

Social Emotional Arts: Drumming and Classroom Learning

Adapted from *Beat the Odds: Social and Emotional Skill Building Delivered in a Framework of Drumming* by Ping Ho, MA, MPH, Giselle Friedman, LCSW, and Mike DeMenno, 2008.

Information on facilitator trainings, purchase of manual/CD and DVD, publications, media clips including documentary trailer, testimonials, summary documents for administrators, and more, can be found at: <http://www.uclartsandhealing.org>

In the actual curriculum, activities are presented in various combinations within each session. Beginning, intermediate, and advanced designations for activities in this curriculum are intended to illustrate their progression.

Body Percussion

Definition: Playing the body as an instrument.

Purpose: Body Percussion demonstrates that one can be creative without a drum. It can be used to bring rhythmic activities to the classroom.

Instructions: The Facilitator demonstrates slapping thighs, clapping, snapping fingers, stomping feet, etc.

Call and Response

Definition: Facilitator plays a simple rhythm on the cowbell (Call), and students echo the rhythm in unison (Response). This process is repeated several times with different rhythm patterns and volumes.

Purpose: Call and Response increases the ability to focus and can be used to re-establish the act of paying attention. Student-led Call and Response increases leadership skills and promotes self-expression, creativity, and self-esteem.

Instructions:

- Basic: From the center of the circle, the Facilitator asks the group to copy her/him. The Facilitator plays a simple rhythm on the cowbell (Call) and the students echo the rhythm in unison on their drums (Response).
- Intermediate: The Facilitator may cue students to play louder and softer volumes, faster and slower tempos, or more syncopated and complex rhythms. Over time, students lead the Call



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and Response from their seats in the circle, using a series of two rhythm patterns of their choice.

- Advanced: Students take turns leading Call and Response from a drum in the middle of the circle. The Facilitator models creativity in initiating the activity.

Call and Response with Affirmations

Definition: Call and Response activity with positive assertions.

Purpose: This activity establishes positive thinking patterns that will influence behavior.

Instructions: From the center of the circle, students are instructed to repeat after the Facilitator. The Facilitator speaks an affirmation (Call) such as, *I am re-spon-si-ble, I do the right thing*, that students will repeat verbally without drums (Response). This exchange is repeated at least once. Then the affirmation is spoken by the Facilitator while playing a beat on the cowbell for each syllable. Students respond accordingly, using their drums. In this manner, each affirmation is practiced verbally first, then with drums.

A Reflection period always follows the Call and Response with Affirmations, whereby the Facilitator explores the meaning of the affirmation with the students by a Socratic method, i.e., asking them about their thoughts about the meaning of the affirmation. This process is scripted within the actual *Beat the Odds* program.

Drum Rhythm

Definition: Students join the Facilitator in playing an ongoing rhythm, creating a “groove.”

Purpose: Repetitive rhythms can be calming, stress reducing, and re-energizing. The continuous “groove” of the Drum Rhythm also empowers the group with a strong sense of synergy, community, and belonging. In addition, it promotes focus, since attention must be paid to the rhythm, in order to stay together as a group. It promotes creativity and self-expression, by encouraging students to improvise within the basic pulse of a drum rhythm. *Perfection is not expected of students or the Facilitator in this activity.*

Instructions: The Facilitator plays an ongoing rhythm, creating a “groove.” Students join in for an extended period of time. Sometimes rhythms are taught by using a phrase such as *Pass, the Pop-corn* (which happens to be inspired by African rhythms) and having students repeat the phrase verbally together with the rhythm until the rhythm is familiar to them.

- Basic: The Facilitator demonstrates a drum rhythm and invites the students to join in with, “One, two, everybody groove.” The rhythmic phrase continues in an ongoing pattern.



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- Intermediate/Advanced: Call and Response within Drum Rhythm. A rhythm is established as a group and then stopped at random points ONLY using the Stop Cut signal, without the 4-3-2-1 countdown. When the rhythm is stopped, a student is then chosen to lead the Call and Response, using a series of two rhythm patterns of their choice. After two sets of Call and Response exchanges led by that student, the group goes back into the continuous rhythm with, “One, two, back to the groove.”

Favorites Activity

Definition: Students share a favorite color, animal, and food, and facilitator beats the syllables of each student’s answers. Everyone joins together to play that rhythm once while simultaneously verbalizing the answers.

Purpose: Encourages students to be introspective and identify things that they like. Identifying and sharing things that they like strengthens their sense of self. This activity enables them to get to know themselves and others better. Overall, encourages students to identify and share things that they like, while also enabling them to find common ground with others.

Instructions: Facilitator is seated in the circle and introduces the Favorites Activity by explaining that the students will go around the circle and each share a favorite color, animal, and food. The Facilitator demonstrates the process by sharing her/his own favorites verbally without playing the drum, followed by simultaneously saying *and* playing the syllables of her/his answers on the drum (e.g., blue, dog, spa-ghet-ti). Then everyone in unison is invited to say *and* play the Facilitator's answers on their drums once. Each student will then have a turn to share their favorites, followed by the whole group simultaneously saying *and* playing the answers on their drums once.

Facilitator encourages Reflection on the activity by encouraging participants to think about commonalities that they noticed among their answers and how they felt sharing.

Gratitude Activity

Definition: Each student states something for which they are grateful and then plays a rhythm to express their gratitude.

Purpose: The Gratitude Activity teaches a positive outlook on life. It teaches students to appreciate the lesson learned in life situations. Students gain insight into positive things in their lives. The activity also increases good feelings. Research on gratitude suggests that it is associated with relationship formation and improvement, in addition to conflict management and prosocial behavior.

Instructions: The Facilitator introduces the concept of gratitude, what it means and how a grateful vs. ungrateful person looks at life. Then each participant has the opportunity to state something for which they are grateful and play a rhythm to express their gratitude.



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Rumble / 4-3-2-1 Stop Cut

Definition: The Rumble involves playing the drum, with right and left hands alternating rapidly. The Rumble is ended with a 4-3-2-1 simultaneous verbal and hand signal countdown, followed by a Stop Cut motion similar to that of a baseball umpire calling a runner "safe."

Purpose: The Rumble promotes focus, since attention must be paid to directions from the leader in the center of the circle. It helps maintain focus by releasing energy and stress. It also helps transition students out of more contemplative states.

Instructions:

- **Basic:** From a seated position, the Facilitator demonstrates a Rumble on the drum, with right and left hands alternating rapidly. S/he initiates the group Rumble by saying, "One, two, everybody Rumble." The Facilitator then steps into the center of the circle and signals Volume Up and Down in a playfully unpredictable pattern. While students Rumble, the Facilitator may Sculpt (divide) the group in half, and direct each half to Rumble either loudly or softly, using the Teeter Totter signal in a playfully unpredictable pattern. Rumbling is stopped with the 4-3-2-1 Stop Cut signal.
- **Intermediate:** With the Facilitator, students co-lead Rumbles from the center of the circle, with Volume Up and Down, Teeter Totter, and 4-3-2-1 Stop Cut signals.
- **Advanced:** By themselves, students lead Rumbles from the center of the circle, with Volume Up and Down, Teeter Totter, and 4-3-2-1 Stop Cut signals.



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