

THE Bucket Book

A JUNKYARD PERCUSSION MANUAL

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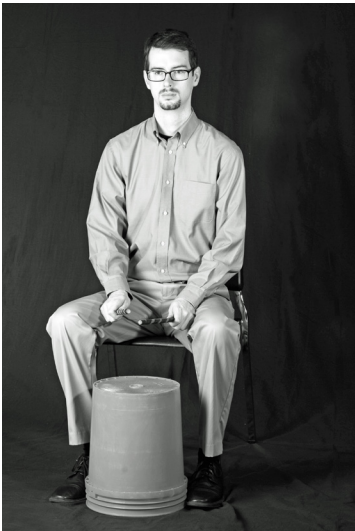
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Classroom Management

Students love to use sticks and mallets, but they often prove to be a distraction. Before handing out potential flying projectiles to students, demonstrate and rehearse the following three positions: resting, ready, and relaxed.



Resting Position



Ready Position



Relaxed Position

	When to Use It	What It Looks Like
Resting Position	Someone (you or the teacher) is speaking.	Sticks point straight up with the thumb facing the ceiling; hands rest on the knees.
Ready Position	Students are about to play.	Hands are out in front of the body with sticks pointing a few inches away from the first tone to be played.
Relaxed Position	Speaking or discussion will last more than one minute.	Students are allowed to slouch and stretch their legs as long as the sticks are silent, still, and in their laps. Students can also place the sticks on top of their buckets, on the ground beneath their chairs, or sandwiched between their leg and the chair.

Taking the time to teach these positions at the very beginning will save both time and energy throughout the unit. The students will know what to do with their sticks when not playing. You might not need to teach and use all three—sometimes just ready and relaxed position will do the trick. For extremely enthusiastic drummers, have students place the sticks on top of their buckets and put their empty hands on their laps.

Physical fatigue is another consideration for classroom management. Drumming uses muscle groups that may not be

developed in your students. As they drum and their muscles tire, their musical accuracy as well as focus might diminish. Remember to schedule quick breaks during activities so arm muscles can relax. You might even throw in some arm stretches to loosen up before drumming.

Note that playing with just the hands directly on the bucket can become uncomfortable after about two or three minutes. Placing a folded hand towel on top of the bucket will help protect sensitive hands *and* reduce the overall volume when playing with sticks.

A circle or semicircle works well for classroom setup. Each student has his or her own chair (or spot of floor) and might share a bucket with a partner. The circle is maximally effective because every student can see every other student. Not only is this a positive for ensemble communication, but it also allows students to observe the technique of other students.



Shakers

Shakers are found in music all over the world and are made out of all types of materials. Musically, they are very useful and can create consistent background rhythms, or “carpet” for a groove, as well as articulate, precise rhythms. The shaker produces sound more easily than many other instruments, but it can be one of the most difficult to play with rhythmic accuracy.

Availability and Construction

Anything that can hold liquid can be made into a shaker. Two components contribute to the timbre of the shaker: the canister (the thing you fill up) and the fill (the stuff you put in the canister). The shape, size, and material of both these items affect the sound of the instrument.

Canisters: Plastic bottles, soup or soda cans, and cardboard tubes

Fill: Uncooked beans: navy, split peas, and pinto; soup mix; rice, beads, and pebbles

The most useful canister has a lid or cap, which lets you easily adjust the sound of a shaker by adding or subtracting fill from inside.

Rice and soup mix are two common types of fill. Rice is inexpensive and available in giant bags. It makes a clean, *legato* sound. Soup mix contains a variety of beans in different shapes and sizes and creates a chunky, articulated sound.

Part of the fun is having students bring in their own canisters and making the instruments in class. This will create a wide variety of shaker sounds. You need the following materials: canisters, fill, duct tape, and a few funnels with a large diameter spout.

1. Students bring in their own canisters, and hold it on their laps or desks.
2. Pass the funnels out to different parts of the room.
3. Walk around the room, and pour some fill into the funnels. A little trial and error will help you decide how much fill each size and shape canister needs to create a good sound.
4. When a student has some fill, he or she should pass the funnel to the next person.
5. Whatever the canister shape, make sure that it is leakproof by duct taping any possible opening.
6. Shake!



Shakers