

by Mark Perrett + John Lluvera



DRUMLINE *PHILOSOPHY*

CHAMPIONSHIP CONCEPTS FOR MODERN CORPS STYLE DRUMLINE



AUTHOR'S NOTE

The world of the marching arts has a beautiful variety of approaches. (Corps Style, Show Band, Pipe Band, Etc.) We love and respect all forms of the activity and understand different genres do things differently. This book focuses specifically on the Corps Style approach. These methods are a mixture of our years performing and teaching in the DCI, WGI, and BOA circuits.

We have always tried to keep everything as generalized as possible when writing our books, so this was an opportunity for us to zoom in and get detailed on a specific subject. Whether this becomes your exact pedagogy, or simply acts as a reference, you will get the most out of this book if you approach it with an open mind.

With anything in life, it is great to always be a student. Take from this what you like and build your own idea of what the marching arts means to you. We are simply offering some helpful tips that have proven to be successful during our time as performers and educators in the Corps Style activity.



INTRODUCTION

by Mark Perrett

I remember being a freshmen in high school and joining drumline for the first time. I went to a school with a very small marching band where the only teacher was the band director. We didn't have a support staff, the leadership was not well defined, and there was a lack of tradition in the drumline. The director was not a percussionist either, so the drumline was very neglected. We basically taught ourselves everything. Most of the drummers on the line couldn't read music, so we made up all of our show music and played something different at every show. Don't get me wrong, we had a great time, but at this point in my life being in drumline didn't provide me with values that would make me a leader later in life. I didn't learn about mindset and the inner game, supreme mental focus, efficient techniques, how to communicate effectively, and there was nothing pushing me to be above average. I was never pushed to reach any level of mastery in anything I was doing. But the next season, my sophomore year, I was introduced to Drum Corps and my whole life changed.

My aunt gave my mom a VHS tape with the 2000 Drum Corps International Finals Broadcast on PBS. She recorded it because it was a "band thing" and thought I would like it. Little did she know my brain would explode. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. These were the best marching bands I had ever seen and I immediately knew I wanted to be a part of something like this. So the next season I went to a local Drum Corps tryout.

I watched that VHS tape until it broke the VCR. I had been drumming along to every audio file I could find and I was so excited to make the line and finally be part of a great drumline.

But life had other plans...

GETTING HUMBLED AT AUDITIONS

I was the best player at my school, and when we went to our district competitions I would size up other drumlines to see if there was anyone better than me. (And, of course, in my mind, there were not.) So when I went to my first drum corps audition I thought I was just going to make the line.

I will never forget sitting outside the auditorium with my name badge, registered and waiting for the audition camp to start. Another guy from the camp saw I had a drum pad and sticks and came over to drum. He said, "Dude! You're trying out for drumline? Me too! Let's play something!" I was so hyped! I had never played with another drummer from another band before so this was pretty cool. He asked what I wanted to play and I called up the 1999 Blue Devils Shopping Spree. He knew it so I tapped it off and we started playing together. We got to the end and he laughed and asked why I only played the "check pattern". I didn't know what he was talking about. **This was the moment my whole world came crashing down.**

He began to explain to me that the spree had flam accents, flam drags,

inverted flam taps, cheeses, flam fives, among other various hybrid rudiments. I genuinely had no idea. I had only been able to listen to the audio and just played what I heard. So basically, I only played accents and diddles. He was a nice guy, so he quickly changed the subject and asked if I wanted to play something out of the packet. I replied, "THE PACKET? What is the packet?"

He took a deep breath and said, "The audition packet? That is the packet with all of the information about this audition, the technique they use here, and the exercises we will be playing this weekend. You haven't been practicing out of the packet man?"

I was MORTIFIED. How could I have missed this? There is a document that gives you all the stuff you need to know for the audition? That sounded awesome, but I was unaware of this. Then it happened... *"ALRIGHT EVERYONE, BRING IT IN!"*

The audition had officially started and I walked, trembling, over to the corps director with the mass of people auditioning. "IF YOU ARE AUDITIONING FOR SNARE, GO IN THIS

CORNER.” I was there to try out for snare, but I was still in shock so I froze in place. “EVERYONE AUDITIONING FOR BASS, GO INTO THIS CORNER.”

There we go! Bass drum is EASY! (Or so I foolishly thought at the time) I will just try out for bass and make the line that way! But to my surprise, it was INSANELY harder than I thought. I was in that bass room STRUGGLING, trying to sight read bass music, and sitting on the ground with my pad doing my best to avoid eye contact with the staff. Somehow I made it through the entire weekend without being put on a drum and right before the line was set I had gotten comfortable enough with the accent tap exercise to ask if I could be put on a drum. They said, “Sure man”, and sent me to Bass 3. BUT I ONLY KNEW THE BASS 1 PART!!

I stopped and said, “Can I actually play Bass 1, that is the part I practiced.” The entire staff looked around, and one guy said, “yeah, let’s get you up there.” (Looking back it is crazy how polite they were considering how much of a NEWBIE I was.) I jumped up on Bass 1, the met started, and I FROZE. I DIDN’T PLAY ONE NOTE. I just marked time. It was one of the most embarrassing moments of my life. I sat back down and was just devastated. I

came into the weekend thinking I was one of the best players, and now I felt like the worst drummer in the world.

The camp ended, and on the drive home I sat in silence. I couldn’t believe it. I was SHOOK. The roller coaster of emotions was pretty insane and at one point I was so FURIOUS that my band director didn’t prepare me for any of this. I know now that blaming others is never the solution to my problems, but I just couldn’t believe that I didn’t know anything. I felt lost.

This could have been the end of my drumming career, but after a while and a really great pep talk from my mom (Love You Mom!) I realized that I just had to work harder and do more research on the subject. So I did.

I spent the next year researching everything I could. At the time YouTube didn’t exist, so all I had was the snarescience.com forum, the Vic Firth website, and contacting drum corps vets on AOL Instant Messenger. (Ahh the early 2000’s) I went to another drum corps (this was an open class corps at the time) and I made it! I made the snare line and it was a HUGE accomplishment for me. That summer was the beginning of learning about mastery of my craft and it was the start of an influential change in my outlook on life.

DEVELOPING

Over the next few years I went through a variety of instructors, learning from some of the best marching arts educators in the world. I became a sponge for knowledge and lived a lifestyle sharpening my craft. I practiced endlessly, and my chops really started to develop to a world class level, but more importantly, I learned a lot about my mind and body. I became an athlete, I learned how to

be a great public speaker, I spent many seasons in leadership positions, and developed incredible ways to process and practice information. My level of awareness was elevated and I began learning detailed techniques for other percussion instruments. The list goes on, but the values I learned from being a marching member in drumline was so vast that I was becoming a powerhouse individual in everything I was doing.

LATER IN LIFE

The moment finally came where I had to make a choice for what I was going to do for the “rest of my life”. And sadly (Or maybe LUCKILY) I chose to quit music and go into the field of architecture for my college degree. It was the most practical decision at the time, and I basically cut band out of my life like flipping off a light switch. This was hard for me, but I knew I couldn’t “do band forever”, so I put my head down and went all in with architecture and design.

This is where something really special started happening. I was going through life with this wide range of skill sets and I started applying what I learned in drumline to my academic studies. I was getting straight A’s in all my classes, carried a 4.0 GPA, received academic scholarships, and became the leader in many group projects. I was able to employ great time management skills, I knew the importance of the tools I was using, and my understanding of music

actually gave me an edge in all of my design work.

I graduated with a Master's Degree in Architecture, was awarded the Alpha Rho Chi medal and selected to be part of the National Professional Fraternity For Architecture. My thesis was called "THE BUILT SOUNDTRACK"

and I experimented with the parallels between music and architecture for an entire year. The discoveries I made have been shared around the world and some of my proposals even became real products that are now fabricated and sold world-wide to city centers and nationally ranked sports arenas.

*What does this have to do with drumline?
Aren't we a little off topic here?*

THE TRANSFER VALUE OF DRUMLINE CULTURE

The accomplishments in my life have all stemmed from the cultural values and techniques I learned while in drumline. What I have come to realize is that drumline is similar to business, martial arts, dance, design, and any other craft that has a system for growth. All of these subjects are governed by specific rules that make each activity unique, but they all have things that truly matter. Each field has blueprints written by the best in the activity, and if you look closely, you can see undeniable similarities on how to think and approach being GREAT.

I think drumline was so special for me because everything mattered. In drumline how you played your instrument REALLY mattered, how you set your drums down REALLY mattered, and it was doing these things with a strong sense of purpose and attention to detail that eventually drove me to be the best version of myself at all times.

Now I find myself using what I learned in drumline with everything I do. The values are directly transferable. I have even noticed my influence on non-drummer friends and it is really cool to see the culture spread like that.

GETTING BACK IN THE GAME

While I was in college, the itch to have music back in my life, specifically music education, really started to hit me hard. So I started helping out local drumlines with a friend of mine who I marched with in Drum Corps, John Lluvera. It wasn't even like riding a bike, it was like waking up and walking around after a nap. I was back in the game and deployed my teaching style to these scholastic drumlines like I have never left the activity. John and I had great instructor chemistry and we started to develop a very specific way of teaching. We marched together, but John also

marched with other world class ensembles and we both developed this hybrid way to teach drumline. One of which we decided to write down and turn into a book. Thus, our first book together called "*The Grid Book Series: Volume 1 Book 1 Accents Down*" was born.

John and I were now teaching together at multiple high schools in the area, writing books, developing packets, and sharpening our craft as educators. Our books were a hit in the community and our methods of teaching began to spread world-wide.

DEVELOPING "THE" PACKET

Remember the audition packet from before? Basically we would write a similar packet for our drumlines each season and include the specific guidelines, techniques, and policies for the students to follow. With every new season, we would update our drumline packet and archived the old

packet to save for making an "ULTIMATE TECHNIQUE BOOK" later down the road. (*Which is exactly how we wrote this series! We took our favorite parts of each packet over the years and organized them to create a massive body of work called "The Drumline Series".*)

After graduating from my Master's program, The Grid Book Series had taken off and I had to make a decision: follow my degree and do architecture, or follow my passion and do Grid Book. I chose to follow my passion with The Grid Book Series and never looked back.

At this time, a buddy of mine asked if I wanted to help out at another local school that never had a full battery on the field. I had never taught a drumline before that didn't have a previous culture, so I knew the packet for this school had to be EXTENSIVE. John and I meticulously wrote out a document that would act as a guide for teaching my new students the art of drumline.

The very first year we were with this ensemble we didn't have enough members to field a full battery, so we only marched a snare line on the field

for that year. That way we could focus on training single drum responsibilities and exceptional marching techniques. We expanded the next year and finally fielded a full battery. It was really awesome to see the growth of these individuals, and it was apparent to us that the information we were providing aided in the development of these students.

That year was a struggle, but the culture we built, and the years of developing a formula for teaching drumline provided a strong foundation for this growing percussion program. That year, the marching band went on to become the 2014 BOA Grand National Champions.

It was fun to see the students reach that level of success, but "winning" or any major accolades are simply by-products of hard work and a consistent, effective process.

WHY WE DECIDED TO WRITE THIS BOOK

Since 2014, we have had the opportunity to work with many other ensembles and deploy our teaching methods to the masses through our ever expanding

Grid Book Community. It is so amazing to see how drumline has shaped who I am as a person over the years and it is astounding how much I have been

able to apply what I learned in drumline to everything else I have done in life. *The Drumline Series* is a collection of books that bring these experiences together in a deliberate and organized manner. We have written many books, all focused on exercises, but we thought it was time to write about the other side of drumline. I see this book as a guide for navigating the structure of being a great drumline performer, but also as a documentation of our personal and professional opinions about drumline education.

John and I understand that the world changes, the activity evolves, and we learn to adapt. But the *secret sauce* remains the same:

Make It Matter.

Whatever you do, it has to matter. Develop your own style and opinions about teaching and performing as a percussionist. So use this book as inspiration for your personal pedagogy, but understand that this not an absolute manual. Because there are so many different styles of percussion performance and all of them are valid in their own way. We simply hope to provide some perspective from our

experiences. Maybe this can act as a book of cheat codes for you to skip some failures and embarrassing situations like my first Drum Corps audition experience.

Remember that we are crafting techniques for mastery in percussion, but we are also developing habits for mastery in life. So hustle hard, stay humble, and most of all, respect the process.

- Mark Perrett

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Perrett', with a horizontal line crossing through the middle of the letters.





MINDSET



THE MENTAL GAME

Being a drumline performer requires a lot of mental stamina. During your performance there will be a multitude of simultaneous responsibilities, but between school, work, relationships, family, side projects, etc, your brain could be filled with things that will potentially interfere with your performance. You must be able to clear your mind of all thoughts and only address what you're working on at the time.

MINIMIZE INTERFERENCE

When you are at rehearsal, you can't do anything about outside interferences. So there is no reason to put energy towards things you can't control. Instead, put 100% of your focus and energy into what you're doing in the moment. This is easier said than done, but when you can control what you think about and itemize your focus on performance demands, everything you do will get better.

This concept is very well thought out and explained in a book called "The Inner Game Of Music" by Barry Green and Timothy Gallwey. The concepts in that book are life changing and many of the ways we teach have

been influenced by years of actively using "The Inner Game". You should check that book out if you have not already!

SELF AWARENESS

Self awareness is the #1 most important attribute you can have in life. You have to be aware of your actions, your strengths, and your weaknesses at any moment. Being successful in drumline is a game of constant self evaluation and if you can't pinpoint your inconsistencies, it will be hard to make the right adjustments.

With that being said, your will to succeed will ultimately make you the player you want to be someday.

You have to set goals, find a method of progress that works for you, and TRUST the process.

So be self aware and evaluate your performance every day. Bring a consistent will to succeed to every

rehearsal and trust in the process to help you move forward. Know that YOU are the only one truly responsible for your own progress. Living your life with these attributes will help you will find the success you're looking for.

MINDSET IS EVERYTHING

Being judged for what you do is a fundamental part of the activity, and how you take criticism, or praise, will determine a lot about your success as a player.

You might have been told before that you have "potential", but be careful not to let this get to your head. It has been said that potential is one of the most dangerous words in the English language. Someone saying you have "potential" means you COULD be good someday, but you're not there yet. Sometimes, especially as younger players, this can make us think we are better than we are. Having confidence in what you do is great, but potential alone won't actually get you anywhere.

If you don't have the ambition to act on your potential, you won't find progress. It takes a lot of work to turn

potential into success, and ACTION is the only true way to get results. Then what you do with those results will determine your success.

TALENT VS SKILL

All of us are here because there is something inside us that said "I want to be in drumline." There are many different reasons why, but when you step back and look at it, we all want to be part of something great. But sometimes we get down on ourselves because we think we are not talented or as good as the people around us.

STOP THINKING THIS WAY.

There are always going to be people out there who are more talented than

you, but you have the opportunity to succeed through the development of skill.

We have had students who join drumline and become better than the veteran members in a few weeks. This is rare (and awesome), but not everyone is built this way. Other people have to work as hard as they possibly can to keep up, but at the end of the day the result is the same.

“But what is the secret? I’m not very talented yet, but I’m ready to do the work. Let’s say I wanted to be great at triplet rolls. Should I just play triplet rolls for hours until it is good? I want a great final product at the end of my hard work.”

The secret is actually not in the final product, it is in the process. If you want to get better at triplet rolls, you can’t just work on triplet rolls and expect them to be great. You must become skilled with the fundamental method of building double strokes first before you can work towards the final product of playing the roll. There are different demands mixed together that make up a triplet roll. You have to be able to break everything you play down to its most basic form and become proficient in each step before moving on to the other. *CRAWL. WALK. JOG. RUN.*

We don’t always start out as great as our expectations want us to be, so develop your skills and you will succeed over time.

EVERYTHING GETS A RETURN

If there is anything you get from this book, know that

WHAT YOU PUT IN, IS WHAT YOU WILL GET OUT OF THIS.

You must be willing to DO THE WORK and go through the pain (both physically

and mentally) to get the results you want. Remember, everything you do gets a return. **DO NOT EXPECT BIG RESULTS IF YOU ONLY PUT IN MINIMAL EFFORT!** So put in a lot of effort, and you will get a lot of results from it. Then take those results, evaluate them, and adjust moving forward.

THE TRUTH BEHIND “HOW TO BE CONFIDENT”

There is a big difference between being CONFIDENT and being ARROGANT. Confidence is internal, optimistic, and positive. When you have confidence you are not seeking anyone’s approval, you are simply performing your best and showcasing your talents through action. Arrogance is external, egotistical, and negative. When you are arrogant you will often exaggerate your sense of self worth for the sole purpose of impressing or suppressing others.

But how do you stay confident without seeming arrogant?

There is a fine line between the two, but there are ways to be confident in yourself without having an inflated ego. The key is to understand when you’re playing the role of your character, and when you are being yourself.

When you are performing on the field, you are a character in a show. That might require you to be aggressive and charged with energy that can come off as having a large ego. This is all for the show and the audience wants you to bring this energy to the stage. Once

you get off stage, that is where the true test of character comes into play. When the uniform comes off and you are not in performance mode, you must be kind, caring, and HUMBLE.

This will act as a contradiction, because on the field you are a beast, but being able to flip the switch and live a life of humility will go a long way. You can have pride in what you do off the field, but understand there is always more to learn. This fact can keep you grounded regardless of the success you encounter.

TAKE PRIDE IN EVERYTHING YOU DO

As a member of drumline, it is important that we take pride in every aspect of what we do. Every drumline is different, so it is important to understand what the expectation is for your group. Sit down with your line and have a discussion about what you think “PRIDE” means for the group. What are you doing that shows a sense of pride? Then write all of those things down in a “PRIDE CHECKLIST” so you can reference them throughout the season.

Here is an example of a pride checklist that outlines things you can do to show pride inside and outside of rehearsal. These are examples, but you should make your own list using your personal drumline culture.

PRIDE CHECKLIST
Show up early and have a warm up routine with your section.
If there is downtime during rehearsal, run a few segments without being told to do so.
Always have everything you need for rehearsal.
Clean your drum after every rehearsal.
Take special care of all percussion equipment.
Play every rep like it was your last performance.
Always leave a rehearsal space CLEANER than when you found it.
Anywhere you set your stuff down, line it up in a row. (Neat and Impressive)
Pick your drums up together at the start of every rehearsal.
Move together, in step, when you travel as a line.
Always look the same. (Down to the smallest detail)
Have each other's back at all times.
If you are called out for something in rehearsal, show up next rehearsal with it fixed.
Help other people for no reason. Do things selflessly for the good of the group.
Take pride in your playing.
Take pride in your shot quality.
Have a secret word or phrase that means something to all members in the line.

TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

EMPOWER YOUR PEOPLE

How you interact with people on your line is going to affect the mood of rehearsal. Your attitude and energy every time your team gets together can be the vessel that motivates the people around you.

*What does this mean?
How do I do this?*

From the moment you get to rehearsal to the moment you leave, you have to be positive and excited to be there. This means having great body language, be willing to help others when they are having a bad day, and find ways to encourage your teammates. Listen intently to others and find ways to reinforce good habits. If you see someone finally accomplish a move in the drill or part in the show they normally have trouble with, give them props for it. And if you see someone struggling and getting frustrated, even a simple, "You got this!" can go a long way. Be forgiving of mistakes and never put yourself ahead of the group. Break

free from the traditional "Leader vs Follower" relationship and understand that you are an equal part to a whole. With this mentality, not only will you and your team have a bigger sense of gratitude towards each other, you can overcome adversity more quickly and settle disagreements without a skewed perspective of power.

BELIEVE IN YOUR BRAND

We will put this in all caps so the people in the back can hear:

**YOU MUST BELIEVE
IN YOUR BRAND!**

Your brand is everything you do as an organization. It is not just your performance, but all of the work you do behind the scenes as well. For other people to believe in your brand, you have to believe in yourself and the others around you. If you start doubting and blaming yourself or others for the shortcomings in your performance the atmosphere can easily get negative

and this breaks down the integrity of your brand. Everyone must be on the same page to move forward. The best groups in the activity are usually the ones with the best momentum and strongest brand from top to bottom.

BE PROACTIVE

Successful people are proactive and think ahead. Do your best to find out what is happening for rehearsal and do your best to prepare for that. For example, if you know that the drumline is starting rehearsal inside, show up early and help set the drums up so you can start playing right away when rehearsal begins. If you see that you will be learning new music, spend some extra time setting up music stands for everyone. Take ownership and do things for other people without looking for something in return. This behavior is contagious and if everyone is doing this, the momentum of rehearsal will speed up.

This also means taking care of responsibilities outside of your performer duties as well. For example, if you have a lot of homework, but your ensemble is traveling, get your work done ahead of time so you can focus

all of your energy towards the trip. Do your best to seek out information and control situations by making things happen rather than waiting around to be told what to do.

RESPECT THE PROCESS

Do your best to learn how things work. Then execute that process to the best of your ability at all times. Sometimes things will change, and you might want to question the process if you don't see the results you want right away. But you must trust the process and know that your staff is giving you the best information possible. If you disrespect the process and fail to trust your staff, the only direction you will ever move is backwards.

With that being said, if you ever have any questions, the staff is there to help you and it is your job to communicate your concerns.

BE KIND

Kindness is so important to this activity and to the world in general. You want to create great experiences for each other. So be positive, respectful, and kind to each other at all times. This is

not a place for negativity. What you do, what you say, and how you act towards other people MATTERS.

So make sure you are kind to each other, even if that means being the

bigger person in a conflict. There are many words we use to help us better understand successful actions. Use the definitions below to better understand what it takes to be successful.

TERMINOLOGY OF SUCCESS	
WORK ETHIC	To maintain a constant and positive effort towards a goal.
CONFIDENCE	The undeniable belief in your ability to succeed.
RESPONSIBILITY	To hold yourself accountable for what is within your control.
PERSISTENCE	Repeating a course of action until, and only until, a goal is reached.
PASSION	Possessing intense feelings, emotions, or love towards perfecting your craft.
TEAMWORK	The act of working together towards a common goal regardless of adversity.
POSITIVE ATTITUDE	Maintaining an optimistic perspective in spite of opposition.
MOTIVATION	Inspiring yourself and those around you to become better than ever before.
ENDURANCE	Pushing through unforeseen hardships for as long as it takes to succeed.
INTEGRITY	Acting honest and true with great moral character when you think nobody is watching.
SACRIFICE	The ability to say no to something, so you can say yes to something else.
FLEXIBILITY	The ability to adapt or modify yourself without complaining.
HUMILITY	To be understanding and accepting of your flaws.

“Greatness doesn’t just come from developing great habits, but a great lifestyle. Habits are itemized, lifestyle effects your soul. To be successful you must eat, sleep, and breathe in the spirit of your proposed accomplishments. Live your goals and you will see your dreams of today become the realities of your future.”



CULTURE



THE VIBE

Along with the performance side of things, there is something in drumline we call “THE VIBE”. The vibe of a drumline is the relationship and overall emotional value between members. This is one of the MOST IMPORTANT things about a drumline because we have to practice and perform regardless of how we feel emotionally. If you or anyone in the drumline has a “Bad Vibe” then the rehearsals will lack energy and focus, and the performance could be effected by this.

If everyone in the drumline has a great vibe, everything goes right. People are motivated, everyone gets along, and there is ZERO drama that interferes with what actually matters, your performance. If the vibe is bad, even if it is just one person, that will cause a disturbance in how we think, therefore it will effect how we perform. If for any reason the VIBE is bad, everyone (staff and students included) should all work

together to find the root of the problem and fix it immediately. In our experience, it is always great to know who in the line is genuinely good at reading people and can help motivate the group. This person can really help build a sense of team and act as an individual scout for bad vibes. If you can get multiple people like that it is even better! The biggest thing is that everyone knows that THE VIBE is a team effort.

BEING A ROLE MODEL

A great part about being in drumline is that you are inspired and motivated to be great as an individual. So you work hard and focus on self betterment, but as a by product of this lifestyle, you become a role model for other people. You might not think too much about it, because we are always so focused on ourselves and our immediate section, but your influence as a performer extends far past the drumline. If the drumline is really doing a great job, that energy is contagious and will encourage other sections to work hard

and do their best as well. Even simply showing hustle during rehearsal can make an impact.

While you can be a great influence in this way, you can also be a bad influence. If you have bad habits, that will show other people in the ensemble that it is ok to do those things. So make sure you are constantly maintaining the standards of excellence. Whether you like it or not, you are a role model to your section, other sections in the ensemble, and the people in the community who watch you perform.

NETWORKING

Drumming is a community activity. Many students over the years have asked us “How do I get better at drumming?” And one of the answers we always give is:

**DRUM WITH OTHER PEOPLE
OUTSIDE OF REHEARSAL!**

Individual practice time is crucial, but if you never drum with others, you’re not practicing the skill set of listening to someone else. That would be like practicing on a Basketball court by yourself, then jumping into a game with two full teams. You wouldn’t be prepared for the demands that other people bring to the table. Also,

understand that you should drum with people from many different skill levels. Drum with people WAY better than you (so you can grow and learn from them), drum with people within your current skill level (so you can have fun and play a lot of material), and drum with people who are not as proficient as you (so

you can teach them). This is especially important in a drumline setting because not everyone has the same skill level. Plus, when you drum with other people in your line, the entire line gets better. It is a win-win situation! This will take some planning on your part though, so be prepared to schedule these sessions.

GET INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY

The world of percussion is growing at a rapid rate and there are so many resources available to you now. To truly master your craft, dive deep into these resources and be a sponge for knowledge.

Watch YouTube / Videos on the internet.
Frequent blogs and websites with percussion content. (thegridbookseries.com)
Check out a variety of drumming apps.
Stay connected to your favorite percussion brands on social media.
Find ways to participate online. (Like posting videos and getting feedback)
Go to drum clinics.
Go to shows. (Including DJs, live bands, indoor drumline, drum corps, etc)

** The list can go on, but the point is to get connected with your community. You will learn a lot, make friends who have similar interests, and it is always fun to share your passion with others.*

LEARN EVERYWHERE

Regardless of your skill level, you should try to learn from as many places as possible. If you have a question, you should feel comfortable asking your instructors, but you should also use Google, YouTube, your peers, books, social media, and other places that provide information to learn. Not all information out there is great, but the student who finds the answer for themselves is usually the one who becomes a leader later in life.

LEVERAGE SOCIAL MEDIA

We live in a digital age where you can record yourself, put it on the internet, and get feedback from other people who have years of experience in the drumming community. **USE THIS AS A TOOL TO GET BETTER!** This is difficult to do if you're just starting out, but you would be surprised how much it helps to put that pressure on yourself.

Knowing that you will publish a video and have people tell you what you're doing wrong is intimidating, but if you can get over that, you will find this as a great tool for self evaluation. This

also makes you more accountable for fixing personal inconsistencies. When the camera is recording, you start to think differently and your attention to detail and level of awareness raises exponentially.

NOTE: Not all social media is going to help, and there is no rule book for how to use this platform, but getting yourself in a position of critique is always good if you know how to filter the comments to your advantage.

PRIVATE LESSONS

Another great tool for getting better is taking private lessons. Private Lessons are customized lessons to address your personal needs as a student. In a group setting there is usually not enough time to give as much individual instruction as needed, but private instruction is time dedicated to one student. This provides focused communication for the student and lets them know everything they need to be working on to get better individually.

Becoming a master of your craft

requires many hours of practicing on your own, but many students spend these hours practicing incorrectly or on material that is not helping them fundamentally. With private lessons, the student is taught how to practice to achieve the best results. A private instructor can also give you faster results, act as a personal mentor, teach you time management, teach you how to practice, and provide you with new concepts you may have never heard before.

You can take lessons with a staff member, a local instructor, or from someone online. But make sure that the person you take lessons from is teaching you the methods of drumming for your current goal. It doesn't make sense to take lessons for drum set if you want to play rudimental snare drum. There are obvious parallels, but you want to study with someone who will give you the highest transfer value towards your goals. This will simply help the speed up process.

DEALING WITH ADVERSITY

Great drumlines are a product of hard work and sacrifice. While it is very fun to be in a drumline (and may include some of the best years of your life) you are going to have some bad days. You are going to see adversity you might have never encountered before. Your body will ache and your friends will ask why you're always practicing. You will have disagreements with people in the ensemble and your instructors are going to tell you when you're wrong. To be in drumline you have to have a thick skin, but this makes us stronger people.

Then, when you go out into the real world, you have a strong, well rounded perspective on dealing with adversity. You will even see other people around you going through things that are difficult for them and you can help them through those tough times as well.

In this culture there is so much more than just drumming. You gain life experience and in the end you realize that the marching arts is very little about the music and more about developing who you are as a person. Just make sure you enjoy the ride.



EQUIPMENT



BACKPACK CULTURE

In our experience, the “Backpack Culture” in drumline is pretty serious. We do a lot of traveling (Whether that is traveling to another country to perform, or moving from one practice space to another) and our rehearsals require equipment that has to be moved around as efficiently as possible.

Having a sturdy backpack, that is big enough to hold all of your things, is very important. Your backpack should always hold everything you need for rehearsal at all times. This pack never leaves your side and helps you stay prepared. At any moment, you know that whatever you need is just a few steps away. This can help speed up the pace of rehearsal if everyone maintains great backpack etiquette.

If you're not prepared, you may have to leave rehearsal to pick up something you forgot. Then, the rest of the ensemble has to wait for you or keep going without you until you come back.

Your backpack will become part of your life. Because you will

carry more than just your drumline items in it. If you are in school, you will need your school supplies, and if you are in other activities, those things will need to be accessible as well. Therefore, becoming a master of backpack organization is going to help you manage everything. All aspects of your life will be mixed together. So size really does matter.

Some people even have two backpacks to organize the different activities they do. The only bad part about this is if you grab the wrong pack or forget one of them one day, but either way, having a backpack in your life and defining what that means for you can really raise the level of productivity and preparedness in your career.

“THE HOUSE”

As you move throughout rehearsal, there is a large list of items you will need to have on hand. You will not always need everything all at once, but it is important to have all of these items with you, so when the time comes, you are prepared.

“THE HOUSE” is the term we use for everything you need with you to be successful during rehearsal. The term

“Bring The House” means you should bring everything you need for the goals of that rehearsal. Be smart with what you bring to practice. Know what situations will occur and be prepared for anything.

These items may vary depending on what activity you are doing, but it is important to be as prepared as possible to ensure a smooth rehearsal.

THE HOUSE CONSISTS OF, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO	
ON BODY	IN BACKPACK
Proper Attire (Athletic Clothing)	Sticks / Mallets
Drum Harness	Stick Tape
Drum	Drum Pad
Section Hat	Drum Key
Water Jug	Hex Key / Tools
Backpack	Carabiner
	Metronome
	Batteries / Chargers
	3 Ring Binder (With Pockets)
	Plastic Sheet Protectors
	Pencils / Highlighter
	Drill / Dot Book / Show Music

TAKE CARE OF YOUR EQUIPMENT

With a variety of responsibilities and a fast-paced schedule, it can be easy to neglect your equipment as a drumline performer. However, you have to slow down and make an effort to respect the equipment you use. This means setting your drums down with care, cleaning your drums, taping your sticks, keeping

your backpack clean, using cases when you travel, and avoiding anything that will harm your gear in general. This includes cleaning and maintaining your equipment as well. That way everything lasts longer. Plus, these are great habits that will transfer into other things you do in life as well.

SECTION “HYPES”

In drumline, uniformity is a key attribute of excellence. That is why you wear uniforms during your show. In order to maintain this same camaraderie and hype for togetherness during rehearsal, members will wear “Section Hypes” like Section Hats, Section Shirts, Section Shorts, Sections Shoes, etc. Some drumlines will just do one section hype, others will deck out with the full fit, but as long as you make something special for your crew to hype on, that is the main goal.

You can also have section mascots like a stuffed hippopotamus

or a baseball with a face drawn on with permanent marker. This will all depend on the vibe of the group and what everyone finds *cool*. This ritual is something that can even bring energy or happiness to a member who is having a bad day. It might sound weird, but we have seen this technique work for generations of drumlines over the years. We have seen the entire vibe of a group be really down, then the section leader pulls out a rubber pig, squeezes it loudly, and give a speech about not letting “*stosh*” down. The group rejoices and the next rep is fire. (*Insane, we know.*)

EQUIPMENT SPECIFICS

WATER JUG

It is obvious that you will need some form of water source when doing extended periods of physical activity, but sometimes we underestimate how much water we really need. It is important to get a water jug that will hold enough water to last you the entire rehearsal. If you show up with a bottle of Gatorade and drink the whole thing during the first water break, you won't be able to hydrate properly through the rest of rehearsal. While sizes may vary, we recommend at least a 1 gallon jug.

DRUM KEY / HEX KEY / TOOLS

Drums and hardware require tools for adjustments and repairs. Sometimes you will only need a drum key (we recommend a high tension drum key designed for marching instruments) to adjust your harness and tune the drum, but there are other screws and bolts you might need for your equipment that won't work with a drum key. Take a look at your equipment and see what tools are needed and have those tools

ready at all rehearsals and shows. Some common tools are wrenches, a hex key set, and a screw driver. (Sometimes the guts of the snare drums will use a Phillips Head or Flat Head screw driver. Make sure you know what your specific instruments require.)

DRUMLINE HACK: THE CARABINER

A carabiner is an oval shaped (often metal) clip that you can attach to your backpack. This is great for helping you carry things. When you move from one rehearsal area to another you might have to carry your drum, drum stand, water bottle, music stand, backpack, and anything else you need for rehearsal. Clipping things to your backpack can help minimize clutter and act as another hand when on the move.

COMMON CARABINER USES:

- Hold water bottle, section hat, shoes, jacket, etc.
- Hang your backpack on a fence or bus rack.
- Connect to other bags/luggage.

BATTERIES / CHARGERS

It might not seem very obvious, but batteries and chargers are very important to have in the drumline setting. An entire ensemble rehearsal can come to a screeching halt if the 9 Volt dies in the Dr. Beat.

Look at the things you need charged during rehearsal and make sure you are always prepared to have those things fully charged and ready for the day.

3 RING BINDER

In drumline you will receive a lot of music and other various information like technique packets, fund-raiser information, etc. Having a 3 ring binder with pockets and plastic sheet protectors is a great way to organize everything.

The nice thing about the plastic sheets is the ability to re-organize/replace pages as needed without tearing anything out. This ease of organization, along with great durability, is why the 3 ring binder is a must have for drumline performers.

Choose a size (1", 2", 3", etc) that makes sense for what you will have

in the binder. If you just have show music, a smaller binder will work, but if you need room for drill, packets, and notes, you might need a larger binder.

DRILL COORDINATES

The "DRILL" is a set of coordinates you use to make forms on the field during your marching show. It is important someone on the field has the drill coordinates at all times to reference the entire form when setting up each DRILL SET.

DOT BOOK / DOT CARD

A "DOT BOOK", or "DOT CARD" is an abbreviated version of the drill showing your individual spot on the field per set called a "DOT". DOT CARDS are used to minimize the size of the drill so you can have it with you on the field during rehearsal.

SHOW MUSIC

Your "SHOW MUSIC" is the music you play during your performance. Your show music should always be memorized, but is great to have for reference when you need it.



HOW TO PRACTICE



THE SET UP

When you practice outside of rehearsal, which should be daily, you need to set up your “PRACTICE STATION” as close to performance conditions as possible. Since this is a marching activity, and you wear your drum when you play, you want to recreate performance conditions as closely as possible. Here is a list of what you might find in a “Practice Station”.

PRACTICE STATION	
1	Set your drum/pad/stand to the height of your drum when you perform. (Practice standing up to recreate performance conditions.)
2	Set up in front of a mirror. (This way you can see yourself to catch visual inconsistencies.)
3	Have a music stand so you can read music easily.
4	Practice with a metronome and have it nearby so you can turn it on and off. (And try not to use your phone. If you get a metronome, you can use your phone to record yourself.)
5	Record yourself. Set up a camera (or phone) to record your playing. (This will help you see yourself from a spectator’s point of view and allows you to see things you might miss when you play. This allows you to focus 100% of your energy towards searching for things to critique rather than splitting that focus with the demands of performance.)

GUIDELINES FOR EFFICIENT PRACTICE

When you set up to practice, it is important to have specific goals. Make sure you know what you want to practice, and spend time working on very specific things. If you are hacking around for an hour, that is not

considered practice time. The most efficient way to practice is to find what you are not good at, and practice that first. If all you ever do is play things you're good at, you will never grow in your practice time.

USE THE FOLLOWING TO HELP YOU GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR PRACTICE SESSIONS:

- MAKE A SCHEDULE AND FOLLOW IT
- SET SPECIFIC GOALS
- HAVE A PLAN
- GET OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE (Attack Your Weaknesses)
- USE TEMPO THRESHOLDS
- RECORD YOUR PROGRESS & TAKE NOTES

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE.

You have to practice every day. A perfect "formula" does not exist for how many hours you should practice, but you should get your hands moving every day. When you don't practice, your chops actually get worse. So if the only time you are playing is during rehearsal, you're actually moving backwards!

Practicing every day helps build the muscle memory it takes to perform at the highest level in rehearsal. So make sure you are playing, chopping out, doing plenty of repetitions, and moving your hands EVERY DAY! That way the progression is always forwards, never backwards.

PRACTICE HOW YOU WANT TO PERFORM

When we perform in uniform in front of people there is a great amount of energy that you will provide for the performance. This cannot be an itemized thing that only happens when you're in uniform. You must practice, rehearse, and perform with the same focus and energy EVERY SINGLE REP! If you change the way you perform based on how you feel at the time, you will get a variety of results. The most successful performers are able to recreate the same feeling from a show setting ANYTIME, ANYWHERE! So make sure you are practicing exactly how you want to perform so there are no surprises.

PROGRESS

As you work through your music, take things slow and really work towards QUALITY over QUANTITY. A common mistake students make is to play something until they get it into their hands, then move on as fast as possible. This often creates bad habits and you end up having to RE-LEARN things you already worked on. Instead, practice something until you can't get it wrong. You should be able to perform all of your music 10 times in a row without error before moving on to the next

tempo or exercise. Then, over time, you will notice your growth and be stronger than you would have been if you just blasted through the information. That slow, deliberate growth over time, is true progress.

USING THE METRONOME

Also, remember that rudiments are rhythms! Know your rudiments and know them well, but be sure you are playing them CORRECTLY – meaning pay attention to how certain sticking patterns affect your rhythmic tendencies. Don't practice difficult parts at tempos that are faster than your hands can play, or you'll end up practicing bad habits.

Practice with a metronome to focus on good timing and rhythmic accuracy. Also, to make it more enjoyable and realistic, play your various exercises along with music you like. It's generally the same thing as using a metronome, but it gives you a musical context on which to base your playing. This is the foundation of ensemble playing. Groove along with the music and enjoy it!

TEMPO THRESHOLDS & GOALS

When you practice, use a very specific process. Train yourself at slow tempos, and slowly increase the tempo (2-5 Beats Per Minute) over time.

TEMPO THRESHOLDS	
STEP 1	SET THE MET
STEP 2	PLAY THE REPS (Until you are comfortable at that tempo)
STEP 3	RAISE THE TEMPO (2-5 BPM)
STEP 4	PLAY THE REPS (Until you are comfortable at that tempo)
STEP 5	RAISE THE TEMPO (2-5 BPM)
STEP 6	PLAY THE REPS (Until you are comfortable at that tempo)

** Follow this process to practice the Tempo Threshold method. Remember quality is key. Once you reach a tempo where you no longer play with quality, write it down as your new Max Tempo.*

PRACTICE VS REHEARSAL

Practice is individual time, rehearsal is with your ensemble. Do all of your trouble shooting and experimenting at home during your practice time. Then be as consistent as possible and bring all of those skills you worked on

in practice to the rehearsal. This time is spent lining up individuals and working on a unified approach. Understanding the different between practice and rehearsal will make the process better for everyone on the field.

ALWAYS PLAY WITH QUALITY. IT CAN BE EASY TO “HACK” AROUND IN YOUR PRACTICE TIME WITH BAD TECHNIQUE, BUT THIS ONLY DEVELOPS BAD HABITS. INSTEAD, EVERY TIME YOU PLAY YOUR INSTRUMENT, APPROACH IT WITH THE SAME ATTENTION TO DETAIL YOU WOULD IN REHEARSAL.



REHEARSAL ETIQUETTE



THE PACE

Rehearsal etiquette is the specific way you act and order of operations during rehearsal. Things like standing still, running back when resetting drill charts, and staying quiet all play a role in the “pace” of rehearsal. The pace is how quickly you move through information and, with a limited amount of practice time, you want the pace to move quickly. Good rehearsal etiquette helps the pace move fast, bad etiquette forces the pace to move slowly. It is important that the etiquette guidelines are set at the beginning of the season so everyone knows how to be as effective as possible during rehearsal.

In any ensemble, there are different sections. When you watch a full show, you see everyone as one ensemble, but these sections will rehearse separately to maximize the attention to detail for the performers.

You might think that every rehearsal type is the same whether you have 5 people or 100 people, but there are many factors involved when rehearsing. Each individual has their own inconsistencies, each section plays different music that needs to be explained, the drumline

has music that works together and relates to the show in a special way. All of these things need to be addressed and it can be difficult to address everything all at once when rehearsing as a full group.

Dividing your ensemble into smaller groups can help maximize rehearsal time and focus information for the performers.

Use the examples on the next page to understand the different levels of rehearsal. Notice how each level is slightly different based on the amount of people involved.

REHEARSAL TYPES

01 SUB SECTIONALS

This is an isolated rehearsal with one section. Everyone separates into their single sections (Snare, Tenor, Bass, Etc) and works on instrument specific information. This is the most relaxed vibe, you receive lots of individual attention, and this is the time to really work on specific issues of individual players. Since there are only a handful of people in this setting, there can be lots of talking between instructor and performers here to get a dialog going about performance excellence.

SUB SECTIONAL GOALS

- Develop individual hand technique and get detailed about the approach.
- Clean individual breakdowns in the drill and answer any questions about individual responsibilities from set to set.
- Develop quality of sound and balance/blend within the section.
- Clean the music and rep small chunks of music. Even as small as one beat at a time.

02 DRUMLINE ENSEMBLE

This is when the sub sections come together to rehearse as a full battery. The main goal here is to address drumline specific demands. The level of focus here goes up and you are mostly silent. There is still some dialog between staff and students, but not as much as Sub Sectionals. The staff will ask questions for the group to answer and there will be discussion about performance excellence as a group.

DRUMLINE ENSEMBLE GOALS

- Take the quality of sound developed in Sub Sectionals and balance that sound as a drumline unit. (This will create “THE SOUND”)
- Clean form/interval breakdowns in the drill and address guiding situations.
- Match stick heights and approach as a line.
- Align musical phrases. All accents, inner beats, and overall rhythmic clarity should be addressed. Even if parts are different it is important everything still aligns musically.

03 PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

This is when all percussive and electronic elements (if applicable) of the ensemble rehearse together. The main goal here is to develop vertical alignment. This is done by aligning sound from back field to front field so the audience hears one cohesive performance. Since sound in the front of the ensemble will reach the audience faster than the sound in the back, everyone should listen back to a central source of time. This is done by addressing the source of time for each set. Typically the drumline will be the best source of time on the field, but if the drill puts the drumline too far away the ensemble may need to use another, more reliable, source of time until the drumline moves back into a clear position.

The level of focus in percussion ensemble rises again to a new level as there are more performers on the field and things can get out of control quickly. In this rehearsal setting talking is minimal to non-existent.

PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE GOALS

- Align the ensemble sound.
- Address ensemble music.
- Address ensemble drill movement.

04 FULL ENSEMBLE

If you are in a marching band or drum corps (as opposed to an indoor percussion ensemble) the percussion section joins the rest of the ensemble including sections like winds and color guard. At this point your level of focus is at it's peak. The main goal here is to be a role model of performance excellence.

THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO TALKING FOR ANY REASON IN THIS SETTING.

This setting has the most amount of people on the field and even one person from the percussion section talking during this can take away focus from the instructions being given from your instructors. Stay focused on your job and do your best to transfer what you learned in the other rehearsal settings to this one.

FULL ENSEMBLE GOALS

- Align ensemble sound.
- Address ensemble music.
- Address ensemble drill movement.
- Teach ensemble body movement.
- Address general effect and overall thematic ideas.
- Run through the entire production.

REHEARSAL VOCABULARY	
GET SET	The position that is most appropriate for you to perform before you run a segment. (This may range from standing with your sticks in to posing from a previous drill set.)
GO TO LOW	“Low” is the position you stand when you are idle and waiting for instructions. (This position should be comfortable and allow the performers to stand for long periods of time.)
THE ASSIGNMENT	(Staff Instructions) - When you work through your show you will break the show down into smaller segments to get detailed with your performance. “The Assignment” is specific performance focus of that segment. (EXAMPLE: Running “B to C” in the closer.)
THE COUNT OFF	Before you perform, the “count off” is a notification represented visually or audibly allowing the ensemble to start the assignment together. (EXAMPLE: 8 clicks from the metronome. 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-BEGIN)
PERFORMANCE REP	When you are running a segment (the assignment) that is a “Performance Rep”. Even though you are in rehearsal, you should still perform each small segment of the show with the same focus and energy as you would in front of an audience
CHECK, ADJUST, RESET	When you get to the last count of the assignment, you will freeze in place. Then you do a series of self critique that helps you understand what needs to be fixed. “Check” means look at where you are in the drill, “Adjust” means you adjust your body to the correct position in the drill, and “Reset” means to run back and start the assignment over.
STAFF CRITIQUE	This is time during rehearsal dedicated to allowing staff member to address the ensemble for critique.
THE “BOX”	In the marching arts, “The Box” often refers to the “press box” in a stadium where the judges sit during a performance. This is where some staff member will give critique from that vantage point.
FIELD INSTRUCTORS	“Field Instructors” are staff members on the field level with the performers. They are able to give detailed critique from that vantage point.

ORDER OF OPERATIONS

In the FULL ENSEMBLE setting, sometimes there is a specific order of operations. The following is an example of how an order of operations can be used to create structure and momentum during rehearsal.

STEP 01	GET SET
STEP 02	RECEIVE REP INSTRUCTIONS
STEP 03	METRONOME BEGINS FOR THE COUNT-OFF
STEP 04	PERFORMANCE REP
STEP 05	STOP AT THE END OF THE ASSIGNMENT
STEP 06	CHECK
STEP 07	ADJUST
STEP 08	RECEIVE CRITIQUE (Box First, Then Field Instructors)
STEP 09	RESET
STEP 10	GO TO LOW

** Having a process to follow can maximize your rehearsal time. Whatever you do, make sure you define your own order of operations so everyone in the ensemble understands the expectation.*

WATER BREAK VS “GUSH-N-GO”

In rehearsal you will have periodic water breaks, but some breaks will be longer than others depending on what is needed for the group.

A **“Water Break”** is when you take a break for a few minutes to rest your body, control your breathing, grab a quick stretch, and possibly get out of

the sun if you are rehearsing outside.

With a **“Gush-N-Go”**, the goal is to hydrate quickly and effectively. You have limited time to rehearse, so moving as quickly as possible is important. These are more frequent to ensure proper hydration, and longer breaks should be given as needed.

DEVELOPING GREAT REHEARSAL HABITS

Since rehearsal time is always limited, you have to do everything you can to make sure your mindset during rehearsal is focused directly on your performance. There will always be a variety of distractions that will make you less effective as a marching member, but it is your job to have enough self awareness to know areas you can improve.

Here are five helpful tips that will make your rehearsal time as effective as possible:

#1 ATTEND EVERY REHEARSAL

Drumline is a team effort. Even when one person is missing it can affect the entire ensemble. Not only does it make things harder for the people who did attend rehearsal, but they will also have to teach you what you missed while you were away.

If you do have to miss a rehearsal for any reason, make sure you communicate with another member and learn everything you missed before the next rehearsal block.

#2 COME WITH A GREAT ATTITUDE

It doesn't matter what is going on in your life. You have to show up to rehearsal and leave all drama, stress, and outside interferences at the door. A great attitude can go a long way and the effects of your attitude can determine the outcome of rehearsal. As we mentioned earlier, a great attitude will empower other members of the line, but a bad attitude can bring everyone down. Overall, just use common sense. The last thing you want to do is be distracted by things you can't control when you should be focusing on performing.

#3 BRING EVERYTHING YOU NEED

In drumline, we have a lot of gear that is required for rehearsal. When you don't have all of your gear it can slow down the pace of rehearsal. If you are a "forgetful" person, set reminders for yourself like alarms on your phone, sticky notes, or packing your rehearsal bag the night before and setting it by the door.

#4 KNOW ALL OF YOUR MUSIC

It is your job to show up to rehearsal with your music memorized. When you don't know the music, it is difficult for the instructional staff to teach you. Instead, time will be taken from rehearsal to teach you the music which should have been done in your practice time at home.

#5 LISTEN CLOSELY & ADAPT QUICKLY

When you are being addressed, make sure you are always listening to the information being provided to you and actively apply that information immediately. You have to be fully engaged, because if you are not 100% engaged you will slow down the pace of rehearsal.

REHEARSAL MINDSET

DRUM FOR TOMORROW

Everything you do matters, and we are always "drumming for tomorrow". With every rep, every rehearsal, and every show, you are building a legacy and creating a tradition of excellence. The way you practice and perform now will influence the percussion sections that perform 10 years from now.

If at any point you are not motivated, remember that the work you do today, good or bad, will show up tomorrow. So make sure you are giving everything you have in you at all times. That will make each day the best it can be and success is built over time.

HAVE A VISION

What do you want out of this? What inspired you to be in drumline? To be successful in this activity you must have a clear idea of what you want. Have a vision for what you want to accomplish and keep that in mind at all times! You must maintain consistency in your actions

ESPECIALLY WHEN THINGS GET TOUGH.

If you can stay focused on your vision through the chaos, you will be successful not only in this activity, but later in life as well.



COMMUNICATION



COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS

Communication is how we exchange information, build relationships with others, and convey ideas and feelings. The success of any drumline is based heavily on the group's ability to communicate at the macro and micro scales. How we communicate determines so much about what we do. It is your job to make sure you are always respectful and that you understand how to listen effectively. It is also important to speak well about your craft and know how to interact with your peers. This chapter will give you concepts to make you more effective as a communicator and how to structure your communication hierarchy.

MICRO VS MACRO COMMUNICATION

There are different scales of communication that we use in a group setting. **Micro Communication** consists of small scale concepts that help you communicate immediately with others. These traits will provide immediate feedback and is the main way you communicate with your instructors/peers. These might be on a smaller scale, but they have a

large impact on your effectiveness as a member of the activity. **Macro Communication** consists of large scale concepts that determine your overall character. This is how you interact with others on a broad scale. Being a great communicator will take time, so make sure you are patient as you interact with the other performers in your line.

MICRO COMMUNICATION

BODY LANGUAGE

In drumline, we communicate with body language more than you may think. Here are some great body language signals you can use to let people know you are engaged:

Make eye contact.
Nod your head (yes) when you hear something you agree with or enjoy.
Stand up straight and actively listen to the person talking to you.
Don't slouch, look at the ground, or fidget with things in your hand.
Smile and high five people. (Secret handshakes work too.)
Move quickly and with a purpose.

** Being in drumline is a privilege. You have to have tremendous appreciation for the activity, and using positive body language is a great way to show your respect.*

EYE CONTACT

Showing respect for each other comes in all different forms, but maintaining eye contact when you are talking or listening tells others that you are fully engaged.

EXAMPLE: *If the instructor is addressing the entire ensemble it can be easy for you to feel like you can hide within the*

crowd. We have seen many students over the years who will sit in the back on their phone, pick at grass, or simply look at the ground while information is being provided. 9 times out of 10 these are the same students who are not performing well or have attitude issues.

Even if that student is performing at a high level it is still disrespectful and is communicating to

the speaker that you don't really care about what they're saying. Instead, look them in the eye and keep your focus the whole time.

RESPONDING IN REHEARSAL

Another way to show you're engaged is to respond when asked a question. Even in a group setting, if the instructor asks "Does that make sense", respond (out loud) with either "Yes" or "No". (And don't be afraid to say "No")

We have all been there. You don't understand something, but you're

afraid to "look stupid" in front of your peers by raising your hand and letting everyone know you're lost. In the long run it is much better to "call yourself out" and gain a better understanding in the moment than to try and figure it out on your own during rehearsal. This will not only help you understand but chances are other people will have the same question as well. Now, you have helped multiple people by speaking up and rehearsal always runs better when everyone understands the instructions. You just have to be willing to take that first step and ask.

** It is common sense for most people to always be polite, but we have seen times when people will ask questions in a sarcastic or challenging way. At no point should you ever be disrespectful or seeking attention from the group. Make all questions genuine.*

MACRO COMMUNICATION

BE TRANSPARENT AND TRUTHFUL

Drumline can become a hostile place if you are not transparent with yourself and others. You have to be honest about how you feel and understand that you may need to allow yourself to be vulnerable at times.

If there is an issue, don't be afraid to talk about it. The goal is for

everyone to feel good about what they are doing and the longer you let something negative build up, the worse everything will get over time. If you are having trouble for any reason (with your playing, with another member in the group, or anything else) it is important to know who to talk to about it and take action to fix it.

We have seen entire ensembles

fold due to a lack of transparency and trust between members and staff. This might not seem as important as the music you are playing, and nobody wants to take time out of their day to talk about personal issues, but if you can't perform at the highest level because your mind is on something else, that is an issue.

Be transparent, be truthful, and communicate effectively. Even if that means being true to yourself and auditing how well you're actually doing with your responsibilities in the line.

ASK QUESTIONS

How many times has this happened to you? You're in class (or any group setting) and the instructor says, "Alright does anyone have any questions?" And even though you don't understand the material, you don't raise your hand because you don't want to be the only one who doesn't get it.

THIS IS ONLY HOLDING YOU BACK!

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Some people will pick things up faster than you, and other will be slower at receiving information, but you have to focus on your personal progress. We have seen so many students who don't

ask questions and just hope things will work out. This always catches up to you eventually and it is better to ask and feel insecure for a few minutes rather than spend an entire season without truly understanding.

On the other side of that make sure you are listening effectively. If you are asking the same questions over and over again due to a lack of attention, that is a problem. So stay focused when receiving information or critique, be a sponge for knowledge, and don't be afraid to ask questions when you don't understand or want to learn more about the subject.

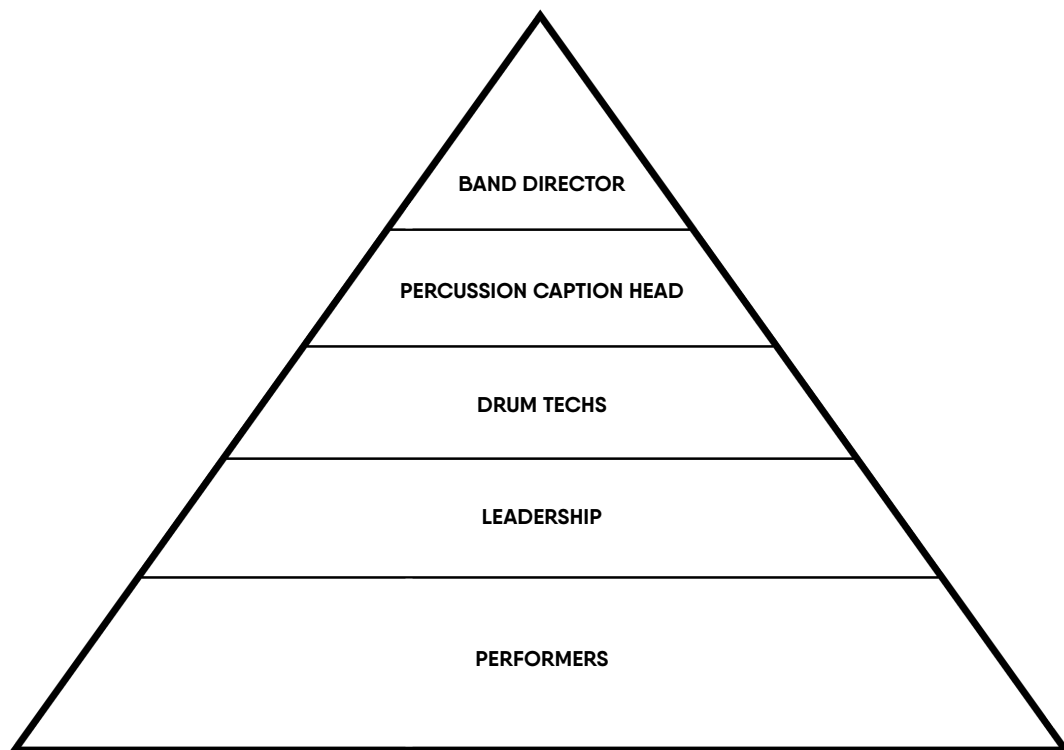
THERE IS A TIME AND PLACE FOR EVERYTHING

We know communication is key, but sometimes we have to be aware of our surroundings and understand there is a time and place for certain conversations. Also knowing WHO to talk to can make a big difference in the outcome of the conversation.

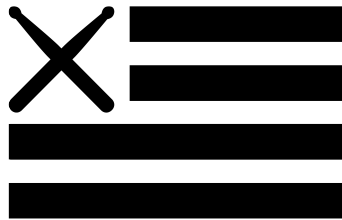
For example, if you are in the middle of a full ensemble rehearsal, asking what you're having for dinner to the caption head is NOT an efficient move. That would be a better question for a section leader before the rehearsal block starts.

COMMUNICATION HIERARCHY

There are many different roles within an ensemble and while communication is a key to success, if everyone talks to everyone, some information might get lost. Below is a breakdown of roles and who you should be communicating with directly:



This prevents any one person from getting overwhelmed with information. Every ensemble is different, and you should adjust the pyramid to match your personal situation, but if you use this type of communication breakdown every voice will be heard. As an individual it is your job to know your role and who you're responsible for communicating with directly.



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