

A QUICK GUIDE TO SETTING UP “BAND DAY” IN YOUR METHODS CURRICULUM

A decorative musical staff with various notes, sharps, and symbols like 'D', '&', and '2' is visible in the background on the right side of the slide.

+

•

○

What is “Band Day”?

- “Band Day” is a weekly activity that allows Methods students to engage with instruments and music in real-time. This hands-on experience allows them to experience percussion from both a student and a teacher perspective, and provides opportunities for discussion that might not come from a traditional textbook approach.

+ Where Does This Fit In My Class Schedule?

- Every class schedule is different based on your individual institution. For our class, we typically met on a MWF schedule, with “Band Day” happening weekly on most Fridays.
- If your class meets only once or twice a week, it may be ideal to do a biweekly or every-few-weeks schedule.
- The “recurring event” model allows the focus of the activities to shift and focus on whatever instrument(s) is the topic of that week’s lessons.

+

•

○

How Does It Work?

- Students participate in a “sectional” with one student acting as the conductor. Starting with one player per instrument, students play along with the publisher recording/read from the score.
- Once the playthrough has taken place, the instructor then encourages dialogue amongst the class about their experiences.
- Multiple playthroughs are encouraged with students rotating instruments and roles (player vs. student conductor).

+

•

○

What Kind of Questions Are Best?

- As the instructor, you can encourage discussion amongst the students with questions and observations. Here are some examples that were successful for me:
- 1. What are some differences between percussion music and music you read on your “home instrument”?
- 2. What did you hear? What did you listen to?
- 3. Did you encounter anything unexpected with your chosen instrument?
- 4. For student conductors, what were you listening/watching for? Does your idea of percussion change when you’re on the podium?

+

•

○

Technique Exercises

- One of the activities my students enjoyed the most on Band Day was our “wrong technique” exercise.
- 1. One student volunteered as the conductor and would turn their back. The other students had fifteen seconds to display an incorrect technique with their instrument.
- 2. Once the student conductor turned around, they were given the opportunity to instruct their fellow students in correct technique for that instrument. Again, we rotate students so that everyone participates in the experience.

+

•

○

What Music Should I Use?

- At our institution, the band and education departments were generous enough to lend us beginning band scores with percussion parts approachable enough for beginners.
- If no scores are available at present, please check the guide on my website that lists several charts full of beginning band literature categorized by fundamental percussion skills.