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In Addition: A Supplement for Beginning Band Method Books

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IN ADDITION: A SUPPLEMENT FOR BEGINNING BAND METHOD BOOKS

by

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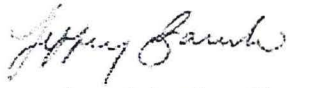 — 5-5-2020

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IN ADDITION: A SUPPLEMENT FOR BEGINNING BAND METHOD BOOKS

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Art and Design Department
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts
at
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By

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Abstract

This project provides an in-depth look into system of instruction that is used in many beginning band classes in our society. First, the work describes a few of the issues that music education faces today, such as budget cuts, declining music literacy, and program changes in schools. Next, the work examines the literature based around the subject of beginning band methodology. This will include a look into new methods that can be used in beginning band classes, an examination of the proper way to create sound on common band instruments, ways in which music reading skills and audiation skills are acquired, and the relevance of the 2014 Music Standards on band classes. Once a firm grasp of what should be taught to beginning band students is established, the work moves to examine commonly used beginning band method books to determine the strengths and weaknesses of each. Areas that are deemed weak in comparison to the criteria are then reinforced with new methods to cover said topic. At the conclusion, an assortment of band exercises will be included for use in supplementing any of the three examined method books.

Keywords: beginning band, embouchure, tone production, audiation

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Introduction/ Background Information

Throughout the twentieth century, many methods of teaching music began to develop across the world. These methods of conceptual education formed the base of what music education is today, in schools and private instruction. Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, Carl Orff, Zoltan Kodaly, and Edwin Gordon, just to name a few, studied how children learn music, and what the most effective methods were for teaching students to become musically literate. As time passed, and new technologies were developed, more and more methods for music education were created to promote music literacy in a K-12 curriculum, among them was the band method book. With these advances, one would think that music education would be more successful, and many more people would be musically literate. This, however, is not the case. According to Jon Henschen (2018), musical foundations, like reading and composing music, are disappearing, and the percentage of people who can read music notation proficiently is down to 11 percent. Music programs are facing budget cuts in favor of STEM programs and standardized testing-prep programs and are becoming less successful in creating music literate adults (Arostegui, 2016). Henschen (2018) also found that popular music was becoming less diverse and more homogenous. This fact can be seen in great detail by examining the study created by Joan Serra et al., entitled *Measuring the Evolution of Contemporary Western Popular Music*. This study showed that, since the 1960s, timbral quality (sound color, texture, and tone), harmonic presence, and pitch content of melodies has declined in popular music. Loudness has become more uniform, which has decreased the impact of dynamic contrast.

This leaves music educators in a precarious position. If music educators are not creating music literate adults in our society, as Henschen (2018) claimed, and schools are facing increasing pressure to include STEM and testing-prep programs that directly affect music

funding, how can music education be justified in public schools? The answer is to ensure that students are receiving the best music education possible and becoming music literate members of society. Luckily, music educators have been a proactive group that will rise to meet challenges to the profession, like they have since the Tanglewood Symposium of 1967, where leaders in all aspects of music came together to unify and define the role of music education in our society. (Mark & Madura, 2014). Being that music education is a broad subject that spans the entirety of a child's public educational career, this can be quite the undertaking. With that in mind, this Thesis Project will look at one aspect of music education (beginning band), and work to ensure that the topic is presented to students in the best way possible to achieve true music literacy.

With the goal of achieving true music literacy stated, what exactly does that mean? Is that the ability to read notes and rhythms? The ability to sing or play written music? The ability to listen to and enjoy music? The ability to judge music's quality? As stated earlier, music educators are a proactive group and by reviewing the 2014 Music Standards, a firm grasp on what it means to be 'literate' in music can be determined. The 2014 Music Standards for ensembles has four categories, which are divided into 11 common anchors (CA). These common anchors are to be accomplished by novice musicians, which includes beginning band (2014 Music Standards, 2014). The four categories and subsequent anchors are Creating, Performing, Responding, and Connecting. Within 'Creating' the novice should:

> "compose and improvise melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that reflect characteristics of music or text studied in rehearsal, select and develop draft melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or text studied in rehearsal, preserve draft compositions and improvisations through standard notation and audio recording, and evaluate and refine draft compositions and

> improvisations based on knowledge, skill, and teacher-provided criteria." (2014 Music Standards, pg.1-2)

This process, put into simpler terms, states, that the novice musician should compose and improvise original melodic and rhythmic ideas; refine and rework those ideas; record those ideas in both written and audio forms; and evaluate and refine those ideas again with teacher guidance. The category of 'Performance' is again broken down into a multistep process. The novice musician should:

> "select varied repertoire to study based on interest, music reading skills, an understanding of the structure of the music, context, and the technical skill of the individual or ensemble, demonstrate, using music reading skills where appropriate, how knowledge of formal aspects in musical works inform prepared or improvised performances, identify expressive qualities in a varied repertoire of music that can be demonstrated through prepared and improvised performances, and use self-reflection and peer feedback to refine individual and ensemble performances of a varied repertoire of music." (2014 Music Standards, pg. 3-4)

This process, again, can be simplified to the novice musician should select and perform a varied repertoire of music based on individual and ensemble technique level and music reading level. The music should be performed with expressive qualities, and the novice should use self-reflections and peer feedback to refine individual and ensemble performance. 'Responding' contains the following steps:

> "Identify reasons for selecting music based on characteristics found in the music, connection to interest, and purpose or context, identify how knowledge of context and the

> use of repetition, similarities, and contrasts inform the response to music, identify interpretations of the expressive intent and meaning of musical works, referring to the elements of music, contexts, and (when appropriate) the setting of text, and identify and describe the effect of interest, experience, analysis, and context on the evaluation of music." (2014 Music Standards, pg. 5-6)

To simplify this section, the novice musician should be able to identify the reasons for selecting music based on characteristics found in the music, connection to interest, and purpose or context and evaluate it accordingly. Finally, in 'Connecting' the following steps are given. The novice musician should: "Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing and responding to music, demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life." (2014 Music Standards, pg. 7-8) This section simply combines ideas presented in earlier sections and has the novice simply apply them to their individual life. A full list of the four categories and 11 CA can be found in the appendix.

Using this predetermined set of goals, one can see that music literacy goes far beyond being able to read notes, rhythms, and a few Italian descriptive terms, though these are also vital points in the equation. Additionally, in order for any music literacy to be prevalent in beginning band, the student musician must be able to make a technically correct sound on their chosen instrument. By including music reading skills, instrumental tone production, and covering the eleven common anchors of the 2014 Music Standards, a thorough list of items for music literacy has be created. Using this list as a guideline for music literacy, this Thesis Project has reviewed the effectiveness of three widely used beginning band methods (*Essential Elements 2000,*

Traditions of Excellence, and *Sound Innovations)*, and created a supplement to help complete the educational formula to create musically literate beginning band students.

State of the Field

The literature surrounding beginning band methodology is vast, varied, and created to achieve many specific goals. When determining what literature to review for this project, a wide sample of many articles were considered. After sorting through a great deal of the current literature on beginning band methodologies, problems, and strategies for improvement three big topics were appearing more and more often: embouchure/tone production, music reading skills, and audiation.

Forming the correct embouchure is essential for producing a good tone on any instrument (Sheldon, Boonshaft, Black, & Phillips, 2010). Beginning band method books, such as, *Traditions of Excellence, Essential Elements 2000* and *Sound Innovations,* provide a basic guide on embouchure and tone production for each instrument however, there is some vital missing information. By examining articles and dictated presentations by masters of various instruments, a more complete picture can be obtained.

For the flute, Cluff (2013) suggested three items that need to be included for successful sound production. Placement of the embouchure plate compared to the key tops must be adjustable for each individual student, based on lip size and shape. Students need to engage their abdominal muscles, to increase their lung capacity for a full sound. Flexible lip centers need to be used for the various registers of the flute. Using these concepts, in addition to the materials that are presented in method books, will help create a characteristic tone for young flautists.

By reviewing the work of Cabral (2017), Criswell (2014), and Klose (1946), four items will need to be included to create a characteristic tone on the clarinet. First, students need to

identify the fulcrum, to know how much mouthpiece to place in one's mouth. Second, students need to anchor their top teeth on the mouthpiece and allow their bottom lip to act as a cushion for their reed. Third, students need to know how to tighten their lips around the mouthpiece, to form a seal for their air. Lastly, students need to know where to place their tongue inside their mouth, to correctly funnel the air into the instrument.

According the works of Allen (2017), de Ville (1908), and Cottrell (2013), the following items need to be addressed when creating a characteristic sound on the saxophone. The neck strap needs to be adjusted to bring the instrument naturally to a student's mouth. It should not be held up by the student in any way. The top teeth need to be placed directly on top of the mouthpiece. The bottom lip should be rolled slightly over the bottom teeth to provide a cushion for the reed. Lastly, the corners of the mouth and top lip should be pulled tight into the mouthpiece to provide an air seal.

Brass instruments all have a similar set up and can find success by using nearly the same information for performing with characteristic sound. The articles and books by Criswell (2016), Arban (1982), and Ely and Van Deuren (2009) give the following items to teach beginning brass students. First, the bottom jaw must be lowered inside of the mouth, to keep one's teeth from impeding air. Next, the brass player should wet their lips and press them together, as if saying the syllable or letter 'em' or 'M.' Lastly, the student must use fast air to create a buzz with their lips in the mouthpiece.

According to Bueckert (2006), tone production for percussionists comes from knowledge of the natural movement of the stick. Students need to be taught how to use the natural motion of the stick or mallet to produce the proper rebound and allow for free vibration of the instrument.

In addition, students need to know where to strike the particular instrument for the correct tone to be produced.

Recently, a great deal of research has gone into understanding how musicians read music and translate that into sound. Since music has a written symbol system that is composed of two parts, rhythm and pitch, understanding how musicians read each of those elements, and combine them, is essential for instruction of beginning students. Jennifer Mishra published an article in 2015 that discussed this very topic. Mishra analyzed both rhythmic and melodic sight reading in conjunction with various interventions to help with the tasks. She determined that having an identifiable system to help musicians read rhythms, such as a counting system, would help with rhythmic sight reading, but not necessarily with pitch reading. The same was true for a pitch reading system, such as solfege, it would greatly help reading melodically, but not always in terms of rhythm. This suggested that rhythm and pitch are read and processed differently by the brain.

This concept was supported by the findings of Reifinger (2018), who found a link between music achievement and reading achievement. In his study, Reifinger found that students who could sight-sing pitches with high success would likely have high marks in language reading skills. This correlation did not register with rhythmic success. This was further corroborated by Russell (2019), who found that "Results of the current study not only support findings that recognized the distinct nature of pitch and rhythm but also suggest that rhythm processing may change based on the presence of pitch." Currently, music method books approach this topic by breaking down music into rhythm and pitch separately. These findings suggest that, when approaching the subject of music reading, students will need to learn to read

rhythms in conjunction with pitch or create a sequential learning process to integrate the two concepts.

Audiation is a term Gordon coined in 1975, though not a new topic that refers to the comprehension and internal realization of music, or the sensation of an individual hearing or feeling sound when it is not physically present. This concept has earned much attention recently in music instruction, as it is a vital skill for musicians. Band method books typically introduce music reading and performing at the same time. This is typically done with students playing whole notes on a single given pitch, alternating with a whole rest. This very simple type of music reading and playing can be tedious, and sow disinterest in students (West 2016).

In his article "Sound Foundations," West suggests instead to start with sound. Instructors should teach students to use their instrument and create a few good notes and even learn songs before learning how to read notation. This concept of sound before symbol is not a new one, but West adds a few new elements, which will help students gain audiation and aural dictation skills. By having students learn a few notes and teaching students to play simple songs by rote, then creating their own notation system, which slowly migrates to standard music notation, audiation skill are ingrained in students.

This concept was further explored by Clauhs (2018) in his article "Beginning Band without a Stand." Clauhs has his beginning students learn to use their instrument first, without the use of music or written notation. He feels that students must, "listen and speak music before reading and writing it." This process mimics language acquisition skills and is not a new concept, as it follows the traditions of Suzuki, Kodaly, Orff, and Gordon. Both West (2015) and Clauhs (2018) find using this method useful in fostering internal musicianship skills and

creativity, as well as instilling good audiation skills. Using this method will be a significant shift in from traditional class method books, but the research supports its worth.

This can be seen clearly in Melissa Rogers' 2013 report "Aural dictation affects high achievement in sight singing, performance, and composition skills." In this report, Rogers finds that students that have high marks in aural dictation (audiation) have higher achievement in all sight singing skills, performance skills, and even in music writing skills.

Research Methodology

The primary method of research used in this project is action research. Action research allows for the diagnosis of a problem and development of a solution. First, this research method has allowed for the identification of areas of weakness and strength inside the beginning band classroom setting. Second, it has allowed for the qualitative discussion of various articles, books, and studies inside the areas of concern for validity and worth. Finally, it allowed for the identification and implementation of a plan of action, to remedy the areas of concern.

To identify the areas of concern for this project, three beginning band method books have been examined closely to see what instruction is given to students through their use. Next, each method book was compared to the four categories and subsequent anchors found in the 2014 Music Standards. The resulting list has been used as a guideline to find lacking areas in instruction, or areas that need reinforcement. In addition, peer-reviewed and published articles were consulted to determine additional areas of concern, potential needs for beginning band students, and methods for improving beginning band instruction. The strengths of each band method book have also been determined for these areas. Examining and listing the strengths of each band method has helped narrow the focus for supplemental book and has identify areas that should not be changed in beginning band instruction.

Results of method books compared to the 2014 Music Standards

The first method book that has been analyzed was *Essential Elements 2000 Comprehensive Band Method* (2004) by Lautzenheiser et al. This method covers four of the music literacy checklist items and can potentially cover two more items. The book provides seven opportunities for students to compose or improvise melodic and rhythmic musical ideas and record those ideas in their book. This is the most of any of the books evaluated and this book also provides an entire page dedicated to composing music. On this page, the book does also provide one chance for students to evaluate and refine their own compositions. This could potentially be done with feedback from the teacher or with peer feedback. The book also provides 203 excerpts of music for students to perform. Little option is given for students to have any choice in what is selected to perform but there are some exercises that give students some small choice, such as which line of a trio or duet to play. Some exercises give the student the option to perform with expressive elements of music. This book introduces the concepts of articulations such as slurs, ties and accents as well as four tempo markings, and six dynamic markings. Finally, the method book does contain the opportunity for students to make connections to their personal life and other disciplines. There is opportunity to study music of various world cultures (of which the student may be apart) and opportunities for students to take part in music of various holiday celebrations. The *Essential Elements 2000 Comprehensive Band Method* book falls short in several categories. There are no opportunities (strictly provided by the book) for students to audio record any of their own compositions or improvisations. There are no opportunities for students to self-reflect or give/receive peer feedback. And finally, this method book does not provide the opportunity for students to identify reasons for selecting music based

on characteristics found in the music, connection to interest purpose/context, and evaluate it accordingly.

Next, the analysis of Bruce Pearson and Ryan Nowlin's *Tradition of Excellence Comprehensive Band Method* (2010) provides very similar results when compared to the music literacy checklist. *Tradition of Excellence* covers three items of the music literacy checklist and potentially can cover two more. The book provides students with four opportunities for composition and improvisation. Each of these opportunities provides students with the requirement for them to write out their composition or improvisation. The method book provides one-hundred and seventy-eight excerpts of music for students to perform. The book does provide the opportunity for students to play with expressive elements of music. These include: slurs, ties, accents, staccato, ritardando, six dynamic markings, three tempo markings, as well as one style marking.

In much the same way as *Essential Elements 2000, Traditions of Excellence* could potentially connect music learning to individual personal experiences and life. The book provides many pieces of music from various cultures and various holiday events. This method book does fall short in many categories as well. First, there is no opportunity for composition rework or for teacher feedback and rework. There is no opportunity for students to have their compositions audio recorded for evaluation or refinement. There is no opportunity for students to use self-reflection and peer feedback to refine performances. Finally, there is no opportunity to identify reasons for selecting music based on characteristics found in the music, connection to interest purpose/context, and evaluate it accordingly. On a side note, this book is aligned for work with a program called Smartmusic. This program does provide opportunities for students to record themselves for evaluation and feedback on many of the pieces in the method book. This

program does require a subscription fee from the student and because of the additional requirements, was left out of the analysis of this method book.

Sound Innovations (Sheldon, Boonshaft, Black, & Phillips, 2010) faired much the same as the other two method books when analyzed against the music literacy checklist. *Sound Innovations* provided the fewest opportunities for improvisation and composition, with only three. These three opportunities do require students to record the compositions in written notation. This method book did provide the most music excepts and two-hundred and four pieces. The method book also provided, one item that no other method book did provide, that was one opportunity for peer feedback. One excerpt specifically suggested for students to listen to their peers, practice good concert etiquette, and evaluate their performance. The method book did provide opportunities for students to perform with musical expression, such as: the tie, slur, accent, legato, staccato, six dynamics markings, four tempo markings, ritardando, and one style marking. Just as the other two books did, this method book provides the potential for connecting music learning to individual personal experiences and life through multicultural pieces of music and holiday centered music. This method book falls short in many of the same places as the previous two examined methods. It provides no opportunities for composition or improvisation rework. It provides no opportunities for audio recording of original compositions for evaluation and refinement. It does not provide any opportunity for compositional or improvisational rework with teacher guidance. Finally, there is no opportunity to identify reasons for selecting music based on characteristics found in the music, connection to interest purpose/context, and evaluate it accordingly.

Based upon these findings, music educators must supply many aspects of the education curriculum to create music literate beginning band students. In particular, they need to provide

composition and improvisation assignments that allow for students to refine and rework throughout the process. In addition, music educators need to provide a method to record aurally the composition or improvisation for self-reflection and evaluation. Finally, there needs to be a step in the process for the music teacher to provide feedback on composition and improvisation process. These three items come from the 'Creating' (see appendix 1) step of the "2014 Music Standards." From the performing section of the "2014 Music Standards," students need to be provided with an opportunity to self-reflect and use peer feed-back to improve and refine performances (see appendix 1). From the 'Responding' section of the "2014 Music Standards," students need more opportunities to identify reasons for selecting music based on characteristics found in the music, connection to interest purpose/context, and evaluate it accordingly (see appendix 1). Lastly, from 'Connecting,' beginning band music students need more ways in which to connect music learning items to individual personal experiences and life (see appendix 1).

Results of embouchure and tone production in beginning band method books

According to Cluff (2013), when learning to make a sound and form an embouchure on the flute several things need to be taken into account. First, the position of the head joint and lips compared to position of the keys must be correct. The key tops should always be facing the ceiling while the head joint can be adjusted to comfort and clarity of sound based upon the student's lip size and shape, hand size and shape, and chin concavity. A student with thicker lower lips will want to have the blowhole aligned with the key tops. Students with thinner lips will want to align the outer edge of the blowhole to the key tops. This alignment is successful with 75% of students. Students will need to make slight adjustments between these two areas to

find the perfect spot for them. It is also important to note that 'perfect' spot for them will change as they grow and develop.

Next Cluff (2013) suggests the use of flexible lip centers. This concept adapts the embouchure and airstream based upon the register in which the flute is playing (see the diagram 1 below). This means that a flautist needs to know several different embouchures to be successful. For most beginning level work the student will be able to use the medium register (center) lip position. The final important aspect of flute instruction is the use of proper breath support. The flute requires a great deal of air to create and maintain a full, rich sound. To accomplish this, the student will need to engage their lower abdominal muscles to both expand their lung capacity and to control their exhalation (Cluff, 2013). When one takes these aspects into account, three criteria emerge that should be included in beginning band flute instruction: embouchure placement on head joint vs. key top placement on the flute main body, the flexible lip centers based upon register of notes, and finally instruction in the use of abdominal muscles to provide air support.

When discussing and evaluating the beginning band methods flute instruction vs. the established flute criteria, it is obvious that the books are lacking a good deal of information. All three of the methods gave the least effective blowhole to key top alignment. This is most likely due to the ease and clarity in which their instruction is given compared to what Cluff (2013) suggests. Simply stating for a student to align the blowhole to the key tops is much easier than telling them to align the outer edge of the blowhole to the key tops. In the area of flexible lip centers, no method described more than one.

Essential Elements 2000 Comprehensive Band Method by Lautzenheiser, et al, (2004) gave the wrong lip center for the notes they students would be performing first. The other two

methods (*Sound Innovations* and *Traditions of Excellence*) gave the correct flexible lip center but did not explain the other two. This again is most likely in order to keep instruction clear and simple for young students. Lastly, only *Essential Elements 2000* gave the proper breathing advice for the young flautist, going through the process of breathing deeply and creating a focused stream of air. Both other methods gave poor instruction in this area, simply having students breathe in fully and exhaling completely.

The basics of the clarinet embouchure begin with simply how much mouthpiece one should place into the mouth. The mouthpiece should only be placed in the mouth until the fulcrum point. The fulcrum point is where the opening between the reed and the mouthpiece meet. This allows the reed to vibrate properly and create a good sound. To find the fulcrum point you can place a piece of paper into the opening of the reed and mouthpiece. When the paper stops naturally, you have found the fulcrum point and that is how much mouthpiece and reed should be inserted into the student's mouth.

Next, the student is to place their teeth on top of the mouthpiece and let their lower lip act as a cushion between the reed and their teeth. The student should not pull the lower lip in over their bottom teeth since it would then obstruct the fulcrum point and keep the reed from vibrating (Cabral, 2017). Klose (1946) states that the lower lip should be lightly over the bottom teeth but not pulled completely over the teeth. The student would then pull their top lip and corners of their mouth tight around the mouthpiece while keeping the chin pointed down and flat (Cabral, 2017).

Lastly, it is important to keep the tongue high in the mouth to direct the air into the mouthpiece (Criswell, 2014). Saying the syllables 'eee' and 'ooo' one after the other should place the tongue in the correct position (Cabral, 2017). The information provided by Cabral,

Criswell, and Klose suggests that the following criteria will provide success for beginning clarinet instruction. First, identify the fulcrum. Second, top teeth and bottom lip placement. Third, closing and tightening the embouchure while keeping the chin pointed and flat. And lastly, keeping the tongue high in the mouth to funnel the air correctly.

In the clarinet section of this evaluation the clear winner is the *Traditions of Excellence Comprehensive Band Method* by Pearson and Nowlin (2010). This method book hit nearly all the criteria perfectly. The method's only true stumble was on the tongue placement which it touched on in a vague and unclear manner. The other two methods completely omitted the identification of the fulcrum and gave improper information about what to do with the bottom lip. All the methods were clear on the placement of the top teeth and how to close around the mouthpiece while keeping a pointed, flat chin.

According to Cottrell (2013) the saxophone embouchure has undergone many changes and alterations since the instrument's creation in 1840s. Today there are two accepted embouchures that are used by performing artist on the saxophone: the classical embouchure and the jazz embouchure. For the purpose of this study, the classical embouchure will be examined since it would be taught to beginning students in their first year of instruction. To form the classical embouchure the student is to place the mouthpiece inside the mouth up to the fulcrum point, similar to the clarinet embouchure. Then, the student is to put their top teeth on to the top of the mouthpiece. The student should roll the bottom lip in over the bottom teeth very slightly, most of the lip should remain on the outside of the mouth. The upper lip and corners should tighten around the mouthpiece to only allow air to flow into the instrument (de Ville, 1908).

Lastly, it is important to note that the student should adjust their neck strap so that their instrument freely lays against their hip and the mouthpiece moves directly to their mouth. The

student should not hold the instrument up in any fashion (Allen, 2017). Using the information provided by Allen (2017), de Ville (1908), and Cottrell (2013) the following are the criteria that will produce successful saxophone embouchure and sound: identifying the fulcrum point on the mouthpiece and reed; placing the top teeth on the top of the mouthpiece; rolling the bottom lip slightly over the bottom teeth, not completely rolled in; pulling the corners and top lip tight around the rest of the mouthpiece; and adjusting the neck strap to allow the instrument to rest properly against the student's hip and mouth.

Overall, the method books did a good job in saxophone instruction. Both *Essential Elements 2000* and *Traditions of Excellence* touched on all criteria and would provide a great starting place for the young saxophonist. S*ound Innovations for Concert Band* stumbled on only one criterion, the placement of the lower lip, however that is an important point and could cause problems in the future for the saxophonist.

When discussing brass instruments and their embouchures a great deal of similarities can be found between the various brass instruments. For the purpose of this study we will consider all brass instruments (trumpet, horn, trombone, baritone, and tuba) at the same time and find how each method book does at instructing the brass family as a whole. First, the teeth position inside of the mouth should be discussed. The teeth need to be parted to allow for an uninterrupted flow of air into the instrument. To do this lower the bottom jaw enough to allow one's tongue through the teeth.

Next, the lips should be moistened to allow them to 'buzz' freely into the mouthpiece. To obtain a good 'buzz' the lips should be pressed together as if saying the letter 'M,' the syllable 'em,' or 'um.' While pressing the lips together in this method air should be blown through the lips (Arban, 1982). These items are the same for all brass instruments. Another point of great

importance is the use of a solid air stream for the various brass instruments. Since air is what creates the vibration that causes sound for the brass instrument, it is important to point out the importance of using a fast air stream when playing brass instruments (Criswell, 2016). The only variety that can be found is where the mouthpiece is placed upon the lips for the various instruments. In this area some confusion can also be found.

Generally, it is accepted that the trumpet, trombone, baritone, and tuba should place the mouthpiece directly centered on the mouth. The horn should place two thirds of the mouthpiece on the upper lip while placing one third on the lower lip. It is important to note that this is a basic guideline and some variation does occur without causing any problems (Ely & Van Deuren, 2009).

Taking the work of Arban (1982), Criswell (2016), Ely, and Van Deuren (2009) into account the following criteria will help brass players find success playing in beginning band. First, the bottom jaw must be lowered to allow for air to pass unimpeded. Second, the lips must be moistened and pressed together forming the syllable or letter 'em,' 'um,' or 'M.' Lastly, the student must use fast air to create a good lip buzz and support their sound. Due the great variation in mouthpiece placement that can be found to be acceptable, this area will not be used as a criterion for success but will be included for general knowledge.

The three method books did a good job teaching how to form the proper embouchure for all the instruments in the brass family. The methods were nearly identical in the instruction language and methodology. The big difference here is how the books instructed students to use their breath in conjunction with the embouchure. *Essential Elements 2000* had the best use of breath support for a good sound, followed by *Traditions of Excellence* which omitted the

discussion about breathing out, and lastly by *Sound Innovations* which gave the wrong information to students.

According to Bueckert (2006), when developing the criteria for producing a clear, characteristic percussion tone, three main ideas need to be considered. First, is the student striking the instrument in the correct spot? Second, is the student allowing the instrument to resonate to its full potential by allowing for the natural rebound of the stick or mallet? This second concept does include a sub-category that needs to be addressed. Is the student holding the mallet or stick correctly to allow for a natural rebound?

The three examined method books percussion instruction for tone production is fairly complete. All of the books discuss how to hold mallets and sticks for various instruments. Every book discussed where to strike the bar on a mallet instrument and where to strike a snare drum. The biggest area of concern happens to be the discussion of the natural rebound. Both *Sound Innovations* and *Traditions of Excellence* contain information on natural rebound and the differences of this rebound on various instruments. *Essential Elements 2000* did not discuss rebound. It is worth noting that *Essential Elements 2000* did not introduce as many instruments and the technique to playing them as the other books did. Essential Elements 2000 introduced two instruments, while Traditions of Excellence introduced five, and Sound Innovations introduced seven.

When examining the method book score card in table 2, some startling information can be ascertained. First, when looking at the flute score card, all the method books were lacking in information and even presented improper instruction. Second, there is a clear lack of information in all of these method books. Only the *Essential Elements 2000 Comprehensive Band Method* by Lautzenheiser, et al. (2004) met all the criteria in more than one instrument category. *Traditions*

of Excellence Comprehensive Band Method by Pearson and Nowlin (2010) met all the criteria in only one instrument category and *Sound Innovations for Concert Band* by Sheldon, Boonshaft, Black, and Phillips (2010) did not meet all criteria in any category. Lastly, and potentially the most troubling, is the fact that each of these method books presented incorrect information at least once through instruction. If you take into account the number of criteria met and take into consideration the number of incorrect instructions given it seems that the best method to help the band director in his/her classroom is the *Traditions of Excellence Comprehensive Band Method* by Pearson and Nowlin (2010).

Results of the method books in music reading skills/audiation

When discussing the creation of music reading skills and audiation skills all three of the examined method books (*Essential Elements 2000, Sound Innovations,* and *Traditions of Excellence*) did nearly the same thing and will be examined as such for this section. As such, here is the basic layout of each book. The first few exercises introduce notes and their placement on the staff of music as well as the whole note/whole rest and half note/half rest. One notable exception to this is the early introduction of the quarter note and quarter rest in *Essential Elements 2000 Comprehensive Band Method* by Lautzenheiser, et al. (2004).

Once three notes have been introduced, a couple of simple songs are introduced. These allow the students to read the notes on the page and create sound accordingly. Throughout each book new pitch, harmonic, and rhythmic content is added as the students progress through the method. This coincides with the introduction of music terms, style markings, and other various topics. In the back of each of these method books additional rhythmic exercises and technical exercises (scales, scale patterns) can be found. As a whole, this process is logical and follows a progression that will help students develop their music reading skills throughout the course of a

year. Research does however give two ways to improve this process: a new way to begin each method book and a more complete rhythm reading process.

A better way to begin each method book would be to not use the method book. Based on the research by Clauhs (2018) and West (2016), starting without using written notation has several benefits. First, it does not allow students to get bored with the simplistic beginnings that most method books contain. Instead of learning three notes by looking at whole notes alternating with whole rests, the first three notes are taught to students and then combined into songs by rote. Second, this allows for students to acquire the "speaking" portion of the music language before the "written" portion. This mimics language acquisition and is an easy way to foster the early stages of audiation skills (West, 2015). Third, this allows for students to focus on their sound and listening to others early in their music training. By creating music sounds first and adding the written portion later it improves the student's aural diction skills once the music is added (Rogers, 2013). Lastly, if this is done early in the academic year it would not impede any later progress and skill acquisition that the method books do well, as stated above.

The other section in beginning band method books that could use improvement are the rhythm supplement pages found towards the end of each method book. These additional rhythmic studies have traditionally been thought of as a good way to practice rhythm reading skills. When looking strictly at rhythm reading skills, they do help greatly. Having a counting method of reading these items will help with rhythm, however as the new research suggests they do not help students read rhythms if they contain any pitch information (Mishra, 2015). Alternatively, it would be more beneficial if these rhythmic ideas were introduced as they currently are then followed by exercises with varying pitches using the same rhythm. This would

allow students to learn a new rhythmic concept and immediately use it in several scenarios which would create a more solid base of understanding.

Production

In evaluating the three sections of results above, a clear picture of the next step for beginning band method books and instruction starts to emerge. First, beginning band method books are sorely lacking in music improvisation, composition, recording opportunities, and peer feedback opportunities. These concepts are straight from the Common Anchors of the 2014 Music Standards and need to be present in the materials that are being presented to our music students. Second, more information is needed in the embouchure and tone production section of beginning band method books. Admittedly, there is many various ways to find success in teaching these concepts, which can be confusing, but having the information present for all to see and use would be helpful to band directors and students. Lastly, though beginning band method books do a great job of presenting most of their materials in a logical format, the beginning section and supplemental rhythm section could be improved.

First, in the area of improvisation, composition, recording, and peer feedback. Simply, providing these opportunities is an easy fix for this lacking area. *In Addition,* the supplement created for this project, has exercises to allow students to improvise new endings to songs in call and response fashion and even to compose new pieces of music. As technology becomes more and more integrated into our society, recording opportunities become easier and easier. I-pads, smart phones, and computer technology makes it easy for students or teachers to make recordings for self-evaluation. Lastly, any of these ideas would allow for positive peer and teacher feedback. Have the students discuss what they liked or did not like about a written

variation or someone's improvisation. For examples of these exercises, see Appendix 2, examples 1-3.

The second topic, embouchure and tone production, is a bit harder to set ideas for improvement. Publication companies and method book writers could create a document that contains every scrap of information about every instrument's embouchure and tone production. This, however, would not be feasible to print or easily understood by the incoming band student. Instead, this falls into the realm of a band director's expertise. If a director is to take the advice of Clauhs (2018) and West (2016) and start without a book, this becomes even more important. A band director needs to know how to quickly and effectively teach students this concept and provide ways to supplement their chosen band method on a need by need basis. Knowing the information presented in the results section of this document would be valuable starting point.

As for the third topic, music reading skills and audiation. Following the guidance of Clauhs (2018) and West (2016) it would be advisable to begin teaching music by rote, with sound first. Reading music notation should be added once a comfortable level is obtained with the early steps of sound creation. This allows for a more natural progression of the early steps to gain audiation skills. *In Addition* contains simple song exercises that could be taught to young students, as suggested. These exercises come in 3-known notes to 6-known notes variations. A list can be found in Appendix 2 example 4. It is also advised to use the regular progression of method books to introduce new concepts, and to make use of the vast number of written exercises. *In Addition* also contains a key study exercises which allows students to play through well-known melodies in various key signatures. This helps students understand how sound relates to the written pitch in several scenarios, as well as reinforcing key reading skills. Lastly, as Mishra (2013) advises, rhythms and pitch content need to be taught in conjunction. This

allows for the brain to make more synaptic connections to help students learn how rhythmic ideas function in written music. *In Addition* contains exercises in two-four, three-four, and four-four time that facilities these ideas. See example 5-6 in Appendix 2.

Conclusions

In the content area of beginning band, it is vital that music educators provide additional supports to the standard beginning band method books to facilitate a complete music education for our students. Band directors need to have extensive knowledge on how students learn, what techniques and technical information are needed on each instrument, and how to give students the opportunities to improvise and compose music. *In Addition* provides some of these supports and can be used as a resource to create more learning opportunities for music students on their way to becoming musically literate.

Moving forward, research should be conducted for the following items to ensure they are being taught in the best manner possible. First, more time and quantitative research is needed on how students begin to read music and how they internalize that musical reading. There is plenty of qualitative research in this area but not as much in a pure numerical format. Second, it would be advised for researchers to investigate a 'best method' for students to learn rhythmic and notations simultaneously. Mishra (2016) has provided a study that uncovers the issue with rhythmic and notation reading and provides a few ideas on how to integrate them, but more information is needed on this topic. Lastly, it may be time to rework the tone and embouchure sections in beginning band method books. A simple getting started page, like the ones that currently exist, are great, but by adding a troubleshooting page, many common issues in this area could be solved by the student.

In conclusion, the beginning band method book is a great tool for teaching beginning band. However, like any tool, it must be understood and used properly to fully function. By adding a few exercises to our method book of choice and increasing personal knowledge directors can better cover the concepts of music education that our students need to become truly musically literate. It is important to note that this is only one step on each student's journey towards that goal, however it is important to have a solid foundation to foster each next step. In this way, music educators will produce truly music literate adults who will have a great appreciate for the art of music in our society.

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Appendix 1

2014 Music Standards (Ensemble)

CA1: -Compose and improvise melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that reflect characteristics of music or text studied in rehearsal.

CA2: -Select and develop draft melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or text studied in rehearsal.

-Preserve draft compositions and improvisations through standard notation and audio recording.

CA3: -Evaluate and refine draft compositions and improvisations, based on knowledge, skill, and teacher-provided criteria.

-Share personally-developed melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives-individually, or as an ensemble-that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or texts studied in rehearsal.

CA4: -Select varied repertoire to study, based on interest, music reading skills, and understanding of the structure of the music, context, and the technical skill of the individual or ensemble.

-Demonstrate, using music reading skills where appropriate, how knowledge of formal aspects in musical works inform prepared or improvised performances.

-Identify expressive qualities in a varied repertoire of music that can be demonstrated through prepared and improvised performances.

CA5: -Use self-reflection and peer feedback to refine individual and ensemble performances of varied repertoire of music.

CA6: -Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music.

-Demonstrate an awareness of the context of the music, through prepared and improvised performances.

CA7: -Identify reasons for selecting music, based on characteristics found in the music, connection or interest, and purpose or context.

-Identify how knowledge of context and the use of repetition, similarities, and contrasts inform the response to music.

CA8: -Identify interpretations of the expressive intent and meaning of musical works, referring to the elements of music, contexts, and the setting of the text.

CA9: -Identify and describe the effect of interest, experience, analysis, and context on the evaluation of music.

CA10: -Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.

CA11: -Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

Table 1

Music Literacy Checklist items	Essential Elements 2000	Traditions of Excellence	Sound Innovations for Concert Band
Compose and improvise melodic and rhythmic ideas	7	4	3
Refine and rework self-created melodic and rhythmic ideas	1		
Record with audio and notation compositions and improvisations	N/A	N/A	N/A
Refine and rework self-created melodic and rhythmic ideas with teacher guidance	1 potential**		
Select and perform varied repertoire based on technique and music reading level	203 total excepts and exercises	178 total excerpts and exercises	204 total excerpts and exercises
Perform music with expressive qualities	Yes, dynamics and various articulations, various tempos (13)**	Yes, dynamics, various articulations, ritardando, various tempos (15)**	Yes, dynamics, various articulations, rallentando, various tempos (17)**
Use self-reflection and peer feedback to refine performances			1
Identify reasons for selecting music based on characteristics found in the music, connection to interest purpose/context, and evaluate it accordingly	0	0	0
Connect the items listed above to individual personal experiences and life	Potentially**	Potentially**	Potentially**

** see further explanation in results section

N/A --Indicates no real way for a book to accomplish the goal, this will be up to the director.

Table 2

Instrument	*Essential Elements 2000 Comprehensive Band Method*	*Traditions of Excellence Comprehensive Band Method*	*Sound Innovations for Concert Band*
Flute	1/3 *	1/3 *	1/3 *
Clarinet	2/4 *	3/4	2/4 *
Saxophone Family	5/5	5/5	4/5
Brass Family	3/3	2/3	2/3 *
Percussion	2/3	3/3	3/3
Totals	11/15 2*	11/15 1 *	9/15 3*

* Denotes incorrect information given based on the criteria

Diagram 1

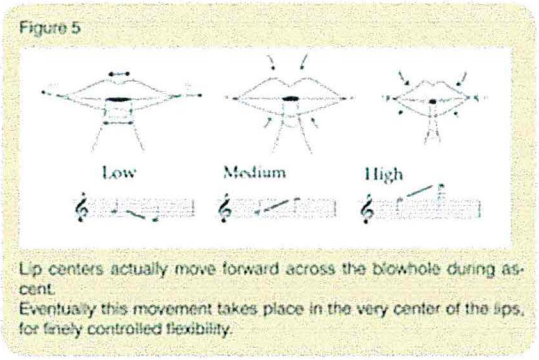
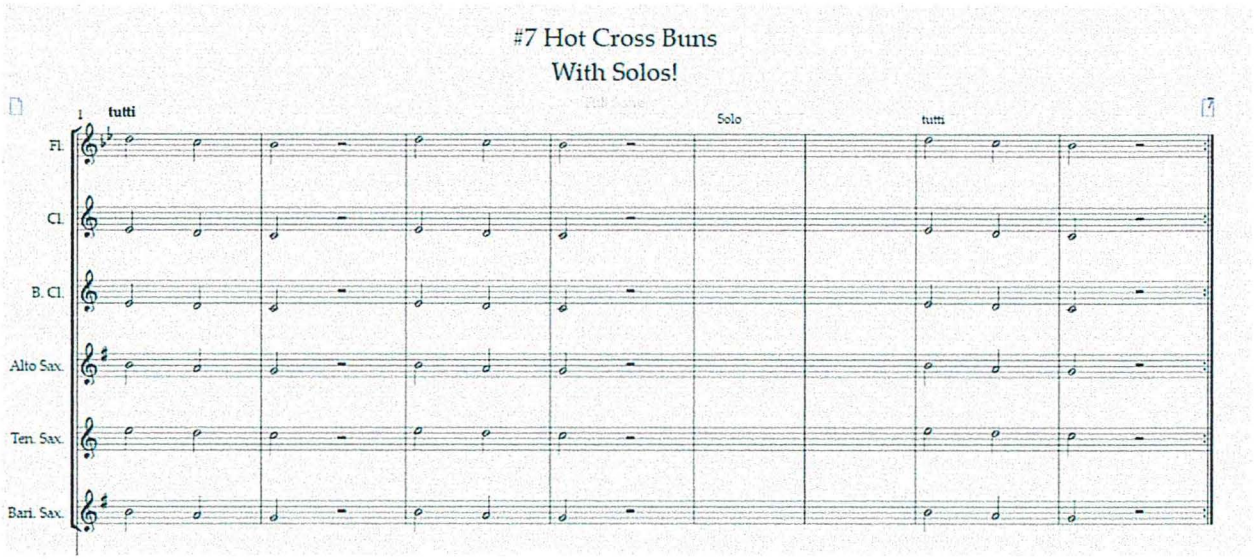


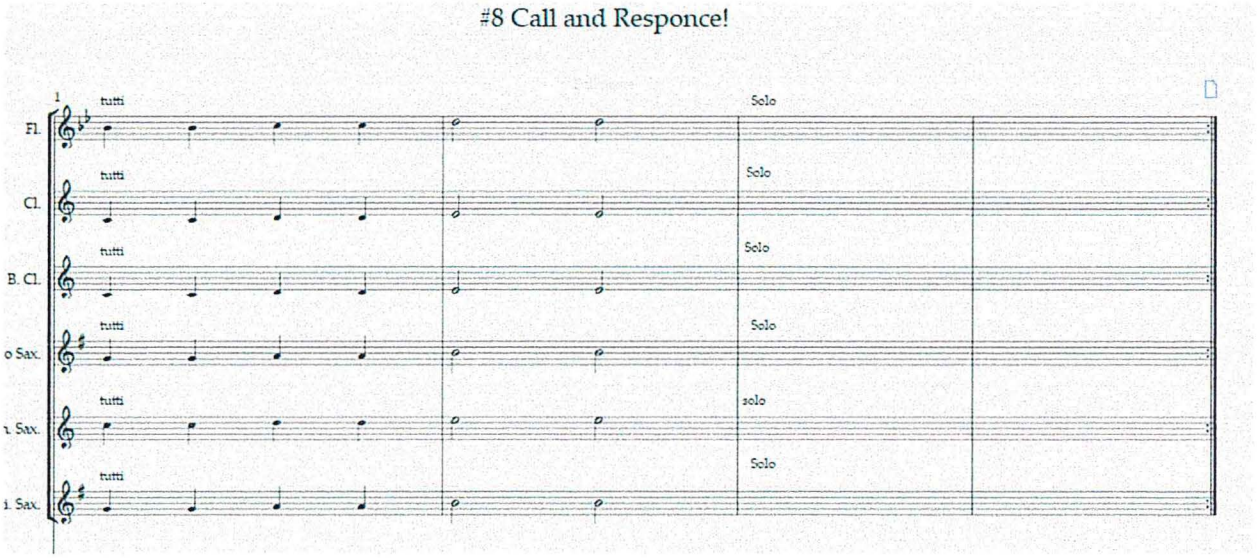
Diagram 1 from Cluff (2013)

Appendix 2

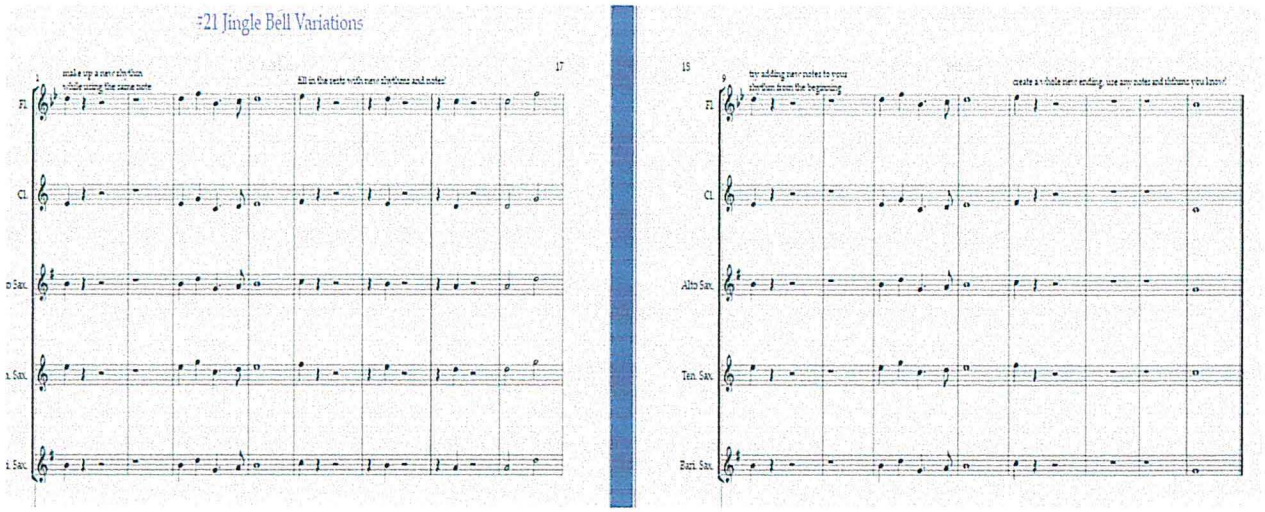
Example 1



Example 2



Example 3

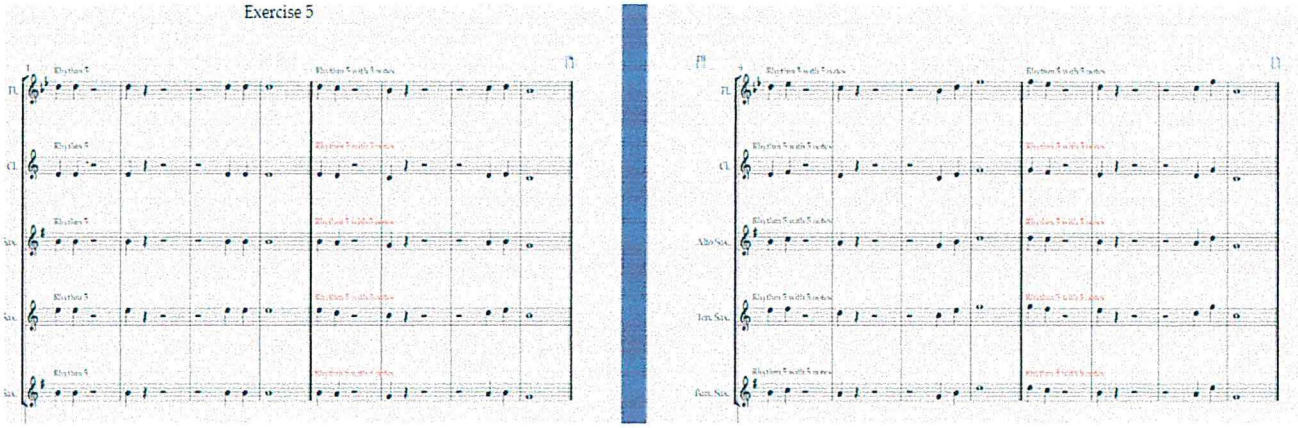


Example 4
(List of 3-6 note songs)

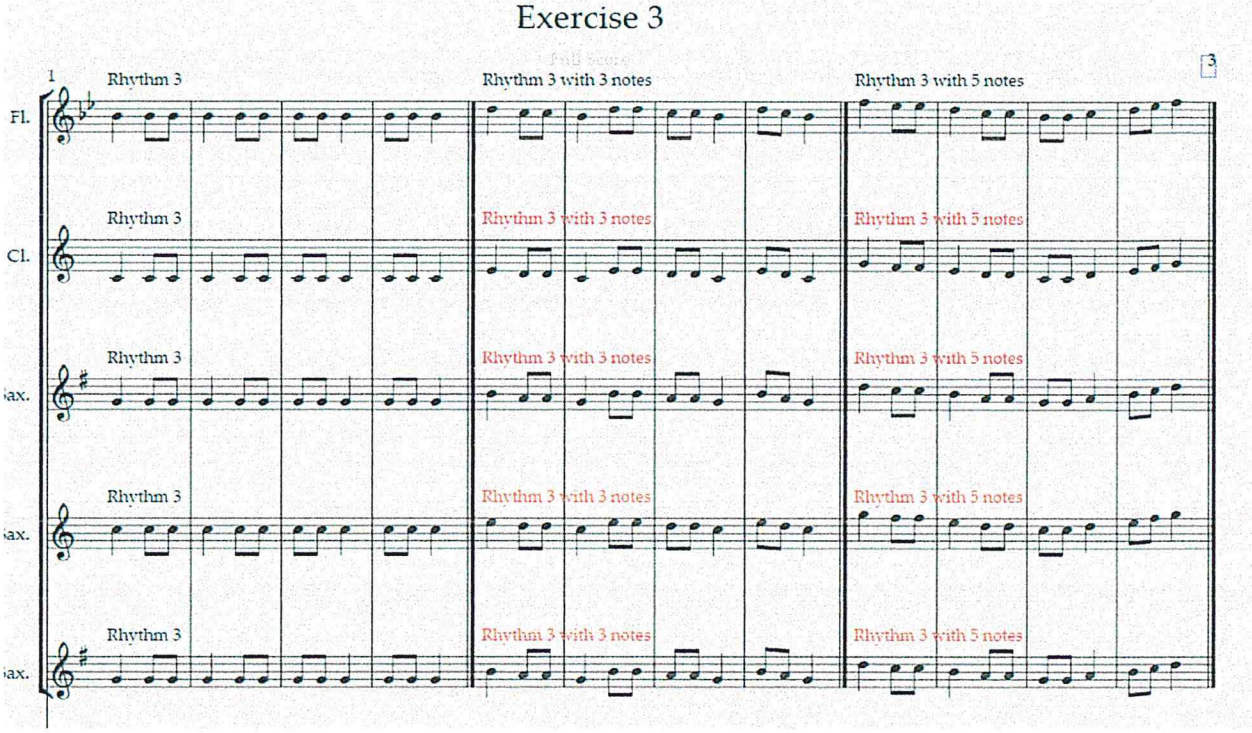
"Hot Cross Buns"
"Merrily We Roll Along"
"Au Claire De La Lune"
"The Rain is Falling Down"
"Suo Gan"
"A Simple Rock Melody"

"Mr. Cordray's Song"
"Mary Had a Little Lamb"
"Go Tell Aunt Rhodie"
"Lightly Row"
"Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star"
"Jingle Bells"

Example 5



Example 6


Exercise 3
1
3
Rhythm 3
Rhythm 3 with 3 notes
Rhythm 3 with 5 notes
Fl.
Cl.
Rhythm 3
Rhythm 3 with 3 notes
Rhythm 3 with 5 notes
Rhythm 3
Rhythm 3 with 3 notes
Rhythm 3 with 5 notes
Rhythm 3
Rhythm 3 with 3 notes
Rhythm 3 with 5 notes
Rhythm 3
Rhythm 3 with 3 notes
Rhythm 3 with 5 notes