

Growth, Sustainability and Happiness: How to Teach Your Heart Out Without Burning Out

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Overview:

- Purpose and Goal for Today
- Tackling Music Teacher Stresses and Getting Help
- Tips for a More Balanced and Happy Life

Purpose:

Why is this topic so important?

- Teachers are experiencing burn out at all levels.
- Teaching Public School has it's challenges already, and it's gotten more demanding.

What do we want professionally? What do you want your life to be like?

Tackling Music Teacher Stresses and Getting Help:

Planning:

Types of planning that we do:

- Instruction: Daily, Weekly, Long Range
- Events: Concerts, Fundraisers, Trips, Recruiting
- Help/Support: Parent Volunteers, Other Instructors
- Fun! (We forget to do this)

Tips for planning for instruction:

- Plans for class come first! Don't check/respond to your email (or anything) until you are ready for class.
- It helps to have a general routine (but not too rigid!)
- Try a weekly plan/structure:
 - Example #1:
 - Monday: Introduce new skill
 - Tuesday: Reinforcement of new skill, review and refinement of older skills
 - Wednesday: Prepare for assessment
 - Thursday: Assessment and Music Theory
 - Friday: Fun Friday! Mostly repertoire or a fun activity at the end of class (YouTube video).

Example #2:

- Monday: Instrument Placement
- Tuesday: Left Hand Position
- Wednesday: Right Hand Position
- Thursday: Assessment
- Friday: Fun Friday!

Tips for More Organized Planning:

- Get a routine that works for you.
- Have a To-Do List.

- Have ONE calendar.
- Choose what you are going to spend your energy on if you can. If it is something that wastes your time, toss it.

Assessment

- Create assessments so that they are effective without adding more work to your plate.
 - Grade what you can during class.
 - Whatever you grade outside of class time, make sure it is quick and effective.
 - **Listen to less.**
 - Make sure the students are actually getting that feedback you are spending valuable time to create.
- Enter grades once per week.

Concerts Tips:

- Have a concert checklist.
- Ask for help! Make a list of jobs and delegate.
- Volunteer sign up—Sign Up Genius or Charms
 - Parents can be monitors, take photos and videos, sell merchandise, create the programs, decorate, help set up or break down equipment, organize student volunteers, provide food/reception
- Have a lead parent volunteer
- Instruction signs: Include instructions for students and parent volunteers
- Other string teachers or private teachers to help (especially for tuning/strings/bridges). High school volunteers aren't the best for this, but they are great at being the stage crew.
- "Rule of 5"
- Have a go-to student that kids can ask questions if they forgot what to do at a concert. Make them a badge or crown!

Fundraisers:

- Can you implement a class fee or "fair share"?
- Choose one or two effective fundraisers per year.
- Everyone wants the teacher to focus on teaching, not the other stuff. Let parents do this for you!

Field Trips:

How can we make it easier?

- Develop a field trip check list.
- Have a travel company or parents who organize your trip.
- Control the paperwork!
- Make it enjoyable (survivable!) for everyone.
- Chaperone meeting, instructions, check-ins
- Take another teacher and/or administrator
- Take a school nurse or medical professional (if your school allows it).
- Take a music teacher or professional.
- Assign bus leaders (chaperone) to take care of each bus.

Getting Parents to Help:

- Create a support system from parent volunteers in whatever way is best for you.

- Choose the right parent-leaders for the jobs.
- Clearly define everyone's role and responsibilities.
- Make sure you are in charge of the decisions about the finances of the educational materials, but not the "small stuff".
- Tips:
 - Schedule your volunteers/helpers for certain days each week so you don't have to keep asking.
 - Keep a running list of tasks needed for volunteers to do.

Getting Students to Help:

- The students should be working harder than the teacher!
- Teach all students to set up and break down (for class)
- Have a core group who can be in charge of set up for performances.
- **Jobs for each class:** Librarians, instrument caretakers, rock stop patrol, tuner leader, time keepers (train them to start class without you!)
- If you give a student a job, they will not quit!

Strategic Abandonment

- Don't add anything new without taking something away.
- Re-evaluate your activities and make sure they are really effective and necessary.

Thoughts on Handling Our Jobs:

- What are the jobs you have to do, the jobs you want to do, and then the jobs you need others to do (parents or hired professionals)?
- Have a clear list of the jobs that ONLY YOU can do and a list of all the other jobs.
- Make sure you have time to do the "only I can do" jobs, then do some of the other jobs and have parents or other volunteers do the rest.

Tips for a More Balanced and Happy Life:

Choose what gets your attention and your energy.

Have a Support System:

- Have friends, family, colleagues, or a professional (therapist) that are there for you.
- Surround yourself with positive people. Avoid the "teacher workroom grippers".
- The friends that you meet at these conferences are your people!
- What we have learned through the pandemic is that we can connect with colleagues from far and wide so much easier than in years past.

Self-Kindness

- Avoid "shoulding"
- Forgive yourself
- Focus on the things you can control
- Do Less
- Expect the unexpected...and then roll with it!
- Practice gratitude

General Tips:

- Limit your hours.

- Do something healthy every day!
- Learn to say, "NO!"
- Take a day off for your mental health.
- Have a hobby or an outlet that is NOT work related.
- Plan for fun!

Cheer Up Folder

Sake and Sandcastles

3 ideas or take-aways that can help YOU toward a less stressed, happier and more balanced life:



Margaret Selby is the orchestra director and 2020-21 Teacher of the Year at Laing Middle School in Charleston, SC where she grew the program from 42 to over 200 students in five years. She was the 2022 Featured Clinician for the Orchestra Division of the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) and is a contributing author of *Rehearsing the Middle School Orchestra*, published by Meredith Music and distributed by GIA. She has conducted the West Virginia Junior All-State Orchestra and multiple regional orchestras across the southeast, and has adjudicated orchestras in Las Vegas and South Carolina. Mrs. Selby has presented sessions for the Texas Orchestra Directors Association (TODA), the South Carolina Music Educators Association (SCMEA), co-presented

at the ASTA National Conference (2012, 2020, 2021) and was a panelist at the 2019 Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago. She served as the President for the SCMEA Orchestra Division and is currently the SCMEA Orchestra Division Region 4 Representative. Mrs. Selby is the 2017-18 String Educator of the Year awarded by Southern String Supply. She earned degrees in Music Education and Cello Performance from the University of South Carolina, studying under Dr. Robert Jesselson. She has performed with the South Carolina Philharmonic, the Charleston Symphony, and regularly as a freelance cellist. She is also a registered Suzuki cello teacher. Mrs. Selby lives in Mt. Pleasant, SC with her husband and their two crazy teenagers. She enjoys running and sampling Charleston's many amazing restaurants.