

## **Kids Are People Too - Making Connections to Improve Retention**

Mark Nowak - Oak Valley Middle School - mnowak@powayusd.com - 858.335.4718

### **Connecting with classroom culture**

Welcome to the best part of your day

- You have to MEAN it
- Making music with them is the best part of my day, not the boring adult stuff
- It's OK to get excited when the group sounds great!
  - though I usually scare the kids when I do this
- Tell them when the opportunity arises in class

Tenets of Band Kwan Do

- And how it relates on an everyday basis
- YOU are the model
- The director IS the culture
- You have to be authentic and honest
- This IS social/emotional learning/development
- Use inclusive language - our, we - with kids and parents
  - a strong program is a collaboration at all levels
  - say kids instead of students sometimes
- Use it during class when the opportunity arises

### **Connecting through shared experience**

REMEMBER what it was like to be a middle schooler

- Were you the popular kid, the quiet kid, the weird kid?
- Younger teachers, you're not that far away from their experience
- For me, an 80's kid, it can be harder to relate, so thank you Stranger Things!

Notice I didn't say kids are ADULTS too

- You can be honest and authentic with them
  - but not condescending
  - treat each age group differently

But they are NOT adults

- Communicate on their level
- To me that's the weakness of parents and sometimes teachers - they forgot what it was like to be a kid, the stupid things you did, the awkwardness
- Emotional quality of music
  - children have life experience too, just different from yours
  - for example, what do Misterioso or With Energy mean to them?
- A great way to get on their level - learn a new, ENJOYABLE instrument!

### **Fantastic Resources**

Dr. Harry Wong - The First Days of School

Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish - How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk

Scott Lang - Sound Leadership, Music Foundations, musicfoundations.com, bepartofthemusic.org

Scott Edgar - Music Education and Social Emotional Learning: The Heart of Teaching Music