

## TOP TIPS FOR CONDUCTING AUXILIARY PRACTICES

1. Make sure to have a complete outline and structure for the entire practice including the format and time schedule for warm ups--stretches, special movements, equipment drills and technique, etc. This should always be written so that you demonstrate that every aspect of rehearsal has been well planned and time efficient. Usually a 15 minute warm up is sufficient.
2. Save yourself time and frustration during band camp and marching band season. Duplicate charts for every member of the band. Sections leaders should be well versed in location of hash marks, end zones, yard lines, front and back sidelines. Map out your course of rehearsal on how many charts you can cover in an hour, 2 hours or a 4 hour rehearsal. **GOALS!** Make it competitive & fun! The Drum major will instruct the band/section leaders they have 10 minutes to map out their spots from "Chart A" to "Chart D". The section that achieves the 4 chart goal is the section of the hour and the section that completes all of the sections required for the day is section of the day! Working in mini teams (sections) to achieve the goal for the big team (the Entire Band) is the ultimate goal! Every member of the section/band should have a dot on each chart from beginning to end. Using different Icons (saxophone, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, tuba, drum line, flags, rifles and batons if applicable for your band) for each section would be helpful to identify. Be mindful of intervals from set to set; 4 step interval; 6 step interval; color guard could possibly even be 8 and 12 steps from each other. Run-throughs will make going from set to set easier and eventually become second nature!
3. Always arrive 15 minutes early to any practice. Naturally, make sure that both rehearsal time, place, and attire has been communicated well in advance to prevent any confusion or misunderstandings.
4. Make sure that all equipment needed for rehearsal is there: flags, sabers, rifles, batons, music, sound system, etc.
5. Make sure that you have mastered every element of the routine you will be teaching. That is, have you written the routine notes in series of 8 counts, have you thought of catch phrases for certain sections of the routine that will improve memory for your group, have you anticipated the parts of the routine that are most difficult and will require more time for instruction, etc. Complete mastery also includes the ability to "mirror" a routine. That is, to perform the routine looking directly at your squad doing the movements with opposite arms/hands so that members can follow and you can keep a gauge on their progress. It is very difficult to be a great instructor if you can only teach with your back to the group. This diminishes your voice command/volume as well as your ability to chart the progress of each team member.
6. Make sure you have a commanding voice with good articulation, volume, and variation in tempo and emphasis.
7. If you are teaching a new routine, always demonstrate the entire routine first so the group gets some idea of how it is going to look and how it progresses throughout. Then, follow this same demonstration procedure before teaching each 8 count.
8. Always teach to counts. You must have body, arm/hands, and footwork precisely positioned for each count of the routine. Otherwise, precision, execution, and polishing will be nearly impossible.

9. It is crucial to know how much time you have to teach a routine--especially when having to allow rehearsal time for learning drill. Most new teachers do not budget their time correctly and find that they have not finished the entire routine by the end of rehearsal. What should you do? Know when to keep teaching and when to review! Usually, teach the first two 8 counts and then review setting to music. Then, teach the next two 8 counts before reviewing and putting to music. Naturally, if there are transitions between 8 counts, spend time on transitions like any other parts of the routine. Keep pushing along with the teaching. Why? Very simply, you will always be reviewing the first and middle sections of any routine the most. Thus, you can afford to move a little more quickly in your teaching so that you ensure the last section of the routine receives proper attention.

10. Standards of Etiquette Rules that must be followed to conduct an effective rehearsal. These should be specified and written in a code of conduct manual. These might include: (1) arriving before rehearsal time, (2) no gum chewing, (3) always requiring appropriate rehearsal attire including clothing, shoes, socks, hair, jewelry, hats, sunglasses, etc., (4) not spinning or practicing while group is receiving instruction, (5) no talking during instruction or performance, (6) giving or asking for help outside of practice if you are struggling, (7) practicing or working individually only if another section of the group is receiving specific instruction, (8) conforming to time allotment for breaks, (9) being dependable, and (10) always performing full out and doing your best.

**FINAL TIP: BE VERY FREE WITH YOUR PRAISE FOR ALL MEMBERS OF YOUR GROUP. REMEMBER TO GIVE THEM CREDIT FOR ACHIEVEMENT AND INITIATIVE. ALWAYS BE AVAILABLE TO CONDUCT EXTRA PRACTICES FOR INTERESTED MEMBERS AND/OR SPECIAL HELP FOR MEMBERS WHO MIGHT BE STRUGGLING.**