

TEACHING
THROUGH
RAIN, SLEET, SNOW
AND A
7TH GRADE
FIRE DRILL

Individual Assessment through Games for Beginning Band



MARGUERITE
WILDER

Teaching through Rain, Sleet, Snow, and a 7th Grade Fire Drill

Pass-Off Round

I. CLASS PARTICIPATION

1. Students sit in the pass-off-order of exercises completed.
(Mixed instrumentation: This placement is not concert order.)

Example:

1. Student A (trombone) is on exercise 14: **New Note Bb Concert**
 2. Student B (tuba) is on exercise 15: **Step Up, Step Down**
 3. Student C (clarinet) is on exercise 16: **Pentastic**.
 4. Student D (trumpet) is on exercise 17: **Concert Bb Pentascale**
 5. Student E (flute) is on exercise 18a: **Hot Bundt Cake Duet**
2. Pass-off round begins. *(Class plays every 10 to 15 seconds.)*

*By having everyone the class **and** studen) first play the exercise together it serves as a model for some students while acting as a review of music fundamentals for more advanced students.*

1. Class plays Trombone Student A's **Exercise 14: New Note Bb**
2. Class is involved in silent practice while Student A (Trombone) plays **Exercise 14: New Note Bb Concert**
3. Class plays Tuba student B's **Exercise 15: Step Up, Step Down**
4. Class is involved in silent practice while Student B (Tuba) plays **Exercise 15: Step Up, Step Down**
5. Class plays Clarinet Student C's **Exercise 16: Pentastic**
6. Class is involved in silent practice while Student C (Clarinet) plays **Exercise 16: Pentastic**
7. Class plays Trumpet Student D's **Exercise 17: Concert Bb Pentascale.**
8. Class is involved in silent practice while Student D plays (Trumpet) **Exercise 17: Concert Bb Pentascale**
9. Class plays Flute Student E's **Exercise 18a: Hot Bundt Cakes Duet**

(This pattern continues through the order until all students have had one turn during each pass-off round.)

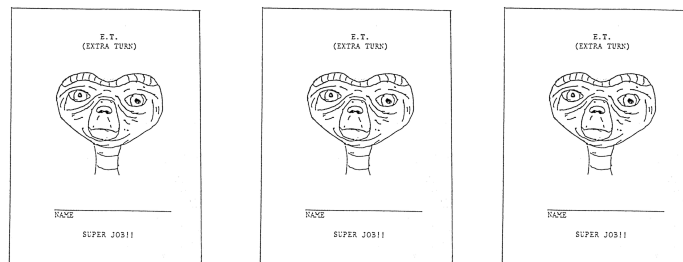
II. INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION

1. Student plays pass-off exercise with entire group.
2. Student plays pass-off exercise by themselves.
 1. Student starts at the beginning of the exercise.
 2. Student plays through the exercise to the end with no stops or replaying portions of the music.
3. Student observes all repeats as well as first and second endings.
4. Student performs with correct posture (body, hands, instrument), embouchure, breathing, pitch, rhythms, articulations, and dynamics.

C. Performance possibilities of an individual student:

1. Student plays song correctly on the first attempt and receives a pass-off.
2. Student makes a mistake, “buys” an extra turn with an “ET” coupon, and then plays song correctly.
3. Student makes a mistake, “buys” an extra turn with an “ET” coupon, and then plays song incorrectly.
4. Student makes a mistake and does not use a coupon.
5. Student’s turn is over and pass-off round moves to the next student.

(An “ET”—or extra turn—is earned for each 30 minutes of practice. Students turn in a practice note signed by the “consenting adult of their choice.” The ET coupon can be used once per exercise. An ET can also be earned by writing a report on a composer, attending a pre-approved live concert, or viewing a video on music. With the use of the ET coupons, the responsibility for a second chance to perform an exercise is controlled by the student.)



III. TEACHER PARTICIPATION

A. Teacher starts round with Student A by asking the song or (exercise) number.

(By starting with the student closest to the beginning of the book, these songs can also serve as a warm-up or a review of material for more advanced students in the class.)

2. Teacher starts song with a count-off or a musical introduction.
3. Teacher monitors group performance:
 1. Active participation
 2. Correct posture and hand positions
 3. Correct playing
4. Teacher monitors individual performance of the pass-off exercise.
 1. Student receives pass-off for correct performance. OR
 2. If a student makes a mistake and the student has an extra turn coupon, they may decide to “buy” and extra turn to try and pass off the song again or wait until they have practiced and will try the song on another round.

* Student’s may only buy one chance to replay a song per round – even if they have multiple ET Coupons. Rationale: The third time they may play it correctly and not really understand the notation.

(Teacher starts song again at the beginning.)

5. Teacher continues round with Student B by asking the song or exercise number.
6. Teacher starts song with a count-off or a musical introduction.
7. Teacher monitors group performance:
 1. Active participation
 2. Correct posture and hand position.
 3. Correct playing

If Student A is successful in performing the pass-off exercise correctly, the teacher marks the song with a large “P”, and then adds the date and his/her initials (e.g., P. 12/19/24 M.W.).

If Student A is unsuccessful in performing the pass-off exercise correctly, the teacher circles the mistake(s) and shows the explains the mistake to the student.

(By dating the pass-off, the teacher, parents, and students can track performance progress. The initials indicate which teacher approved the pass-off.)

Regular Round

The pass-off method can be used in a variety of ways. If the class is of reasonable size, the regular round can be used daily. A student may stay in the round if they remain on the current pass-off exercise. When the turn comes to a student, they will play with the group on their exercise and then continue to play the exercise from the beginning as they observed a repeat. This keeps the class moving quickly and avoids a second count-off by the teacher.

Example:

1. Student A (Oboe) is on Exercise **#21: Give Me Five**.
2. Student B (Horn) is also on **Exercise #21: Give Me Five**
3. Student C (Euphonium) is on **Exercise #22: Don't Skip It**
4. Student D (Trumpet) is on **Exercise #23: Go Tell Aunty**
5. Student E (Tenor Sax) is **on Exercise #24: Lamb Chops**

LIGHTNING ROUND

This type of round can be used with a limited amount of time for pass-off. The student is allowed only one chance to play the exercise he/she is on. A student may **not** "buy" an extra turn in this type of round. A **super lightning round** is played without the group performance of the exercise. Students must be ready for the count-off. No hesitation, ready, play! The teacher can use this round the last few minutes of class. If the class is small enough, everyone can have one last chance to play.

PARTNERSHIP PASS-OFF

Two or more students are involved in ensemble playing. The student playing the melody line will receive the pass-off. The student(s) playing the other lines will receive an ET coupon for their participation in the ensemble. This process is a good tool to stress ensemble balance and blend.

PARTNER PICK

When a student passes off his/her assigned exercise for the round, he/she may pick any other student to play an exercise. This round is a bonus turn for the chosen student. If the chosen student plays his/her exercise correctly, he/she receives a “free” pass-off, and the first student receives an ET coupon. This allows the better-prepared students to move faster through their exercises without the teacher giving them an extra pass-off turn. The prepared students will usually be picked because of the assumption that they will complete their pass-off and the first student will acquire a “free” ET coupon.

LAS VEGAS

A student may select any exercise from the book he/she has not passed off. The student may bet up to 5 extra turns that he/she can successfully pass off the exercise. The teacher will lay “odds” on the bet. (Example: A student bets 2 extra turns that he/she can pass off page 17, #2. The teacher, knowing the difficulty level of the exercise and the ability of the student, will place an odd of 4 on the bet. The student could earn 8 extra turns if he/she passes off the exercise, or the student could lose the 2 extra turns he/she bets.) This approach is a good change of pace for a student who is “stuck” on an exercise or has just arrived at a difficult exercise.

TEAM COMPETITION

Divide the class into two or more teams. Teams should have equal numbers of woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments, as well as male and female players. A point system may be set up by the teacher and the class. (Example: 2 points for most exercises in the book, 5 points for difficult exercises, 10 points for scales played by memory.) Students can earn points for their team by attending concerts; watching video programs; writing reports on instruments, composers, etc. The teacher can award “team” bonus points when all team members are involved in the silent practice while an individual is playing. Good posture, hand position, tone quality are often given bonus points. The team with the most practice notes turned in receives bonus points. Points can even be acquired by being the first team set up and ready to go, with all members in their place. (The

team captain will raise his/her hand with great dignity and calmly notify the teacher of this achievement.)

ESSENTIAL IN THE BAND ROOM—an egg timer (or stopwatch with an alarm). The timer is set to ring every 1 to 5 minutes throughout the class. If the egg timer goes off while a line is in progress, then the song is now worth 3x to 5x the number of team points originally assigned. If the timer goes off between teams, the bonus points go to the next team, provided the student passes off his/her exercise.

BAND SQUARES

This game is set up like Tic-Tac-Toe and Hollywood Squares. Nine students set up the board. They sit in three rows of three. Draw a Tic-Tac-Toe grid on the chalkboard. Two students are chosen to be the players. Assign Player 1 the X and Player 2 the O. When the player chooses a student who can successfully play his/her pass-off exercise, the appropriate X or O will be placed on the corresponding Tic-Tac-Toe board. If the chosen student does not pass off his/her exercise, he/she will leave the band square set-up. A new class member will now occupy the vacated space on the Tic-Tac-Toe board. This will continue until the game is won or tied.

LET'S MAKE A DEAL!

If a student can play his/her pass-off exercise correctly, he/she may choose to play Let's Make a Deal! The student will choose Door #1, Door #2, or Door #3. Behind each door is a different prize: free ET coupons, loss of ET coupons, a melody line to a popular rock tune or commercial, or silly tunes (like nursery tunes). Another option could be a turn where a student could play as many songs as he/she can until he/she makes a mistake, or a student could be given a free 30-minute private lesson with the teacher.

BAND BASEBALL

Divide the class into two teams—The Braves! and someone else. Set up the room like a baseball diamond. Place a chair and a stand where 1st, 2nd, and 3rd bases should be. The teacher's podium serves as home plate. The team captain for each team sets the batting order. Students can play up to 4 exercises in this game.

Example: Student 1 plays his/her first exercise and moves to the 1st base chair and stand. At this point, he/she can choose to stay or play another exercise to move to second base. If the student plays the second exercise correctly, he/she moves to second base. Same for 3rd base and home plate. However, if the student makes a mistake and is not able to complete the song using an extra turn, the student's turn is over, and the team has acquired its first out. Three outs and the other team comes to bat.

MAIN RULE: No arguing with the umpire or YOU'RE OUT!

GRAB BAG

Fill a bag with questions that, when answered correctly, can earn the student extra turns, actual pass-off, or extra points for his/her team.

Example: Key signatures, musical terms, a request to play a certain exercise of scale or passage from Concert Music. Who composed the piece *Three London Miniatures*? Who composed the piece *In the Shining of the Stars*? Who composed the piece *Under Three Flags*? Who composed the piece *Cobb County Festival*?

SUMMARY

With the pass-off method, everyone is involved during the entire class. The students will be playing the line with the group, or they will be involved with silent practice while another student is playing for a pass-off. On average, the group will be playing every 30 seconds. Students will play review material, current material, and new material during each pass-off round. In our quick fix, instant results from computers, TV remote control society of today, students have few opportunities to practice mastery by practicing a song (or concept) over and over until they achieve mastery. The pass-off system offers this opportunity to students.

REPETITION IS THE KEY TO MASTERY!

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