

CRESC.

or

“CUMULATIVE RHYTHM EVALUATION SYSTEM to assess COMPREHENSION”

Purpose of Assessment Tools:

- To evaluate rhythm comprehension and sight reading skill level to assess individual member's band level or ensemble chair placement.
 - To measure the successful teaching of rhythms to individual members of an ensemble.
- Since there is more than one tool, they can be used for both pre-evaluation, mid-semester, and post-evaluation(s), or any combination desired by the instructor.
- To assess individual or ensemble area(s) of weakness in counting. Using the “Rhythm Vocabulary” listings from the “Rhythm Masters” series off the web site, specific levels can be pin-pointed as performance areas of below standard. Strategies can then be devised to target and improve these areas, usually in short three to five minute instructional mods.
 - To begin experimenting with a working assessment model. In the case where a State Department of Education may require some “hard” form of evaluation assessment of our student musicians' progress, it would definitely be in our program's best interest if some form of performance based assessment could be devised. The most time efficient and accurate format to use would be a “running record” tool, assessing a musician's accurate or inaccurate performance.
 - To be used with your full ensemble as rhythm reading instructional material. This is possible since each tool is melodically compatible with all wind instruments.
 - As a rhythm reading, or, counting tool to be adapted by directors to help facilitate ensemble auditions and chair placement assignments.

I have been working on the first drafts of the “Cumulative Rhythm Evaluation System to assess Comprehension” tools for over a year now. I plan to put together 20 to 24 different tools in the third section of the fourth book in the “Rhythm Master” series. First, I designed each tool mathematically, trying to balance the difficulty levels of each “Rhythm Masters” chapter's vocabulary list. Then, over the course of writing several tools, incorporate all possible rhythms assessing the ability to perform the entire vocabulary list. At this time, I have completed six “tools”, two using standard notation only, and four that incorporate the entire rhythm vocabulary. One of each of the standard notation tools have been inserted, as examples, at the end of “Rhythm Masters” books I & II. These standard notation tools, as well as the other four tools can be found on my web site, along with the transpositions for all wind and string instruments. My colleagues can feel free to print out, and / or copy, any of these tools, look them over or use them as an evaluation tool with students, and then give me any feedback or suggestions. I will continue working on the first two sections of Book IV, putting this section on hold until later, after I have received several music educators' initial input and comments.

The initial focus will be on the measurement of each student's present level of rhythmic comprehension. In other words, the extent of his or her "whole language rhythm vocabulary" and where on the student's rhythmic vocabulary list some kind "phonetic" or "analysis" system must kick in. Using a "running record evaluation" approach, each measure performed is evaluated as: "correct", "incorrect", or "corrected". Partial credit can be given as designated by the rubrics on the master score sheet, and extra credit can be given for the proper adherence to articulation markings contained in certain target measures. These evaluation sheets can be posted in the classroom, or passed back to the students, to show what areas of the rhythmic vocabulary they need to work on prior to future evaluations. I place them in a three hole binder from highest to lowest score. My students are very competitive, and the highest chairs are not always the best "readers." This can also be a great help with parent conferences, or with a principal who wishes to see hard copies of assessments.

In addition, all measures used in each tool are labeled, by chapter, on the master score sheet. This design is to aide music educators in targeting specific areas on which they may wish to have additional class instruction. Each tool takes four to five minutes to play, if the entire tool is able to be performed. Accommodations are made for students with a more limited playing experience, by stopping them at any of the assessment levels where full credit is lost for mistakes made in three consecutive measures. This will shorten the overall time necessary to complete these evaluations in any given class, since not all students will be performing the entire tool. Another variation that takes even less evaluation time, is stop the student you are evaluating after the "third strike" in each assessment level. A "strike" is considered any measure, that is valued at two or more points, or is a "1*" measure, where the entire bar has been assessed rhythmically incorrect.

Included with each tool is the master score sheet with the appropriate rubrics. As stated earlier, transpositions for of all the tools can be found in the appropriate "Rhythm Masters" books, or on the web site in PDF format. In this way, you can use them as the assessment tool they were designed to be, or as full ensemble instructional, review or sight reading materials for chair placements. If interested, the complete "Rhythm Vocabulary" list is in the first section of Book III, and can also be printed out from the "R.M." web site.

Feel free to help yourself and print out anything else on the web site that you feel might aide you or your students. All of the instructional materials in both books 1 & 2 are available for your use, in addition to several music and rhythmic games, and other misc. instructional aides. You can reach my web site or contact me any way you wish as listed below. Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

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