a music facilitator is to provide a safe, encouraging environment where students can discover and experience the mechanical fundamentals of music theory and performance so that they can understand a composer's intentions and add their personal interpretation and emotion into turning written music into audio (sometimes visual) art while always striving for a higher level of excellence.

Teaching, however, is about more than “just” the academics and artistic value of music. Students are so much more than instruments into which we are supposed to dump vast amounts of knowledge. I want to help students realize a love and appreciation for the art of music that they can utilize as a performer or audience member for the rest of their lives. I want to earn their admiration and respect so that they will trust that I am more than just a knowledge provider. I want them to see me as a mentor who cares as well as a proficient musician and life coach. I want to provide a safe environment that

maintains the level of control necessary in a music ensemble while also encouraging emotional and artistic expression and contribution. I want them to learn from what I show them, from each other, from competitive experiences as well as from their mistakes along the way. I want them to desire and strive for excellence in music and in everything they do. I want them to appreciate their community and to want to give back to those whose support they need in entertaining performances and projects.

Using Evaluation to Improve Instruction

Dr. John Scheib, a current Ball State professor, introduced his Assessment Techniques class with the question, "How do I know that you know?" The purpose of evaluation is to determine and measure student learning. It also provides the teacher with feedback to constantly adjust teaching technique to enhance student response. With band, most evaluation is audio, although there can be written assignments. Rehearsals are an ongoing evaluation involving instant constructive feedback. I also use playing tests, custom rubrics and RISE encouraged software for feedback.

Relationships

--Faculty members

There can be much cross-academic collaboration researching the history behind a composer or a piece of music. Recently, I used the background music to the movie, "The King's Speech" which involved looking into pre-WWII politics and British royalty. When I played a piece called "Africa", we needed to learn about African cultural drumming. A school musical can also involve working with several teachers. In addition to sharing students as needed, I realize the importance of collaborating with academic teachers to ensure band students have grades that enable them to continue in the program.

--Classified employees

It is important to cooperate with all school employees. I try to appreciate office workers who assist and respond to requests. When we had a cake-bake as part of a spirit campaign during band camp, the office secretaries were invited to be our judges. When we have band food (usually a meal provided by parents when students are at school for extended periods and also on band trips), we take leftovers to the custodians and invite bus drivers to eat with us on trips. As much as possible, we clean our own messes and try to make it easy for custodial staff to do their jobs.

--Parents

Parents are vital to a band program, especially a marching band. I have an open rehearsal for parents for all rehearsals. I send lots of compliments about their children through Facebook, email, postcards and face to face. I try to cc parents when I send an email or other written message to the student. I provide a seminar for parents about preparing for college from a music perspective.

--Community members

I maintain an online "Band Friendly" list to recognize businesses and individuals who help our program. Then, when we ask for their support (advertisements, uniforms, fundraising), they are more willing to help.

--Students

I invest heavily in **Relationship Building**. I want to know my students. By knowing their situations *outside* of the classroom (family, financial, etc) I can better know how to most effectively relate to them in the classroom. A phrase I use periodically is that I “love, admire and respect” my students, and they know it. My office desk tends to be a hang out area, and when students are congregating in the band room, I often join them.

Technology

Students are proficient and comfortable in using technology and I use a variety in and out of the classroom. I put **PowerPoint** Announcements on a screen in the Bandroom, use **YouTube** to show music examples and to post (for students/parents to subscribe) videos of performances for review and comment. I maintain a band **Blog** that includes schedules, calendar, news, parent organization meeting notes, pictures, college info and more. During the Fall 2011 marching season, we averaged 90 views per day in October, and on a single day we had 296 when I posted information about a fundraising dinner for a band student fighting cancer. I have both a personal plus a band **Facebook** page and also have accounts on **Twitter**, and more. I have used **Skype** to communicate with remote band directors and also to provide individualized coaching to a clarinet student in a different school system, and regularly use **SmartMusic** (a practice enhancing software) both in classroom and individual private coaching sessions. A large percentage of my students and their parents have access to my **Cell** phone, which I do use for calling, **texting**, plus picture and video making. I use portable **digital recorders** as well as a **video camera** for recording and then studying rehearsals. I created an **Access** file to coordinate health form, contact, instrument, and contact info plus to track notes sent to students and parents, **Excel** to chart Music Dept. reading prompt data to show averages and improvement, **Publisher** to create flyers, posters and encouragement cards, **Dropbox** for storage, **Evernote** for note organization, and more.

I find that students and parents utilize, yet do not abuse the variety of access I enable.

Strengths and Experiences

Personality/ Relationship Building. See ‘Relationships’.

Recruiting, Retaining and Reaching out. Building an instrumental program involves 1) **Recruiting** beginners (but also middle/high school students for auxiliary ensembles and participation). Middle schoolers should perceive that band can be cool. 2) **Retaining** students as they transition from middle to high school is crucial as that is typically where there is much fall out. 3) **Reaching** out to the public through entertaining performances.

Proficiency /Expertise. Students need to know that I know what I’m talking about. And when I periodically use an opportunity to demonstrate a musical proficiency for them, it enhances that bond. They want to get better, but they need to trust that I know how to help them achieve their goal. Because of my expertise and the relationship I have with them, they want to do what I ask.

Honesty / Integrity. My mission statement is “**Achieving Excellence with Honesty and Respect**”, which I define, expect and model. Students appreciate that I am the same in and out of the classroom.

Experience PLUS Enthusiasm. I have the enthusiasm of a younger teacher combined with 30 years of business experience and wisdom that helps me organize and operate efficiently and effectively. Although not “certified” in business education, I could be utilized in those areas.