

Percussion Inventory Organization and Planning

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Bill Wilkinson

(Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX)

Getting Students Involved

We are a fairly large-sized percussion studio at Texas Tech University (TTU), with anywhere from 30 to 40 students. Each student that is enrolled in private lessons must complete one hour of volunteer service in the field of percussion maintenance.

- That means that there are at least 30 tasks to be completed regarding percussion maintenance.
- We use a sign-up system, so that each student choose his/her task to complete.

It is the role of the Head of Percussion maintenance (a TA position held by a percussion graduate student) to facilitate these volunteer hours. (hereby referred to as “studio hours”)

It is the role of the percussion program to provide parts, tools and most of all SAFETY EQUIPMENT for up to two students plus the head of percussion.

These studio hours cover all of the “low priority” percussion maintenance needs of TTU’s percussion program. This includes:

- Scheduled Maintenance
- Minor Repairs
- Craft Projects/ Organization for the studio.

Low priority needs are ones that are not crucial to instruments being functional. High priority needs go directly to the Head of Maintenance and are expected to be repaired as soon as possible.

Scheduled Maintenance-

Anything that uses consumables (Checking the quantity, or replacement)

- Heads
- Sticks
- Bar String
- Cymbal Sleeves/Felts/Washers

Lubrication of moving parts. (Oiling of mechanisms, greasing of lugs, etc.)

Tightening of Fasteners (Especially older instruments)

Cleaning of Instruments

Minor Repairs-

Lethargic Vibe Pedals

Stripped Thumbscrews

Tambourine Head Replacement

Craft Projects-

Labeling and Organizing the Percussion Studio

Shelving for studio.

Assembling of new equipment

Cutting of carpet squares

Possible Learning Outcomes-

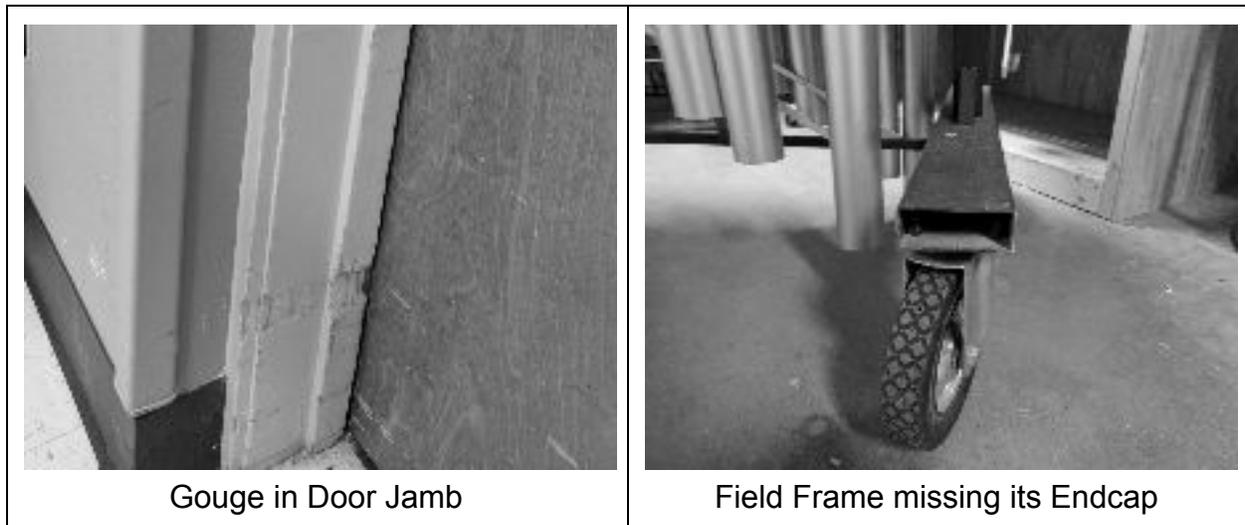
- The Head of Maintenance should make it a point to frame these activities as a learning experience.

Introduce the student to the idea of PROBLEM SOLVING.

Treat every repair like a crime scene, and work backwards from equipment failure to figure out why a failure occurred.

- Analyze patterns of wear, look for structural weak points, or seek to understand patterns of human behavior that led to this item's destruction.
- Weak points are anywhere there is a change in structural material (rubber wheel to steel rim, metal bracket to wooden frame) or a change in force direction.

Using Wear Patterns to Determine Behavior



In this scenario, students complained that the frame on this instrument was “wobbly” and that they had trouble adjusting the height. Looking at the wear in the door frame tells me that every time the instrument leaves this room, the endpiece bashes into the door jamb, twisting the frame slightly. This twisting leads to loosened fasteners, and height adjustment mechanisms out of alignment.

- When making the repair, make your information clear and concise, and present it in order.

- Be able to justify every step of repair. Explaining the **WHY** of your method of repair.
- Many repair items come in sets of two/four/six, so you can demonstrate a repair, and then have the student complete the remaining repairs.

On the topic of failure: Much like these instruments, people fail. Students may very well fail to repair or maintain something properly, and that's okay. Because these repairs are low priority, it shouldn't be the end of the world if a student further damages a minor component of an instrument.

These types of repairs are skills that need to be constantly improved, and your maintenance program should reinforce that.

The Head of Maintenance-

This is a TA position at TTU. Personnel is going to change, and therefore quality of maintenance will change.

If you can, speak to your graduate students and get a feel for how much they know about percussion maintenance.

You want someone who is: (In order of importance)

OBSERVANT

- Patient
- Always willing to learn
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- Handy (Someone who has used hand/power tools in his/her life.)
- Has an interest in Engineering
- Respects Authority, willing to abide by institutional rules (Safety training, EHS compliance, etc.)

Organization

Label EVERYTHING with **LARGE FONT**

- Get a labelmaker
- Get a barcode printer/ scanner for Charms if your school has a site license.

Inventory EVERYTHING

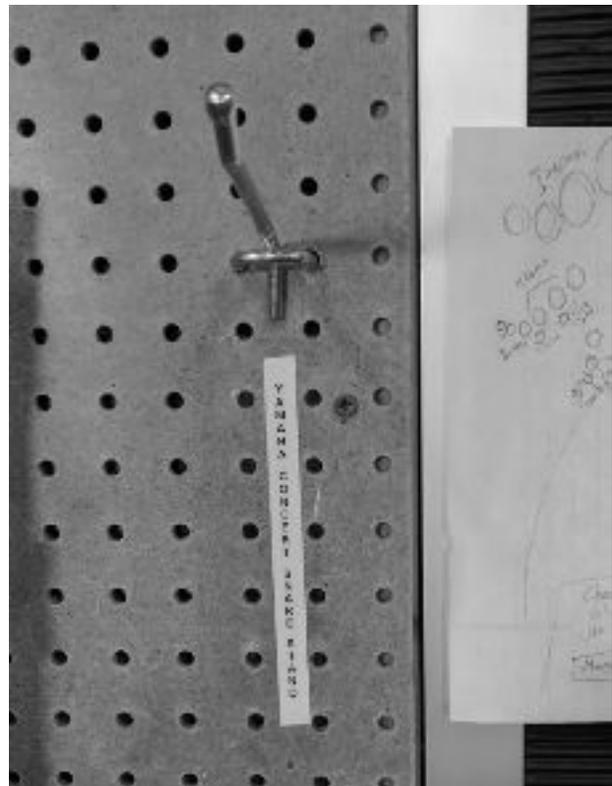
- Keep a digital document of this information and **BACK IT UP.**
- Make this information available to yourself and administrators.

The way we keep track of inventory at Tech is to use Google Drive (Specifically Google Sheets, the Excel equivalent.) to have cloud-based archives of all consumables and rolling stock.

Take photos of a studio/ storage room's layout and post them in that room, so you're not reliant on people reading labels. (they won't)



Picture of Layout pinned to corkboard.



Labels behind hardware.

Studio Culture-

Ultimately, the quality of organization and maintenance is up to the members of the studio.

Newer students may come into the studio thinking the instruments are disposable, especially at a large high school or university.

You as an instructor should suggest these behaviors to your upperclassmen, as you cannot be everywhere at once to make sure everything is organized.

Caution-

Too much oversight will lead to the opposite effect. Ultimately, the members of the studio can take care of themselves and the equipment.