Simple Machines

1. As a class have students make a list of words that they think of when you say “Machines.”
2. From this list create a rhythmic text that matches up with the rhythms in the A section of the PowerPoint. I have put my students’ text in there so feel free to use ours or modify it as you see fit.
3. Speak through the A section and have students notate the rhythm of the words in small chunks.
4. I have students echo sing each measure on words before having them learn it on the xylophone. After they echo it a few times show the slide with pitches so they can play through it. Any D highlighted in Yellow is the low D on the instrument.
5. Use this process to teach the A section and Bass Xylophone Ostinato.
6. Play both A section and BX ostinato together.
7. When starting the B section have students start on high F and walk down to C. Then systematically add 1 note at a time until students can play all 7. After teaching them the pattern I show them how using 2 mallets makes playing it so much easier. I demonstrate this by using 2 different colored mallets so they can see that right hand just walks down from F to C and left hand walks down from D to B. Remember students who struggle with the entire pattern can always just play the F, E, D, C pattern while your hotshots play the whole thing.
8. Add words to help with rhythm.
9. Play this section (spokes and gears from lessons learned) 3 times for practice.
10. Teach last part of B section and try entire section.
11. Have students clap or stomp the BX B section ostinato.
12. Play both B section and BX ostinato for B section together.
13. Try A section then B section
14. Final form of the piece is A A B A.

Play around with the form. Students could sing it then play it: lots of different options.

If you don’t have enough instruments for everyone you could have half of the class create simple machine creative movements to be performed while the other students perform on xylophones. The possibilities are endless.