

# Working smarter, not harder: Tips and tricks to help you and your students in and out of the classroom



Melissa R. Life  
*Instructor of Choral Music Education*  
University of Alabama  
205.348.2809  
[mrlife@ua.edu](mailto:mrlife@ua.edu)

## Work

- What is work?

## Working Harder

- Factors
  - Internal Factors
  - External Factors

## Working Smarter

- Key sentence: Organization is essential to everyone's success.
  - Master calendars
  - Physical Classroom/Office environment
- Key sentence: It is not about you.
  - Evaluate your daily teaching often.
  - Know your students!
  - Flip the script.
    - Small tasks to big tasks
      - Attendance
      - Warm-ups (Physical, Breathing, and Vocal/Playing)
      - Section leading
      - Full rehearsal leading
- Key sentence: Don't stick to what you've "always done."
  - You are a researcher! Seek advice/help.
    - Colleagues (within and outside of music at your school/community)
    - Reach out to colleges/universities
    - Online resources (Facebook groups, Twitter chats, vlogs, etc.)
    - Journals, Books, etc.
  - Technology should help support your instruction, not become the instruction.
    - How much time do you and your students utilize technology?
    - Accessibility, Affordability, etc.
      - Be resourceful.
- Key sentence: Remember your passion for/love of music education.
  - Take time to breathe.
  - Reflection tools can help.
    - Blogging, Journaling
    - Counseling, group meetings, etc.
  - Advocate for the need of music and inspire the next generation of leaders.