

Title: Coffee Can Drumming (Cathy Weston)

Cycle: 1 and 2

Length: Several lessons

Grade: 1-4

### FOCUS OF THE LESSON:

- to experiment with creating a variety of sounds
- to experiment with improvisation and rhythm
- to learn basic drumming techniques
- to invent and perform a piece of music

#### MUSIC COMPETENCIES:

- to invent vocal or instrumental pieces
- to appreciate musical works, personal productions and those of classmates

#### ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE:

##### Language of music

- loud/forte soft/piano
- rests
- duration: whole, half, quarter, eighth notes

##### graphic representation

- how to make whole, half, quarter, and eighth notes and quarter rests

##### instrumental techniques

- form
- means of production
- technique

##### rules for group ensemble work

- directions for beginning and end of a piece, dynamics, beat

##### composition procedures

- reproduction of sound
- repetition
- ostinato

#### CROSS-CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES:

- encouraging creative expression
- cooperating with others
- development of critical judgment

#### BROAD AREAS OF LEARNING: (INCLUDING OTHER SUBJECT-MATTER)

- math: fractions
- language of music

#### EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- Pertinent, varied use of sound sources and elements of technique
- Pertinent, varied use of elements of musical language

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### Coffee Can Drumming

**Cycle:** 1 and 2

**Length:** Several lessons

**Materials:** A large coffee can with plastic lid for each student

#### Procedure:

1. Give each child a “drum”. Ask them to explore their drum to see how many different kinds of sounds they can make. Encourage them to try different ways to make sounds. Have them share their sounds, either in small groups or with the whole group.
2. Talk about improvisation. Give each child an opportunity to improvise with his/her drum. Encourage them to “play whatever they want to”.
3. Teacher plays a 2-bar rhythm on his/ her drum, children play it back. Works best leaving a rest at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> bar, ie, ta ta ta ta/ titi titi ta rest. This is called **call and response**. Start simply, gradually making rhythms more complicated. Use the different areas and sounds of the drum to play these. Children must observe as well as listen. Vary tempo and dynamics, and use the appropriate musical terms. Encourage bouncing hands off “skin” or plastic “head” of their drum so it can vibrate better.
4. Divide class into 4 groups:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> group plays 1 4-beat note, ie, 1 whole note (no bouncing for this)
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> group plays 2 2-beat notes, ie, 2 half notes
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> group plays 4 1-beat notes, ie, 4 quarter notes
  - 4<sup>th</sup> group plays 8 ½-beat notes, ie, 8 eighth notes

-Discuss math concepts as you go along. Refer to a chart of musical note values. Have 4 children “walk” the note values at the same time to demonstrate the concepts of note values.

-Have all 4 parts play together. Begin with whole-note group, then bring in half-note group, etc. Give each group a chance to play each part.

5. Create with the input of the children a 3 or 4 part piece. This can be done using any appropriate theme. The rhythms of the parts should complement each other. By saying the words, the rhythms are easy for the children to learn. The words can be taken away later.

Example: It is very cold. (ta ta titi ta)  
Don't forget your mittens! (titi titi titi rest)  
I'm freezing. (two-oo ta ta)

Add rhythm instruments to each part that express the idea of the words best and fit the rhythm.

Have each group try the different parts. Always start with one group and bring in the others one at a time. Vary the group that begins.

**Extension:**

-Create more elaborate pieces. Do this throughout the year as themes and seasons change.

-Use graphic representation to record the rhythms of each part.

-Create an ostinato to add to the piece. Example for the winter piece above: a small group saying "Brrrrrrrr, Brrrrrrrr", using a vibra-slap or xylophone to accompany their voices.

**Evaluation:**

-By observing each student's grasp of the competencies used in the lessons

-By assessing each student's ability to perform during each activity

-By taping the 3 or 4 part piece, then playing it back for the students and asking them to evaluate themselves.