



HAPPYNESS DRUM CIRCLES

ARTS PLAY DVD HANDOUT 2004

New cottage, Farr, Inverness, IV2 6XB
Tel: 01808 521335 Mobile: 07752 934023
Web: www.happyness.org e-mail: steve@happyness.org

THE DRUM CIRCLE MODEL

Music is something that lives within each of us. It moves us physically, emotionally and spiritually.

The drum enables us to make a loud noise with our hands. This release of emotion is also a feeder of emotion, as the drum places us in the here and now and we entrain to the beat. As childcare workers we have the opportunity to allow this raw expression and facilitate this NOISE into a structured, educational, fun shared group experience. We can teach without teaching the aspects or elements of music and rhythm that make it fun, enjoyable and healthy for groups to participate in.

We must be careful not to inhibit the expression of a child through the drum, but rather, take that expression and use it as a platform or springboard to develop an awareness within that child of the different aspects that can help the child participate in a team, a group, a band, a family.....life.

The drum is simply a tool for developing life skills and allowing self-expression. If we facilitate this raw energy into a shared group experience using musical dynamics we can create music.

As we facilitate the elements of music, so too can we facilitate the emotional experience of the child. For example if a child is persistently beating a fast, loud beat on the drum, and we teach that child, in a fun way, that the drum can be played softly, we are not only teaching him that this is possible, but we are directly calming his inner state of emotion, allowing him to participate in a group and empowering him to use the drum as a tool for creativity, so that next time he comes to the drum he is empowered and aware that he can influence his own emotional state.

Elements to facilitate

Start & stop

Volume

Tempo, speed

Timbral groups

Turn taking

Vocals

Accent beats, stomps etc.

Layering

Call and response

Rumbles

Facilitation skills

- Body language – precise, clear, consistent, telegraphing (anticipation)
- Honesty and trust – trust the group and they will trust you
- Personality – be yourself, share *your* spirit and the group will share theirs
- Rhythmical awareness – a basic understanding that rhythms fit together
- Spirit sharing awareness – an understanding that the drum is a tool for expression

Planning for a workshop

Have a beginning, middle and an end.

Have enough instruments for everyone to take part.

Build on small successes.

If you are using a variety of instruments, make sure that everyone gets a chance at playing something *they* have chosen.

Drum Circle Games

There are a whole host of games and activities that a facilitator can lead during a drum circle. Different games include: rhythm games, listening games, teamwork games, games for personal growth, vocal games, creative games and many others.

Any activity can be introduced as a game as long as you stress that the most important aspect of the game is FUN.

Games can be used for a variety of purposes:

- To educate the group about a specific aspect of their group music making
- To introduce or close a session
- To break up a session
- To build confidence and self esteem in certain players
- To regain the focus of the group

There are different games that work better for certain populations and size of group, and it is important to take these considerations into account when setting up a game for the first time.

Here are a selection of games that have developed with Happyness over the years:

| NAME | GROUP SIZE | PURPOSE | EQUIPMENT | DESCRIPTION |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|---|-----------------------|--|
| Hide & Seek | Any | Volume Control, Teamwork, Fun | Drums &/or percussion | One person leaves the room, the others decide on a place to hide a given object (shaker for example). When the person returns, the others have to guide him/ her with loud and soft rumbles to the given object. LOUD= near, SOFT= far. |
| One at a time | Small | Fun, patience, teamwork, | Drums &/or percussion | Everyone gets a chance to say something on his or her instrument UN-INTERRUPTED, i.e. only one person is allowed to play at any given time. If someone interrupts, they're out, or if two people start together, they're both out. The winner is the last person in. |
| Call & response | Any | Listening, fun, rhythmical awareness, confidence building | Drums &/or percussion | There are many games based around call and response. My three favourite are: Simon Says: the group can only respond to a particular rhythm when 'Simon Says' Odd one out: the group responds to all rhythms played, except one particular one, which has been demonstrated prior to the start of the game. On the run: A player calls and the group responds to that call. Following that response, the next player in the circle calls, and the group responds. This goes on until everyone in the circle has had a turn. |
| Pass the beat, roll to change | Small to medium | Fun, taking turns | Drums &/or percussion | The beat is passed around the circle in a clockwise direction until someone rumbles which means the direction of the passing beat changes. |

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|-------------------|-----------------|---|------------------------|---|
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| Conductor | Any | Develop awareness of orchestrational tools, confidence building, fun, developing creativity and leadership skills | | You as facilitator invite participants to direct the group using their own signals for the different elements to facilitate (e.g. Start/ stop, Volume up/ down). You can begin with just rumbles and move on to rhythms. |
| 1 to 8 | Any | Fun, Rhythmical awareness. | Mixed instrument-ation | Ask participants to choose a number between 1 and 8 and they are to keep this a secret. Lead the group in a rhythmical chant “1.2.3.4.5.6.7.8.1.2.3.4.5.6.7.8” etc.etc. Then tell the group to stop chanting and play their instrument on the beat, which they have chosen. Start off slow and build up the speed, when the group is playing by feeling, rather than counting, the facilitator can stop chanting, and encourage the group to add another number, or you can even let it flow into an improvised rhythm. |
| Rainstorm rhythms | Any | Rhythmical awareness, turn taking | Drums &/or percussion | Begin by telling the group that they must copy the person on their left. Begin the sequence by stroking your drum skin; the person on your right will then join in, and so on until the whole group is stroking their drum skins. You can then begin tapping your finger on the drum; this too will pass around the circle until everyone is doing it. You can gradually build up the sound of the circle by going from one finger to two, to five, to a rumble, and similarly you can bring the sound back down to a stroke. When you have done this, you can re-do the game but allow each person to have a turn at initiating a sound or rhythm. The result will be an ever evolving rhythm with never more than two rhythms going on at anyone time. |
| 1 to 10 | Any | Patience, awareness of space in rhythms, fun. | Drums &/or percussion | Initiate a call “1.....2.....3.....” at the pace of your choice. The group is to follow the count silently until they reach 10, on which they must strike their instrument. In theory everyone will strike his or her instrument together!! |
| Conversations | Small to medium | Encourage dialogue | Drums &/or percussion | Play a pulse. Choose two people to begin, encourage them to develop a dialogue on top of the pulse. Choose two more people and encourage them to do the same. Continue until everyone is dialoguing with some one else. BOOM – we have a song! |

SONGS

Make up your own:

There's a great book called 'clap your hands and wiggle your fingers' available at any music store. The theme of the book is adapting traditional nursery rhymes and making them into games & action songs. This idea is a great method and can be built upon by giving you the idea to make up your own (simple) songs to fit your own themes and aims.

Here are a few songs that I have made using this method:

1. Shake Shake Shake - (To the tune of Bob Marley, Redemption song)

Shake Shake Shake Shake Shake Shake Shake Shake
Shaking's fun so lets all shake
We can shake fast.....
We can shake slow.....
We can STOP

And we can GO!!

2. Tambourines, Tambourines where are you? -(To the tune of Tommy thumb)

Tambourines, Tambourines where are you?
Here I am, Here I am, this is my tune.....

Jingle bells, Jingle bells where are you?
Here I am, Here I am, This is my tune.....

Etc.

3. Suzy play the tambourine -(To the tune of Polly put the Kettle on)

Suzy play the tambourine
Suzy play the tambourine
Suzy play the tambourine
Give us a tune

La La La La La La La
La La La La La La La
La La La La La La La
La La La La

Etc.

N.B. Boomwhackers can also be used to give you simple melodies.

Traditional songs like if you're happy and you know it, can be used with instruments to make fun games and activities.

Simple changes can be made to songs like:

Row row row your boat (Bang Bang Bang your drum)

Old Macdonald had a farm (Conon bridge playscheme had a band)

Don't forget that simply playing a pulse along to a song is great fun and very satisfying.

STORIES

Percussion stories led by the children using drums and/ or a variety of sound sources are great fun and encourage creativity. If a sound effect can't be found on an instrument you can use voices or think about the feeling of a particular sound and play the feeling. For example you may not be able to find a sound for a creaking door, so ask the children how the creeping door feels, and play the feeling (soft, anticipation, excitement etc.)

It's a good idea to start with something you know will work for example: going for a walk. Then open it up to the children- where are we going etc.?

Sound effects can be used for story books . Stories with the weather & animals are very easy to add sound effects to, for example: Noah's ark, A very noisy night, Rumble in the Jungle. There are some classic stories in which you can add different musical dynamics such as: The hare and the tortoise (fast and slow), Jack and the beanstalk (sounds going up and down), Goldilocks and the 3 Bears (Volume dynamics). Use mixed percussion and let the children decide on the different sound effects before putting the story together.

RESOURCES

For sale:

Boomwhacker – Pentatonic set 6 (all the notes sound good together) - £14.50
- C major diatonic scale set 8 £18.50
- Chromatic set 5 (black notes on a piano) - £13

Djembes – Kambala – start at £68
Bucarra – start at £35
Indonesian – start at £32 (pack of 4 assorted sizes £129!!)

Other drums and percussion are available from happyness at discounted prices. Please ask for a catalogue.
Tel: 01808 521335 or e-mail: steve@happyness.org

Homemade instruments:

A) Carpet tubes cut to length

All the lengths cut will be a proportion of the longest length, here are the proportions:

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| LONEST LENGTH (TONIC) – 1.00 | e.g 100 cm |
| MAJOR 2 nd – 0.88 | 88cm |
| MAJOR 3 rd – 0.8 | 80cm |
| PERFECT 5 th – 0.66 | 66cm |
| PERFECT 6 th – 0.6 | 60cm |
| OCTAVE – 0.5 | 50cm |

GIVE IT A GO!!!!

Don't give yourself a hard time if something you try doesn't work, the main thing is trying out new ideas. Children are our greatest teachers and if you are open to their ideas and feedback -they will show you how you can show them!!

Rhythm is everywhere, we all have it. It's in our hearts, our breath, the movement of the earth and moon. Be aware of it, use it and have fun with it. You can do it!!