## Avoid Wasting Precious Class Time by Using the "Do Now" Method

By Jim Matthews

The moment students begin entering your classroom, chaos will occur and time will be wasted unless you as the teacher set expectations for your students. One very effective strategy that will set the mood for the class period and make the best use of time is the "Do Now" method. This technique can be used for any school teacher, but this article will mainly address music teachers. The goal for each class period is meaningful and purposeful practice, and great band directors learn how to make the most efficient use of every minute. This article will discuss the Do Now method to help you avoid wasting the first few minutes of each class.

You may be wondering, what exactly is the Do Now method? Do Now is a short activity (sometimes called "Bell Ringers") used at the beginning of class to get students engaged and ready to learn. This assignment should take no longer than three to five minutes, and students should be able to complete it without any assistance or instruction from the teacher or their classmates. When you create a Do Now, make it engaging so students will want to do them and complete them with success.

Specifically for band teachers, each class should have its own Do Now activity, such as a certain scale or section of music. Obviously it won't be the same for each class because beginning students won't be able to play at the same difficulty level as more mature players. Be sure to put the Do Now assignment in the same place on the board every day so students know exactly where to look and what to do as soon as they enter the room.

The activity should preview the day's lesson. For example, you might write "Say aloud, finger, and play the B \( \) Concert scale for performance in class today." Another one could be "Write the B \( \) Concert scale one octave on a scratch sheet of paper with the letters under each note and turn it in as fast as possible. The time limit is three minutes." Keep in mind that a Do Now activity works because of its consistency and preparation. If there isn't a Do Now in the same place every day, students will most likely not do them regularly without instruction. The important thing to remember is that students should be able to do them on their own. While they work on the Do Now assignment, you will have a few minutes to prepare for class. Once the allotted time has passed, jump right into the lesson so that you can continue making the best use of class time.