



EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

Lesson Plan

DRUMMING: FROM THE HEART TO THE HAND

DIV 1/2 (GRADES K-6)

LESSON 1 of 4

Cross Curricular Outcomes
Music Language Arts

Comprehensive School Health Priority Areas	
Physical Activity	X
Healthy Eating	
Positive Social Environments	X

Key 21 st Century Competencies	
A	Know how to learn
E	Innovate
H	Demonstrate good communication skills

MATERIALS

- Hand drums of various sizes, preferably djembes (can also use congas, darbukas, percussion cow bells, rubber balls, plastic containers, shakers, etc.).

RELATED RESOURCES

- *Drum Circle Facilitators Handbook*, Nellie Hill and Arthur Hull 2013
- *Rhythmical Alchemy Playshop*, Arthur Hull, 2013. <https://drumcircle.com/playshops/types/playshop.html>
- *Life For Djembe*, Mamady Keita, West African 1992
- Notation For West African Percussion: www.paulnas.eu/wap/.

INTRODUCTION

History and usage of the hand drum

Explain the physical components of the djembe, the most popular hand drum in North America, although originating and used still in West Africa. This drum has been used for the same purpose for more than a millennium, withstands the tests of time and is still relevant. Ask students what they think the instrument is used for. Try to establish that hand drums are universally used as an accompaniment instrument for other musical instruments. It's also used as an accompaniment for dancing in many cultures and for celebrations in Africa (harvest, fishing, etc.).

Then bring out the drum and play it. The djembe is also called a 'talking drum.' See if students can see why when you play it. It is also used in a circle setting as a healing instrument. Explain the use of drums for sound effects. Emulate the sound of nature with drums and shakers.

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

Learning the drum call

Ask students to take a drum, sit in a circle and play the drum experimentally. Call for "mumble jumble chaos," meaning everyone has free abandon to use their hands in a flurry of pounding on their instrument. Put your fist in the air to get the students' attention and signify that they should stop. Then explain hand signals for facilitating a drum gathering.

Next, ask students to take their hands off the drums and clap steadily, repeating what you say, "Pra papa pa papa papapa..." This sound imitates the drum call, used to initiate and end a drumming session. In many cultures, instead of counting in, they use the drum call. Next, say, "Ha haha ha hehe hehehe..." and have students repeat, while still clapping.

Hands on the drum

The three sounds on the djembe are bass, middle tone and high tone.

1. Bass - the whole hand hits the drum somewhere in the middle of the drum for the low sound (instant gratification as this is the easiest sound to achieve)
2. Middle tone – the wrist is bent but comes forward and comes in contact parallel with the drum head. The whole length of the finger strikes the drum near the edge of the drum.
3. High tone – the wrist is bent, the padded part of the hand hits the edge of the drum and the finger tips catapult on to the drum head.

Note: For bass, middle and high tone strokes, your hand should come off the drum immediately after making contact. Focus on bass and middle tone, the easiest sounds to achieve. Clap to the beat and review the drum call. Get the students to play with their dominant hand, while waving to a friend with the other hand. Maintain the beat, with everyone playing in unison. Switch to non-dominant hand on the bass and wave with the other.

Then wave with one hand and play “boom tap” or “doum tek doum tek” with the other hand. Play or say the drum call to stop everyone. Then ask for “mumble jumble chaos” and after a few minutes sound the drum call, ending the session. Try inserting a drum game into your repertoire. Visit <https://drumcircle.com/playshops/types/playshop.html> for ideas.

CLOSURE

Review and final activities

Have the students rub their hands together, creating sound. Choose one or more students to play a beat on the drums while the other students rub their hands to the beat of the drumming. Have one or two do their own moves on the drums (innovation) and half the class follows one student while the other half follows the other. Ask the students how they feel.

MODIFICATIONS OR EXTENSIONS FOR GRADE LEVELS

Instead of the ‘waving with one hand’ activity, give students an egg shaker and ask them to shake it with one hand while playing the rhythm on the drum with the other hand. Periodically check if students are covering their ears due to the volume. If they are, then infuse tapping with the fingers (like the motion used to play the piano) for volume reduction.



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Lesson Plan

DRUMMING: FROM THE HEART TO THE HAND DIV 1/2 (GRADES K-6) LESSON 2 of 4

Cross Curricular Outcomes
Music Language Arts

Comprehensive School Health Priority Areas	
Physical Activity	X
Healthy Eating	
Positive Social Environments	X

Key 21 st Century Competencies	
B	Think critically
F	Create opportunities to play
H	Demonstrate good communication skills

MATERIALS

- White board, congas, djembes, darbukas, shakers, scarves, rubber balls.

RELATED RESOURCES

- *Drum Circle Facilitators Handbook*, Nellie Hill and Arthur Hull 2013
- *Rhythmical Alchemy Playshop*, Arthur Hull, 2013. <https://drumcircle.com/playshops/types/playshop.html>
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INTRODUCTION

Rhythm in language

With your students, compile a list of words (e.g. repetitious, delicious, fun, laughing, happy, passion, harmonius, melodius) and use them to create rhythms to play on the drums.

Categorize the words on the whiteboard by number of syllables. You can also choose one or more themes, such as countries, animals, uplifting words, etc. Pair words with the same number of syllables together (e.g. pretty kitty) to create a rhythm. Clap while saying “pretty kitty” and then play the drums saying “pretty kitty.”

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

Review the djembe technique briefly, focusing on bass and tone. Sound the drum call, “pra papa pa papa papapa” and have the students repeat after you. Say, “laugh out loud, laugh out loud” and let them feel the rhythm in launage. Say, “la lala la lala lalala...laugh out loud, laugh out loud...mumble jumble chaos!” Signal students to stop by putting your fist in the air.

Ask the students to choose some rhyming words from the whiteboard. Say the words aloud while clapping, then transfer your hands to the drums and play “boom tap” then you say and they repeat, “Happy, happy, happy camper...laugh out loud, laugh out loud.” Review the drum call, then have someone volunteer to sound it, then play the rhythm again.

Emphasize the importance of a commencing soundly and ending all together. Ask for some volunteers to dance (no experience necessary); a circle dance is easy to emulate. Let the volunteers improvise and know that they're in a non-judgmental place. Do the "mumble jumble rumble."

Review the lesson, inform everyone of the healthy healing tradition of drumming in group settings and emphasize its community-building abilities. Ask for volunteers to do the hand calisthenics while one or a few individuals play the pulse quietly.

MODIFICATIONS OR EXTENSIONS FOR GRADE LEVELS

Simplify the word list for lower grades or choose more complicated words for higher grades. If you have a bilingual school or are teaching a French or Spanish class, try doing the activities in those languages.



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Lesson Plan

DRUMMING: FROM THE HEART TO THE HAND DIV 1/2 (GRADES K-6) LESSON 3 of 4

Cross Curricular Outcomes
Music Language Arts

Comprehensive School Health Priority Areas	
Physical Activity	X
Healthy Eating	
Positive Social Environments	X

Key 21 st Century Competencies	
A	Know how to learn
E	Innovate
H	Demonstrate good communication skills

MATERIALS

- Djembes, congas, darbukas, doun douns
- Plastic containers, skakers, use of floor etc.

RELATED RESOURCES

- *Drum Circle Facilitators Handbook*, Nellie Hill and Arthur Hull 2013
- *Rhythmical Alchemy Playshop*, Arthur Hull, 2013. <https://drumcircle.com/playshops/types/playshop.html>
- *Life For Djembe*, Mamady Keita, West African 1992
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INTRODUCTION

Explanation of the heart beat

Long ago when man was being chased by the mastodon or the grizzly bear, he realized that when he was fearful or running that his heartbeat was elevated and he could hear the pounding in his chest. This pounding was a pulse and man realized that other rhythmic things he did were only because of the heart beat. Perhaps thousands of years ago he emulated this sound through hitting on a wooden surface to create drumming. This drumming was improved when people stretched a hide across the hollowed wood service and upon striking the drum we heard the resonance of sound inside the drum was inherently pleasing to the ear because it emulated the heart beat.

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

Creating a heart beat

Start with the “mumble jumble rumble” and sound the call to end the drumming. Ask students to repeat the call verbally, then review the technique for bass and tone.

Have students improvise and play the sound of a heart beat on the drums. “Can we say the heart beat and can we play the heart beat. THUMP thump THUMP thump.” From there add the tones and play “boom, boom, tone, tone, Boom boom, tone, tone.”

Turn your attention to the doun douns. Explain the melody created by the doun doun drums. “Which is low, high, highest?” Establish the marriage between the lower drums (doun douns) and the djembes. Doun douns are called Duunba Sangban and Kenkeni. As there are three sounds on the djembe, there are three sounds on the bass drums (doun

douns). Explain the role of different parts (called patterns) on each djembe and different parts on the doun douns to create a sound mix. Play a composite on the doun douns, using shakers.

Show a volunteer how to play the doun douns. Have half of your group play “doun, doun, tone, tone” and half play “boom tap, boom tap.”

Explain the use of teamwork in a drum gathering or drum band, as illustrated by the interplay between the doun douns and the djembes.

CLOSURE

Show the three sounds on the djembe, voice the rhythms in a call-and-answer format. Do the hand calisthenic routine with student volunteers as everyone else plays accompaniment on the drums.



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Cross Curricular Outcomes
Music Language Arts

Comprehensive School Health Priority Areas	
Physical Activity	X
Healthy Eating	
Positive Social Environments	X

Key 21 st Century Competencies	
A	Know how to learn
F	Create opportunities through play
H	Demonstrate good communication skills

MATERIALS

- Variety of drums (including dounounba, kenkeni and darbukas), shakers, bells, claves, scarves, use of the floor
- Beledi music - www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5jxGPI0AJs
- Computer, stereo and speakers

RELATED RESOURCES

- *Drum Circle Facilitators Handbook*, Nellie Hill and Arthur Hull 2013
- *Rhythmical Alchemy Playshop*, Arthur Hull, 2013. <https://drumcircle.com/playshops/types/playshop.html>
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INTRODUCTION

Constructing vocals and drums together

Review basics of the djembe and other hand drums. Have everyone play their drum separately, and include some shakers, claves and bells. Let the students discover that the drums are various in tones and the shakers and bells add to the timber. Clap and sing: “doum doum tek, doum tek.” Transfer to the drum but with the dominant hand only.

Egyptian and Middle Eastern Classic Beledi

Have volunteers of four or more form standing circles and have them improvise a scarf dance. The scarf is around the wrist and stand one in front of the other, in a circle. Play beledi music and have some students volunteer to play douounbas and kenkenis.

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

Creating a heart beat

Play the darbuka. Mention the beauty of the sound and that this drum is popular in a large segment of the world, such as Egypt, South Asia, parts of Europe and today in Canada. Note that it’s held sideways and the sounds “doum doum” and “tek tek” are great examples of onomatopoeia.

Have students repeat after you: “Doum Doum tek doum tek” while clapping and playing Beledi. Someone can play “doum doum” on the Dounounba and someone can play “tek” on the Kenkeni. With one hand in the air, play “Boom tap boom tap” and “See you later alligator.”

Students reply, “In a while, crocodile.”

Play the call and end with “Laugh out loud, laugh out loud.” Then say “mumble jumble chaos.”

MODIFICATIONS OR EXTENSIONS FOR GRADE LEVELS

Bells are recommended for the higher grades as they are loud and higher in the decibel level. Onomatopoeia is a tough word for the younger grades.