



Check Points for Teaching Beginners

CLINICIAN:

Marion West

Texas Bandmasters Association 2012 Convention/Clinic



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HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

Check Points for Teaching Beginners

Texas Bandmasters Association Clinic:
Saturday, July 21
Monday, July 23
CC Room: 214AB
Sponsor: TBA

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Is it possible to teach musical concepts to beginners? I believe that you must teach music from the beginning, and I also don't believe in a "beginner sound".

Concept: A general idea that is created by abstracting the uncommon characteristics from several particular ideas.

Efficiency: Using the least amount of energy to accomplish something

Entropy: 2nd law of thermodynamics – energy flows from a state of greater organization to a state of lesser organization. Students need to understand this because the energy in the mind is what keeps the tone organized.

Example: pour coke from a can – it goes to a state of lesser organization. The energy of the can kept it organized.

Four elements of music are: Tone, Rhythm, Melody, and Harmony. These four elements will be explored today as they naturally apply to various styles and dynamic ranges of music.

Tone:

- ✓ Posture
 - The balance of the body and head
- ✓ Breathing
 - Breathe naturally – through the nose to feel the calmness of the air – smell freshly baked cookies. Then transition to breathing through the mouth while recreating the same feel.
- ✓ Hands
 - Hands should look as though they are relaxed – look at hands when standing to see if they are relaxed
 - Even Exercise is wonderful to train hands

- ✓ Balance of Instrument
 - Every instrument has balance points

- ✓ Equipment
 - Students should know the brand and model of their instrument, their mouthpiece, and reeds
 - Use class time to make a record of this

- ✓ Concept of Tone
 - Describe how a tone is made – draw pictures on the board
 - Show that vibrations of resonator must match vibrations of the tone – draw on the board

- ✓ Articulation
 - The syllable and placement of tongue affects the tone

Words and thoughts are energy, and when students understand how much they can accomplish, they have a lot of fun!

Rhythm:

Rhythm: movement or procedure with patterned recurrence of a beat or the like
 Movement marked by the regulated succession of strong and weak elements, or of opposite or different conditions

- ✓ Note Relationship Chart (see handout)

- ✓ Concept of Time Signature Chart

- ✓ Rhythm concept sheet
 - Number of notes within a beat – initial introduction

- ✓ What to layer onto the rhythm concept sheet
 - Pulse
 - Agogic Flow
 - Breathing Decisions
 - Two Rules of Breathing:
 - 1. Breathe after longer-valued notes
 - 2. Breathe after stressed beats

- ✓ Teach conducting pattern – students will conduct with their pencils (no need for pencil check!)

- ✓ Articulation
 - Articulation creates rhythm
- ✓ Rhythmic resolutions
 - Example: a tie across the bar

I suggest:

Incorporate projects that involve hands, feet, or bodies when teaching the rhythm concept sheet.

Melody:

- ✓ Major Scale
 - Steps and ½ steps
 - Enharmonic tones
- ✓ Tetra Sheet
 - A follow through of steps and ½ steps
 - Layer rhythm drills, even drills, tongue drills, tuning drills, or technique drills
- ✓ Intervals in a major scale
 - Teach the intervals from do – write the C scale, but sing in A
 - Do re do, do mi do, etc – teach name of interval and sing every day adding a new interval every few days
- ✓ Key Signatures
- ✓ Learning to play the scales
 - Teach in tetras – then expand (see handout)
- ✓ Performing major scales as a group

I suggest:

Give written tests on all concepts. Performance testing is valuable. Test often, but in small amounts.

Harmony:

- ✓ Compatible
 - A good word to describe how playing intervals between two or more individuals
 - works well with around the room exercises
 - Perfect intervals are good to play and are fun!
 - Practice difference tones
 - Around the room – practice all intervals – remember the word compatible

In conclusion,

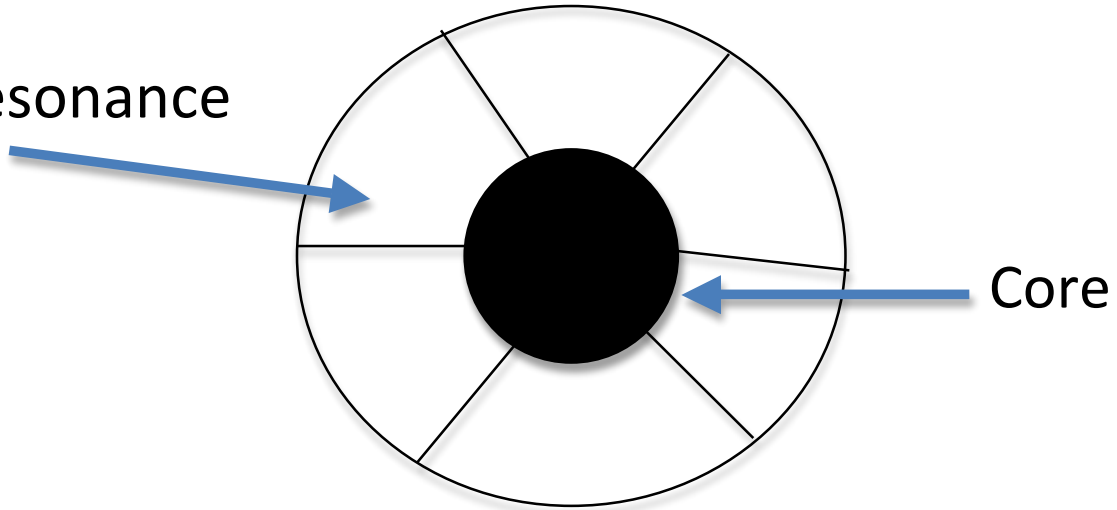
Designing the curriculum based on the four elements of music can help you make appropriate decisions. It will feel more organized to the students as well.

Concepts can be taught at any age level. When the students understand that everything they do on their instruments gives emotion to the audience, they truly love performing.

Notes:

Definition of a Sound:

Resonance



Center of a Sound:

(Thin and Small A 450)

(Centered Pitch A 440)

(Tired/Fuzzy/Dull A 430)

Basic Rhythms

This page contains 18 numbered musical exercises in common time (C), arranged in two columns. Each exercise is on a single staff with a common time signature. Vertical dashed lines are drawn through the staves to indicate the downbeat of each measure.

- 1. Quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- 2. Eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- 3. Triplet eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- 4. Sixteenth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- 5. Dotted quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- 6. Eighth notes with a dotted quarter: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- 7. Eighth notes with a dotted quarter: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- 8. Eighth notes with a dotted quarter: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- 9. Eighth notes with a dotted quarter: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- 10. Half notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- 11. Quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- 12. Triplet quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- 13. Quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- 14. Quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- 15. Quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- 16. Quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- 17. Quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- 18. Quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.

MAJOR SCALES
Table of Enharmonic Tones

C	C#	D	D#	E	E#	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B	B#
C	Db	D	Eb	E	F	G	Gb	G	Ab	A	Bb	B	Cb

Bb Instruments			C Instruments			Eb Instruments			F Instruments				
D	E	F#	G	D	E	F	A	B	C#	D	E	F	G
G	A	B	C	F	G	A	Bb	C	D	E	F#	G	C
C	D	E	F	Bb	C	D	E	G	A	B	C	F	F
F	G	A	Bb	Eb	F	G	Ab	C	D	E	F	A	Bb
Bb	C	D	E	Ab	Bb	C	D	F	G	A	Bb	C	Ab
Eb	F	G	Ab	Db	Eb	F	G	Bb	C	D	E	F	Db
Ab	Bb	C	Db	G	Ab	Bb	C	E	F	G	Ab	B	G
Db	E	F	G	C	Db	E	F	Ab	Bb	C	Db	F	G
D	E	F#	G	C	D	E	F	A	B	C#	D	E	G
A	B	C#	D	G	A	B	C	E	F#	G#	A	B	C
E	F#	G#	A	D	E	F	G	A	B	C#	D	E	G
B	C#	D#	E	A	B	C	D	F#	G#	A#	B	C#	D
F#	G#	A#	B	E	F#	G#	A	G#	A#	B#	C#	D#	E
C#	D#	E#	F#	B	C#	D#	E	C#	D#	E#	F#	G#	A
G#	A#	B#	C#	F#	G#	A#	B	G#	A#	B#	C#	D#	E
D#	E#	F##	G#	C#	D#	E#	F#	A#	B#	C##	D#	E#	F#