Tips for Bridging the Gap:
Career Focused Practice Techniques

SCAN for Session Documents

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Adjunct Professor of Percussion - Shaw University

Friday, March 3, 2023 – 2:00 pm

September 2022 Poll of 20 Percussionist Band Directors

95%

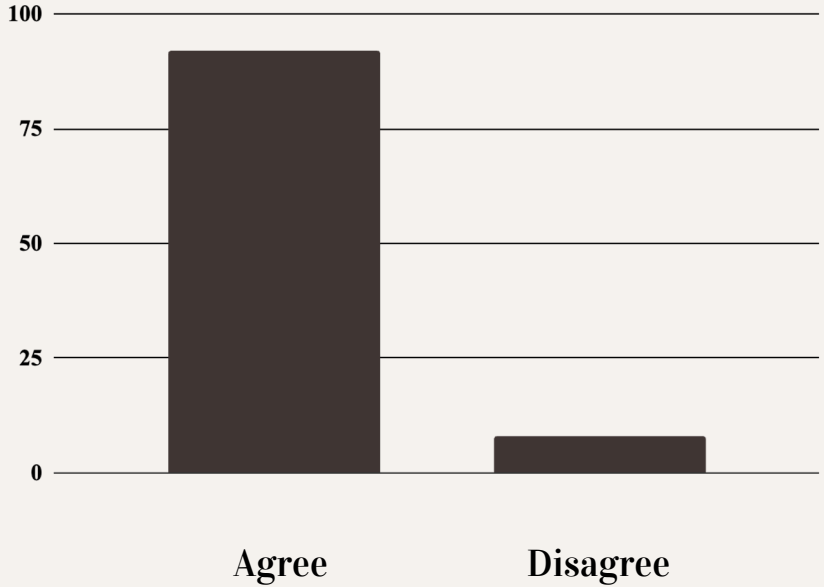
of directors polled stated that they felt either “fully unprepared” or “mostly unprepared” to teach woodwind & brass concepts to students going into student teaching

August 2022 Poll of 1,500 Band Directors

*"**Percussionist Band Directors are held more responsible** for what they don't know **about wind instruments** than Wind Instrument Band Directors are for what they don't know about percussion."*

92% Agree

8% Disagree



Source: *Band Directors* Facebook Group - poll by Brian Sims

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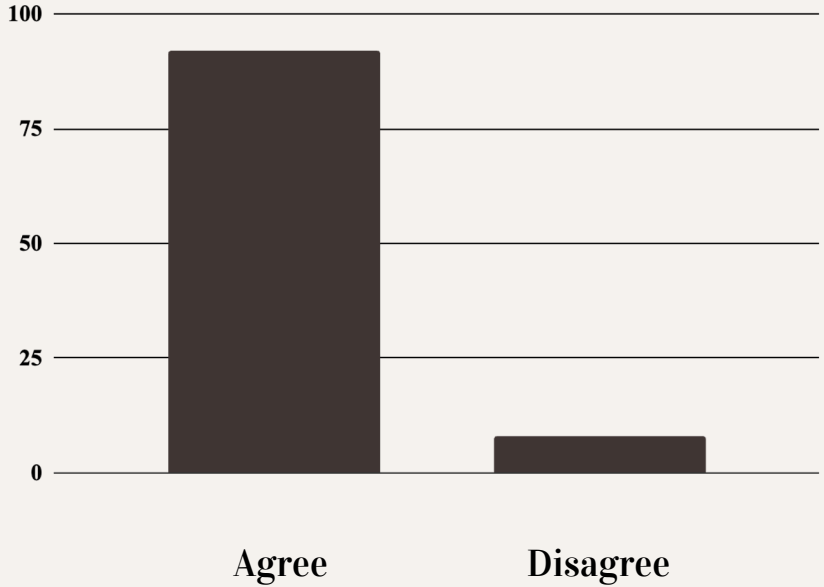

Overall, percussionist educators feel unprepared entering the workforce!

Source: *Band Directors* Facebook Group - poll by Brian Sims

How can we make our students (& ourselves) more prepared?

Identifying the Gaps

- Assumed knowledge - percussion students are at a disadvantage
- Wind & Brass students generally have 7+ years of experience in:
  - Breathing/Breath Support
  - Tonguing
  - Forming an embouchure
  - Differing articulations with the mouth and when to apply them
  - Performing and memorizing fingerings
  - Phrasing with air
  - Tone Production
  - Transposing
  - Intonation & Fine Tuning

Common Music Education Teaching Coursework

- Woodwind Methods
- Brass Methods
- Percussion Methods
- String Methods
- Vocal Methods
- Lab Bands or Lab Teaching Courses
- **Maximum of 5 semesters focusing on non-percussion pedagogy**

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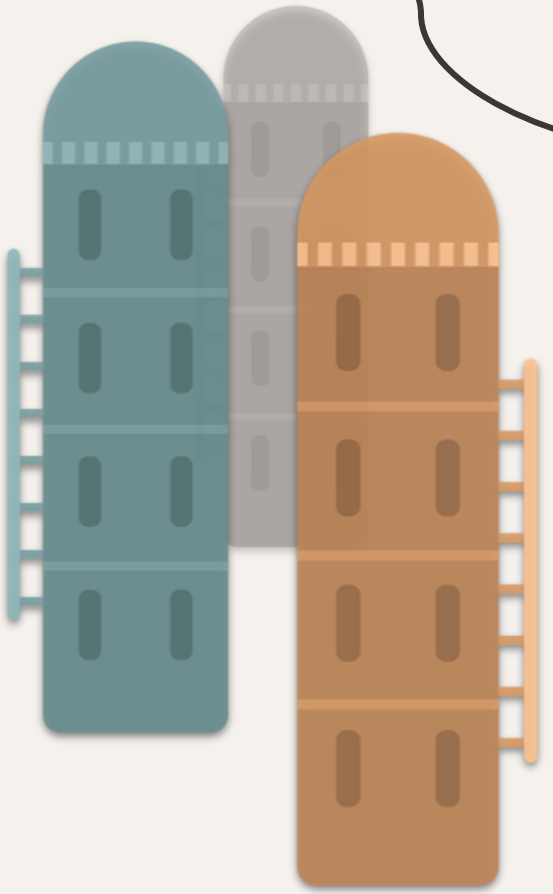
Gaps can be addressed & supplemented within private lessons & personal practice

Bridging the Gap

- How can you integrate the wind/string/vocal concepts you are learning in your music education coursework directly into daily practice?
- Your musical experiences should not be separate, but **combined and transferred** from one area to another to maximize efficacy in learning

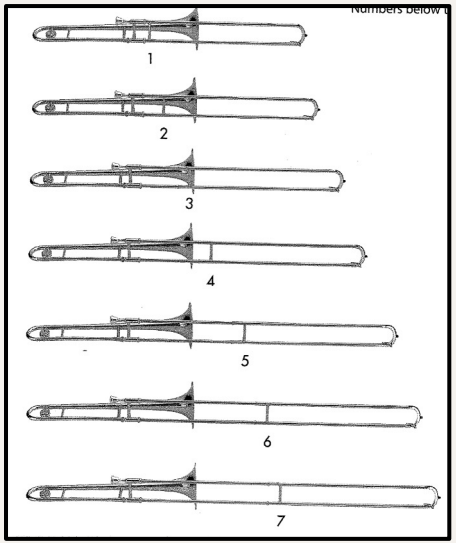


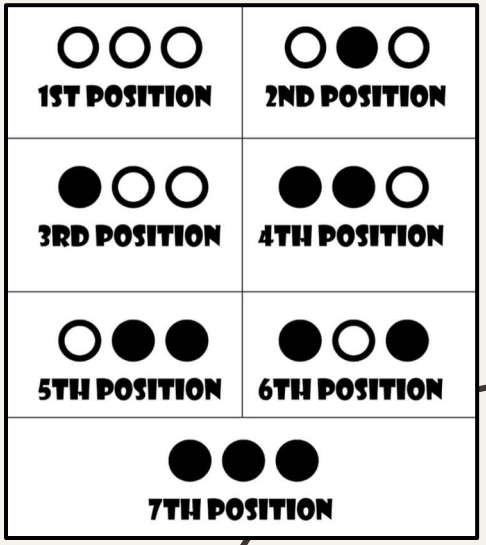
Bridging the Gap – Practicing Strategies

STRATEGY #1

Play keyboard scales while speaking brass positions

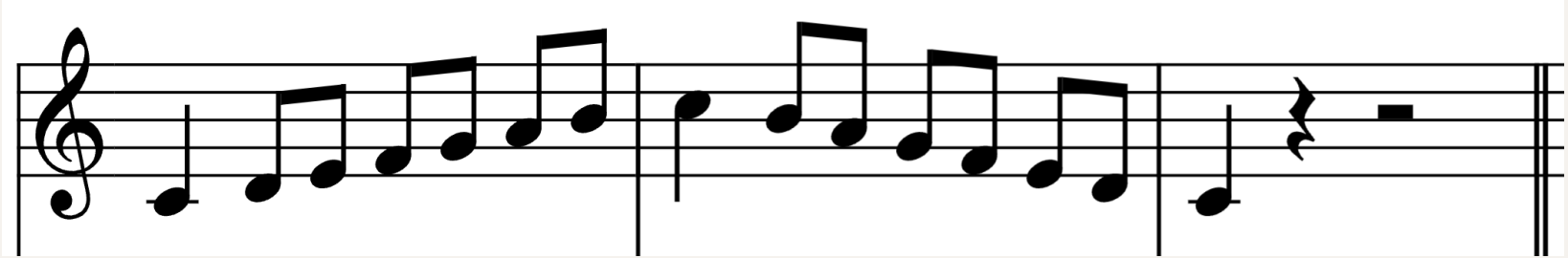
Works on: trombone, trumpet, & euphonium positions



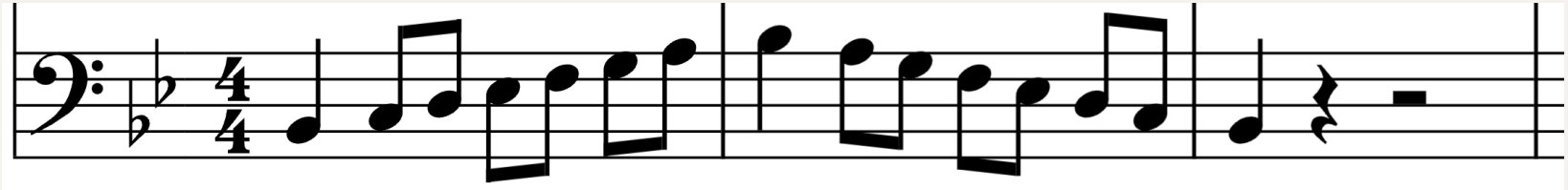


How can we clearly & efficiently communicate information to students while playing?

Trumpet



Trombone



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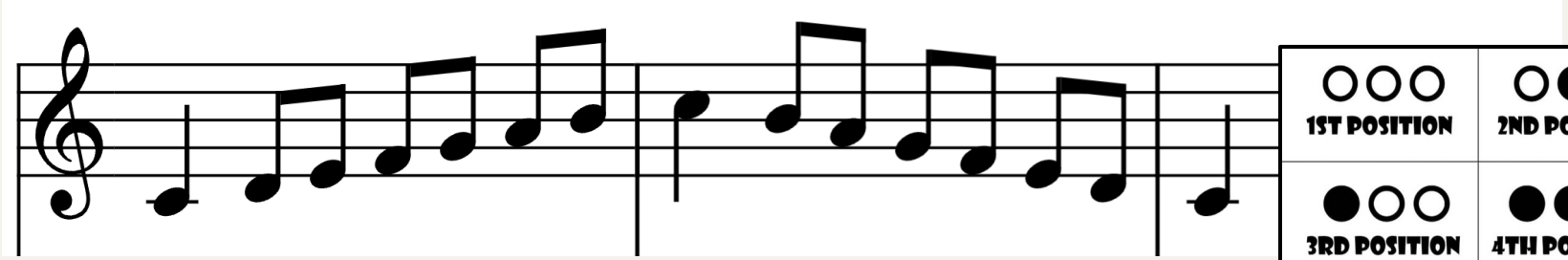
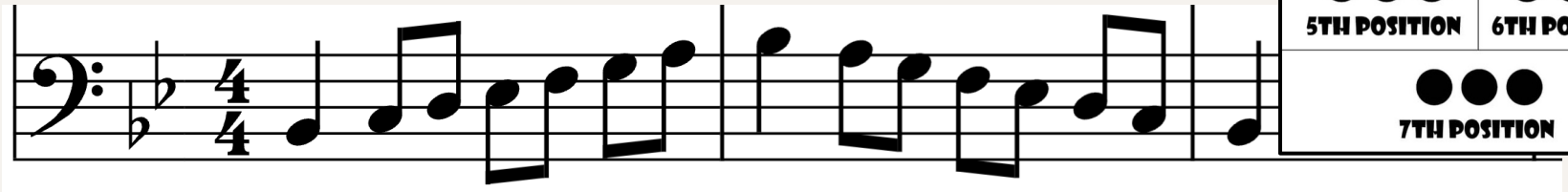
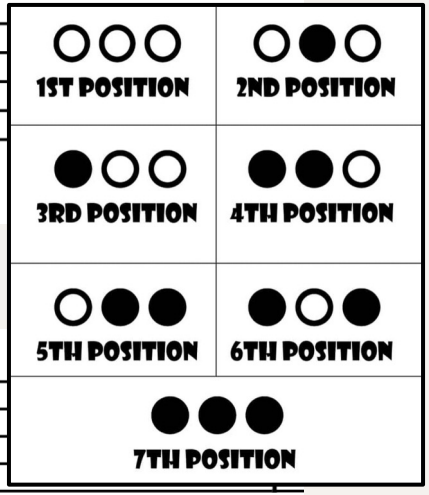


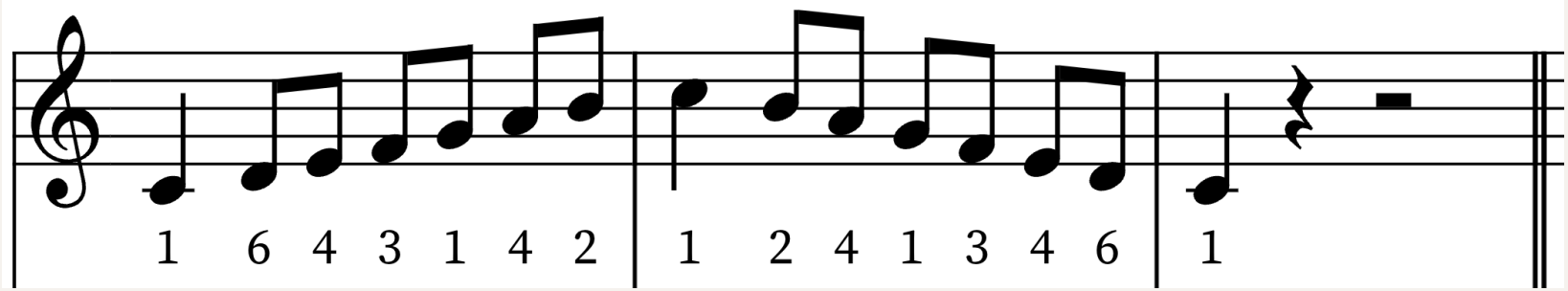
Trombone



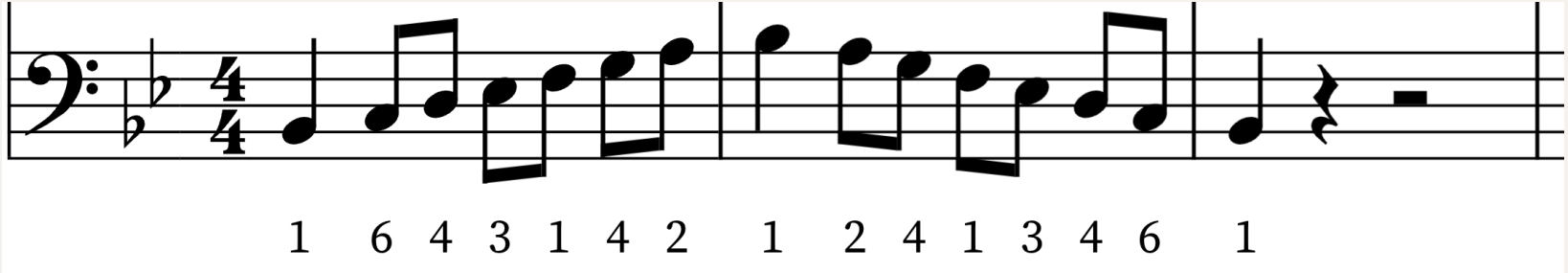


Let's Try It! – Strategy #1

Trumpet



Trombone



Bridging the Gap – Practicing Strategies

Common Transpositions Cheat Sheet

C Instruments Piano, Mallet Percussion, Timpani, Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Strings, Trombone, Tuba	**Bb Instruments** Trumpet, Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, TC Baritone, Soprano Sax, Tenor Sax (plus an octave)	**Eb Instruments** Alto Sax, Baritone Sax (plus an octave)	**F Instruments** English Horn, Horn
Concert Pitch	**UP a Major 2nd (whole step)**	**UP a Major 6th**	**UP a Perfect 5th**
C	D	A	G
C#/Db	D#/Eb	A#/Bb	G#/Ab
D	E	B	A
D#/Eb	F	C	A#/Bb
E	F#/Gb	C#/Db	B
F	G	D	C
F#/Gb	G#/Ab	D#/Eb	C#/Db
G	A	E	D
G#/Ab	A#/Bb	F	D#/Eb
A	B	F#/Gb	E
A#/Bb	C	G	F
B	C#/Db	G#/Ab	F#/Gb

Quick "In A Pinch" Sight Transposition Techniques

- Read Alto Sax (Eb) music part in bass clef to transpose to concert pitch
  - Remove 3 sharps from the key signature to get the correct pitch
  - 3 flats to key signature to get the correct concert pitch

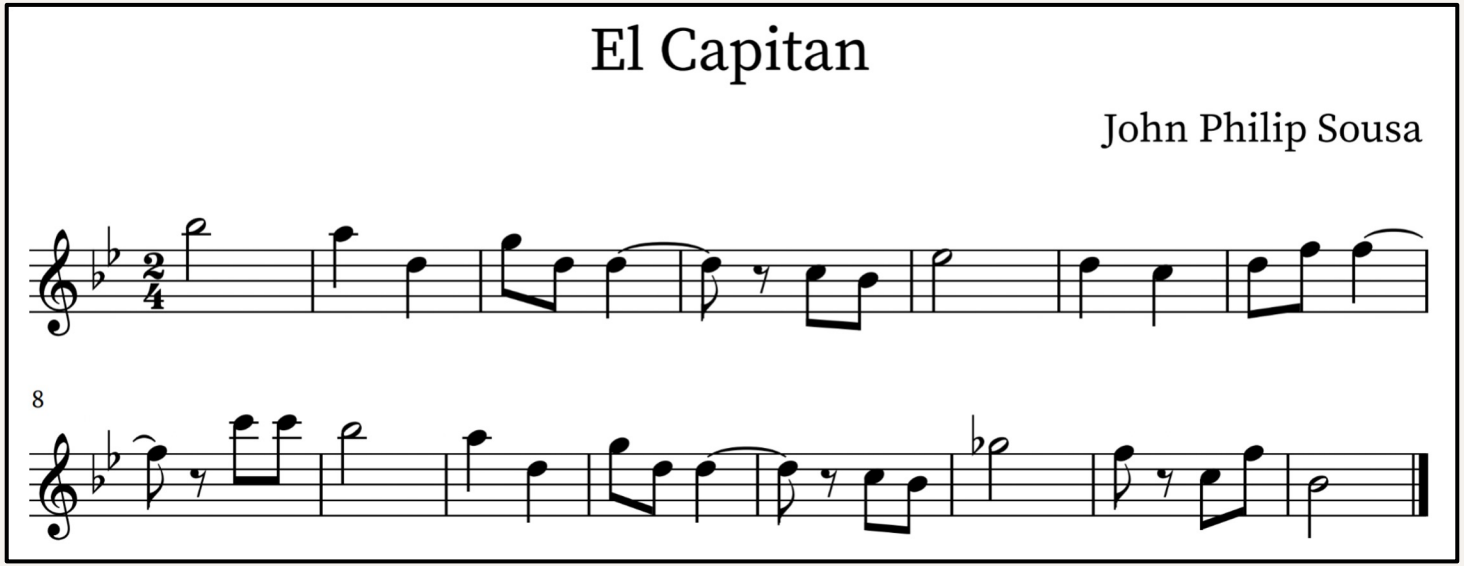
STRATEGY #2

Sight-reading melodies while speaking pitch transpositions (BOTH ways)

Works on:

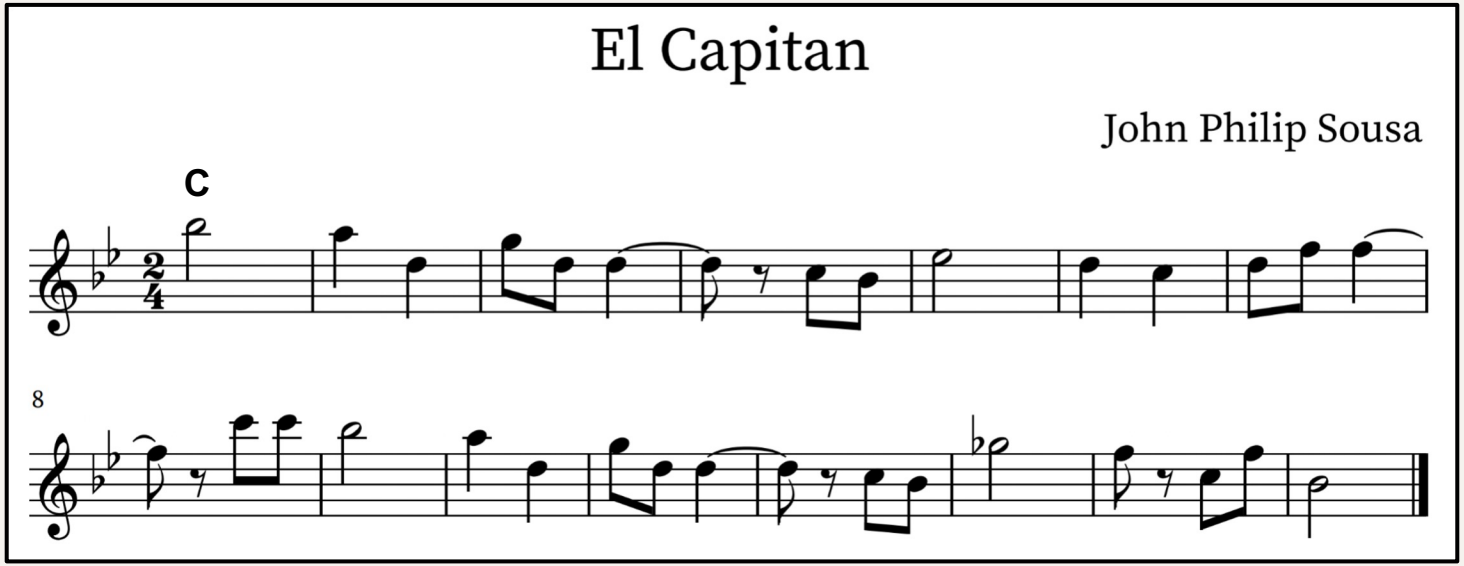
- Sight transposition (brass & woodwind)
- Sight reading (mallets or timpani)
- Gordon Stout style "Ideo-Kinetics" (pivot note)

Let's Try It! – Strategy #2



1. As written – Concert Pitch

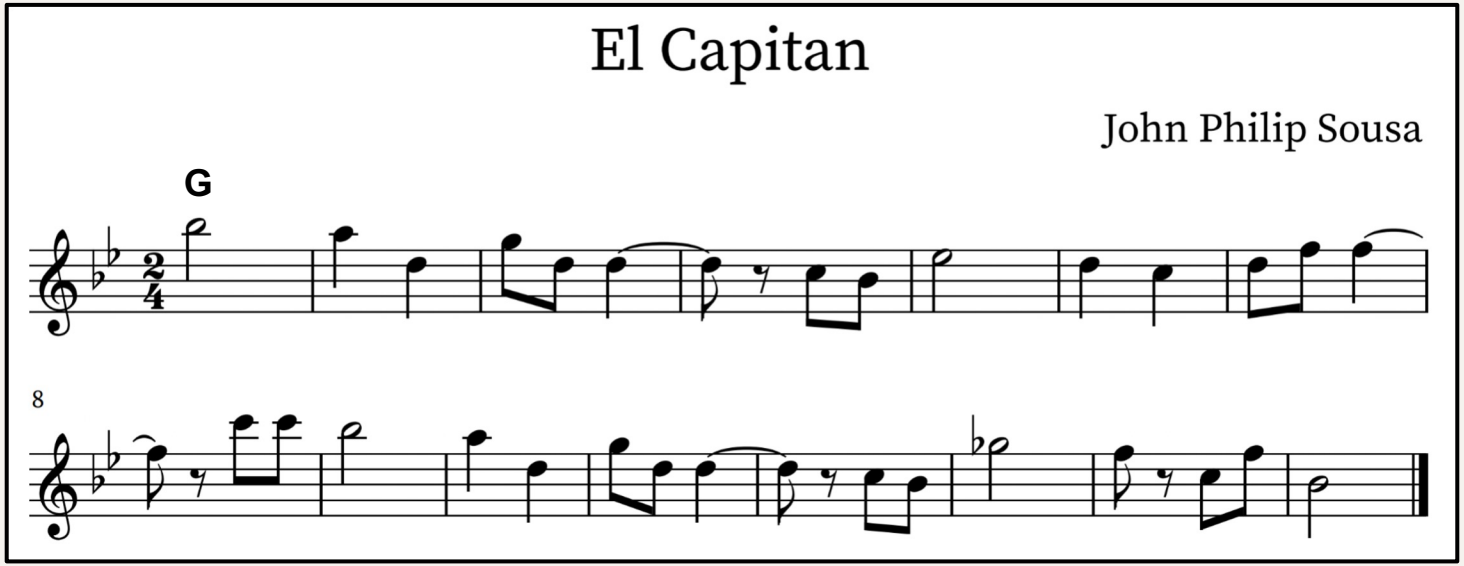
Let's Try It! – Strategy #2



1. As written – Concert Pitch

2. Transposed - Bb

Let's Try It! – Strategy #2



1. As written – Concert Pitch
2. Transposed - Bb
3. Transposed - Eb

Bridging the Gap – Practicing Strategies

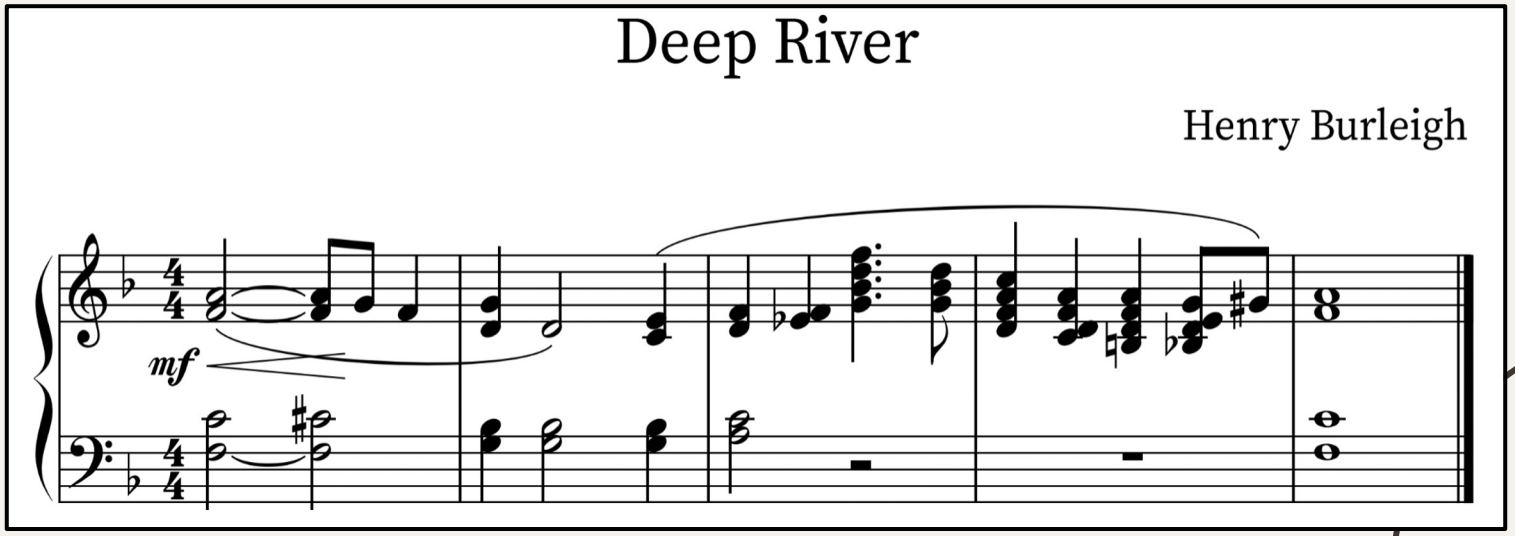
STRATEGY #3

Singing (solfege, scale degrees, or vowel syllables) melodic lines while playing

Works on:

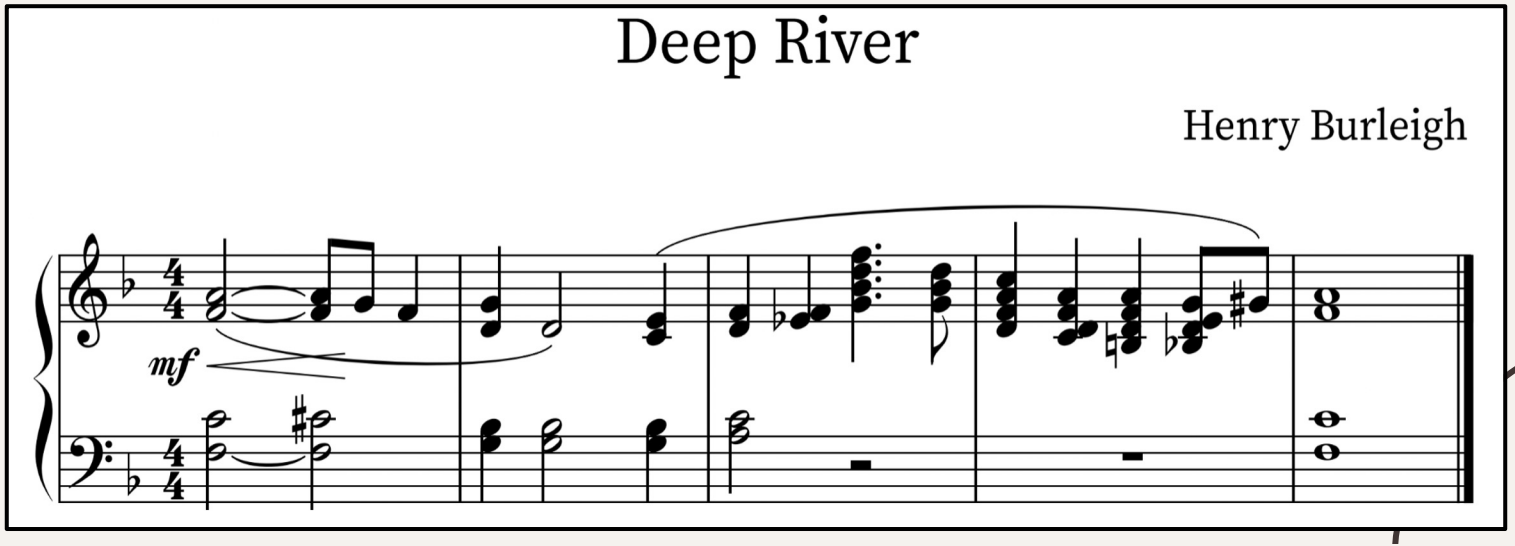
- Solfege Identification
- Phrasing
- Breath/Air Support
- Vowel Sound Clarity
- Singing Skills
- Limb/mental interdependence

Let's Try It! – Strategy #3



1. Vowel Syllables (mi-me-ma-mo-mu)

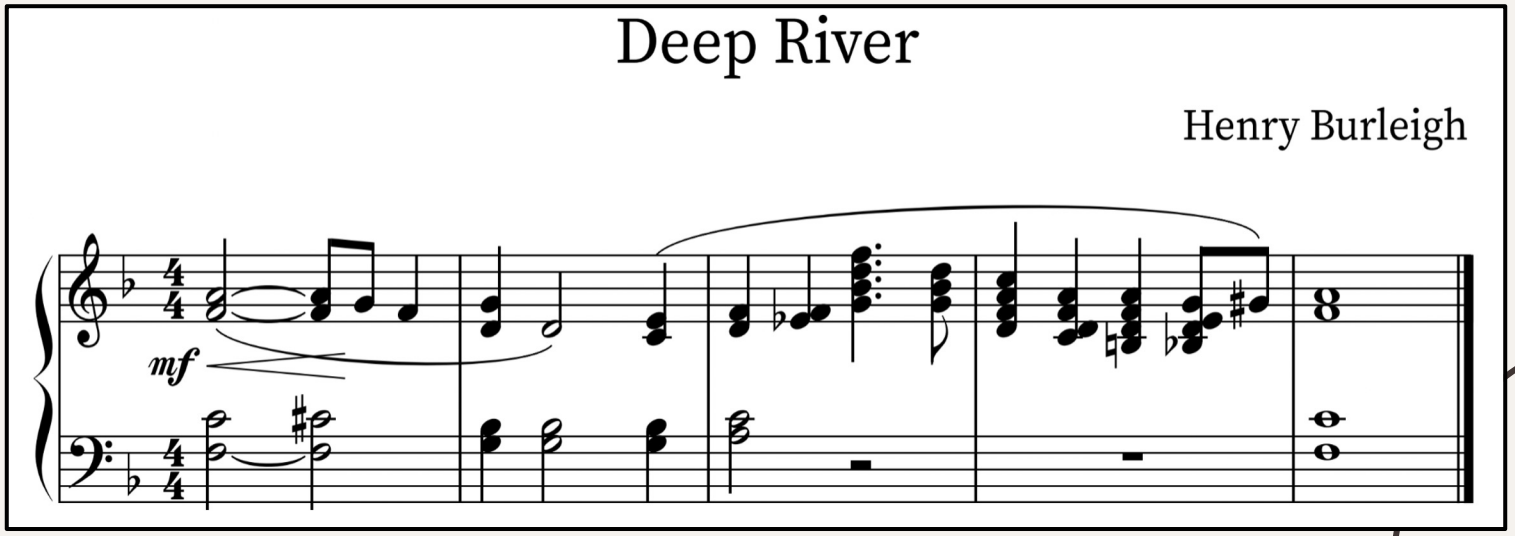
Let's Try It! – Strategy #3



2. Tizzle : the combination of tonguing and air

Reinforces breath support, consistency of air throughout a melodic line, and keeping your posture/set-up solid for the breath (i.e., no raised shoulders)

Let's Try It! – Strategy #3



3. Moveable Do Solfege (top melodic line)

Bridging the Gap – Practicing Strategies

STRATEGY #4

Articulating and tonguing non-pitched percussion music with syllables

Works on:

- Tonguing
- Articulations
- Use of Articulation Syllables
  (dah, tah, doo, dit, etc.)
- Phrasing & Line

Tonguing & Articulation Review*

Syllables

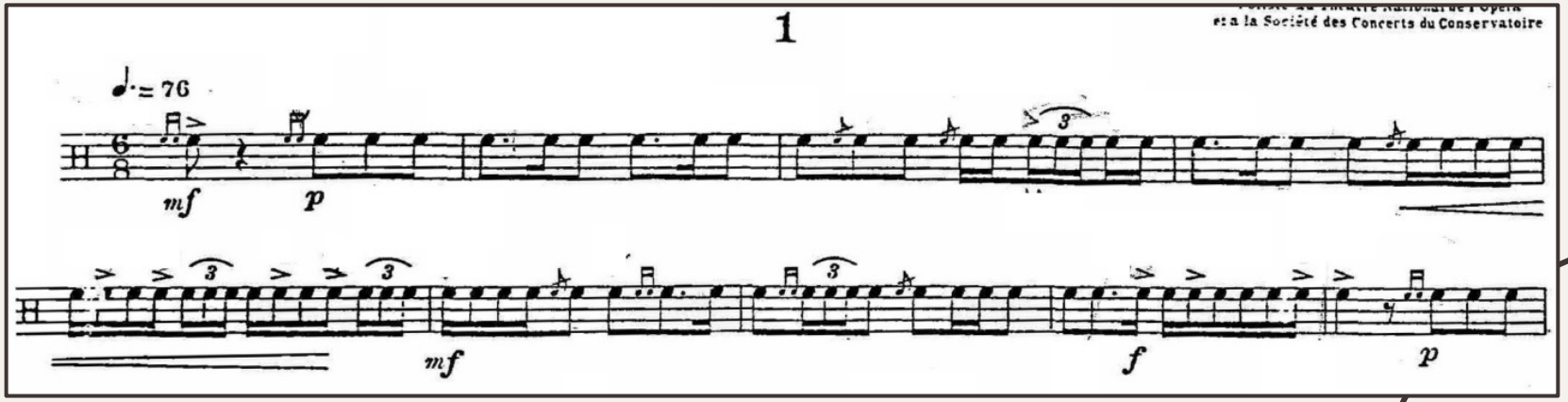
- Clarifies musical style and tone color of the note
- Consonant → clarity, immediacy, and shape of the note's start
- Vowel → tone color of a note
- Makes the start of notes more consistent
- General Syllables: Tah, Too, Toe, Tee (Immediacy and definition)
- Legato: Dah, Doo, Doe, Dee

Multiple-Tonguing

- Consonants alternate (T-K-T-K); vowel remains constant
- Final product should sound like an incredible single tongue.

*Source: "Brass Articulation And Musical Style" - Joe Dixon (Texas Bandmasters Association)

Let's Try It! – Strategy #4



General Syllable: Tah (tah-kah for doubles)

Bridging the Gap - Everything Else

Section Set-Up

What's wrong with this picture/video?

Equipment

Moving considerations & stage plots

Storage Logistics

Storage of equipment & its maintenance

Planning

Rehearsals, part assignments, and more

Bridging the Gap - Everything Else

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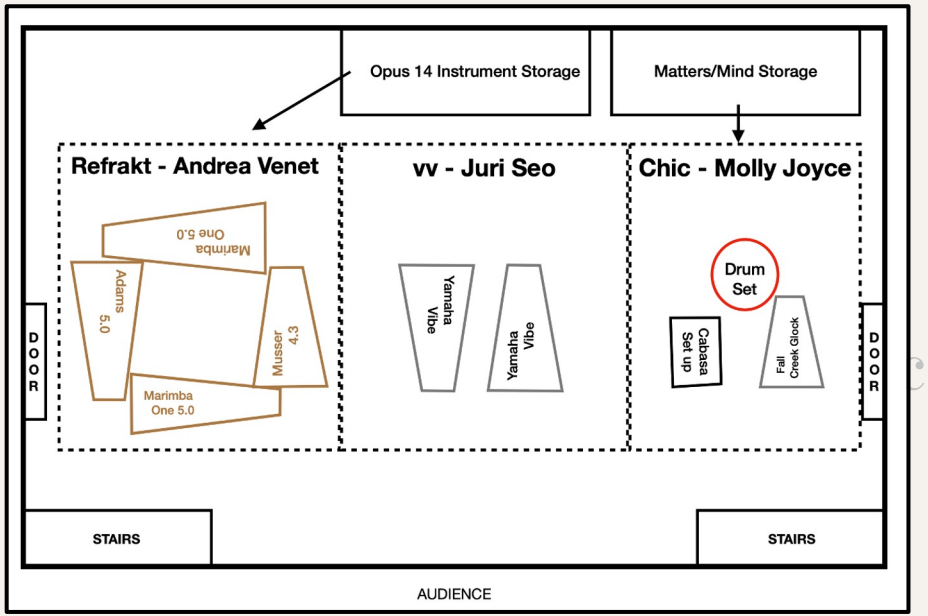
*Source: What's Wrong With This Picture? An Extreme Makeover for Your Percussion Section - James Campbell & Julie Hill - The Midwest Clinic, December 2007

Bridging the Gap - Everything Else



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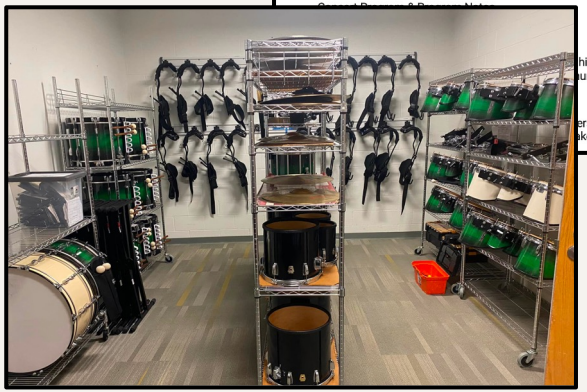

Performance Logistics Project - Example

Applied Percussion Lessons

The following project will assist you in coordinating and delegating logistics tasks for a chamber or large ensemble performance. You can complete this project using the repertoire and personnel from a "real" performance OR you can make a "fake" roster of personnel and repertoire – it's up to you. We will discuss and work on these items together throughout the semester leading up to the performance date.

- Performance Name, Location, Date, & Rehearsal Dates
- Program (make sure to list title, date of composition, composer and/or arranger, composer date of birth)
- Equipment/Backline Needed by Piece (indicate equipment that is needed on more than one piece with an *)
- Stage Plots or Tech Riders for Concert (see example on next page)
- One Week of Rehearsal Plans
- Dress Rehearsal Schedule
- Concert Day Schedule

his event, how would you delegate unity/yourself? How would you go

ers to each piece on this ke in your part assignments?

Bridging the Gap - Everything Else

Example High School Percussion Part Assignments

Winter Concert 2022

	Madeline	Andrew	Elliot	Nick	Brandon	Wyatt	Gabi	Sarah	Ethan	Daniel	Collin	Seth	Lindsey	Emma	Joey
Concert Band															
Christmas Fantasia (9)	SD	Perc 3	Timpani	Bells	CC	SC	BD	Chimes	Vibes						
Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas (4)		Bells	Chimes & CC @ 40	SC		Timpani									
A Crazy Mixed-up Christmas Concert (6)		BD	SD & Whistle	Timpani	Perc 3	Bells/Xylo					Perc 2				
Jazz Band												Set		Piano	
PE - Shared Space	Player 3						Player 5	Player 1	Player 7	Player 2			Player 4		Player 6
Symphonic Band															
Overture to a Winter Celebration (7)		Timpani	Tom/Triangle	BD/TD	Bells/Crot	SD	Chimes				SC/CC/Finger Cym				
Silent Night (4)	SC				CC/Scrape			Timpani		Chimes/Bells					
Celtic Carol (7-8)	Timpani						Toms A2	SC	Bodhran	Cabasa	BD & Wind Chimes	Spoons	Toms	Toms	Spoons
JB												Set		Piano	
PE - Flow											Marimba (Player 2)	Djembe (Player 3)		Vibes (Player 1)	
Wind Ensemble															
Holiday Piece (everyone, 7 parts)	Bells	Sleigh	Bells	Sleigh	Timpani	Marimba (8vb)	Vibes	Marimba	Xylo	Set	Vibes	Bells/SC/Chimes	Triangle	Marimba	Marimba (8vb)
Greensleeves (4)							Timpani					Chimes		Bells	CC
PE - Samba	Surdo Reposta	Caixa	Caixa	Agogo	Repenique	Surdo Marcacao	Tamborim	Chocalo	Repenique	Caixa	Agogo	Surdo Cortador	Tamborim	Shekere	Surdo Marcacao
The Night Before Christmas (7)									Perc 1 Xylo	Perc 2	Timpani	Perc 3 Marimba	Perc 1 Bells	Perc 4	Perc 3 vibes
Sleigh Ride (6)	Bells/Xylo									Temple Blocks		BD	Whip	Sleigh Bells	SD/Ride

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Questions?

For more information:

Visit www.mckaylaphillips.com

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Thank You!

If you have any additional questions, feel free to email/DM at the links below:

mckaylaphillipspercussion@gmail.com

www.mckaylaphillips.com

Instagram: @mckayla_p

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