



**Texas Bandmasters Association
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**Developing Efficient Rehearsal
Strategies**

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HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER - SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Developing Efficient Rehearsal Strategies

Texas Bandmasters Association

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- Purpose
 - We spend a lot of time working on specific fundamentals developing strong tonal concepts and technical facility, but how does that transfer to our instruction and how do we efficiently and effectively get to a great sounding and musically fulfilling performance on stage?

- Warm-ups or Fundamentals
 - When is “Warm-up” time?
 - Using “Fundamentals” provides more credibility or importance to this time of your rehearsal”
 - What to focus on during Fundamental time
 - Use UIL Evaluation Sheet for guidance
 - Tone Production (air, balance, intonation)
 - Technique (i.e., MVP studies, Clark Studies, Scales/Arpeggios)
 - Musicianship (most often overlooked and underemphasized, but most important for efficiency)
 - Style
 - Phrasing
 - Dynamic Contrast
 - Tempo
 - Musical Understanding
 - How often
 - Daily
 - Percentage of time (i.e. WHS “warm-ups”)
 - Sectionals
 - Daily band rehearsal - Same Routine or Vary?
 - Appropriate to what stage the group is in the literature learning process
 - Design own exercises specific to the literature requirements
 - Use of tetrachord (or something similar)
 - When
 - Beginning of rehearsal
 - During rehearsal
 - End of rehearsal

- Rehearsal Strategies
 - Consistent expectations (language and approach consistent with what is used during Fundamental time)
 - Importance of conducting skills
 - Efficiency of non-verbal communication
 - Practice during Fundamentals
 - Active student listening
 - Ask questions – and wait for answers! Students are often more critical than we are...
 - Students empowered and expected to make musical decisions
 - No conductor (or met)
 - Singing
 - Use of Metronome
 - Frequency
 - Volume
 - Placement
 - Balance (perhaps the most important concept to address the greatest number of issues)
 - Director is responsible for identifying musical roles (who to listen to or what to listen for)
 - How many layers?
 - Students are responsible for making adjustments
 - Melodic content, introduction of new material, moving parts are of more importance
 - Like rhythmical patterns
 - Subdivide!
 - How to rehearse efficiently (Variations and Fugue example)
 - Matching style
 - Tongue strength
 - Note length
 - Note shape
 - How to rehearse efficiently (Simple Gifts, mvt. 1 example)
 - Vertical alignment (and balance)
 - Bopping
 - Breathe “in Time” and “In Style”
 - Subtract conductor and metronome
 - How to rehearse efficiently (Three Ayres, mvt. 2)
 - Dynamic Contrast
 - Gradual or sudden (hairpin dynamics – one volume change)
 - If it is not heard by the listener, it is not being performed)
 - Accents
 - How to rehearse efficiently (Grace Before Sleep)

- Tempo modifications
 - Know musical structure
 - Subdivide
 - When in doubt, get students to help
 - How to rehearse efficiently (Grace Before Sleep)
- How to create mood and musical understanding
 - Combine factors above
 - Use analogies/pictures (climbing a mountain for crescendo /decrescendo; do you stay at the top and enjoy, or do you immediately turn around and descend?)
 - Use student experiences (Lux Arumque – don't want to leave your friend's house until the last second!)
 - Use "touch" and "feel" words for descriptions (gentle, bounce, caress, slap)
 - Student descriptions

Adding importance to the musical qualities of a piece (the Musicianship caption on the UIL sheet) usually brings more ownership and meaning to the students and teacher. At some point in our early music life each of us had at least one of those musical moments that lead us to understand and nurture our passion for music. After all, isn't that why we become band directors in the first place-because of our passion for teaching and making music together?

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