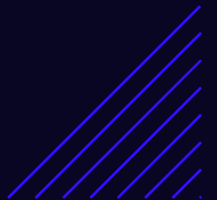


Stop, Look, and Listen
**Giving Meaning to
Rehearsal Clichés**

Laurie Lafferty

| The University of
Akron





Cliché - Definition

- ❑ An overused expression
- ❑ Something that is said so often it no longer has relevance or even noticed in conversation



Clichés

- ❑ Found all over the world
- ❑ Interpreted differently depending on
 - ❑ Cultural knowledge
 - ❑ Identity

Common Clichés

The early bird gets
the worm

Don't
tempt
fate

Good
things
come
to him
who
waits

Common Clichés

An apple
a day keeps
the doctor
away

A penny
saved is a
penny earned

Don't put all you
eggs in one basket

Common Clichés

Stop and smell the roses

Wake up
and smell
the coffee

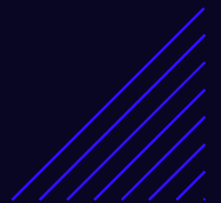
Patience
is a
virtue

As educators we often bear the brunt of clichés

❑ Those who can do - those who can't teach

❑ There is no expertise to teaching, only passion and enthusiasm

❑ Anyone can teach



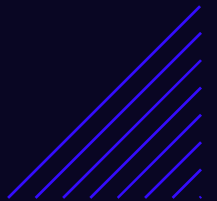
In the field of music education it only gets worse

Music is not definable

It is all about talent

Music is an activity not a scholarly discipline

You either have it or you don't



The Music Man



The Think
System

Mr. Holland's Opus "Play the Sunset"



Educational jargon and clichés

at risk

scaffolding for
success

value added

best-practices




aggregate the data

stakeholders


authentic

assessment

A dark blue vertical bar is positioned on the left side of the slide, extending from the top to the bottom. It has a solid color and a thin white border on its right side.


"Aligned instruction with buy-in by highly qualified teachers for authentic inquiry-based learning and student engagement in professional learning communities will produce 21st century skills in our youngsters."

.....John Merrow

A dark blue vertical bar is positioned on the left side of the slide, extending from the top to the bottom. It has a solid, uniform color.


"I have come to the conclusion that it (professional jargon) exists because of a professional lack of esteem. Other professions requiring college degrees have a specific language -- medicine, the sciences, engineering, law. But educators only have plain English, so they change it into a "professional" language that sounds fancy and inaccessible when it ought to be the most accessible profession of all."

Anne Lewis

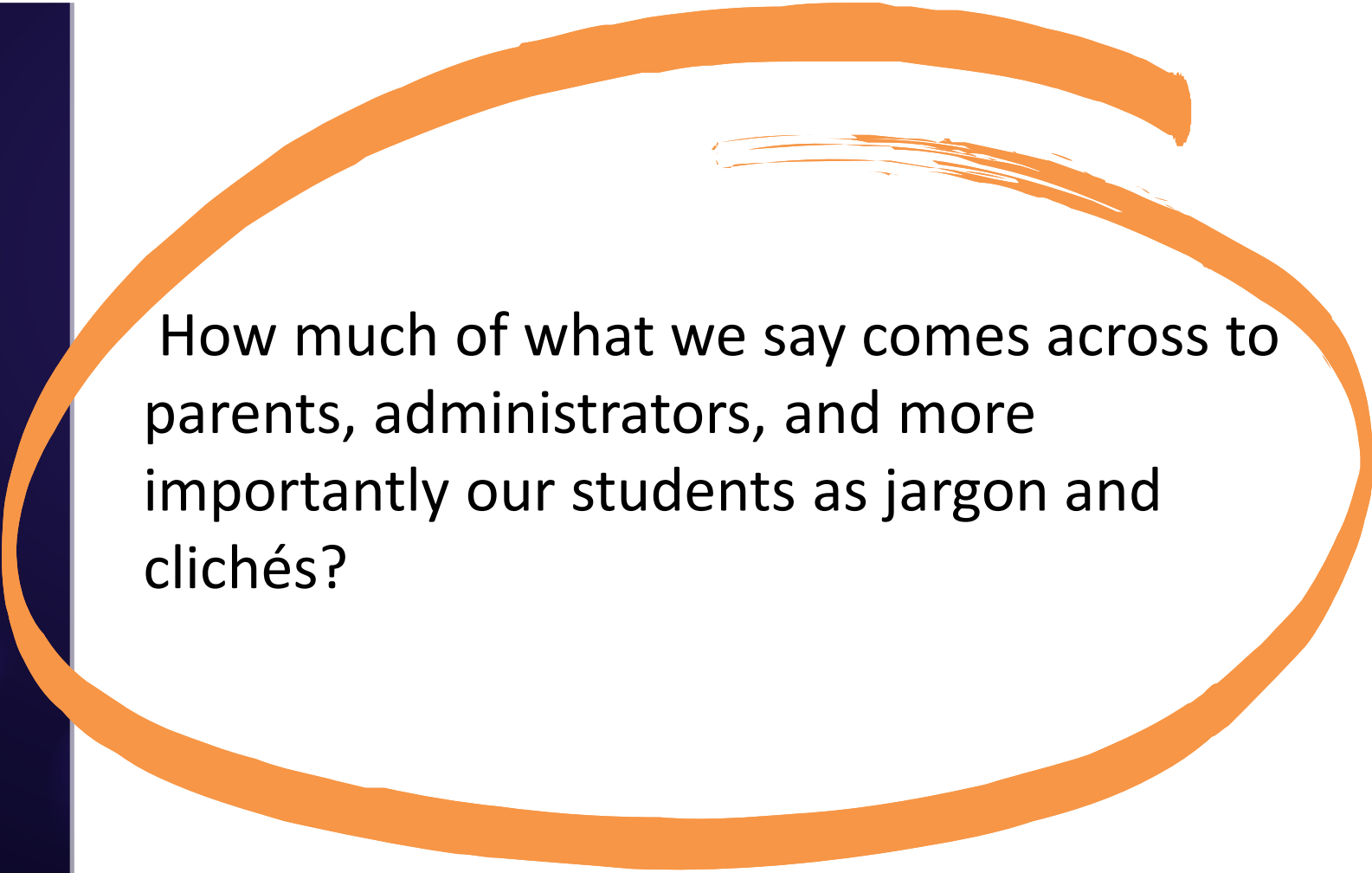



Do some educators obfuscate because they think it makes them sound more professional?

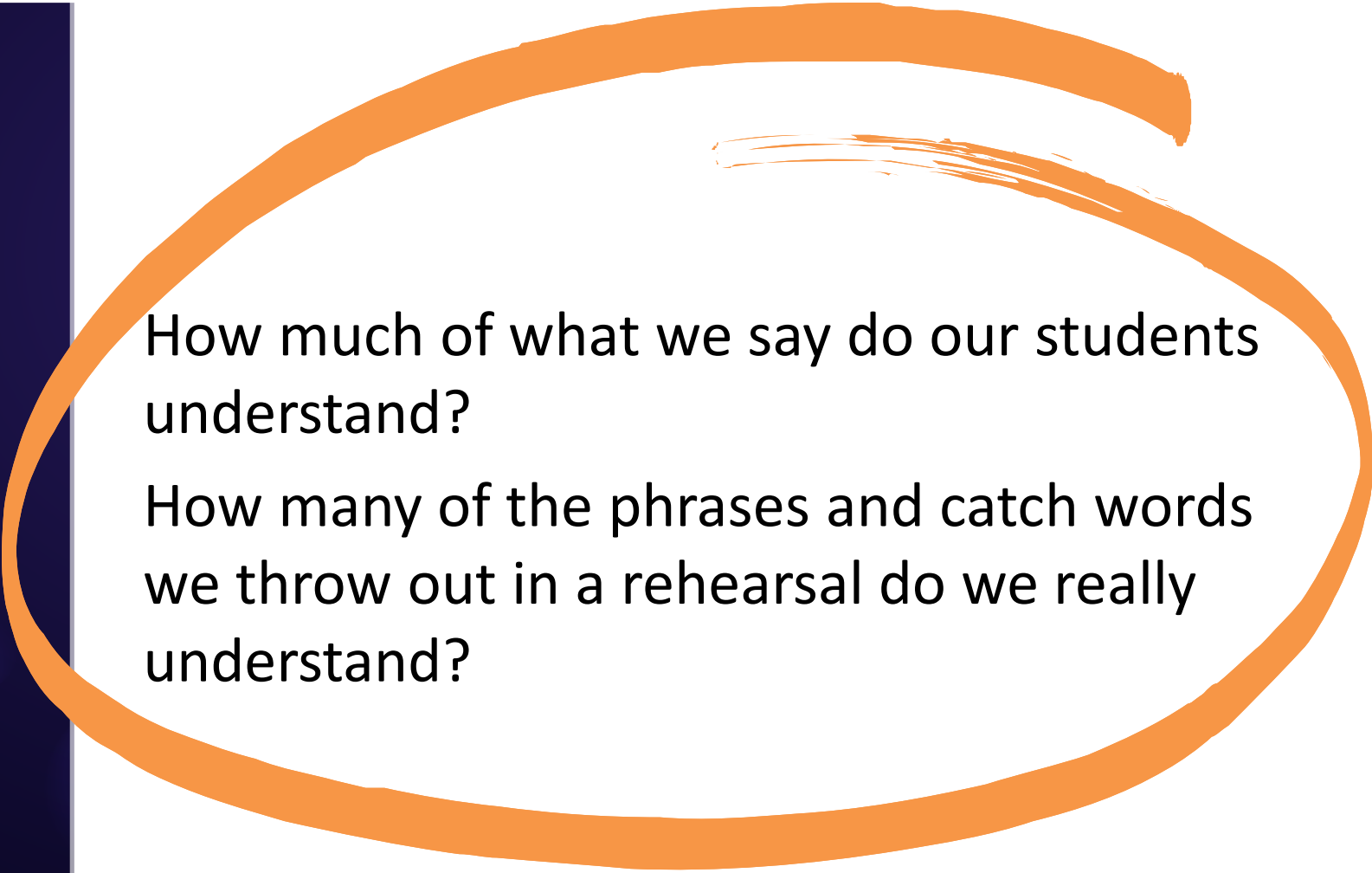

Are some educators so deep in the weeds of their profession that they have forgotten how to communicate with ordinary folks?



And... Do we as music educators sometimes obfuscate because we think it makes us sound more professional?



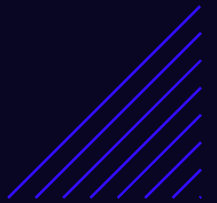
How much of what we say comes across to parents, administrators, and more importantly our students as jargon and clichés?



How much of what we say do our students understand?

How many of the phrases and catch words we throw out in a rehearsal do we really understand?

Support

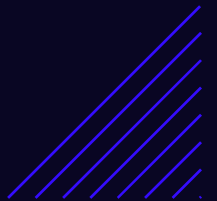


Support the sound

You need to use more breath support

Support the air

Support the air from your diaphragm



What does support really mean?

Applied Teacher Band Director Responses

It means more air

Blow the air
through the
instrument

Engage your
diaphragm, keep
the air fast

I don't use it, it
implies tension
and does not exist

What does support really mean?

Applied Teacher_ Band Director Responses

Support means taking a deep breath and using the air completely but I don't actually know what that means

Always using the appropriate volume of air

Correct breathing and good posture

Good embouchure, air and posture

What does support really mean?

Applied Teacher_ Band Director Responses

Constant push or
column of air

Keeping energy

Using the
diaphragm
muscles correctly

Use consistent air

I don't know,
good question

What does support mean?

Student Responses

I don't know

To keep the air
steady and full

The air going into
the instrument

Hold your posture
in such a way to
breathe better

I don't know

What does support really mean?

Student Responses

Engaging the diaphragm and having good posture

Breathe deep

It means supporting the air

Not allowing the note to become sharp or flat

More air

Air pressure behind the tongue

What does support really mean?

Student Responses

Blowing air from
your stomach not
your lungs

To tighten your
stomach muscles

It means keeping
the air well
supported

How you use your
diaphragm

It means listening
and using a proper
embouchure

Full sound

What does support really mean?

Student Responses

Making sure the melody is featured and not covered

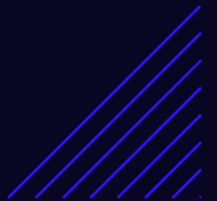
Constant air to keep pitch from going high or low

Take an adequate amount of air to support the phrase

What does support really mean?

Is it about breathing, air, and/or air speed?

What is the relationship between embouchure and air or air speed?



Is it possible to have good air speed without good posture?

What are alternative phrases to “support?”

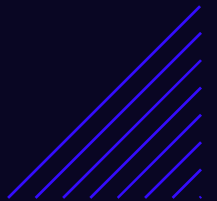
Sit up tall

Breathe deeply so you fill up your lungs

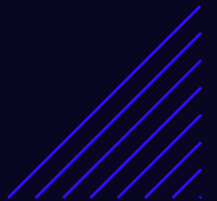
Keep your shoulders relaxed

Use fast air

Keep the air moving



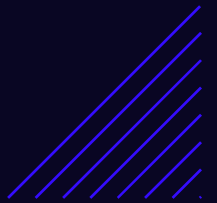
Phrase



Play the phrase

Play the phrase musically

The phrase needs to have rise and fall





Philip Farkas *The Art Of Musicianship*

...many explanatory phrases are used in urging musicians to employ good musicianship. Commonly heard are these exhortations: “sing” “phrase” “*espressivo*”, “project”, “communicate”, “say something”, etc. Unfortunately, these terms are almost as nebulous as the parent word “musicianship” which they are meant to elucidate.

A dark blue vertical bar is positioned on the left side of the slide, extending from the top to the bottom. It has a subtle gradient and a few small, faint light spots near the bottom.

Philip Farkas *The Art Of Musicianship*

The trouble with the vague and nebulous words listed above is that they do not tell us what to do physically with the music. While these words may convey beautiful images to the player, they will not be audible to the listener unless the player converts them into **concrete and definite physical action** on his or her instrument or voice.

What is a phrase? What does it mean to play a phrase?

Applied Teacher_ Band Director Responses

A phrase is a musical thought

A phrase is like a sentence

A musical idea

Portion of or complete idea

Play a certain section with direction

Look for the peak or high point

What is a phrase? What does it mean to play a phrase?

Applied Teacher_ Band Director Responses

To play a phrase you must not have breaks between the notes. It means to play the musical sentence

Play each articulation and dynamic

Begin at the start of the musical idea and play to the end

Add musicality

Make musical sense of the line

What is a phrase? What does it mean to play a phrase?

Student Responses

Follow the line of the music dynamically and breathe in the appropriate spots

It means to listen to what the music is trying to say

To play with one long breath

Don't take a breath during the measures

Play the current section of the music

I don't know

What is a phrase? What does it mean to play a phrase?

Student Responses

To play the phrase markings in the music


Play a group of measures

Not note to note

Play between the letters or numbers
Use dynamics

Play more clear

What you do in between breaths



What is a phrase? What does it mean
to play a phrase?

Student Responses

Play from one rehearsal
number to the next

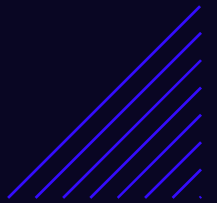
Obviously need a better system for teaching phrasing

What are components of good phrasing?

Good tone? Good articulation? Proper breathing?

What are the components of good tone, good articulation, and correct breathing?

Good posture, good embouchure?



What is the first step in teaching a phrase?

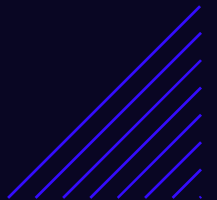
Holding notes full value?

Second step?

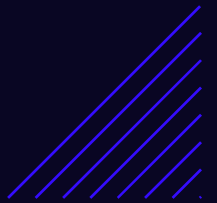
Breathing every 2 measures?

Third Step?

????

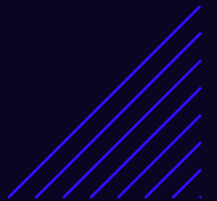


Listen



Listen

- ❑ What does listen mean?
 - ❑ Balance, blend, style, intonation?
- ❑ Typically band directors just say listen
 - ❑ or in concert point to their ears





Research on Intonation

- Directing students to listen is a good thing. Any time you can get someone to pay attention more carefully to what he or she is doing there is going to be improvement
- Students are less accurate when tuning to a low drone
- Timbre effects pitch perception
- Right ear perceives pitch differently than the left
- Instrumentalists that have good basics...posture, embouchure, will play better in tune



Approaches to tuning

No tuning

An ensemble over time establishes it's own pitch center

Young bands, are typically sharp which effects tone quality and forces students to pinch

Approaches to tuning

Concert F or Bb in tuba, students match pitch

Students less accurate when tuning to a low drone

Clarinet or oboe sounds a concert Bb, A, and/or F

Have you ever checked for student accuracy?

Approaches to tuning

Using an electronic tuner to check individuals in band

The cliché response is:

- It takes too much time and
- It only tunes 1 pitch

Approaches to tuning

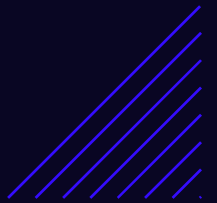
- ❑ Consider the advantages of tuning one note with an electronic tuner
 - ❑ Opportunity to hear students individually each day to determine not only if the student is sharp or flat but to teach the concept of sharp or flat
 - ❑ Determine if the student's equipment is working
 - ❑ Hold students accountable for having equipment that works
 - ❑ Determine if clarinet/saxes are using a good reeds

Approaches to tuning

Advantages of using an electronic tuner to check individuals in the band

- Look into students' eyes to see how they are doing on that particular day
- Keep the pitch level from rising
- Improve student listening skills
 - Provide students with the information needed to help them learn to tune themselves

Accent



What does accent mean? What happens physically when we play an accent?

Applied Teacher_ Band Director Responses

Faster air and louder

More air

Faster air

Tongue harder

More emphasis on the front of the note

Increase in air not a harder tongue

What does accent mean? What happens physically when we play an accent?

Applied Teacher_ Band Director Responses

Touch reed
harder with
tongue

Not tongue
related, harder
push of air

Tongue is always
the same, it has
to do with air

More push of
air, tongue is
always light

Good question,
hard to answer

What does accent mean? What happens physically when we play an accent?

Student Responses

Use more air

Tongue
harder

Make it pop

More tongue

Blow air
quickly

Use a sharper
tongue

What does accent mean? What happens physically when we play an accent?

Student Responses

I don't know

To accent a note you add markings

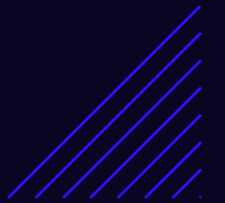
Use the tip of the tongue

More sound on the front of the note

More strength

More air and more space

Piano



What happens physically when you play a note piano

Applied Teacher_ Band Director Responses

Less air, warm air,
less pressure, less
speed

Slower air
column

Less quantity of
air, speed stays
fast

Same air speed,
less air

Firm up the
embouchure and
use slower air

Use less air and
slower air

What happens physically when you play a note piano

Applied Teacher_ Band Director Responses

Keep the airstream constant, controlled and slower

Slower, more controlled airstream

Air needs to be not as fast

Control the air using the diaphragm and use less air

Playing a soft note takes more air than less and involves more breath support

Use fast air but not as much air

Air remains constant while the speed is decreased

What happens physically when you play a note piano

Student Responses

To play a note on the piano you must push down a key with a finger

Same air pressure as forte but not as much air let out

Same amount of air, slower

Keep my air support but play with slightly less volume of air
Push less air

Slow the air flow

What happens physically when you play a note piano

Student Responses

Change embouchure, slower air

Sit with correct posture, press the key

Good support, slower air speed

Use less air

Faster air, use less air

Slower air

What happens physically when you play a note piano

Student Responses

I don't know, I never thought about it

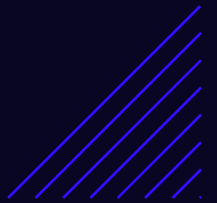
Same amount of air with less force

Breathe with it

Play with more restricted air

Use softer air

Subdivide



Subdivide this rhythm



What is the purpose of subdivision?

Student Responses

To divide notes
into shorter counts

Keep the 8th notes
in time

To help you stay
with the director

I don't know

Break a note into
smaller parts

Divide the rhythm
in your head to
keep it more
steady

What is the purpose of subdivision?

Student Responses

More precise playing

Count with the measure

To help count accurately

Break the notes into smaller parts

Help with tempo and rhythms

What is the purpose of subdivision?

Student Responses

For better accuracy
of beginning and
ending of the notes

To stay with the
ensemble

To keep steady
time

So you can count
more efficiently

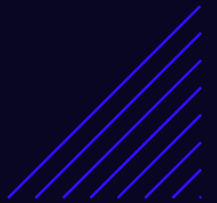
Break the notes
into shorter counts

Additional Words/Concepts to Consider

Staccato

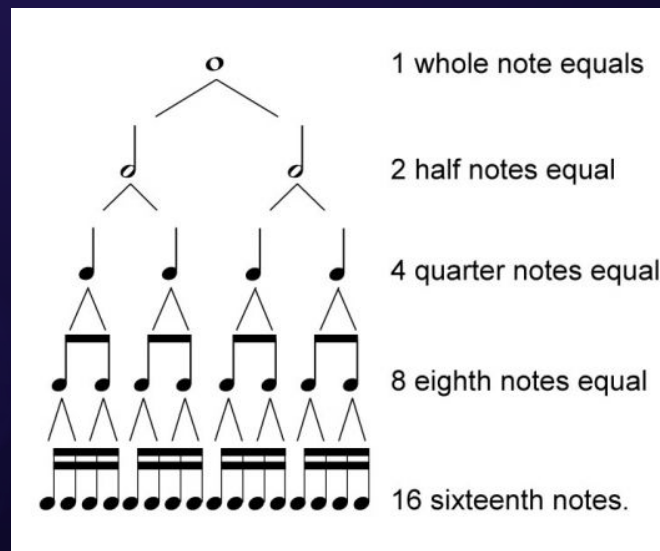
Marcato

Legato



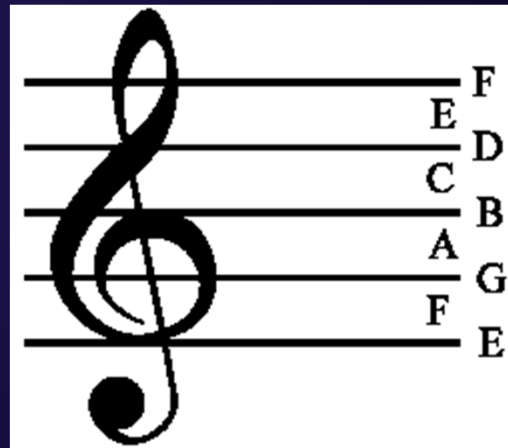
Additional Words/Concepts to Consider

“Teaching” the “Rhythm Tree”



Additional Words/Concepts to Consider

“Teaching” lines
and spaces



Additional Phrases to Consider

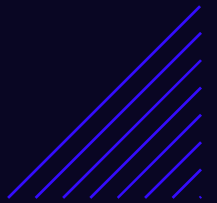
“More air”

“You’re rushing”

“Watch”

“Play it again”

“Aw come on, play it again”



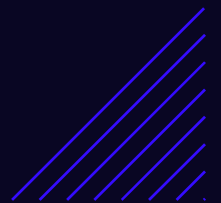
“Listen down” and/or “Think of the pyramid”

“Take it home and practice”

“I want to challenge the students”

“Play it up to tempo”

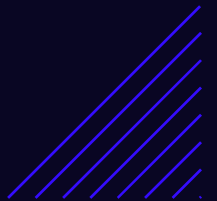
“Open your throat”



Tune the third higher (or lower)

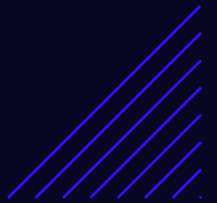
A harder reed will improve the sound

A larger mouthpiece will improve the sound



All phrases and rehearsal suggestions have the potential to be clichés

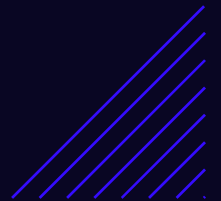
The point is to be more analytical about what we say



Need to have dialog to find a
consensus on the definition of terms

&

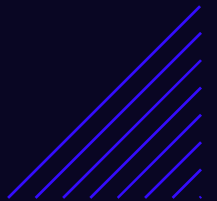
the physical movement associated
with each term



There are no easy answers

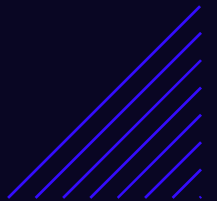
Directing students to listen is a good thing.

Any time you can get someone to pay attention more carefully to what he or she is doing there is going to be improvement



&

Anytime we pay attention more carefully to
what we are doing there is going to be
improvement



Thank you for being here
today.

Have a great conference!

