JAPANESE TAIKO

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Below are suggested classroom activities that could be used pre or post taiko performance. Modify as appropriate for various K-12 levels. For more background and resources on Japanese Taiko, see the *Taiko Information* sheet.

COUNT TO TEN IN JAPANESE

Japanese Pronunciation of Numbers

1. One - Ichi ("eechee" but 'itchy' is close and an easy way to remember)
2. Two - Ni ("knee")
3. Three - San (the "a" sounds like the a in "Ma")
4. Four - Chi ("chee")
5. Five - Go ("go")
6. Six - Roku ("roekoo")
7. Seven - Shichi ("shechee" – she like the pronoun)
8. Eight - Hachi ("hachee" the "a" sounds like the a in "Ma" and chi rhymes with he)
9. Nine - Ku ("koo")
10. Ten - Ju ("Joo")

RHYTHM GAMES

Studies show a correlation between the ability to hear and repeat a rhythm accurately with readiness for math. Students who learn kinesthetically and/or aurally will benefit.

The best way to play these games is for just a minute or two at a time—you can use the game as a transition from one activity to another.

1) Clap a simple rhythm and ask them to repeat your rhythm. Start with four evenly spaced claps: You clap 1 2 3 4; then they clap 1 2 3 4

2) Play with speeding up and slowing down the tempo. Listen to their claps and encourage them to copy your claps as closely or accurately as they can.

3) Clap eight even beats. Then play with omitting one beat out of the eight:

1 2 3 ( ) 5 6 7 8 or

1 2 3 4 ( ) 6 7 8

4) Add in one or two extra beats in the same amount of time:
1 & 2 3 4 5 & 6 7 8
As they improve, complicate the rhythms you clap. You can also ask if one of the students would like to lead a clap.

5) Once they can play the game, ask them to count out the beats with you, in other words, for each clap, say the number that goes with it: “One, two, three, ( ) five, six, seven, eight.

6) Clap and start counting at a random number: "45, 46, 47, 48, (), 50, 51, 52."

7) Now you can lead into basic math concepts:

- Clap and count eight beats and ask them to clap half as many
- Clap and count six beats and ask them to clap twice as many
- Start by clapping and counting eight beats and then clap every other beat and count by twos.
- Start by clapping and counting twelve beats and then clap every three beats and count by threes.
- You can create variations that can help your students get a kinesthetic and aural feel for fractions, multiplication, and skip counting.

INTRODUCE THE SCIENCE OF SOUND

Use the performance as a jumping-off place for studying the science of sound. Ask questions after the performance: Which drums made the lowest sounds? Which made the highest sounds? Why do you think that is? How do you think the sounds are made? Why does hitting a drum make a sound? How do we hear? How does the sound get from the drum to us? What happens to the sound in our ears?

BUILD DRUMS FROM FOUND OBJECTS

1) Show students various found objects-- buckets, plastic bins, cans, plastic water jugs, gourds, etc. (Ask the cafeteria and maintenance people for some. Ask students to bring in some.) Have a variety of sizes.

2) Before they do anything, students predict which objects will become drums that will make lower sounds, which higher. They draw the objects they will make the lowest, highest, and middle tone. Have them explain on paper why they make these predictions.

3) Each student chooses materials with which to make a drum, and writes down what materials they chose.

4) Each student (or pair of students) builds a drum from the found objects chosen. For drum skins, have various materials on hand–paper, plastic, tape, scraps of material, leather scraps, etc., as skins. Rubber bands, string, and tape can attach skins to drum bodies. Use hands or pencils, sticks, etc., as drumsticks.

3) (You may want to go outside:) Students experiment with making sounds by hitting their drums with hands, sticks, and other objects and hitting them in different places. They make a chart (see example, below) to record their impressions of tone (high and low pitch) with each change of hitting object. They make adjustments to the drums and record what changes they observe.

Name _____ *Date* _____

DRUM EXPERIMENT

1) Prediction

Which object do you think will make the lowest sound?

Why?

Draw it.

Which object do you think will make the highest sound?

Why?

Draw it.

Which do you think will make a middle range sound?

Why?

Draw it.

2) Building the drum:
What materials did you use?

What did you learn from building the drum?

3) Drum tests:

Hit drum with what? How hard? Where? Observations: How low or high? What changed?

1:

2:

3:

4:

5:

4) Conclusion:
A: Compare your predictions to what happened with the drum you made.

B: How did your drum compare to other drums that others made? Was it on the low end or high end or in the mid-range of all the drums?

C: Why do you think sound is lower for some drums and higher for others?