

Bucknell University  
Department of Music, Music Education  
**MUSC 241 Instrumental Methods and Literature**

## **REHEARSAL STRATEGIES**

### **Strategy Template**

**[strategy name]:** [clear description of strategy] ([citation])

*Use to improve:*

- [rhythm, tone, intonation, balance, articulation, dynamics, technique, expression, practicing, timing, entrances, bowing, breath support, pulse, blend, listening, style]
- [select from list above]

### **Example Strategies**

**Bopping:** Instruct the group to reduce all notes down to just the onset of its rhythmic value. For example: whole, half, quarter, and eighth notes will all be played as a single sixteenth note.  
(Observation: Dr. Roseth)

*Use to improve:*

- Timing
- Articulation

**Conduct and Sing:** Teach students the basic conducting patterns and have them count and sing rhythms while conducting. (Reading: Roseth, p. 5)

*Use to improve:*

- Rhythm
- Pulse
- Transitions

## Class Strategies

**Clap 'N Count Pickups:** To properly time a pickup note, divide the class into two. Assign one side the task of chanting the subdivisions of the measure while clapping the beat, with the other side clapping and saying the pickup and downbeat. Switch after successful iterations.

*Use to improve:*

- Rhythm
- Counting

**Subdivide and Conquer:** To address rushing, at the correct tempo, have students keep a steady beat physically (tapping, stomping, etc.) while singing their assigned parts subdivided to a common duration. Have them sing the numbers/takadimi to emphasize the subdivisions.

*Use to improve:*

- Timing
- Rushing
- Practicing

**Redirection to the Section:** To help with togetherness, redirect the students' ears to a steady line in the ensemble (steady and predictable).

*Use to improve:*

- Timing
- Pulse

**Modeling:** When most playing problems arise, take out an instrument you are comfortable on and demonstrate what you want the ensemble to sound like. Make a habit to rotate through multiple instruments when utilizing this strategy.

*Use to improve:*

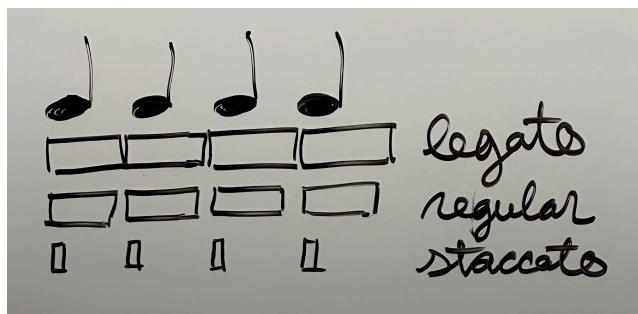
- All the things

**Analogy:** Draw comparisons between a musical concept and a known event to clarify expectations. This could look a variety of ways, some examples include “touching a hot stove” or an “ocean wave”.

*Use to improve:*

- Articulation
- Musicality
- And More!

**Blocks of Sound:** Different size blocks are used to represent the onset, length, and space of sound between individual notes.



*Use to improve:*

- Articulation
- Expression

**Dotting your 1's:** When difficulty arises with playing a fast sequence of notes in time (e.g., a series of 16th notes), alter the phrase by changing the rhythms to dotted rhythms, including short-long, long-short, long-short-short-long, short-long-long-short, etc.

*Use to improve:*

- Rhythm
- Technique
- Practicing

**TIE-dee Rhythms:** To help students accurately play a tie over a barline, first have them perform the rhythm without the tie. Next, put the tie back in, but put a small emphasis on the notes contained in the tie. Remember to put it back in context with the tie back in place!

*Use to improve:*

- Rhythm
- Timing
- Practicing

**Ways of the Phrase:** When students are struggling with a difficult rhythm, create/apply a phrase or word sequence that students can say in that rhythm to build familiarity with it. (e.g., pepperoni pizza = four sixteenth notes followed by two eighth notes)

*Use to improve:*

- Rhythm
- Timing
- Practicing

**In-Hold-Out:** For a rehearsal exercise to develop breath support, have students inhale for a certain amount of beats, hold for a certain amount of beats, and exhale on a hiss for a certain amount of beats. Frequently change the duration of holding for each section.

*Use to improve:*

- Phrasing (long-term)
- Intonation
- Practicing

**Stagger Breathing:** Give specific instructions to sections/individuals on where each can time their breath so the phrase sounds clear, without interruption.

*Use to improve:*

- Breath support
- Phrasing (in the moment)

**No Note Bow:** Isolate the bow movement by having students bow not on the instrument or on an open string. Use this to help bowing pattern accuracy.

*Use to improve:*

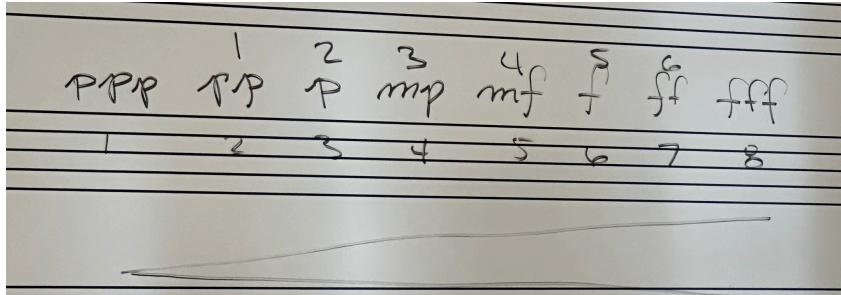
- Bowing
- Technique
- Practicing

**Dynamic Change Checkpoint:** To help control the growth/descent of a crescendo/decrescendo, set dynamic checkpoints throughout the phrase so students can change at a consistent rate with each other. (Ex: Over the course of a 2 measure crescendo from p-f, the checkpoint is mf at the end of the first measure)

*Use to improve:*

- Dynamics
- Tone
- Blend
- Breath support

**Numbering Dynamics:** When students are struggling with dynamic levels and how loud they should be, assign a number to each dynamic level to create a scale students can reference when playing.



*Use to improve:*

- Dynamics
- Balance
- Expression
- Mental Concept of Dynamic Level

**Balance Bonanza!**: To resolve balance issues, first acknowledge the issue then ask the students to play purposefully out of balance. Discussion on this experience can be used to help students develop an understanding of their role in creating/maintaining balance. Then have the students who are playing too loudly listen to the melody. Finally, prompt them to play their line at a dynamic where they can hear the melody clearly. (Class Discussion 9/28)

*Use to improve:*

- Balance
- Dynamics

**Build-A-Nalogy**: Incorporate the student's input/opinions about how they believe the music should sound in different ways such as: telling a story, making a diagram, drawing a picture, and interpretive dance. (Class Discussion 9/28)

*Use to improve:*

- Expression
- Interpretation

**Prime Time**: Before a listening activity where students listen to a recording of themselves, ask a question or give them a specific aspect of playing to focus on while listening. (Class Discussion 10/3)

*Use to improve:*

- Listening
- Anything else you want them to listen for

**Think Pair Share**: Students will be placed in groups, primed with a listening task before the class listens to the recording. It is important to make sure that students are given time to think by themselves. (Class Discussion 10/3)

*Use to improve:*

- Listening
- Blend

**Brick by Rubric:** Pass out copies of a rubric you would use to assess the group's performance and prime them on what to listen for. Invite students to assign a grade to the ensemble, using the rubric while listening. Join back together and discuss as a class. (Class Discussion 10/3)

*Use to improve:*

- Anything identified on the rubric

**Breathe Together, Play Together:** To help the ensemble enter at the exact same time, prompt students to "breathe together," so they are actively listening to the people around them. Furthermore, students can breathe in character, in tempo, or with another aspect of the piece. (Colin + Friends + Dr. R)

*Use to improve:*

- Entrances
- Breath support

**Rhythm Words:** When presented with rhythmic challenges, creating a word or phrase that is associated with a rhythm is very helpful. Words should have strong beginning syllables and should match the natural stress of the word. (Class Discussion 10/17)

*Use to improve:*

- Rhythmic Accuracy
- Timing
- Practicing (have them show you their rhythm word before they leave)

**Melodic Words:** To get students to sing/internalize a melody, creating a word or phrase that matches the stresses of the melody can be helpful. The height of the phrase should align with strong words (not "the" or "and"). This strategy can also help students with aural recognition of repeated motives in a piece. (Class Discussion 10/17)

*Use to improve:*

- Articulations
- Rhythms
- Expression

**Meet in the Middle:** When a chord is out of tune, have students play the chord extremely sharp and flat before coming back to the correct tuning. An alternative is to have students play the chords one semitone above and below the desired chord. (Class Discussion 10/24)

*Use to improve:*

- Intonation
- Blend

**Chunking:** When a section has difficulty playing a challenging passage, divide the section into parts (can be measures, phrases, or even a few notes). You can then decide which chunk to focus on first, then add on the other parts of the passage. Be sure to “zoom out” and run the passage as a whole at the end! (Class Discussion 10/26)

*Use to improve:*

- Rhythm
- Technique

**One Note Wonder:** In a measure with multiple notes, begin by cueing note 1. Then cue notes 1 and 2, then notes 1, 2, and 3, and so on. This could be used for a variety of pitch, rhythm, and fingering issues. (Class Discussion 10/26)

*Use to improve:*

- Rhythm
- Articulation
- Pitch

**Stand Monitors:** For inconsistencies in accidentals, bowing, pitch, etc., have students check in with their stand partner to confirm they are playing the correct way. (Class Discussion 10/31)

*Use to improve:*

- Technique
- Bowing

**Score Marking Shenanigans:** When students are asked to write in certain markings into their music during rehearsal, model an effective way to write in their parts (ex. show them the marking in the conductor score or on the board). While they are writing, walk around the classroom to check if students have pencils and are actively following the writing directions. This can also take the form of collecting music at the end of a concert cycle to look for effective score marking, potentially for a grade. ([Class Discussion 11/9)

*Use to improve:*

- Score Marking
- Dynamics
- Technique

**Sizzle Rhythm of Rizzle:** Incorporate sizzling by removing the pitches and have the students sizzle the correct rhythms while playing the correct fingerings. (Ryan's Brain 11/30)

*Use to improve:*

- Rhythm
- Articulation

**Sizzle Listening for Lizzle:** When a certain section of students are rehearsing a part in the music, have the rest of the ensemble sizzle their parts with the correct fingerings. This way, students can focus on listening to a particular section while still focused on playing. (Ryan's Brain 11/30)

*Use to improve:*

- Balance
- Melodic Recognition/Listening
- Dynamics