

Western Division
American Choral Directors Association

P R E S E N T S

**Choosing Your Path Wisely –
Timely Tips for New Music Educators**



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The University of Arizona

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
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Western ACDA, Pasadena, CA

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Timely Tips For New Music Educators

1. Research your 1st and 2nd jobs
2. Take charge of your finances
3. Get involved in professional organizations
4. Become a team player
5. Embrace technology
6. Participate in collaborative events
7. Emphasize lifelong learning
8. Greener pastures

1. Research your 1st and 2nd jobs

- Approach the job search with renewed energy
- Your first and second job will determine how you will spend the next 20 years
- Apply to as many options as possible
- Look outside of your university's city, outside of your state to apply for jobs
- Commit significant time to this task!
- Consider the type of position that will afford you success in the long term.
 - Being 2nd choral director vs. the head director in a small program
- Look for a mentor-friendly school or district
- Look for good administration, arts support
- Stay 3 to 5 years in your first job
- Learn everything you can from a mentor
- After 3 to 5 years, research your second job
- This may well be the position in which you stay for 20 years

2. Take charge of your finances

- You are the only one who can take control of your finances
- Many creative people forget to deal with the practical aspects of life
 - Personal budget
 - Live within your budget

- Begin saving NOW
- Negative effects can be felt 20 years down the road

3. Get involved in professional organizations

- Take on the mindset of Lifelong Learning
- Professional Organizations and their conferences and conventions
 - American Bandmasters Association
 - American Choral Directors Association
 - American Orff-Schulwerk Association
 - American School Band Directors Association
 - American String Teachers Association
 - Dalcroze Society of America
 - Music Teachers National Association
 - National Association for Music Education
 - Organization of American Kodály Educators
- Support from colleagues
- Learn your craft, study your craft
- Read the Journal
- Get students involved in festivals
- Become involved in leadership roles

4. Become a team player

- For some people, becoming a team player comes naturally, for some it does not
- A team player is someone who is willing to step outside of his or her own world and consider the needs of others
- Reach out to other teachers
- Administrators
- Parents
- The Community

5. Embrace technology

- Use technology to improve your teaching, not as a crutch
- Connect with your students through technology
- Study carefully your school and district policy on FaceBook and other social media
- Most school districts require teachers to have some technology components
- When used properly, technology can sharpen focus
- Can help you engage 100% of the students, 100% of the time
- Technology can energize students
- Teach to students of all learning styles
 - Aural
 - Visual
 - Kinesthetic

6. Participate in collaborative events

- Build teamwork among departments
- Combine events with other performing arts groups within your school.
- Unite with the art department for a visual and performing showcase.
- Work with the athletic department to benefit both departments.
- Program a musical work that combines two or more groups, such as choir and orchestra, or orchestra and dance.
- Consider other collaborative events within your school, such as Madrigal Dinners, Open House Nights, and Student Composer/Writer Exhibitions.
- If your district has multiple schools, develop a festival event that expands on the idea of a District Concert.
- Join forces with a community group or local college for large works.
- Look for other opportunities in your community, state, region, and beyond.

7. Emphasize lifelong learning

- Lifelong learning is best described as an attitude that you can learn something from every situation, and you should never feel like you have arrived and can simply stop acquiring knowledge.
- In your first few months at a school, seek out a Master Teacher in your school
- Show a humble attitude
- Be willing to learn from others
- Read about your craft
- Improve your musicianship
- Study your music scores
- Practice your conducting
- Visit Master Teachers before they retire
- Attend conventions and clinics
- Share the lifelong learning concept with your students
- Teach them music literacy so they can play and sing after high AFTER high school and college
- Expose your students to Master Teachers, mentors, advisors
- Encourage alumni reunions
- Support community groups and lessons
- Research and prepare program notes
- Make every activity an educational activity
 - San Antonio example

8. Greener pastures

- The grass is always greener on the other side of the hill. We all tend to stand on our own side of the hill and gaze longingly to where the grass looks ever so much greener. Maybe, we think, I would be better off if I went over there.
- Vincent Tan says that the truth about the greener grass syndrome is that “the other side is always greener no matter [on] which side you are.”

- As a music educator, you will be faced with the greener grass syndrome
- Instead of lamenting, find positive ways
- Find more resources for your program
- Lead your students to become “better”
- Find partners to help you build support in your community
- Find significant ways to help your principal
- Consider restructuring your current program
- Bloom where you are planted
- However, don’t stay stuck in a dying situation
- Evaluate carefully before leaving a position
- Carefully research your next job
- Keep your options open

Remember:

“Those who fail to learn from the mistakes of their predecessors are destined to repeat them.”

(George Santayana, *The Life of Reason*, 1905)