

Elemental Exploration

Keetman's elemental building bricks are not just tools for young children; they create patterns that grow with the children as they acquire knowledge and skills. This session focuses on one simple pattern developed from the bricks (ta - rest - ta - rest, ta - ta - ta - rest) to model how this element can evolve in increasingly complex ways. These activities are intended to demonstrate ways in which the pattern becomes a tool for learning through multiple media and over a range of grade/skill levels. Please use the back of the page to record your observations and insights based on your experience in the session.

Warm-up – Introducing the pattern through *Turkish March* by Beethoven

- What prior experiences would children need for success?
- What music skills did you use to be successful?
- What social/emotional skills are needed for success?

Come Join the Fun – The pattern as foundation for teaching a new type of bordun

- What music skills and prior experiences are needed for success?
- What social/emotional skills are developed in learning this piece?
- What was the role of the pattern in learning a new skill?

Takenoko Ippon – Using the pattern to practice ensemble skills

- What are the challenges to success with this game?
- What was the role of our pattern in facilitating success?
- What social/emotional skills are needed for success?

Rhythmische Übung – The pattern facilitates understanding rhythmic relativity.

- What musical skills/concepts were developed as we progressed through the learning process?
- How does reusing one pattern lead to discovery and deeper learning?
- The video showed differing learning/processing styles. How do you honor this in your students?

Some People Talk a Lot – The pattern as a tool for vocal improvisation

- What new concepts were introduced using the pattern?
- How does the pattern provide security for improvisation?
- How do rhythmic variations on the pattern expand opportunities for improvisation?

Beethoven's 7th Symphony, 2nd Movement – Pattern and composition

- In what way is our pattern the same? In what ways is it different?
- What did the movement experience bring to our pattern?
- How does Beethoven use the pattern to create contrast and unity?

A handout with resources, material, and teaching process used in the session will be provided at the end of the presentation. The handout also includes extensions for each activity that encourage creative exploration to extend the learning through the content used in this session.

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The goal of this session was not to learn activities for your classroom. We hope you come away thinking about how to sequence learning experiences that spiral through elemental concepts while students grow as musicians. The activities below were designed to model this type of planning. The process notes are shared with the hope that any activities you use will not be part of a single experience. Rather, we encourage you to think about how the element in the activity might become a foundation for deeper learning in future lessons.

Turkish March by Beethoven – Keeping in mind that children need at least 3-5 opportunities to hear a composed piece (as contrasted with an elemental composition) in order to process the structure of the composition, these steps were intended to provide children with a way to play with the music each time they hear it. The steps increase in difficulty as the children become more familiar with the music.

1. Simple imitation of teacher's moves: A – body percussion; B – stretch/yawn/boredom
2. With a partner: A – body percussion; B – stretch/yawn/boredom (teacher continues to model and cue B if needed)
3. With a partner: A – body percussion; B – walk away but return in time for A
4. With a partner: A – body percussion; B – walk and find a new partner

Extensions for creative exploration (whole group; small groups; or partner work):

1. Create a new body percussion pattern for the A section.
2. Create a new movement for the B section using contrasting Laban efforts (i.e., dab/slash)

Come Join the Fun (based on *Music for Children Vol. 1*, p. 90 #1) – Greeting songs are a strategic way to begin class and may be extended to introduce, practice and explore additional concepts. The canons on page 90 are a terrific source of melodic material. Create a text that works for your classroom. Once mastered, students can sing in unison or canon, explore and create instrumental and movement accompaniments and ostinati.

*Come join the fun, music has begun!
Singing, saying, dancing, playing, welcome everyone!*

1. Learn the song through analysis and whole song assimilation.
2. Keep pulse while singing: transfer to bordun accompaniment.
3. Review playing bordun, broken bordun, and level bordun to accompany the melody
4. Transfer the “pattern of the day” to body percussion (patsch: L, L, LR Cross).
5. Transfer the pattern to a crossover bordun on barred instruments.
6. Add color part and/or melodic ostinato to complete orchestration.

Extensions for creative exploration (whole group; small groups or partners)

1. Create a dance reflecting the form of the song.
2. Create a B section using rhythms found in the melody (consider hand clapping games, untuned percussion, found sound etc.).
3. What other ways might you choose to explore and extend the work in this simple melody?

Takenoko Ippon – It was the intent of Carl Orff that OS be adapted to the culture in which it was taught. When a teacher uses content from a culture other than their own, it is important not to make adaptations for an OS classroom in a way that is not authentic to the culture. The creative extensions included below model one way for children to experience music from a culture other than their own and also engage in creative exportation without compromising the authenticity of the culture from which the music originates.

Takenoko Ippon

Japanese Children's Song

Ta - ke - no - ko ip - pon o - ku - re

ma - da - me - ga de - nai - yo.

Translation: Please may I have some bamboo shoots.

Chopstick game:

touch floor, click together, touch floor, click together, touch floor,
put both in right hand, pass to the right (left hand receives a new pair)

1. Watch teacher pattern 3 times and then join in. (fingers only)
2. Can you add words to explain what you are doing? (e.g., touch, together - touch, together - touch, together - out.)
3. Teacher sing song while students transition to circle.
4. Teacher models with chopsticks...students describe what they see. (e.g., touch, cross - touch, cross - touch, together, pass).
5. Begin adding chopsticks one set at a time.
6. Play the game with the song and the chopsticks.

Extensions for creative exploration:

1. Using the rhythm pattern from *Takenoko Ippon*, create a new rhythmic text about foods the children like. Be careful that the new speech rhythms reflect the natural rhythm of the words. Depending on students' prior experience with this type of activity, this may be completely created by the students as a whole group process, or completed by the teacher using words suggested by the students.
2. Can students create a new passing pattern for their new text that is based on the ta-rest-ta-rest, ta-ta-ta-rest pattern? What objects will they pass in this game?
3. Create a partner game based on our rhythm pattern. Play the game while speaking your new text.

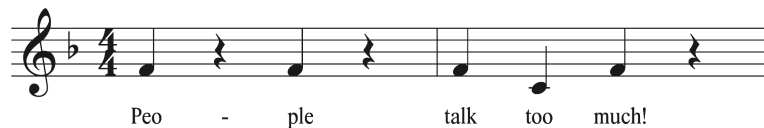
Rhythmische Übung p. 9, #33 – This simple rhythm piece from Rhythmische Übung serves as a springboard for ensemble building, rhythmic reading, and music analysis. As students examine the rhythmic relationship, compositional techniques and strategies are revealed.

1. Learn through echo imitation: transfer to HD then to tubanos
2. Add our “ostinato pattern of the day” - identify rhythm using traditional notation skills
3. Play on contrasting instruments in 2 parts
4. Rhythmic analysis leading to the discover of augmentation and diminution, planting seed for independent composition work

Extensions for creative exploration: How might a compositional task be structured to solidify student understanding of the concepts presented and provide evidence for understanding?

Some People Talk a Lot (Source: in CANON by Erling Bisgaard and Tossi Aaron) – This canon has a simple harmonic structure that aligns with our familiar rhythm pattern (I - I - I-V-I -). It also offers a way to introduce the children to vocal improvisation by allowing them to anchor their creative exploration in this previously learned element. When the voice is the instrument for improvisation, it is important to allow students ample time to explore ideas and gain confidence in solo singing. We began this activity by playing with our pattern as an ostinato leading to aural understanding of tonic/dominant harmony.

1. Using the “rhythm of the day,” explore how this pattern may be played using *F* and big *C*.
2. Teacher sings melody: Using *F* and big *C*, how might these pitches “fit” as an accompaniment to the melody?
3. Learn the song through analysis and whole song assimilation.
4. Once children can sing the song independently, add words to the ostinato:



5. Invite small groups to sing the ostinato while others sing the song until all students are confident with the vocal ostinato.
6. Teacher models changing words of the ostinato (e.g., Yak - Yak- , don't talk back!). Invite students to work with a partner to create the new words and sing as a duet for the class.
7. Continue working with partners as children come up with many ways to vary the ostinato.
8. As children gain confidence in this level of vocal improvisation, suggest that it is also possible to play with the rhythm (e.g., yakkity yak - yakkity yak, don't talk back!). Encourage students to share their new versions of the pattern.
9. Ask the children to engage in a singing conversation with their partner: One student sings the ostinato as a question, the other sings an answer. Remind students about using rhythmic variations. Encourage students to take on roles that add emotion to their conversation (e.g., parent/child; playground argument; eating something yummy, etc).
10. As students explore this way of improvising, the teacher should wander around the classroom listening to their work, offering praise, and suggesting that they may want to share their conversation with the class.
11. When inviting students to share, respect those who are not ready for this more public exposure...it will come as students repeat similar experiences. If you don't invite vocal improvisation, children will never discover how rewarding it can be!

Beethoven Symphony #7, 2nd Movement (A section, 1st 96 measures) – Our pattern appears in this movement in retrograde. What a wonderful way to introduce this compositional device to older students. After a movement experience, students will listen again and analyze the other compositional devices used by Beethoven and then use similar musical tools in a new composition.

1. Teach the rhythmic pattern used in this excerpt. Build up the pattern by echo clapping 2 bars, then 4 bars, then all 8 bars. Exaggerate the difference in the 8th bar with a large hand gesture (this is preparation for the movement to follow).



2. Transfer the rhythm pattern to the feet, stepping in place.
3. Invite students to move through the classroom with this pattern in their feet. Point out things you see that help show the phrasing (e.g., change of direction or extended motion at the end of the phrase).
4. Play the excerpt from this movement while the students move rhythmically through space. Encourage ways to partner (even briefly) with other students as they move.
5. After the movement experience, ask the children to clap our familiar pattern and then the pattern that Beethoven uses in this music? How are they different...how are they the same. Identify the way the pattern is used as 'retrograde.' Note that this retrograde version of the pattern is also used in diminution of the original (similar to the discovery in the *RÜ* piece we explored in this session).
6. Listen to the first 3 repetitions of the full 8-bar pattern. Note the ways in which Beethoven uses this pattern in different ways (played on one note, ascending melodic pattern, melodic sequence).
7. Listen to the entire excerpt again. Does Beethoven continue the same melodic devices (one note, ascending, sequence)?
8. Listen to the excerpt again. What does Beethoven do with each repetition to add contrast? (changes in texture; use of counter melody; variations of dynamics).
9. Small group project:
 - Create a motive (rhythmic, melodic, or both)
 - Vary the motive at least 2 ways to create a longer musical phrase (like Beethoven, repetition may also be used).
 - What instrument (including voice) best suits your phrase?
 - Add texture (e.g., instrumental layers, ostinato, instrumental or body percussion color)
 - Do you want to include variations in dynamics and tempo?
 - What formal structure do you want to use? (e.g., theme/variations; rondo)
 - Should the piece have an introduction/coda?
 - Video the composition. Watch and discuss what works and what you might change. Revise, refine, rehearse.
 - Share the composition with the class.
10. Note: I have used this lesson idea along with art prints of the work of Paul Klee. His work often made use of visual motifs and students used his visual art as inspiration for musical motives.

Enduring Understanding: Pattern helps us create and understand music.

Essential Question: What is the role pattern in music?

Topical Questions:

1. What rhythmic patterns do children need to learn?
2. What melodic patterns...
3. What formal patterns...
4. What harmonic patterns...

How does an elemental approach to music and movement influence our use of pattern?

1. How/when do you introduce patterns?
2. How do you set up lessons that encourage children to create using pattern?
3. How do you know what the children know about pattern?
4. How do the children know what they know about pattern?