

THE PERCUSSION SPECIALIST

Developing a Curriculum to Prepare the Future Percussion Educator

Tracy Wiggins
The University of North Alabama
National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy
Virtual Conference 2021

THE QUESTIONS

- What does a percussion/music degree currently cover?
- What do job descriptions for percussion teachers now look like?
- What are the skills needed now, in the 21st Century, that are not covered in the traditional curriculum?
- Is there a need for prep on these skills while in school, or can they learn it on the job?

SOME OF THE ANSWERS

- In recent years, the job expectations of the percussion teacher have expanded due to the growth of the marching arts, the use of electronics in concert band composition, greater theatrical elements being required by percussion compositions, and other current trends. The percussion teacher of today must often be a show designer, audio engineer, stage director, and arranger, as well as a percussion pedagogue. This certificate is designed to address these varied roles through specific coursework in the variety of areas in which the modern percussion instructor must work. This certificate is designed to be completed within the elective hours for the BA or BS in Music Degree.
- Why not change the degree if so important? Our degree is controlled by the education program, and is VERY difficult to change.
- The traditional music education degree does not necessarily fit the needs of every person who might be going out and teaching percussion now. There are many that do it as a side career as an example. Additionally, many are making careers now in areas such as musical and audio design for percussion and band.

THE PERCUSSION SPECIALIST CERTIFICATE

- The Certificate in Music: Percussion Specialist program is designed to prepare students who wish to go into a primary or secondary field as a percussion instructor to be adequately prepared for the current trends and job demands in the field. The Percussive Arts Society defines a Percussion Specialist as “anyone who teaches percussion in grades 6-12: public, private, charter schools.” Such a position often does not require a music education degree or certification. Traditionally, a position of this nature is open to one who has taught percussion ensembles, beginning percussion classes, private lessons, and the marching percussion ensemble. who teaches percussion in grades 6-12: public, private, charter schools.” Such a position often does not require a music education degree or certification. Traditionally, a position of this nature is open to one who has taught percussion ensembles, beginning percussion classes, private lessons, and the marching percussion ensemble.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Learning Outcomes
- Expanded knowledge and understanding of the field of percussion performance, and pedagogy.
- Enhanced perspective on and knowledge of theatrical design elements that are increasingly common in both concert and marching percussion performances.
- Broad knowledge base about audio design, and related performance implications.

CLASS LIST

Code	Title	Hours
CAT-250	Rendering	3
MU 392	Percussion Literature and Pedagogy	2 (only required by Performance degree)
MU 151	Class Percussion	1 (only required by Music Education)
MU 123-223	Music Composition	2
	Arranging for Marching Percussion	1
MU 372	Introduction to Music Technology	3
MU 315	Percussion	2
ENT 335	Survey of Audio Recording	3
ENT 340	Live Production Technology.	3
MU 490	Pedagogy of Marching Percussion	1
•		
•	<i>Total hours</i>	21

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

- The Certificate in Music: Percussion Specialist program is designed to prepare students who seek a percussion specialist position in a primary or secondary school setting to be informed of the current trends in the discipline and to be adequately prepared to meet the specific job demands of the field.

HOW WE COULD MAKE IT WORK

- Location
- Programs and courses already in place
- The 490 classes
- Larger faculty to draw from
- Support of administration who have gone along with a lot of new ideas
- Admin that are interested in Micro Credentials
- Large marching presence already threaded into the program
- Allowed us to cross list graduate versions of the new classes for our MA students
- Students have to take lessons as part of it, and the lessons for it are upper level meaning they do have to take 100 and 200 level study and pass a barrier – this means we still assure a fundamental level of study in percussion
- Ensemble requirements are part of their scholarship awards

WHAT ADMIN WANT TO KNOW

- **Financial Expense to the University:** No additional foreseen expense, as these are courses that are already offered at UNA.
- **Enrollment:** It is connected to the BA/BS degrees, which currently is 5 percussion students. However, It is predicted this would likely increase.
- **Recruiting:** As UNA would be the first institution to offer such a program, it should have a positive impact on recruiting. This area of “Percussion Specialist”, and these requisite skills sets are seeing an increase with the growth of the pageantry arts in particular (Marching Band, Drum Corps, and Winter Guard International). UNA would be the first school to offer a formal program that addresses professional preparation and growth in these areas.
- **Retention:** The impact of retention should be significant. It is a certificate in which many percussion students will see a direct future application of their studies to a growing field.

- **Admission Requirement**

Students in the Certificate in Music: Percussion Specialist program are required to successfully complete an entrance audition administered by the UNA Department of Music.

CURRENTLY

- We currently have 5 students doing the certificate. All are doing it concurrently with either a BS in Music or the Music Education degree. No one presently is completing it as part of another on campus degree (though there have been inquiries about it)
- The additional courses have had a very positive impact in that some students who had no interest in writing as an example, have discovered and talent for arranging they did not know they had.
- It has allowed us to even more deeply ingrain our philosophies of approach to students that will be going out and teaching our future recruiting base
- The one additional change we have considered (that many take as an elective as they still have some) is including some form of business course

THANK YOU

- I would like to thank NCPP for giving me the opportunity to present about this today. It is great that we have a conference like this focused entirely on how and what we teach.
- Thank you to everyone who checked out the session today.
- If anyone ever has questions regarding this beyond the Q and A please don't hesitate to contact me at twiggins@una.edu