

John Bingaman

Building Firm Foundations for the Beginning Percussionist

December 15, 2021

Midwest Convention

Featuring:

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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.

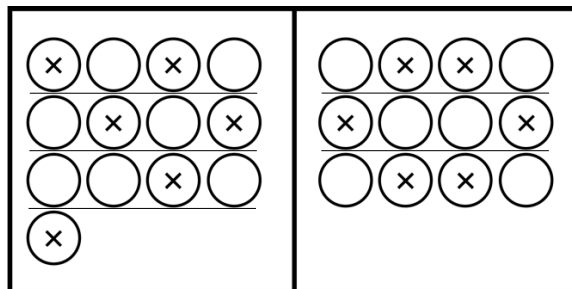
First Round Audition

- 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

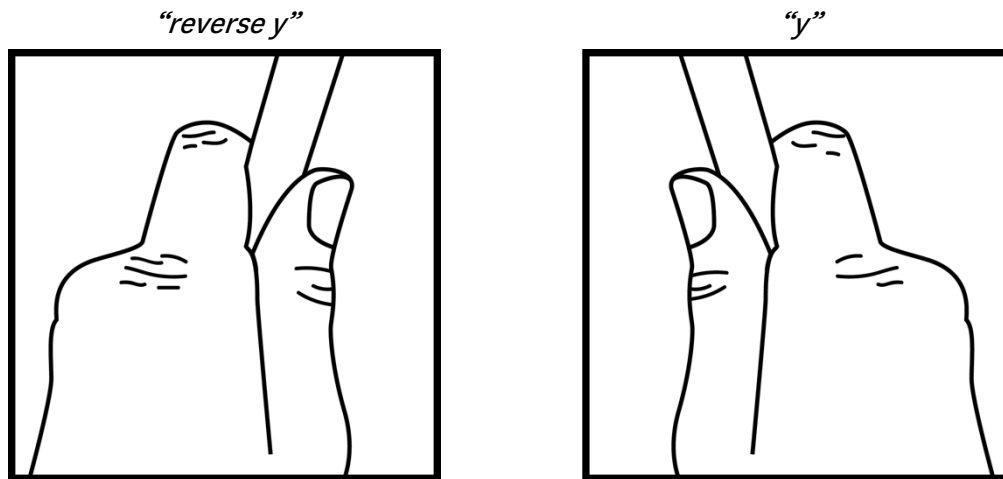
- Introduce door knock hinge
- Seated position with elbows in line with body and not too far away
- Play on legs with hands, slow at first, staying relaxed the entire time
- No tempo

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.

- Foot Tap
- Finger Tap
- Counting and Pulsing
- Playing

Diagram illustrating rebound strokes in time, divided into three sections (1, 2, 3) with corresponding foot and hand patterns.

Section 1:

- Foot pattern: (1) (2) (3) (4) | 1—ne (2) (3) (4)
- Hand pattern: 1 | 2
- Labels: whisper count, full voice, whisper count, final bar line

Section 2:

- Foot pattern: (1) (2) (3) (4) | 1—ne (2) 3—ee (4)
- Hand pattern: 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
- Labels: touch, 1—ne (2) (3) (4), 1—ne (2), 3—ee (4), 1—ne (2) (3) (4), B, L, R, B

Section 3:

- Foot pattern: (1) (2) (3) (4) | 1—ne 2—oo (3) (4) | 1—ne 2—oo (3) (4)
- Hand pattern: 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6
- Labels: touch, 1—ne 2—oo (3) (4), 1—ne 2—oo 3—ee (4), 1—ne 2—oo 3—ee (4), B, B, R, L, B, L, R, B

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

Figure 1 illustrates the sequence of foot strikes and body postures for a 100m sprinter. The diagram is divided into two rows of foot strikes, each with a timeline of 100m. The top row shows the sequence of foot strikes for the first 50m, and the bottom row shows the sequence for the second 50m. The foot strikes are labeled with numbers 1 through 4, and the body postures are labeled with letters R (Right), L (Left), B (Back), and F (Front). The timeline is marked with vertical lines and dots, indicating the sequence of events.

7

1 2 3 4 5

R L L L R L R R L L R R

- Practice cards are turned in on Mondays
- Tests happen on Mondays
- DTRs (Down the Rows) happen during the week

2 notes for every 1 beat. First introduced like this:

Emphasizes hand speed and transitions between hands. See the black stickings in 8 on a Hand above.

4/4

R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R R R R L L L L R R R R L L L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R

- One hand is moving while the other is not
- Adding and taking hands away while playing

Double Stops

2:1 Transitions

Figure 1 displays six diagrams (1-6) illustrating the evolution of a 6x6 grid. Each diagram has a header row with labels 1, 2, 3, (4) and a sub-header row with labels te, te, te. The diagrams show the sequence of cells (black or white) and the transitions between them, indicated by arrows.

- Diagram 1:** Row 1: B, B, B, B, R, R. Arrows indicate transitions from B to B, B to B, B to B, B to R, R to R, and R to R.
- Diagram 2:** Row 1: B, B, B, B, L, L. Arrows indicate transitions from B to B, B to B, B to B, B to L, L to L, and L to L.
- Diagram 3:** Row 1: R, R, R, R, B, B. Arrows indicate transitions from R to R, R to R, R to R, R to B, B to B, and B to B.
- Diagram 4:** Row 1: L, L, L, L, B, B. Arrows indicate transitions from L to L, L to L, L to L, L to B, B to B, and B to B.
- Diagram 5:** Row 1: R, B, B, B, B, L. Arrows indicate transitions from R to B, B to B, B to B, B to B, B to L, and L to L.
- Diagram 6:** Row 1: L, B, B, B, B, R. Arrows indicate transitions from L to B, B to B, B to B, B to B, B to R, and R to 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

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

Double Articulating Instrument

- Singles
- Buzzes

The Next Step to Independence: Filling In

1:1 Filled-In Builder

(1) (2) (3) (4)

1—ne 2—oo 3—ee 4 te 1—ne (2) (3) (4)

1 4

R R R R L R

1—ne 2—oo 3 te 4 te 1—ne (2) (3) (4) 1—ne 2 te 3 te 4 te

4

R R R L R L R

1—ne (2) (3) (4) 1 te 2 te 3 te 4 te 1—ne (2) (3) (4)

7

R R L R L R L R

Eighth Note Example Lines, #2



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



Approaching Stickings

- Toe tap
- Groupings
- Perspective



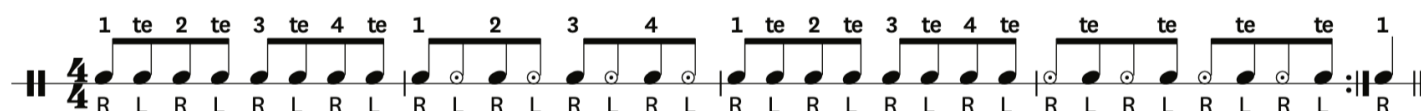
Offset Trainer

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

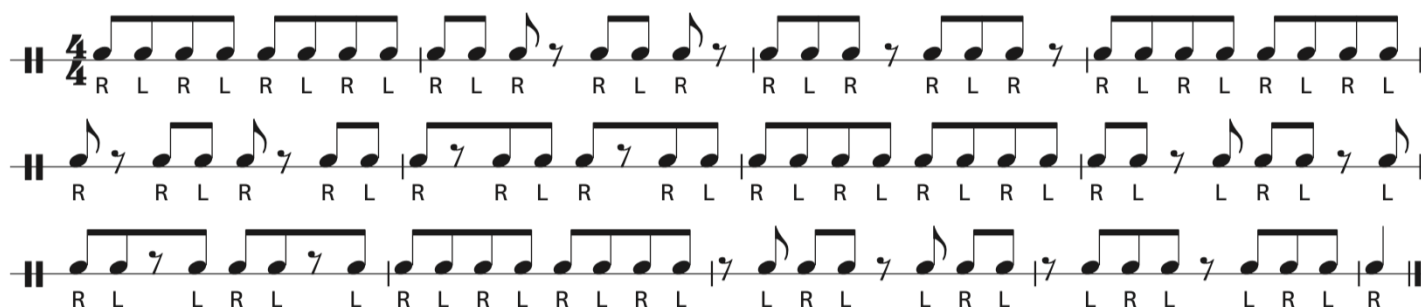


Benefits

- 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)



8 on a Hand (Sixteenth Notes)

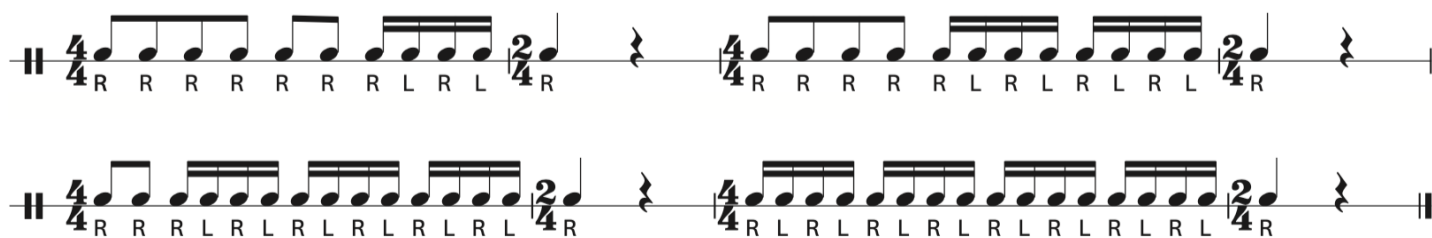
It is effective to single articulate new rhythms.



8 on a Hand Inverted (Sixteenth Notes)



2:1 Filled-In Builder



Sixteenth Note Partner Exercise



Sixteenth Note Training Duet



Coordination Exercise

Coordination is an integral part of developing percussion skills. Some rhythms and skills are difficult for students not because they don't understand them, but because they lack the coordination to execute them.



Sixteenth Timing (3 Note)



Developing a Personal Warm-Up

The warm-up consists of three staves:

- Staff 1:** A sequence of long buzzes (R, L, R, L, R, L) followed by a speed up section (R, L, R, L, R, L, R, L) ending with a buzz roll. Labels: *long buzzes*, *buzz roll*.
- Staff 2:** A sequence of bounces (R, R, R, R, R, R) followed by L bounces (L, L, L, L, L, L), then two bounces (R, R, L, L, R, R, L, L) ending with a repeat sign. Labels: *bounces*, *two bounces*.
- Staff 3:** A sequence of constant motion (R, R, L, L, B, B) followed by a slow down section (R, L, B, R, L, R, L) ending with a single stroke roll. Labels: *constant motion*, *isolated strokes*, *single stroke roll*.

Diddles: Things to Consider

- Develop over time
- Emphasize space between notes with subdivision
- Recovery is extremely important
- Diddles need a little weight behind them (no arm cast)
- Sequence the skills

Diddle Progression Step Two

Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff contains 16 measures of eighth notes, with some measures having double notes (RR or LL). The second staff contains 16 measures of eighth notes, also with some double notes. The notation is designed to be played with a diddler, with R and L indicating right and left strokes.

Playing at Different Heights

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

First time: A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a crescendo exercise. The staff starts with a downward arrow (↓) and ends with an upward arrow (↑). The notation shows a sequence of eighth notes that increase in volume over time, indicated by a wedge-shaped crescendo line. Labels: *first time*, *second time*, *15'*.

4. Develop the decrescendo

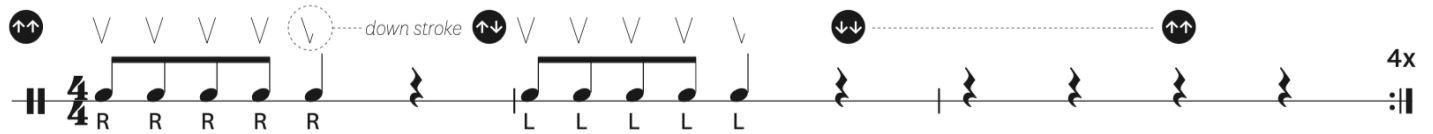
Second time: A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a decrescendo exercise. The staff starts with an upward arrow (↑) and ends with a downward arrow (↓). The notation shows a sequence of eighth notes that decrease in volume over time, indicated by a wedge-shaped decrescendo line. Labels: *first time*, *second time*, *15'*.

Exploring Different Strokes

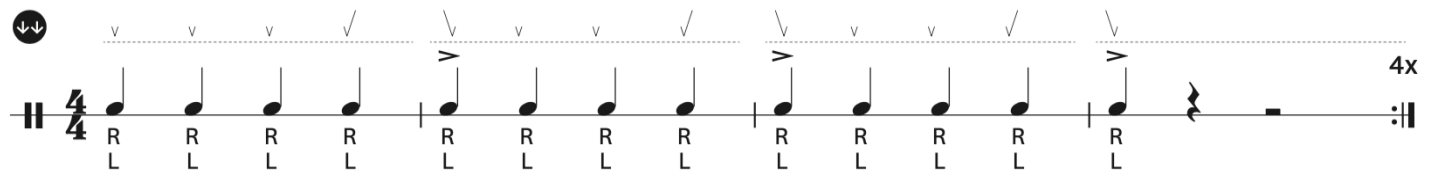
- Develop specific mechanics when learning a new stroke
- Tune your highs and lows
- Develop a high level of contrast

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

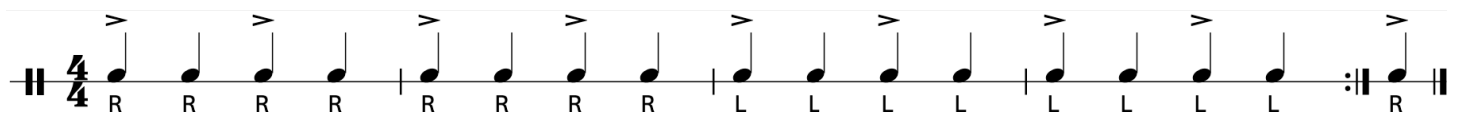
Down Stroke Exercise



Up/Down Exercise



Bucks



Getting From the Academic to the Actual

IV. Mallets

Musical Alphabet

- Recite forwards and backwards
- View horizontal and vertical
- Apply to the staff
- Apply to the instrument

Musical Alphabet: Horizontal

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A
B	C	D	E	F	G	A	B
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
D	E	F	G	A	B	C	D
E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E
F	G	A	B	C	D	E	F
G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G

Musical Alphabet: Vertical

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
G	A	B	C	D	E	F
F	G	A	B	C	D	E
E	F	G	A	B	C	D
D	E	F	G	A	B	C
C	D	E	F	G	A	B
B	C	D	E	F	G	A
A	B	C	D	E	F	G

The Instrument

- Musical Alphabet
- Bars, resonators, frame, height adjustment
- Nodal points
- Playing areas

Piston Stroke

- 1/3 up the mallet
- Mimics rebound stroke

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

E is to the right of the 2 black notes.



F is to the left of the 3 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

Tetrachords

- Build the mechanics of scales in smaller chunks
- Opportunity for faster corrections on playing areas, stroke, and note accuracy
- Teach starting hand positions (both “white keys,” both “black keys,” staggered)
- Create scales quickly
- Quickly teach Circle of Fourths



Major Scales and Arpeggios

- Play off the Left Hand and Right Hand
- Arpeggios in quarters, then 8ths
- Stand in the middle of each scale (change standing position)



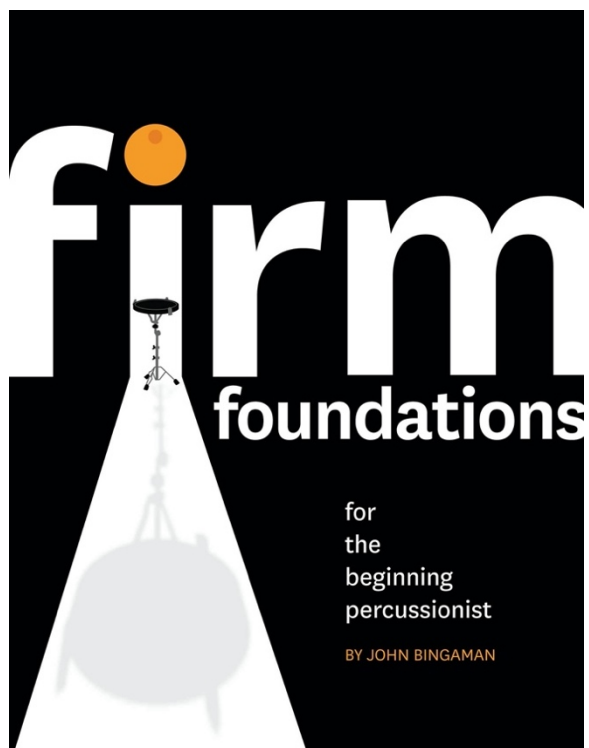
Reading and Playing Mallets

- Music stand should be low and close to the keyboard
- Read and play “black keys” first
- After, read and play “white keys”
- One Step Reading: Adjacent Space or Line
- Focus on Up = Right, Down = Left
- All mistakes are not created equal

More Important Technical Skills

- Thirds
- Green
- Two octave scales

Higher Starting Points = Higher Finishing Points



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