

Notes from CGIA 2024



Thank you WGPO for this **INCREDIBLE** opportunity!



Preparing Students for Drum Core

- Basic Technique Training
- Attend Auditions before they are ready so that they can learn how to audition.
- Attend a variety of clinics to learn different teaching and choreography styles.
- As much dance class and dance exposure as they can get – even if it's just youtube.

Making the Most of Rehearsal Time

- Structure your rehearsals
 - ⅓ technique, ⅔ choreography, etc.
 - Start learning choreography as early as possible (Don't wait until band camp if you can start earlier.)
 - Make a list and plan what you need to get done and send it to staff so everyone is on the same page.
- Have the band and color guard do body warmup together if at all possible.
- Accountability of Knowing Choreography
 - Star Chart: Have students pass off assignments (technique and choreography) with due dates.
 - Watch each other do choreography pass offs.
- Set High Expectation:
 - Have students stop and reset if they are not using performance energy.
 - Let them know that not putting in quality effort is the same as dropping a toss.
 - Praise those who are exhibiting the qualities of a great member.

Layering Strategies

- A&B Choreography
- Front/Back, Side/Side, Multiple Direction Facing
- Leveling
- Picking up specific musical voices (Flag spin to brass, Rifles spin to drum etc.)
- Organized chaos into unison resolve
- Blending Equipment

How to Build on Your Own Skills as a Director and as a Circuit

- Director Mentorship Programs:
 - Newer directors paired with long term directors – help sign up for shows, attend critique with them, etc.
- Choreography get together
 - Plan a day to get together with a few other local directors and create choreography together. This helps to get you through any writing blocks, encourage collaboration, and helps to increase each others choreography style and vocabulary.
- Use your Network
 - Send a video to a friend and ask questions.
- It's ok to reuse choreography – if you want it to look different face the a different direction.
 - One director get's her students excited about this by making it a tradition to “show homage” to the previous seasons show by putting one of the phrases into this years show, this also helps with team bonding as she pairs a returning member with a new member to teach the phrase in small groups.
- Practice before you are in Front of Your Students.
 - It's great for your students to see you try, fail, and fix, this doesn't mean to not let them see those things, it just means to improve your own skills you must be practicing as well.
- Goal Setting
 - Goals do not have to be competitive. (Maybe reaching a specific score, growing your group to a specific size, improving by X amount from season to season, etc.)

Creating Good Transitions

- Transition Strategies
 - Sequential off and on the field... In a Ripple... in A&B groups...
- Sequential with use of soloist at beginning or end of sequence.
- Cycling... changing equipment seamlessly and entering back on the field with new equipment.
- Split back field off first while front field holds focus or vice versa... Side one, side two could do the same thing.
- Start moving towards your transition point early so you do not have a dash at the end of the song.
- Watch the Cavaliers “Secret Society” pyramid fall.

Building Better Performers

- Do not wait to teach performance qualities.
 - Chins up, shoulders back, fix your face.
 - Eyes off the ground.
 - Teach “Pleasant face” eyebrows up, lips in smirk.
- Performing is a skill that needs to be shown, taught, and practiced constantly.
 - Acknowledge that it is difficult.
 - Be an encourager and praiser.
- If your show has a strong theme, or mood make sure you are communicating that to your students so that they know and understand how to perform said theme.
- Sit in a circle with backs to their friends to start with and practice different emotions or themes.
- Tell them what to do with their eyebrows as this is the most expressive part of the face.
- Try different performance exercises (flutter across floor to center, perform for 8-16 counts, flutter off floor.)

Creative Dance Projects for Students:

- Pick a 3–4 minute video on YouTube and students have to go and learn it.
- Can be individual project or you can partner into small groups.
- Set a specific timeline and stick to it.
- Have students perform their dance in front of team for more performance experience.
- Could even select the group with the best performance to teach the rest of the team and include part of the dance in a phrase of your show.

Preventing Burnout Among Students

- Realize when you have to sacrifice time for mental health.
- Break up into smaller groups (and change up the groups regularly.)
- Have a list at the beginning of rehearsal so they know what's coming next.
- Don't be afraid to move your schedule; instead of dance in the morning, move it to the afternoon.
- Change the warm up music so it feels fresh - consider changing between emotions your warm up song requires as well.

Starting an Elementary (Cadet) Guard:

- Run mini clinics or camps to build interest.
- Rally the Parents
 - Have them email principals about how great the program is and what it has done for their kids.
 - Have parents with little kids email principals, admin etc. about wanting to do color guard in elementary.
 - Have teachers email and ask admin how to get a guard program going for their elementary school.



Color Guard
Fall Mini Clinic

Pre-k to 6th grade
Clinic October 14th & 16th 6-8pm
Performing at the football pre game October 17th

\$35 included mini clinic instruction with the Kellyville Color Guard, Performance at the football game, T-Shirt, and admission for participant. Deadline to register October 8th



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The poster is decorated with colorful stars and a string of colorful beads. The background features a faint grid pattern.

Final Thoughts:

- If you are not already a member of the [Color Guard Instructor Academy \(CGIA\) Music For All Summer Symposium](#) facebook group, join it!
 - You can check out videos from camp, warmups, technique, etc. As well as ask questions and have a wonderful community of instructors from all over for advice, and assistance anytime.
- This was such an incredible opportunity to meet new people, try new techniques, and experience different teaching styles, I cannot recommend attending this camp, or one like it, to any instructor looking to grow their skills, and make new experiences.