



A DRUM CIRCLE PROGRAM BY DAN REIFF

All Hands On Beat ~ Primary Program

APPROACH:

To show that rhythm and music is universal, something anyone at any age or stage can do - if you have a pulse, you can play! I will use a mix of fun and simple rhythm games, basic instruction, and fundamental listening and cooperative activities to get everyone participating in creating and playing music together.

LEARNING GOALS

- Playing the basic sounds of the djembe drum and egg shakers
- Pattern recognition and rhythm through word play, movement and sound
- Communication and expression through a musical instrument
- Being part of the class community by listening, sharing and taking turns
- Importance of team-work: the whole is greater than the parts
- Listening and looking for patterns and rhythm in every day life

SINGLE SESSION

We will start with simple and fun rhythm games using our hands, feet, bodies, and voices that will get everyone smiling and warmed up before we use the drum. This will include testing our coordination by trying to do two things at once, and testing our rhythmic ability through simple word play and number games. I may break the circle up into parts and show them some basic hand signals used to shape the sounds we are making. Then we will move to the djembe drums, and talk a little about where they are from and what they are made of. We will go through the basics of playing the drum and getting two different sounds, the low (bass) and high (tone) notes. We will get a feel for those two sounds by playing some simple rhythms, and using word games to change and create our own patterns. Then we may use some of the hand signals to shape the patterns we've made. Lastly, we may introduce egg shakers to the beat, or play an egg shaker game.

OUTCOME

To know what the djembe drum is, where it comes from, and how to play the basic sounds, bass and tone. To all play a learned rhythm, or create their own as a class, with confidence and cooperation.

MULTIPLE SESSIONS

These ideas can be expanded to include more instruction, games and activities to put students in control of the drum circle. By showing them more hand signals for shaping and changing the music, they can take turns leading the group, building confidence and trust as they learn to lean on, and listen to each other. We can also explore other percussion instruments and sounds, and discuss their role in bringing different tones to the drum circle. We can continue to create our own beats, play along with popular songs, and even record ourselves in the process.