



## The Quick Check

### A strategy for Percussion Studio Culture and Community Development

Based on the Daily Check-In format for meeting from Patrick Lencioni’s book *Death by Meeting* I have adapted this strategy into a weekly format that suits the needs of my studio.

The original format of the style of meeting is:

Format	Length	Agenda	Priorities
Daily Check-in	5 – 10 minutes	Share daily schedules and activities	• don’t sit down
			• keep it administrative
			• don’t cancel even when some people can’t be there

At the start of most studio classes we do this *Quick Check*. It’s not mandatory that everyone participate every week, if someone doesn’t feel comfortable sharing they are able to simply ‘pass’. The idea is that they have the opportunity to share, but they are not required to if they don’t feel they have anything to share or if they don’t feel comfortable on that particular day. Procedure:

We follow the procedure of the format above with a few small adaptations.

Format	Length	Agenda	Priorities
Weekly Check-in	5 – 10 minutes	Share schedules and activities, concerns or updates	• don’t sit down
		Share positive accomplishments	• keep it concise and factual
		Share something you noticed or appreciate about one of your peers	• sharing something is optional, not mandatory, a ‘pass’ is an acceptable alternative to sharing

Some of the **questions** I ask (they vary week to week) to lead the conversation include:

- What are you working on?
- Is there something you need help with?
- Are there any logistic concerns I or the studio should know about?
- Is there anything that needs to be fixed or maintained?
- Do you have a new goal you’re working toward?
- Have you accomplished something you feel proud of?
- Have you noticed something someone has done that has impressed you?

These questions lead to the creation of accountability and collaboration in the studio. Instead of information being kept a secret (whether intentionally or accidentally) because there is no open forum for sharing, students are able to talk to each other about their needs, which could be: dealing with logistical concerns, starting new repertoire or overcoming a challenge in a piece they are working on. They are also able to recognize their personal accomplishments (a recent performance, achieving a goal they set in their repertoire or technical work, etc) and give each other accolades and praise for the progress they hear and see in their peers.

## **Comments from Students:**

### **Senior—Performance Major**

I feel like the quick checks are a super helpful part of the year, especially in important times in the year (beginning of term, directly before/after concerts, etc.). There's really only so much that can be communicated via email, messages and calendars, and being able to discuss events face to face helps everybody feel like they have a place at the table. In particular, the logistical hassles of the percussion studio can be smoothed out quite quickly through regular group check-ins!

### **Sophomore—Performance Major**

The quick checks are an excellent system for keeping an open line of communication. I think starting rehearsals with quick checks is a great way to establish relationships in a new studio and develop an open line of communication. It is also very nice for mental health in a way, as university life can be hectic, so it is nice to take a minute and if anything is going wrong, to talk about it.

I think I would have really appreciated a system like this in my first year as it took me a few months to feel comfortable with the people in the studio. Quick checks would have likely sped up the process of building relationships with the people who I now consider to be my closest friends.

### **Senior—Education Major**

I liked the quick check meetings, they were an easy way to know what's up.

I really like slack, [for more in-depth information] it's a great way to focus conversations and only include the relevant people (for example, we make a new wind ensemble chat every year).

### **Sophomore—Education Major**

I found the Quick Checks to be an excellent form of communication between fellow studio peers in terms of gear discussion, rehearsal orders, performance instruction and/or plan run throughs/or simply planning social events!

### **Freshman—on various aspects of studio communication**

Slack is fantastic. It's easy to find information because everything is categorized efficiently and conversations are streamlined. The funny pictures we use of each other for our profiles are a huge plus. Nothing says we love each other more than that.

Studio classes where we did fun activities above the standard class requirement (mallet making, yoga, games, etc.) were a great bonding experience. It helped relieve stress for a couple hours and it was nice to spend time together where it's not about work.

Personal check-ups at the beginning of every lesson made me feel valued as a person, not just a student. It was encouraging to know that you care not just about our studies but our well-being, too.