

Creating Your ULTIMATE CONCERT CYCLE Road Map



The life of a band director is incredible! Every week seems like the craziest week of your career until you finally perform that concert... and then you are already behind on the next one! The race against the performance clock is real, but it doesn't have to rule your teaching style. You can balance the short and long game for ultimate outcomes with a road map.

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1 CONCERT CYCLE ROADMAP BASICS

1. List of goals to achieve before a specific performance
2. Detailed timeline to assist in achieving the goals
3. Starts with a calendar of performance dates

2 KNOW YOUR CONCERT TIMING

1. How many rehearsals do you have between now and the performance?
2. What all will you need to work on in the time available?
 - a. Tone Building
 - b. Technique
 - c. Tuning
 - d. Sight Reading
 - e. Music for performance(s)

3 DESIGN YOUR DAILY REHEARSALS

1. How much time will you spend on each goal?
 - a. Graduated schedule
 - b. Beginning of cycle 80/20 of warm-ups to music
 - c. Move to 10-90
2. Warm-Ups
 - a. Be consistent with feedback
 - b. Variety within routine makes it better
 - c. Better to cover less, but with more attention to detail
3. Technique
 - a. Create exercises that help with performance music
 - b. Scales are important
 - Unison and harmony both offer value
 - Best taught in sectionals
 - Vary articulations, rhythms
 - Listen to individuals and small groups

4 GETTING TO THE MUSIC

1. What is your focus each day?
 - a. Have a plan for what you plan to cover on each piece
 - b. Work on one piece or more than one?
 - c. Write it down and place on your stand
 - d. Set a timer to keep you on schedule
2. Set tempo goals for each week
 - a. Provide a printed calendar to the students with the goal tempos
 - b. Reevaluate and be ready to adjust these goals as needed
3. Build your group's stamina
 - a. Three weeks out, play through program at least once
 - b. Two weeks out, play at least twice
 - c. Week one should include at least two play throughs

5 PACE YOUR REHEARSALS

1. Play as close to "bell-to-bell" as is feasible
2. Keep pacing lively
 - a. Talk 10-15 seconds and then play
 - b. Tell them one or two things and go on
 - c. If you do feel you must stop and work a section
 - When you stop, make sure all attention is on you
 - Spend three to four minutes on the problem spot
 - Take a minute to play through in context and move on
 - If not fixed, mark it in score to cover another day
3. Section work is for sectionals
 - a. Divide into individual sections
 - b. Divide into woodwinds, brass, percussion
 - c. Divide by like parts in the music
 - d. Use team-teachers (if available) during class or do outside the school day
4. Try not to spend too much time on one piece
 - a. Set alarms
5. Consider asking students "why did we stop" to get them engaged and learning more

6 KEEP SIGHT READING FUNDAMENTAL

1. Good reading skills help on the concert music
2. Start with easier selections and graduate up to level
3. Great online platforms like SightReadingFactory.com
4. Invest in one, or several, of the available sight-reading books
5. Purchase past UIL sight-reading tunes
6. Start early, you'll never regret it!

7 ASK FOR HELP

1. Find a mentor!
 - a. It's never too early to start bringing in guests
 - b. It's never too late either!
 - c. Sometimes you need to watch them teach
 - d. Or have them watch YOU teach
2. Ask questions of experienced teachers in your area.
3. Find opportunities to watch other people teach

MEET BILL HARDEN



Bill Harden, a retired band director residing in Abilene, TX, brings a wealth of musical experience to his community. With 35 years devoted to classroom instruction, he also serves as the Associate Principal/Second Bassoonist for the West Texas Symphony in Midland/Odessa, TX, a role he's held since 1988. Beyond his professional commitments, Bill has a passion for travel, exploring new places whenever he can. Currently, he applies his expertise at CutTime as a Customer Education Specialist, continuing to share his love of music and learning with others. Get in touch with questions via bill@cuttime.net