

Chapter 12

Establishing and Maintaining a Positive and Productive Learning Environment



Classroom Management and Leadership

- It's not about a list of strategies.
- It's not about being reactive.
- It *is* about being proactive.
- It *is* about building relationships.

Times are changing

- Historically, school performing ensembles have been modelled on their professional counterparts with...
 - an authoritarian approach and
 - a focus on direct instruction.
- Many protocols, traditions, and conventions associated with large ensemble performance (e.g., “conductor as *maestro*”) are out of step with current educational goals and practices in contemporary Canadian society.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDAsABdkWSc>

0:00-2:00

The New Paradigm

- Compliance → **Self-regulation**
- Rules → **Caring and trusting relationships**
- Authoritarian → **Participatory decision-making**
- Top-down → **Shared responsibility**
- Passive learning → **Active learning**
- Teacher-directed → **Student-centred**

jazz ensemble leadership:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7n05aHlQAo>

Leadership

- What is required to lead in the new paradigm?
 - Vision
 - Ability to motivate and influence others
 - Decisiveness
- These behaviours and qualities *can* be learned and developed.

Vision

- To lead, one first must know where one is going— i.e., *vision*.
- Not only must effective leaders have a vision, they must also be able to communicate, “sell,” or share the vision and influence and motivate others to “buy in” to their vision and follow.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hO8MwBZl-Vc>

Motivating and Influencing Others

Positive ways:

- passion,
- enthusiasm,
- commitment,
- role modelling,
- enabling and recognizing successes

Negative ways:

- threats,
- coercion,
- fear

Research consistently demonstrates positive approaches to be far more effective.

Motivating and Influencing Others, cont'd

- *Lowe (2012) identified five music student motivators :*
 1. An intimate and comfortable learning environment, different from other subjects.
 2. Teachers who treat students with respect and develop a positive rapport with them.
 3. Teachers who exhibit positive professional attributes including organization, enthusiasm, encouragement, and patience.
 4. Teachers who can model on their instrument to a high standard.
 5. Instructional materials and activities that are engaging and relevant.
- *Anything YOU would add?*

Motivating and Influencing Others, cont'd

- *Detrimental to music student motivation:*
 - Repetition of scales and other technical exercises they perceive as boring and/or irrelevant
 - Repetition of repertoire
 - Ensemble groupings that are not level-appropriate
 - Repertoire that is not level-appropriate, too slow, unfamiliar, or boring

- *Anything YOU would add?*

Decisiveness

- *How to be decisive without being a dictator?*
 - ✓ Base all your decision-making on what is truly in the best interests of your students.
 - ✓ Share power and responsibility with students; involve them in making decisions.
 - ✓ Exhibit appropriate and timely responses to misbehaviour.
 - **Low-level responses:** stop and wait for compliance, say the student's name, give 'the look'
 - **Higher-level responses:** stay after class, discuss calmly and with open ears, contact parents
 - **Avoid:** public power struggles, group punishments, sending student to the office

Leadership, cont'd

- Nested within the three key elements of effective leadership are numerous others:
 - Communication
 - Personality
 - Discipline
 - Dedication
 - Courage
 - Integrity
 - Passion
 - Confidence
 - Competence
 - Modelling
 - Clear focus
 - Attention to detail
- *In which area are you strong already?*
- *Which would you like to target for growth?*

2017 MusiCounts Teacher of the Year

- **Diane Windmill, Bancroft, ON**
- *How does she engage her students in music class?*
 - It has to be fun: in high school music is not compulsory—they have to have fun;
 - She tries to make them laugh everyday;
 - She makes them feel like they've accomplished something everyday: *“Because that can be lacking in other subjects—that daily sense of accomplishment. And that builds self-esteem, and when they're feeling like that, they're on top of the world and all they want to do is get better and better.”*



Passion

- People are attracted to and motivated by enthusiastic individuals who have a genuine passion for what they are doing.
- What works:
 - ✓ Share your passion

S.O.R. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMvpJDbWX_c → 4:42

Positivity

- Effective leaders exude positivity.
- What works:
 - ✓ Positive focus
 - ✓ Positive feedback
 - ✓ Positive language
 - ✓ Positive beginnings
 - ✓ High expectations

High Expectations/High Support

- Highly effective teachers do not cajole, mollycoddle, babysit, or police their students.
- Establish a class climate that combines high expectations (behavioural and musical) with high levels of support and caring.

Communication

- What works:
 - ✓ Inclusive language
 - ✓ Respectful language
 - ✓ Clear language
 - ✓ Appropriate language
 - ✓ Expressive language
 - ✓ **Really listening**
 - ✓ Modelling
 - ✓ Effective non-verbal communication
 - ✓ Clear and expressive conducting

Building Community

What works:

- ✓ *Names.* Learn and use students' names.
- ✓ *Know your students.*
- ✓ *Let your students get to know you.** (friendly but not a friend)
- ✓ *Greet your students at the door.* personal individual contact
- ✓ *Safe and caring classrooms.*
- ✓ *Collaboration.* Encourage peer coaching and collaborative decision-making.

Presence

- *Presence* is the sum total of all of the above attributes.
- Developing presence is one of the biggest challenges for young music educators.
- You cannot be an effective leader if you are trying to be someone else; students quickly recognize the lack of authenticity.
- *The key is to find YOUR leadership qualities within, and amplify them!*
 - **Think of a leader that you respect and who has the kind of presence you might emulate.**

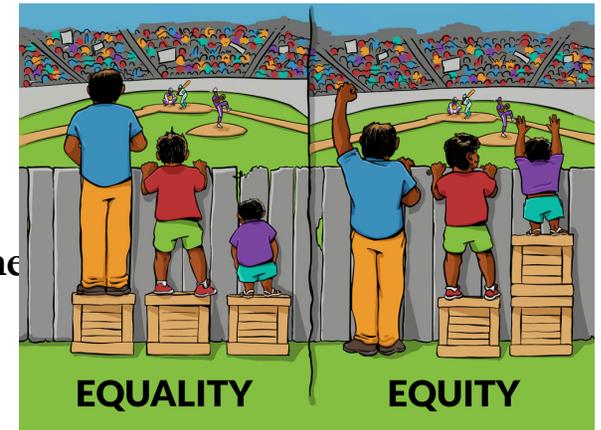
Words of Wisdom (?)

Good advice? Bad advice? It depends?

1. *Don't smile until Christmas*
2. *Don't sweat the small stuff*
3. *You never get a chance to make a second impression*
4. *Be firm, fair, and consistent*
5. *It is more important to be respected than liked*
6. *They won't care how much you know until they know how much you care*
7. *Praise in public, reprimand in private*

Words of Wisdom (?)

1. *Don't smile until Christmas*
 - It depends. Start out firm, but not cold, uncaring, unfriendly (impossible to establish relationships)
2. *Don't sweat the small stuff*
 - Bad advice. Sweat the small stuff and the big stuff will follow.
3. *You never get a chance to make a second impression*
 - Good advice. The tone is set on the first day.
4. *Be firm, fair, and consistent*
 - It depends. Balance consistency with individual needs.
5. *It is more important to be respected than liked*
 - It depends. Be friendly, but not a friend.
6. *They won't care how much you know until they know how much you care*
 - Good advice. Positive relationships lead to positive learning environments.
7. *Praise in public, reprimand in private*
 - Good advice. NEVER humiliate. It ruins the relationship permanently.





But I always loved the difference between **Stan** and **Suds**.

Stan has produced a lot of wonderful musicians, **Suds** has produced a lot of wonderful musicians.

Stan is very rigid—I love him, he’s a great guy, although he’s worked in opposition to me many times. He hated Jazzamatazz—he didn’t talk to me for two years after that show started to be so successful...

But Suds brings his band in. He’s dressed in a purple jumpsuit with a huge afro. You know, this is Suds. And his guys are all sort of dragging in, then 1,2,3...POW! Then all of a sudden—and this is NOT—forgive me, I’m not criticizing Stan, it’s a different approach OK, but it’s OH MY GOD—those guys are—his musicians are all sitting there, you know, beating time and *PLAYING*.

Cripes. They’re *really* getting off on this music.

Whereas Stan’s musicians are: Tweedle-deedle-dee. “Well what did you think of that, Martha?”

“Well I missed note number two and...”

Suds would be: “Guys, give it some BALLS! Crank that bass up!” (Stan hates bass).

But Suds. If the bass rattled the windows—and that was fine with me too.

He’d play all this neat stuff and he’d say, you know Duff, I found this way to get something out of the kids *was* to do this, (you know, the afro thing) and he’d jump up and *down*, ’cause he said something happened to the music.

So you learn from that.





- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pwe-pA6TaZk>

Where is Matt?

Management

- Teaching and learning occur implicitly in many ways.
- All aspects of classroom management must be planned, including the elements of time, space, and matter.
- If you plan proactively there is a much greater chance of having a successful class or rehearsal.
- Generally, the better you organize time, space, and matter, the better your lesson will go.

Time

- Highly effective music educators manage their classes to maximize time actually spent on music making/learning and minimize the amount of class time used for organizational tasks.
- Plan carefully and be very organized to minimize loss of instructional time.
- The first few minutes of each class/rehearsal set the tone.
- Time on task makes for more learning and fewer behaviour problems.

Space

- The physical environment of the music room implicitly conveys a multitude of messages.
- Organize the physical space to optimize teaching, learning, and music making.
- Students behave better and create more artistic music in an orderly, stimulating, and inviting space.
- A neat and well-organized music room conveys high expectations, both musical and behavioural.

Matter

- Teach students, explicitly and implicitly, to treat all instruments, music, equipment, and the room with respect
- Share the responsibility with students for making sure things are well cared for, returned to the storage area when rehearsal is over, and the room is left clean and tidy.

Matter, cont'd

- What works:
 - ✓ Ensure the music facility has proper storage space for instruments and other equipment.
 - ✓ Ensure your music room has adequate lighting and ventilation.
 - ✓ Ensure your music room is as pleasant and stimulating as possible.
 - ✓ Look for creative ways to optimize space to maximize learning.
 - ✓ Have the room set up and ready *before* the students enter the room.
 - ✓ Have a seating plan in place on the first day.
 - ✓ Move around! This enables you to manage by proximity.

Matter, cont'd

- ✓ Occasionally mix up the seating arrangement.
- ✓ Have students assist you in creating a space within the music room to simply “hang out.”
- ✓ Keep your office/desk organized too!
- ✓ Plan transitions within your lessons and rehearsals carefully.
- ✓ Develop a plan for procedures and routines.

More Than Leadership and Management

- Management and leadership cannot be discussed in isolation.
- The quality of instruction and the variables at work in the classroom also greatly influence student behaviour.

Instruction

- Csikszentmihalyi's Flow Theory also holds implications for student behaviour.
 - Because the learner is totally engrossed in the learning activity and self-motivated, learning is optimized and behavioural problems are minimal or non-existent.
 - Students are more intrinsically motivated when the learning environment is under their control.
 - Students are also more likely to experience flow when actively rather than passively involved in learning .

Instruction, cont'd

- What works:
 - ✓ Motivating repertoire and other instructional content
 - ✓ Well-paced lessons/rehearsals
 - ✓ Advance organizers and/or “bell work”
 - ✓ Quiet music rooms
 - ✓ “Listen carefully when others are speaking” should be one of your classroom expectations
 - ✓ Score study and preparation
 - ✓ Engaging instructional/rehearsal strategies
 - ✓ Assessment *for* learning

Variables

- A host of contextual variables affect the quality of learning, either positively or negatively.
 - Personal variables can include such things as a teacher's or student's health and well-being; ethnic, educational, or religious background.
 - Contextual variables include such things as student demographics; community or school district values; school culture; administrative leadership; time of day, week, month, or year; disruptions to routine; and even the weather.

Variables, cont'd

- Contextual variables most directly related to classroom conditions have the most immediate and obvious impact on the quality of teaching, learning, and music making.
- Learning to recognize the variables and respond appropriately significantly improves a teacher's ability to maximize learning and minimize disruptions.
- Effective teachers actively search out solutions to issues as they arise.
 - Sources of information include students, their parents, colleagues and mentors, professional reading and training.

Learning to Establish/Maintain a Positive/Productive Learning Environment

- Learning to lead and manage in twenty-first-century classrooms is a challenging and long-term prospect for all teachers.
- Even highly effective music educators struggle with leadership and management at various points and in particular contexts.
- The key is a high level of commitment to constantly refining one's teaching practices in all ways.

Conclusion

- Highly effective music educators weave effective management and leadership practices seamlessly into the fabric of excellent teaching, learning, and music making.
 - Misbehaviour is infrequent and the learning environment is positive and productive.
 - Students and teachers alike are happily engaged in learning, teaching, and music making.
- Effective music educators proactively solve potential problems before they occur.

Conclusion, cont'd

- Leadership and management are learned primarily through experience.
- Solutions are found through ongoing reflection, observation, professional development and reading, trial and error, learning from colleagues and mentors, and thoughtful decision-making.