

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

The Procedural Approach

As an educator, you want to have the year get off to a positive start. Topics to be discussed on the first day of school are extremely important. If a teacher does it right, it sets a great tone for the year.

1. Cover the expectations of your students and the **procedures** which will benefit them throughout the trimester. The number one problem encountered by teachers is NOT student discipline, but rather the lack of structures and **procedures**. Classroom management is like an offensive lineman, in that they're only noticed when something goes wrong. Once it is gone, it is difficult to get it back.
2. Set **procedures** for everything including entering and exiting the room, taking attendance and how to retrieve and put away instruments and materials. Learning and creativity should be free-flowing, but behavior needs to be directed with **procedures**.
3. When dealing with disciplinary matters, have rules, but not too many. Make the punishment fit the behavior, not your level of frustration. Handle discipline discreetly and learn what to overlook. Do not get drawn into "power struggles" with kids. Handle as much as you can on your own without it allowing it to take away from learning
4. Greet students at the door. It might be the only greeting they'll get all day. Students appreciate and respond to environments where they feel welcome. Students who feel more welcome are more likely to "buy" what you're "selling." By greeting kids at the door, you might also see potential problems--problems from the cafeteria, a previous class, in the gym, home, etc. Recognize a *potential* problem BEFORE it becomes an *actual* problem.
5. Try catching students being good. Teachers are trained to recognize problems, diagnose the cause and respond accordingly. Why not try these things on positive behaviors. When you observe positive behaviors, reward them.
6. Use proximity as an ally. Without a seating chart, "problem" students will gravitate to the back of the classroom. Even with assigned seats, problems tend to arise in the back of the room. MOVE AROUND. Get to the back of the room or that's where the problems will be. Use what works for you without the "teacher eye" or verbal reprimand. Move problems up front or simply rotate the rows as part of your regular **procedure**.
7. When problems are encountered, don't escalate them. Don't ask a question you aren't prepared to hear the answer to. We've all been there. Questions like: "How many times do I have to tell you?" These provoke defensiveness and create power struggles. Yelling and screaming isn't the answer either. Eventually, students know it's coming. They'll tune you out and ride out the storm.
8. If you do run into a severe issue with a student, be sure to visit with your direct supervisor about the problem and seek out assistance for how to deal with it. They are there to help you!

9. Avoid “down time” in which students have nothing to do. This usually occurs at the end of the period once materials and instruments have been put back in order. This can also happen when rehearsing one part of the class while the others are “sitting and waiting” for instruction. ALWAYS provide students who are “at rest” with a task while you are rehearsing another section. They can be counting rhythms aloud, air playing their instrument or humming their part – which also helps establish part independence.

Some strategies to avoid “down time.”

a. Ticket out the Door

Toward the end of the class, pass out a half-sheet of paper and ask students to write about one concept they learned “today” and two questions they have that need to be answered. This exercise can be used as an effective way to check for understanding.

b. Note to a Friend

After presenting a new concept or idea, ask students to write a note to a friend explaining in detail what they have just learned. They should write as if they are teaching this concept to their friend.

c. D.E.A.R. time

Drop Everything And Read. There are materials that you may want to provide students about mariachi and/or mariachi performers and this would be a good time for them to read these items.

Get them busy, keep them busy, keep your sanity.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER IS THAT THIS IS A PERFORMANCE-BASED CLASS SO KEEP THE STUDENTS ENGAGED IN MUSIC-MAKING!

Helpful Hints for Classroom Procedures (AKA *Marcia's Expectations*)

1. Students enter quickly and quietly and report to their seat.
2. Attendance is taken quickly and quietly. Use a hand in the air--hum/number system as soon as the bell rings
3. Students are dismissed by row to retrieve their instruments and materials and return to their seat.
4. Students put their music in rehearsal order as indicated by the detailed lesson plan which should have been put on the board in the same place each day (Your plan should not only indicate which selections you will rehearse but which pages and what will be rehearsed-- i.e. dynamics, diction, etc. Listening examples/lessons can be implemented here.
5. Begin warm-ups and, if possible, ensure that there is relevance to the music you will be rehearsing that day.
6. Try to make strides in at least three (3) pieces of music each day. The more you expect, the better. This does not refer to the level of difficulty of the music, but rather to achievement of musical aspects within each piece.
7. At the end of the period, do two (2) things.
 - a. Review musical accomplishments by asking the students a question like, "What improvements did we make today?" Be sure to praise them for these achievements!
 - b. Articulate what needs be worked on "tomorrow."
8. Make relevant announcements. Always make announcements at the END of class – **NEVER** at the beginning
9. Have students put away their instruments and materials within a reasonable amount of time before dismissal.
10. Students remain IN THEIR SEATS until dismissal.

Analogy of the music teacher's job. . .the *Professional Attitude*

It is best for music educators to work with students in a business-like, professional manner. As a result, students perceive that they have a job to do. It is somewhat like running a very large company. You are the president/CEO and each of the sections is a department which must be provided the tools and motivation to operate well within the organization in order for the company to function at its very best and make a profit (the musical performance). The individuals within the section thus have the responsibility of working at their best so that their department is the best it can be. All of this should be accomplished while having an enjoyable rehearsal with high expectations.