

DRUMBEATS: Catch the Beat in Africa

Grades K – 2: Lesson 1 — A

1. Who, what, where, why and how do Africans use percussion to create and communicate?

A. What are percussion instruments: strikers, shakers and scrapers? Play a game to identify and categorize percussion instruments.

Introduction

Percussion instruments are categorized in three different ways. To get acquainted with the sounds and categories of strikers, shakers and scrapers, the class will play a game of recognizing timbre (tone color) of instruments. This will lead into specific African percussion instruments and their names.

Content and Grade Level

This lesson utilizes integrated curriculum lesson plans targeted to students in grades K-1-2 and linking music to language arts, social studies, science and math.

Curriculum Links

Discipline-based Music

Criticism — listening to, analyzing and critically examining music using higher level thinking skills such as comparing, contrasting, discriminating and discussing to make value judgments about musical sounds and compositions

National Standards for Music Education

#6- Listening to, analyzing and describing music.

Indiana Language Arts Proficiencies and Competencies

Categorizing
Asking and answering questions
Listening and responding
Following directions
Making critical judgments
Collaborating in groups
Comparing and contrasting

Indiana Social Studies Proficiencies and Competencies

People have similarities and differences
People learn from each other in many different ways
Practice citizenship through participation in group activities
Examine the contributions of various racial and ethnic groups
Identify and celebrate the diverse cultural and ethnic contributions
Identify common elements of world cultures and diverse American cultures
Examine the influence of diverse cultures

Indiana Mathematics Proficiencies and Competencies

- Develop problem-solving abilities
- Recognize and make connections
- Recognize and develop mathematical connections

Indiana Science Proficiencies and Competencies

- Manipulation and observation as a "science habit of mind;" technology and science

Implementation Overview

The teacher should review background information provided at the beginning of this unit. Using this information, introduce the class to the Africa's location with pictures from the Internet or CD-ROM programs on the subject (look at reference) The entire class will participate at one time, and the lesson will require one to two sessions of 30 minutes each.

Resources Needed

1. Globe of world to identify Africa
2. Pictures of African instruments (Printed from the CD-ROM of Musical Instruments or from the Internet (See Webquest) or copied from books.
3. Video *Music of Africa*, Our Musical Heritage Series, 22 minutes, ISBN 1-55784-025-3. Video focuses on western African music, Ghana in particular.
4. Black/white board with chalk or dry marker, or easel pad and marker
5. A large screen or a place where children can hide while they play the instruments.
6. Instruments that strike, shake and scrape (pitched and un-pitched instruments.)
for each child

Procedure

1. Introduce the unit by identifying where Africa is on the globe.
1. Show short video *Music of Africa* and discuss the importance of percussion instruments in the lives of the African people.
2. Ask class to name the three ways in which percussion instruments are played. Select three children to play instruments that are struck, shaken and scraped (example: a drum, shekere and a guiros) and ask the class how the instruments are played. Write down "Striking, Shaking, Scraping" on the board when the children identify the timbre of each instrument.
3. Ask three new children to hide behind a screen and have one child play one instrument at a time and have three children from the class identify whether they were played by striking, shaking, or scraping. When one child from the class is called upon and gives the correct answer, he/she takes the place of the child behind the screen. Continue this process with a variety of instruments until you feel that the class knows the classifications. Then vary the rules for classes that can go further with a more difficult game.
4. Have three children play the instruments in sequence and another child identify the instruments in order of performance by striking, striking, shaking or shaking, scraping, striking. etc. All children like to be involved in answering and playing the instruments. If time permits have each child take a turn. Review the three ways in which percussion instruments are played.

Evaluation

Evaluate the class as to how many children can identify instruments by their timbre. Distribute instruments to each student. Have the class move into three groups: striking, shaking, scraping. Observe each child to see if he/she knows which group to join. Then observe children in the "call and response" activity below to see if they play during the time designated for each group.

Kindergarten

End the class with all groups echoing the teacher's lead where she/he will play a rhythmic pattern on a drum or stick. This is the "call and response," which is the basis for musical communication in Africa. The teacher may vary the call and response with just Strikers, then Shakers and Scrapers so that she/he can evaluate how well the children know the categories.

First Grade

Begin with the call and response activity under the kindergarten section (above) and then go into a three-part rhythmic ensemble one line at a time. Then, try combining them one line at a time.

Say or chant the words:

Strikers playing the steady beat — Ta- Ta- Ta- Ta (drum, drum, drum ,drum)

Shakers playing — ti-ti-ti-ti-ti-ti-ti-ti(shaker, shaker, shaker, shaker)

Scrapers playing — ti-ti Ta ti-ti Ta (shaker drum, shaker drum)

Each section repeatedly plays its ostinato pattern to fit into the polyrhythm ensemble.

Second Grade

Begin with the call and response activity under the kindergarten section (above)and then go into a three-part rhythmic ensemble one line at a time. Then, combine them one line at a time.

Say or chant the words:

Strikers playing — Ta- Ta-ti-ti-Ta (drum, drum, shaker, drum)

Shakers playing — ti-Ta ti-Ta Z (Shake, drum, shake drums, rest)

Scrapers playing — Ta- ti-ti Ta-ti-ti (drum, shaker, drum shaker)

Each section repeatedly plays its ostinato pattern to fit into the polyrhythm ensemble.

Assignment

Homework: Explain and give examples of how to make music with homemade or found objects. Assign each child is to make a hand-made instrument that is played by striking, shaking, or scraping, using found objects in his/her environment. They are to bring the found sound "instrument(s)" to the next music period. Copy the form titled "Lesson 1 — B" on the next page to send home with students.

Grades K – 2: Lesson 1 – C

1. Who, what, where, why and how do Africans use percussion to create and communicate?
C. Play your instruments, categorize and play in a polyrhythm ensemble.

Introduction

The students will categorize the found sound instruments into strikers, shakers, scrapers and play them in large and small groups using call and response and African polyrhythms. They will also create a simple polyrhythm chart and play their composition.

Content Area and Grade Level

This lesson utilizes integrated curriculum lesson plans targeted to students in grades K-1-2 and linking music to language arts, social studies, science and math.

Curriculum Links

Discipline Based Music Education

- **Production** — improvising and performing music to give students a pathway for communicating ideas and expression.
- **Historical and social context** — understanding music in relation to history and culture to discover how humans have expressed ideas and experiences in sound through history.
- **Aesthetics** — expressing personal preferences for specific musical works and styles, responding to music intellectually and emotionally, valuing music's importance in life and making aesthetic judgments about music.

National Standards for Music Education

- #2 Performing on instruments, alone and with others
- #9 Understanding music in relation to history and culture

Indiana Language Arts Proficiencies and Competencies

- Categorizing
- Asking and answering questions
- Listening and responding
- Following directions
- Making critical judgements
- Collaborating in groups
- Comparing and contrasting

Indiana Social Studies Proficiencies and Competencies

- People have similarities and differences
- People learn from each other in many different ways
- Practice citizenship through participation in group activities
- Examine the contributions of various racial and ethnic groups
- Identify and celebrate the diverse cultural and ethnic contributions
- Identify common elements of world cultures and diverse American cultures

Examine the influence of diverse cultures

Indiana Science proficiencies and Competencies

Manipulation and observation as a "science habit of mind" technology and science
Materials and manufacturing
Structure of matter

Indiana Math Proficiencies and Competencies

Develop problem solving abilities
Recognize and make connections
Recognize and develop mathematical connections

Implementation Overview

The teacher should review background information provided at the beginning of this unit. Explain and review the different types of instruments and their functions in Africa. The entire class will participate at one time, and the lesson will require one and one-half to two sessions of 30 minutes each.

Materials

Handmade instruments brought in by students
Chart of the 12-beat patterns for each category of percussion instrument (See appendix.)

Procedure

1. Ask each student to share his/her instrument with the entire class and have the class figure out if it is a striking, shaking or scraping percussion instrument. Discuss the science of how the sound is made and what kind of materials were used in making the instruments.
2. Ask the class to divide into groups by instrument type. Lead off with a rhythmic call and response activity. Then, go around the room and point to individual students to play a rhythmic pattern and have the other children answer. (Kindergarten) Discuss why call and response is so basic and important to African music.
3. As an extension of this lesson, you may teach the students the African call and response cradle song, Taa Taa Yee and experience how this form applies to vocal music. Compare and contrast this cradle song to lullabies in America. (Song may be found in the First Grade McGraw Hill 2000, music series, Share the Music on page T90.)
4. Lead they class in a polyrhythm ensemble. Using a 12-beat matrix, assign each category a line and have them play their instruments only when they say their number. Practice separately until each group: strikers, shakers and scrapers have the pattern learned. Then put all three groups together with their own rhythmic pattern. Please see the polyrhythm example in the appendix for the first pattern. Use it and then have the children change the patterns to allow for overlapping and blank spots for rests. Then practice and play as a group with the new pattern. You may reproduce the grid for individual or small group work.
5. Also included is a matrix for a 16-beat pattern. The children may also use this for songs that have a 16-beat pattern.
6. Refer to the Resource Appendix and play polyrhythm ensembles with African songs found in these music curriculum book series, 2000: MacGraw Hill, *Share the Music* and Silver Burdett, Ginn, *The Music Connection*.

Evaluation

Have students evaluate the group: Did they keep a steady beat? Did they keep their own rhythmic part? Did it all fit together as one piece? With this background, the students will be ready to learn

how percussion instruments are used for communicating in Africa through the book "The Singing Man" by Angela Medearis.

Grades K – 2: Lesson 1 – D

1. Who, what, where, why, and how do Africans use percussion to create and communicate?
 - D. Learn how African people communicate with signal drum music.

Introduction

There are many parts of Africa where people play talking drums. Talking drums communicate danger, invite people to gather, announce the news and welcome people.

Content Area and Grade Level

This lesson utilizes integrated curriculum lesson plans targeted to students in grades K-1-2 and linking music to language arts, social studies and science.

Curriculum Links

Discipline Based Music Education

- **Historical and social context** — understanding music in relation to history and culture to discover how humans have expressed ideas and experiences in sound through history.
- **Criticism** — listening to, analyzing, and critically examining music using higher level thinking skills such as compare and contrast to make judgments about musical sounds.

National Standards for Music Education

8. Understanding the relationship between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

Indiana Language Arts Proficiencies and Competencies

Listening with enjoyment to storytelling
Listening and responding
Asking and answering questions
Making critical judgments
Comparing arts from different cultures

Indiana Social Studies Proficiencies and Competencies

People have similarities and differences
Identify the diverse cultural and ethnic contributions of various groups of people
Identify common elements of world cultures

Indiana Science Proficiencies and Competencies

Science of sound

Implementation Overview

The teacher should review background information provided at the beginning of this unit. The entire class will participate at one time, and the lesson will require one and one-half to two sessions of 30 minutes each.

Resources Needed

Map, globe, or web site map to locate Africa, specifically the countries of Nigeria and Ghana in West Africa

Signal manipulatives, ex: a whistle, a dinner bell, a flag, a drum

The storybook, *The Singing Man*, by Angela Shelf Medearis

Tapes, CDs

A stereo or boom-box

Procedure

1. As a class, discuss what a signal means. (A sign given by gesture, flashing light, sound, etc. to convey a command, direction, warning, etc.)
2. Brainstorm and chart lists of signals observed going to and from school, at school and at home.
Ex: Police and fire sirens, traffic lights, playground whistle, school bell, dinner bell, weather warning
3. Take turns communicating through signals by playing a pantomime game. Act out a signal from the above list or make up new ones to represent daily classroom activities.
Ex: Using the restroom, fire drill, lunch time, pencil sharpening, recess
4. Listen to songs that signal a feeling, action or emotion. Move in a style that the music indicates.
Ex: *Hail to the Chief*, *Pomp and Circumstance*, *Fanfare for the Common Man*, talking drum music
5. Read the West African folktale, *The Singing Man*, and discuss the use of the *omele* drum (a talking drum) as a means to signal communication and the entrance of people in the story.
6. Show pictures of the talking drum, find the drum on the Web or bring a drum to the class.
7. Listen to selections of African talking drum music. Feel the beating in your body, with the call of the music in your feet, and the response in your hands.
8. Discuss as a class what the drums might be communicating. Is it good or bad news? A village person or a royal visitor? Talking across great distances or talking nearby?
9. Compare and contrast a telephone conversation with a talking drum conversation by completing a Venn Diagram with the class.
10. In a class discussion, list or act out all of the ways talking drums are used to communicate in an African village.

Evaluation

Assessment is included in the above lesson as part of lesson procedures 9 and 10. The lesson is successful if students can compare a means of communication they are familiar with to the means of communication of the African talking drum. They will also have listed signals that are part of their everyday lives and what those signals conveyed by talking drum could mean to the people of West Africa.

Grades K – 2: Lesson 1 – E

1. Who, what, where, why, and how do Africans use percussion to create and communicate?
 - E. Use your own percussion instrument to improvise signals and communicate with other members of your class.

Introduction

There are many parts of Africa where talking drums are used to communicate.

Content Area and Grade Level

This lesson utilizes integrated curriculum lesson plans targeted to students in grades K-1-2 and linking music to language arts, social studies and science.

Curriculum Links

Discipline Based Music Education

- **Production** — improvising and performing music to give students a pathway for communicating ideas and expression.

National Standards for Music Education

3. Improvising melodies, variations and accompaniments
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

Indiana Language Arts Proficiencies and Competencies

Sharing ideas
Listening and responding
Collaborating in groups

Indiana Social Studies Proficiencies and Competencies

People have similarities and differences
Identify and celebrate the diverse cultural and ethnic contributions

Indiana Science Proficiencies and Competencies

Materials and manufacturing

Implementation Overview

The teacher should review background information provided at the beginning of this unit. The entire class will divide into three groups by instruments that you shake, scrape or strike. The lesson will require a 30-minute session.

Resources Needed

Map, globe, or web site map to locate Africa, specifically the countries of Nigeria and Ghana in West Africa
Instruments the children have made that you shake, scrape, or strike
A signal drum or box with a different timbre than their instruments
Tapes, CDs
A stereo or boom-box

Procedure

1. As a class, listen to a recorded example of West African talking drum music.
2. Brainstorm and chart a list of communications the drums may have made.
3. Discuss conversations between two people. Role play a question and answer (call and response) drama between teacher and class.
Ex: Teacher: Hello!
 Class: Hello!
 Teacher: How are you?
 Class: Various answers
 Teacher: What did you have for breakfast today?
 Class: Various answers
4. Listen again to a recorded example of West African talking drum music. Move to the high and low pitches created by the drum. Use high and low pitches to say "Hello, how are you?" with your voice. Pass a talking drum or two drums of varying pitch around the circle, and mimic the high and low pitches of "Hello, how are you?" after it is spoken.
5. Divide the class into three groups (if possible) of instruments they have made that shake, scrape or strike. Choose one child to be the lead drummer who creates a short starting signal for each one of the groups that shake scrape or strike. The lead drummer must signal with a drum or box that has a different timbre than the other instruments. When their signal is sounded, they shake, scrape or strike group will improvise a musical call (or question). When the next signal is sounded, the shake, scrape or strike group will improvise a musical response (or answer).
6. Have different students be the lead drummer.
7. Listen again to the recorded example of West African talking drum music. Then improvise a response to the calls of the talking drum. Point out that in this piece of music, the calls and responses will be of similar phrase length.
8. Have each student improvise a short phrase on his/her instrument to signal the lesson has ended.

Evaluation

Assessment is included in the above lesson as part of lesson procedures 7 and 8. The lesson is successful if each student can improvise a short signal as their instrument is put away.

Grades K – 2: Lesson 2 — A and B

2. Stories, folk tales, and percussion (music) help us learn about everyday life in Africa.
A & B. Learn about the African mbira, and use it, along with other African instruments, in improvising an original accompaniment to enhance the telling of an African folk tale entitled *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears*, retold by Verna Aardema.

Introduction

The mbira, or thumb piano, vibrates or make a buzzing sound because of the metal attached to the body of the instrument. Buzzing sounds are used to complement music, dance and storytelling in Africa. Simple mbiras are easy to make.

Content Area and Grade Level

This lesson utilizes integrated curriculum lesson plans targeted to students in grades K-1-2 and linking music to language arts, social studies, science and math.

Curriculum Links

Discipline Based Music Education

Historical and Social Context - understanding music in relation to history and culture to discover how humans have expressed ideas and experiences in sound throughout history.

Production - music making: improvising and performing music to give students a pathway for communicating ideas and expression.

National Standards for Music Education

2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
5. Reading and notating music.
3. Understanding the relationship between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

Indiana Language Arts Proficiencies and Competencies

listening with enjoyment to storytelling
comprehending stories
telling why they like to listen to something
asking and answering questions
sharing ideas
listening and responding
following directions
comparing arts from different cultures
comparing and contrasting

Indiana Social Studies Proficiencies and Competencies

people learn from each other in many different ways
practice citizenship through participation in group activities
examine the contributions of various racial and ethnic groups

identify and celebrate the diverse cultural and ethnic contributions
examine the influence of diverse cultures

Indiana Science Proficiencies and Competencies

materials
science of sound vibration
manipulation and observation as a "science habit of mind"

Indiana Math Proficiencies and Competencies

develop an understanding of whole numbers and fractions
develop an understanding of measurement

Implementation Overview

The teacher should review background information provided at the beginning of this unit. The entire class will receive direct instruction at one time, collaborate in small groups, and come together for a final telling of a folk tale. The first part of the lesson will take one 30-minute class session to study and make a mbira with adult helpers. The second part of the lesson will take one to one and a half 30-minute class periods.

Resources Needed

Map, globe, or web site to locate Africa
An mbira, or picture of an mbira from Microsoft Musical Instruments CD ROM
Materials to construct a replica of a mbira
The West African Tale *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears*, retold by Verna Aardema

Plot Synopsis

Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears is a cumulative tall tale that starts one day when a farmer was digging yams that were almost as big as mosquitoes, or so a mosquito tried to tell her friend the iguana. This sets off a chain of events in the animal kingdom that concludes with unending nighttime when mother owl refuses to wake the sun in her sorrow. The council of King Lion meets to try to solve the problem and all of the animals wish to punish the mosquito, who now was not to be found. The story ends satisfactorily for everyone but the mosquito, who still feels guilt and continues to ask if people are angry with her. And that is why mosquitoes buzz in people's ears.

Procedure

1. As a class, listen to the West African Tale, *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears*.
2. Discuss the "buzz" in African music. Learn about the mbira (thumb piano) sound that buzzes in African music. The "buzz" is also heard in African vocal music in vocables and in singing. Make a list of the lively sounds of the animals in the story.
3. As a class, find and listen to the sound of the mbira, or thumb piano. (This could be a link to the study of pianos, or to how many other instruments are played with the thumbs.)
4. Make a replica of an African mbira.

Materials:

Block of soft wood approximately 5" X 6" and 3/4" thick.
Seven to 10 craft sticks
Wire coat hanger
Four small "eye" screws, big enough to allow the coat hanger wire to thread through
Small nail
Hammer
Needle-nose pliers

Wire-cutter
Pencil
Ruler

Procedure:

1. Cut a 6" length of wire.
 2. Lay the block of wood with the 5" side long, and the 6" side tall. On the block of wood, measure in 1/2" from each side of the 5" side of the block. Mark with pencil. Measure down from the top 1". Mark with pencil. Start two nail holes and screw in two eye screws on the 1/2" marks on each side, and then place the other two eye screws in another 1/4" on both sides.
 3. Thread the wire through the eye screws.
 4. To create a bridge for the instrument, place two craft sticks about 1" below the wire on the piece of wood.
 5. Guide as many craft sticks as will fit over the bridge, and under the wire. They will remain firm if you push the bridge up toward the wire. Bend back the wire edges up toward the top of the instrument.
 6. Push some sticks in farther, to create different pitch variation, and pluck the sticks with your thumbs, to create the buzzing sound of the mbira.
 7. If time allows, the instrument can be pitched to a "scale."
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5. Create a cumulative chain to show the events in the tale. Students can draw or list on cards, the events of the animals and the mosquito in the story. Place the cards in the correct order.
 6. Share a yam. Try cooking one to taste, or choose to only pass one around the circle. Study where and how it grows.
 7. Discuss the tall tale that Mosquito told Iguana. Should Mosquito be punished for the chain of events that occurred because of the yam tall tale? Discuss other tall tales.
 8. Tell the story again, and play your mbira during the story to create various buzzing sounds for the characters in the story. Make choices for when the mbira should be soft or loud, fast or slow. Learn the music terms piano or forte, allegro and andante.
 9. Use the list of animal sounds from the story, and create an original accompaniment for the tale. Use xylophones pitched to a pentatonic scale. (Ex: C,D,E,G,A) Match the pentatonic pitches to the words of the animal sounds.
 - a. Use the African polyrhythm chart in this unit. Read the patterns for the *A toke*, *gankoqui*, *dawuro* and *firikiwa*. Play them using the pentatonic scale as an introduction to the tale.
 - b. As a reader tells the story, play themes for each animal. Here are some examples:
 - Mosquito — Zeee!
 - Iguana — mek, mek, mek, mek
 - Python — wasawusu, wasawusu, wasawusu
 - Rabbit — krik, krik, krik
 - Crow — kaa, kaa, kaa
 - Monkey — kili wili
 - Mother Owl — so sad, so sad, so sad
 - King Lion's meeting — pem, pem, pem
 - Mosquito, coda theme — Zeee! Is everyone still angry at me?
 - c. Retell the story with all of the sounds, but dramatize the animals through masks and movement.
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10. Mosquitoes today still make their buzzing whine into people's ears. Do we react the same way as the person in the story? Conduct a class survey. Yes! Kpao! or No! Write a short story that tells what punishment the animals and King Lion would have done to Mosquito. Would you punish the mosquito in the same way as the animals?

11. Make a list describing what would happen in nature if the sun did go away. Can you make up a tale that "explains" something that happens in our world? Use these examples or make up your own.

Why people yawn
Why the tide goes in and comes out
Why people don't walk on four legs
Why a bear sleeps in winter
Why trees lose their leaves
Why teachers give homework
Why kites fly

— Teacher Created Material, Inc. 1989

12. Write a tall tale about an animal you like. Go to the zoo to study it. An example might be "Why a Zebra Has Stripes".

Evaluation

Assessment is built into the above lesson through the active participation, the successful building and playing of the instruments, and the creation of the student's own tall tale. A class critique of the story could be done to assess abilities to make critical judgments.