

**TEACHER TALK:  
MAXIMIZING LEARNING BY SAYING WHAT WE MEAN**

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College Division Session  
Saturday 12:15-1:15  
AAT Credit

The purpose of this session is to stress teacher language in general music and rehearsal situations as an important instructional tool.

**CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION**

**FOCUSING ATTENTION**

**Instructional**

Everyone stand and listen to my secret song.  
Get on the risers, stand tall and be ready to sing.  
Listen to how many times we sing the song as you move into a circle.

**Non-Instructional**

Would you like to stand up?  
I'd like you to stand up.  
Come and make a circle.

**TTAS Criteria:** Organizes materials and students, maximizes amount of time available for instruction.

**BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

**Meaningful Commands**

Close your lips and put your instruments [hands, music, etc.] in your laps.  
Stop talking, check your posture, eyes up here, set your embouchure, and think about the sound you're going to make.

**Non-Instruction Commands**

Get quiet.  
Get ready to play.  
That's enough!  
Who's talking? Shhhhh. Quiet!

**Attention to Behavior**

Dana, try to walk *between* Susan and Tammy in the line.  
James, take your horn away from your mouth when you're not supposed to be playing.

**Presumed Misbehavior**

Dana, go sit down since you can't stay in line.  
James, put your horn away until you can learn when *not* to play.

**TTAS Criteria:** Evaluates and provides feedback on student progress during instruction, manages student behavior.

# INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES, PRESENTATION OF SUBJECT MATTER, AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

## MEANINGFUL REPETITION, TERMINOLOGY AND QUESTIONS

### Meaningful Comment

I'm hearing a C from the altos in the second measure when it should be a C#.  
The crescendo must be stronger in order to be heard.  
Move your finger closer to the bridge for F#, violins.  
That sounded so balanced and well-tuned  
I want to make sure you hear it, too!

### Non-Instructional Comment

Let me hear that again.  
  
Start again in Measure 75. Altos begin.  
  
Much better! Play that again.

### Potentially Unclear Terminology

Where's your breath support?  
Spin the air!  
You are under the pitch!  
Sing higher, Tommy!  
Come on, *build* there!

**TTAS Criteria:** Evaluates and provides feedback on student progress during instruction, presents information accurately and clearly.

## USE OF PRAISE

### Meaningful Information/Feedback

There was lots of improvement on your 'ah' vowels that time.  
Very good, celli! The sixteenth notes were steady all the way through that passage.  
  
It sounds as if that's easy for your voice to do, Jennifer.  
Tina, you must have been working on that!  
[Non-verbal recognition of quality]  
  
Some students are sitting quietly, ready to go.  
[Non-verbal recognition of cooperation]

### Empty Praise

Much better!

### Lavish Praise

You have a *beautiful* voice, Jennifer.  
  
You are so *smart*, Tina!  
*Great* job, Mark!

### Manipulative Praise

I *like* the way the girls are sitting.  
Thank you for singing so nicely, Brent.

## USE OF SARCASM

### Sarcastic Remarks [actual classroom examples]

Did your mother have any kids that *lived*?  
You're acting like *first* graders!  
Did you decide to grace us with your presence today?  
Who died and left *you* in charge?  
Any time you're ready, trumpets.  
Bass clarinets, you sound like a vacuum cleaner...and you know what *they* do!

**TTAS Criteria:** Uses strategies to motivate students for learning, maintains supportive environment.

**FEEDBACK AS INSTRUCTION**

What cycle is likely to occur next if you say:

It sounds as if that's easy for your voice to do, Jenny.  
Bob, you must have been working on that!

The altos brought out their line just right.

Good answer, Tommy, because you thought it through.

Please note that the composer inserted a rest for the altos, but when the same phrase occurs for the tenors, they hold the same notes for a whole measure. I wonder why!

What cycle is likely to occur next if you say:

Is that easy for you, Jenny?

I think I can tell that it took Bob some work to learn this passage so well. Which part was the most difficult for you?

If you listen to the altos, it will be easy for the sopranos to come in. Why?

Tommy, that was a good answer to Jenny's question, what made you think of that idea?

Someone in the bass section tell me where the sopranos do not have the melody. We all know the reasons that often cause clarinets to sound flat. Jamie, can you remind us which ones they are?

**TTAS Criteria:** Provides opportunities for students to participate actively and successfully; evaluates and provides feedback on student progress during instruction; maximizes amount of time available for instruction; teaches for cognitive, affective, and/or psychomotor learning and transfer; uses strategies to motivate students for learning; maintains supportive environment.

Situations where it is desirable through feedback to:

**Initiate** instructional-interactive cycles \_\_\_\_\_

**Extend** instructional-interactive cycles \_\_\_\_\_

**Terminate** instructional-interactive cycles \_\_\_\_\_

**Avoid** instructional-interactive cycles \_\_\_\_\_

**TAKING A LOOK AT [LISTEN TO] OURSELVES**

**INSTRUCTIONAL STYLE**

Do you encourage students' questions?

- Yes, I solicit them.
- Yes, I leave room for questions at the end of class.
- Yes, I am always glad when they occur.
- I tell students to feel free to interrupt me anytime.

When asking a question, how much "waiting time" do you allow before you call on someone else?

- I am not sure
- 1 second
- 2 seconds
- 3 seconds

When receiving an answer from a student, do you make use of it in the instructional process?

- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- My district's goals do not give me that flexibility
- I prefer to stick to my lesson plan

## USAGE OF WORDS

Do you use students' names for other than disciplinary reasons?

- always       most of the time       occasionally       rarely       NA

Do you provide constructive criticism when pleased with the performance/behavior of a student or group?

- always       most of the time       occasionally       rarely       NA

Do you provide constructive criticism when displeased with the performance/behavior of a student or group?

- always       most of the time       occasionally       rarely       NA

## EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR VOICE AND STYLE OF SPEECH

Have you listened to the tone of your voice?

- recently       a while back       never

Do you make full use of your speaking voice ...

- in range:       yes       no       I think so  
in dynamics:       yes       no       I think so

Do you use long sentences when explaining concepts?

- never       occasionally       rather frequently

Do you use long sentences when explaining terminology?

- never       occasionally       rather frequently

Do you use long sentences when responding to the question of a student?

- never       occasionally       rather frequently

## SELECTED WRITINGS AND RESEARCH ON TEACHER TALK

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See also: Bibliography in *Teacher Appraisal System* (1986-1987).  
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