



# BEGINNING PERCUSSION CURRICULUM

Beginning Percussion Curriculum: A Survey of Methods and Materials Used in Teaching

Beginning Percussionists

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# BEGINNING PERCUSSION CURRICULUM

## **Abstract**

The first few years of percussion instruction are crucial for young musicians. This is when beginning percussionists will learn the fundamental skills necessary to become successful musicians. Many undergraduate students are required to take a percussion method class as a part of their degree program. Undergraduate method classes often focus on introductory knowledge of learning to play some instruments and how to teach students basic skills. Due to time constraints, classes rarely discuss the variety of resources available for teachers to use. The purpose of this empirical study is to help new and current teachers know what resources are available to use as a part of the beginning band curriculum. Further, it will give teachers a better understanding of each resource's benefit. In this study, beginning percussion teachers were surveyed to gather background information, information on methods and materials used, and the factors considered when selecting these resources. The data was compiled and analyzed to create a list of resources that are currently being used as a part of the beginning percussion curriculum.

### **Acknowledgments**

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# BEGINNING PERCUSSION CURRICULUM

## Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
Statement of Purpose .....	1
Rationale .....	1
Expected Findings.....	2
Chapter 2: Background Information on Instruments, Methods, and Teaching Percussion .....	3
Percussion Instrument Classifications and Definitions.....	3
Percussion Method Books & Supplementary Materials .....	4
Teaching Percussion .....	5
Chapter 3: Determining a List of Beginning Band Methods & Materials.....	10
Survey Questions .....	10
Data Analysis .....	12
Survey Responses .....	13
Correlations and Findings .....	23
Chapter 4: Conclusions .....	25
Expected and Unexpected Findings.....	25
Improvements to the Study .....	26

## BEGINNING PERCUSSION CURRICULUM

Potential Future Research .....	27
Reflection .....	28
Appendices.....	29
Appendix A: Survey .....	29
Appendix B: Survey Invitation .....	33
Appendix C: Survey Results .....	35
References .....	42

## BEGINNING PERCUSSION CURRICULUM

### List of Tables

Table 1: State Where Participant's School is Located.....	13
Table 2: Participant's Primary Instrument.....	14
Table 3: Instructional Settings for Beginning Percussion Students.....	16
Table 4: Method Books Used with Beginning Percussion Students.....	18
Table 5: Factors Influencing the Use of Selected Method Book(s).....	19
Table 6: Supplementary Materials Used with Beginning Percussion Students.....	21
Table 7: Factors Influencing the Use of Selected Supplementary Materials.....	22



# BEGINNING PERCUSSION CURRICULUM

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Grade Levels Taught as a Part of Beginning Band .....	15
Figure 2: Instruments Taught to Beginning Percussionists .....	17

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Statement of Purpose**

This empirical study will investigate what percussion methods and materials are utilized when teaching beginning percussionists during group lessons and full band instruction. A survey will be administered to teachers of beginning percussion students in the United States. It will request information on the background of the teacher's program as well as what beginning percussion resources are used as a part of their curriculum. This study will explore the method books and supplemental materials being used. Additionally, it will examine what influenced those resources to be chosen. The data will be analyzed and compiled into a list of resources. Furthermore, motivation for employing each method or material will be addressed.

### **Rationale**

The first few years of percussion instruction are crucial for young musicians. This is when beginning percussionists will learn the fundamental skills necessary to become successful musicians. Before entering the field, many teachers, as undergraduate students, are required to take a percussion method class as a part of their degree program. Undergraduate methods classes can consist of as little as one semester of learning. These method classes often focus on introductory knowledge of learning to play instruments and how to teach students basic skills. One semester is hardly enough time to cover the various techniques and skills needed to prepare young percussionists. In addition, classes rarely discuss the many methods and materials available to teach beginning percussion students. This study will help new and current teachers know what resources are available to use as a part of the beginning band curriculum. Furthermore, it will give teachers a better understanding of each resource's benefit as a part of

the beginning percussion curriculum. Ultimately, the knowledge gained from this study will help aid teachers in selecting the best resources for their beginning band program and curriculum.

### **Expected Findings**

This study aims to discover what methods and materials are the most popular and widely used for teaching beginning percussion. Additionally, it will look at what factors influenced teachers to use these resources as a part of their curriculum. In order to achieve this goal, I will collect survey responses from current beginning percussion teachers. I anticipate that I will be able to receive many responses by employing this survey during the summer months. Since the school year is a hectic time for teachers, the break during the summer months seems to be an ideal time to complete a survey. To encourage participation, the survey responses will be kept anonymous.

I foresee a great variety of method books and resources being used by teachers due to the number of currently available resources. From the results, I expect that there will be trends in what resources are utilized within similar settings. For example, some teachers within the same state may use the same resources due to their county or district's curriculum requirements. In other cases, band directors who only teach in heterogeneous settings may use the same or similar method books as other directors in a different state but teach in a similar heterogeneous environment. Since there are countless percussion resources available today, I anticipate there will be a variety of supplementary materials used in addition to method books. Ultimately, after examining and compiling the survey responses, teachers can use the findings to help decide what methods and materials are the most beneficial for their beginning percussion curriculum.

## **Chapter 2: Background Information on Instruments, Methods, and Teaching Percussion**

### **Percussion Instrument Classifications and Definitions**

When teaching percussion, directors must know the wide range of instruments that students will be required to perform. Some commonly played percussion instruments are the snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, keyboard, and accessory, also known as auxiliary, instruments. The keyboard, also known as bar or mallet, percussion group contains a variety of instruments such as the marimba, xylophone, vibraphone, concert bells or glockenspiel, chimes, crotales, celesta, marching band lyre, and electronic keyboard musical instrument digital interface (MIDI) controllers (Cook, 2019). Accessory instruments include tambourines, triangles, tam-tams and gongs, wood blocks, temple blocks, cowbells, castanets, finger cymbals, ratchets, slapsticks, anvils, brake drums, metal plates, pipes, sleigh bells, sandpaper blocks, wind chimes, lujon, horns, marching machine, horse hooves, slit drums, log drums, percussion aerophones, toys, and exotic instruments (Cook, 2019). Additionally, these instruments in the percussion family can be classified into four groups: membranophones, idiophones, chordophones, and aerophones, based on Sach's classification of instruments (Cook, 2019).

Instruments that produce sounds through a vibrating membrane are classified as membranophones. These instruments contain a membrane, commonly a plastic head or animal skin stretched over a bowl or a shell. Percussion membranophones include bongos, timbales, snare drums, bass drums, tom-toms, and timpani (Cook, 2019). Idiophones are instruments that create sounds through the vibration of their entire body. These can be struck, shaken, rubbed, scraped, or bowed. Percussion instruments that are idiophones include cymbals, triangles, claves, wood blocks, temple blocks, slapsticks, guiros, maracas, cowbells, gongs, steel drums, and keyboard percussion instruments (Cook, 2019). Chordophone instruments generate sounds

through vibrating strings. The strings can be stretched through or over a resonating box to help amplify the sound. Chordophones can be played by stroking, rubbing, striking, or plucking a string. Examples of percussion chordophones include the lion's roar and the piano (Cook, 2019). Aerophones are instruments that make sounds through an enclosed, vibrating column of air. These include whistles, horns, bullroarers, wind machines, and sirens found in the percussion family (Cook, 2019).

When looking at teaching beginner percussionists, it is important to consider what instruments in the percussion family should be taught. A "total percussionist is defined as a person who can play the snare drum, timpani, keyboard percussion, and accessory instruments" (Martin, 2017, p. iii). When teaching percussion students, our goal should be to train students to become total percussionists who successfully perform on various instruments in the percussion family. Cook (2019) states that it is essential for early percussion instruction to include training on both the keyboard percussion instruments and the drums. Additionally, he recommends that students need to study the drum set, all accessory instruments, and the timpani as they develop their skills. Mixon (2002) agrees that keyboard and snare drum instruction should occur from the beginning of a percussionist's training to create versatile percussionists. Furthermore, he advocates that all percussionists should be required to learn keyboard percussion, snare, accessory instruments, and timpani.

### **Percussion Method Books & Supplementary Materials**

Method books are valuable materials used in the instrumental music classroom. These books can help support and even influence a curriculum. Riddell (2016) describes a method book as a textbook for band class. He states that the method book guides students starting from their first note and beyond, advancing through music in a pedagogical and sequential order.

Additionally, method books are used by teachers to help create classroom activities from the materials presented (Robinson, 1977).

Several factors can influence a band director to choose a specific method book. Some of these factors include class time length, number of weekly periods, concepts presented, heterogeneous or homogeneous class groupings, variety of instruments in a heterogeneous class, pacing, facilities, age of beginners, the depth of content, the quality of the conductor's part, and the economic level of the community and students (Swack, 2015).

When looking specifically at percussion methods, many band methods offer a combined percussion book to help teach students a variety of percussion instruments. These may include keyboard percussion, snare, bass drum, and accessory instruments (Mixon, 2002). Wilson (2008) reviewed a variety of band method books for percussion. He stated that each method book contained serious flaws, therefore, recommending that band directors need to provide additional instruction or use supplemental materials to help students be successful and to counteract each method book's deficiencies.

## **Teaching Percussion**

### ***Band Director Preparation in Percussion***

Teaching percussion may seem daunting for new band directors whose primary instrument is not percussion. Undergraduate method classes in percussion may be some teachers' only experience with percussion instruments and teaching the subject before entering the field. Wilson (2018) discusses the importance of these method classes for future band directors. He notes that non-percussionist band directors' training during collegiate education impacts their ability to teach percussion. The percussion method class aims to teach the developing educator how to perform and train students on that instrument. Wilson discerns that this is a minuscule

amount of time to learn such a large family of instruments, especially if percussion is not the future educator's primary instrument. Austin (2006) agrees that there is a large amount of content to be covered in a percussion method class when looking at the number of instruments and techniques used. Despite the large amount of material that must be taught, he notes that many institutions require the same amount of percussion methods credits as wind or string method classes. Rote (2018) states that it is understandable that non-percussionist band directors would be less proficient in teaching percussion, especially if most of their percussion training is only from a semester-long percussion method course. He explains that these courses attempt to cover about six to eight years of instruction into one semester.

Since the method class only gives emerging teachers a limited overview of teaching percussion, directors must look at what will help make their beginning percussionists successful. Directors should know the challenges and demands set on beginning percussion students. They will need to look at how to approach these challenges and help their students become successful musicians.

### ***Challenges of Beginning Percussion Instruction***

Many challenges and demands need to be considered when teaching beginning percussionists. Beginning percussion students must have strong spatial awareness, be able to play a range of different instruments, and meet the increased demands of the percussion parts in current band literature.

One challenge percussion students face relates to their body position and spatial awareness. Though all musicians must have body awareness, percussionists must have a solid spatial awareness when playing instruments. They must be conscious of their body position when playing instruments with multiple surfaces, such as tom-toms, keyboards, or the timpani

(Janners, 2003). This is not an ability that comes naturally to all students; therefore, it is important to note that this skill may need to be addressed and worked on with students.

Another challenge brought upon percussion students comes from the assortment of instruments that must be learned. These students must be versatile and trained in all percussion instruments (Riddell, 2016). Percussionists need to learn a wide variety of instruments versus students studying wind instruments. Percussion students must learn multiple instruments and their respective techniques, while wind instrumentalists may only have to study one embouchure and one set of fingerings for their instrument (Janners, 2003). Additionally, due to the variety of instruments being learned, percussionists are forced to divide their learning time to try to be successful at the many different instruments (Weyer, 2010). Wilson (2018) points out that it is common for young percussionists to be weak at playing their instruments due to needing to learn a wide range of instruments and their techniques from band directors with potentially inadequate training. He also notes that beginning percussionists have an opportunity to become well-rounded performers on their instruments with the correct guidance.

Percussion parts in band repertoire also provide new challenges for beginning percussionists. Wilson (2018) analyzed recent trends in grade one band repertoire to see what was required for percussion instrumentation and their techniques. He observed the challenges placed on young percussionists regarding the variety and number of instruments used in grade one literature and the musical and technical demand placed on these young musicians. Cook (2019) also notes the obligation for students to be able to perform demanding parts that require skills that are beyond the average school percussionist's training. Another challenge relating to percussion parts is the requirement to frequently play one part that contains several different instruments to perform (Janners, 2003).



Knowing and considering these challenges and demands is important when looking at percussion instruction and methods. By knowing potential problems, directors can look at the best way to prevent, address, and conquer these issues. Teachers can look at what they can do to help find the best way for their students to become successful.

### ***Instrument Groupings***

When teaching beginning percussionists, it is essential to look at what factors will help students become successful performers and musicians. Preston (1975) performed a study and found the research showed that the method of instruction and class groupings were some of the factors that may have influenced the success of beginning percussionists. Many educators agree that it is crucial to have a small group or class lesson time to address beginning instrumentalists' needs and help students become successful.

Cook (2019) emphasizes that due to the many requirements of the beginning percussionist, it is crucial to have separate percussion meetings where teachers can address the various techniques and potential problems when performing on all the percussion instruments. He recommends establishing a regular meeting time, or class lesson time, for beginning percussionists outside the heterogeneous band class to give students a thorough percussion education. Cook states that these meetings also need to cover proper ways to maintain and organize these instruments for performance. He notes that some systems create homogeneous instrumental groups to meet these needs.

When establishing class lesson times, band directors often choose to group students based on instrumentation. Some teachers choose homogeneous instrumentation for small groups, while others prefer heterogeneous instrumentation. Homogeneous instrumentation is described as a

system where students are all playing the same instrument versus heterogeneous instrumentation, consisting of a mixed instrumentation group (Babcock, 2003).

Babcock (2003) discusses the advantages of these homogeneous instrument classes when teaching beginning band, specifically during the first year of instruction. She states that the main advantage of homogeneous instrument classes is the ability to focus on a specific skill versus needing to address techniques for various band instruments at once. An opposite model suggests placing beginning instrumentalists in small heterogeneous classes. The justification for this grouping is that students will need to consistently listen to adjust for rhythm and pitch while trying to blend their different instrument timbres (Babcock, 2003).

Ultimately, it is seen that a separate meeting time outside of the heterogeneous band class is essential to establish when teaching beginning percussionists. Directors need to look at the benefits of homogeneous and heterogeneous class groups and decide what the best solution is to match what they are looking to accomplish for their program. In setting up these regular meeting times, teachers can hope to address the many challenges that may face their beginning percussionists when starting to study their instruments.

### **Chapter 3: Determining a List of Beginning Band Methods & Materials**

To collect data for my study, I created an online survey using Google Forms. This survey was designed to ask teachers about the background of their band programs and what methods and materials they use for teaching beginning percussion students. The survey was titled “Beginning Percussion Methods and Materials.” It was distributed on July 9, 2022, through social media on two Facebook groups, “Band Directors” and “Beginning Band Engagement (Band Director Chat Room),” and on my personal social media account. My goal was to gather approximately 50 responses. The purpose of my survey was to collect data in order to create a list of resources currently being used to teach beginning percussion. From this list, beginning band teachers can know what methods and materials are available as well as why these resources were selected by teachers.

#### **Survey Questions**

This survey consisted of eight main questions and two sub-questions. Questions were formatted to allow for ease of use for participants to respond. The types of questions included yes or no, multiple choice, check all that apply, and short answers to allow participants an opportunity to explain their responses.

The first question of the survey was a qualifying question to establish if the director taught beginning percussion. Question one asked, “Do you teach beginning percussion students?” The available responses included “yes” or “no.” If answered “yes,” I was able to use their response in my data collection. If a participant selected “no” the survey would allow the participants to finish and exit the survey.

The next five questions were demographic and background questions. These questions acted to provide background information on the teacher’s background and their band program.

Question two asked, “In which U.S. state is your school located?” The drop-down menu of choices included all fifty states in the United States to select an answer from.

Question three asked, “What is your primary instrument?” It included sixteen multiple-choice options: Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Saxophone, Bassoon, Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone, Euphonium/Baritone, Tuba, Percussion, Violin, Viola, Cello, Bass, and Voice.

Question four asked, “What grade levels do you teach as a part of your beginning band? Please check all that apply below.” Participants could select from any of the six options provided as well as one write-in option as well: 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade, and “Other.”

Question five asked, “What setting(s) do you teach beginning percussion students? Please check all that apply below.” Participants were able to select from any of the two options provided as well as one write-in option: Group lessons, Full band instruction, and “Other.”

Question six asked, “What instruments do you teach to your beginning percussionists? Please check all that apply below.” Participants could again select from any of the six options provided as well as one write-in option as well: Snare Drum, Bass Drum, Timpani, Keyboard Instruments, Cymbals, Accessory Instruments (tambourine, triangle, etc.), and “Other.”

The next four questions asked for specific information on what method books and supplementary materials were used in their classroom to teach beginning percussionists and why they were chosen.

Question seven asked, “What method book do you use with your beginning percussionists? Please check all that apply below.” Participants could select from any of the twenty-four options provided as well as one write-in option.

Question eight asked, “What factor(s) influenced you to use the method book(s) in the previous question?” Participants could select from any of the thirteen options provided as well as one write-in option.

Question nine asked, “What supplementary materials do you use with your beginning percussionists? Please check all that apply below.” Participants could select from any of the nine options provided as well as one write-in option:

Question ten asked, “What factor(s) influenced you to use the supplementary material(s) in the previous question?” Participants were able to provide a short answer describing why they chose to use the supplementary material(s) that they answered in the previous question.

Before the distribution of this survey, I sent the survey to three colleagues to check for lack of clarity or any errors. After my initial posting on July 9, 2022, I received 28 responses. I posted my survey again on July 26, 2022, in hopes of gaining more teacher feedback. I received 24 additional responses totaling 52 responses. Of these responses, 47 were viable for collecting data for my project findings.

### **Data Analysis**

The survey responses were collected using Google Forms. This tool compiled the results into multiple formats which made the data easier to view and analyze. These formats allowed the responses to be organized in different ways which helped to evaluate and compare the submitted answers. One format organized the results into a Google Sheet that could be manipulated to compare specific answers between specific questions or even multiple questions. Another format allowed the data to be arranged into graphs or charts based on the question type or answers, allowing results to be clearly viewed and deciphered. Responses were also able to be viewed in summary (through charts and graphs), grouped answers by the question, and by individual's

responses to each question. Being able to use and manipulate data through the different formats in Google Forms allowed me to gather results and find correlations between answers.

## Survey Responses

### *State Where Participant Teaches*

Participants were able to select what state their school was located in. Twenty-two states were represented through the forty-seven responses. The top four states represented were Pennsylvania (8), New Jersey (6), Texas (5), and Kansas (4). Though all 50 states were not represented there was a wide variety of states represented across the country.

**Table 1**

### *State Where Participant's School is Located*

State located	Number of responses
Pennsylvania	8
New Jersey	6
Texas	5
Kansas	4
Connecticut	2
Illinois	2
Indiana	2
Michigan	2
New York	2
South Dakota	2
Arizona	1
Arkansas	1
Colorado	1
Idaho	1
Louisiana	1

Maryland	1
Missouri	1
North Carolina	1
North Dakota	1
Ohio	1
Oklahoma	1
Oregon	1

### *Participant's Primary Instrument*

Participants were able to select their primary instrument of study. Ten instruments were represented through the collected responses. The top three instruments included Flute (8), Percussion (8), and Clarinet (7). Almost all the band instruments that were listed as an option were represented. There were no participants whose primary instrument was the bassoon or a string instrument.

**Table 2**

### *Participant's Primary Instrument*

<b>Primary instrument</b>	<b>Number of times selected</b>
Flute	8
Percussion	8
Clarinet	7
Trumpet	5
Euphonium/Baritone	5
Tuba	5
Saxophone	4
Trombone	3
Oboe	1
Voice	1

### ***Grade Levels Taught in Beginning Band Program***

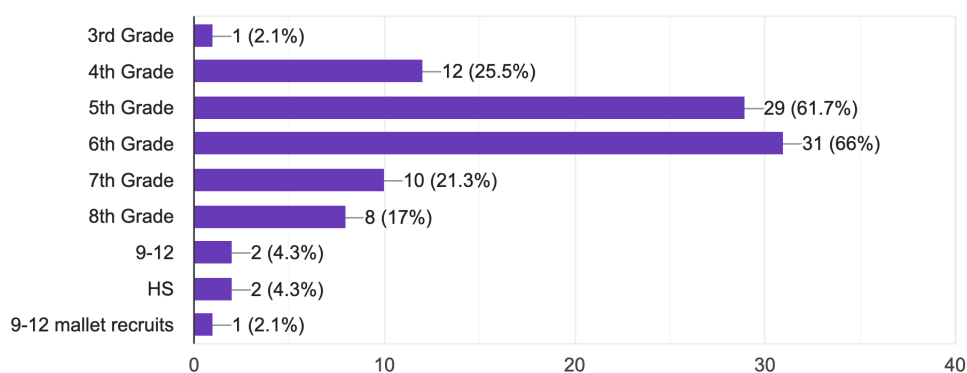
Each district and school has different grade levels represented as a part of their beginning band program. Participants were able to select what grade level they taught as a part of their beginning band. Ten grade levels were represented through the collected responses. The option included typical grade levels that start beginning bands as well as “HS” for high school beginners. The decision to provide an additional option of “other” proved to be useful for participants to clarify their responses if desired. Sixth and fifth grade was the most often taught grade levels as a part of a beginning band, followed by fourth grade. Sixth grade was taught by 31 participants, fifth grade was taught by 29 participants, and fourth grade was taught by 12 participants. The most popular grade level ranges taught were fifth and sixth grade which had eight responses followed by fourth and fifth grade which had seven responses.

**Figure 1**

### ***Grade Levels Taught as a Part of Beginning Band***

4.) What grade levels do you teach as a part of your beginning band? Please check any that apply below.

47 responses



### ***Instructional Settings***

Participants were able to select the setting(s) in which they teach beginning percussion students. Six settings were represented through the collected responses. The decision to provide



an additional option of “other” proved to be useful for participants to clarify their responses if desired. Some participants chose to break down group lessons further into homogeneous or heterogeneous categories. Twenty-two participants teach in both group lessons and a full band instruction setting while eleven participants only teach in a full band setting and eight participants only teach during group lessons. Two participants not only teach beginning percussionists during group lessons and full band instruction time, but their students are also taught in an individual lesson setting.

**Table 3**

*Instructional Settings for Beginning Percussion Students*

<b>Instructional setting</b>	<b>Number of times selected</b>
Group lessons	32
Full band instruction	35
Homogeneous beginner class	2
Individual lessons	2
Group with either brass or woodwind class	1
Beginner Percussion Ensemble	1

*Percussion Instruments Taught*

Each beginning percussion curriculum provides content on a different range of percussion instruments. Participants were able to select what instruments are taught to their beginning percussionist as a part of their curriculum. Seven instruments or instrument categories (e.g., accessory instruments) were represented through the collected responses. Snare drum, keyboard instruments, and bass drum were the top three instruments taught followed by accessory instruments. Of the responses collected, 100% of the responses included the snare drum, 98% of responses included keyboard instruments and 92% of responses the included bass

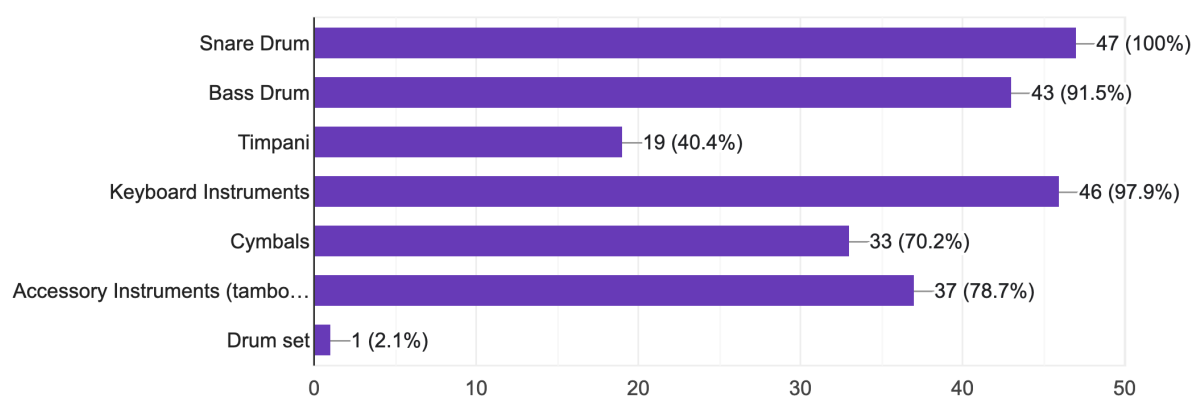
drum. The most popular “set” of instruments taught, as a part of the participants’ percussion curriculum, included the snare drum, bass drum, timpani, keyboard instruments, cymbals, and accessory instruments which were all selected by seventeen participants.

**Figure 2**

*Instruments Taught to Beginning Percussionists*

6.) What instruments do you teach to your beginning percussionists? Please check all that apply below.

47 responses



***Method Books***

There are a variety of method books available to use to teach beginning percussionists. Participants were able to select what method book they use as a part of their beginning percussion curriculum. Thirty method books were represented through the collected responses. The decision to provide an additional option of “other” proved to be useful for participants to clarify or add their responses if desired. The top three method books used were Essential Elements, Standard of Excellence, and Alfred’s Drum Method. Twenty-seven participants only use one method book when teaching beginning percussion. Ten participants use a combination of two method books. Two participants use a combination of three different method books. Five participants use a combination of four different method books while three participants use a

combination of five or more different method books. The most popular combination of method books used was Alfred's Drum Method and Essential Elements with two participants selecting both books.

**Table 4**

*Method Books Used with Beginning Percussion Students*

<b>Method book used</b>	<b>Number of times selected</b>
Essential Elements	12
Standard of Excellence	9
Alfred's Drum Method	8
Accent of Achievement	6
Fresh Approach to Snare Drum	5
Sound Innovations for Concert Band	5
Tradition of Excellence	5
Fresh Approach to Mallet Percussion	4
Simple Steps to Successful Beginning Percussion	4
Measures of Success	3
Developing the Percussionist	2
Habits of a Successful Beginner Band Musician	2
Haskell Harr Drum Method	2
The Mallet Player's Toolbox	2
The Snare Drummer's Toolbox	2
Self-made Lessons/Book	2
Bandfolio	1
Breeze Easy Method 1 Drums	1
Ed Sueta Band Method	1
Fundamental Studies for Mallets	1
Fundamental Studies for the Snare Drum	1

Hal Leonard Snare Drum Method	1
Learn to Play the Keyboard Percussion	1
The Ludwig Drum Method	1
Making Music Matter	1
“The Packet”	1
Performing Percussionist	1
Rubank Method	1
Reading Mallet Percussion Music	1
Solo Expressions for the Beginning Percussionist	1
N/A	1

### ***Factors Considered when Selecting Method Book(s)***

Participants were able to choose what factors influenced them in using the selected method book(s) as a part of their beginning percussion curriculum. Fifteen factors were represented through the collected responses. Again, the decision to provide an additional option of “other” proved to be useful for participants to clarify or add their responses if desired. The top three factors for selecting these method books were “includes fundamental skills and/or rudiments” which was selected by 70% of participants, “part of a method for full band” which was selected by 62% of participants, and “sequence of concepts/pacing” which was selected by 57% of participants.

**Table 5**

### ***Factors Influencing the Use of Selected Method Book(s)***

<b>Factors influencing use of method book(s)</b>	<b>Number of times selected</b>
Includes fundamental skills and/or rudiments	33
Part of a method for full band	30
Sequence of concepts/pacing	27

Method already in possession by school district	20
Includes multimedia	12
Covers all percussion instruments and/or techniques	11
Inclusion of solo/ensemble work	11
Includes pictures and/or graphic aids	10
Alignment with NAfME and/or state standards	7
Includes music theory	7
Multiple books within the series	6
Student interest	2
Told to by head director	1
Familiarity	1
Does not use a method book	1

### ***Supplementary Materials***

There are countless supplementary materials available to use as a part of the beginning percussion curriculum. Participants were able to select what supplementary materials they use. Fifteen different materials were represented through the collected responses. Again, the decision to provide an additional option of “other” proved to be useful for participants to clarify or add their responses if desired. The top resource used as supplementary material was “self-created content” with 55% of participants selecting this response. The next most popular resource used was “youtube.com” with 53% of participants selecting this response. The third most popular resource used was “vicfirth.com” with 43% of participants selecting this response. It was surprising to see that four participants did not use any supplementary materials at all with their beginning percussionists. Ten participants only use one supplementary material. Seven participants use two supplementary materials. While the other twenty-six participants use three or more supplementary materials.

**Table 6***Supplementary Materials Used with Beginning Percussion Students*

<b>Supplementary materials used</b>	<b>Number of times selected</b>
Self-created content	26
Youtube.com	25
Vicfirth.com	20
Musictheory.net	18
TeachersPayTeachers	18
SmartMusic software	6
Staff wars	4
Does not use supplementary materials	4
The Drum Dictionary app	1
MusicFirst	1
NARD rudiments	1
Practicing Musician	1
Rhythm Cat	1
Stone Stick Control	1
Snare drum rolls explanation worksheet	1

***Factors Considered when Selecting Supplementary Material(s)***

Participants were able to describe what factors influenced them to use their selected supplementary materials. The collected responses were compiled and categorized to represent nineteen factors used when selecting these supplementary materials. The most stated factor considered by seventeen participants, when selecting these materials, was to use material(s) that “reinforces or focuses on a specific concept(s) outside of the method book.” “Ease of access” of supplementary materials was also noted by four participants.

**Table 7***Factors Influencing the Use of Selected Supplementary Materials*

<b>Factors influencing the use of supplementary materials</b>	<b>Number of times selected</b>
Reinforces or focuses on a specific concept(s) outside of the method book	17
Ease of access	4
N/A or no reason given	4
No reason given	3
Clarity of information presented	2
Explains percussion concepts in a “better way”	2
Note review/practice for keyboard instruments	2
Pacing	2
Quality resource	2
Student interest	2
Alignment with method book used	1
Allows chance to hear other instruments and how their part fits.	1
Audio examples	1
Available technology	1
Expansion of curriculum in an affordable and accessible way	1
Material used or developed by colleague(s)	1
Previous success rate	1
Selected after attending workshop about the materials	1
Use of more visual representation	1

***Correlations and Findings***

One of my main goals was to see if there was any correlation between the methods being used and the factors considered when selecting to use that specific method book(s). Data was analyzed to find correlations between the factors considered and the top three most popular

method books. The top three method books selected by participants in this survey were Essential Elements, Standard of Excellence, and Alfred's Drum Method.

According to the data, the top reasons directors selected Essential Elements were as follows: "a part of a method for full band" (selected by 9 participants), "includes fundamental skills and/or rudiments" (selected by 7 participants), and "already in possession by the school district" (selected by 6 participants). Standard of Excellence was selected due to the following factors: "a part of a method for full band" (selected by 9 participants), "includes fundamental skills and/or rudiments" (selected by 5 participants), and "already in possession by the school district" (selected by 5 participants). Lastly, data on Alfred's Drum Method book was analyzed for the top factors considered by directors when deciding to use this method. The top factors selected were "includes fundamental skills and/or rudiments" (selected by 8 participants) and "sequence of concepts/pacing" (selected by 7 participants).

Next, the survey data was analyzed to find any correlation between the instructional setting and the resources selected. There was no correlation between specific instructional settings and one, or a few, distinct method books. However, when looking at specific method books, all participants that selected "Sounds Innovation" also chose "full band instruction" and "group lesson" as their instructional settings. Additionally, all of the participants that use "Simple Steps to Successful Beginning Percussion" did not select "full band instruction" as one of the settings where they teach beginning percussion.

Later, a comparison was looked at between the responses of primary instruments, specifically percussion, and the resources selected. Three out of four participants who selected "Fresh Approach to Mallet Percussion" also chose "Percussion" as their primary instrument. The final correlation was among participants who selected "Simple Steps to Successful Beginning



Percussion.” Two out of three participants that chose that method also selected “Percussion” as their primary instrument.

The final correlation noted was the most popular method books by the state where the band director teaches. When analyzing this data, the top three best-represented states were considered: Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Texas. Pennsylvania’s most popular method book selected was “Alfred’s Drum Method” (selected by three participants), New Jersey’s was “Essential Elements” (selected by three participants), and Texas’ was “Simple Steps to Successful Beginning Percussion” (selected by three participants).

## **Chapter 4: Conclusions**

### **Expected and Unexpected Findings**

When deploying this survey, I had some expected outcomes in mind. After reviewing the results, I could confirm some of my expected outcomes, but I was also surprised by some of the results and correlations. Some of my expected findings included seeing a wide variety of methods used, seeing new methods and materials shared, and seeing well-known full band instruction methods being used. My unexpected findings dealt with the correlations between results within the survey.

While creating this survey, I researched and included a wide variety of twenty-three method book choices for band directors to select from. Nineteen of these twenty-three methods (83%) were selected as being used by current beginning percussion teachers. Though the results already showed a comprehensive selection of methods being used, I knew that there were numerous additional methods available for band and percussion. I fully expected to see more methods being listed under “other.” I was correct with this expectation, as a total of thirty methods were represented in the results. Eleven additional methods were provided and selected as being a part of a beginning percussion curriculum.

Through my experience teaching band and through discussions with colleagues, I have come to find that full band methods are often used by beginning band teachers. Full band methods are convenient for teaching skills in full band instruction as well as with homogeneous and heterogeneous small groups. Going into this survey, I expected the full band methods to be popular selections. I was correct as comprehensive band methods were selected forty-five times as being used in a percussion curriculum.

On an opposite note, when reviewing my findings, I found various unexpected results in my research. I expected there to be many correlations between the results chosen. Specifically, I was surprised to find that there were no major correlations between the instructional settings and specific method(s) being used. I expected there to be trends within each instructional setting and the methods selected. This was not the case as the same methods were used across instructional settings.

Additionally, I expected there to be some correlations between the states where directors teach, and the method(s) being used. Some districts and counties in the United States create a curriculum for the entire district and/or county. These curriculums can include specific methods and materials to be used when teaching. This knowledge led me to my assumption of some correlations between states and methods. This was not the case. There was no clear pattern found between the locations and the methods used as a part of their beginning percussion curriculum.

### **Improvements to the Study**

Throughout the research process, I have learned what aspects of this project went successfully and what aspects could have been improved upon. Overall, I am pleased with the format of my survey and the intent behind the questions asked. I felt that I asked what I sought to identify in order to accomplish my goal. Though the question asked assisted greatly in my research, if I could improve my study, I would change or expand upon a few questions as well as attain more results.

The main item that I would have wished to change for my research is the number of responses. Though I was close to my goal, in an ideal situation, I would have liked to have a much greater number of responses. Having a bigger number of results would have helped to have more resources found, more correlations seen, and more conclusions drawn. After seeing my

results and reviewing my questions again, I feel that a few changes may have helped to increase my pool of responses.

Despite having colleagues trial my survey for potential misconceptions, I do feel that some questions could have been worded differently, or expanded upon, to not limit my result pool. For example, my second question asked which U.S. state the band director taught in. After deploying my survey on social media, one potential respondent commented that she lived outside of the United States of America therefore, she could not take my survey. I had not considered there would be teachers worldwide available to take my survey. Had I considered this, I may have been able to get a greater pool of responses.

Another question that I could have modified to potentially increase my number of responses was question one. In this question, I asked, “Do you teach beginning percussion students?” I had not considered opening the question up to band directors that used to teach beginning percussion but may not anymore. Had I opened this question up to past and present beginning percussion teachers, I may have had a greater number of results to review.

### **Potential Future Research**

The results found in this study could be used in a variety of ways for future research in teaching beginning percussionists and the beginning percussion curriculum. When examining methods, researchers can compare the best methods for teaching specific percussion instruments or groupings of percussion instruments. Researchers can also take a deeper dive by looking at the best supplementary materials for specific method books. If a specific method book is lacking material for a certain percussion instrument, they can examine the best supplementary material(s) to balance that specific method book. An analysis can also be done to look at these methods and see which ones are best for specific age groups of beginners. Likewise, these methods could be

studied to see if there is a particular method that is best suited for specific instructional settings. For example, what method is best for teachers who teach full band instruction, heterogeneous group lessons, or even homogeneous group lessons?

### **Reflection**

As a teacher whose primary instrument is not percussion, I often feel that my knowledge of teaching percussion is limited to my previous method classes and my short experience teaching beginning band. I was very interested in this topic in hopes of expanding my knowledge of teaching percussion and, in hopes of helping others with similar interests do the same.

The main goal of this study was to discover what methods and materials are the most popular and widely used for teaching beginning percussion as well as, what factors influenced teachers to implement these resources into their beginning percussion curriculum. This goal was accomplished by surveying beginning percussion teachers. The results of this survey provided a list of a wide variety of methods and materials that band directors can use as a part of their beginning percussion curriculum. Additionally, the results showed what factors were the most important when choosing these resources.



In conclusion, I hope that my research will at least be a starting point, if not more, to help other band directors and percussion teachers strengthen their beginning percussion programs and curriculum. Whether it is through the inspiration of future research or through helping new band directors, I am optimistic that my study will help beginning percussion teachers when looking for methods and materials for their beginning percussion curriculum.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Survey

## Beginning Percussion Methods and Materials

Hello, my name is Kaitlin Scott. The following is a study that I am employing in order to collect data for my Master's Thesis. This study aims to collect data on the resources band directors use with their beginning percussion students. Resources can include method books and supplementary materials used in group percussion lessons and full band instruction. The survey takes approximately 3-5 minutes to complete. Thank you for your participation and feedback!

 kscott001@uarts.edu (not shared) [Switch account](#) 

[Next](#) [Clear form](#)

1.) Do you teach beginning percussion students? \*

☐ Yes

☐ No

[Back](#) [Next](#) [Clear form](#)

In which U.S. state is your school located? \*

3.) What is your primary instrument? \*

☐ Flute

☐ Oboe

☐ Clarinet

☐ Saxophone

☐ Bassoon

☐ Trumpet

☐ French Horn

☐ Trombone

☐ Euphonium/Baritone

- ☐ Tuba
- ☐ Percussion
- ☐ Violin
- ☐ Viola
- ☐ Cello
- ☐ Bass
- ☐ Voice

4.) What grade levels do you teach as a part of your beginning band? Please check any that apply below. \*

- ☐ 3rd Grade
- ☐ 4th Grade
- ☐ 5th Grade
- ☐ 6th Grade
- ☐ 7th Grade
- ☐ 8th Grade
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

[Back](#)[Next](#)[Clear form](#)

5.) What setting(s) do you teach beginning percussion students in? Please check all that apply below. \*

- ☐ Group lessons
- ☐ Full band instruction
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6.) What instruments do you teach to your beginning percussionists? Please check all that apply below. \*

- ☐ Snare Drum
- ☐ Bass Drum
- ☐ Timpani
- ☐ Keyboard Instruments
- ☐ Cymbals
- ☐ Accessory Instruments (tambourine, triangle, etc.)
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

[Back](#)[Next](#)[Clear form](#)

7.) What method book do you use with your beginning percussionists? Please check all that apply below. \*

- ☐ Accent on Achievement
- ☐ Alfred's Drum Method
- ☐ Building Percussion Technique
- ☐ Do It! Band
- ☐ Ed Sueta Band Method
- ☐ Essential Elements
- ☐ Fresh Approach to Mallet Percussion
- ☐ Fresh Approach to Snare Drum
- ☐ Fundamental Method for Mallets
- ☐ Fundamental Studies for Mallets
- ☐ Fundamental Studies for the Snare Drum
- ☐ Habits of a Successful Beginner Band Musician
- ☐ Haskell Harr Drum Method
- ☐ The Mallet Player's Toolbox
- ☐ Measures of Success
- ☐ Percussion Keyboard Technique
- ☐ Performing Percussionist
- ☐ Rubank Method
- ☐ Simple Steps to Successful Beginning Percussion
- ☐ Sound Innovations for Concert Band
- ☐ The Snare Drummer's Toolbox
- ☐ Standard of Excellence
- ☐ Tradition of Excellence
- ☐ I do not use method books with my beginning percussionists.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

8.) What factor(s) influenced you to use the method book(s) in the previous question? \*

- ☐ Alignment with NAFME standards and/or state standards
- ☐ A part of a method for full band
- ☐ Covers all percussion instruments and/or techniques



- ☐ Includes fundamental skills and/or rudiments
- ☐ Includes multimedia (i.e. audio tracks, video examples, etc.)
- ☐ Includes music theory
- ☐ Inclusion of solo/ensemble work
- ☐ Includes pictures and/or graphic aids
- ☐ Multiples books within the series
- ☐ Method already in possession by school district
- ☐ Sequence of concepts/pacing
- ☐ Student interest
- ☐ I do not use method books with my beginning percussionists.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

[Back](#)[Next](#)[Clear form](#)

9.) What supplementary materials do you use with your beginning percussionists? \*  
Please check all that apply below.

- ☐ Musictheory.net
- ☐ Rhythm Cat
- ☐ SmartMusic software
- ☐ Self-created content
- ☐ Staff Wars
- ☐ TeachersPayTeachers
- ☐ Vicfirth.com
- ☐ Youtube.com
- ☐ I do not use supplementary materials with my beginning percussionists.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

10.) What factor(s) influenced you to use the supplementary material(s) in the previous question? \*

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

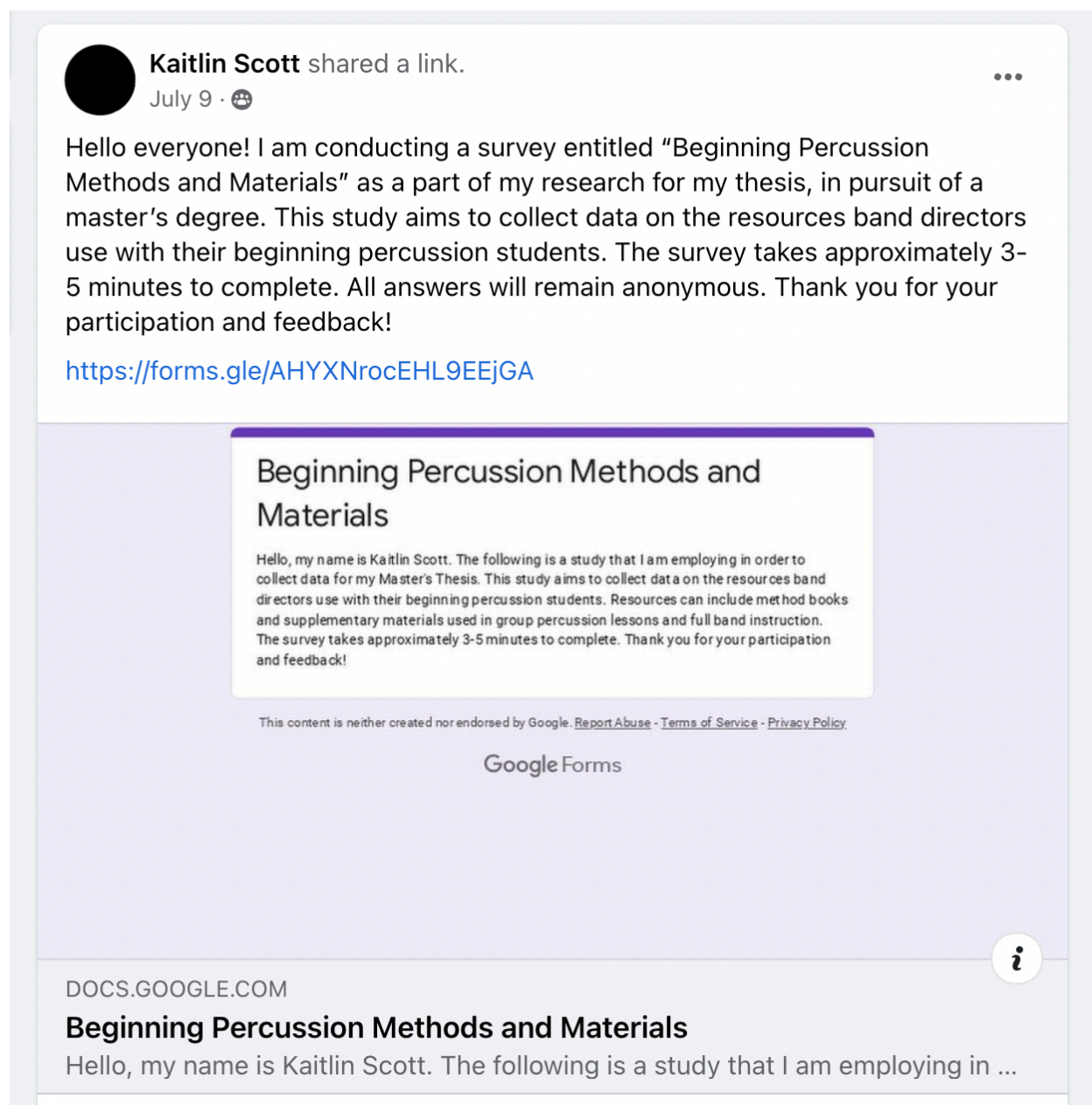
[Back](#)[Next](#)[Clear form](#)

Thank you for participating in my survey!

[Back](#)[Submit](#)[Clear form](#)

## Appendix B: Survey Invitation

The message below was posted through social media on two Facebook groups, “Band Directors” and “Beginning Band Engagement (Band Director Chat Room)” on July 9, 2022.



The image is a screenshot of a Facebook post. At the top, it shows a profile picture of Kaitlin Scott and the text "Kaitlin Scott shared a link." followed by "July 9 · 🌐". The main text of the post reads: "Hello everyone! I am conducting a survey entitled 'Beginning Percussion Methods and Materials' as a part of my research for my thesis, in pursuit of a master's degree. This study aims to collect data on the resources band directors use with their beginning percussion students. The survey takes approximately 3-5 minutes to complete. All answers will remain anonymous. Thank you for your participation and feedback!" Below this text is a blue hyperlink: <https://forms.gle/AHYXNrocEHL9EEjGA>. The post includes a preview of the Google Form titled "Beginning Percussion Methods and Materials". The preview text says: "Hello, my name is Kaitlin Scott. The following is a study that I am employing in order to collect data for my Master's Thesis. This study aims to collect data on the resources band directors use with their beginning percussion students. Resources can include method books and supplementary materials used in group percussion lessons and full band instruction. The survey takes approximately 3-5 minutes to complete. Thank you for your participation and feedback!" Below the preview is a disclaimer: "This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google. [Report Abuse](#) - [Terms of Service](#) - [Privacy Policy](#)". The Google Forms logo is visible. At the bottom of the screenshot, there is a footer from DOCS.GOOGLE.COM with the title "Beginning Percussion Methods and Materials" and the start of the survey text: "Hello, my name is Kaitlin Scott. The following is a study that I am employing in ...".

Kaitlin Scott shared a link.

July 9 · 🌐

Hello everyone! I am conducting a survey entitled “Beginning Percussion Methods and Materials” as a part of my research for my thesis, in pursuit of a master’s degree. This study aims to collect data on the resources band directors use with their beginning percussion students. The survey takes approximately 3-5 minutes to complete. All answers will remain anonymous. Thank you for your participation and feedback!

<https://forms.gle/AHYXNrocEHL9EEjGA>

**Beginning Percussion Methods and Materials**

Hello, my name is Kaitlin Scott. The following is a study that I am employing in order to collect data for my Master’s Thesis. This study aims to collect data on the resources band directors use with their beginning percussion students. Resources can include method books and supplementary materials used in group percussion lessons and full band instruction. The survey takes approximately 3-5 minutes to complete. Thank you for your participation and feedback!

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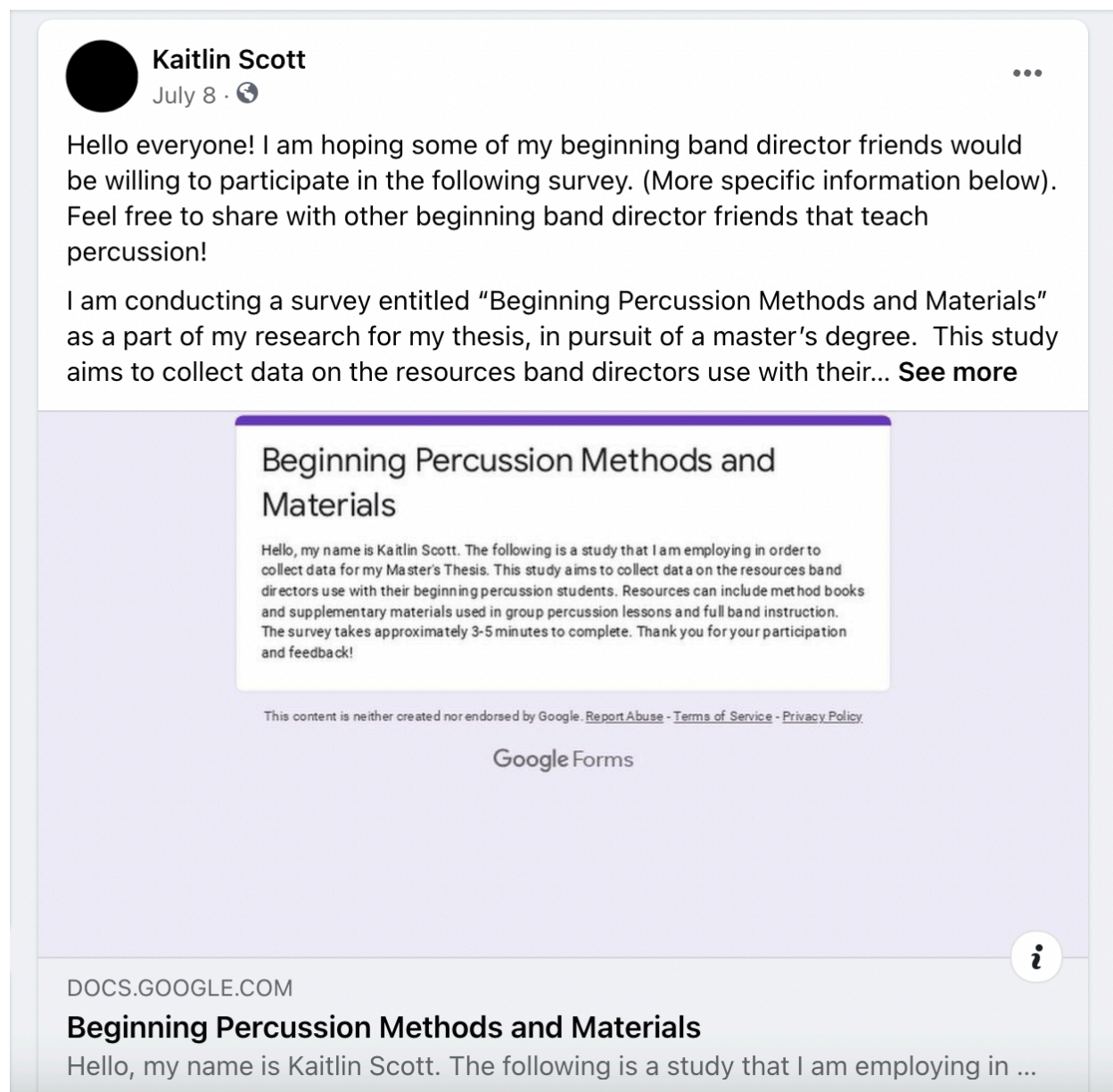
Google Forms

DOCS.GOOGLE.COM

**Beginning Percussion Methods and Materials**

Hello, my name is Kaitlin Scott. The following is a study that I am employing in ...

The message below was posted to my personal social media account on July 8, 2022.



**Kaitlin Scott**  
July 8 · 🌐

Hello everyone! I am hoping some of my beginning band director friends would be willing to participate in the following survey. (More specific information below). Feel free to share with other beginning band director friends that teach percussion!

I am conducting a survey entitled "Beginning Percussion Methods and Materials" as a part of my research for my thesis, in pursuit of a master's degree. This study aims to collect data on the resources band directors use with their... **See more**

### Beginning Percussion Methods and Materials

Hello, my name is Kaitlin Scott. The following is a study that I am employing in order to collect data for my Master's Thesis. This study aims to collect data on the resources band directors use with their beginning percussion students. Resources can include method books and supplementary materials used in group percussion lessons and full band instruction. The survey takes approximately 3-5 minutes to complete. Thank you for your participation and feedback!

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Google Forms

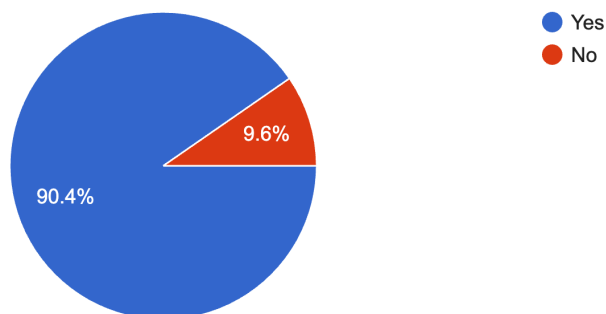
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**Beginning Percussion Methods and Materials**  
Hello, my name is Kaitlin Scott. The following is a study that I am employing in ...

## Appendix C: Survey Results

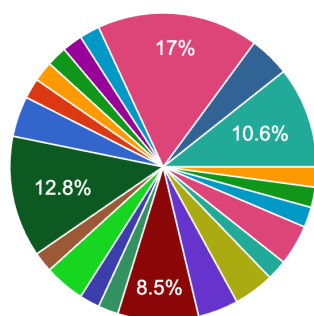
### 1.) Do you teach beginning percussion students?

52 responses



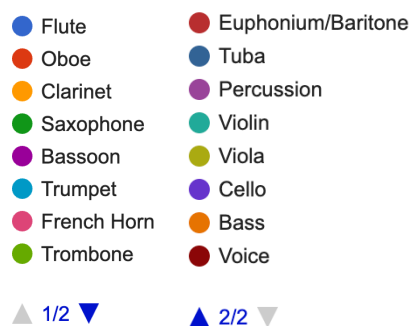
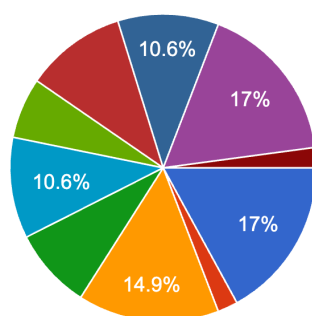
### In which U.S. state is your school located?

47 responses



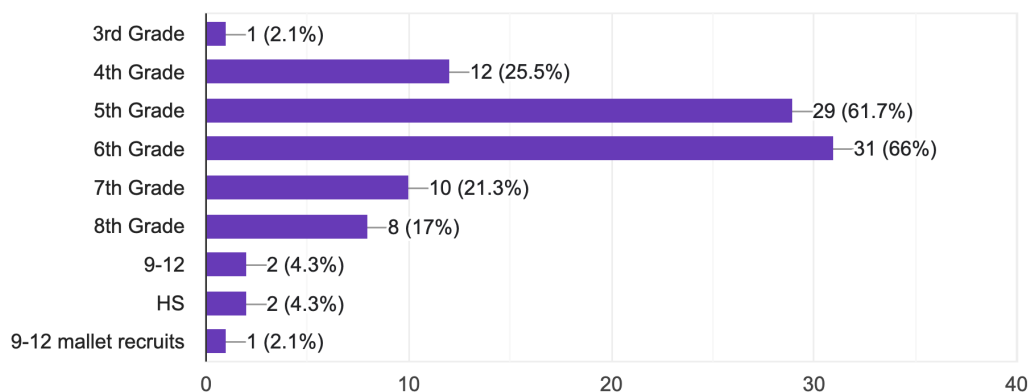
### 3.) What is your primary instrument?

47 responses



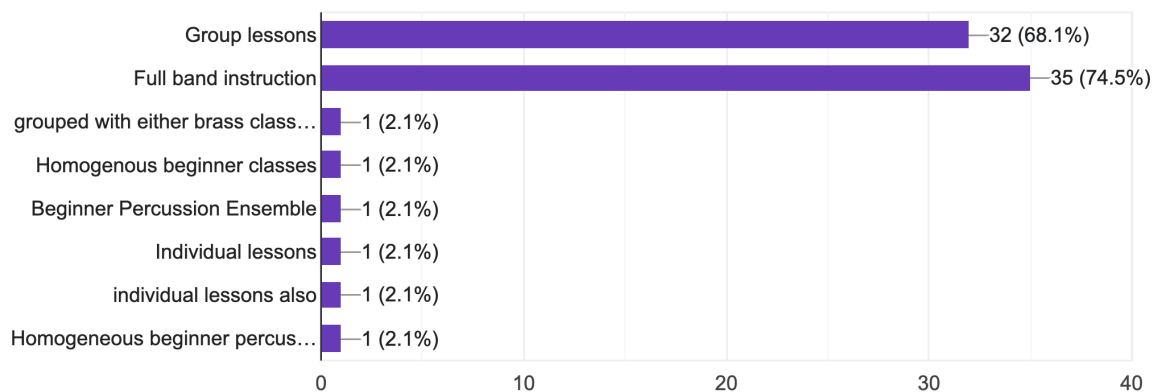
4.) What grade levels do you teach as a part of your beginning band? Please check any that apply below.

47 responses



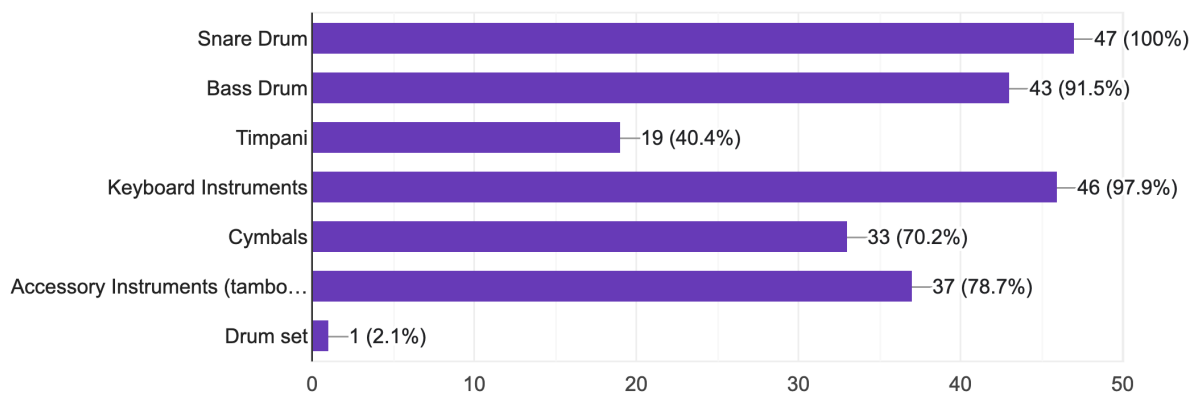
5.) What setting(s) do you teach beginning percussion students in? Please check all that apply below.

47 responses



6.) What instruments do you teach to your beginning percussionists? Please check all that apply below.

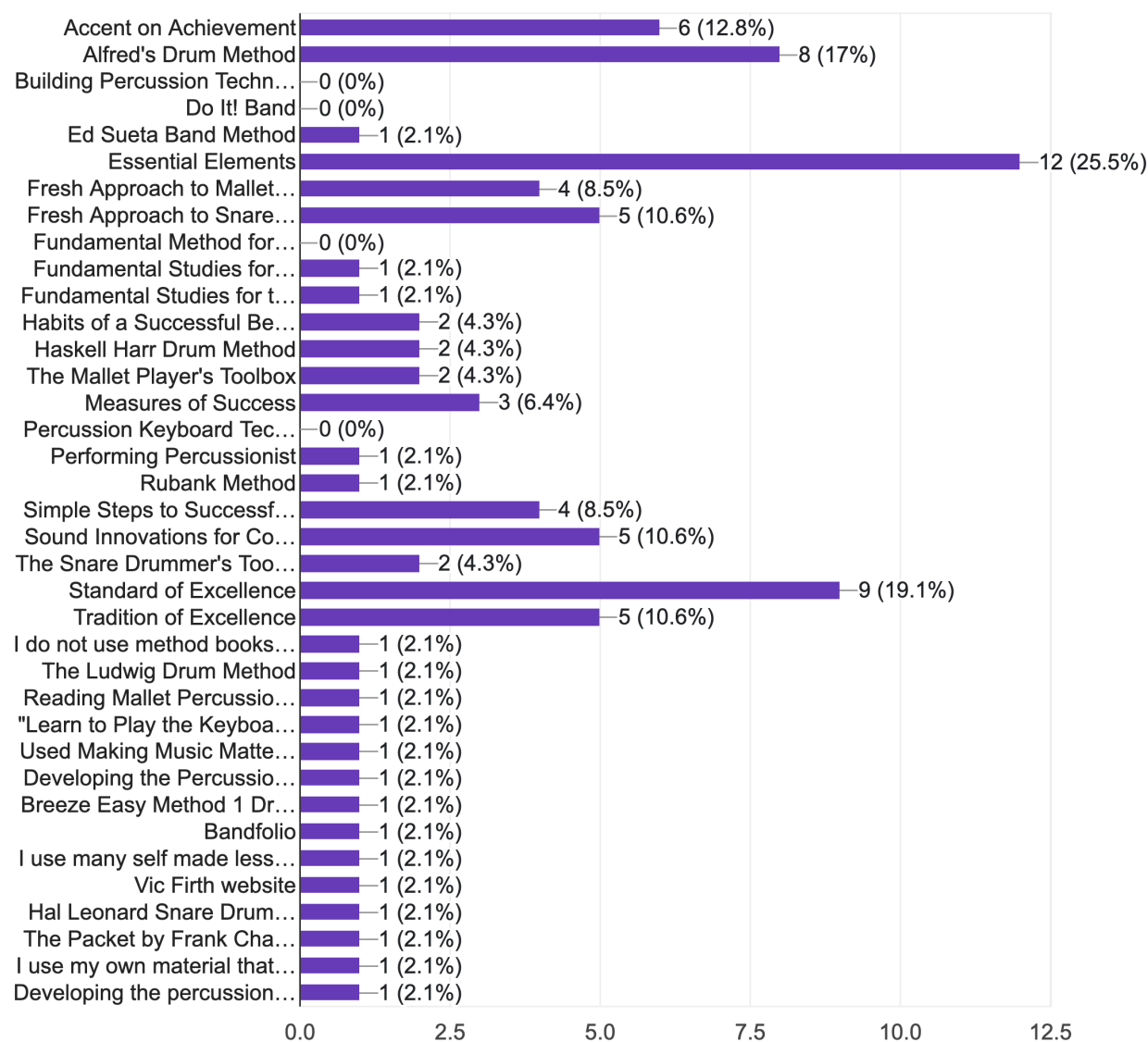
47 responses





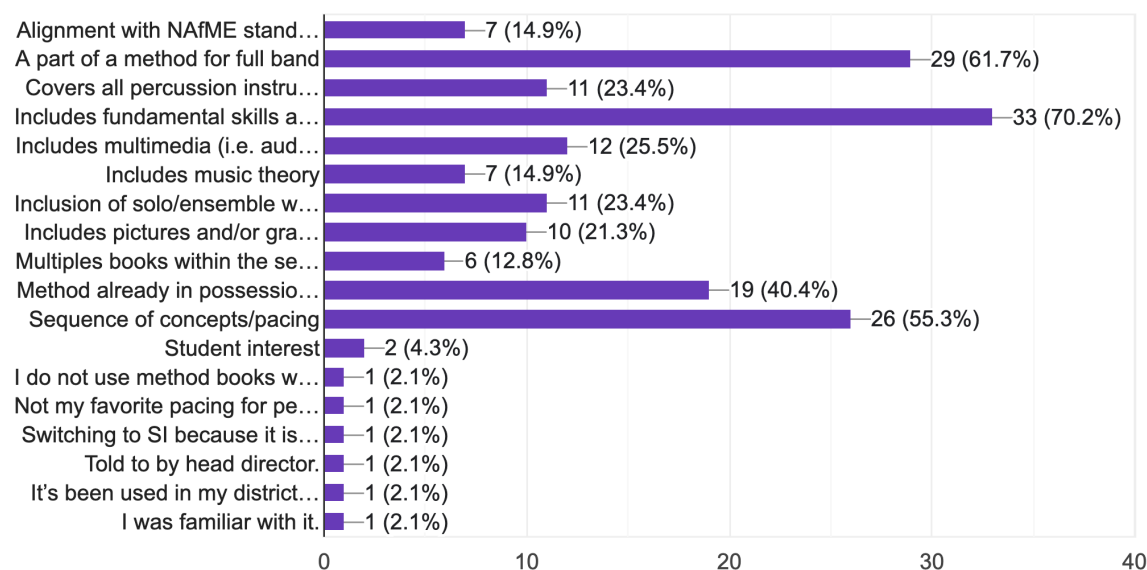
7.) What method book do you use with your beginning percussionists? Please check all that apply below.

47 responses



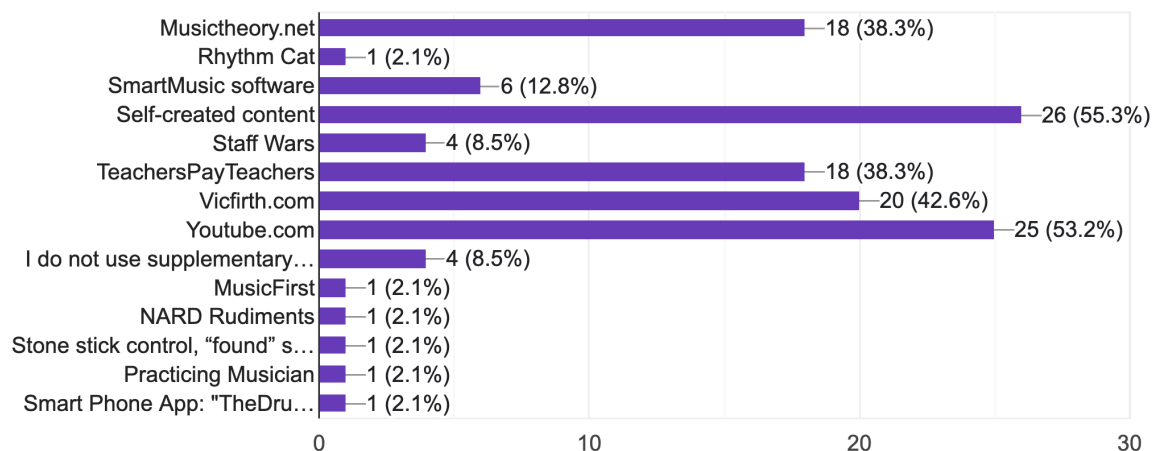
## 8.) What factor(s) influenced you to use the method book(s) in the previous question?

47 responses



## 9.) What supplementary materials do you use with your beginning percussionists? Please check all that apply below.

47 responses



## 10.) What factor(s) influenced you to use the supplementary material(s) in the previous question?

47 responses

Need for repetition on first 5 notes and stick control not offered in EE.

Essential Elements does not have a good method of teaching students the location of notes on a keyboard. I teach them everything they need at home, but how can they practice at home if they forget?

Concept I need reinforced is not available in the method book

Ease of access, student interest

none

Ease of availability

Needed to expand my curriculum but in an affordable and accessible way

I SHOULD be supplementing, but a lack of time and resources makes this difficult in my position.

Did not like the way method book started off.

Alignment with the Wessels snare book

Need for reinforcement of concepts

For things that are not necessarily covered in a method book, but are important concepts for music making.

??

Available technology and district support

None of the method books work 100% for percussion

Pacing

Lack of material in Making Music Matter. I am hoping to supplement less with SI. But will probably still supplement some depending on student interest.

N/a

Anything that is both fun and helpful

Not every book will have everything that I need for students every year. I have goals for the beginners for the end of the year and I give the material needed to help those particular students that year.

Quality and applicability to the skills I'm trying to teach.



We have a rudiment contest for our 2nd and 3rd year percussionists. The winner receives a pair of color-changing light up drum sticks!

Finding the appropriate pacing for individual students, ability of individual students

I create content that best fits my students need; staff wars is a fabulous fun tool to get kids to learn notes, teachers pay teachers for appropriate content, Vic Firth is great since it truly covers the most via YouTube video resources.

I wanted to use more visual representation. I like using YouTube to show students different styles and techniques. I like smartmusic for home, to help guide my students when I can't be there

Mallet packets using the first 3-6 notes were developed by my colleague, so I use those sheets along with EE. I also have very limited time with my students, so their 2nd year we basically just work on concert music from September-April. After the Spring Concert in April, we do sight reading out of the EE to give my players more rhythm/rudiment work to focus on.

While I like the method book I use, there are always things lacking and I think it is important for students to see the information presented from different sources. Musictheory.net is a great help for note review since that is the biggest struggle for my students with the keyboard instruments. SmartMusic allows the students to develop their inner pulse and to hear the other instruments when learning ensemble repertoire so they can hear how their part fits.

The supplemental sheet I use focuses beginning SD rolling on open rolls instead of the closed rolls that Essential Elements starts on. So, I mostly have kids ignore EE rolling for half the year. Open rolls are the backbone of SD rolling, not buzz rolls. This is a serious flaw with Essential Elements.

Great resources to supplement current lessons.

Previous success rate with prior groups

Clarity of information. Ease of access

We go to a drumline in 7th grade

Many videos can explain percussion techniques better than me

I create warmup sheets that reinforce concepts introduced in our concert music.

The method book needs more examples before introducing new concepts.

Better learning

None needed. It's all in the Simple Steps book.

As a non-percussion teacher my confidence level in teaching percussion is one of my weakest points. Though I have gotten stronger I still like to find resources that can explain percussion concepts better than I am able to.

Ease and familiarity

Attended workshop by Frank Chapple as he explained the book

The method books are not comprehensive enough. Often, my students may need more practice than the books provide, so I look elsewhere!

-

Reinforcement of class curriculum

YouTube- play along drum beats- way more interesting than a met.

I know about them and they were applicable to what I was trying to teach my students.

Audio examples of rudiments and set patterns (Vic Firth, TheDrumDictionary); Self created belt advancement system aligned with the rest of the band

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