



# 2023 Tietz, Scaffolded Steps in Barred Instrument Instruction

## **Scaffolded Steps in Barred Instrument Instruction: Activities for Primary Ages**

Meg Tietz (megtietz@yahoo.com)

AOSA Conference, Albuquerque, NM 2023

### **Mallet Games**

- Sitting in a circle, imitate teacher's movement with mallets. Practice ways to hold them, ways to bounce gently, playing hands simultaneously, playing with alternating hands.
- Experiment with a partner, trying different ways to hold the mallets.

### **Sound Exploration: April Rain Song**

- In self-space, experiment with different ways that rain could fall on you.
- Present the poem "April Rain Song" by Langston Hughes and experiment with the different raindrops that we hear about in the poem.
- Move to partnerships. Make the rain fall on your partner's back in the different ways we explored.
- Move to barred instruments. One partner is seated behind an instrument, and their partner is seated behind them. As the poem is read, the person seated behind puts the raindrops on their partner, and their partner transfers these raindrops to the instrument.
- Ask students to select their favorite three images from the "map" of images, perform these three, and then end with the symbol of "I love the rain" (hands crossed in front of chest with mallets in hands). Perform.

### **High/Low Analysis: Goldilocks and the Three Bears**

- Read the story of Goldilocks. Make sure that you change your voice to be high, middle, and low to match the characters in the story. I prefer this version because the bears are listed by size not by Papa, Mama, Baby. That gives us more flexibility when we act it out, and takes it out of the realm of the binary.
  - ISBN-13 : 978-1404854994, Author Robert Piumini
- Divide into multiple groups (each containing 3+ bears and Goldy) and practice acting out the story. The teacher narrates throughout.



# 2023 Tietz, Scaffolded Steps in Barred Instrument Instruction

- Compare the size of instruments to the bears. Talk about the voices changing like our characters. Determine which instruments you will use for Great Big Bear, Medium Bear and Little Bear.
  - Extension: show families of instruments and compare the sounds of the various sizes within the families.
- Perform the entire story with actors and also musicians.

## Musical Alphabet

- Read the book “Chicka Chicka Boom Boom” by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault ISBN 13: 9780618512621
- Practice making the capital letters of the musical alphabet in partnerships or trios. Play a guessing game where the students choose a letter to create, and the class has to guess which one it is.
- Complete the musical detectives worksheet In partnerships, have students practice calling out letters and numbers for their partner to point to, and then play, on instruments.

## Beat vs. Rhythm

- Teach the following poem through echo imitation:

Engine Engine Number Nine  
Rolling down Chicago line,  
See it sparkle, see it shine!  
Engine, Engine, Number Nine.
- Practice being trains (lines of people with hands on shoulders) while teacher accompanies on the cabasa. Teacher changes the tempo of the train on the instrument.
- Move to mallet instruments.
- Ask students to play the rhythm of this poem using alternating mallets (hands taking turns). For now, do not specify anything else about the letters they play. Just ask that they use gentle mallets, held like bicycle handlebars, and take turns with their hands as they try to match the rhythm. For a beginning player, this is plenty of things to consider at one time. :)
- Then, ask students to review the performance of the beat using two hands simultaneously on **any** two bars.

# 2023 Tietz, Scaffolded Steps in Barred Instrument Instruction

- When students are very successful at performing beat and rhythm accurately, then I try performing the opposite against them (i.e. I perform the beat while they perform the rhythm, then switch).

## Fragment Performance, sol-mi patterns

- Talk about cuckoo clocks.
- Teach cuckoo song.

## Cuckoo

Nursery Rhyme



Trees

Cuckoo Cuckoo Cu-ckoo, where are you? Cu-ckoo, where are you?

Birds

(Cu- ckoo) (Cu- ckoo)

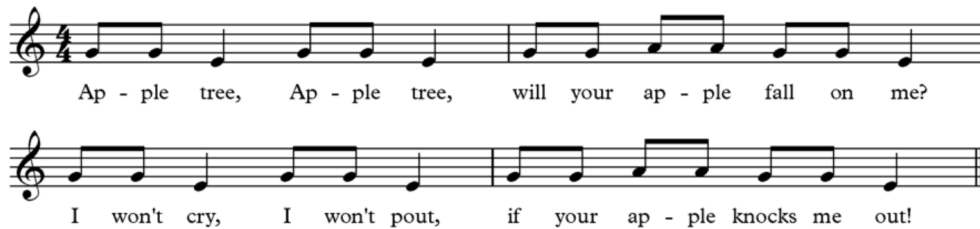
- Play game: half of the students are trees, half are birds hiding behind them. Birds peek out and echo the trees in the song. During the “cuckoo where are you” part, birds fly to another tree. There cannot be two birds behind one tree, so whoever gets their first stays and the other keeps flying.
- After kids are familiar with the game, show the words to the song with the bird echo highlighted in a different shape or color. Ask students to sing just the bird words (cuckoo). Ask them which syllable of the word “Cuckoo” is sung higher (the first one). Have students remove F1, F2, and B1 (C pentatonic)
- Let’s see if we can perform “Cuckoo” using G and E. Draw their attention back to the low and high syllables of Cuckoo. Which pitch should we start on? (G)
- Perform cuckoo on both of the box words, singing all of the tree words (circles and no shapes).
- Try the same activity on A1 and C2, and the E2 and G2. All three locations work because they are all the minor third from the song. Decide which location to use today.
- On another day, ask students to echo you on their instrument while you perform sol-mi melodies. Lead them to the two patterns of the song (s-m, and s-s-m). Identify which words of the song are which patterns (s-m is Cuckoo, s-s-m is where are you)
- Perform all three colors of the song individually, then divide into groups by instrument type or size to hear the entire song.

# 2023 Tietz, Scaffolded Steps in Barred Instrument Instruction

## Sol-mi-la Melodies

### Apple Tree

American Singing Game



Ap - ple tree, Ap - ple tree, will your ap - ple fall on me?  
I won't cry, I won't pout, if your ap - ple knocks me out!

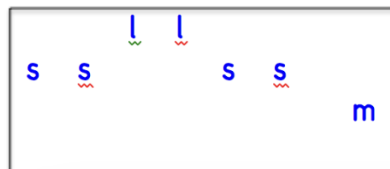
- Play the game “Apple Tree.”
  - In the game, the teacher taps the apple on each child’s outstretched fist to the beat of the song. The child who is landed upon on the word “out” gets out of the game.
  - I ask my students to always say “Good try, (child’s name)” to the child who gets out.
- Identify sol-mi-la on the barred instruments. Echo various sol-mi-la patterns.
- Learn how to play these two melodic cells:

(Red)



s s m

(Blue)



s s l l s s m

- Present six blank boxes to represent the entire melody. Solve which melodic elements fit in each box.
- Perform just the red, just the blue, and then the entire melody.
- Add a steady beat drone below the melody. Once successful, try to add a strong beat drone to the melody (quarter note, quarter rest)