

## ❖ Ensemble Mastery

Ensemble Mastery requires the group to accomplish a set of goals and to move through a series of “levels.” Ensemble Mastery games consist of: each participant has a role, their role will impact the outcome, and the outcome is collective (everyone moves forward or nobody moves forward).

Most games can be transformed into Ensemble Mastery games. Here is an example of how to transform two commonly used rhythm games into Ensemble Mastery games.

**Pass The Note:** One at a time each student plays a note on the pulse in consecutive order.

- **Warm-up:** “Let’s see how many in a row we can get!”
- **Elimination:** “If you play late or early you’re out.”
- **Ensemble Mastery:** “We must get all the way around to pass level 1, Level 2 is 90 bpm Level 3, is 100 bpm”

**Poison Rhythm:** Students echo all rhythms except for the poison rhythm:

- **Warm-up:** “See how many times you can identify the poison rhythm!”
- **Elimination:** “If you play the poison rhythm you’re out”
- **Ensemble Mastery:** “If nobody plays the Poison Rhythm the ensemble gets a point, if you get three points you move to the next level, level 2 90 bpm, level 3 100 bpm”

## How They Work

The main goal of Ensemble Mastery games is to create group bonding from overcoming shared adversity. As a facilitator you want to make the games hard enough that they struggle, but not so hard that they quit.

One of the best ways to do this is by setting parameters around how many attempts they get or how long they have to complete the game. If you spread the game out over multiple sessions and give them a set amount of time, you will avoid expectations of having to succeed right now, while providing motivation to work within their given limit.

Most importantly, don’t let them win. Of course, we want them to succeed so sometimes think “ahhh they’re close enough,” unfortunately, every time we let them win we take an opportunity to overcome challenges and adversity together.