Exploring Sound
Body percussion

Ideas and activities for exploring body percussion sounds for all classes

Strand: Listening and responding

Strand unit: Exploring sounds

Exploring sounds involves listening to and creating sounds from a wide variety of sources using

- the environment
- the voice
- the body
- instruments

This document will suggest some activities which can be used to explore body percussion sounds across all classes. Suggestions for linkage and integration will also be made where appropriate.

The language used in the objectives for exploring sound asks children to

- Identify/recognise
- Imitate/Explore/Experiment
- Describe sounds using: language, movement symbols (pictures, drawings, notation)
- Investigate sound makers
- Investigate musical concepts (loud, long, quiet etc)
- Discover
- Make

Exploring sound is a prerequisite for Composing. In the composing strand, children are asked to select sounds from variety of sources for a range of musical purposes. Children who have experienced lots of activities in exploring sound will find it much easier to use a variety of sounds in their compositions.
Infant classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Discover ways of making sounds using body percussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>tapping, clapping, slapping</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Activity   Copy cat game

The teacher makes a sound – clapping hands, clicking fingers, slapping knees, stamping feet and the children copy the sound. When all of the children are making the sound, the teacher makes another sound and the children copy this new sound. When the children have experienced a wide variety of sounds, one of the children can be chosen to be the leader.

Possible sounds – varying the volume

- Clapping Hands – loudly
- Clapping hands – quietly
- Tapping palm with two fingers
- Clapping cupped hands
- Clapping flat hands
- Rubbing hands together cupped
- Rubbing arms or legs
- Rubbing backs of hands together
- Slapping knees
- Clicking fingers
- Tapping finger nails
- Tapping finger tips together
- Tapping knuckles
- Tapping backs of hands together
- Flicking fingers in the air
- Flicking on the other palm
- Rubbing backs of hands
- Stroking arm or legs
- Popping air filled cheeks gently
- Popping inside of cheek
- Tapping feet
- Stamping feet
- Tapping toes on floor
- Clicking heels
- On table or floor
- Tapping fingertips on table or floor
- Tapping fingernails on table or floor
- Tapping knuckles on table or floor
- Tapping whole fingers on table or floor
- Tapping whole hands on table or floor
- Rubbing fingers on table or floor
- Rubbing hands on table or floor
- Slapping fingers on table or floor
- Slapping hands on table or floor
- Banging fists on table or floor
- Knocking knees together etc.....
Activity  Chants with body percussion

These chants or rhymes are useful as transitions between lessons, or when you want to get children's attention for story time for example.

**Right hand, left hand**

Right hand, left hand,  
give a little clap.  
Right hand, left hand,  
put them on your lap.

**Two Little Feet Go Tap, tap, tap**

Two little feet go tap, tap, tap,  
Two little hands go clap, clap, clap.  
I stand up quietly by my chair, then...  
Two little arms reach high in the air.  
Two little feet go jump, jump, jump,  
Two little fists go thump, thump, thump.  
One little body goes round and round,  
And one little child sits quietly down.

**Open Them, Shut Them**

Open them, shut them,  
Open them, shut them,  
Open them, shut them,  
And give a little clap.  

Other verses:  
Open them, shut them,...  
And give a little snap,...  
And give a little pat. .....  
And put them in your lap.

**Ready to Listen**

Let your hands go clap, clap, clap;  
Let your fingers snap, snap, snap;  
Let your lips go very round,  
But do not make a sound.  
Fold your hands and close each eye;  
Take a breath and softly sigh;  
Ahhhhhhh.

**Clap Your Hands**

Clap them, clap them, clap them so.  
Clap them high, clap them low.  
Clap them left, clap them right.  
Clap them, clap them out of sight.  
Other verses: Roll them....  
Shake them....

**Roll, Roll, Roll Your Hands**

Roll, roll, roll your hands as slowly as can be.  
Roll, roll, roll your hands, do it now with me.  
Roll, roll, roll your hands as fast as fast can be!  
Roll, roll, roll your hands, do it now with me!  
(repeat clapping hands, then stomping feet)
Our hands say
Our hands say thank you with a clap, clap, clap
Our feet say thank you with a tap, tap, tap.
Clap, clap, clap
Tap, tap, tap.
We wave our hands around and we say good-bye!

**Stretch up high (with actions)**
Stretch up high as tall as a house
Curl up small like a little mouse
Now pretend you have a drum
Play like this Boom boom boom!
Shake your fingers, stamp your feet,
Close your eyes tightly and go to sleep.

**Lámha, Bosa**
Lámha, bosa, glúine, cosa,
Buail do lámha ar do chosa

**Cuimil do bhosa**
Cuimil do bhosa
Suas is síos
Dún do lámha
Oscail do lámha
Dún is oscail arís
Dorn ar dhorn
Dorn ar dhorn
Suas, suas, suas
Buail do bhosa
Buail do bhosa
Thuas, thuas, thuas

**Dorn ar dorn**
Dorn ar dhorn, dorn ar dhorn, suas, suas, suas.
Buail do bhosa, buail do bhosa, thuas, thuas, thuas.
*Dorn ar dhorn, dorn ar dhorn, sios, sios, sios.*
*Buail do bhosa, buail do bhosa, thios, thios.*

**Buail Bos**
Buail Bos, Gread cos,
Buail Bos, Gread cos,
Cas timpeall is
Glac sos

**Buail do bhosa**
Buail do bhosa
Buail do bhosa
Bosa beaga mine.
Buail do bhosa
Buail do bhosa
Is gheobhaidh tú féirín Dé hAoine.
Buail do gluíne........
Buail do chosa.........
Activity   Body percussion songs

These songs are all performed with sounds and actions.

This is the way   Tune ; Here we go round the Mulberry Bush

This is the way we clap our hands

Clap our hands, clap our hands.

This is the way we clap our hands.

Clap our hands

....Stamp our feet

....Click our fingers

....Rub our hands

....Slap our knees etc....

Stamp and Clap

Tune: London Bridge

Stamp your feet and clap your hands

Stamp your feet, clap your hands

Stamp your feet and clap your hands

We’ll stamp and clap

Other suggestions   Click your fingers, touch your head, tap your knees, rub your hands etc

Make your sound the same as mine   Tune ; Mary had a little lamb

Teacher makes sound with body percussion and children copy the sound

Make your sound the same as mine

Same as mine, same as mine.

Make your sound the same as mine

And make it after me

1.....  2.....  3.....  4....... (sounds are made during the 4 pulse beats after the song)

Make your sound the same as Ciara’s.... choose different children to make the sounds.
**First and Second**

**Objective**  
Discover ways of making sounds using body percussion  
*tapping, clapping, slapping, clicking*

**Activity**  
Try the Copy Cat game above with one of the children as a leader

**Activity**  
Make as many sounds as you can with your……..

Challenge the children to make as many sounds as they can with different parts of their bodies. This activity can be done in pairs or small groups. The children could try to create loud or quiet sounds and long or short sounds.

**Activity**  
Sounds in a circle – using Body percussion

Children sit in a circle. The first person makes a body percussion sound such as a *clap* and all of the children copy the sound in turn when the sound has travelled around the entire circle, the next person makes a new sound such as *clicking their fingers* and the new sound travels form person around the circle.

**Activity**  
Sounds in a circle – choose your body percussion sound

Children sit in a circle. They chose one body percussion sound that they are going to make. The teacher or a conductor from the class stands in the centre of the circle with their hand outstretched. They turn slowly and as they pass by, each person makes their chosen sound. When the children are familiar with the activity, the conductor can turn faster.

**Activity**  
Sounds in a circle – yours and mine

Children sit in a circle, The first child makes a body percussion sound. The next child imitates that sound and adds their own. The third child imitates child number two’s body percussion sound and adds their own sound. This continues around the circle.
Activity

Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes

Sing this song tapping the named body part. When it has been sung through, leave out one or more of the words and just tap the appropriate body part.

Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes,
Head, shoulders, knees and toes knees and toes! And
Eyes and ears, and mouth and nose!
Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes,

Ankles, elbows, feet and seat, feet and seat,
Ankles, elbows, feet and seat, feet and seat,
And Hair and hips and chin and cheeks!
Ankles, elbows, feet and seat, feet and seat.

Ceann, Gualainn, Glúine, Cos
(fonn: Head, shoulders, knees and toes)

Ceann, gualainn, glúine, cos. glúine, cos,
Ceann, gualainn, glúine, cos glúine, cos
Agus súile, cluasa, béal agus srón.
Ceann, gualainn, glúine cos glúine cos.

Can you tap this…. Soh, mi, doh. (G, E, C)

Can you tap this rhythm for me. Just like this, just like this.
I can tap this rhythm for you. Just like this, just like this.

Activity:
• Play a game of echo clapping
• Change the word ‘tap’ to clap, click, stamp or any other kind of body percussion.
Third and Fourth Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Discover ways of making sounds using body percussion, in pairs and small groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tapping, clapping, slapping, clicking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>creating slapping and clapping sequences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activity  Sounds in a circle games –using Body percussion

Try the sounds in a circle activities above.

Activity  Sounds in a circle – pass two claps

Children sit in a circle. The first person makes a body percussion sound such as a *clap* and all of the children copy the sound in turn. Practice this so that the sound travels fully around the circle. Explain to the children that a second clap is going to be added when the first clap is about half way around the circle. Practice the game so that the two claps make three full rotations around the circle.

Variations

- use a different body percussion
- try three claps or clicks.

Activity  Sounds in a circle- remember them all

Children sit in a circle, The first child makes a body percussion sound. The next child imitates that sound and adds their own. The third child makes the first and second sound adds their own. This continues until someone forgets the sound. The next person starts the game again.

Activity  Sound your Name Game

Children sit or stand in a circle. In turn, each child says their name and follows it with body percussion to match the syllables. For example: Sinéad – clap, rub arm, Jonathan – click, slap, stamp. All of the other children copy the name and the sounds. The activity continues until every child has had a turn.
Variations

- The first child says their name and sounds it. The second child repeats the first child’s name and sound and adds their own.
- As a child takes their turn, they try to remember all of the children’s names and sounds that have gone before them.

Activity Name that rhyme!

Practice saying or chanting some nursery rhymes emphasising the rhythm patterns for example:

- Baa baa black sheep
- Hickory dickory dock
- Humpty Dumpty
- Mary had a little lamb

Divide the class into four groups and assign a nursery rhyme to each of the groups. Ask the children to leave out the words and to clap or tap the rhythms. Ask them to experiment with as many different body percussion sounds as they can. They might choose a different sound for each line of the rhyme. After some practice, each group can perform their body percussion nursery rhyme for the rest of the class.

Activity Create a sequence

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\pi & I & I \\
Stamp & Stamp & Clap & Clap \\
\pi & I & I \\
Stamp & Stamp & Click & Click \\
\pi & I & I \\
Stamp & Stamp & Slap & Slap \\
I & I & I & \\
Hips & Hips & Shout!
\end{array}
\]
Practice a body percussion sequence such as the one above with the children.

In pairs or small groups the children can create similar sequences using a variety of body percussion.

**Fifth and Sixth classes**

**Objective**  
Identify a variety of ways of making sounds using body percussion in pairs and in small and large groups  
- tapping, clapping, slapping, clicking  
- creating more complex sequences involving slapping, clapping,  
- clicking etc. and alternating left and right hands or feet

**Activity**  
Sounds in a circle games – using Body percussion

Try the **sounds in a circle** activities above.

**Activity**  
Name that rhyme! – in rounds

Try the **Name that rhyme!** activity above with a more extensive selection of rhymes, songs or poems that the children are familiar with.

Get two groups of children to try clapping the rhythm of a nursery rhyme as a round, with one group starting and the other group coming in at the appropriate place.

Variations:
- Try varying the dynamics as they go through the round. Agree on a dynamics plan beforehand
- Try the round in three parts
- Try different body percussion

**Activity**  
Laps Clap Click

This body percussion sequence should be practiced one verse at a time with a strong steady four beat pulse. When the children have mastered the two verses they can be performed as a two verse sequence. It works very well as a sequence performed to any music with a strong four beat pulse. The sequences can also be performed simultaneously with one group starting on verse one while the other group starts on verse two.
Laps clap click (rest)  
Laps clap click (rest)  
Laps clap click clap  
Laps clap click (rest)

Clap clap clap clap clap clap (to right)  
Clap clap clap clap clap clap (to left)  
Clap clap clap (right)  
Clap clap clap (left)  
Laps clap click (rest)

The children working in small groups, could be challenged to create a third verse using a variety of body percussion.

**Activity  Body Percussion Grid**

The children work in pairs or small groups. They draw a 4 X 4 grid on a piece of paper and then put one or two body percussion sounds in each square. They can use a word, picture or symbol to represent each sound. They then practice and perform their body percussion sequence for the rest of the class.

For example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>clap</th>
<th>slap, slap</th>
<th>stamp</th>
<th>stamp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>flick, flick</td>
<td>pop</td>
<td>tap, tap</td>
<td>pop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slap</td>
<td>knock</td>
<td>rub rub</td>
<td>(rest)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>click, click</td>
<td>tap</td>
<td>stamp</td>
<td>clap</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Variations**

- Rhythm grids can be extended
- Rhythm grids can be swapped so the groups perform each others grids
Activity  Stomp Video clips

http://www.lunchbox-productions.com/show_stomp/promos.shtm  the video clips on this site feature the Stomp troupe from the UK making sequences with body percussion.

http://www.stomponline.com/pdf/study_guide.pdf  is a free study guide with lesson ideas.

Linkage

Exploring sounds – instruments, vocal sounds, environmental sounds,

Composing – Improvising and creating - using  body percussion in compositions

creating rap type sequences with body percussion sounds

Performing – Song singing - using body percussion sounds as an accompaniment or an

ostinato

Performing – Literacy – creating sequences of body percussion sounds with a rhythm pattern

Integration

English – oral language – developing competence in using oral language.

Science – Energy and Forces – Sound

Spiral Nature of the Curriculum

The Irish Primary school curriculum is spiral in nature. By revisiting knowledge and ideas already acquired as the starting point for new learning, it allows for the coherent expansion of knowledge and the gradual refinement of concepts. Objectives and activities explored at a previous class level can be explored again in a more complex way at the next level.