Make It Work!

Making the Most Out of Your Teaching Space

Presented by Judy A. Voois
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A wee bit of bio background about your presenter . . . .

**Who** I am: Director of Bands and Unified Arts Team Leader at J.R. Fugett Middle School in West Chester, PA since 1999

**Where** I’ve taught: elementary schools, secondary schools, private schools, private homes – you name it!

**What** I’ve taught: classroom music, vocal/choral music, bands, small and large group instruction, private lessons – you name it!

**How** long I’ve been at this: 34 years and counting . . .

**Why** am I presenting this webinar? The efficient and effective use of your teaching space is a critical component of your instruction.

**When** am I going to stop talking about myself and get started? Now!
Who can benefit from this webinar?
New teachers and established teachers of all music specialties at all instructional levels. If you teach somewhere, you need to think about your teaching space!

**Oh, the places I’ve taught . . . .**

Proprietary space – my own band room! (AKA teaching space nirvana)
Shared classroom
Auditorium/stage
A la cart – music on the move
Cafegymnatorium – the dreaded multipurpose room
Closet and boiler room
Private studio
One-on-one in student’s home
Limits and possibilities

The limited scope of this evening’s webinar:
Instrumental music instructors in Gr. 3-12 settings

See the bigger picture:
Key concepts that are applicable to all music teachers

My job: Organize the format of the discussion, give concrete examples, stimulate conversation

Your job: Be open and chime in!
The best way get great tips and tricks is to learn what works for others

Enough with the introductions already; let’s DO this!
Topic 1: Visuals

Essential Question: What can you do make your teaching space visually appealing and inspiring for your students?
Visual elements to consider:

Essential questions and Student Learning Objectives

Conversation starters

News

Something for everyone

Quotations

Humor
MUSIC IS
Physical
AND
Mathematical!

MUSIC IS
INTERACTIVE!

MUSIC IS
EXPRESSIVE!

MUSIC IS
GRACEFUL!

MUSIC IS
EXCITING!

MUSIC IS
LIFE!

MUSIC IS
JOY!

MUSIC IS
DRAMATIC!
Repetition is the key to success!

Basic Laws of Musical Performance:
- Never play so "soft"
- Never play so "loud"
- Never play so "short" that your tone quality suffers!

The "100% Guaranteed, Full-Proof or Your Money Back!" practice method:
- Read in rhythm, with a steady beat
- Read and finger in rhythm, with a steady beat
- Play in rhythm, with a steady beat

If You Can't Say It, You Can't Play It!
Reading is fundamental!

The 3-Step Practice Loop:
- Analyze
- Prepare
- Perform
What Do We Think Are the Character Traits of a Great Musician?
This is an effective visual: funny, true, and a great conversation starter

ONE DOES NOT SIMPLY

LEARN TO SIGHT READ OVERNIGHT
Instant Art! Thanks, NAfME!
You can add effective visuals to your teaching space, regardless of where you teach

In a band room, you have lots of options, but if you’re an itinerant teacher or room-sharer you have to be more creative

Negotiate with your building administrator and room-sharing colleagues to gain some wall space and storage space

Use every available surface: exterior walls (just outside your teaching space), doors, hallways and the ceiling! (hang a mobile!)

Use a whiteboard/blackboard

Be tech savvy: use a projector and screen, use your laptop or tablet
Visual Basics . . .

Make it age-appropriate

Let your students help – youthful exuberance is your friend!

You don’t need to be an artist – the computer is your friend!

Don’t spend a lot of money – the dollar store is your friend!

Save like a squirrel – the laminator is your friend!

Trophy art – show ‘em, don’t stow ‘em!

Change it up regularly
A brief word about quotes, sayings and other truisms

Be sure they’re age-appropriate:
- Elementary: “If you can’t say it, you can’t play it!”
- Middle level: “Success only comes before work in the dictionary.”
- High school: “From those to whom much is given, much is expected.”

Write a “Thought for the Week” at the top of a white board
- Use it as a conversation starter for higher level thinking or as a writing prompt for an open-ended response

Always apply the KISS principle
The Band Room Rules
Rule #1: Sit on the edge of your chair.
Rule #2: Put both feet flat on the floor.
Rule #3: Be still.

Student Responsibilities – NO EXCUSES
1. Be on time.
2. Focus your eyes and ears on the teacher.
3. Have your stuff: instrument, music, pencil
4. Have an attitude to try (95% of success = effort!)

What All Band Musicians Must Know
1. Know your part.
2. Know how your part fits in the total sound of the band.
3. Listen and decide for yourself about balance and intonation.
4. Apply the proper techniques to make an appropriate sound.
5. Make MUSIC, not noise!
The Three-Step Practice Loop

Prepare

Analyze

Perform
Topic 2: Stuff

*Some food for thought:*

How much stuff do I really need?

My stuff and student stuff – where do keep all our stuff?

Use of technology to reduce stuff

Use of student portfolios to organize their stuff
What stuff does a student need?

Instrument
Instrument maintenance supplies (reeds, valve oil, cleaning swabs, etc.)
Lesson book or other technique exercises
  (scale studies, chorales, rhythms, sight reading)
Concert music
Pencil, music stand, chair

How much of the student’s stuff is the student’s responsibility?
Truism: The more idiot-proof you make your teaching space, the less time you’ll spend dealing with idiotic things!
Simplifying the Student Stuff Situation

It pays to help your students get and stay organized. By doing so, you’re teaching them an awesome life lesson!

The Incredible Band Binder/Portfolio
Contents: lesson schedule, scale sheets, rhythm exercises, music vocabulary lists, note reading (lines and spaces) pages, percussion rudiments, hall pass, concert dates & concert information, private teacher and local music store contact information, note and rest values in various meters, course expectations, grading rubrics and, oh yes . . . .

congert music!
What stuff does an instrumental music teacher need?

Stationary Stuff and Portable Stuff

Chairs, music stands and pencils for the students

File cabinet

Large instrument storage

Printed materials

Technology

Repair and maintenance supplies
Chairs, Stands and Pencils

Proper chairs with straight backs – not folding chairs, not stools and not teeny kindergarten-sized chairs for 5th graders.

Proper music stands – not wire folding stands.

Pencils to mark parts (I prefer red for emphasis) are essential. Attach a piece of Velcro tape to the stand, wrap the matching Velcro tape around the pencil and voilá; the pencil doesn’t walk away!
Procuring Funding for Essential Stuff – Be Creative!

Become familiar with your school/school district’s budget procedures.

Is there a PTO? Is there an Education Foundation? Does your building principal have a discretionary budget?

Don’t be proud – ask colleagues in other buildings or districts for donations.

Local businesses and service organizations (Rotary, Lion’s Club, Kiwanis, etc.) like to give limited one-time grants to show community support.

Start with your music parents.

If you HAVE TO do a fundraiser (and I truly hope you don’t), make it a musical one and an opportunity to showcase your program.
Two Terrific Tools of the Trade for the Traveling Teacher

Computer or smartphone with portable speakers
  Free metronome and tuner apps
  Free recording software
  Audio and video capabilities for demonstrations and playback
  Internet access to your own comprehensive website
  Record keeping and document storage

The incredible fishing tackle box – essential supplies
  A couple of extra reeds of for all reed instruments
  Spring hook – needle-nosed pliers – rawhide mallet
  Valve oil – slide grease – pad glue – pad paper
  Mouthpiece puller – ultrafine sandpaper
  Sanitizing spray – small screwdriver set
  Your own set of basic mouthpieces & drum sticks
Some Final Thoughts

Regardless of where you teach, do everything you can to make your teaching space look organized, efficient and professional.

The squeaky wheel gets the grease! Make sure your colleagues and supervisors know what you need and why you need it to do your job.

Don’t turn down storage or display space that isn’t adjacent to the place where you teach.

Make yourself and your program a visible and essential part of the success story of your school.

Be creative and never be afraid to ask for help!