



**Texas Bandmasters Association
Convention/Clinic July 22-24, 2021**

**Sequencing for Success: A Guide to
Beginning Percussion Pedagogy**

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July 24, 2021

Texas Bandmasters Association Convention

I. Finding the Right Percussion Students

The Beginning Percussion Class

- Plays a large part in the professional emotional health of the percussion instructor
- Means new beginnings for the program

Testing Date Options

1. Testing students concurrently with wind instrument fittings
2. Testing students separately by appointment

My Audition Process (Two Rounds)

- Set an audition date for at least a week before the wind instrument fittings
- Consider having an additional first round tester for the load
- Use Sign-Up Genius or a comparable program to make an appointment schedule
- Make sure percussion audition information and that link is emailed to 5th (or 6th grade) parents along with your email address

Auditions are individual only. There should be a strong focus on consistency including verbiage, tempo, sequence, and even inflection. This more than anything else facilitates fairness and accuracy.

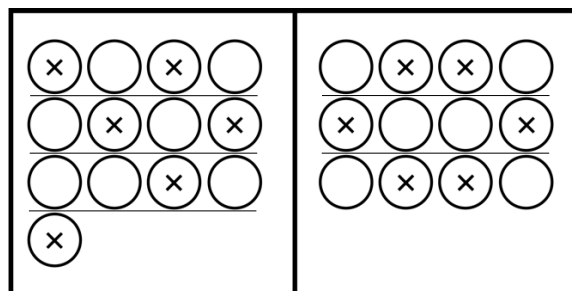
First Round Audition

- Parents usually come in
- Have the kids hold sticks and start to play. Look for natural rebound.
- Have them play along with music to test for natural pulse (**VERY IMPORTANT**)
- Coordination between hands and foot tap
- I play, you play
- Determine lack of understanding vs lack of ability
- Announce the results by email

Second Round Audition

- Parents do not come in
- Same as first round but more difficult pulse and coordination examples
- I play, you play (include more elements such as upbeats, triplets, compound meter)
- Mallets
- Circles and Xs (see the diagram below)

Circles and Xs



Things to Strongly Consider

- Perception and performance of time
- Coordination
- Natural Hands
- Dominant vs non-dominant hand
- Eye contact and Attentiveness
- Maturity and Self Control
- Ability to receive instruction and make correction
- Grit
- Grades and Citizenship

Communication of Results

1. Congratulations on making percussion. You will not need to attend the wind instrument fitting. There will be a meeting soon to discuss percussion moving forward. ***Do not make any purchases at this time.***
2. Thank you for attending the percussion auditions. Your student did not make percussion. They will need to attend the wind instrument fitting on/at/from/to

Beginner Percussion Pack: Points of Consideration

- Pads back and forth (need an equipment bag) or school set of pads (only mallet bag)
- Bell kit (included) or practice marimba (rented)
- Don't forget the music stand for home
- What book are you going to use?

My Pack (Click and Buy)

- Quiet Tone pad (stays home)
- Snare stand with a memory lock (stays home)
- Music stand (stays home)
- Stick bag
- Concert sticks
- Marimba mallets
- Timpani mallets
- Metronome

Do not send out the information about the packs yet.

Spring Meeting

Equipment, timeline, expectations, summer dos and don'ts

- Sign-In sheet
- Congratulations
- Equipment purchase cost and validity (Beginner Pack); Marimba rental (if applicable)
- What to do and not do over the summer
- Camp (if applicable)
- Lessons

After the meeting, send an email with links and documents for equipment. Receive equipment at the school and distribute it at a time of your choosing. Unpack and label everything, and discuss proper care and handling.

II. Ready to Play!...Almost

Metronome

- Start seated
- Identify downbeats and upbeats
- Foot Tap with downbeats. *First opportunity to hold a standard.*

Hinge and Hands

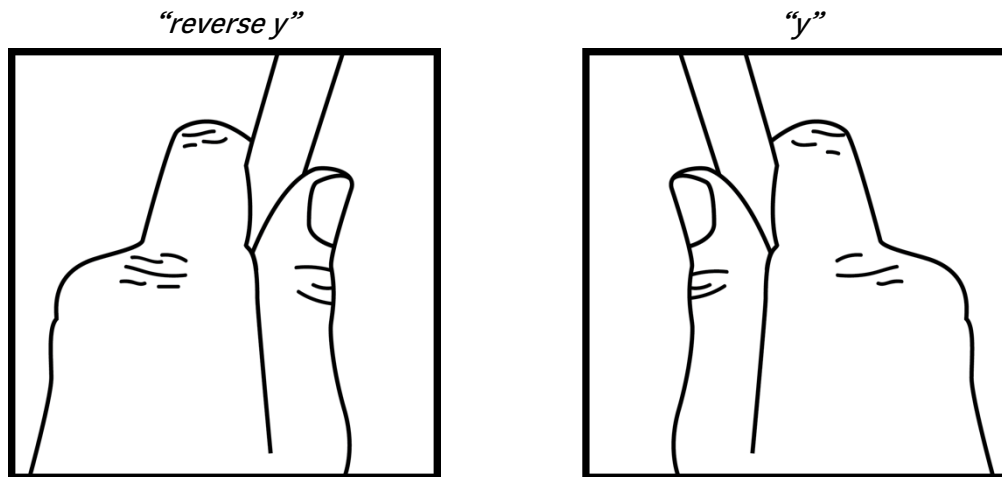
- Introduce door knock hinge
- Seated position with elbows in line with body and not too far away
- Play on legs with hands, slow at first, staying relaxed the entire time
- No tempo

Equipment and Workspace Set-Up

- Dots
- Tape
- Memory locks

Holding the Stick

1. Identify parts of the stick and then find $\frac{1}{3}$ distance from the butt of the stick. Identify this as the balance point.
2. Form a fulcrum. "Thumb print" the stick. *Explain what a fulcrum is and how it functions.* Look for the "y" and "reverse y." (see the diagram below)



3. *Hold* the stick in one place and *touch* the stick everywhere else.
4. Remaining fingers gently wrap around the stick
5. Stick should be resting in the "brake" of the hand
6. Make sure that hands are symmetrical.

The Stroke

1. Identify the right and left "dots" or beating spots on the pad.
2. Develop the sensations of pivoting and rebound.
3. Trace the path of the stick slowly to the up position and then back to the dot position.
4. Raise to the up position and attempt rebound/full strokes.
5. Try with the Right Hand and Left Hand
6. Explain the Double Stop. Attempt double stop rebound strokes.
7. Dot games

Constant Motion vs. Isolated Motion

- How to differentiate
- How to develop
- Tacet hand up and down

III. Snare Drum

Setting Up Your Class

- Set an expectation for the time they should be set up.
- Seating (semi-circle), and Order
- Music stands should be low and angled so that hands are visible.
- How to set sticks down

Rebound Strokes in Time

Put your foot with the metronome and your hands with your feet.

- Counting and Pulsing
- Foot Tap
- Playing

The diagram illustrates three steps of a rebound exercise:

- Step 1:** A four-measure sequence. Measures 1-4 are marked with shoe icons and labeled (1), (2), (3), (4) under a bracket labeled "whisper count". Measures 5-8 are marked with shoe icons and labeled 1, 2, 3, 4 under a bracket labeled "Full Voice". A dashed arrow labeled "foot tap continues" points to the right.
- Step 2:** A four-measure sequence. Measures 1-4 are marked with shoe icons and labeled (1), (2), (3), (4). Measure 5 is marked with a shoe icon and labeled "R". Measure 6 is marked with a shoe icon and labeled "L". Measure 7 is marked with a shoe icon and labeled "B". Measure 8 is marked with a shoe icon and labeled "B".
- Step 3:** A four-measure sequence. Measures 1-4 are marked with shoe icons and labeled (1), (2), (3), (4). Measure 5 is marked with a shoe icon and labeled "R". Measure 6 is marked with a shoe icon and labeled "R". Measure 7 is marked with a shoe icon and labeled "L". Measure 8 is marked with a shoe icon and labeled "L".

1:1 Note Ratio

1 note for every 1 beat. Hear the upbeats between the downbeats.

The diagram illustrates a 1:1 note ratio exercise in 4/4 time:

- Staff 1:** A sequence of notes with shoe icons and labels (1), (2), (3), (4), 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4.
- Staff 2:** A sequence of notes with shoe icons and labels 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4, 1.

2:1 Transitions

1. 1 te 2 te 3 te (4)
B B B B R R

2. 1 te 2 te 3 te (4)
B B B B L L

3. 1 te 2 te 3 te (4)
R R R R B B

4. 1 te 2 te 3 te (4)
L L L L B B

5. 1 te 2 te 3 te (4)
R B B B B L

6. 1 te 2 te 3 te (4)
L B B B B R

8 on a Hand Double Stops

4/4
B B B B R R R R | B B B B L L L L | B B B B R R R R | B B B B L L L L | B
R B B B B L L L | L B B B B R R R | R B B B B L L L | L B B B B R R R | R

Self and Peer Evaluation

The most important thing that we teach students is awareness.

- Enables students to give and take constructive criticism
- Makes them accountable to themselves and each other
- Creates *awareness* and, eventually, *intent*
- Gives *value* to certain skills and work ethic

The Next Step to Independence: Filling In

1:1 Filled-In Builder

4/4
(1) (2) (3) (4) | 1 R 2 R 3 R 4 te 1 R | (2) (3) (4)

1 R 2 R 3 te 4 te 1 R (2) (3) (4) 1 R 2 te 3 te 4 te

1 R (2) (3) (4) 1 te 2 te 3 te 4 te 1 R (2) (3) (4)

Eighth Note Example Lines, #2

4/4
R R L R L R | R L R R L | R L R | R L | R L R L R | R

Instruction can be staggered using notation.

Duets

- Develop musical independence
- Create a deeper understanding of note relationships
- Teach and develop *vertical alignment*
- FUN!

Eighth Note Training Duet

Ties

- Missing from percussion pedagogy
- Teach subdivision
- Reinforce note relationships
- Make certain notes much easier to learn

Tie Example Line

Offset Trainer

Create situations where students have to be able to do what you're telling them to do.

Offset Trainer Steps

1. Play every note but omit the counting of the optional notes
2. Count every note but omit the playing of the optional notes
3. Omit the counting and playing of the optional notes
4. Bonus Step: Follow the last step but count only downbeats

1:1 Offset Trainer

Benefits

- Develops verbal independence
- Teaches partials
- Makes rhythms more accurate and cultivates a better understanding
- Encourages the student to think of the rhythm correctly

Notation, Builders, and Permutations

Eighth Note Timing (3 Note)

Staff 1: $\frac{4}{4}$ R L R L R L R L | R L R R L R | R L R R L R | R L R R L R

Staff 2: R L R L R L R L | R R L R R L | R R L R R L | R L R R L

Staff 3: R L R L R L R L | R L L R L L | R L L R L L | R L L R L L

Staff 4: R L R L R L R L | L R L L R L | L R L L R L | L R L L R L R

8 on a Hand (Sixteenth Notes)

It is effective to single articulate new rhythms.

1 ti te ta 2 ti te ta 3 ti te ta 4 ti te ta 1 ti te ta 2 ti te ta 3 ti te ta 4 ti te ta 1

R R R R R R R L L L L L L L | R R R R R R R L L L L L L L :|| R

8 on a Hand Inverted (Sixteenth Notes)

1 ti te ta 2 ti te ta 3 ti te ta 4 ti te ta 1 ti te ta 2 ti te ta 3 ti te ta 4 ti te ta 1

R L L L L L L L R R R R R R R | R L L L L L L L R R R R R R R :|| R

2:1 Filled-In Builder

Staff 1: $\frac{4}{4}$ R → L → | R L R L | $\frac{2}{4}$ R L | $\frac{4}{4}$ R → L → | R L → L R → | $\frac{2}{4}$ R L

Staff 2: $\frac{4}{4}$ R R R L → L L L R → | $\frac{2}{4}$ R L | $\frac{4}{4}$ R L → L R → | $\frac{2}{4}$ R L

Sixteenth Note Partner Exercise

Player 1


Player 2


R R R R R R R R | R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L


R R R R R R R R | R R R R R R R R | R R R R R R R R | R R R R R R R R

R R R R R R R R | R R R R R R R R | R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L

Diddle Progression in Partial

1. 

2. 

3. 

Playing at Different Heights

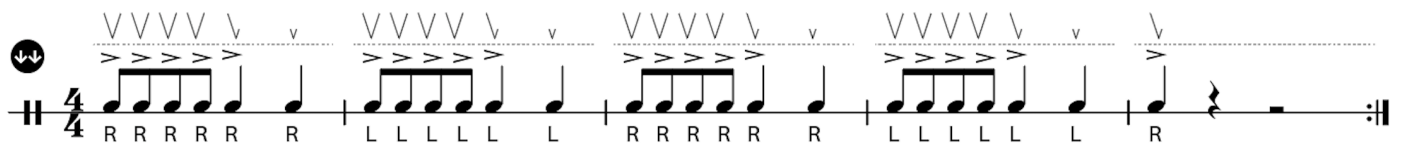
1. Play at stagnant heights/angles
2. Work to maintain a great sound at lower heights
3. Develop the crescendo
4. Develop the decrescendo

Exploring Different Strokes

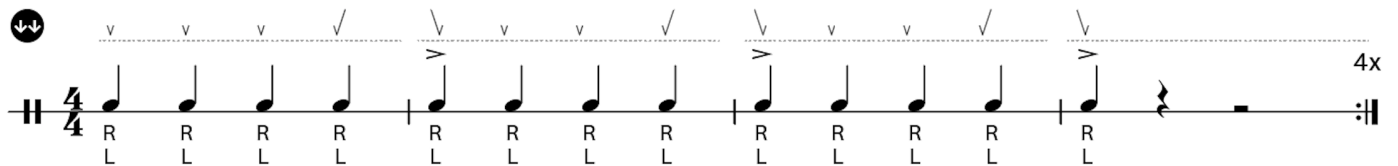
- Develop specific mechanics when learning a new stroke
- Tune your highs and lows
- Develop a high level of contrast

How many things are being learned at once? How many aspects are involved? Can those aspects be scaffolded?

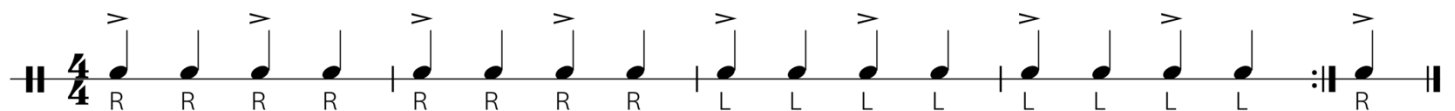
Down Stroke Exercise



Up/Down Exercise



Bucks



Getting From the Academic to the Actual

Playing the Instrument

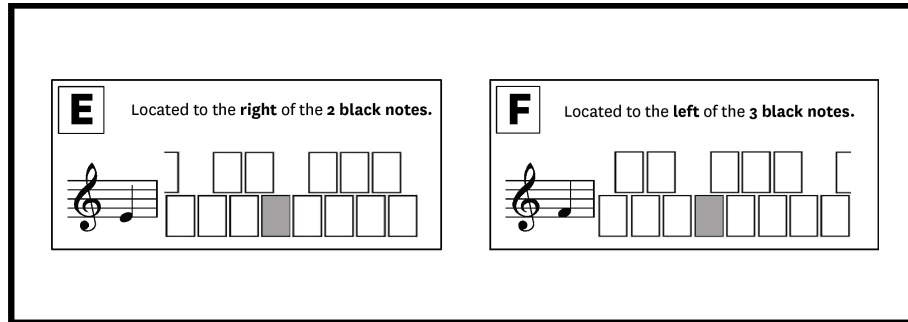
- Correct height
- No toe tap
- No unnecessary movement with feet

The First Step: Playing Individual Keys

True Accuracy = Correct Notes + Correct Playing Zones

1. Locate white keys by using black keys as a reference

E and F in Relation to Black Notes



2. Play “white keys” with names
3. Play “black keys” without names

Use Half Steps as the first interval study to give the “black keys” names and some “white keys” alternate names. Develop a language with the kids that facilitates learning.

X and Y Axis

Shifting

- Encourages forward thinking on the instrument
- Develops muscle memory on distances between the notes
- Makes players more accurate

Shifting While Playing Repeated Strokes

1. Chromatically
2. 4 on each note
3. 2 on each note
4. Octaves
5. 1 of each note one hand at a time

Four Notes Each

