

- 1) Record Your Band Often
 - a) At the Beginning of class, choose one piece to play and record a run through. Study that recording in evening and make a laundry list for the next day. If you try to record everything every day you will burn yourself out.
 - b) Any digital recording device will work. My cell phone does an adequate job
 - c) Record in different areas of the room (not just from the podium). You will be amazed at what you hear (usually not as good as you thought).
 - d) Send your recordings to people whose opinion you respect. We often become desensitized to what our students are playing on a daily basis.
- 2) Do you have a tuning routine for your band?
 - a) I tune every Tuesday that we have a full five day week. We call it tuning Tuesdays.
 - b) I use a tone generator and a tuner at the same time. I use the tuner to keep me honest and accurate because sometimes I am wrong.
 - c) In between each student I play the correct pitch on the tone generator so they are tuning to the correct pitch and not the out of tune note that was just played.
 - d) Teach you students to hear what good intonation sounds like. Have them to listen to the pulse waves and how they slow down you as you get closer to being in tune. Pure intonation has no pulse waves.
 - e) The tuner only can get you 90% in tune and out instrument are problematic with inherent notes. Your students need to listen and adjust as they play. Tell them, if something sounds wrong it needs to be fixed.
- 3) Music Selection
 - a) Try to spend an entire month picking out your MPA music and give yourself about a month and a half after that to get your selections ready. Playing the same music all year long usually does not work and your students will become board.
 - b) It is wise to find music that both you and your students like. Don't be afraid to ask them what they think. You are going to beat these selections into the ground and if they buy into it your job will be easier.
 - c) Make sure the difficulty level works with the amount of time you have to prepare the music.
 - d) Do not choose your MPA selections until you hear your band play them.
 - e) Avoid any selection with the words hymn or chorale in the title (meaning the entire piece is lyrical by nature). Especially if it is a grade one or two. It may look easy but is not!
 - f) Each selection in your MPA program needs to be from a different composer.
- 4) Music Preparation
 - a) Fundamentals, fundamentals and fundamentals!!!
 - b) After fundamentals are set, if something does not sound correct it is usually wrong notes.
 - c) Musical expression can be broken into three areas: phrasing, dynamics and rubato (mess with the tempo in most lyrical sections). Know where there phrases are and express them. The kiss syndrome: keep it simple stupid!
 - d) Make a story out of the music especially with middle school students. Music composers write their music with a theme or idea. Together you and your students need to figure out what the intent of the piece and express the heck out of it.
- 5) Recommended reading.
 - a) Note Grouping by James Thurmond
 - b) Secrets of Success in the Band Room by William C. Miller

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or want if you to send recordings to share with me: paul.morton@browardschools.com or 954-249-5062