

PERCUSSIVE POSSIBILITIES

San Angelo ISD, Texas

Clinician: Artie Almeida, Ed.D.



Kids love percussion instruments, and you'll love these lessons that utilize hand drums, unpitched percussion, as well as non-traditional percussion instruments like Pop Toobs and Firestix. Our focus will be on the building blocks of music, including beat, rhythm, form and phrasing.

1. Hoop Groups: Play Percussion, a Parody of Alouette

Source: *Woods, Metals, Shakers, Skins!* Book by Almeida

Focus: *Timbre, Form, Steady Beat*

Materials: Set up Hoop Groups: (1) Woods (2) Metals (3) Shakers (4) Skins.

Process: I display the lyrics sheet for student viewing while I teach the song, and it helps if the children have previously learned *Alouette*. Analyze the Lyrics Sheet drawing attention to (1) the refrain - which is sung and played by all, (2) the cumulative Call & Response sections for the individual timbres, (3) the four-beat roll at the end of each verse on "Oh . . .". Conduct a *rallentando* and a rolled note at end.

2. Hoop Groups: I-M-P-R-O-V-I-S-E!

Source: *Woods, Metals, Shakers, Skins!* Book by Almeida

Focus: *Timbre, Improvisation*

Materials: Set up Hoop Groups in a different order than the lesson above: **Metals/Woods/Shakers/Skins**.

Process: The melody of this fun improvisation activity is the **Military Cadence** or **Cadence Call** (the call & response melody sung a cappella by military personnel when marching or running). I have printed it in the score for you, but I teach this piece to the children from the Script, rather than displaying the score.

Analyze the piece, discuss the components of a musically interesting improvisation, seat students at the Hoop Group Stations and begin. Finish the song with a "round" of instrument applause (playing a roll while moving the instruments in a vertical circle in front of you). *This lesson is available for Orff instruments in the publication Mallet Madness Strikes Again.*

3. Hoop Groups: Trepak from The Nutcracker

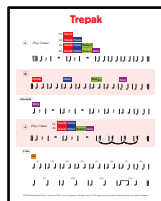
Source: *Woods, Metals, Shakers, Skins* book by Almeida

Focus: *Timbre, Form, Steady Beat*

Materials: Recording of *Trepak*, visual, a pointing device, non-pitched percussion instruments (W/M/Sh/Sk), four hula hoops for station organizers

Process: Consider using *Trepak* as your entrance music on the day you are teaching this lesson.

Perhaps use it as exit music the week before or playing it during your lesson and telling the children to be ready for an exciting NPP performance of it in their next class. With students in their seats, project the score and discuss the following details:



1. Find the color-coded labels for each timbre on NPP
2. Lead students through a spoken description of the form, noting the repeats
3. The 2/4 time signature
4. The tied notes in the second A Section
5. The additive nature of the two A Sections. Note that they are different.
6. The numbers above the measures in the Coda. It is easy to lose track of where you are in this fast-moving piece and the numbers will help. (continued on next page)

In preparation for the performance, use a laser pointer to lead the children through the score while listening to the recording. Answer any questions they might have. Move students to the Hoop Group Stations and help with any playing technique issues. Encourage an “Attitude of Energy” and enjoy the performance!

4. Hoop Groups: Hungarian Dance #5

Source: *Woods, Metals, Shakers, Skins* book by Almeida

Focus: *Timbre, Form, Note Values*

Materials: *Recording of Hungarian Dance #5 by Brahms, Visual, a pointing device, non-pitched percussion instruments (W/M/Sh/Sk), four hula hoops for station organizers*

Process: Before distributing instruments, project the score and discuss details, using a laser pointer to guide students’ attention. Details to address: form, color-coded labels, time signature, tied notes, roll markings, block rests, combined timbres and accent marks in the coda. Pass out non-pitched percussion instruments and begin the fun!

5. Two is Company

Source: *Playtime* book by Shirley McRae. Modified Almeida. Used w/Permission.

Focus: *AB Form, Note Values*

Materials: *A hand drum for each student. Headed tambourines could be substituted.*

Process: This wonderful hand drum activity is in one of my favorite resource books. Be sure to teach this thoroughly, with lots of practice time, before passing out drums.

Two-Partner Directions:

A Section: Speak these words (with drum held above head) while walking to find new partners: “Two is company, three’s a crowd. Four on the sidewalk is not allowed!” Bring drums down and hold horizontally in front of partner, so both drums can be accessed.

B Section script: Yours-theirs-yours-clap. Yours-theirs-ti-ti-ta (ti-ti-ta is on your own drum). Repeat. Immediately begin the poem again and walk to find a new partner, holding drum above head until in front of a new partner.

Three-Partner-Directions:

A Section is same as above

B Section Script: Yours . . . to the right. Yours . . . to the left. Yours to the right, yours to the left, yours to the right, ti-ti-ta. Repeat. 3 children stand shoulder to shoulder for this.

The Grand Finish: All drummers stand in a circle to perform the “3s” pattern. Then increase tempo.



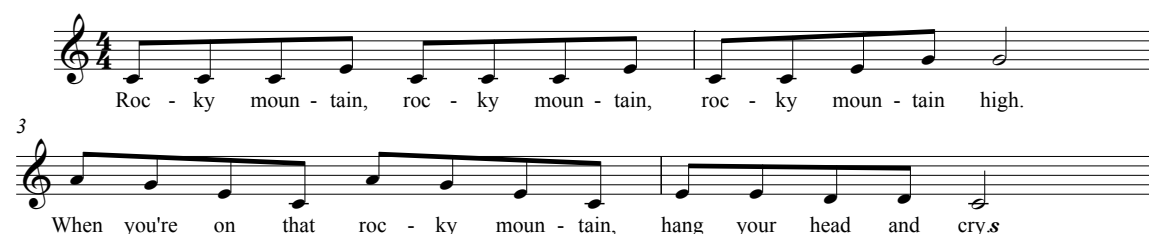
6. Rocky Mountain: Hand Drum Note Value Game (American Folk Song)

Source: *Percussion Parade* book by Almeida

Focus: *Note Values, Rondo Form*

Materials: This lesson can be done with large drums that stand on the floor: Tubanos, Congas, etc. or hand drums played horizontally with a mallet.

Process: It is best to prep this lesson a week before adding the drums. Teach students the A Section pattern, showing the direction with hand levels. Discuss the four note values to be reviewed (whole, half, quarter, eighths). Clap whole notes while singing the A section. Ask students how many occurred. Repeat with the other three note values. Perform entire song with clapping game: Pat the value on your own lap, move one leg to the right, then your own lap again, then one leg to the left. During each B section sing only, with no movement. Transfer clapping to drums. It is helpful if teacher displays a visual of each note value as it is performed.



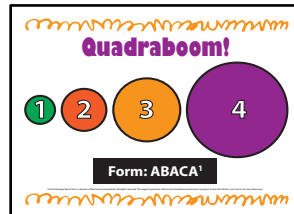
7. *Quadraboom*: A Piece for Graduated Sizes of Hand Drums

Source: *Percussion Parade* book by Almeida.

Focus: *Rondo Form, Rhythm Patterns, Science of Sound truism: "Size determines pitch."*

Materials: Four graduated sizes of drums. The more the merrier! If only a small number are available, consider giving different teams of children a chance to play the drums, while other students use body percussion or non-pitched percussion instruments.

Process: This piece works well in your intermediate music class lessons, or as a performance piece for your ensembles. Prepare with body percussion before adding drums. **I have included a score in the PPT visuals for you to study**, but I teach the parts to the students from the picture visual seen below – representing the four sizes of graduated drums. Consider using the round SHAPES DRUMS for this piece.



Dr. Artie Almeida has 38 years of public-school teaching experience and was the music instructor at Bear Lake Elementary in Orlando FL, where she taught 1200 K-5 students. Her dynamic performing groups have performed for Florida Music Educators Association, American Orff-Schulwerk Association, Music Educators National Conference, Walt Disney World, American Express International, many educational organizations and on the NBC Today Show. For the last 35 years she has traveled to provide elementary music symposia to teachers around the United States, as well as in Canada, Singapore and Taiwan. Each year she presents workshops for many state music education conferences, Orff chapters, school districts and other education organizations.

Artie's accolades include Florida Music Educator of the Year, Runner-Up for Florida Teacher of the Year, Seminole County Teacher of the Year, International Educator 2006 (Cambridge UK Biographical Society), school-level Teacher of the Year six times, and University of Central Florida Alumni of the Decade. Artie is included in the publications *Who's Who in American Education* and *Great Minds of the 21st Century*.

Artie's 32 music education publications celebrate innovative delivery systems for K-5 music instruction. Her themes in teaching are "Heavy Academics: Delivered Joyfully!" and "Where There's Passion, There's Retention!"

Artie was an adjunct professor of music education at the University of Central Florida for 34 years, the saxophone instructor at Valencia State College, the music and movement instructor at Seminole State College and a saxophone performer and teacher. Additionally, she performs early music with Ars Antiqua and the Halifax Consort.