



## Percussion Signal Challenge

### Learning Objective

Students will demonstrate how instrumental timbre can be used to send messages.

### Vocabulary

*Timbre* – the sound color of an instrument

### Resources and Materials

- 4 percussion instruments of distinctly different timbres, for example: a drum, a tambourine, a wood block, and a triangle.
- A scarf, bandana, or any fabric which can be used as a blindfold
- Classroom furniture which can be easily moved

### Teaching Sequence

1. The teacher divides the class into teams of 5 each and tells the students there will be a challenge presented to each team. The teacher explains that one individual from each team must navigate through a maze designed and created by the students using the furniture in the classroom. The teacher asks the team to decide how to navigate their teammate through the maze and allows time for discussion as to how this will be achieved.
2. The teacher challenges the students further by revealing that the individual who represents the team will be blindfolded and that there can be no talking among the teammates and no touching of the individual going through the maze. The students discuss how these new additional limitations affect their previous answers and brainstorm possible ways to navigate their teammate through the maze.
3. The teacher guides the students in their suggestions to include the use of sounds as signals, specifically the sound of instruments to represent directions. For example, one drum beat can represent one step forward. One sound from the triangle can represent one step backwards. The teacher writes directional words on the board and the students' suggestions for the instrument to represent each action. For example:
  - Drum = forward
  - Triangle = backwards
  - Wood block = to the right
  - Tambourine = to the left
4. The teacher gives the remaining instructions to the class:
  - a. The team must be in agreement as to who will be blindfolded.
  - b. The team must be in agreement as to who will play each of the instruments.
  - c. The team's turn will be over when someone from the team talks or when the blindfolded individual bumps into a piece of furniture.
  - d. The winning team will set up the maze for the next team.



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### Culminating Activity

1. The teacher and the students set up the first “maze” created from classroom furniture. Each team takes a turn, working collectively, to meet the challenge of guiding their blindfolded teammate through the maze using percussion instrument signals only.
2. After each team’s turn, discuss what was successful and what was not. The teacher should focus the students’ attention on how the signals were given (one at a time with wait time for the blindfolded teammate to respond, etc.) and how the blindfolded person responded to the signals (one step at a time, small steps, hands at sides, hands held in front of the body, etc.)
3. Continue until each team has the opportunity to give signals to their teammate, guiding him/her through the maze.

### Evaluation

Were the students able to demonstrate how instrumental timbre can be used to send messages?

### TEKS Connection

FA.M.(3-6).b.6C,  
FA.M.(3-6).b.3A,  
FA.M.(3-6).b.4,  
Knowledge & Skill  
Statement: 3.31,  
Knowledge & Skill  
Statement: (4-5).29