

“Playing with Rhythms: Eurythmics to STOMP”

**Presented at the Council for Children’s Expanded Physical Education
(CCEPE) Conference 2013**

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Description of session:

Participants will explore **elements of time/rhythm (beat, duration, tempo, accent, meter, phrasing, rhythm patterns, and polyrhythms)** through a variety of movement activities, including samples from Dalcroze Eurythmics and STOMP-inspired rhythm creations with equipment.

What conference participants will learn:

Elements of rhythm, a variety of activities for K-12 students to explore rhythm through movement (with and without equipment), and inspiration for integrating rhythmic activities in their physical education curricula.

How session aligns with the conference theme, “Active and Healthy Schools”:

The elements of rhythm are included in National Association for Physical Education and Sport (NASPE) content standards 1 and 2. The development of rhythmic skills positively impacts students’ motor coordination, participation in dance-related physical activities, and overall competency in motor performance. When students experience success in movement, they are more apt to enjoy and value it, hopefully leading to more active lifestyles. Also, use of props in rhythmic activities often makes those inhibited by rhythms/dance more comfortable and inspired. Additionally, the integration of movement with music fosters interdisciplinary collaborations between physical educators and music educators. The inclusion of movement in music education lessons adds to children’s overall physical activity while the inclusion of rhythms/music in physical education lessons reinforces rhythmic acuity and musicality. Moreover, cognitive abilities can be enhanced through the use of inconsistent, varied, and combined rhythmic patterns.

Session activities:

All activities in this session emphasize one or more **elements of time/rhythm**, including the following:

Beat: underlying pulse, even rhythm
Duration: length or time span of a beat

Tempo:	speed of the music
Accent:	emphasis given to one or more beats/counts
Meter:	time signature or rhythmic organization of the music (e.g., 4/4 = 4 counts per measure of music and a ¼ note gets one count)
Phrase:	combinations of beats, often longer than one measure (e.g., 8-count phrase)
Rhythms:	combinations of beats that can be even (all equal intervals/durations, e.g., “1, 2, 3, 4”) or uneven (mixture of durations or fast and slow beats, e.g., “1, 2, 3 & 4” or “slow, slow, quick, quick, slow”)
Polyrhythms:	layering of multiple rhythms performed at the same time; prominent feature of African rhythms

Warm-up: (Musical selections: Kou Kou and Ebo rhythms, *Christy Lane’s Authentic African and Caribbean Rhythms*)

- Brain Dance: sequentially moving through the 8 motor patterns on the beat
 1. Breath: taking deep breaths – lifting arms up and down and coordinating movement with inhalation/exhalation
 2. Tactile: squeezing, tapping, slapping, brushing muscles and areas of the body to “wake up proprioceptors” (heightening sensation and awareness of body movement and place in space)
 3. Core-distal: bringing all body parts toward center (in close proximity to each other), then extending torso and limbs outward (distally from each other)
 4. Head-tail: bringing the head and tailbone closer together in front and back; moving the spine - flexing, extending, laterally flexing (e.g., arch, round, snake motions side to side)
 5. Upper-lower: dividing the body into upper and lower halves; moving arms/upper body only, then moving legs/lower body only (bi-lateral movement)
 6. Body-side: dividing the body into right and left halves; moving right side (e.g., right arm and leg) together, then left side (e.g., left arm and leg) together
 7. Cross-lateral: dividing the body diagonally with limbs crossing the midline (e.g., oppositional movements, such as knee lifts with the opposite hand touching knees)
 8. Vestibular: relates to inner ear/balance; getting off-balance and then stopping to allow the body to regain balance (e.g., spinning, rocking)
- Body Part Jam:
 - Embodying the beat from head to toe; moving/articulating body parts and/or whole body (head, shoulders, arms, ribs, hips, knees, legs, feet, whole body) to the beat – half time, regular time, and/or double time
 - Traveling (e.g., walking, galloping, skipping) into and out of a circular formation – moving on the beat, in for 8, out for 8 (focus on phrasing)
 - Adding a clap on the last count of 8 (focus on accent)

Sample Dalcroze Eurhythmics Activities:

- A-1, B-2, C-3...
 - Standing in place, say out loud A-1, B-2, C-3, D-4, E-5, etc. going through the entire alphabet (1 to 26), while alternately lifting and lowering R hand (on A, B, C...), then L hand (on 1, 2, 3...), speaking and moving on the beat
 - Add walking in general space while doing the above activity
 - Add silence on every other two sets (i.e., say out loud A-1, B-2, then in silence to yourself C-3, D-4, then out loud E-5, F-6, and so on)
- Experimenting with tempo:
 - Finding your personal tempo or “pulse” – walking in general space using your favorite speed and dynamic of movement
 - Walking to different musical tempos in general space (slower, moderate, faster)

Musical selections: *Home* – Daughtry, *The Climb* – Miley Cyrus, *New York, New York* from *Christy Lane’s Let’s Do Ballroom*, *Firework* – Katy Perry, *On the Floor* – Jennifer Lopez
 - “High 10” (clap both hands) with people as you greet them (find their eyes first) – randomly; then “high 10” on the count of 8; then counts of 4 and 8; then counts of 2, 4, and 8 (focus on accent)

Musical selection: *Home* – Phillip Phillips
- “Hip-hop” – changing duration of time: half-time to regular time to double-time (also emphasizes beat and phrasing)
 - Tapping to music (“tap” 2 fingers together lightly so that it doesn’t overpower music and so that students who change the speed don’t influence others): first half-time, then regular time, then double-time; practice each individually and repetitively
 - Repeat above with marching in personal space, then walking in general space (using full motion through the duration of each beat)
 - Students begin tapping or walking (or both) half-time; then when the teacher cues “hip,” the students move *up* one level (i.e., faster, in this case, to regular time); when the teacher cues “hop,” the students move *down* one level (i.e., slower, in this case, to half-time);

when the teacher cues “hip hip,” the students move up two levels (in this case, to double-time); and when the teacher cues “hop hop,” the students move down two levels (in this case, to half-time)

- Perform each duration for 2 8-counts, rotating from half-time to regular time to double-time, then back to half-time and so on; use full range of arm movement so you move through the entire duration of each beat
- Combination of tapping and walking: start with walking half-time for 2 8-counts, then switch to walking regular time while simultaneously tapping half-time, then switch to walking double-time while simultaneously tapping regular time, then switch to walking half-time while simultaneously tapping double-time, and so on... (i.e., rotate from half to regular to double time starting with feet [walking], then adding hands after the first round [tapping])

Musical selections: *Canon in D* – Johann Pachelbel, *Do You Remember* (Jay Sean)

- Rolling pinky balls between partners (focus on duration, phrasing, accent, tempo, and meter)
 - Students sit in a V-position (legs out to sides) and roll a pinky ball between them, back and forth, using the exact amount of force needed to get the ball to their partner to catch at the end of each phrase (more precisely, each “measure”) of music; partners catch on the last count of the phrase (measure) – e.g., roll 1, 2, 3, catch on 4, then immediately roll the ball back to their partner, not losing any measures or time
 - Try the above with music of different speeds (slower, faster) and meters (e.g., 4/4, 3/4, 2/4, 6/8)

Musical selections: 4/4 faster: *Viva la Vida* – Coldplay, 4/4 slower: *Mad World* – Michael Andrews & Gary Jules, 3/4: *Edelweiss* from *Christy Lane’s Let’s Do Ballroom*, 2/4: *Beer Barrel/Pennsylvania Polka* from *Christy Lane’s Let’s Do Ballroom*

- Bouncing pinky balls on different beats in a phrase or measure (focus on accent and phrasing)
 - Students stand and bounce pinky balls on the “1” count of each 4-count phrase (measure); then on the “2” count; then on the “3” count; then on the “4 count” (practice each many times before moving on)
 - Try the above activities while walking in general space
 - Try various combinations of walking and bouncing, e.g., step, bounce, step, bounce
 - Try the above with music of other meters, e.g., 3/4 (3-count measures, like a waltz)

Musical selections: 4/4 faster: *Viva la Vida* – Coldplay, 4/4 slower: *Mad World* – Michael Andrews & Gary Jules, 3/4: *Edelweiss* from *Christy Lane's Let's Do Ballroom*, 2/4: *Beer Barrel/Pennsylvania Polka* from *Christy Lane's Let's Do Ballroom*

- Combination: without stopping between 4-count measures, bounce the pinky ball on the “1” count of the first measure, then on the “2” count of the second measure, then on the “3” count of the third measure, then on the “4” count of the fourth measure, then back to the “1” count, and so on; the difficult transition is between the “4” and the “1” – these will be like bouncing twice in a row; try standing in personal space, then while walking in general space

Musical selection: *I Gotta Feeling* – Black Eyed Peas

Experimenting with rhythm patterns:

- “Call and echo” – the teacher claps (or taps with rhythm sticks) a 4-count rhythm pattern and then the students immediately repeat it, without losing the underlying beat, tempo, and measures of music
 - Vary the 4-count rhythms from even rhythms (e.g., “1, 2, 3, 4” – “slow, slow, slow, slow”; “1&2&3&4&” – “quick, quick, quick, quick, quick, quick, quick, quick”) to uneven rhythms (e.g., “1&2, 3&4”; “1, 2, 3&4”)
 - Add in “rests” where the beat/time remains, but there is no sound (e.g., “1, 2, _, 4”); open hands on the “rests” to help students *feel* the beat that is “silent”
 - Increase the length of the rhythm pattern to an 8-count phrase (e.g., “1&2, 3, 4, 5&6&7, _”)
 - Try the above activities with stomping in place of clapping/tapping
 - The above can be also done by tapping body parts (keeping it simple) – e.g., using an even rhythm (“1, 2, 3, 4”), tap head 2x, tap shoulders 2x, then students copy/repeat; have students try this with a partner (one calls/leads, the other echoes/repeats)
- Stomp out rhythm patterns on the floor
 - Stomp rhythm patterns from different dance steps around in general space, e.g., polka: “1&2, 3&4”; cha cha: “1, 2, 3&4”

Musical selections: Polka: *Beer Barrel/Pennsylvania Polka*; Cha Cha: *Tea for Two*, both from *Christy Lane's Let's Do Ballroom*

- Stomp out the rhythm of your own name (i.e., create a rhythm using the syllables within your name)

Experimenting with polyrhythms:

- Hemiola pattern (3:2)

Individually, and using a 6/8 musical framework (i.e., “1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6”), tap out the 3-count (“1, _, 3, _, 5, _”) repetitively with your right hand on your right thigh; then tap out the 2-count (“1, _, _, 4, _, _”) repetitively with your left hand on your left thigh; then try both simultaneously; an easy way to get started is to tap R & L together on “1” and then R (“3”), L (“4”), R (“5”) – i.e., “together, R-L-R” – gradually speed up and listen to the “resultant rhythm” as well as each individual rhythm (i.e., the triple rhythm vs. the duple rhythm, as you accentuate each, respectively)

Musical selection: *Keep Holding On* – Avril Lavigne

- Group rhythms – gradually combining/layering to create a polyrhythm and “resultant rhythm”

Have students in small groups create a 4-count rhythm pattern, making sure they are all different; then “conduct” the groups by cueing the first group, who performs their rhythm pattern 4 times (i.e., for 4 sets of 4) (but doesn’t stop); then cueing the second group to layer their rhythm pattern “on top of” the first group 4 times; and so on, until all rhythms are performed simultaneously; make sure no one speeds up (the teacher is the conductor and drummer – the person who maintains the pace/speed)

- STOMP polyrhythmic group creations with equipment (e.g., rhythm sticks, balls, etc.)

Have students in small groups create a “STOMP” inspired creation (polyrhythmic combination); each student (in the group) creates and performs a different 4-count rhythm pattern, using their body (clapping, stomping) or equipment; each student (in the same group) should make sure their rhythm is different from their peers, but coordinates with the other rhythms in the group, thus making a “resultant rhythm” that is richer than each rhythm pattern performed alone; groups need not be limited to 4-count rhythm patterns – the patterns can be longer (e.g., 8-counts) and the repetitions of the rhythms can vary – i.e., a common pattern is to repeat the same 8-count pattern 3 times, then vary the pattern on the last (4th) 8-count; movement of all types can also be included in the rhythm patterns; “Show and Share” polyrhythmic combinations, one at a time (so resultant rhythms can be heard)

Suggested Music:

Kou Kou and Ebo rhythms from *Christy Lane’s Authentic African and Caribbean Rhythms* (Christy Lane Enterprises)

Home – Daughtry

The Climb – Miley Cyrus

New York, New York from *Christy Lane's Let's Do Ballroom* (Christy Lane Enterprises)
Firework – Katy Perry
On the Floor – Jennifer Lopez
Home – Philip Phillips
Canon in D – Johann Pachelbel
Do You Remember – Jay Sean
Viva la Vida – Coldplay
Mad World – Michael Andrews & Gary Jules
Edelweiss – Let's Do Ballroom
Beer Barrel/Pennsylvania Polka from *Christy Lane's Let's Do Ballroom* (Christy Lane Enterprises)
I Gotta Feeling - Black Eyed Peas
Tea for Two from *Christy Lane's Let's Do Ballroom* (Christy Lane Enterprises)
Keep Holding On – Avril Lavigne

Recommended Resources:

Dalcroze Eurhythmics: Dalcroze Society of America at <www.dalcrozeusa.org>

Brain Dance: Anne Green Gilbert - Creative Dance Center: <www.creativedance.org>

Lane, C. (2000). *Christy Lane's authentic African and Caribbean rhythms*. Palm Springs, CA: Christy Lane Enterprises. Available at www.christylane.com.

Lane, C. (1997). *Christy Lane's let's do ballroom!* Palm Springs, CA: Christy Lane Enterprises. Available at www.christylane.com.

Stomp (1997). *Stomp out loud*. Yes/No Productions Ltd. Available at <www.stomponline.com> or www.broadwaystore.com

References:

Frego, R. J. D. (2011, October). *Dalcroze Eurhythmics: Experiencing rhythm in your whole body*. Presentation at the National Dance Education Organization conference, Minneapolis, MN.

Frego, R. J. D. (2012, October). *Dalcroze Eurhythmics: Experiencing rhythm in your whole body*. Presentation at the National Dance Education Organization conference, Los Angeles, CA.