

**Rehearsal Strategies**  
2010 Florida Orchestra Association Fall Workshop  
Presentation by Judy Evans  
Bower School of Music (FGCU)

## **Rehearsal Preparation**

### **Room Set Up**

Chairs/stands set before class time  
Cases/book bags out of the way so the instructor is free to move around the room assisting all students  
Beginning of the year: chairs in rows  
First weeks: tallest students in back of each section  
Rotate seating: every Monday

### **Lesson Plans**

Long range planning is necessary for you to cover the curriculum.  
Divide the curriculum into three sections to be covered the first three quarters.  
-then divide by the weeks.

Lesson Plan format (Beginning class through high school)

One-A-Day Warm-ups:

Physical  
Echo/Improvisation/Ear Training  
Rhythm and Sight Reading  
Music Listening of the Week  
Dictation (Melodic and Rhythmic)

Order of Lesson Material for the day placed on the board for students as they enter class. State Standard(s) lesson is focused around should also be on board.

Music should be selected to teach technique that corresponds to the student development.

Music in the folders is not always material intended for a performance.

Music should cover a variety of eras, keys, meters and styles.

Music should allow for work in intonation, new rhythms, bowing styles, vibrato and position work.

There should be at least one challenging work, but most music should be on their technical level, and one selection they can truly polish.

If carefully selected, all student levels will find something challenging.

Each rehearsal needs to include various levels of difficulty.

### **New Music/material**

New music/material on stands before class begins.

Uniform bowings and suggested fingerings should already be placed in the new music before the first rehearsal.

### **Posture:**

Posture and instrument/bow positions are key to better playing.

Constant need to monitor throughout their school playing years.

Design signal for students to stand without moving feet or needing to "shift" body.

A Balanced body is very important for freedom in playing

## **Rehearsal Strategies**

Start rehearsal/tuning one minute after the tardy bell.

Keep everyone actively involved in the rehearsal. It is not a time for sectionals.

Scales: Practice without vibrato for better pitch

Vary scale patterns or ways you rehearse

**Close eyes and play (turn off most lights)**

**Establish an order of importance for rehearsing problems.**

**Example: rhythm, tone, notes/intonation, expressiveness and style.**

**If you stop the rehearsal, make sure you quickly tell the students why you stopped and how they can correct the mistake/problem.**

**Drills should be related to problems in the music or actual small section of the music.**

**Rhythm: If you can't count it, you can't play it**

**Matching bow articulations**

**First chairs play passage; section watches**

**Section memorizes passage – then form circle and watch peers' bowings**

**If problem is a slurred passage, take the slurs out and rehearse separate bows until the LH is stable, then add slurs.**

**Students must learn to internalize the beat**

**Dynamics:**

**WASP:**

**W- natural arm weight**

**A- bow angle on string**

**S- Speed of Bow**

**P- Placement on string (contact point)**

**Zones: 1-5**

**Remember the closer to the bridge, the more natural arm weight and slower bow.**

**Intonation:**

**Have students hum/sing – a lot!**

**Tune string basses first (then cellos, violas, violins)**

**Ensemble blend and balance:**

**Quartet seating after parts are learned. Students then learn the ensembles parts and understand the music better.**

**After placing back in “regular” seating, make sure they continue to listen across the ensemble.**

**Teach intelligent playing – make sure the students understand “why”.**

**Sample rehearsal questions:**

**“What section has the same part?”**

**“Who has the same pitch”**

**“Who has the melody, countermelody?”**

**Constant encouragement, but not undeserved praise. Set goals that are a little out of reach. “That is better” “You are getting there”**

**When they reach your goal, raise the bar.**

**Students need to know it is not personal when you criticize their playing.**

**Try to end all rehearsals on a positive note with a musical moment.**

**Have fun and enjoy!!**