

Beginner Band to Ensemble Class - BRIDGING THE GAP

**This is GENERAL Information from the perspective of ideas applicable to BOTH in person & virtual.*

Get materials out to them quick so you can train how to learn lines of music.

Teach students how to record with a metronome when submitting recordings.

IN PERSON: Start of Each Class: Concept of the week.

{Goal: Review Basic Theory Accelerated Pace.}

Use Board to give 2-4 min lecture style and Q/A time on weekly topic. Concepts to cover

Time Signatures, Enharmonics, Key Signatures, Rhythm Tree, Dynamics, Style Markings, etc.

VIRTUAL: Links to Theory Video are sent to students that supplement an online theory assignment each week via musictheory.net or other sites you are utilizing.

"You are a Private Lesson Instructor Now" Mindset & "Beginning Band 2.0"

Approach the "band class" as though you were creating a plan for a private lesson

Accelerated Continuation of Beginning Band

1. **Instrument specific Warm Up** {Goal: Expose instrument specific concepts.}

Flute/Oboe/Bassoon/Sax – Octaves/Vibrato Exercises

Clarinet – Register Studies

Brass – long tone/slur/range

Example: "Foundations for a Superior Performance" book for ensemble skills. "Warm Up/Set 1" can be used with the options of having brass playing slurs while flutes/sax/dbl reeds are playing octaves and clarinets doing a form of register studies. This is a good example of the construction of combining instrument techniques. However, the level of difficulty presented in this book is typically above the level of a typical "Middle School NV Band member." It is suggested that you use those as a template and locate other materials, "Music Mastery" co-created by Kathy Johnson is a great resource for the types of exercises, and/or create exercises that meet the needs of your students.

IN PERSON: Execution of "Instrument Specific Warm Up":

Step 1 Discovery – Everyone plays at same time. Provide simple listening goals prior to playing.

Step 2 Expose – Select 1 wwd and 1 brs to play their measures of the exercise

Step 3 Diagnosis – Provide feedback (peer or director)

Step 4 Cure – Give the student(s) something to do to improve & Number of Reps. "Trumpets start use 2 more taste buds when you start the sound with a "Tee" syllable getting your tongue down faster."

Step 5 Reps – Allow same section to improve. "Trumpets, you get 3 reps." Provide brief feedback after each rep. Then no matter what, move on after last rep.

VIRTUAL: Execution – Create recording assignments/pass offs – video submissions. Project game.

2. **Articulation** {Goal: Exposure to timing of tongue & style.}

Repeated Pitch – Vowel Sound/Syllable for each instrument to "hold in mouth." I would use a text/music to evaluate this concept.

Changing Pitch – Coordination of Timing between tongue, fingers, and for brass also embouchure manipulation. "Your tongue always tells your fingers what to do!" I would use simple unison lines of music.

Rhythmic Vocabulary – Exposure of new rhythms on repeated pitches. I'd use a more rote approach to introduce rhythm.

Articulation for exposure to Style Markings- "Foundations for Superior Performance" has a good page on this. Change "rhythm of the day" to style of the week" and use various approaches. Be mindful of increasing tempos too soon the "style of the week."

Example: Students should see as much music as possible, therefore “Winning Rhythms” book, rhythm sheets/exercises you already use. I also use the “Appedix” from the Mark Wessels “Fresh Approach to Snare Drum” pages as rhythm pages/articulation, “Music Mastery” also has good “Rhythm Rocker” section for quick review and possible lines to play as unison pitches. For changing pitches, I would utilize a the “101 Rhythmic Rest Patterns,” “TRI Book”, or your beginning method early lessons lines, but with goals of articulation awareness.

IN PERSON Execution:

Step 1 “Rhythm of the Day” using a “kind of note” every two days. Starting with 4 Quarter Notes, director plays, students play with metronome reference on repeated, unison pitch.

Step 2 Call for volunteers to demonstrate. Peer/Director provide positive and improvement feedback, then move on to the next student. You could also have “instrument of the day” “shirt color of the day” “best posture of the day starts” etc. to go around and hear students play individually.

Step 3 Set a particular number in your head (4 students), then increase tempo.

Step 4 Set a weekly goal for class that by Friday. We are articulating 4 quarters on a repeated pitch, with NO distortions at 84. Adapt to the ability of the group, however start basic enough that you could also call on a student to count the rhythm you play back, then you write it on the board and they all see it and play. There are lots of variations on this part of class.

VIRTUAL: Execution – Create recording assignments/pass offs – video submissions. Project game: “Dragon Tongue.” Create a set of repeated pitch rhythm lines that increase in difficulty and students submit recordings and progress to “Dragon Tongue” Status based off execution of tempo goals.

3. **Scale Patterns** {Goals: Review & Mastery of Big 7 Scales/Chromatic}
Big 7 Scales – Concert Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, G, C, F to be performed at least 1 octave in scale rhythm.
Chromatic Scale – Concert F 1 octave chromatic scale to be performed in even eighth notes with efficient woodwind fingerings and everyone is clearly articulating with a clear tone throughout.

Example: Students will have “How to Learn Scale” pages I have created that breaks down the scale into chunks. Students will have “region scale sheets” or Music Mastery Scale Sheets, etc. We will have students will pass off scales using Scale Karate Project to earn their belts. Each week students will receive their “belt”/ribbon in the weekly belt ceremony, as they are presented the belt, director strikes gong. When the student achieves “Black Belt/Sensei Master” status – they get to hit the gong (disinfecting the mallet each time!). Each time they earn a “belt” students sign their name to the “Sacred Scale Scrolls”/colored butcher paper hung on the walls around the band hall.

In regards to the chromatic scale, utilizing Nathan Carter’s “Fundamental Techniques” book, his “chromatic resonance” exercise is breaks about the chromatic scale, utilizes enharmonic spellings and is designed for “warm up” portion of class. Meanwhile, “Music Mastery” has “levels” of chromatic pages for more individualized instruction on each instrument. Utilizing both of these or referencing them to create your exercises might serve students best.

IN PERSON: Execution - Utilize some form of scale pattern music daily. Plan a “key of the week.” Monitor student fingerings in wvds and embouchure in brass. Depending on other expectations, “Big 7” & 2 8va Chromatic should be completed by December break.

VIRTUAL: Execution – Record weekly scale to earn belts. Students can attend “virtual” belt ceremony, or director records short video each week reading off names that have earned belt and striking gong on video. Indicate to students they will be mailed their “Black Belt” only.

4. **Method Book** {Goal: Read music & teach student how to teach self.}
 Accelerated review & continuation of your Beginning Band Method or start at beginning in different Beginning Band Method.

Example: Students will use the “Rhythm Master” Book to read lines, error detect, review concepts of relationships of rhythms, articulation of rhythms, time signatures, key signatures, and basic “T” syllable articulation. The “Rhythm Master” Book also provides simple duets, rounds, trios, etc. within each lesson to establish rudimentary understanding of learning an ensemble and introduce ensemble vernacular and skills.

IN PERSON: Execution – After “warm up” period of class this is the first of two “chunks” of what use to be the “band music” portion of class. Here follow your procedure for teaching lines of music from your method book. Set goals of a completing a lesson every 2 days if it is a lesson you are reviewing. If it is a “new” lesson, meaning you did not get to it Spring 2020, then plan for 1 lesson per 3-4 days. This timeline will vary due to make up of the class and time with students. I also do NOT use the metronome with every line, or I turn it on/off during playing of the line to see how students internalize pulse is evolving. I attempt to raise the awareness of students regarding their eyes reading ahead of what you hear, foot tap, articulation, finger movement, and brass embouchure coordination when the metronome is not there as reference. Select specific lines per lesson to pass off as part of “Project Game”: Band Olympics/Objective Sheets/Band Bracket Competition, etc. I target lines that demonstrate the main rhythmic concept for that lesson and/or musical concept i.e. chromaticism/fingerings.

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|--------|---------------------------|--|
| Step 1 | Discovery | Play line together |
| Step 2 | Count Line | Options: row, section, grade, favorite Avenger, etc. |
| Step 3 | Count & Finger Line | |
| Step 4 | Letter Name & Finger Line | Options: Bb instruments letter name, others count |
| Step 5 | Play Line | Options: Various groupings play/individuals |
- *Measure(s) with issue – isolate, expose, review, rep it out, all play. Then move on.

VIRTUAL: Execution – Move the “Band Olympics” to online with recording or video conference pass offs. When meeting with students online, allow them to play lines for you so you can check understanding. They use their metronome at all times online. Individual students can pass off an entire lesson in a 15 minute mini lesson depending on their ability. Most will cover 1-2 lines in a 15 minute online meeting with more than 2 students in the meeting. Depending on the number of meetings you can almost average 1 lesson per week if you are not introducing new concepts.

5. **Ensembles** {Goal: Develop ensemble skills/independence.}
 Students will receive accelerated instruction on how to learn ensembles as a solo performer. Students will be able to learn all 4 parts of a quartet. Then the student can perform any part assigned, as well as move to a virtual setting and record the entire ensemble with no other members present.

Example: This is “chunk 2” of what was the “band music” portion of class. Students will use the “Festival Ensemble” Series. Any collection of ensembles that you can mix instruments is great. They are usually “themed;” “Movie Quartet’s for All” “Patriotic Duets” etc. If you have any “Like Instrument” ensembles those would work depending on your splitting of the class with a director and/or recording project assignment.

IN PERSON: Execution - A quartet could be taught by everyone working on Part A Monday, Part B Tuesday, Part C Wednesday, Part D Thursday, and then work as an ensemble on Friday. You could split; row 1/part A, row 2/part b, etc. You could assign letters randomly. Get creative. Then work the piece. You should plan ensembles that you could showcase as a

“fall concert” and then also as a “Holiday/Winter Concert” later in the semester. Students can learn various ensembles and then “live stream” a performance from class to family as early as October.

VIRTUAL: Execution – This is the best transfer to virtual for evolving ensemble skills. The director can record a part then send it on using Garage Band for the student to record the next part, etc. Students can use apps like Acapella to record themselves performing all parts. Finding FREE apps that work on school district devices is your immediate obstacle. Garage Band is useful, but cannot replicate Accapella. MIXOUND is like Acapella, and FREE. However MIXOUND is set accessible on school devices due to the programmer setting its age restriction at 17. Students could use personal devices with parent permission. Student submissions can be compiled in iMovie with title slides and emailed as link through “band YouTube” channel as a “Virtual Concert.”

6. **Band Music** _____ {Goal: Provide students/community performance.}
Students will be trained to record their band part for submission to be used to create a “Virtual Band” Concert.

EXAMPLE: Students will learn work on a band piece in class. They will be assigned to record their part. They will be trained in class how to set up to record their part at home. They will record and submit their part to the best of their ability. The recording will be compiled by a professional to create a Virtual Concert.

IN PERSON: Execution – Rehearse the band piece as you normally would. Plan in class time to instruct students and have various elder students demonstration/monitor younger students on how to make their individual recording.

VIRTUAL: Execution – Create a “how to video” for students/parents to create the video submission. Students submit videos. Director sends videos to professional to create “Virtual Concert.”

BEG TO ENSEMBLE CHECKPOINTS:

December:

“Big 7” Scales 1 octave at least

Concert F Chromatic 2 Octaves/enharmonic vocab

Articulation of Repeated Pitch 16th @ 90-100

Submitting Video Assignments on time/met reference

Demonstration of Reading Rhythm Vocab Whole Thru 16th/4 group

PERC

- Region Rudiments/Keyboard Big 7 Scales
- Submitting Video Assignments on both instruments
- Rhythmic Vocab through all 16th patterns/basic compound time rhythms
- 8 on hand timing exercises 120-144

2nd Year to 3rd year Students –BRIDGING THE GAP

Who is participating in any **district/region audition**? I'd target these students for those opportunities to provide "more meat on the bone" for their band experience.

You are now "**assistant band directors**" **mindset** for 2020-21 8th graders. Team Band needs you on your game now more than ever. Set up a "command structure" of responsibilities for younger players – Band Buddies. Use experienced students as peer tutors for less experienced students.

Engagement/Enthusiasm for this block of students is vital for program continuity. "Crossover Activities" will be a great tool to get everyone on the same page and modify pacing/differentiate instruction.

Example: Scale Karate – goal is to pass off pattern (tempo, octaves, and maybe even rhythm is adaptable to level of player)

Example: Ensemble Apps – music difficulty adaptable to student ability level

Example: Band Buddies – younger students pass off method book lines to section leader or buddy, assists with creating recording to submit to director for feedback or play for class-not for grade, but for "fun project."

Music should be at or below grade level at start of year while, having high expectations and musical standards. They should feel immediate success/pride in musicianship. Then increase the difficulty while maintaining the standards.

2nd to 3rd Year CHECKPOINTS:

December –

"Big 7" Scales Region Octaves/Memorized

Concert F Chromatic 2 Octaves/enharmonic vocab

Articulation of Repeated Pitch 16th @ 100-120

Submitting Video Assignments on time/met reference

Demonstration of Reading Rhythm Vocab Whole Thru 16th/mixed

PERC - Region Rudiments/Keyboard All 12 Scales

- Submitting Video Assignments on both instruments

- Rhythmic Vocab through all 16th patterns/basic compound time rhythms

- 8 on hand/timing exercises 120-144

- Basic understanding of timpani set up/tuning

Engagement Activities that Align IN PERSON with Virtual Crossover:

"Show and Tell" performances more detail

Weekly "Tune by Ear" Challenge - more detail

FLIPGRID Challenges – Chromatic Scale Challenge, etc.

"King of the Hill"

Scale Karate

Hogwarts/Avengers/DC House Points

"March Madness Brackets"

Band Olympics

Band Buddies – ability (adv paired with intermediate, HS leadership students, etc.)

Smartmusic/Other online platforms for assessment

Ensemble Apps: Acapella/MIXOUND/Garageband/Soundtrap, etc.

Resources – Beginning Methods, Foundations for Superior Performance, Music Mastery, 101

Rhythmic Rest Patterns, "Book 2" if your beginner method continues, Fresh Approach to

Snare/Appendix, Winning Rhythms, Festival Ensembles, Movie Quartets for All, Yamaha

Holiday Ensembles, 5 Minute Music Theory by Wessels

Engagement Activities have students recording themselves, creating their own "self-quarantine quartet" and/or want to create "Virtual Band" Concert. You are also building independence as a player so they have basic ensemble skills.

How to teach large ensemble in a non-traditional environment

Room Set Up/Instrument Use/Storage – location, location, location

Supplies

Hardcopy – Virtual Binder/Printed Out used in person more detail
Device used for “virtual binder” in class for some use to demonstrate understanding
Where are you putting backpacks?
Wire music stands for each student
* District/ state guidelines
Wired Ear buds for virtual/at home assignments(apple: dongle)
Practice Mutes/at home assignments
Cleaning/Sanitation supplies for instruments

Warm Up/Daily Drill/Ensemble Drill

1-2 Basic Exercises Daily – one size fits all exercise, but priority is to use “ensemble vernacular” and raise level of awareness (levels of listening & priorities– depends on who’s in the class that day)

*Make engaging – section of day, color shirt of the day, etc.

*Isolate grouping, then all – give feedback, move on

1 Instrument Specific Exercise Daily – isolate 1 wwd/1 hrs daily

Articulation – focus on timing awareness/listening/internalized pulse

Method Books (unison lines) that review and continue learning = concepts/reading

TRI Book, Beginning Method/Book 2, Rubank, 101 Rhythmic Rest Patterns

*Avoiding Blue Book, Fussell for now – no rhythmic vocab developed

Ensemble Books/Music that is adaptable to your situation – Fall Concert just do ensembles, you can adapt to your specific class, adding repeats, features, etc. Holiday Concert too! Showcasing students in these challenging times in a safe, low stress circumstance with high musical expectations.

Band Music – 1 goal is to have something to showcase for Holiday Season

Pass Off Material –lines from book, region music, warm ups, scales, articulation speed, etc.

Band Buddy – seated by pairings, maybe even in possible Virtual Pairings, protocols/facility allows for peer-to-peer tutoring during class same issues/caveats as before

SPLIT OUT WITH AVAILABLE STAFF- Once you feel students/band staff are versed in campus/class routines and technology integration split up the class for more effectiveness/pacing and getting to all students as often as possible.

GENERAL THOUGHTS ON NON-TRADITIONAL BAND CLASS

- Do your best to set up your year "as normal," Give yourself, and students the month of August to adapt and integrate the NEW normal. Labor Day is a checkpoint that students are in a "new" normal learning routine and integrating band tech successfully.
- Main goal: Get anything you want them to have with them at home in their (sanitized) hands. Check that all students have demonstrated an understanding of what devices you will use for band, for what purpose, and they have turned in "virtual assignments" as soon as possible in August. i.e. "FLIPGRID video of Key Chant, Posture Chant, Instr Assembly, etc. -FLIP YOUR CLASS - THEY TEACH YOU SOMETHING

Switch to Virtual: ***If you are moved online, design "Sesame Street Lessons" taught with "Mr. Rogers's patience" providing "Barney the Dino" enthusiastic feedback.***

Priorities to set up for long term uncertainty/redundancy

CHUNK 1 – AUGUST – Student Checklist

- a. Campus/Class Procedures now take up 2 weeks
 - i. Supplies
 1. Procedures: storage, usage, transport
 2. Disinfecting
 - ii. Technology
 1. What devices will be used?
 - a. School v. Personal
 - b. Screen size (phone v. other)
 2. Purpose for each device?
 - a. Phone: audio/video connection/NOT viewing
 - b. Other: Viewing/other as well
 3. Device/Platform Set Up & Integration
 - a. How to:
 - i. Connect: troubleshoot with student
 - ii. Login-passwords (accounts/Wi-Fi/etc.)
 - b. Purpose of each Platform
 - i. Entry Point Platform
 - ii. Distribution/Assessment
 - c. Virtual Binder
 - d. Create SIMPLE Assignments to record/turn in. i.e. Creative FLIPGRID of "Posture Chant"

CHUNK 2 – Create a "Virtual Band Binder" THEN print/distribute.

- *Can this possibly be the ONLY tool for the entire year?
- *Is there enough, purpose, concise material for students to use as their sole source without stepping foot back on campus?
- *How can you distribute NEW music to everyone no matter levels of access?
- *Use "Virtual Binder" in person class setting to monitor student interaction/understanding of navigating material

CHUNK 3 – What materials are you providing to establish "ensemble" skills?

- *Method books with "duet lines"
- *Ensemble Collections i.e. Festival Ensembles, Yamaha Holiday Ensembles, etc.
- *Integrate tech app that allows for students to record multiple parts by themselves i.e. "Acapella" App, MIXOUND, Garage Band, etc.
- *Fall 2020 – Ensembles/1-2 Band Pieces – streamed/virtual band video created

NON-TRADITIONAL BAND CLASS CHECKPOINTS/DECEMBER

- More Scales than you started the year
- Chromatic Scale – at least 1 octave with efficient fingerings
- Performance in some form has been given – showcasing students
- Morale is high, consistent engagement both in person/online

GENERAL ONLINE PACING WITH WEEKLY REAL TIME VID CONFERENCING:

- One-on-One = move at the pace students ability allows.
- 2 or more "middle of the road students" that has a foundation in the material you are teaching can generally cover 1 new rhythm per week, 1-2 lines per week, 1 scale every 2 weeks. Otherwise, it is 1 concept per week (1 rhythm, 1 tetrachord, 1 method book line, 1 ens. Line)