Survey and Analysis of Undergraduate Music Education Percussion Methods Courses in Relation to the Practical Needs of Secondary Music Educators in American Public Schools

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Abstract

The majority of Bachelor’s degrees in Music Education require students to enroll in a series of instrumental methods or techniques courses. These courses cover fundamental techniques and pedagogical approaches that prepare students for their future careers as music educators. Due to the percussion instrument family having a large scope of material that needs to be covered, it is commonly perceived by those who teach the classes, that Percussion Methods classes within an undergraduate Music Education degree operate on time frames that make equal coverage of all instruments and topics a pedagogical challenge within a standard academic semester.

The purpose of this study was three-fold. Firstly, to examine the syllabi of current Percussion Methods instructors at the university level from throughout the United States, with an eye toward comparing the curriculum content of each, and identifying which major textbooks are used for these courses. Secondly, to investigate the perceptions of public school music educators in the United States in regards to how well they felt their undergraduate Percussion Methods courses had prepared them to teach K-12 music in the schools. And finally, to gain deeper insight into the beliefs of those involved in both sides of the process of teacher preparation as related to the topic through case study interviews with current music educators and percussion methods instructors.

The results of this study include an evaluation of the scope and sequence of each major pedagogical topic explored within the scope of the methods course syllabi reviewed in relation to the self-reported practical needs of current public school music educators. While the results of this study suggest that while the majority of methods class content specific to percussion instruments does seem to be aimed toward addressing the practical needs of music educators, there are
some topics that survey respondents who have taken the classes before may perceive as being inadequate or impractical. This study highlights such potential issues and aims to provide Percussion Methods class instructors with suggestions for possible course alterations and adjustments by illuminating common course issues, and providing information to better serve future music educators who teach instrumental music.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In the United States, the majority of undergraduate degrees in the field of Music Education require students to complete one or more semesters of a “Percussion Methods” or “Techniques” course, in which students are provided learning experiences that are fundamental to the goals of ensuring a competent level of playing ability (to be used for modeling and instructional purposes), and increasing student’s fluency in the ability to teach a variety of percussion instruments in public school settings beyond graduation. Curriculum content and pedagogical approaches vary depending on the instructor, and may focus on a variety of areas vital to preparing a future music educator to successfully teach percussion, including (but not limited to), technical proficiency on a variety of percussion instruments, relevant pedagogical information, and related logistical information.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was three-fold. Firstly, to examine the syllabi of current Percussion Methods instructors at the university level from throughout the United States, with an eye toward comparing the curriculum content of each, and identifying which major textbooks are used for these courses. Secondly, to investigate the perceptions of public school music educators in the United States in regards to how well they felt their undergraduate Percussion Methods courses had prepared them to teach K-12 music in the schools. And finally, to gain deeper insight into the beliefs of those involved in both sides of the process of teacher preparation as related to
the topic through case study interviews with current music educators and percussion methods instructors.

**Need for the Study**

In Schools of Music and Conservatories throughout the United States, it is common practice for undergraduate students who receive their Bachelor’s degree in Music Education to have taken, on average, one to two semesters of instructor-led Percussion Methods/Techniques courses. Many of these preparation programs for future music educators share a common model where two 60-minute meetings per week are held over the course of a fourteen-week semester, resulting in students having approximately 28 hours of in-class instructional time to gain a fundamental understanding of the scope of percussion techniques and pedagogy. Taking into consideration class days, that are used for assessment purposes, public holidays, individual student absences, and any possible missed classes due to extenuating circumstances, those who teach these classes often find that their instructional time can quickly dwindle.

As the instrumental and technical scope of the Percussion family of instruments is expansive and consists of many different areas of focus, the content included in every methods or techniques class of this kind, from both pedagogical and practical viewpoints, is critical to the success of future instrumental music educators beyond graduation. Since it is impossible to cover all subset families of percussion in as much depth as they would like, instructors are faced with balancing the issue of ‘depth versus breadth,’ and consequently, some class topics will receive more coverage than others. Therefore, it is of vital importance that university instructors plan their curriculum with a mindset toward practicality, as well as ensuring appropriately sequenced
pedagogically important content, in order to best prepare students for their future careers in K-12 music education.

**Research Questions**

This study aims to answer the following research questions in regards to current Percussion Methods classes that are offered in instrumental music teacher preparation programs at universities and conservatories throughout the United States:

1. How do instructors perceive they put into practice the effective planning of pedagogically sound percussion methods course content while balancing the challenges presented by limited instruction time?
2. How do current K-12 instrumental music educators perceive the practicality of the curriculum content they received in their own teacher training programs?
3. What course content should be included to ensure that both the pedagogical and practical needs of the current K-12 instrumental music educators are being met?

**Hypothesis of the Study**

The scope of the Percussion instrument family is arguably the broadest of all the major instrument families. Percussion methods classes within an undergraduate music education degree operate on time frames that make equal coverage of all instruments and topics a challenge within a standard academic semester. Analyzing the data gathered from syllabi collected from 74 collegiate percussion methods instructors in the United States, surveying 241 current K-12 music educators across the United States, and two individual case study interviews with a novice teacher from a public school instrumental setting and a novice teacher from a university
Percussion Methods class teaching setting were combined to examine trends and perceptions specific to percussion methods courses, and to provide insight into how collegiate instructors might best prepare undergraduate music education students (particularly those preparing to become instrumental music educators) for their future careers as music educators, specifically related to the instruction of percussion instruments in a variety of music teaching settings.

**Definition of Terms**

The following definitions will be used to specify a number of commonly used terms in the current research study:

1. *Percussion Methods course*: A standard 1-2 semester class taken as a part of an undergraduate Music Education degree, in which collegiate students gain an understanding of percussion techniques and pedagogy. For the purposes of this study, it should be noted that some universities use the term Percussion Techniques to mean the same as a Percussion Methods course — the term Methods is being used in the current study to combine the idea of a Techniques/Methods class — while others using the term “Methods” may do so to suggest a higher level and depth of pedagogical understanding of the subject being studied.

2. *Western percussion instruments*: Percussion instruments commonly found within western (U.S. and Europe) wind bands/ensembles, symphonic orchestras, or percussion ensembles. These instruments include, but are not limited to: snare drum; bass drum; keyboard percussion instruments; timpani; cymbals; Drum Set; and accessory percussion such as triangle, tambourine, and woodblock.
3. *Homogeneous classroom*: An instrumental music classroom setting in which the grouping of similar instruments occurs for instruction purposes (e.g., individual trumpet class, clarinet class, percussion class).

4. *Heterogeneous classroom*: An instrumental music classroom setting in which the grouping of different instruments occurs for instruction purposes (e.g. trumpet, clarinet, and percussion taught simultaneously in the same class)

5. *K-12 Music and K-12 Music Education*: The traditional scope of public school music education programs in the United States that offer instruction in the study of general classroom music, instrumental or vocal music education in teaching settings that include kindergarten aged through 12th-grade high school students.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Whilst historically, the inclusion of Percussion as a family of instruments has long been considered a critical component in a variety of musical and non-musical performance settings (including leading generations of civilizations into battles of war), it is interesting to note that despite the heavy reliance on its usage and contributions throughout its existence to the continued growth of our musical repertoire and performance contexts, while there is an abundance of literature available for specific Percussion instruments, there exists a paucity of literature – both research and pedagogically based in nature – for prospective, non-percussionist, Music Educators. Further, it is notable that in today’s university educational settings, that those who aspire to provide instrumental learners of varying age differences with up to date information on how best to approach playing (and in some cases teaching) percussion instruments, face a paucity of available literature upon which to build their curriculum goals and expertise. Consequently, this lack of available and relevant literature has the potential to greatly impact the positive experiences of those studying percussion instruments, specifically those training to become Music Educators. Therefore, one of the intents of this study is to examine the existing research and pedagogical literature available – both current and past – specific to the topic of preparing future instrumental Music Educators and current instrumental Music Education majors to feel adequately prepared and successful in their efforts to both learn and teach the large family of instruments, and the technical and musical challenges presented by the family of instruments known as, Percussion.

The National Association of Schools of Music’s (NASM) 2019-2020 Handbook lists “musical, specialization, teaching, and professional competencies” as the four main points of a
NASM accredited undergraduate degree in Music Education (p. 119-120). The specialization competency is divided into the following five categories: General Music; Vocal Music; Instrumental Music; All-Level Music; and other specific or combinations of a variety of fields of music. The category of Instrumental Music is separated into four sub-sections, with the first being “Knowledge of and performance on wind, string, and percussion instruments.” ¹ (p. 122).

This classification creates what could be considered a pedagogically unsound, “umbrella” competency situation in which the intended undergraduate music education student’s ability to teach an inherently diverse group of percussion instruments is, to all intents and purposes, somewhat randomly grouped with three other instrument families as one just component of two broad areas related to instrumental music instruction (Knowledge and Performance).

With the NASM requirements of future music educators being so expansive, and the importance of methods courses being hidden under four layers of competencies, it is not surprising that the need to address the curriculum content of percussion methods courses arose for this study. Further, the fact that these types of classes make up less than half of the entire curriculum suggested by NASM - with mandatory core-curriculum classes required by the universities accounting for 50% of the undergraduate music education degree – highlights the potential unintended misemphasis on what might and could, or should, be studied in order to be most beneficial for undergraduate music education students preparing to enter the world in instrumental music education settings in the future.²

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² Ibid
A number of studies have suggested that music educators whose principal instrument was percussion during their undergraduate studies feel less confident in their ability to successfully teach non-percussion instruments in public school instrumental music settings than their peers who studied other instruments and had the same amount of music education training. Similarly, these principal instrument, music educator, percussionists are also documented (via self-reporting survey responses) to have less confidence in their own musical literacy compared to their non-percussionist peers – including challenges with reading sheet music at the same level as their non-percussionist peers. Similarly, non-percussionist music educators are also found to have less confidence in their own ability to teach percussion instruments, compared to non-percussion instruments. The self-reported reasons attributed to this lack of confidence in non-percussionists teaching percussion instruments included the perceptions that the non-percussionist music educator’s training on percussion instruments was not adequate during their undergraduate studies; and that their current teaching position’s classroom setting was not as optimal as possible for effective percussion education instruction (heterogeneous groupings, lack of adequate instruments, and lack of emphasis on percussion instruction within textbooks currently published for use in ensemble settings were cited as being among the reported contributing factors.). The results of Christopher Wilson’s (2018) examination of repertoire and method books used in beginning percussion instruction suggest that of all the major band method books used in beginning percussion instruction suggest that of all the major band method

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book series share “serious flaws” and that “without supplemental materials or additional instruction, students will not be able to succeed in the classroom.”6 (p. 1). Similarly, Horner’s (2005) investigation of college level Percussion teachers suggests that “creating method materials that serve the needs of teachers should be facilitated by considering the opinions of experts.”7 (p. 52).

Since it is more than likely for middle and high school ensemble directors to be non-principal percussionists (due to percussion being only one of the applied instruments required for admission to the Music Education major), it is crucial to recognize that beginning percussionists in public school settings have far different fundamental challenges than their wind, brass, or string playing peers, and that the ensemble director must be ready to remedy this. While all of the musical instrument families may share some overlapping musical terminology and expressions, the actual pedagogical process involved in achieving the same outcome (such as crescendoing a held note), differs between instruments, and translates with even less similarity of transfer into the context of teaching percussion instruments in a heterogeneous setting. Richard Kearns’ (2011) Quick Reference for Band Directors references this issue, proposing that non-principal percussionist directors should utilize trained percussionists to model for their classes, and that “there are techniques for playing membranophones that a non-percussionist can’t demonstrate.”8 (p. 123).

6 Ibid, 67

7 Horner, A National Survey of College Level Percussion Teachers, 2005, 52.

8 Ronald E. Kearns, Quick Reference for Band Directors (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2011), 123.
The idea of future music educators gaining a firm grasp on the instruments they teach is not a radical one. The ability to teach fundamental skills on all instruments is necessary for music educators, as some may argue that potentially the most crucial years in musical and technical development occur in elementary and middle school when students are cementing foundational skills on their instruments that will either set them up for long term success or failure on their instruments; it is no secret that success begins with strong fundamentals. With percussion education, and all general methods courses, being highly important for music, the issue of methods courses being under-credited at the university level is systemic.

In one examination of the current content of an undergraduate Music Education degree program at a large university in the State of Virginia that was representative of the curriculum offered in Schools of Music at many other institutions around the country, the Instrumental degree concentration required a minimum of 123 credit hours, of which Percussion Methods courses accounted for just two credit hours divided over two semesters, making the emphasis on percussion pedagogy 1.63% of the required course work. Similarly, at a large university in the State of Nevada, a recent Bachelor of Science in Music Education degree required a minimum of 120 credit hours of study, of which a percussion methods course accounted for one credit hour of study, making the emphasis on percussion education .83% of the required coursework.

Albin (1978) surveyed 244 instrumental music educators at the middle and high school level, and found that fewer than 43% of those surveyed felt prepared to teach percussion when beginning their career, and that many had worked much more to actively supplement their

knowledge of percussion than was necessary on other instruments.\textsuperscript{11} Similarly, Cooper (1994) in an examination of the core repertoire used in the preparation of instrumental music education majors found music educators directing band and wind ensembles at the secondary level considered their prior experience in collegiate methods courses to have been “no better than adequate.”\textsuperscript{12} Further, Harris (2000) in his article related to current percussion pedagogy being taught in the public school music programs also noted that high schools are still regularly graduating senior percussionists who cannot read pitched music, or have limited experience on a variety of percussion instruments.\textsuperscript{13}

Some of the more commonly used texts for Percussion pedagogy include Gary Cook’s \textit{Teaching Percussion}, and Michael Udow’s \textit{Percussion Pedagogy: A Practical Guide for Studio Teachers}. As the subtitle of Udow’s text suggests, both books are designed for students whose primary instrument is Percussion. The first of these texts is the most commonly used textbook for Percussion Methods courses in the United States.\textsuperscript{14} Furthermore, Nathaniel Gworek’s study shows that only six major textbooks addressing Percussion pedagogy and methods courses are in regular circulation. These six texts are authored by Gary Cook, Cort McClaren, Robert McCormick, Robert Schietroma, Tom Siwe, and Stephen Primatic. Gworek found that while all of the previously mentioned authors’ texts covered essential concert Percussion instruments (snare drum, bass drum & cymbals, auxiliary percussion, timpani, keyboard percussion), many

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{11} William Albin, “Teacher Preparation in Percussion: Results of a Survey.” \textit{Percussive Notes}, 1985, 69.
  \item \textsuperscript{12} Lynn Cooper, \textit{A Study of the Core Repertoire for the Preparation of Instrumental Music Educators} (Dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1994).
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Scott Harris, “National Conference for Percussion Pedagogy.” \textit{Percussive Notes} vol. 38, no. 6 (December 2000).
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Gary Cook. \textit{Teaching Percussion}. Belmont, CA: Schirmer Cengage Learning, 2006, xv (preface).
\end{itemize}
texts chose not to include other prominent instruments. For example, McClaren chose to not include any World Percussion instruments, only Cook chose to include African drumming, and McCormick and Cook (the most popular) elected to not include lesson material for directors, despite most Percussion Methods instructors using these texts for their courses. While the information in these six texts is valuable, only the texts by McClaren, Primatic, Schietroma, and Siwe texts are specifically designed to serve the Percussion methods classroom, while the other texts are aimed towards educating future percussion-specific educators such as high school specialists and university professors.\textsuperscript{15}

Considering all of the aforementioned issues addressed by both the research and pedagogical literature, one might safely surmise that since the 1970’s attention from music education practitioners, university faculty and researchers alike has been focused toward continuing to improve the quality of methods courses in order to ensure the best possible educational experience for undergraduate instrumental music education majors, and also to improve the literacy skills of secondary percussionists. Considering that the majority of students will rely on their Percussion Methods course to familiarize them with percussion techniques and pedagogy it is imperative that non-percussionists learn as much as they can during their studies in order to set them up to be successful in their future ensemble rehearsal settings beyond graduation.

\textsuperscript{15} Nathaniel Gworek. \textit{A Study of Percussion Pedagogical Texts and a Percussion Primer} (Dissertation, University of Connecticut 2017), 10.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was three-fold. Firstly, to examine the syllabi of current Percussion Methods instructors at the university level from throughout the United States, with an eye toward comparing the curriculum content of each, and identifying which major textbooks are used for these courses. Secondly, to investigate the perceptions of public school music educators in the United States in regards to how well they felt their undergraduate Percussion Methods courses had prepared them to teach K-12 music in the schools. And finally, to gain deeper insight into the beliefs of those involved in both sides of the process of teacher preparation as related to the topic through case study interviews with current music educators and percussion methods instructors.

Collection of Syllabi Data

The initial phase of this study involved the collection and content analysis of Percussion Methods and Techniques course syllabi aimed to collect the scope, sequence, and any emerging pertinent themes in the topic coverage. The syllabi were collected from 74 instructors of percussion methods courses across 25 States in the United States. 200 universities with NASM accredited undergraduate degrees in Music Education were selected by the researcher based on the size and prominence of the university, and invitations to submit syllabi for the study were sent to the percussion instructor(s) at each university. A total of 40 of the 200 contacted responded. Additionally, the researcher used a social media group entitled “University Percussion Teachers” to request university professors to submit their percussion methods course syllabi; 34 instructors responded, creating a total of 74 collected syllabi. Respondents included methods class instructors of all professional rankings, including professors and graduate/teaching
assistants. The collected data were used to examine: which percussion instruments and topics were covered in each course; the amount of class time devoted to each of these topics; and information regarding textbooks and any supplemental sources used.

Participants and Collection of Survey Data

Participants in this study were full-time instrumental and general music educators (N=241). The researcher did not invite private lesson instructors or part-time faculty to join the study. Upon successful approval of an Institutional Review Board submission, each of the participants was invited via email to participate in the study, and after completing an Informed Consent form were asked to complete an online survey on Qualtrics, hosted through James Madison University.

The online survey consisted of a series of 14 open ended, multiple choice, and Likert scale questions that examined participants’ perceptions and personal experiences within the percussion methods courses they had taken during their undergraduate music studies. The survey questions covered a variety of topics, including: educational background information; geographical location data; class meeting and syllabus content (including texts and teaching sources used) information; performance and written or research-based assignment work; university requirements for taking applied percussion lessons; quality of content; instrument care and maintenance content; and self-perceived preparedness to teach a variety of percussion instruments based on the knowledge gained in prior classes.

Following completion and initial classifying of data from the online survey, a series of interview questions were developed based on themes observed in the survey participants’
responses. Two individuals from the original participant groups were invited by the researcher to participate in individual case study interviews. One participant is a current music educator from a public school instrumental setting, and the second participant is a current instructor of percussion at the collegiate level. These participants were selected by the researcher and invited based on the participants’ similar teaching experience and the well-known success each participant has in their respective fields.

The survey questions are listed below:

1. In what U.S. State do you currently teach?
2. In what U.S. State did you complete your undergraduate degree?
3. In what year did you complete your undergraduate degree?
4. How many semesters of Percussion Methods were you required to take as an undergraduate?
5. How many class meetings did your Percussion Methods course have per week?
6. Check which sources were primarily used in class.
7. If you remember the titles of the texts/sources your class used, please list them below.
8. What was the relationship between playing assignments versus written/research based assignments?
9. Did you ever take private applied lessons in percussion as an undergraduate?
10. Please list any instruments, techniques, or aspects you feel were particularly neglected, or that your instructor could have better prepared you for.
11. Please list any instruments, techniques, or aspects you feel were covered very well, and that your instructor did a superior job preparing you for.
12. Was instrument care covered in your class? You may elaborate if you wish.
13. Based on the information gained in your university Percussion Methods class, how prepared do you feel teaching the following instruments on a scale of 1-10. 1 being a minimal pedagogical understanding of the instrument(s) and 10 being a total pedagogical understanding of the instrument(s).
14. What instruments/knowledge did you have to supplement the most when you began teaching in the “real world?”

15. On a scale of 0-10, how well do you feel your undergraduate Percussion Methods course prepared you for your career?

16. If you have any further answers or thoughts that you wish to speak further on, please elaborate them below.

Collection of Case Study Interview Data

As previously mentioned, the case study interviews were comprised of two individual interviews. Each of the case study participants’ names, along with any identifying information was not included from the data that was collected so that they could speak freely on the subject. Likewise, any information regarding the respondent’s undergraduate institution has also been removed.

The first interview was with a current secondary public school music teacher in the State of Texas who had recently earned a Bachelor of Music in Music Education degree and was in the early years of their career teaching instrumental music, specifically band. The respondent was invited based on their career experience and the interview was conducted through email correspondence. The first respondent was asked 11 questions about their own personal experiences with their undergraduate Percussion Methods course, and what changes they would recommend to better suit their current needs teaching percussion at the K-12 level. The first interviewee was also asked about his/her own experiences and perceptions of both musical and non-musical trends they had seen evolve in the current generation of K-12 music programs in relation to student interests. Additionally, the respondent was asked to share the ways in which they have supplemented their percussion knowledge over the course of their career.
The second case study interview was undertaken with a current collegiate instructor of a Percussion Methods class for undergraduate music education majors at a university in the State of Texas. Similarly to the first interview, the instructor was currently in the early stages of their career teaching in the field of music in higher education. The second case study participant was also asked to respond to 11 questions regarding their experiences teaching undergraduate percussion methods courses and how they perceived they could have better shaped their course to meet the needs for future K-12 music educators. Similar to the first subject, this interview was also conducted through email correspondence.

Below are the questions asked in the case study interviews:

**Case Study Interview Questions: K-12 Music Educator**

1. From your first years as a director to now, can you speak to and discuss your relationship with percussion education at the K-12 level? How has your understanding changed? How much have you had to actively supplement your knowledge from your undergraduate course? Were you given materials in you undergraduate that you were able to reference back to?
2. What percussive trends in K-12 band/orchestra literature do you see that you weren’t prepared for (instrumentation, uncommon techniques, etc.)?
3. Do you see any new trends in K-12 students in general? Musical or non-musical trends?
4. It’s not uncommon to have band/orchestra music that doesn’t involve your whole percussion section. How do you go about incorporating percussion in rehearsals and keeping them engaged? Do you ever have issues with incorporating percussion inside of full ensemble rehearsals, or including them within group activities such as warmups, tuning, or other wind-focused exercises?
5. Marching Band has become a prominent part of high school band education. How do you feel about working with marching percussion? Were you prepared to run a full battery rehearsal based on your undergrad studies if needed?

6. Overall, what is your experience with students who want to play Drum Set, or working with set inside of a jazz band or concert band? Were you given resources to help steer your students’ interests?

7. Similarly, what is your experience with students who have interests in any form of “world” percussion (congas, bongos, tabla, etc.), or working with “world” percussion inside of a jazz or concert band setting?

8. Overall, what are the aspects of percussion education that you find most challenging to teach?

9. In terms of undergraduate methods course content, do you think it is more beneficial for future educators to be able to play percussion instruments at a fundamental level, have a more theoretical/pedagogical knowledge, or does your opinion fall somewhere in between? Could you speak to the importance (on unimportance) of being able to physically play and demonstrate on instruments, and also to having a more textbook understanding of the material? In short, how important is the ability to play/model the instruments?

10. What do you believe the overarching goals of a percussion methods class should be? Should we be teaching the class as a “survey of fundamental percussion playing techniques,” should we be gearing it towards a more pedagogical “how to teach percussion,” should the goals be in line with “successful incorporation of percussion in the K-12 system,” or something else?

11. If you could suggest changes to be implemented in percussion methods courses to better serve the needs of future educators, what suggestions would you recommend?
Case Study Interview Questions: Percussion Methods Instructor

1. From your first years teaching percussion methods to now, what trends or beginnings of trends have you seen emerge in the current generation of undergraduate students? These can be musical or non-musical trends.

2. How often do you alter your course curriculum or content? How has it evolved over the years?

3. What percussive skills do you see as necessary for a future music educator to have?

4. What non-playing, logistical, or teaching-related topics do you cover, or do you believe should be covered in an undergraduate methods class? Why?

5. How important is it for percussion methods students to be able to play the instruments that they’re studying in percussion methods? How much weight do you put into their performance abilities? What is your opinion on balancing playing assignments vs written assignments?

6. Marching music is a prominent portion of a high school director’s academic year. How do you approach marching music from a percussion methods class? Should it be covered? If so, how far do you delve into the marching arts in class?

7. Similarly, Drum Set is frequently one of the most quickly covered topics but has been shown to be a topic band/orchestra directors responded to as feeling the least prepared to teach based on their classes, and also one of the most requested topics for more instruction due to its frequency in K-12 teaching. Since Drum Set is one of the most logistically difficult instruments to teach to a class, do you have any thoughts on how we can better cover Drum Set during percussion methods courses?

8. Some of my research has shown that educators appreciated the opportunity to teach their peers the topics you’ve discussed within class time. While this can be useful, it also means sacrificing another topic’s coverage, or playing time on instruments. Should students be practicing their teaching within class time, or should class be reserved for the delivery and absorption of information?

9. Modern band/orchestra literature often requires atypical instrumentation, multi-percussion setups, numerous implements, and differs greatly from older band music (e.g.,
Holst Suite). How, and to what extent, do you cover the logistics of setups and the percussion sections role within ensembles.

10. Is there a particular reason you choose to omit or reduce coverage of certain topics or instruments? A trend in my syllabi analysis is that snare drum, timpani, and keyboards average a large percentage of undergrad course content, while instruments like Drum Set and “world” percussion often receive a small fraction of time (or no coverage at all). However, in educator comments, “Drum Set” and “Latin” percussion are two of the areas that current educators wished their class had covered more.

11. What do you believe the overarching goals of a percussion methods class should be? Should we be teaching the class as a “survey of fundamental percussion playing techniques,” should we be gearing it towards a more pedagogical “how to teach percussion,” should the goals be in line with the “successful incorporation of percussion in the K-12 system,” or something else? (e.g., is it our job to educate about percussion or train band directors?)
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The following data analysis is presented systematically and in order of methodological process. The data collected from the class syllabi is presented initially, followed by the results of the music educator survey, and then the case study data. Discussion of how the data collected interconnects will be addressed at the end of this chapter.

PART ONE: ANALYSIS OF SYLLABI CONTENT DATA

Textbooks Used

Data from the 74 collected syllabi revealed that half of the classes used Gary Cook’s collegiate textbook Teaching Percussion (see Table 1) as the primary resource for the class. It should be noted that 14.9% (n=11) of syllabi marked DNR (Did Not Respond) had no information regarding textbook or method book usage available for analysis in the existing content. This may have been an indicator that the instructor/s who were responsible for designing the syllabus purposefully chose not use a book in class, but might also suggest that they preferred to use either in combination or alone one or some of the following: original handouts; a course packet made available at their establishment’s library or bookstore; a class set of books; photocopied materials; or a traditional “lecture only” approach. Taking into account the numbers for books that could be categorized as ‘collegiate textbooks,’ the data show that 71.6% of (n=53) instructors preferred using collegiate textbooks as their primary used source in class.
Table 1  
Syllabi Data: Primarily Used Sources from Course Syllabi (N =74)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Source Type</th>
<th># of Responses</th>
<th>Respondent %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Percussion</td>
<td>Gary Cook</td>
<td>Collegiate Level</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNR</td>
<td>DNR</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Steps to Successful Beginning Percussion</td>
<td>Kennan Wylie</td>
<td>Beginning Level</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Complete Percussionist</td>
<td>Bob Breithaupt</td>
<td>Collegiate Level</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern School for Mallets, Snare, Timpani Series</td>
<td>Morris Goldenberg</td>
<td>Teacher Method Book</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh Approach Series</td>
<td>Mark Wessels</td>
<td>Beginning Level</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percussion Methods</td>
<td>Stephen Primatic</td>
<td>Collegiate Level</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Frequency and Duration of Meeting Times**

When analyzing the collected syllabi, very few of the percussion methods instructors who had designed them indicated the number of semesters that were required for students enrolled in the class. Because of this, information specific to the required number of semesters was not collected from course syllabi. However, data examined in the copies of individual instructor course syllabi did show that 72.7% (n=40) of those who had submitted syllabi had two class meetings each week (see Table 2).
The importance of a strong foundation on snare drum cannot be overlooked in the preparation process to teach percussion instruments. The techniques developed on the instrument can be transferred and modified to fit a wide variety of percussion instruments. Important technical concepts covered should include the ability to physically perform: rebound control; varied roll types; and appropriate leverage from the fulcrum point between the hand and striking implement. The review of related percussion pedagogy literature undertaken as part of this research study revealed that every book listed as being a beginning method book, or a collegiate percussion methods textbook introduced the snare drum as the first primary instrument, and always dedicated significantly more pages to its development as compared with other instruments. Gary Cook’s *Teaching Percussion* even goes as far as to title the second chapter of his book “Basic Percussion Technique Through the Study of the Snare Drum,” where the author explains an overarching approach to percussion playing, and using snare drum as a vehicle for explanation.\(^\text{16}\)

Study of Keyboard Percussion

Similarly to the aforementioned observed emphasis on focusing on the snare drum, 92.9% (n=69) of the syllabi content suggested that instructors chose to cover keyboard percussion in preference to other instruments due to its prominence in today’s musical literature (see Table 3). Most collegiate institutions require keyboard percussion solos as part of the auditions process. Furthermore, for those who have had experience teaching privately at the secondary level, keyboard percussion solos tend to constitute the majority of literature students bring in for their private lessons.

With percussion ensemble and percussion orchestra performance groups being a staple ensemble at most schools at both the secondary and collegiate level, knowledge of keyboard percussion instruments is vital for those wanting to teach percussion in order to be able to understand and adequately address (in terms of teaching) the performance demands of most contemporary literature. Pitched percussion is also found in the majority of band and orchestra repertoire. Similarly, in the applied curriculum syllabi of numerous higher education institutions, students are required to consistently study solo keyboard repertoire, primarily on marimba, while alternating or substituting which other instruments are covered each semester alongside their keyboard lessons. The data from the syllabi collected for this study show that in the classes in which they were used this was not the case.
Study of Multi-Mallet Grips

With four mallet keyboard playing now a prominent aspect of percussion education, methods students should have, at a minimum, some exposure to how to hold and fundamentally execute at least one of the three multi-mallet grips that are most commonly used. These grips are the: Musser-Stevens, Burton, and Traditional; approaches. While most of the instructor syllabi examined for the purposes of this study did not expressly state whether they exposed their students to all three majors grips during the class, syllabi from two different schools seemed to emphasize the importance of having methods students obtain experience in playing using all of the major grips (see Table 4). While this pedagogical focus may disproportionally take up more of the averaged 1.8 class meetings playing with four mallets, students will benefit from the opportunity to see that depending on the player, some grips may be easier or harder to master than others for some beginners.

It is not uncommon that the Burton grip is frequently understood more quickly than the Musser-Stevens approach due to the similarity of technique that is needed to hold a single mallet, but also the advantage of the mallets being crossed in the hands that creates a point of leverage for the mallets to work against. Exposure to all of the major four-mallet grips allows methods students to find a grip that best works for them, gives them a more comfortable grip for

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Table 3
Syllabi Data: Average Amount of Class Coverage Assigned to Keyboard Percussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Semester Classes Studying Keyboards</th>
<th>% Semester Studying Keyboards</th>
<th>% Syllabi (N = 69) Studying Keyboards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

17 Cook, Teaching Percussion, 127-8.
technically modeling with their future students, and will allow their methods students to have quicker success in holding and manipulating multiple mallets. In doing so, students’ in-class practice can be better focused on actually developing stroke types and technical execution rather than losing precious instruction time to students’ initial struggles with holding the mallets in their hands.

Table 4
*Syllabi Data: Average Amount of Class Coverage Assigned to Four Mallets*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Semester Classes Studying Four Mallets</th>
<th>% Semester Studying Mallets</th>
<th>% Semester Studying Keyboard Percussion</th>
<th>% Syllabi Studying Four Mallets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>39.8%</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Study of Timpani**

While much like the snare drum or bass drum, timpani are classified as membranophones, from a pedagogical perspective they differ mostly due to the impact that one’s choice of mallets can make on the performer’s ability to influence the articulation and timbre of the instrument through the choice of mallets. In addition, other aspects such as stroke weight, velocity, angle, shape, and playing area factor in to the final sound that is produced. This issue arises to a more extreme level on timpani, because unlike other membranophones, where the tightness and pitch of the top batter head has a direct relationship with the resonant bottom head, timpani are comprised of a single head with a parabolic (i.e. “U” shaped) chamber underneath, which is the bowl of the instrument.

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Due to the nature of how sound travels and reacts within the parabolic bowl, we can easily manipulate timbre and articulation through the previously mentioned methods. The essential skills of sound production, such as rebounding strokes and single stroke rolls carry over from the study of snare drum. Despite this, much more time must be dedicated to understanding how articulation is controlled on the instrument, as well as instrument-specific skills such as hand dampening and tuning.

Among the syllabi examined, 89.3% (N=66 out of 74) included the teaching of timpani. However, none of the syllabi introduced timpani as the first instrument in the course schedule (see Table 5). As the timpani utilizes similar strokes to the rebounding strokes and the single stroke roll used on the snare drum, but does not make regular use of double strokes or controlled downstrokes, instructors have a responsibility to ensure that their students are exposed to all the major stroke types on the snare drum before they move onto a variant form of the techniques applied on timpani. From a logistical perspective, it is also unfeasible for even a small percussion methods class (6-10 students) to be able to play timpani simultaneously due to the rarity of having multiple sets of drums in a single location. By starting students on the snare drum, they can be allowed to develop the strokes needed on both timpani and snare drum by using a class set of practice pads. Once these strokes are understood and developed, students may then successfully move on to playing the timpani, at which time their previous knowledge of stroke types will transfer more easily.19

Table 5
*Syllabi Data: Average Amount of Class Coverage Assigned to Timpani*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Classes Studying Timpani</th>
<th>% Semester Studying Timpani</th>
<th>% Syllabi Studying Timpani</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Study of Accessory Percussion**

There is little solo literature revolving around accessory instruments, and rarely more than one of each instrument within an instrumental ensemble piece. Due to this, students may often go months or even years before playing some accessory instruments past their initial exposure and study. While these are likely possibilities, 22.4% (n=54) of the total K-12 directors surveyed also perceived that the accessory education in their percussion methods course was not adequate and that they felt that they needed significant remediation in both how to play the instruments, and what was considered an acceptable sound on each instrument (see Table 6).

Table 6
*Syllabi Data: Average Amount of Class Coverage Assigned to Accessory Percussion*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Classes Studying Accessories</th>
<th>% Semester Studying Accessories</th>
<th>% Syllabi Studying Accessories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regard to the study of accessories, my interview with the Percussion Methods Director, highlighted the issue that it is common to see the same issues when attending rehearsals at middle and high schools throughout their State. Such problems include students not understanding or not being able to execute the fundamentals of accessory instruments such as tambourine, triangle, castanets, and woodblocks. In my own related work as a percussionist and teacher of percussion, I too have seen this same issue consistently occur throughout my career.
However, it should be noted that compared to the allure of other instruments and genres such as snare drum, keyboard percussion, Drum Set, and marching percussion, the individual interest in developing musical skills on accessory instruments is much lower. Similarly to Jeff Kaufmann’s research findings that it takes 20 hours to develop basic skills on an instrument, and Dr. Pychyl’s research suggesting that it takes that much time for the initial knowledge to be weakened, or lost, it is my belief that while the knowledge of accessory percussion playing is introduced to students by their directors, they do not actively pursue the study until they are required to do so.

**Study of Bass Drum**

While the concert bass drum is as prevalent as timpani in both modern and classic band and orchestra literature, it is mostly considered a supporting instrument, not a soloistic instrument. Data collected from the class syllabi revealed that 85.7% ($N=63$) had allocated an average of 2.6% of their class time on playing concert bass drum, which equates to less than one class meeting per semester (see Table 7). This could be considered an acceptable amount due to the fact that the majority of concert bass drum playing involves similar approaches to snare drum, single-stroke rolls (from timpani and snare drum study), and manipulation of the resonance of the instrument through the muffling and controlling of the batter and resonant heads. The latter of these topics thus being the only new concept. Bass drum pedagogy also does not require the use of the more difficult technical aspects of snare drum, such as rudiments and soloistic playing.
In Gary Cook’s *Teaching Percussion*, the study of concert bass drum is assigned 10 pages of discussion and illustration on bass drum history, as well as maintenance, playing, and pedagogical information, while study of the snare drum is allocated 55 pages to cover the same areas. A similar proportion can be seen in the average amount of class coverage between bass and snare drum. As a whole, the data collected from the class syllabi suggested that the Percussion Methods instructors spent less than one (0.7) class meeting on bass drum, while snare drum was allocated an average of 6.4 class meetings for coverage (see Table 7 above). In Kennan Wylie’s *Successful Steps to Beginning Percussion*, we see a similar emphasis with snare drum receiving regular coverage through the majority of the book, while only a 2-page lesson is included for bass drum.

### Study of Cymbals

Similar to bass drum, concert cymbal playing had an average class time coverage of 2.6% (see Table 8). Due to the grip of concert crash cymbals being similar to the fulcrum of snare drum and the need to control cymbal impact and resonance, the argument could be made that while cymbals do not have any major technical overlap with other percussion instruments, they segue most logically after snare and bass drum have been covered. Also, due to the need for concert bass drum and concert cymbals to be a cohesive unit in most standard band literature,
with an emphasis on marches, it would make the most sense to draw a connection between the ensemble responsibilities of concert cymbal players and bass drummer simultaneously.

Table 8
*Syllabi Data: Average Amount of Class Coverage Assigned to Cymbals*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Classes Studying Cymbals</th>
<th>% Semester Studying Cymbals</th>
<th>% Syllabi Studying Cymbals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Study of Tam-Tam**

The class syllabi examined for the purposes of this study, showed that study of the Tam-Tam was the lowest in terms of the average number of classes that were spent studying it (0.6 meetings) (see Table 9). One could assume that this is because the Tam-Tam is often used as an effect or impactive voice within ensembles. While a commonly seen instrument, the fundamental technique of playing tam-tam is quite simple and can be summarized as Bob Breithaupt’s *The Complete Percussionist* explains by categorizing necessary information into the general playing area and style. This includes striking singular notes, rolling on the instruments, and special effects such as bowing the instrument, information on priming the instrument, controlling dampening, and proper instrument setup and stand usage.\(^{20}\) While these general techniques are quite easily understood, Gary Cook recommends that more time be spent on developing “touch” on the instrument, such as producing the ideal sound without overplaying or underplaying the instrument, managing the instrument resonance, and dealing with logistical issues such as setup and selecting striking implements.\(^{21}\)

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\(^{21}\) Cook, *Teaching Percussion*, 240.
It should be noted, that it is unclear whether or not non-western gongs such as Chinese opera gongs or Javanese gongs were included in the class coverage listed in the syllabi examined. If these non-western instruments were included, it is most likely that any elements of traditional playing techniques of these cultural instruments may have been excluded, and rather the focus may have been on their timbral color and incorporation within the modern band, orchestra, and percussion repertoire.

**Study of Drum Set**

While it may not make an appearance in every wind band, orchestra, or percussion ensemble concert, Drum Set is commonly found in all of these mediums. In addition to the previously mentioned groups, Drum Set is regularly used in jazz bands, commercial music, athletic bands, marching ensembles, and is regularly cited as being a percussion instrument that is studied and used in extra-curricular music. Drum Set can be challenging for students to learn initially, and for instructors to teach, due to its unique performance issues. These issues include the inherent challenges of composite instruments having their individual response times and dynamic ranges, its role within the genre and ensembles, and the required development of four-limb coordination in the successful playing of Drum Set.22

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Syllabi data observed specific to the coverage of Drum Set suggested that the average number of classes per semester spent studying the instrument was 2.3 – the equivalent of 6.7% of the semester, and that almost two-thirds of the instructors (76.8%) who had designed the syllabi chose to include the Drum Set as part of the covered class content in their percussion methods courses (see Table 10).

Table 10
Syllabi Data: Average Amount Class Coverage Assigned to Drum Set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Classes Studying Drum Set</th>
<th>% Semester Studying Drum Set</th>
<th>% Syllabi Studying Drum Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>76.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As previously mentioned, the importance of educating percussion methods students of these styles lies more so in the student’s understanding of the fundamental coordination and struggles of Drum Set, and the importance of guiding future students to play and learn correct stylistically, as opposed to learning each individual style. Taking into account the initial difficulty that occurs in learning the Drum Set and its related pedagogical challenges, its lack of frequency of use in ensembles, and its importance within those ensembles, student understanding of Drum Set techniques, pedagogy, and knowledge of appropriate playing styles is crucial for future music educators.

Study of World Percussion Instruments

While world instruments can be found in the percussion section of many ensemble pieces, their incorporation is often to make use of the unique timbres of the instrument rather than the stylistic authenticity of the instrument. With many of these instruments categorized as needing a specialist performer to play authentically and accurately, a one-semester course is not a
feasible means to have adequate coverage of even one culture’s music, much less many cultures throughout the world. With a mindset of practicality, instructors must choose which instruments will and will not be covered, and frequently use a homogenous approach to teach many instruments from differing cultures. For example, while hand drums such as bongos, congas, and djembes all have their own specialized playing techniques and cultural significance in their home countries, a base level of understanding can be supplied in a methods course in addition to educating students about the instrument region, significance, and supplemental resources. Breithaupt acknowledges the differences between these hand drums but also categorizes all these instruments as Latin American Instruments that have three to four main sounds that can be quickly understood, such as open tones, closed tones, and slaps in the case of congas. Students may then be able to transfer and adjust these techniques across other hand drums, similar to how the techniques learned on snare drum will transfer and adjust when moving to an instrument such as timpani.

Data collected from the syllabi revealed that while over half (69.6%) of the instructors who had designed the syllabi chose to include the coverage of world percussion in their classes, that less than two classes (1.8 or 5.1%) per semester were assigned to cover the related material (see Table 11).

Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Classes Studying World Percussion</th>
<th>% Semester Studying World Percussion</th>
<th>% Syllabi Studying World Percussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While it may be unfeasible to give detailed instruction for every instrument that arises, we can make a point to educate students about the cultural and historical importance of these instruments and roles within ensembles while pursuing a more homogenized technical approach that is more applicable and practical to the K-12 system. With the frequent inclusion of world instruments in modern wind band and orchestra music, taking this pseudo-simplified approach gives students the ability to interpret the music within ensembles, and ideally the ability to make conscious performance and musical decisions based on knowing how the fundamentals of hand percussion work. Understanding the instrument’s fundamental sounds will inspire students to seek more outside sources to guide their future studies in playing in a more authentic style.

**Study of Steel Pan**

Steel pan was one of the lowest instrumental areas covered, with only 12.5% (N=9) of instructors choosing to include it in their curriculum. Of the submitted syllabi, an average of only 1.4 days were spent studying steel pan playing (see Table 12). While most of those instructors covering this topic chose to spend between one and two days maximum on steel pan, one instructor spent a total of four days (or two weeks of class in their schedule) covering steel pan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 12</th>
<th>Syllabi Data: Average Amount of Class Coverage Assigned to Steel Pan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># Classes Studying Steel Pan</td>
<td>% Semester Studying Steel Pan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While steel bands are not a typical ensemble at the K-12 level, they do exist in some music programs. Reputable companies such as Steel Drums Unlimited have been making great strides to help incorporate steel drums into K-12 schools around America. They cite the success
and support that steel bands bring to schools by increasing student engagement and performance attendance, and increased community support and involvement in the band. The inclusion of steel drum ensembles opens avenues for teaching harmony and melodic structure at a fundamental level, the three to four-part relationships between melody, accompaniment, and bass voices, and student arrangements and compositions. While a knowledge of steel pan may not be applicable to every public school music program, university students should have the knowledge of how to incorporate steel pan into their schools, and how to play and teach the ensemble at a fundamental level.

**Study of Marching Percussion**

In reviewing the syllabus data that were collected, it was determined that on average, instructors spent 6.7% \((N=2.4)\) of scheduled class meeting time on teaching about marching percussion (see Table 13). In other words, the exact same amount of time that was, on average, dedicated to the study of Drum Set. Also, compared to the 76.8% \((N=74)\) of semester class time dedicated to covering the Drum Set, only 69.6% \((N=52)\) of instructors chose to include the topic of marching percussion in their curriculum (see Table 13). While Drum Set may be a more frequently used instrument throughout the school year, it most commonly involves a single Drum Set performer at any given time, and not an entire percussion class. Marching percussion and marching music frequently occupy the time of both teachers and students throughout the fall semester, with planning and preparation continuing on throughout the summer.

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Depending on their regional location, school programs may also include an indoor drum line to compete in Winter Guard International events as part of the curriculum, meaning that there can then be a continuous focus of marching percussion throughout the entire academic year. With how common marching percussion is in a typical school program, it was surprising to see that 30.4% (N=22) of instructors chose not to include marching percussion in their methods course curriculum (see Table 13). One possible reason for this could also be the inclusion of a ‘marching band methods’ or ‘marching band procedures’ course within the undergraduate curriculum, where students have a stand-alone course dedicated to the challenges and pedagogy of marching band, including marching percussion.

Table 13

| Syllabi Data: Average Amount of Class Coverage Assigned to Marching Percussion |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| # Classes Studying Marching Percussion | % Semester Studying Marching Percussion | % Syllabi Studying Marching Percussion |
| 2.4 | 6.7% | 69.6% |

Curriculum and Literature

When analyzing the syllabi data for inclusion of curriculum and literature, the focus was on curricula tailored to public school teaching, such as the inclusion of a scope and sequence for beginners through graduating high school students, as well as guides to teaching percussion in homogenous versus heterogeneous classrooms. When analyzing literature that was included in syllabi information, the researcher’s focus was on identifying class meetings dedicated to the introduction of popular and quality literature.
The formation of curriculum and selection of literature is likely to be influenced by a number of potential variables, including the ability of the students, the size of ensembles, and the location of the school. However, providing a generalized example of what might be appropriate to include in a public school class curriculum within a percussion methods class is crucial.

Syllabi data confirmed that 42.9% \((N=32)\) of instructors chose to address appropriate curriculum content within their methods course. These instructors spent an average of 3% \((N=1.9)\) of assigned class time on this topic (see Table 14). While less than half of the syllabi collected suggest that instructors chose to include this topic in their class content, it is important to remember that most undergraduate education programs require other additional classes that study the topics of curriculum and sequencing classes.

Table 14
*Syllabi Data: Average Amount of Class Coverage Assigned to K-12 Curriculum*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Classes Studying Curriculum</th>
<th>% Semester Studying Curriculum</th>
<th>% Syllabi Studying Curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data on this topic was not directly collected in the music educator survey data that follows. However, several participants provided written comments that included these areas.

**Study of Instrument Care and Maintenance**

On average, instructors spent 1.6% \((N=1.3)\) of their class time on the topic of repair, care, and maintenance, and a majority 66.1% \((N=49/74)\) of instructors chose not to include this topic in their class (see Table 15). It is unknown what percentage of instructors chose to incorporate any instrumental repair and maintenance within the individual instrument coverage.
Table 15
*Syllabi Data: Average Amount of Class Coverage Assigned to Instrument Care And Maintenance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Classes Studying Maintenance</th>
<th>% Semester Studying Maintenance</th>
<th>% Syllabi Studying Maintenance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Study of Percussion Literature**

Of the syllabi examined, 21.4% \((N=16)\) included percussion literature and score study in the course curriculum, and allocated an average of 2% \((N=2.3)\) of the assigned class time to this topic (see Table 16). It should be noted that data surrounding whether or not literature was covered as a part of individual instruments studied (for example, studying important snare drum method books and solos during the study of snare drum) is therefore unknown.

Table 16
*Syllabi Data: Average Amount of Class Coverage Allocated to Percussion Literature*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Classes Studying Literature</th>
<th>% Semester Studying Literature</th>
<th>% Syllabi Studying Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Study of Other Miscellaneous Topics**

Several syllabi included topics as part of the class curriculum that were not included in the music educator survey. The topics included ‘percussion ensemble’ and ‘multiple percussion.’

**Study of Percussion Ensemble**

Data included in the collected syllabi revealed that 66.1% \((N=49)\) had allocated an average of 2.7 class meeting times per semester for the study of percussion ensemble related curriculum content (see Table 17). Despite the analysis of syllabi, it was unclear as to how
instructors had chosen to allocate related instruction topics within these meeting times. A few topics that were covered included study of the percussion ensemble literature, other pedagogical topics, and the inclusion of percussion ensemble playing experiences.

Table 17
Syllabi Data: Average Amount of Class Coverage Assigned to Percussion Ensemble

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Classes Studying Percussion Ensemble</th>
<th>% Semester Studying Percussion Ensemble</th>
<th>% Syllabi Studying Percussion Ensemble</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>66.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Study of Multiple Percussion

Multiple percussion refers to a percussion setup comprised of any number of percussion instruments orchestrated so that the many individual instruments can be played as one, varied timbral collection. The most common example of this is ‘Drum Set,’ where many cymbals, toms, bass drum, and snare drum are played as one percussive unit. A contemporary example of this would be Iannis Xenakis’ multiple percussion solo *Rebonds b*, in which the performer commonly uses two bongos, one tumba, one tom, one bass drum, and a set of five wood blocks or wood slats. Of the syllabi examined, 26.8% (*N*=20) included multiple percussion instruments within the class coverage and had assigned an average of 1.4% (*N*=1.3) of the assigned class meeting times to this topic (see Table 18).

Table 18
Syllabi Data: Average Amount of Class Coverage Assigned to Multiple Percussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Classes Studying Multiple Percussion</th>
<th>% Semester Studying Multiple Percussion</th>
<th>% Syllabi Studying Multiple Percussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

25 Xenakis, *Rebonds*. 
PART TWO: ANALYSIS OF SURVEY DATA

Course Information

In response to question 4 of the survey, that was specific to the number of required semesters of Percussion Techniques classes, 84.2% ($N=203$) of participants reported that their undergraduate program had required them to take only a single semester of a percussion methods course, while a 14.9% ($N=36$) minority graduated from programs that required the percussion methods course be broken up over two semesters of study (see Table 19).

Table 19
Survey Data: Respondent Answers to Survey Question 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Semesters Required</th>
<th># Responses</th>
<th>Response %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to question 5, specific to the number of class meeting times per week, the data revealed that the most common number of percussion methods classes occurred twice each week (see Table 20). All meetings were split as either Monday and Wednesday meetings, or Tuesday and Thursday class meetings. This reflects the data collected with regard to the number of meetings within instructor course syllabi, where 72.7% ($n=40$) of respondents had two meetings each week.
Table 20
Survey Data: Respondent Answers to Survey Question 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Weekly Meetings</th>
<th># of Responses</th>
<th>Response %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With a majority of 72.7% (N=40) of the syllabi that were examined sharing similar data, it can be noted that the standard course schedule for the undergraduate percussion methods class syllabi collected was two meetings per week. Assuming the standard of a 50-90-minute class meeting time within a typical fourteen-week long semester, one can presume with some degree of certainty that, on average, the survey respondents had spent on average of 23-42 hours of instructional time in class during their undergraduate studies. While Malcolm Gladwell’s book Outliers (2008) indicates that it takes 10,000 hours to become an expert on a topic, Josh Kaufman’s (2020) research posits that while it may take 10,000 hours to become an expert, it only takes 20 hours to learn a new skill at a fundamental level. It should be noted that it takes approximately as long to lose a new skill as it does to learn it initially. When one starts the re-learning process, the skill will return at a faster rate due to familiarity with the material, paralleling the phrase “like riding a bike.” However, this figure does not take into account the concept of smaller practice sessions with outside supplemental study.

---


While the number of meetings a class has each week is not always a decision an instructor can make, an insufficient number of them does provide significant challenges when considering how class time will be utilized. When considering both Jeff Kauffman’s findings that it takes 20 hours to become fundamentally proficient in a skill, and Dr. Pychyl’s findings that it takes an equal amount of time to begin reducing previous progress made, having a class that meets only once a week would be highly detrimental to student success. If the students fail to practice regularly, their skills will either steadily decrease, or not develop at all. Likewise, if students are diligently practicing each day for one week on an instrument that is new to them, it is not unlikely that unconscious technical errors or misunderstandings may be amplified to the level of a bad habit. With the previously mentioned reliance on technical transfer across many percussion instruments, one misstep early on in the practice regimen that remains unresolved could become an issue that is carried over to percussion instruments covered in the future and possibly to their future students.28 29

Comparing the number of semesters required to the number of weekly class meetings, the data collected here suggest that the most frequent requirement for an undergraduate Percussion Methods class may be a one-semester course that meets twice per week (109 respondents, 45.2%), followed by a one-semester course which meets three times per week (56 respondents, 23.2%), and finally, a one-semester course that only meets once per week (34 respondents, 14.1%) (see Table 21). While only 14.9% of respondents (N=36) reported that they were required to take a two-semester course, 13.7% of respondents (N=33) comments suggested that the course

28 Ibid
29 Kaufman. PERSONAL MBA: Master the Art of Business.
should be split into two semesters due to the impracticality of attempting to cover the scope of even percussion in a one-semester course (see Table 21).

Table 21
Survey Data: Weekly Class Meetings Compared to Number of Semesters Required to be Taken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Weekly Meetings</th>
<th>1 Semester</th>
<th>2 Semesters</th>
<th>3+ Semesters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>34 (14.1%)</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>109 (45.2%)</td>
<td>21 (8.7%)</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>56 (23.2%)</td>
<td>13 (5.4%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3 (1.2%)</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of preparing future K-12 music educators, it is unfeasible for students enrolled in percussion methods classes to try to achieve total mastery of every percussion instrument taught within the modern public school curriculum. In the case study interview with the Percussion Methods Instructor (the results of which will be addressed in the next section of this document), the importance of letting non-percussionist students know that they already possess the ability to teach music to percussionists was emphasized, based on the premise that the parameters of good music-making transcend individual instrumental families.

**Percussion Methods Course Instructional Sources**

For survey question number 6, respondents were asked to identify the types and (in some cases) details of instructional sources that had been used in the Percussion Methods class they had been enrolled in during their undergraduate studies. In one of the most even distributions of numbers throughout this survey, we see from the resulting data (see Table 22) that the use of
online, digital resources was very low, and that of those classes using online resources, almost all of them made use of the Vic Firth company’s online education resource library. This resource website provides video demonstrations of various percussion instruments, as well as information critical to general instrument maintenance and pedagogy.

As a personal example, based on my own experiences in teaching Percussion Methods classes, I make sure students know that these online resources exist and make great reference material, but I avoid using such resources because it will be a reiteration of what I will cover in the class, and different percussionists will often use somewhat differing terminology and analogies when speaking to percussion instruments and techniques. While many terms imply the same meanings, music educators should ideally try to keep their terminology consistent from class-to-class to avoid confusing the student. One example of this is the initial stroke type learned on the snare drum.

The aforementioned stroke is achieved by using weight and velocity to “throw” the stick into the drumhead, thereby allowing the rebounding force to send it back up into a playing, or “ready” position. Depending on the pedagogue, this stroke may be called the full stroke, legato stroke, rebound stroke, or free-rebounding stroke. When introducing the multiple-bounce roll on snare drum, educators may refer to it as a multiple-bounce roll, closed roll, buzzed roll, concert roll, or possibly something else entirely.

Making up just over half of the responses with 30.9% (N=171) and 23.5% (N=130), survey responses reflected that traditional instructor handouts and class lectures were used most frequently to deliver information in the classes in which the respondents studied in (see Table

---

With almost no instructor syllabi requiring more than a single method or textbook for in-class use, the issue of finding a text that uses all the same terminology and pedagogical approaches as the instructor may arise. Similarly to online resources, textbooks and method books are also valuable sources of information and content for use with assigned in-class playing, exercises, and imparting of historical and pedagogical information. However, these books often necessitate additional handouts being created by the instructor, or taken from other resources, and as such need to be supplementary to instructor lecture. Combining all of these potential resources allows the students to have a reliable desk reference text for study and future use, while also allowing the instructor the option to meld and supplement the course information in a way they believe to be the most reflective of their approach to teaching and playing.

With only a 12.5% ($N=69$) response rate, in regard to the survey question asking about the use of beginning textbooks within methods courses, this was the least reported type of physical text used (see Table 22).

Table 22

Survey Data: Text and Source Types Used in Class (Multiple Selections Allowed)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Type</th>
<th># of Responses</th>
<th>Respondent %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructor Handouts</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor Lecture and Note-Taking</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegiate Level Textbook</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning Level Method Book</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Resources</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While surveying popular percussion method books for beginning students, such as Kennan Wylie’s *Simple Steps to Successful Beginning Percussion*, the majority of the book
contains a plethora of useful information pertaining to various percussion instruments, such as grip and stroke, instrument setup, tuning, stickings, and numerous exercises. The disconnect between methods instructors and these texts may be that the books themselves are aimed at true musical beginners. Portions of these books are dedicated to reading rhythms and notes, time signatures and meter, very brief coverage of some instruments, and explaining common musical terminology that should be second nature to any college-aged musician.

However, in my analyses of many of the popular textbooks used in percussion methods classes, I have found that they contain only a fraction of playing examples to use within class, as compared to a book that is aimed at beginning level students. It appears that if using a true textbook-style approach for class, the instructor will have to put serious consideration into supplementing playing materials for class instruction, outside student practice assignments, and any playing tests. Furthermore, if using a true beginning level textbook, instructors will be forced to heavily supplement historical, pedagogical, maintenance, and additional more advanced technical material using handouts and lectures.

While collegiate textbooks were found to be used more frequently than beginning method books for percussion methods classes, I believe that through a well-planned curriculum, it is possible to favor the use of a beginning level book, if it is combined with carefully supplemented material. While this approach may create more initial planning at the beginning of one’s career or semester, the prospect of having college students purchase a less expensive textbook for class use would likely be far more appealing to methods students. Likewise, with the ease of access to many quality online percussion education resources, such as Vic Firth, Lone Star Percussion, and many other manufacturers and retail sites, the need to have a physical desk reference text
becomes less necessary. Personal collections of home or office reference books may even be obsolete within the next generation of music educators.

For question 7 of the survey, participants were asked to share the names of the textbooks and/or sources that had been used during their percussion methods classes. While only 35.7% (N=86) of respondents were able to supply from memory the name of the texts and sources used in class, 64.3% (N=155) of respondents chose not to respond; their DNR (Did Not Respond) categorical answers are listed below (see Table 23). While the titles of these texts and sources may be unknown, respondents were, however, able to provide what types of sources were used during in-class instruction as seen further below in Table 23.

Table 23
Survey Data: Responses to Survey Question 7 (Ranked High to Low)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Source Type</th>
<th># of Responses</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DNR</td>
<td>DNR</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Percussion</td>
<td>Gary Cook</td>
<td>Collegiate Level Text</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Steps to Successful</td>
<td>Kennan Wylie</td>
<td>Beginning Level Text</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning Percussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vic Firth Online Resource</td>
<td><a href="http://www.VicFirth.com">www.VicFirth.com</a></td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stick Control</td>
<td>George L. Stone</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfred’s Drum Method</td>
<td>Sandy Feldstein/ David Black</td>
<td>Beginning Level Text</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning/ Intermediate</td>
<td>Garwood Whaley</td>
<td>Beginning Level Text/Method Book</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrument Series</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percussion for Musicians</td>
<td>Robert McComick/ Anthony Cirone</td>
<td>Collegiate Level Text</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examination of the DNR responses above show that while collegiate textbooks made up 32% \((N=77)\) of the respondents primarily used sources in class, far more respondent’s experiences featured traditional lecture and note-taking (40%, \(N=96\)), and instructor compiled handouts (53.5%, \(N=129\)) as a majority of the sources used in class. Beginning level method books made up only 19.1% \((N=46)\) of respondent answers, and online resources accounted for only 15.8% \((N=38)\).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Description</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modern School for Mallets, Snare, Timpani Series</td>
<td>Morris Goldenberg</td>
<td>Method Book</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh Approach Series</td>
<td>Mark Wessels</td>
<td>Beginning Level Text</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Complete Percussionianist</td>
<td>Bob Breithaupt</td>
<td>Collegiate Level Text</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percussion Methods</td>
<td>Stephen Primatic</td>
<td>Collegiate Level Text</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential Elements</td>
<td>Hal Leonard Corp.</td>
<td>Beginning Level Text</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syncopation</td>
<td>Ted Reed</td>
<td>Method Book</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards of Excellence</td>
<td>Bruce Pearson</td>
<td>Beginning Level Text</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Minute Drills</td>
<td>Ralph Hicks/ Eric Rath</td>
<td>Beginning Level Text</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound Percussion</td>
<td>Dave Black/ Chris Bernotas</td>
<td>Beginning Level Text</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubank Method for Percussion</td>
<td>Paul Yoder</td>
<td>Beginning Level Text</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percussion Manual</td>
<td>F. Michael Combs</td>
<td>Beginning Level Text</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drum Class Method Vol. 1-2</td>
<td>Alyn Heim</td>
<td>Beginning Level Text</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Snare Drum Method</td>
<td>Benjamin Podemski</td>
<td>Method Book</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Overall, of the 35.7% ($N=86$) of respondents who provided textbook and source titles in response to question 7, 14.5% ($N=35$) of those respondents listed the collegiate textbook *Teaching Percussion* by Gary Cook as the text used in class. In comparison, 4.6% ($N=11$) of respondents listed the beginning percussion method book *Simple Steps to Successful Beginning Percussion* by Kennan Wylie as a primarily used text. Finally, 2.1% ($N=5$) respondents listed the Vic Firth Educational Website as a component of their class.

Table 24
*Survey Data: Primarily Used Sources from Survey Question 7 Respondents (155 DNR, Multiple Answer Selections Possible)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Type</th>
<th># of Responses</th>
<th>Respondent %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructor Handouts</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>53.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor Lecture and Note-Taking</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegiate Level Textbook</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning Level Method Book</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Resources</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many percussionists, educators, and Gary Cook himself consider *Teaching Percussion* to be a valuable and thorough asset for music educators, and a reliable “desk reference” for music educators to be able to easily access for a reliable source on percussion information.31In the 1996 dissertation study of snare drum instruction within percussion methods courses, by percussionist Cary Dachtyl, it was reported that Gary Cook’s *Teaching Percussion* was the most used textbook for percussion methods classes in Ohio and surrounding States, being used by 45% of those surveyed. Other texts which were popular in Dachtyl’s study, such as Michael Combs’ *Percussion Manual* and Anthony J. Cirone’s series of method books, were used by around 15%

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31 Cook, *Teaching Percussion*, preface.
(N=11) of those surveyed instructors. However, my own survey and syllabi data show that while *Teaching Percussion* has remained as the most used textbook for methods courses (45% in 1996, 50% in 2019), the majority of the texts from Dachtyl’s 1996 research are no longer in use, have a fringe number of responses, or serve as supplementary sources.\(^\text{32}\)

**Respondent’s Perceptions Regarding Class Instructional Focus**

Survey responses to Question 8 that addressed the curriculum content and assessment related issue of balance with regard to playing assignments versus written or researched based assignments highlighted some interesting trends (see Table 25). Combining the two answer choices that favored performance ability of research, it was determined that 69.3% (N=167) of respondents had selected that their class was oriented more towards playing, compared to the 8.7% (N=21) total that had courses with more written work than physical playing. Respondents who had an even mix of playing and research accounted for 22% (N=53) of responses. With 91.3% (N=220) of respondents reporting that playing was equal to, or more important than, written work or research is not necessarily surprising.

---

Table 25
Survey Data: Respondent Answers to Survey Question 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Types</th>
<th># of Responses</th>
<th>Respondent %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primarily Playing</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primarily Playing, with Some Written/Research</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even Mix of Playing and Written/Research</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primarily Written/Research, with Some Playing</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primarily Written/Research</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As previously mentioned in this document, the availability of information through desk references and online resources has never been higher than it is today. Music educators can easily access information about instrument selection, repair, notation, and music selection by accessing these resources. However, a university level percussion methods course is frequently the only time future music educators are able to physically play the instruments while receiving critical feedback on their progress and instruction on the fundamentals of playing. A similar parallel can be seen when students take an instrumental methods course on brass instruments. The resources for information on brass instruments, repairs, fingerings, and music is plentiful; however, that methods class may be the only time students enrolled in the class have a professional brass player and music educator working with them and teaching them about the pedagogy of the instrument, and how a quality sound is produced on the instrument.

There are many sources that can describe the process of playing an instrument. Still, very few of those sources can provide active feedback on your progress, address technical issues, or provide pedagogical advice on how to pass along this information and address any issues in your future students’ endeavors. Percussionist Colin Hill’s research on Anders Ericsson’s “10,000
“hour rule” found that educator (collegiate percussionists in Hill's study) practice time is drastically reduced once leaving academia at the student level and entering their career field. Assuming the same model applies to music educators and their practice of instruments that are not their primary instrument, it is safe to assume that while educators may have the terminology and understanding of how percussion techniques should be executed, the time and ability to seek lessons and instruction outside of their college education may not be possible, and instrumental methods course practice should be considered highly valuable.33

Private Percussion Lesson Study

In response to Question 9 of the survey question: “Did you ever take private applied lessons in percussion as an undergraduate?;” more than half of the participants reported not having been required to take private percussion lessons during their undergraduate music studies (see Table 26).

Table 26
Survey Data: Respondent Answers to Survey Question 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Type</th>
<th># of Responses</th>
<th>Respondent %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I was required</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, by my own choice</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I was not required</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>68.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since most music education majors are required to take applied lessons on their primary instrument, one might assume that at least 68.1% (N=164) (see Table 26) of the respondents in this current study were non-percussionists. As there was no question included in the survey that

asked respondents to identify their primary applied instrument during their undergraduate studies, it is impossible to say with certainty if the 32% ($N=77$) of respondents were actually required to take lessons or if they took lessons by their own choosing, are whether they were percussionists or not. However, I do not believe this figure should be discarded, as the survey’s goal was to take into account the information gained from the participants percussion methods course, and those who chose to identify themselves as playing percussion as a primary instrument in the open comments all commented that they submitted answers based on their class experience, and not their pre-existing knowledge. Personally, in my own experienced as an instructor I have had several students who have taken percussion methods courses with previous experience playing percussion in their secondary school, playing Drum Set, playing percussion as a secondary instrument in a university ensemble, or playing percussion as an extra-curricular endeavor.

**Perceived Level of Preparedness on Snare Drum**

In response to question 13 of the survey, when asked about how prepared they currently felt about teaching each instrument based on the knowledge they had gained from their undergraduate percussion methods course, the surveyed music educators averaged a 7.5/10 on their self-perceived level of preparedness, with 57.7% ($N=139$) of those surveyed marking between a 7/10 and 10/10 (see Table 27).
The topic of snare drum had the highest number of respondents who reported that their class had provided a superior amount of coverage, as stated by 34% ($N=82$) of those surveyed (see Table 28). From these 82 responses, 36 indicated that their class spent more in-class time on this instrument than any other area. While this was the topic that most respondents received superior instruction in, it was also the second-highest topic of neglect based on the participants’ responses. 15% ($N=36$) of respondents reported feeling that they had received an inadequate amount of instruction time on the snare drum.

### Table 27
Survey Data: Respondent Answers to Their Perceived Level of Preparedness on Snare Drum, Based on Their Percussion Methods Class Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Preparedness</th>
<th>Snare Drum</th>
<th>High Preparedness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 28
Survey Data: Respondent Comments on Areas of Superior Coverage and Neglected Coverage on the Topic of Snare Drum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th># of Recurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neglected Coverage</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rudimental drumming and incorporation of rudiments in the classroom and individual study</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed and open rolls, and how to teach them</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More time spent on drums and not practice pads</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Superior Coverage</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most time spent on this instrument</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With the highest response rate being a request for more instruction on rudimental drumming and incorporating them into classes and individual study, it is important to remember where rudiments most frequently occur: in marching ensembles, percussion ensemble, and rudimental snare drum solos. While these three areas may also occur at the elementary or middle school levels, they are most commonly found at the high school level, and these ensembles and solo literature typically require the previous study of rudiments prior to joining. The exposure of rudiments typically occurs in beginning band.

The best-selling beginning percussion texts, Kennan Wylie’s *Simple Steps to Successful Beginning Percussion*, Frank Chapple’s *The Packet*, Mark Wessels’ *A Fresh Approach* series, and Bruce Pearson’s *Standards of Excellence*, all regularly include rudiments in each lesson, covering all of the Percussive Arts Society Standard 40 Rudiments. While the initial explanation and exposure of each rudiment are no different than explaining a rhythmic combination of sticking patterns with possible embellishments, detailed feedback on student performance may prove challenging because of the need to dissect each stroke for clarity and consistency. While this is possible to do within a homogenous percussion class or extracurricular meeting, it can be highly unfeasible within a heterogeneous classroom. While beginning students may comprehend written stickings themselves, they are often unable to understand the types of individual strokes that occur within each rudiment. This same issue can be seen in many areas of heterogeneous

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stickings</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rudiments</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlap with other instruments</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
band classes where instructors may have to simultaneously teach differing fingerings, positions, stickings, and techniques to a variety of different instruments.

**Perceived Level of Preparedness on Keyboard Percussion Instruments**

Keyboard percussion instruments have quickly become one of the most popular instruments for the solo percussionist to explore and have quickly advanced over the past few generations, since the mid-20th century. While solo literature for both two and four mallet keyboard instruments has evolved, so has the use of these techniques within modern ensemble repertoire. It is now standard to see repertoire for concert band, orchestra, percussion ensemble, and the marching music idiom to utilize more advanced two and four mallet techniques. Due to this increase in regularity, it is expected that students have a fundamental, technical understanding to successfully participate in these programs. This is especially true if the schools and students are active in competitive music, the common ‘All-State’ audition process, seasonal music festivals, or if the students wish to pursue music at the collegiate level.

In response to question 13 of the survey that asked participants about how prepared they felt teaching each instrument based on the knowledge gained from their undergraduate course, the surveyed music educators averaged a 7.5/10 on their self-perceived level of preparedness to teach keyboard percussion, with 63.5% ($N=153$) of those surveyed reporting between a 7/10 and 10/10. With 7.5/10, Keyboard Percussion Instruments had the highest level of averaged pedagogical understanding based on the respondent answers (see Table 29).
Of the responses collected, 39.4% ($N=95$) of these comments were related to participants perceived superior coverage in their classes on ‘keyboard percussion,’ while the remaining comments were divided fairly evenly between general ‘keyboard techniques’ and ‘four mallet technique’ (see Table 30).

In terms of perceived lack of preparation, 10.4% ($N=25$) of respondents reported that they felt that their course had neglected the area of keyboard percussion instruments. From these respondents, comments were closely divided between those who responded with an unspecified answer of ‘keyboard percussion instruments’ and those who stated, ‘four mallet techniques’ (see Table 30).

Table 30
Survey Data: Respondent Comments on Areas of Superior Coverage and Neglected Coverage on the Topic of Keyboard Percussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th># of Recurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neglected Coverage</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keyboard Percussion</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Mallet Techniques</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Superior Coverage</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keyboard Percussion</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keyboard Technique (4 Mallets)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Keyboard percussion instruments have become one of the most crucial areas of percussion study in the past few generations. The vast majority of universities now require four mallet marimba solos for acceptance into music programs, with some also requiring an additional two mallet work. The importance of strong fundamental development of keyboard percussion knowledge can be seen in nearly every beginning percussion text, including bestselling texts Mark Wessel’s *A Fresh Approach* series, and Kennan Wylie’s *Simple Steps to Successful Beginning Percussion*. Both method books have students focusing primarily on snare drum and keyboard percussion for the first semester of study, due to the overlapping nature of these two instruments within the percussion instrumental family. This provides collegiate students with more instructional time on the pedagogy and techniques of two of our most crucial starting instruments.

**Perceived Level of Preparedness on Timpani**

Almost half (48.5%) of the participants (*N* = 117) ranked their understanding of timpani at being relatively average with a rating of 6.9/10 (see Table 31). Those surveyed scored their understanding of timpani to be between 7/10 and 10/10. Perceived understanding of timpani was scored the lowest out of what are frequently considered the ‘big three’ instrument categories of Western Concert Percussion: Snare Drum, Keyboard Percussion instruments, and Timpani.
Table 31
Survey Data: Respondent Answers to Their Perceived Level of Preparedness on Timpani, Based on Their Percussion Methods Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Preparedness</th>
<th>Timpani</th>
<th>High Preparedness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In their individual responses regarding level of preparation on timpani, 24.1% (N=58) of respondents seemed to perceive that their in-class timpani experience had provided superior preparation for their future careers (see Table 32). However, 98.5% (N=57) of those responses were unspecified ‘timpani,’ with the remaining 1.5% divided among the specific coverage of ‘stroke types’ and ‘tuning.’

A further 9.5% (N=23) of respondents reported that they felt that their class had neglected to cover the study of timpani adequately. These respondents were evenly split between unspecified ’timpani’ answers and ‘tuning.’ It should be noted that the term ‘tuning’ may also involve the maintenance of the instrument and could be mistakenly overlapped with the previously covered ‘Instrument Maintenance.’

Table 32
Survey Data: Respondent Comments on Areas of Superior Coverage and Neglected Coverage on the Topic of Timpani

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th># of Recurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neglected Coverage</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timpani</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timpani Tuning Process</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Superior Coverage</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timpani</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Robert McCormick, in his text *Percussion for Musicians*, separates the teaching of timpani into nine sections: logistical information, head changing, stick selection, grip, tuning, stroke types, rolls, muffling, and cross sticking. It should be considered that sections such as logistical information regarding the individual parts of the drums and how to move them may be assigned as reading, or quickly shown in class, or head changing may occur during a class meeting on instrument maintenance. If the concept of the single stroke roll, fluid stroke types and manipulation of stick weight, velocity, and grip were thoroughly understood during classes designated for snare drum, there should be far fewer items to address when moving to timpani. While these skills do not have a 100% transfer rate, they are executed very similarly on timpani as they are on snare drum. This would leave the topics of tuning, muffling, and cross sticking as the only new concepts to introduce, alongside the variation of the previously learned techniques from snare drum.

### Perceived Level of Preparedness on Accessory Percussion, Bass Drum and Cymbals

With an average score of 7.3/10, 51.5% (N=24) of those surveyed responded that their self-perceived pedagogical understanding of accessory instruments (excluding bass drum and cymbals) was between 7/10 and 10/10.

---

Table 33
Survey Data: Respondent Answers to Their Perceived Level of Preparedness on Accessory Percussion, Based on Their Percussion Methods Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Preparedness</th>
<th>Accessory Percussion</th>
<th>High Preparedness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bass drum and cymbals were not included with the questions about general accessory concert percussion due to how different the approach to these two instruments can be. Thus, the bass drum and cymbals were grouped together based on how they are commonly paired in terms of orchestration. With an average score of 7.5/10, respondents perceived that they had gained a slightly stronger understanding of bass drum and cymbals than of general accessory concert percussion during their undergraduate studies.

Table 34
Survey Data: Respondent Answers to Their Perceived Level of Preparedness on Bass Drum and Cymbals, Based on Their Percussion Methods Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Preparedness</th>
<th>Bass Drum &amp; Cymbals</th>
<th>High Preparedness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.32%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In their individual comments 20% (n=48) of respondents stated that they felt auxiliary instruments received superior coverage in their course, with the majority of responses being unspecified. 12% (n=29) of respondents felt auxiliary percussion was neglected in their class coverage, with the majority of responses being unspecified ‘accessories’ (see Table 35).
While a significant portion of respondents (20%) reported that their percussion methods class had provided them with a superior experience in the study of auxiliary percussion instruments, the individual comments from those who seemed to perceive that their class had neglected the study of auxiliary and accessory percussion seemed to suggest that the respondents felt that they did not know enough information about producing a characteristically good sound on these instruments.

Table 35
*Survey Data: Respondent Comments on Areas of Superior Coverage and Neglected Coverage on the Topic of Accessory Percussion*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Number of Recurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neglected Coverage</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessory techniques (unspecified)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tambourine technique, sound quality, and good vs bad quality tambourines</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to produce quality concert cymbal crashes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangle technique, sound quality, and good vs bad quality triangles</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass drum playing and muffling techniques</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaker technique, and the role of different shakers depending on the ensemble</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Superior Coverage</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessory Percussion</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tambourine</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass Drum</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cymbals</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perceived Level of Preparedness on Drum Set

An average of 4.7/10, respondents marked Drum Set as the percussion instrument on which they perceived themselves to be second least prepared. Only 21.6% \( (N=52) \) of respondents indicated a 7/10 to 10/10 on the level of preparation they felt that they had received from their undergraduate percussion methods course. A total of 55.2% \( (N=133) \) of respondents marked the areas between 1/10 and 4/10, and 10.8% \( (N=26) \) to indicate that they did not teach this instrument in their current teaching setting (see Table 36).

Table 36
Survey Data: Respondent Answers to Their Perceived Level of Preparedness on Drum Set, Based on Their Percussion Methods Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Preparedness</th>
<th>Drum Set</th>
<th>High Preparedness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of the 241 total respondents, 15.8% \( (N=38) \) reported that their Drum Set education was neglected in some way (see Table 37). Specifically, there were 21 comments relating to simply wanting more class days spent on the instrument, and 18 comments relating to Drum Set not being covered at all. Only 1.7% \( (N=4) \) of respondents reported that they felt that Drum Set had received an adequate amount of coverage within the class they took. With the prominence of Drum Set, or elements of Drum Set, in modern band and orchestra literature, it should be considered an important part of a percussion methods education. Drum Set can also be found in many other school ensembles, most notably jazz bands, percussion ensemble, and athletic ensembles such as marching band and pep band. Even outside of playing full Drum Set,
instruments such as hi-hat cymbals, kick bass drum, toms, snare drums, and combinations of these instruments can be found in the frequently programmed music of modern composers such as John Mackey, Frank Ticheli, and Steven Bryant.

Table 37
Survey Data: Respondent Comments on Areas of Superior Coverage and Neglected Coverage on the Topic of Drum Set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Number of Recurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neglected Coverage</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More depth of study, often a 1-2 class section before moving on.</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often omitted from being taught at all. Needs to be incorporated.</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More information on different styles</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Drum Set notation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Superior Coverage</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drum Set</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On average, instructors only spent 6.7% (N=2.3) of class meetings on Drum Set, which is one of the most common instruments we see in the percussion world. Also, while 76.8% (N=74) of instructors spent time in class teaching this crucial instrument, 23.2% (N=57) of instructors opted not to include Drum Set at all (see Table 10). While not as consistently incorporated by composers into ensemble music as snare drum, keyboard percussion, timpani, etc., Drum Set is still frequently found in all major ensembles such as band, orchestra, the marching idiom, and jazz band, and also in smaller ensembles such as percussion ensemble, chamber music, and pep bands. Drum Set is often found in musical theatre and pit orchestras, two areas which provide a yearly means for inner-departmental collaboration between instrumental ensembles, choirs, and theatre students, at both the public school and collegiate levels. While the fundamental
mechanics of Drum Set technique stay the same across genres, many aspects change depending on the ensemble. For example, the role of the Drum Set in different ensembles will change drastically depending on the application. Additionally, the individual Latin styles (samba, bossa nova, rumba) all demand their own individual study.

**Perceived Level of Preparedness on World Percussion**

World instruments can be found in the literature of many classical ensembles, such as wind bands, marching bands, orchestras, and chamber music. With them becoming more frequently used for their timbral aspects, the study of World Percussion cannot be ignored. However, in addition to avoiding appropriation, instructors must balance educating students on how these instruments function in a culturally authentic way, and how they are played and used for their timbre and character in modern ensembles.

A total of 52.9% (N=125) of respondents rated their perceived ability to teach World Percussion instruments between the ratings of 1/10 and 4/10 (see Table 38). Further, 5% (N=12) of the individuals surveyed responded that they did not teach world percussion at all in their current position, and only 23.2% (N=56) of those surveyed responded with a score of 7/10 to 10/10 (see Table 38). Overall, World Percussion had an averaged participant perceived preparedness rating of 5.1/10, the third-lowest score from those surveyed.
Table 38
Survey Data: Respondent Answers to Their Perceived Level of Preparedness on World Percussion, Based on Their Percussion Methods Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Preparedness</th>
<th>World Percussion</th>
<th>High Preparedness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 39 illustrates that 9.1% ($N=22$) of respondents' individual comments suggested that they were dissatisfied with how their Percussion Methods course had covered world instruments and hand drumming during their undergraduate studies. All of the respondents' comments were unspecific and listed terms such as world drumming, world styles, Latin drumming, and hand drumming. There were no respondents who responded that they perceived this category to have had a superior level of coverage during their studies.

Table 39
Survey Data: Respondent Comments on Areas of Superior Coverage and Neglected Coverage on the Topic of World Percussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Number of Recurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neglected Coverage</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World styles (unspecified)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin instruments (unspecified)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand drumming (unspecified)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Perceived Level of Preparedness on Steel Pan**

As illustrated by Table 40, preparation on Steel Pan had the lowest average rating for respondents with an average of 2.7/10 from those who were surveyed. Nearly half (47.3%) of the respondents ($N=114$), indicated that they did not teach steel pan in their current teaching
position. This is not surprising, as the inclusion of steel pan in institutions is still relatively uncommon, although it is becoming a more frequently found instrument as time goes on, especially when paired with the pedagogical approaches of Orff and Kodaly.\textsuperscript{35} While there were some respondents who had steel drum included in their studies and felt the course prepared them to teach the instrument, 39\% \((N=94)\) of respondents reported feeling that their steel pan education was at a rating of between 1/10 and 4/10, whilst 13.7\% \((N=33)\) provided a rating of 5/10 to 10/10. Overall, a significant number of respondents marked that they did not, or currently do not, teach steel pan. The responses of the participants who reported currently teaching steel pan suggested that their class had prepared them at least a minimal level to do so. No individual respondent comments were submitted on the topic of steel pan preparation.

Table 40  
\textit{Survey Data: Respondent Answers to Their Perceived Level of Preparedness on Snare Drum, Based on Their Percussion Methods Class}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Preparedness</th>
<th>Steel Pan</th>
<th>High Preparedness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textbf{Perceived Level of Preparedness on Marching Percussion}

The popularity and frequency of Marching Band in the United States is well known, and its inclusion into the public school music curriculum across the country plays an important part in most schools during the academic year. In order for schools to stay competitive, as Marching Band becomes increasingly prevalent, the importance of a successful Marching Percussion

\textsuperscript{35} Cook, \textit{Teaching Percussion}, 288.
education at the secondary level is crucial. At many secondary level marching events, the judge score sheets are split into the categories of Music Ensemble, Percussion, Woodwinds, Brass, Visual, and Overall Design. This six-way split often attributes percussion as an equal 1/6th of the score.\textsuperscript{36} Considering the visual aspects of percussion, and how uniformity of technique and visual height directly plays into the accuracy of the rhythmic interpretation and volume of the percussion ensemble, percussion sections (specifically Drum Lines) frequently need a specialist with them to closely analyze the hands and approach of individual players to ensure they match the ensemble.

Elements of marching music and marching percussion have also worked their way into many aspects of classical percussion, with several works for percussion solo and ensemble, including elements of marching percussion often included. Popular works such as Jon Willmarth’s Timpani solo \textit{Bushido: Way of the Warrior}, and Robert Marino’s multiple percussion duet \textit{Eight on 3 and Nine on}, both heavily incorporate elements of Marching Percussion, both from a technical approach and in the form of visual pageantry.

The importance of Marching Percussion and Marching Band extends past musical opportunities. Michael Udow’s \textit{Percussion Pedagogy} lists many of the advantages to marching music including: equal footing between genders; collaboration between new and senior students; shared activity between both socio-economic and academic groups; the ability for full member inclusion; a collective interaction and work ethic aimed at a goal not always based on score or placement; and it’s general inclusivity.\textsuperscript{37}


\textsuperscript{37} Udow, \textit{Percussion Pedagogy}. 362.
From the survey data collected, 28.2% \((N=68)\) of respondents rated their understanding of marching percussion between a level of 7/10 and 10/10 (see Table 41). Additionally, 49.4% \((N=119)\) of those surveyed rated their perceived level of understanding from the class between 1/10 and 5/10, while 11.2% \((N=27)\) responded that they did not teach Marching Percussion at all in their current teaching position. With the increase in frequency of having a percussionist on staff in many high schools in either a full or part-time capacity, it is becoming more common for non-percussion instrumental directors to have a Percussion Specialist take over a large portion of instructing the percussion section, especially in terms of technique and specialist topics such as Drum Set or Marching Percussion. With an average response of 5.6/10, Marching Percussion had the most evenly spread response rate across the 0-10 spectrum.

Table 41
Survey Data: Respondent Answers to Their Perceived Level of Preparedness on Marching Percussion, Based on Their Percussion Methods Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Preparedness</th>
<th>Marching Percussion</th>
<th>High Preparedness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self-perceptions of preparation on Marching Percussion received fewer individual comments than most of the other survey categories. With the world of Marching Percussion being heavily engrained in public school music education, having only 6.2% \((N=15)\) of respondent comments revolve around what was inadequately covered in class is a good statistic overall (see Table 42). However, only 2.5% \((N=6)\) respondents felt that their percussion methods course had provided a superior level of coverage of material for their future use. An examination of the negative responses, included specific suggestions as to what might have contributed to an
improved learning experience. Ideas of potential beneficial topics for future inclusion included:

“How to build and teach a Drum Line;” and “What to do with a Marching Percussion section if you’re the only director.”

Table 42
Survey Data: Respondent Comments on Areas of Superior Coverage and Neglected Coverage on the Topic of Marching Percussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Number of Recurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate Coverage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marching percussion</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to build and teach a drum line</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What to do with a marching percussion section if you’re the only director</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior Coverage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marching Percussion</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perceived Level of Preparedness on Instrument Care and Maintenance

Like any instrument, percussion instruments need routine care and maintenance in order to produce their characteristic sounds. While the literal breaking of instruments or instrumental components would result in a specialist assessing the instrument, all standard maintenance such as head changing and tuning, instrument storage and preparation, component adjustments, and minor repairs can typically be done by the school teacher or even their students.38

In response to Question 12: Was instrument care covered in your class?, respondents were provided the option to elaborate if they wished to. Examples of potential topics for additional information included instrument repair, head changing, routine maintenance, tuning, purchasing,

"clearing" of timpani heads, tying triangle clips, and proper storage. Of the 241 respondents, 59.3% \((N=143)\) of participants reported that they had received instruction regarding instrument care and maintenance, while 33.2% \((N=80)\) responded that they had not received any instruction, and 7.5% \((N=18)\) chose not to respond to the question (see Table 43).

Table 43
Survey Data: Respondent Answers to Their Perceived Level of Preparedness on Instrument Care, Based on Their Percussion Methods Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>59.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNR</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 143 respondents who stated that they did receive instruction on Instrument Care and Maintenance, 65.7% \((N=94)\) of those 143 respondents reported feeling like they had gained a strong understanding of the related class materials, while 34.3% \((N=49)\) reported that they felt that they had received a fundamental understanding of the topic (see Table 44).

Table 44
Survey Data: Number of Respondents Who Marked They Had Between a "Fundamental" and "Strong" Understanding of Percussion Instrument Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Understanding of Instrument Care</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of &quot;Yes&quot; Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong Understanding</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamental Understanding</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 241 total respondents, 19.5% \((N=47)\) reported that they felt that they would have benefitted from having received more information and instruction on instrument care and maintenance. While 59.3% \((n=143)\) of respondents stated that they received instruction on
maintenance, 32.9% (n=47) reported that they needed more information on the subject of instrument care and maintenance (see Table 45).

Table 45
*Survey Data: Number of Respondents Requesting More Information and Instructional Time on Instrument Care*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requested More Information and Instructional Time on Instrument Care</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of “Yes” Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey data gathered more comments regarding Instrument Care and Maintenance than any other area. Percussion instruments’ care and maintenance changes depending on the specific instrument, but similarly to technical approaches, many instruments use overlapping methods of care and maintenance. For instance, most Western Membranophones consist of a shell, drum head(s), drum lugs and lug casings, and rim(s). The drum may also have a unique piece of hardware, such as the snare mechanism on Snare Drums, the mounting or suspension system on Concert Bass Drums, or the mounting system on Concert Toms. All of these components deal with balancing levels of tension. If the components are too loose, then the instrument may become unstable, the pitch of the instrument may unevenly lower, and the component may fully unscrew and be lost. If the components are overly tight, the instrument or component may break, the pitch can go out of range, or certain components such as snares may be so tight that they are unable to vibrate against the resonating head. These heads must be changed and tuned regularly, and while moving parts should be lubed occasionally, their tightness should be routinely checked.
Keyboards are comprised of tuned bars suspended on a frame over tuned resonators. While there are several components screwed into the instrument to keep it stable, they rarely need adjustment. As long as the instrument is played and moved by a cautious player and kept in a controlled climate, no damage will be sustained, and little maintenance will be needed outside of occasional dusting and possibly sending the bars to be retuned, though the latter is rare.

As previously mentioned, while Timpani overlap with other Membranophones, they do require specialized maintenance due to their parabolic bowls and their need to be tuned frequently. Failure to perform routine care and maintenance on the instruments will greatly magnify any troubles as they arise, ultimately affecting the drum’s ability to hold correct pitch and even altering the range of the instrument altogether.

Accessory Percussion instruments rarely need maintenance, outside of making sure items such as calfskin tambourines are kept in a climate-controlled environment, and anytightening mechanisms on instruments and their stands are of an appropriate level. While accessories may have fewer issues of maintenance, they do have many issues of general care and preparation. A few examples include making sure triangle clips are of acceptable quality and strung with appropriate cord, triangle beaters should be of quality size and weight, cymbals need to be securely placed on stands with an appropriate amount of felt, and woodblocks need correct mallets to avoid cracking the instrument.

While there are respondent comment areas of superior coverage such as instrument storage, Timpani head ‘clearing,’ and minor accessory instrument repairs, the topics of head tuning and changing were the most frequently commented. Table 46 (following) illustrates that 49 respondents found head changing to have been superiorly covered, and 48 found head tuning
superiorly covered. Instrument care and maintenance had no individual respondent comments relating to ‘negative coverage.’

Table 46
Survey Data: Respondent Comments on Areas of Superior Coverage and Neglected Coverage on the Topic of Instrument Care and Maintenance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Number of Recurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Superior Coverage</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Changing</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuning Heads</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storing and Moving Equipment</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrument Purchasing</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearing Timpani</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tying Cymbals</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tying Triangle Clips</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallet Wrapping and Repair</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing Timpani Heads</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marching Equipment Maintenance</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tambourine Repair</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrining Keyboard Percussion Instruments</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 47 (following) illustrates that only 6 (2.4%) of the respondents reported feeling that their undergraduate Percussion Methods class curriculum had performed a superior job of covering issues related to the topics of Percussion Curricula and Literature. The same respondents equally stated that they felt the topics of ‘Percussion Ensemble and Solo Literature’ and ‘Beginning Literature Curriculum’ were superiorly covered. Further, 22 (9.2%) of the respondents felt that their class experience was lacking in not having effectively covered the
topics of curricula and literature. Of these 73% of respondents ($N=22$), the most frequently occurring topic deemed lacking was the non-inclusion of the topic “percussion within a heterogenous band setting’, followed by the topics of ‘beginner class curriculum, scope, and sequence’ (32%).

Table 47
Survey Data: Respondent Comments on Areas of Superior Coverage and Neglected Coverage on the Topic of Curriculum and Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Number of Recurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neglected Coverage</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to include percussion in a heterogeneous classroom band setting</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginner class curriculum, scope, and sequence</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble shooting common issues in percussion</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Superior Coverage</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percussion Solo/Ensemble Literature</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginner Curriculum</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While it is becoming more common to see a hired percussion specialist working within public schools, it is still not commonplace. Due to the instantaneous nature of sound production on percussion instruments, beginner students tend to progress more quickly compared to their wind counterparts. The 2007 National Association for Music Education *Teaching Wind and Percussion Instruments* provides a list of essential skills for beginner mastery of wind and percussion instruments. At the beginner level, the majority of wind instruments have a suggested 7-12 skills to be mastered within the first year. For example, they suggest most winds have an understanding of assembly, instrument position, embouchure, articulation, intonation, instrument care, wood wind alternate fingerings, and brass lip slurs at the end of their middle school
education, along with some instrument-specific issues such as clarinets ‘crossing the break.’

However, using the MENC six categories of western percussion instruments (Snare Drum, Keyboard Percussion, Timpani, Accessory Percussion, Bass Drum, and Drum Set), they suggest fifty-six fundamental percussive skills that should be mastered before entering high school. The syllabi data were unclear on the level of curriculum study that occurred within the methods classes, and it is difficult to ascertain a uniform curriculum that will apply throughout public schools.

**Perceived Level of Preparedness on Other Topics**

In addition to the previously mentioned topics, a fringe minority of instructors included topics that had a recurrence rate of less than 4% (N=3). While these are all important topics for discussion within a percussion methods class setting, many of them can be easily tied in with other instrument categories or covered in other courses within a music education degree (see below).

1. Tom-Toms
2. Creative Music Making and Improvisation
3. Arranging
4. History
5. Survey of Head/ Stick/ Instrument Manufacturers
6. Rhythm Counting

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Similarly to the syllabi and survey data results, the Case Study interview with the K-12 Music Educator also echoed the belief that it is their job to teach K-12 students the fundamentals of technique, give them the resources and motivation to continue to develop on their own, and then facilitate a classroom environment where students learn how to make strong musical decisions, which will inherently support their technical development. The K-12 Music Educator also reported that they believed that their students’ technical abilities could quickly surpass the teacher’s technical ability, with the exception of the teacher’s primary applied instrument.

Percussionist Gary Cook (2006) believes that there is an overlap in some instrumental approaches and techniques, such as controlling the rebound and playing areas on membranophones to manipulate tone, timbre, and volume, meaning that after spending 20 hours becoming competent at snare drum, the student already has a sort of “head start” when beginning to learn other membranophones. While we cannot measure the exact time, we know that because of the transfer of knowledge across instruments, it wouldn’t necessarily take the full 20 hours to become fundamentally competent at playing concert bass drum, since the parameters for playing overlap with snare drum.40

Also during my interview with the K-12 Music Educator, it became apparent that he/she favored the belief that while any percussionist has the potential to be a high-quality methods educator, the best education would come from someone who has “lived it” and has experience

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teaching beginner percussion in public schools. While bringing in experts in the field to pass on their wealth of personal experience and knowledge is a noble idea, the use of a true “beginner” method book for a percussion methods class may be somewhat flawed.

Anecdotally, during the interview with the K-12 Music Educator it was revealed that he/she felt that marching percussion was briefly covered in their own university percussion methods class, and that because of this the assistance of a specialist was required in his/her current teaching situation. Consequently, although instructors may most likely be able to identify when the music is not played correctly or together, inadequate coverage of marching percussion may mean that the instructor may potentially find it challenging to remedy the solution on their own, particularly if an advanced level of marching music is played within their State.

Another interesting reflection made during the K-12 interview was the situation that often educators and students alike may find themselves in where they can identify technical issues and hear that the sound being produced is not correct in its fundamental production, or may be a characteristically good sound, or not appropriate in the musical context, but are unsure how to offer specific prescriptive feedback in order to remedy it. Such uncomfortable teaching situations occur in rehearsals when music educators are not sure of how to tell the student to manipulate the instrument or beater in a way that achieves the mental-aural picture the music educator has. Similarly to wind and string instruments, it can be easy to model correct posture, hand position, etc., but similar to timpani, being able to consistently produce the correct sound is not as easy. As a result, the performing student is perhaps unfairly frequently tasked with exploring the instrument to understand it more clearly.
As previously mentioned, World Percussion can often be a term of conflicting definitions. Most commonly, it generalizes any sort of instrument that is not found in the traditional scope of western art music and can refer to anything that is a non-classical percussion instrument. This can include a litany of instruments from Africa, the Caribbean, South America, the Middle East, non-classical European tradition, and many more.41 My interview with K-12 Music Educator revealed that while his/her course had exposed him/her to some general hand drums and instruments of different cultures, the coverage was highly summarized.

**Percussion Methods Instructor**

My interview with the Percussion Methods Instructor revealed a shared belief that accessory instruments, bass drum, and cymbals are often the most overlooked instruments within middle and high school band classes. Some common issues he/she mentioned were: holding the tambourine at an inappropriate angle; causing the jingles to ring extraneously or be dampened, using inappropriate yarn or string to suspend a triangle; causing the instrument to be dampened and lose its characteristically brilliant sound; standing in front of the bass drum’s head to play; causing a thinner sound due to the inability to fully engage the weight of the arm into the stroke; and crashing two concert cymbals together at the same angle and without offset, causing an air pocket to form in-between the instruments. Even with intact, well-maintained instruments played with correct beaters, it can be difficult to produce a consistent sound on accessory instruments, even in the hands of experienced percussionists.

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41 Ibid, 253.
During the interview with Percussion Methods Director, it was mentioned that on numerous occasions he/she had witnessed accessories being neglected in public school band halls, often seeing students suspending triangles with string that dampens the resonant sound of the instrument, and simply not knowing how to approach common instruments found in American march repertoire, such as bass drum and cymbals. As an educator I have also personally been witness to variations of these same issues arise in the back of ensemble rooms, often unnoticed by the ensemble director.

The logistical issues of teaching Drum Set also were mentioned in my interview with the Percussion Methods Instructor, who like the survey respondents also shared an awareness of the obvious challenges with teaching Drum Set in the context of a Percussion Methods class, specifically the ability to set up and play the instruments. It is uncommon to see more than one to two Drum Sets accessible in one class location at most universities. In a hypothetical scenario of a class of six percussion methods students, even having trios of students rotate on two instruments is often unfeasible. Instruments must be readjusted to the individual player, Drum Sets can be very time consuming to set up, and the teaching space must be big enough to accommodate both the class members and instruments.

The Percussion Methods Instructor also stated that he/she put an emphasis on listening during their Drum Set instruction. They stated the belief that like Marching Percussion, Drum Set is a highly specialized instrument and should not fall into the instructional responsibilities of a sole non-percussionist director. Undoubtedly, it is more beneficial for students to understand the fundamentals of the Drum Set such as appropriate setup, the instrument’s role in ensembles,
how to listen and critique playing for instrumental and ensemble balance, and how to judge if the playing is stylistically correct for the music being performed.

The issues of world percussion are similar to those of Drum Set and marching percussion, in that they require a true specialist approach. My interview with Percussion Methods Instructor similarly revealed that it is more beneficial for students to understand the fundamentals of hand percussion, such as appropriate setup, the instrument’s role in ensembles, how to listen and critique playing for instrumental and ensemble balance, and to judge if the playing is stylistically correct for the music. In terms of performance authenticity, it should be noted that percussion instruments are often used outside of their original cultural context, where traditional playing techniques may not be necessary. One example is Gene Koshinski’s percussion duet *And So the Wind Blew*..., where the composer states that a High Bongo and Concert Tom may be substituted in place of traditional Chinese Tom-Toms. Another example can be found in the works of Joseph Schwantner, specifically *New Morning for the World: Daybreak of Freedom*, where the composer uses Cuban Timbales paired with Western Tom-Toms for their timbral effect, even though they are not played in a way that is authentic to the instrument.\(^\text{42}^{43}\)

The interview data with Percussion Methods Instructor also emphasized the importance of percussion methods students gaining a firm understanding of percussion pedagogy, as many localized issues may end up influencing curricula. Examples mentioned during the interview were such aspects as state education requirements, socioeconomic concerns, and level of public support. Another example mentioned was the issue of heterogenous versus homogeneous

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classroom environments – a topic that will be addressed in more detail in this summary of the interview data.

With regards to covering the logistical nature of many pieces of literature (e.g., modern wind band percussion setups) and the issues that arise while programming these works, the Percussion Methods Instructor shared how they approach these setups and part assignments in class, so that the students understand the logistical difficulties that can arise with the instrumentation of some music. The Percussion Methods Instructor also stated the following:

“I spend a week on concert percussion (in terms of a band or orchestra). We discuss logical setups, and I point out to them that our own wind ensemble uses a setup they can look at. I also take care to go over how to divide parts (both in terms of creating a part rotation so no one is stuck playing the same instrument and physically creating parts from a percussion score—e.g., Symphonic Dances from West Side Story).”

Related to the topic of Percussion Literature, such as method books, solos, and ensembles for percussion instruments, the data were unclear in regards to what instructors included within their class coverage of ‘Percussion Literature.’ However, the Percussion Methods Instructor shared during his/her interview the tendency to focus more on students learning where to find quality percussion ensembles and solos, assessing the technical and musical challenges through their understanding of basic technical approaches to percussion, and using their own musical intuition to choose literature that is appropriate for their soloists and ensembles.

Aiming for wind instrument students to understand a unified concept, such as ‘articulation,’ while also providing a thorough percussion education across a diverse body of
instruments is difficult, and it seems that percussion methods courses should be educating collegiate students on how to incorporate these varying percussion skills into the curriculum of a heterogeneous band class. While a homogenous teaching environment is ideal and provides the best education for students, it is still less common than a heterogeneous classroom. While educators can remedy this with outside rehearsals and possibly hiring percussion specialists to work with their students, undergraduate methods courses should prepare students with information regarding the incorporation of percussion in a heterogeneous classroom. This is especially true in beginning music; while there is shared musical terminology across the instrument families, the fundamental approaches to each instrument differ greatly.

Summary of Survey Data

While the K-12 Music Educator shared during their interview that “not much has caught me off guard,” both interviewees emphasized the importance of teaching universal musical concepts to their students as a group, and providing the students within each instrumental family of their classes with strong fundamental skills. Both interviewees believed that the most successful path to a well-rounded music education in public schools should be centered around giving students a strong technical foundation, pushing the students to progress beyond their own ability level, guiding them from a musical perspective, and using the instructor’s primary instrument to model. In relation to this, the K-12 Music Educator stated: “At some point, my students will be better than I am, and that is when I will no longer model on their instrument and will instead use my flute.”
PART FOUR: SUMMARY OF COMBINED DATA

Summary of Mallet Instruments

The study of Keyboard percussion instruments only accounted for 16.2% (n=4.3) of semester meetings across methods classes. On the surface level, keyboard percussion instruments are more simplistic compared to membranophones such as the snare drum. If the player strikes the instrument with a suitable mallet, held by a correct grip, in an appropriate spot on the bar of the instrument, the instrument will instantaneously produce a characteristically good sound. An unrefined technique can quickly become a technical and musical barrier, often leading to negative effects in terms of the health of the player’s hands. Attention to the fine details of strokes, control, and how the player utilizes their arms and wrists become paramount in the developing percussionist.

Percussionist and marimbist Gene Koshinski, dedicates the first fifteen pages of his marimba solo collection TWO to the importance of marimba technique, and how it is manipulated to influence the music. Likewise, there have been numerous texts written solely covering the issue of performer technique on keyboard percussion instruments. These texts are often very specific and explore items such as the importance of a defined fulcrum in the hand as a point of leverage against the weight of the mallet, and how to manipulate this weight by increasing and decreasing the velocity of the performer’s stroke. Another well-known example is

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the first thirty-eight pages of Leigh Howard Stevens’ pivotal text *Method of Movement*, in which Stevens fully explains his four mallet grip and how to execute each four mallet stroke type.⁴⁵

On the topic of four mallet usage, while 89.3% (N=66) of the syllabi utilized an average of 6.6% (N=1.8) of the semester’s class meetings to specifically cover four mallet technique and approaches, the intricacies of utilizing four mallets for keyboard percussion playing is not something that can be fully comprehended in two class meetings, and begins to fall into a topic which requires a specialist to teach past an introductory level.

**Summary of World Percussion Instrument Study**

Secondary level music frequently incorporates world percussion instruments in five different types of ensembles or related repertoire settings. These are: marching music; large ensemble works; jazz band; multiple percussion; and percussion ensembles. In the marching idiom, world instruments are used as effect sounds and often are incorporated to fit the theme of a show. One common example is the use of taiko drums in a Japanese themed performance. Large ensembles such as Arturo Marquez’s *Danzon no. 2* for orchestra or wind band are an interesting anomaly, where the composer has written for the instruments of their related culture, but the authenticity of the performance on these instruments falls into the hands of the percussionists, who may or may not be equipped to play these instruments in a style that is suitably authentic to the music.⁴⁶

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Jazz bands, especially those who choose to utilize Latin music within their repertoire, for example big band charts written by Afro-Cubano composers, will frequently incorporate a percussionist into the rhythm section to play instruments such as congas or timbales. Many multiple percussion setups within large ensembles will incorporate world instruments for their timbral contributions. One example of this is the use of the bongos to add a sound that is higher and sharper than traditional concert toms. Likewise, many percussion solos will include world instruments for the same effect, such as the fairly common practice of using bongos within the multiple percussion solo Rebons by Iannis Xenakis.\textsuperscript{47} Similarly to their use in large ensembles, many percussion ensemble works will include world instruments, such as the extensive use of Afro-Cuban instruments in Christopher Rouse’s \textit{Ogoun Badagris}, where world instruments are written for in a way that blends authenticity and modernism.\textsuperscript{48}

World percussion appears to be one of the more difficult categories to present in the brief time span in which it is covered in the syllabi of the methods courses examined for the purposes of this study. In addition to providing supplemental resource options, the best approach to teaching world percussion appears to be a focus on transferable concepts between frequently encountered instruments within the secondary level literature, pedagogy about how to include these instruments within the curricula as needed, and the diaspora of the instruments and their style into the western world.

When addressing the use of the steel pan in percussion methods courses, it appears that the instrument should be treated similarly to general world percussion. However, with steel

bands still being a far less commonly used instrument than others in this survey, it is up to the instructor to consider the factors that may influence the depth of including steel pan. For example, instructors should take into account the relevancy of steel pan in the State and area in which they teach. If the school systems in the State or region in which they teach does not use steel drums at all, it may be advisable to suggest removing steel pan from the curriculum to make more class time for other instruments, such as a deeper study and exposure of world percussion instruments. There are many factors that may come into play regarding the inclusion of steel pan; however, they should be addressed on a “case-by-case” basis.

Summary of Accessory Percussion Data

In Stephen Primatic’s text *Percussion Methods*, the author is accurately able to describe all the necessary information regarding triangle (instrument sizes, beaters, holders, striking, rolls, notation) in 500 words. Similar lengths of explanation can be seen in his approach to all of the accessory instruments listed in this chapter. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, while learning the fundamental approach to produce a characteristic sound on these instruments can be accomplished quite easily, accurately, and consistently producing the intended result can be quite challenging. Bob Breithaupt summarizes the common issues of accessory playing in his text *The Complete Percussionist*:

“Accessory percussion instruments are “color” instruments. Professional players spend many years perfecting their technique on these instruments, but

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unfortunately, young players often consider these instruments as less important than the snare drum, timpani, or keyboard instruments.”50

Data collected from the syllabi suggested that instructors spent an average of 11.3% \((N=3.1)\) of their class instructional time covering these instruments. Considering Primatic and others’ beliefs that students can gain a fundamental understanding on how accessory percussion instruments operate very quickly, and Breithaupt’s belief that while easier to play, these instruments take years to perfect and can commonly be mistakenly overlooked, it would make sense that methods instructors lay the foundation during the methods course with an emphasis on the importance of continued study. A parallel can be seen between introductory string methods; students may successfully produce a sound on the cello very quickly but being able to control the consistency and quality of the instrument’s tone takes time and additional study to master.

**Summary of Curriculum Related Data**

The largest issue within teaching curriculum, scope, and sequence within a methods course appears to revolve around the inability to predict what students will encounter in their careers post-graduation. Percussion pedagogue Emily Tannert Patterson emphasizes the importance of using a general curriculum modeled after one that has proven to be successful and can be practically applied to the current teaching environment.51 From the percussion methods instructor’s perspective, it would be highly beneficial to combine their own experiences with

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collected data from the State to create a suggested curriculum that students could more easily tailor to their own needs in the future.

In terms of percussion literature, the syllabi data were too unclear to define an apparent issue or suggest a change. However, taking into account the comments of the two interviewees, as well as the comments of the survey respondents, it would appear that curriculum and literature issues that are relevant to future educators revolve around logistical issues of literature (both percussion and full instrumental ensemble), the ability to evaluate percussion music for specific ensemble abilities, and information on teaching percussion in a heterogeneous environment as well as a homogenous one.

In my interview with K-12 Music Educator, the interviewee expressed several times the importance of finding methods instructors who have an understanding of how public school music programs operate and have ’real world’ K-12 teaching experience if possible. The interview offered one quote that particularly expressed the interviewee’s frustration with a methods class taught by a graduate student seeking an M.M. in performance, compared to an instructor who taught the class with a more real-world, pedagogy-oriented approach.

“We want teachers, not performance students who aren’t passionate about education. My best methods class was brass methods with a horn player who had taught choir, orchestra, and band at a small school in a State. She had lived the classroom setting she had at University with true beginners, and we learned so much from her. I think a class would place the most importance on fundamental playing techniques and HOW to teach them.”
Being in support of this approach is in no way a call to remove those instructors without previous public school teaching experience, but rather to suggest a reevaluation of individual course statements, learning objectives, and content to see if they are truly educating students in what is relevant to their prospective careers. While no instructor should wish to remove course content, with such limited class time, it is important to focus on what is truly important to the students’ future careers.

Anecdotally, in my role as a Percussion Methods instructor, I have always included a week (2 class meetings) of Steel Pan instruments and fundamentals in my courses. During this study, I have found that the majority of music educators I surveyed were not required to teach this instrument. While I still wish to include some steel pan instruction in my classes, I will be reducing the amount in order to give more coverage to another topic, which has shown to be more critically relevant to future educators and frequently covered less. In this scenario, I will be using this extra class taken from steel pan to provide more time dedicated to Drum Set instruction.

The Percussion Methods Instructor interview showed that they too included Percussion Ensemble as a week of their semester class meetings and chose to use it primarily as a playing experience, since logistical issues and literature are covered separately. During these meetings the Percussion Methods Instructor stated that he/she does the following:

“Every semester I have them perform an easy piece on the percussion ensemble concert (e.g. an arrangement of Beat It). This works well because I can balance the more natural talents against those who struggle more (i.e., put the natural talents on keyboard parts and the ones struggling on tambourine). This way
everyone gets to play, all students see a variety of instruments in performance, etc., but we don’t get so bogged down on everyone having to learn his or her part.”

Based on the collected and analyzed data from this study, it seems that the most effective use of Percussion Ensemble within a methods class includes providing students with information on where to find quality literature, teaching them to assess the music compared to their ensemble needs, and providing students with experiences through playing obtainable percussion parts in a chamber percussion ensemble. Because this requires students to actively apply their previously learned percussion knowledge, it would make the most sense for percussion ensemble to be one of the final topics for in-class coverage.

The relevance of Multiple Percussion in public schools is far less common than other percussion instruments such as Timpani, Keyboard Percussion, and Snare Drum. The Texas Music Educators Association has one of the most extensive Prescribed Music Lists in the nation, where students and teachers can find solo and ensemble music for area and State level solo and ensemble competitions. This list contains only 165 works for solo multiple percussion. In contrast, the solo keyboard percussion category contains a list of 470 works, and the solo snare drum category contains 359 entries. Most multiple percussion tends to occur within the individual performer setups of wind band, orchestra, and percussion ensemble music. As my interview with Percussion Methods Instructor suggested, it may be best to not focus on solo repertoire and detail-oriented playing of multiple percussion music, but rather to have methods

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students understand the logistical challenges that come with multiple percussion, including how to remedy and foresee these issues.

**Summary of Snare Drum Data**

With an average of 7.5/10 for preparedness (the second-highest score) and 34% \( (N=82) \) of those surveyed reporting that their Snare Drum instruction was of ‘superior’ quality, Snare Drum appears to be one of the most successfully taught instruments within the Percussion Methods classroom. The most commented topic lacking preparation tended to be about instruction on how to teach both open and closed rolls on snare drum, and how to successfully incorporate rudimental knowledge into both ensemble lesson plans and solo study. As one of the most successfully taught areas of percussion methods, Snare Drum instruction comes with the drawback that the average one-semester methods class spent an average of 25.8% (6.4 classes) of their class time covering this one instrument. However, if we follow Gary Cook’s belief that basic, umbrella, percussion techniques can be facilitated through the study of Snare Drum, it would make sense to spend a larger portion of time on the instrument that will provide students with technical and musical approaches, and terminology that will transfer across the other percussion instruments.\(^{53}\)

One point to consider is the importance of emphasizing Snare Drum as a vehicle to facilitate the education of other percussion instruments. Far too often, percussion students develop strength on one instrument, such as snare drum, and fail to move forward in the other instruments, as they believe they are ‘starting over.’ In 2002, Kevin Mixon’s article “Helping

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\(^{53}\) Ibid
Percussionists Play Musically” notes how frequently the emphasis on ‘Snare Drum only’ deprives students of the chance to develop musical ability on other percussion instruments.\textsuperscript{54} Mixon, as well as many other pedagogues, aims for his students to follow the ‘total percussionist’ model, where while they may have a specialty instrument, they also are required to play all percussion instruments successfully.

**Summary of Drum Set Data**

Having the second-lowest average level of preparation from methods classes, Drum Set is an area of the course that should be heavily reconsidered during class planning. The most common issue from respondents was the need for “more depth of study” on Drum Set, and that one to two classes on Drum Set is not enough to prepare students for their future careers. Continuing with Percussion Methods Instructor’s belief that the goal of percussion methods should be to inform students about how the Drum Set functions within an ensemble; future educators should be knowledgeable in deciphering Drum Set notation, understanding the role of the instrument within the given ensemble, how each instrument of the set should be voiced, and how to teach basic three to four limb coordination pedagogy.

As discussed in previous instruments, a fundamental understanding of snare drum lends itself to the facilitation of learning on the Drum Set. While students may view Drum Set as four limbs playing four separate rhythms, this is not true. There is a rhythmic inner-relation between each limb which helps to simplify the music, that creates a hierarchy of what should be heard, and when it should be heard (similarly to voicing the individual lines within a fugue). A simple

instance of this is seen in rock music: while the Hi-Hat Cymbals and Snare Drum are two separate instruments, they function as a section of the cohesive instrument that is ‘Drum Set.’

While it may look or sound as though consistent eighth or quarter note patterns are being played on the hi-hats, and inner-dispersed notes being played on the snare drum, it is actually one composite rhythm based on the fundamental ‘right-hand lead’ or ‘straight’ sticking system that is covered on snare drum.55 When adding in foot coordination, the same fundamental comparison can be drawn, which allows students not to approach Drum Set as a new percussion instrument, but a new medium to which they will apply their previous knowledge.

**Summary of Marching Percussion Data**

As previously mentioned, marching music frequently comprises a considerable amount of the average public school's time. Taking this into consideration, the inclusion of marching percussion within a methods course is highly necessary. While the approach to marching and classical percussion may seem very different, they have a similar approach with a large amount of transfer between the two areas. Similar to the transfer of abilities between Snare Drum and Drum Set, there are similar adjustments to be made when applying the techniques of Snare Drum to the marching idiom. Neither Cort McClaren’s *The Book of Percussion Pedagogy* nor John H. Beck’s *Percussion Essentials* choose to include marching percussion at all, and Stephen Primatic’s *Percussion Methods* and Robert Breithaupt’s *The Complete Percussionist* choose to only mention the essential differences between concert and marching instruments, instrument summaries, and notation. McClaren summarizes the approach to marching percussion below:

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55 Cook, *Teaching Percussion*, 308.
“There is a tendency to assume that concert percussion and marching percussion are different; that marching requires different techniques, different styles, and a different pedagogical approach. Keep in mind that the function of the instruments may differ among the various styles, but the playing techniques and the concept of tone quality should remain the same. Work toward developing long-term playing habits.”

It should also be noted that the world of marching percussion is quickly evolving in an attempt to become more competitive. This is especially troublesome in the inclusion of electronics. Marching ensembles now use sound amplification systems with their front ensembles, as well as soloist microphones, synthesizers, MIDI-controllers, and computer applications like Apple MainStage. While some of these topics are standardized, such as running microphones through a soundboard, and may be covered in class, the products and software are constantly advancing.

Based on the data, it seems that the Marching Percussion instruction experiences shared by the participants in their Percussion Methods classes was neither bad, nor good, but average. With survey respondents having an average response of 5.6/10, there was a fairly balanced mix of those who felt that their class had adequately prepared them, and those who did not. Taking McClaren and Breithaupt’s pedagogical approach to marching percussion, if methods students receive adequate instruction on and understanding of fundamental percussion techniques, those techniques should transfer to the marching idiom. This would mean that the majority of marching percussion classes would be able to focus on marching specific issues such as stick

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heights and playing areas, notation, the role of the instruments in the ensemble, pedagogy, and electronics. Similar to World Percussion and Drum Set, Marching Percussion is an area that frequently requires a specialist. However, this does not mean that percussion methods students should not have a fundamental knowledge of this topic, especially since it is an ensemble that occupies such large quantities of time in public music programs.

**Summary of Instrument Care and Maintenance Data**

Because the data do not indicate if instructors included repair and maintenance within individual instrumental topics as they progressed through their class, it is difficult to make a firm evaluation on the state of repair and maintenance. However, since 19.5% (n=47) of educators felt that they needed more information and instruction on instrument care and maintenance, and 33.9% (n=25) of instructors definitely included repair and maintenance, there is an argument for increased coverage of repair and maintenance within methods courses.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION
Final Discussion of Data

In order to meet the needs of professional school Music Educators, methods courses must be designed to provide students with meaningful learning opportunities and content relevant to their future careers. The results of the current study revealed areas of weakness within Percussion Methods courses that instructors should consider addressing to better serve their methods students. As a reminder, these results and suggestions are based on the average findings from the study and may not be present within every instructor’s course.

Considering the MENC six categories of Western Percussion instruments (Snare Drum, Keyboard Percussion, Timpani, Accessory Percussion, Bass Drum, and Drum Set), including the additional non-Western instruments surveyed (World Percussion and Steel Pan) and Marching Percussion, the average preparedness educators gained from their percussion methods course was just above average, with some exceptions (see Table 48).

Table 48
Survey Data: Averaged Level of Instrumental Preparedness, Based on Respondent Answers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument Topic</th>
<th>0-10 Average Preparedness Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keyboard Percussion</td>
<td>7.9/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concert Snare Drum</td>
<td>7.5/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass Drum &amp; Cymbals</td>
<td>7.5/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessory Percussion</td>
<td>7.3/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timpani</td>
<td>6.9/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marching Percussion</td>
<td>5.6/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Instruments</td>
<td>5.1/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drumset</td>
<td>4.7/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel Pan</td>
<td>2.7/10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Snare Drum, Keyboard Percussion, Bass Drum and Cymbals, and Accessory Percussion all scored an average preparedness rating above 7/10. Of these instruments, the only common area of neglect was “how to incorporate snare drum rudiments into a classroom setting,” and “how to teach snare drum rolls.” Based on the syllabi, instructors were able to cover all of these instruments fairly effectively in 13.8 class meetings, just under 50% of the instructional time within the standard one semester, twice weekly, fourteen-week model (28 total meetings).

Timpani averaged 6.9/10, just below the 7/10 mark. While Timpani scored just under 7/10, it received no major comments regarding neglect outside of a few comments specifying ‘timpani’ and ‘timpani tuning.’ Overall, while Timpani preparedness is slightly lower than the aforementioned instruments, it appears that the music educators who were surveyed for this study had an adequate understanding of the instrument. Timpani received an average of three class meetings of coverage per semester.

Considering the six MENC categories, Drum Set received the lowest level of average preparedness of these categories with an average score of 4.7/10. While the idea of gaining a total understanding of Drum Set in a single semester is not generally possible, the respondents’ comments reveal that the average of 2.3 class meetings may not be enough time to effectively cover a fundamental understanding of the instrument’s function, basic technique, and fundamental styles. Furthermore, 23.2% ($N=17$) of instructors chose not to include Drum Set at all. These instructors, combined with the average 2.3 class meetings, make Drum Set the least covered instrument of the MENC six categories. Completing the MENC categories, the data suggested that the Percussion Methods instructors whose syllabi were examined spent an average
of 19.8 class meetings covering the most commonly found western percussion instruments within public schools.

Marching Percussion had a lower average preparedness perception rating of 5.6/10. Since Marching Percussion contains a unique set of challenges, it is considered a specialty area of percussion music education. With so many directors seeking outside hires or volunteers to assist with running their Marching Percussion section, it is not surprising that the level of preparedness on this topic is low. The most frequent comment from respondents regarding marching percussion was simply ‘marching percussion,’ reinforcing the depth of the issue. Only 69.6% \((N=52)\) of instructors chose to include marching percussion in their course and spent an average of 2.4 class meetings covering the topic —0.1 more than Drum Set, which had the lowest coverage of the MENC categories. With the frequency of marching music in public schools in the United States, it is paramount that marching percussion techniques and pedagogy are covered in an undergraduate curriculum.

The second-lowest instrument perceived preparedness was World Percussion, with an average of 5.1/10. World Percussion was allocated an average of 1.8 class meetings within the semester, and was only included in 69.6% \((N=52)\) of the syllabi examined. The most commented upon areas of deficiency in survey participant’s perceptions were with World Percussion involved ‘styles’ and ‘instruments.’ While World Percussion may not be frequently played in their traditional styles in public schools, it is likely that much of the large ensemble repertoire performed, especially music of the twenty and twenty-first centuries will require a fundamental knowledge of world instruments; including how to play the instrument, knowing what the instrument is, and what an effective substitution may be.
The Steel Pan received the lowest level of self-perceived fluency from survey participants with a rating of only 2.7 out of 10, as well as being covered the least as a topic in syllabi, with only 12.5% (N=9) of the syllabi including it in the course content. While these syllabi apportioned an average of 1.4 class meetings in which to teach the Steel Pan, this will not be counted towards the average due to the Steel Pan being much less frequently covered in Percussion Methods courses, and subsequently perhaps as a direct result, also less frequently taught by K-12 Music Educators.

Taking into account the six MENC categories, syllabi content collected for this study confirmed that instructors had spent an average of 23.2 class meetings on covering the topics of World Percussion and Marching Percussion, including test days. This left only 6.8 class meetings to cover the remaining five class topics and instruments. The most frequently covered topics were Instrument Care, Curriculum, Literature, Percussion Ensemble, and Multiple Percussion.

**Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations for Future Research and Pedagogical Practice**

In conclusion, the importance of methods courses cannot be emphasized enough. Unfortunately, methods courses are often weighted very low on a credit hour basis, which means for a busy student, it does not take priority over their other classes. Most Music Education students are in the field because of their interest in teaching music to others. Being transparent about the relevancy of the course topics to the career they are going into aids in student engagement and willingness to learn and understand the material. With this in mind, keeping the class-oriented towards these future pedagogical needs should be the primary concern.
While it can be easy to feel the need to address every technical issue that the methods student is demonstrating, most of these are issues that they can pinpoint and fix in their classmates if given the chance to think critically. However, without regular practice and maintenance, these issues will always return as habits. Therefore, it is vital that rather than having the technique perfected for themselves, it is more essential for undergraduate methods percussion students to gain the experience of playing the instruments, understanding how they respond and function, and can confidently provide articulate solutions to common performance issues based on an aural and visual assessment of a student’s technique. In doing so percussion methods students will be better prepared to enter their career as a K-12 music educator.

This study found many areas for possible reconsideration and implementation within percussion methods courses. While there are multiple issues that might be addressed, the current study focused on a few issues that are all of critical importance, can be resolved with minimal adjustment on the instructor’s behalf, and will have the greatest positive impact on the methods course as a whole. These topics for future recommended inclusion follow.

**Recommendations for Future Pedagogical Practice**

The percussion methods syllabi examined for the purposes of this study primarily scheduled testing on no more than two to three instruments during the duration of the course. The assessments typically included testing on Snare Drum, Keyboard Percussion, and Timpani, with some variance such as excluding Timpani or adding in Multiple Percussion or Drum Set. With the rise of recording technology and the ease with which one can accomplish quality sound
and video with smartphones, it would be easy to dedicate two to three class meetings towards playing exams on instruments in a video assignment to take place outside of class time.

Students could easily record from the designated perspective (including their face), and upload a video exam directly to a designated online website. These online videos could be then viewed by the professor, commented on and graded. This would also allow the student to see and hear their mistakes.

A follow up to this video assignment could involve a process such as a student reflection on their mistakes and how they would go about addressing these issues in their own students. In addition to testing, this method can be used to ensure students are regularly practicing by requiring an uploaded video of an exercise or etude from class on a weekly or per-class basis. This method would allow students to make several attempts at the video, with the intent that they will have increased attention to detail before submitting. This also gives students the ability to critique themselves before submitting and provides instructors with an additional two to three class meetings designated to new information.

Sixty-nine point three percent ($N=168$) of those surveyed stated that they had studied in a Percussion Methods class that was more focused on performance ability than written or research-oriented work. My interview with the Percussion Methods Instructor revealed an interesting approach and mindset towards methods student performance ability. While the ability to understand, demonstrate, and explain the concept of an instrumental technique is critical, the ability to execute it within a musical passage is less important. The Percussion Methods Instructor stated the following in regard to the question: “How important is student performance ability to you?”;
“Not very important to me. Even if they reach a reasonable level of proficiency in a semester, they will lose this without maintenance. I also run into a lot of different natural ability levels—some people can play paradiddles well while others can’t; we lose a lot of class time trying to get those people caught up. We do spend a portion of every class (maybe 10-15 minutes of an 80-minute class) playing practice pads, so they do end up with a fairly good grip and decent technique at the most fundamental level. It is more about the experience of playing the instrument(s) than developing a high level of proficiency.”

Embracing Gary Cook’s belief in the ‘total percussionist’ education approach, and the emphasis on utilizing as much technical transfer across percussion instruments as possible, the findings of this study suggest that the most logical sequencing of Percussion Methods classes should begin with the Snare Drum. Approaching any instrument will become easier for students after a firm understanding of the major concepts of snare drum. These concepts will directly transfer with minor adjustments to ‘Tom-Toms, Bass Drum, Drum Set, and fundamental Timpani. Similarly, instructing two Mallet Keyboard percussion techniques as a Snare Drum grip, but utilizing a relaxed whole hand fulcrum, created by keeping the back fingers engaged through the entirety of the stroke, allows for a more seamless transfer from membranophones to keyboard instruments. These same ideas of ‘transfer’ can be used to bridge the gap between classical and marching idioms, focusing on creating a relaxed, unified technique across percussion, where the only adjustments come from implement selection and an adjustment of stick velocity.
Using a more universal technical approach to percussion would allow for instructors to focus on instrumental differences and relevant information, and could provide students with the opportunity to study percussion techniques as a whole, and not undergo the sensation of ‘starting over’ when a new percussion instrument is introduced. Students would also then be able to develop a single adjustable approach for their future K-12 students. Some may argue that having methods students learn such a unified approach might limit their future K-12 students, because a certain degree of nuance and specialization may be lost on some instruments, such as timpani or keyboard percussion.

However, as echoed by the interview with the K-12 Music Educator, where they explained that their job was to teach students the fundamentals, with the hope that at some point, they will surpass the director, unless the director is a percussionist. At this point, the student will be in charge of their own development, with guidance from their director. This is also the moment where those students who wish to pursue music more seriously will and can begin to consider private lessons, where a specialist can take this previous uniform technical approach and shape it into a more mature technique.

Robert Horner found in his survey of percussion method educators that 40.9% (N=110) of his respondents, all of whom were collegiate percussion instructors, had no experience teaching in a K-12 Institution. With the large amount of material that could be covered in a percussion methods course, it is crucial to address what should be covered in relation to the practical needs of modern K-12 music educators. This should be assessed by referencing the needs of area

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57 Horner, 26-7
instructors for input, and annually following up with graduated students on what they found difficult in percussion during their first years or after student teaching.

It is easy to over-complicate concepts in percussion. Unlike teachers of wind instruments, teachers of percussion can actively see the full process of a student’s playing (posture, level of engagement from the arms, wrists, and fingers, any muscle tension, and level of rebound control). As a result, it can sometimes be possible to hyper-analyze a student’s technique to the point of overloading the student with too much information, effectively making the learning process more difficult. Methods instructors should strive to make percussion techniques no more complicated than is necessary and recognize that a student may be able to identify and address errors in their colleagues’ playing while having the same issue themselves; a common, simple example of this is students (incorrectly) allowing their fingers to fully leave the stick when playing Snare Drum.

From the researcher’s own teaching experiences, it is evident that students understand the concept of leaving their fingers on the stick and can identify when someone else has this error, and provide feedback, even though they may have the same error in their own playing. These students mentally understand the concept, but may not have a full technical grasp on it. According to my interview with Percussion Methods Instructor, this should be a welcomed learning scenario since those students who have a perfected technical understanding will lose a great deal of that ability without consistent, regular practice.

In addition to focusing on the mastered application of the concept above, another way of simplifying instruction is by removing extraneous information. One example is the increasingly popular approach of Robert Breithaupt, who exposes students to rudiments and rudimental
playing on snare drum, but reduces the forty standard rudiments to his “seven essential rudiments:” The single-stroke roll, multiple-bounce roll, double-stroke roll, five-stroke roll, single paradiddle, flam, and drag.58 Understanding these seven essential rudiments gives students the ability to identify and combine them to create the other 33 on their own or at a more relevant time in the future.

Keyboard Percussion can be simplified by using the unified technical approach mentioned above, and focusing on the experience of playing the instrument, versus re-developing stroke types —also, addressing articulation changes on keyboard percussion can be dismissed, as it is not relevant, and not typically possible. Similarly, students can be introduced to all three major four-mallet grips and pick the one that most immediately fits their hands and understanding, allowing for a focus on mallet manipulation, stroke combinations, rolls, and general four-mallet playing. This provides students with a quicker understanding of playing and pedagogy for four-mallets by having them utilize a technical vehicle that fits them best.

This method of streamlining information into a more unified, conceptual approach can be applied throughout the other percussion instruments. The biggest challenge with this method is creating a simplified system of instruction that does not demean or slight the importance of percussion, and that stresses that these are fundamental concepts for pedagogy. Like any non-major instrument, supplemental study is necessary for a successful career in music education.

While each instrument and topic in this study included some neglected coverage comments and issues to address, the topics of Drum Set, world percussion, marching percussion, and teaching in a heterogenous classroom had the most significant issues across the study. Drum

Set, World Percussion, and Marching Percussion can all be addressed through the previously
mentioned methods. These include: increasing the coverage time by reducing extraneous classes;
focusing on concepts which are most relevant; and reinforcing overlapping techniques from other
instruments.

How instructors choose to utilize this increased class time will be dependent upon
individual views regarding what is most crucial for a future K-12 music educator to learn about. Instructors may choose to distribute these extra days evenly across several instruments or more
heavily invest in a solitary topic. For example, if an instructor teaches in an area where high
school jazz band is a more prevalent and competitive ensemble than marching band, it would be
advisable to increase focus on Drum Set since it will be more necessary to the career demands of
the region.

The most concerning issue brought up by the respondents in this study was the issue of
teaching percussion within a heterogeneous classroom setting. Micah Martin found the following
in his thesis on percussion instruction in beginning band (specifically heterogenous classes):

“Twenty-two of the teachers, or 71%, said they have difficulty scheduling
adequate time for percussionists. 80.6 percent of the respondents do not meet with
percussionists for rehearsals or lessons outside of class time. Also, 64.5%
indicated that their percussionists do not take lessons outside of school.”

Taking this into consideration, it is abundantly clear that the difficulty in teaching
heterogenous Percussion Methods courses successfully occurs not only in relation to the assigned

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59 Micah Martin *Percussion Instruction in Beginning Band for Programs with a Single Teacher* (MM Thesis), 2017. Pg 70
amount of class meeting time, but also in direct correlation with the issue of finding adequate
time to meet with beginning percussionists outside of the regularly schedule class time. Cook
posited that adequate percussion education learning is impossible, regardless of the level of
student, within a heterogeneous classroom setup. The most obvious solution to this in a
percussion methods course would then be to stress the importance of topics that include
percussion ensemble, solo literature, private lessons instructors, and how to appeal to
administrators to gain the funding to hire a specialist to instruct percussion students (even if it is
only a weekly occurrence).

While gaining this type of support is ideal, it is not always possible. The obvious solution
to the issue of effective heterogeneous instruction on percussion instruments lies in the
development of interchangeable technical exercises for percussion and teaching from a unified
technical approach. This method is an effective exercise the researcher has successfully used in
his own methods courses in percussion, where students are given a basic sixteen measure wind
band exercise (in this case, a basic “F Remington” exercise) and required to write four exercises
to accompany the band. These four exercises are all based on snare drum, and each one focuses
on a single aspect of playing: “8 on a hand,” accent-taps, rolls, and sixteenth and eighth note
timing patterns.

In a teaching scenario incorporating this idea, the band director could call out the next
exercise the band will play, and any percussion variation, such as “Band, play ‘F’ Remington;
Percussion, ‘F’ Remington - roll variation number one.” This method of creating supplemental
accompany exercises ensures that percussion students are engaged in rehearsals and are able to

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60 Cook, Teaching Percussion, 11.
work on technical issues unique to the instrument, while also becoming familiar with the role of “timekeeper.” For methods students, this assignment would allow them to understand how to write for basic percussion and gives initial sparks of how they can incorporate diverse percussion playing within a beginning band curriculum.

This same assignment could be applied to the creation and implementation of ‘custom’ Keyboard Percussion, Timpani, Accessory, Drum Set, and World Percussion parts. For those who find the concept of writing customized percussion parts for every band or orchestra exercise that they will encounter off-putting, there are already many sources that can be used to supplement this process with minimal adjustments, such as Frank Chapple’s *The Packet.*

This method can also aid student development by including regular instrument rotation to avoid any students being made, for example, into a Snare Drum exclusive percussionist. Likewise, more competent or older students can be paired with their younger colleagues or those who are struggling; an example of this is pairing one student with a practice pad and one with a snare drum, allowing the weaker student to read, learn, and play their music on the pad while shadowing and mirroring from their more experienced colleague. Including a large number of varying exercises will also help aid in increasing musical literacy among percussionists by preventing them from memorizing simple exercises, due to the music changing frequently.

The result of teaching methods students how to create, or find, and incorporate supplemental percussion music to full ensemble exercises, and using a more unified technical approach will, in my opinion, lay a strong technical foundation and help yield a more well-rounded percussion ensemble that is closer to Cook’s concept of “total percussionists.” While the challenge of heterogeneous music classrooms, especially beginners, is an issue that will not be
dissolving anytime in the near future, we can help the situation by preparing methods students with strategies on incorporating percussion past the rather simple exercises found in most classroom music texts.
PART A: CASE STUDY INTERVIEWS - K-12 MUSIC EDUCATOR

Background:

The respondent in this interview is a secondary public school music teacher who has an earned Bachelor’s of Music Education degree. During the time of this interview, the respondent had 8 years of experience teaching music at their current position, specializing in teaching band.

Questions and Responses:

1. From your first years as a director to now, can you speak to and discuss your relationship with percussion education at the K-12 level? How has your understanding changed? How much have you had to actively supplement your knowledge from your undergraduate course? Were you given materials in you undergraduate that you were able to reference back to?

   At my first job, I was one of two directors. My head director was a percussionist and was, in theory, heading up the percussion education in the district (small AA town). Truthfully, I learned nearly nothing from him in regards to percussion besides that you’re not supposed to use double stroke rolls on timpani. I worked with percussionists from grades 5-12. Since coming to my city, I have learned a lot more about percussion, having worked with 7 really wonderful percussion instructors (5 paraprofessionals and 2 band directors). When I have a question or am confused/concerned about percussion parts, they have always been able to provide quality advice and feedback and teach me something I didn’t know. I am certainly more involved with the percussion section now and have a much better understanding of what’s going on in their section.

   I never reference back to my undergrad materials. I guess you could say I’m “actively” supplementing, but I only ask for that help when percussionists are around. Unfortunately, I had a TA who was not incredibly passionate about teaching future
teachers to adequately teach percussion. He was frequently late or absent, and I didn’t gain much from it. I have learned far more from my percussionist coworkers.

2. What percussive trends in K-12 band/orchestra literature do you see that you weren’t prepared for (instrumentation, uncommon techniques, etc.)?

To be honest, there’s not a whole lot that has caught me off guard. Most everything I’ve seen instrumentation-wise has been fairly straightforward, with one exception being when I programmed a piece that required amplifying a slinky. I will say, I have noticed that more modern band music includes larger percussion sections and it makes it tricky to put together a well-rounded program and try to keep everyone involved when you need 9 percussionists to play a Ticheli or Mackey piece but only 4-5 in a march.

3. Do you see any new trends in K-12 students in general? Musical or non-musical trends?

A non-musical trend I’ve noticed is that Gen-Z kids have SO MUCH knowledge at their fingertips that they sometimes struggle coping with things that just take time (new rudiments, instruments, set-ups, all-region etudes, etc.). If they quickly can’t find the answer or solution they need, they throw in the towel pretty easily.

4. It’s not uncommon to have band/orchestra music that doesn’t involve your whole percussion section. How do you go about incorporating percussion in rehearsals and keeping them engaged? Do you ever have issues with incorporating percussion inside of full ensemble rehearsals, or including them within group activities such as warmups, tuning, or other wind-focused exercises?

This is something we have played with on my campus the past few years with varying levels of success. My first two years, we had all percussion in one class during the fall for marching season, then we switched the top two groups into full band classes during the
spring and our third band kids stayed in the percussion only class to get some more individual help. Then, the past 2 years, we kept percussionists in percussion class all year long to try and serve their specific needs and make good use of our percussion specialist’s time. This was an attempt to keep them from sitting around doing nothing during rehearsals with the winds, but we wound up with the same kind of problems simply because we still had to rotate their rehearsal days. The third band needed more time because of a lack of ability and the top group would need more time because of the difficulty of the music and how intricate the parts were.

This year, we plan on returning to putting the students in the band classes that they audition into. The difference will be in how they’re involved in each rehearsal. The percussionists will receive additional, percussion only assignments. They will have the opportunity to work on these assignments on days when the winds are rehearsing pieces that have only a small handful of percussion parts or the 1 or 2 triangle hits or cymbal rolls they don’t have to practice 40 times a day. Additionally, the senior high that our kids go to does their schedules this way and we want to try and mimic what they do as best we can.

5. Marching Band has become a prominent part of high school band education. How do you feel about working with marching percussion? Were you prepared to run a full battery rehearsal based on your undergrad studies if needed?

Based on my undergrad studies, I don’t think I would have been terribly successful at running a battery rehearsal. We didn’t really discuss marching percussion at all in my methods course. I could tell when stuff was dirty or when something was off visually (stick heights not matching, etc.), but I couldn’t tell you what was causing problems or necessarily the best ways to fix it. That said, for my first job, my percussion knowledge was good enough. In Plano, I would likely drown if I didn’t work with the wonderful
educators we have. Now I feel comfortable enough that I could probably help them improve some without our instructors, but we certainly wouldn’t be able to play the difficulty level they’re playing now.

6. Overall, what is your experience with students who want to play Drum Set, or working with set inside of a jazz band or concert band? Were you given resources to help steer your students’ interests?

   No jazz experience. We had one day of Drum Set in perc methods. No real resources to help steer that interest.

7. Similarly, what is your experience with students who have interests in any form of “world” percussion (congas, bongos, tabla, etc.), or working with “world” percussion inside of a jazz or concert band setting?

   We were provided with some information regarding these instruments, but nothing as far as educational resources. I like diverse programming, and including some cool percussion instruments is a neat way to do that, so it’s something I like to try and do when possible.

8. Overall, what are the aspects of percussion education that you find most challenging to teach?

   I think the ability to adapt on the fly is so important for musicians in general, but especially percussionists. Their instruments are more affected by a wet, live, or boomy listening environment. Sometimes you arrive at a place after being told you’ll have [piece of equipment] only to arrive and not have it, covering other people’s parts, what to do when equipment is forgotten, etc. There are just simply more variables at play for percussionists.
9. In terms of undergraduate methods course content, do you think it is more beneficial for future educators to be able to play percussion instruments at a fundamental level, have a more theoretical/pedagogical knowledge, or does your opinion fall somewhere in between? Could you speak to the importance (on unimportance) of being able to physically play and demonstrate on instruments, and also to having a more textbook understanding of the material? In short, how important is the ability to play/model the instruments?

We absolutely should have basic abilities on standard concert percussion instruments (snare, bass, timpani, cymbals, keyboards, and common auxiliary). I think theoretical/pedagogical is also important. I would say my opinion is somewhere in between. I know that I can count better than all of my percussionists. I may not be able to play their music, but I know if they’re playing it wrong and I can sing it for them. I don’t think my one semester of percussion methods was enough either. At least, not with the instructor I had (I will address this more in another question). All that said, I think it’s important for me as a band director to be able to model on instruments at least a little bit. At some point, my students will be better than I am, and that is when I will no longer model on their instrument and instead will use my flute.

10. What do you believe the overarching goals of a percussion methods class should be? Should we be teaching the class as a “survey of fundamental percussion playing techniques,” should we be gearing it towards a more pedagogical “how to teach percussion,” should the goals be in line with “successful incorporation of percussion in the K-12 system,” or something else?

Ideally, a percussion class would provide all of these. A music ed. professor recently reached out to some University grads asking about what we wish had been better during our time there, and many of us expressed a desire for better teaching in our methods courses. Just recently, University hired Teacher, retired head director from School District, to head up their instrumental methods courses. She is a teacher who was recently
in middle school classrooms working with real beginners. This is what we’ve been asking for. We want teachers, not performance students who aren’t passionate about education. My best methods class was brass methods with a horn player who had taught choir, orchestra, and band at a small school in a State. She had lived the classroom setting she had at University with true beginners, and we learned so much from her. I think a class would place the most importance on fundamental playing techniques and HOW to teach them. Hopefully, your curriculum involves a variety of opportunities for your percussionists to dive in and get more incorporated into the program, but a methods course should also include information on this along the way.

11. If you could suggest changes to be implemented in percussion methods courses to better serve the needs of future educators, what suggestions would you recommend?

Like I said above, I think the most important thing that can be done for methods courses for future educators is that they be run by experienced teachers who are excited and passionate about teaching. We all have met or at least heard of the “teacher” who’s a really good player but a terrible teacher because they just play and say, “Yeah. Do it like me.” I have learned more from the percussion directors here in my city because, when I ask a question about percussion, they’re EXCITED to inform me and teach me something new so that I can teach my students better.
Part B: Case Study Interviews - Percussion Methods Instructor

Background:

The respondent in this interview current collegiate instructor of a percussion methods class for undergraduate music education majors with 6-10 years of experience teaching in higher education.

Questions and Responses:

1. From your first years teaching percussion methods to now, what trends or beginnings of trends have you seen emerge in the current generation of undergraduate students? These can be musical or non-musical trends.

   I haven’t seen too much change. There are always more dedicated and less dedicated students. When I go into public schools, I still see the same issues pop up time and again—one of the most obvious to me is the lack of accessory technique (especially crash cymbals and tambourine).

2. How often do you alter your course curriculum or content? How has it evolved over the years?

   I keep it fairly consistent at this point. When I first started, I had a lot of playing and very little lecture. We had limited instruments, so a lot of people ended up standing around watching others play. I tried to cut back on that, and now I think I have a better balance between playing and lectures. We do a lot on practice pads now, which means everyone can play. I also have the students diagnose their neighbors in class a lot (e.g., “turn to your left and watch that person play the third exercise of Stick Control—do you have any suggestions on how to improve their grip or their stroke?” [And I always give some prompts like “are their thumbs in the correct positions? Are their sticks slicing or going straight up and down?”]
3. What percussive skills do you see as necessary for a future music educator to have?

I explain this very simply in the first class: you are all qualified to teach percussion TODAY because this is really more about music than it is about percussion. (I had a horn professor tell us the same in brass methods when I was a student.) The majority of what music educators will encounter in teaching percussionists are not percussion-specific issues: counting rhythms, reading notes, dynamics, etc. That being said, the only “unique” part of teaching percussion versus flute, trumpet, violin, or kazoo is the technical side of things. At this rate, we are just addressing the basics of good technique —just like a flute player isn’t going to learn Carnival of Venice on trumpet. The reassuring thing about teaching percussion is that nothing is hidden. Imagine trying to diagnose what is wrong with a student’s embouchure—or, worse yet, their vocal cords—everything is completely out of sight. When teaching percussionists, we can see everything that is happening. This is reassuring to students that aren’t as comfortable with the idea of teaching something out of their instrument family.

4. What non-playing, logistical, or teaching-related topics do you cover, or do you believe should be covered in an undergraduate methods class? Why?

The most important thing is making sure all students get a well-rounded percussion education. No student should be relegated to always being the bass drum player, and no one is too cool to play keyboard instruments. Beyond that: instrument maintenance (mostly how to change heads, fix timpani pedals), percussion parts (e.g., dividing percussion scores up into parts), setup (both individual instrument setup—e.g., snare drum—and section setup), rehearsal techniques for marching percussion, and establishing a percussion ensemble (which doesn’t have to cost anything extra and can be done with very little extra time).
5. How important is it for percussion methods students to be able to play the instruments that they’re studying in percussion methods? How much weight do you put into their performance abilities? What is your opinion on balancing playing assignments vs written assignments?

“Not very important to me. Even if they reach a reasonable level of proficiency in a semester, they will lose this without maintenance. I also run into a lot of different natural ability levels—some people can play paradiddles well while others can’t; we lose a lot of class time trying to get those people caught up. We do spend a portion of every class (maybe 10-15 minutes of an 80-minute class) playing practice pads, so they do end up with a fairly good grip and decent technique at the most fundamental level.”

“I give two playing assignments: one on snare drum and one on marimba. They have limited access to practice these (especially marimba), so it is more about the experience of playing the instrument than developing a high level of proficiency.”

“Every semester I have them perform an easy piece on the percussion ensemble concert (e.g., an arrangement of Beat It). This works well because I can balance the more natural talents against those who struggle more (i.e., put the natural talents on keyboard parts and the ones struggling on tambourine). This way, everyone gets to play, all students see a variety of instruments in performance, etc., but we don’t get so bogged down on everyone having to learn his or her part.”

6. Marching music is a prominent portion of a high school director’s academic year. How do you approach marching music from a percussion methods class? Should it be covered? If so, how far do you delve into the marching arts in class?
Yes, it should definitely be covered; this will be a part of any high school job and is now even creeping into middle school jobs. Not covering it would leave a huge gap in students’ knowledge. I spend a week on marching percussion. We cover as much as possible: instrument/stick selection, terminology, harness adjustments, warmups, bass drum splits, and rehearsal techniques. This is a highly specialized area; after hiring a color guard instructor, this is probably the first outside hire for a band director. That being said, knowledge of advanced topics probably isn’t necessary (or even feasible) for most non-percussionists. As an aside: I once visited a small school district where the middle/high school band director retired. They told the elementary music teacher that she could either take over teaching band—including marching band—or be fired, and they would hire someone that could. So should marching percussion be included in the Percussion Methods curriculum? YES!

7. Similarly, Drum Set is frequently one of the most quickly covered topics but has been shown to be a topic band/orchestra directors responded to as feeling the least prepared to teach based on their classes, and also one of the most requested topics for more instruction due to its frequency in K-12 teaching. Since Drum Set is one of the most logistically difficult instruments to teach to a class, do you have any thoughts on how we can better cover Drum Set during percussion methods courses?

Similar to marching percussion, we spend a week on Drum Set. We go over a very brief history of how we arrived at this instrument, talk about instrument selection, setup, review basic styles, chart reading, and do some listening. I emphasize the importance of listening for Drum Set. Much like marching percussion, this area is too specialized for non-percussionists to really get into but if they can purchase a quality instrument, describe how to perform setups and hits, and refer the student to quality method books and listening materials, the non-percussionist teacher can at least get the student aimed in the correct direction. And also, in terms of making marketable students, we want our
students to be able to direct programs that include a jazz band. (Some schools of the future might even include rock bands in their music programs!)

8. Some of my research has shown that educators appreciated the opportunity to teach their peers the topics you’ve discussed within class time. While this can be useful, it also means sacrificing another topic’s coverage, or playing time on instruments. Should students be practicing their teaching within class time, or should class be reserved for the delivery and absorption of information?

   I think it is important to give feedback on the students’ actual ability to teach percussion. I could probably do more of this. My current system is for the students to teach a beginning snare drum lesson: set up the instrument from scratch, go over grip and technique, and teach the first eight exercises in Stick Control. They submit this as a video assignment, and I give written feedback via email.

9. Modern band/orchestra literature often requires atypical instrumentation, multi-percussion setups, numerous implements, and differs greatly from older band music (e.g., Holst Suite). How, and to what extent, do you cover the logistics of setups and the percussion sections role within ensembles.

   I spend a week on concert percussion (in terms of a band or orchestra). We discuss logical setups, and I point out to them that our own wind ensemble uses a setup they can look at. I also take care to go over how to divide parts (both in terms of creating a part rotation so no one is stuck playing the same instrument and physically creating parts from a percussion score—e.g., Symphonic Dances from West Side Story).

   I also include one class session on multi-percussion. It’s such a broad topic that I find it difficult to sum it up for students, but we go through notation (e.g., show some examples) and talk about instrument setups (how to set up things logically, and you don’t always have to follow the prescribed setup if something else works best).
10. Is there a particular reason you choose to omit or reduce coverage of certain topics or instruments? A trend in my syllabi analysis is that snare drum, timpani, and keyboards average a large percentage of undergrad course content, while instruments like Drum Set and “world” percussion often receive a small fraction of time (or no coverage at all). However, in educator comments, “Drum Set” and “Latin” percussion are two of the areas that current educators wished their class had covered more.

I try to evenly present topics, even if things might be more weighted in reality. For example, we spend the same amount of time talking about snare drum versus accessories versus percussion ensemble. In actuality, a band director will probably mostly deal with issues relating to snare drum, and might not even teach percussion ensemble. I think it is far more marketable for a potential music educator to be well rounded than to know in-depth information about one area at the expense of others.

11. What do you believe the overarching goals of a percussion methods class should be? Should we be teaching the class as a “survey of fundamental percussion playing techniques,” should we be gearing it towards a more pedagogical “how to teach percussion,” should the goals be in line with the “successful incorporation of percussion in the K-12 system,” or something else? (e.g., is it our job to educate about percussion or train band directors?)

I can sum this up with the last question on the final exam I give every semester: why are you qualified to teach percussion? If we are preparing students to teach music in public schools and they can come up with a convincing answer to this question, then we have done our job. This will involve knowledge of percussion instruments and their techniques, teaching ability, and how to blend percussion instruments with others.
Part C: Survey Question 14: Respondent Anonymous Comments (53/241)

Names of respondents have been removed, any institution has been changed to “University,” and any named instructors have been changed to “Instructor.”

Comment 1

Marching percussion was not taught at all by the Instructor while I took this course. Same for world percussion and steel drums. We maybe did one or two classes on Drum Set....maybe.

Comment 2

While my college percussion methods class was enjoyable and interesting, I do not believe it prepared me to teach middle school percussionists. Most of the knowledge I’ve gained through the years has been from percussion specialists in our district and conversations with private lessons teachers and friends.

Comment 3

We were only required to take one semester, but there was an optional second semester. 1st semester covered snare, mallets, timpani, and accessories. Second semester covered Drum Set, marching percussion, and world percussion.

Comment 4

We did not learn Drum Set or anything to do with marching percussion in our class. Pitched percussion was a separate class, but only non-pitched percussion was required.

Comment 5

There was no recommended time/semester to take this class in the course of my degree. I ended up taking it my first semester, freshman year. At the same time, I developed tendinitis and was not able to play/participate for about half the semester, which resulted in much of my time spent studying and learning the pedagogy to supplement the practicum I was missing. Still, the time spent on anything other than snare drum and keyboard instruments was so minimum that I did not feel well prepared when entering 'the real world'.

Comment 6

There is so much material we need to know. I am not sure I was fully prepared for ANYTHING when I graduated. It is a continuous learning process. You, of course, feel most comfy on the instrument family your main instrument is in. But, as long as we use each other, know our strengths and weaknesses then we can make it work (hopefully)!
Comment 7

The previous percussion professor is no longer teaching at my past university. I really wish I could have taken this class with the current professor.

Comment 8

The percussion methods teacher was not a percussionist. Luckily, I was a percussion major.

Comment 9

Should be 2 semesters. More playing less written

Comment 10

The Instructor at my university really did a thorough job of teaching percussion. I was a trumpet player but felt that by the end of his class I could successfully teach and model the correct percussion techniques and concepts.

Comment 11

Percussion was my minor so I was fortunate to study percussion extensively before teaching. Great survey. I wish you the best.

Comment 12

Percussion timbres/techniques are such an important part of the modern wind band conductor's training, and I feel that one semester (particularly if it is a weak course) is woefully insufficient. If it weren't for excellent colleagues along the way I would be nowhere.

Comment 13

Percussion methods was not required...I supplemented my knowledge of all instruments independently

Comment 14

Orff percussion instruction -- level 1 and 2 should be required of music teachers. World Music drumming (Schmid) level 1 and 2 should be required of music teachers. Jazz, rock, R&B, and country styles drumming basics on Drum Set should be taught.

Comment 15

My percussion pedagogy course was geared towards a typical public school setting. As most schools don't have steel drums, for example, they weren't covered at all. Many schools do have
Latin/World percussion, to some extent, I felt more attention should’ve been placed in this area. Also, more attention to drum tuning techniques and concepts would have been helpful as well.

Comment 16

My percussion methods instructor was a low brass player. We did have an adjunct teach percussion lessons. But majors are never advised nor encouraged to take lessons. The expectation was that we would take piano or voice as our secondary lessons.

Comment 17

My percussion methods class in graduate school allowed me to ask “real world” questions after I had taught a few years.

Comment 18

I see where you are going with your research but feel that the problems band directors have (on the whole) with percussion are not so much performance skills on the instrument but rather knowledge of what to buy, where to find knowledge of the performance skills, and how to maintain equipment. This would be a much better education than making every music major master the rudiments and playing techniques of each instrument in my opinion.

Comment 19

It's important for me to add that my area of training is band, but I'm currently teaching k-5 general music.

Comment 20

It was very necessary for me to seek out private percussion lessons after I began teaching. After having lessons with a qualified instructor one on one I am much better prepared to help my percussionists.

Comment 21

It was a long time ago. I believe the resources available now would make it easier to get more information to a student than it was 30 years ago.

Comment 22

In the 90's when I began teaching, supplementing knowledge and skills was not as easy as today, where I can lookup a YouTube video and share with my students and learn together, specifically unique world percussion and Drum Set styles.
Comment 23

I'd love to get the results of this! I am 13 years into teaching and still feel unqualified to be teaching percussion.

Comment 24

My undergrad percussion methods was taught by someone who did not know much about percussion themselves. They only taught methods for one semester (the one that I took). It was quite unfortunate and I was unprepared for percussion as a band director. I learned more from my student teaching and my own supplemental learning.

Comment 25

My percussion methods teacher at university was a joke. He was more interested in teaching us about the most rare percussion accessory instruments instead of teaching us how to play and teach basic rudiments like a flam. He also had us compose our own snare drum playing tests and then perform them. I wish we had played out of real books that we might use in our classroom and worked on real techniques instead of how well we composed something. As a beginning band teacher, I feel like my percussion education is lacking.

Comment 26

My percussion methods class was taught by a GA who didn't want to be there. That situation has been rectified in recent years for the betterment of the program.

Comment 27

My percussion instructor was a DMA student named Instructor at University. He is now the orchestral director there, but we were extremely prepared by him.

Comment 28

I think there's not a lot of time to do much more that was done; however, I think there should be more time devoted to playing and explaining how to teach certain instruments and techniques, including specific exercises kids can use to get better.

Comment 29

I think that percussion methods are great classes, as teaching opportunities for percussionists and informational for non percussionists, but I wish they were a little more in-depth to prepare not only wind players a little more, but also to make sure that percussionists understand the fundamentals to help them succeed in any capacity in the real world.
Comment 30

I supplemented my education with percussion ensembles, additional ensembles on secondary instruments, private instruction, and seeking out information related to percussion pedagogy that I didn't know. I feel that my percussion method course, which was taught by a graduate teaching assistant, was minimally beneficial to my teacher development.

Comment 31

I should divulge that I am a percussionist, and my job is to work with high school and middle school percussionists every day, so I would understand if my responses aren't as valuable as a non-percussionist.

Comment 32

I teach outside of the US. For a one-semester course, it seemed the best possible solution in such a limited time. I am unprepared to run a full percussion program, but I can start beginners, and get my percussionists through most MS and HS band music.

Comment 33

I still tell my students that we weren't ever given the opportunity to learn drumset nor even shown music for it. Everything I learned, I've had to pick up on my own. Snare technique was crummy too. I taught myself snare with beginning band one year and learned far better than college tech.

Comment 34

I scored the preparation part so low because of what is expected of high school percussion sections nowadays. They are playing at an extremely high level. I am confident in my counting and reading abilities and I know what kind of sound I want to hear. That said, I am not always confident I can provide the BEST or most accurate information to my students in the moment that they need it. I know proper technique for most auxiliary instruments and I know that there are many things I can still teach my percussionists, but if I want them to be successful as a percussionist in the North Texas band scene, I know that I am not equipped with the knowledge or abilities. I am equipped with professional relationships and colleagues who can help me with this. Additionally, I find that I am one of the only people who left my university feeling this way. The TA who taught our percussion class was flakey and not enthused about the course. He was also not very encouraging. We practiced on old remo drum pads for 5 weeks and when our buzz rolls weren't flawless the first time we touched a drum, we were scored in the 70s. He did teach us a lot and clearly knew his stuff, but I didn't walk out feeling like I could confidently teach percussion. Many other friends of mine did not have that experience in percussion methods, but they had a different TA who was excited about teaching the course. Feel free to reach out if you need anything else from me!
Comment 35

I really wish percussion methods would have been a two-semester course instead of one. Percussion is much more vast and evolving than all the winds, so I feel like spending more time on instruments and topics would have been more beneficial. (Especially since my first job was at a very small school where I taught beginning percussion, and my primary instrument is trumpet.) I was very fortunate to have taken a semester of Percussion Ensemble II, so I learned quite a bit about multi-percussion set-ups and other techniques I would have never learned in a methods course. I feel like others that are seeking to have a career in the band world, but play a wind instrument, would definitely benefit from at least 2 semesters of Percussion Methods courses.

Comment 36

I had an absolutely fantastic undergraduate percussion teacher, and was placed with a percussionist during student teaching, so I may be a bit of an outlier. Mostly, I wish I had taken the class later in my coursework instead of freshman year. I forgot so much before I had to put it into practice.

Comment 37

I have full faith in the instructors at University. I think they did the best they could in the small amount of time we were given. However, I think we should have been required to play one of these instruments in a practice ensemble or take lessons on the instrument (same goes for wind instruments that were not my primary instrument). I would have gladly given up symphonic band/wind ensemble time on my primary instrument in order to do this.

Comment 38

I felt that my percussion methods class was the best-taught class from other instruments, but there is also more to learn with percussion. It’s so completely different than wind instruments. I wish we had more time. We took one day to watch the TA fly through accessory instruments, which I wasn’t her fault. We learned as much as we possibly could have in the class time we had.

Comment 39

I feel that the percussion pedagogy class at University was very comprehensive. I myself took a lot of extra world music performing ensemble courses which also helped. I myself am a trumpet player, and felt confident enough in my percussion teaching skills to become a drum line instructor. I have been teaching a high school drum line for the past four years very successfully.

Comment 40

I feel biased about answering what I felt prepared to teach after taking a methods class because I am a percussionist. I have marked the items that I have struggled with (or are not able to teach) in my current position. Percussion is a huge family of instruments to cover in just one or two
semesters depending on your primary instrument. It definitely was not enough time for non-percussion majors to learn how to adequately teach proper technique and playing habits. We did not even cover steel drums, marching percussion, or world percussion in the section of percussion methods I completed.

Comment 41

I think percussion is too diverse to cram into just one semester. When I started teaching after college though I saw that even the overachievers that learned a lot in the course still had to review/re-learn when the day came for them to teach. I think the biggest and best resource that any music educator can have is a network of friends (perc, brass, ww, etc) that they can reach out to for help.

Comment 42

I am a perc. major, but had the opportunity to teach Perc. Methods at the College level to freshmen. I've answered the questions based on that experience.

Comment 43

I also played percussion as a junior high school student, so I came into the class with a certain amount of knowledge...

Comment 44

I know the Music Education major is already a massive degree, but Percussion (esp Auxiliary and World instruments (like pan) really require time and training.

Comment 45

I feel like my methods class didn't have enough time to cover each major instrument with enough detail or playing opportunities. I also did not retain a lot of what I did learn (I also didn't necessarily practice it after leaving the class, either).

Comment 46

I believe Drum Set can have so many styles it should require more time overall to teach and learn. I'm sure most percussion professors that teach non-majors might believe that their students will not encounter Drum Set as much, therefore, they spend less energy and time on it.

Comment 47

Hi Caleb, Thank you for doing this survey. I am glad that Percussion Methods is on your mind as something to improve for the future. This is the one thing that many of my band director colleagues have a problem with since the majority of them are not percussionists. Since I am a
percussionist, I have had the chance to work with many instructors since I began in 5th grade. I took private lessons throughout my time playing percussion instruments. I took private lessons through college before I became a band director. I gained most of my knowledge from these instructors more than I did my own college-level instructor. His background was Jazz, so we mainly did drumset and Jazz Vibes in class. I was used as a demonstrator when it came to Mallets, Snare Drum, and Accessory Percussion since I was a Percussion Major. Even though I was a percussion major, I was not given the opportunity to test out of the Percussion Methods class. I did need help in Drum Set and the world instruments, so that part of the class was helpful. I did learn more about how to repair some of the instruments, but the vast majority of the class was reviewing knowledge I already acquired from my previous years working with my instructors. I currently teach a Percussion Methods class at my middle school and I like to teach everything throughout the year - I begin with names/labeling of every instrument and appropriate technique with the appropriate mallet/stick. Then I move towards breaking it up by Drums/ Mallets/Accessory/Timpani so every kid has the chance to play every instrument. I also make it a point to discuss repair and how instruments are made throughout the year. In addition, I make use of the various resources available to us via PAS, VicFirth, etc. Thank you so much for doing this research for the benefit of our future students.

Comment 48

Hi Caleb, As I'm sure you're well aware, there are many universities where the percussion preparation is minimal at best. I have taught in a few states, and it's rare to come across a colleague who is comfortable with or knowledgeable about percussion pedagogy. Best Wishes!

Comment 49

He did the course differently when I took it, every week we had to read a chapter of the Cook book and answer questions about it. Those were our only written assignments which is why I don't have very good notes from that class like I do in most of my other tech classes. I wish we would have used a method book or more concrete materials that we may have used in the future as teachers. The Essential Elements book pacing is terrible for percussion. An appendix almost needs to be written for percussion.

Comment 50

Because percussion is my main instrument I feel like I can teach each of these instruments quite well. Filling out this survey I tried to think back to the class from the perspective of a non percussionist and am quite certain I would have been very lost with teaching percussion when I got into the high school band room.

Comment 51
At the institution where I did my undergraduate work, the teacher of the percussion methods class changed shortly after I took it. According to what I heard from my colleagues, there was much more composition and real-world application incorporated into the class.

**Comment 52**

A lot of my course was based around lecture and then telling us to go practice. I think it would have been much more beneficial to create percussion ensembles and give us playing experience while teaching us proper technique on each instrument.

**Comment 53**

As a trombone player, I feel like my knowledge of wind instruments vastly outweighs my percussion know-how. I find myself asking my coworker (who is a percussionist, thank goodness) about techniques and maintenance issues I feel I should already have learned.
Works Cited


Harris, Scott. “National Conference for Percussion Pedagogy.” *Percussive Notes* vol. 38, no. 6 (December 2000).


