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The Effects of Rhythm for Social Emotional Learning Skills Development

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The Effects of Rhythm on Personal and Community Development:
Wellness, for Children and Adults using the Rhythm Speaks Framework
(RSF)

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Research Capstone

Abstract

Many people talk about the importance of music in school and learning, we all know about its effects on cognitive development for children and adults. Though despite these universally known facts, music education programs are increasingly underfunded in schools, private lessons are not accessible to most people, while our country is simultaneously suffering from an increase in academic retention and destructive societal conflicts. Music brings all people together and at its core is rhythm. It makes available a space for joy; to fully express love, build bonds and strengthen our individual spirits. When used intentionally, music heals, and is a powerful agent for political change around the world. If we may develop our internal rhythm through these four principles: listening, communication, collaboration, and self-expression; an individual may embody the biological constructs of music, for their own social-emotional wellbeing.

Introduction

Listening is the most vital characteristic, which holds the lifeline for any band, group, or organization. It helps us stay connected with others, while supporting the building of individual's interpersonal interactions. Listening helps us develop strong communication, one with our inner self, as well as with others. To have effective communication, one must first examine non-verbal communication. Listening is the catalyst in locating what is missing, the presence of which will make a difference while interacting with someone else.

Through the process of listening for what is missing, it is essential to not be mistaken with finding what is "wrong." I am sure we can find plenty of things that are wrong, either with ourselves or things in the world. In this case, I am offering a type of listening that is designed for tuning in, becoming introspective and in locating what matters or that which is of importance to the task. In doing so, we can begin to be fully present to other people's honest communication, which in turn supports us in connecting more and working collaboratively. Nevertheless, in collaboration, it takes leaving your comfort zone to reach another person, by doing things that are new to you, while showing your true self. It leaves room for emotional regulation and authentic self-expression. In this space of self-expression, individuals get to truly be themselves, fully express their inner truths, and collaborate through innovative ideas with others and become active citizens in the world.

In this improvisational based learning; rhythm is the core ingredient to support the development of SEL skills; by way of listening, communication, collaboration and self-expression. Through drums, participants will experience enhanced, "capacity to integrate cognition, affect, and behavior to deal with daily tasks and challenges" (Domitrovich, Weissberg,

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Gullotta, 2015, pg. 6). In the *Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning* (2015), according to Domitrovich et al offer five competence domains for SEL:

1. Competence in the self-awareness domain involves understanding one's emotions, personal goals, and values. This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations, having positive mindsets, and possessing a well-grounded sense of self-efficiency and optimism. High levels of self-awareness require the ability to recognize how thoughts, feelings, and actions are interconnected.
2. Competence in the self-management domain requires skills and attitudes that facilitate the ability to regulate emotions and behaviors. Including the ability to delay gratification, manage stress, control impulses, and persevere through challenges to achieve personal and educational goals.
3. Competence in the social awareness domain involves the ability to take the perspective of those with different backgrounds or cultures and to empathize and feel compassion. It also involves understanding social norms for behavior and recognizing family, school, and community resources and supports.
4. Relationship skills provide children [and adults] with the tools they need to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships, and to act in accordance with social norms. Competence in this domain involves communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting, and inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking help when is needed.
5. Finally, responsible decision-making is a competency domain that requires the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse settings. Competence in this domain

requires the ability to consider ethical standards, safety concerns, accurate behavioral norms for risky behaviors, to make realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and to take the health and well-being of self and others into consideration

Expanding on these principles above, in this paper, we will begin by exploring the effects of rhythm for SEL skills development, through playing drums. Then I will discuss advantages of developing skills in listening, communication, collaboration and self-expression. In the process, I will also investigate supporting evidence in relation to this topic, the development of SEL and the use of drums and wellness.

Who I am and Why This is Important to Me

Drums have been used as a tool for communication in centuries. It is a tool my ancestors used for intervillage communication, allowing them to send news and information to one another. They did not have telephones, but they used rhythm to communicate non-verbally, enabling a form of communication without words, but through actions.

I was five-years old when I became interested in playing drums. Growing up in Congo, I did not have access to music instruction. Nonetheless, I was exposed to instruments at church. It was there that I began to feel connected to rhythm and melodic sounds and soon, my rhythmic intuition blossomed. I never stopped playing and continue to every day. In 1994, war tore apart the Central African Republic of Rwanda; the fight between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups leaked through the border, well into the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo, my home country.

As a child, I was used to playing soccer outside with my friends. Often, I would set up my make-shift drum set and play, while other kids danced and we all joined in a song. When war

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came, my childhood days of climbing mango trees with my friends, in search of the sun-kissed clouds and playing in the swift, nebulous river fully clothed to beat the heat were evidently over. We were all kids, playing in the backyards of our country. Those backyards became potential hiding places from the chaos.

I was in the first group, a total of ten kids, that were brought to Boston. We later relocated to Brookline, where I was enrolled in the Devotion School as a fifth grader. My new idea of survival now revolved around fitting in. The Devotion School taught me an abundance of lessons; personal space, “don’t hug everyone,” or look people in the eyes when talking to them. Many of those lessons, will never be forgotten. Besides the language of music, I was raised speaking French and Lingala and at school we only spoke French. It was through those educational and life lessons that I began speaking English.

In 6th grade, I was fortunate enough to meet amazing teachers. The music teacher, John Berman, and I quickly connected. He told me that I was born with rhythm, and that musical comprehension came naturally to me. He called it a “gift from God.” John acknowledged my talent, and helped me understand my gift. Another important teacher was Jorge Perez-Albela. Jorge taught me Jazz, connecting the rhythmic dots for me, relating the roots of rhythm to African, Latin, Blues and Funk music. It was because of this that my listening improved, along with my ability to improvise music, and most importantly, my conversations with people. Together we played music and interacted. John and Jorge became more than school teachers to me. They were mentors. I would not be where I am today if it weren’t for having met them both. They nurtured me, taught me, pushed me and gave me the opportunity to be great. And that is what I intend to do.

My two world experiences, from Congo and Brookline, gave me tools that I will use for the rest of my life. I learned that there's rhythm in everything, a time and order to which all things operate. John helped me accept myself and Jorge brought me closer to my intuition. As I grow older, my goal is to train and develop future leaders and innovators using drums for personal development and academic success. In doing so, participants will develop critical skills in listening, communication, collaboration, and self-expression.

Purpose of Paper

Often people talk about how essential music is for the brain and its necessity in society. However, despite all, music education is still out of reach for many people and private music lessons are inaccessible, because it is not affordable to most people. In many previous studies, music is proven to be an integral agent for personal development—as Domitrovich, Weissberg, Bullotta (2015) explain, music develops analytical, communication, and collaborative skills” (pg.6). In developing such vital skills, we can ensure the training of new leaders and innovators in our society.

If we can synthesize the biological constructs of music, perhaps we can use its properties as tools for personal development and wellness; we can use them for a universally designed model for learning. Yet against these positive known facts about music, there has not been a universally designed model for learning using rhythm for developing SEL skills. According to Sacks (1971), “Much that occurs in the perception of music can also occur when music is ‘played in the mind.’ The imagining of music, even in relatively nonmusical people, tends to be remarkably faithful not only to the tune and feeling of the original but to its pitch and tempo” (xii). We all have an innate ability to feel and interoperate music. Therefore, rhythm is developmental and when facilitated well, anyone can learn to create and express rhythm in

sequence McNiff (2009), founder of the first integrated arts in therapy said: “The drums and other percussive instruments help us let go and express ourselves from the body and in sync with our most natural gestures and urges” (pg.40). Rhythm is found within us and everywhere. When we attune to it, there are endless possibilities of its positive effects in society. By developing SEL through rhythm in conjunction with traditional schooling, we can ensure the proper training of future leaders and innovators.

Listening

Active Listening

The act of listening consumes our everyday activities. However, many individuals do not realize that listening, much more than just being able to hear someone or something, is about tuning into what matters or what is missing, the presence of which would add value. In active listening, the individual is completely engaged, attentive and attuned to what is happening now.

In listening, one must first learn how to effectively listen to themselves by attunement. This manner of listening, which involves personal as well as interpersonal, embodies the experience. In the words of Mitchell Kossak (2008), attunement “includes a psychological, emotional, and somatic state of consciousness.” In this space, individuals can undergo deeply felt experiences, not only with the self, but also with other individuals in the drum circle. Through the process of listening and attunement while drumming, individuals will have a peak experience.

Our ears allow us to capture everyday interactions. We can hear things happening and even listen to people speak. But, they do not help us carefully listen for what matters to other people or what other’s may care about. Because most of our listening is passive, it can be

challenging to build an active listening mind. Active listening means to: listen for what is missing, the action of this will make a difference. In active listening, the participant develops the capability to quiet the mind. While engaged in this level of listening, “we *feel* a new awareness, and then store it in our minds for future references” (Herring, 2007, p. 22). Although many people would say they listen, it is safe to say that most of the time all individuals spend time listening to themselves, *rather* than listening for what matters and is of importance to someone else. We spend a lot of time listening to ourselves—the internal dialogue that takes place in our brain— a lot more than we listen to other people.

The process of active listening through rhythm is rooted in improvisation. Imagine if one were dancing salsa in a conversation, taking in account the back-and-forth coordination, while being intensely connected by the pulse and tempo of the song. If the drummer is not actively listening, they will miss what is happening in the groove and will not be present to the changes in the progression and time. Just like a conversation between two people; if an individual is too busy listening to their own internal dialogue, they are passively listening to the other person and as a result, will not be present in the conversation, ultimately miss what was communicated. There is a difference between experiencing communication with someone and hardly thinking about it. Active listening embodies “letting go of the first burden that stops deep [listening], obsession with past and future” (Brahm, 2016, pg. 43). In doing so, one can proceed to create even more beautiful and truthful interactions with a present mind.

Unfortunately, many of us spend too much time listening to our own internal conversation, rather than attuning to what is of importance to another person. While playing in a band, if the drummer is unaware of what the guitar player is doing or cannot follow the base, the entire song will be uncohesive and will lack melody. Through active listening, the drummer will

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be able to listen empathetically and work collaboratively with the other members of the band. In conclusion, by developing active listening in “interpersonal learning produces greater cohesion in a positive and self-reinforcing loop,” resulting in effective communication and collaboration (Yalom, 2005, pg. 63).

Active listening is being physically and mindfully present with a muted internal dialogue. It is important to note that, the internal dialogue that every individuals’ experience is part of human nature. It cannot be deleted. It will always be there. Though it is always there, one may find value in acknowledging that it is possible to have control over it and in doing so, positively redirect the arising negative commentary. As written in the *Yoga Discipline of Freedom* (1995), “tranquility of thought comes through the cultivation of friendship, compassion, joy, and impartiality” (pg. 12). In other words, through listening, one can develop self-regulation and interpersonal relationship skills, despite the pleasures or challenges in life. In this space, new knowledge can develop through deeper states of consciousness. When the self-conversation comes up, it is important to notice it, acknowledge its presence and then let it go. In doing so, the individual will choose to be present to the matter at hand, rather than in their own headspace. Active listening is a choice. It is a place to come from when engaging with other individuals; whether through music playing, interpersonal communication, or anything in the world. This process is critical in supporting how a person exists in the world.

Internal Rhythm

As previously discussed, individuals often listen to internal dialogue rather than listening for what matters or what is missing in the conversation, the presence of which would make a difference. To support students in finding their internal rhythm, they must first learn how to align their thoughts through positive thinking. Before learning how to drum, thoughts that arise are

often negative: “I can’t do this, I am not good enough or “this is too challenging” (personal communication, First grade student). These types of thoughts send vibrations throughout the body, making learning difficult and halting the possibility for attunement. In the *Yoga Discipline of Freedom* (1995), Barbara Stole Miller, the acclaimed translator of the *Bhagavad-gita* writes: “Even the most subtle and benign workings of thought are obstructions to freedom of the spirit” (pg. 7). Internal dialogue can bring negative thinking, which can result in inaction or negative actions. How can one be free in full self-expression if their thoughts are not aligned with their spirit? To help us get there, we sometimes use the art medium, to create positive mental imagery.



This piece above represents an exercise I do with students, to develop positive mental imagery. Here is an image painted by a student post-election 2016, whom I will refer to by a changed name. It was a Wednesday afternoon when Daniel showed up to class, but this time he did not have the same air about him. During our initial check-in, he revealed to me that he was “upset Donald Trump won the election.” We then spent ten minutes improvising. After that, I asked him to do an artistic response and this painting is what he came up with. He explained to me that the dark spot represents how mad he was feeling, it even had its own spiraling cloud. Then he felt angry, which is represented by the red. He felt a little better in the gray area, but really wanted to hang out in the yellow, where he felt much better. This outer feeling bounced back-and-forth. After the exercise, he felt that he could always go back home; where he can look

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to find his alignment, which is represented by the green and light blue, with a touch of yellow. He could get back to his center, which helped him not be as upset and better regulate his emotions during school.

Although the work towards internal rhythmic alignment is never over, it must begin through creating positive imagery as well as good self-regard and rhythm as the catalyst.

Interpersonal Interaction

Compared with the ability to express rhythm autonomously, coordinating between one beat to another is like an individual's ability to adapt in any environment. Adaptability to different situations, while being able to interact with anyone, is based on improvisation. While improvising, the player must be present in the groove while making changes accordingly, thus, adapting to the new feel. This musical phenomenon also occurs in social situations. In a study titled *Development of Interpersonal Coordination between Peers during a Drumming Task*, Endedijk, Ramanzoni, Cox, Cillensen, Bekkering, Humius (2015, p.2) found that coordination during social interaction can be easier for a child when they frequently practice. The researchers studied spontaneous drumming in 2, 3, and 4 year olds of the same-gender. In this study, the goal was to understand how "drumming will change over age both in terms of the development of tempo stability and interpersonal coordination" (pg.3). Overtime, younger students develop the ability to express rhythm autonomously and in sequence. In this, they become adept in playing with others through mirroring and improvisation. The developmental periods for interpersonal rhythm are challenging. It is about finding your rhythmic identity. In time, it makes available tools for lifelong interpersonal maturity.

Interpersonal Rhythm (IR) is the ability to form a deep connection with another person, while engaged in drumming. The process of IR is rooted in listening. As previously, noted, active listening makes available honest communication. To develop effective IR, the participant must first work on aligning his internal rhythm, which makes available patience and the ability to exchange beats. “Coordination can exist of the same behavior of both partners at the same time or by turn-taking in which the patterns produce bouts after each other” (Endedijk, et al, 2015 p. 6). The relationship formed while drumming stems out of the level of engagement between listening and communication. In that level of engagement, IR is born, and overtime, the student will begin to relate to himself and others with more patience, attention, compassion and empathy.

Communication

None-verbal Improvisation

In the realm of communication, we far too often disregard that there is not just one-way of communicating with others. Most people use verbal language to interact with other people when communicating, while using hand gestures to emphasize their points and heighten one’s point of view. Through this mostly exclusive manner of communicating, it is difficult to express yourself from an authentic perspective, resulting in distorted transmission that usually does not come from an attuned place.

A lot of communication is passive and therefore, the way most individuals interact, is non-emotional or intimate. In that manner, one must create a learning environment that is flexible and accommodating to a variety of communication methods. Non-verbal Improvisation allows participants to build from one another, innovate and develop a musical progression without interruption. To make such learning space possible, Irvin Yalom (2005), an American

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existential psychotherapist said: “The group environment in which learning takes place is important. The ideal context is one of partnership and collaboration, rather than prescription and subordination” (pg.8). In this environment, an individual will develop the capacity to bring nothing to the conversation, yet bring everything they have, including listening and being present, as if dancing in the conversation. Here, beauty is created; conflicts are mediated, compassion is acquired, and authentic self-expression is revealed.

While drumming, the participants engage in higher-level reasoning, interpreting rhythmic sequences, and reliably delivering their own complementary beats. In doing so, creating an interlocking symbiotic relationship in expression. The instructor must also embody this manner of expression and interpersonally relate to the participants, while encouraging listening for what is missing in the present, possibly adding value to the jam or interplay. In this space, a relationship is created and a bond is formed. According to Yalom (2005), “interpersonal relatedness has clearly been adaptive in an evolutionary sense: without deep, positive, reciprocal interpersonal bonds, neither individual nor species survival would have been possible” (p.19). This is vital for the growth and development of individuals everywhere, including those who work: in industries, all stages of academia, artificial intelligence, and Government settings.

Promoting non-verbal communication through rhythm is essential in training leaders and innovators, to aide further acquiring fundamental tools for their own personal wellbeing. While playing drums, participants learn the mechanism of non-verbal improvisation through active listening and all its contributing factors. In that space, they learn to adapt to shifting situations, manage the tempo, and regulating the volume. Mistakes are possible, though this is where an individuals’ identity can take shape. Growth is difficult because, conflicts between the inner and outer self are ignited, which is where the key person identity is overcome.

Erik Erikson (1968), developmental psychologist and psychoanalysis, adds that human beings “emerge from each crisis with an increased sense of inner unity, with an increase of good judgement, and an increase in the capacity ‘to do well’ according to his own standards and to the standards of those who are significant to him” (Pg. 92). It is important to play from how you feel and not how you think you should play that will sound good to other people. In this space, most people think about what is wrong or what they are doing wrong. As a result, it becomes about “fixing” something, where there is nothing broken. If more people can communicate from inner unity, they will express more authentically without distorted communication.

Alternatively, when we communicate from a place of curiosity and a sense of inquiry, we can be present in finding what is missing which may make a difference. Consequently, the participant can attune to her own body, while opening the spirit to the possibility of being present and positive. Attunement allows us the space to create and bring harmony and honesty in our expression. On the other hand, there is misattunement when the communication lacks harmony and positivity, resulting in a misstatement: a negative space that negates the possibility of honest rhythmic communication.

Embodiment

While active listening is imperative in helping be present, attunement supports positive narrative and harmony, and communication guides us in being grounded. In all of that, it is essential to develop a sense of embodiment. In rhythm, feeling the groove allows the individual to express themselves wholeheartedly. Botella (2008), the author of *Timekeeping is Everything: Rhythm and the Construction of Meaning* wrote: “The subdivision of such a steady pulse in smaller units such as *upbeats*, *offbeats*, *onbeats*, *backbeats*, and *downbeats*, plus the range of time signatures, tempi, dynamics, rhythmic, and polyrhythmic patterns, create the possibility of using

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rhythm as an expressive and articulate language that evokes embodied emotional responses” (Pg.3). They can fully tune into their internal rhythm to the ambience of the pulsating heartbeat in oscillation. Embodiment “refers to a body centered intelligence that informs how one knows and experiences the world” (Kossak, 2008, p. 2). It is in this space of embodied intelligence we can learn about our bodies and develop a strong sense of active listening, so that we can hear what the body wants and needs. It is only through embodiment that one will be able to be fully present to their own greatness, rhythmically, professionally, and everywhere in their life.

The work of embodied rhythm is the basis for authentic communication and positive self-regard. If the participant has not developed a strong listening, attunement, internal rhythm or non-verbal communication skills, developing an embodied sense of rhythm in how they relate to themselves as a human being, will be distorted. Everything we interact with, helps us create a construct of the world around us. “Time is thus constructed into a series of rhythm patterns that follow a predictable sequence” (Botella, 2008). We feel the world through our bodies, we strengthen our body maps, which informs our sense to understanding constructed objectivity.

Honest Communication

Often, we catch ourselves spending our waking moments thinking, plotting, and examining our next steps. The thinking is usually not about what is happening at that moment, but rather, about something that had already happened or has yet to occur. Loraine Herring (2007), author of *Writing Begins with the Breath*, suggests, “It also helps to move you out of your thinking center and into a place of feeling and sensation” (p.23). In this space of compellation, individuals develop an already listening mechanism of the world in which they have constructed, making honest communication difficult. Honest communication refers to the

ability to communicate healthfully, with pure thoughts and positive regard to the listener. While drumming, the participants will be able to express themselves from whatever level they are. They may understand, accept and embrace where they are, developmentally, so that how they relate with them self and others, is not from an already listening stance. Rather, it would be from an honest quest, wonder and curiosity.

Time and again, fear is what keeps most of us from having honest communication. When we allow fear to get in the way of us living life wholesomely, we lose the ability to be present. Within a space guided by fear, we cannot be ourselves. In turn, force communication onto others to be understood. This sounds like wailing or playing polyrhythms, two or more sounds at the same time, with un-syncopated beats. In other words, we may speak too fast or stutter words, while attempting to sound coherent. Many people interact with others by sounding good or acting out of character to please others. Here, they cover their true authentic self, to please others, while hiding behind a layer of distorted views.

Through non-verbal improvisation, participants develop the ability to communicate at a higher, more introspective and effective manner while simultaneously developing creative sensibilities, logical thinking, and a mystery of their own environment. In this instance, a united identity is displayed, aiding the participant towards a clear perception of themselves and the world.

Collaboration

Leaving the Comfort Zone

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Finding and aligning your center is critical for personal development, it is also essential in supporting creativity. It takes leaving our comfort zone to enter someone else's world. In all, "people need people-for initial and continued survival, for socialization, for pursuit of satisfaction" (Yalom, 2005, p. 24). Working well with someone else can be challenging, though after building familiarity and interpersonal relationships, we can ensure longevity in any sector.



It is much easier to do just about anything in our comfort zone. However, despite that, we cannot make much progress in an area that is already familiar to us. In the same light, if a person is panicking prior to performing, they may not learn new information either. Learning happens in the challenge zone, the middle yellow circle drawn above. This is where grit is built. Here is where one can come into new realizations and find inner strength amidst the challenge. Therefore, it is important to develop the internal rhythm, to have a sense of control in our own self-regulation. In this space, the participant will begin to stand out. Other people may realize subtle changes about them and they may be recognized as intelligent. In *Intelligence Reframed*, Howard Gardner (1999) explained, "They [will] differ from their peers in ambition, self-confidence, passion about their work, tough skins, and to put it bluntly, the desire to be creative, to leave a mark on the world" (P. 120). There are endless possibilities beyond our scope of understanding. Beyond our fears, lies a field of knowledge and interpersonal intuition.

While working with clients in the *Drums and Wellness* program, it is essential that the facilitator be willing to do the work as well—to leave the comfort zone and enter the challenge zone and create a space that welcomes full self-expression. In my experience, I felt liberated to be myself, express what I cared about, and shared my ideas openly with my participants. On occasion, my internal dialogue would start with thoughts such as: “this is not good enough” or questions like, “am I doing the right thing here?” Though, despite all of these thoughts being part of the journey of accepting myself, my work with the participants was always my primary goal. For the “ability to solve problems or to create products that are valued within one or more cultural settings” (Gardner, 1999, pg. 33) is how we construct our perception of the world around us. There were many times where I felt as though my products were not good enough, and I wondered if I was making a difference or if I was just kidding myself. I had to wrestle with my own negative self-talk, to step in to the challenge zone and do the work necessary for creating an incubator-like environment suitable for learning and self-expression with myself and others.

Mindfulness

Sigmund Freud said that the creative experience provides the individual with the "ability to express his most secret mental impulses, which are hidden even from himself" (Blum, 2001, p. 107). In doing so, that person can project the most authentic part of himself and to build a relationship with the internal self; feelings and emotions. Though Freud's ego theory focused on object relation and sexuality, psychoanalysis practices of the 1930s, particularly in England, began to explore Music as a method of Healing. This notion emphasized the idea of interpersonal connectedness and relations, as opposed to instinctual or biological drives. In bringing more mindfulness in our playing and interactions, we will relate with others on a personal level and, authentic connections are created along with lasting interpersonal bonds.

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Mindfulness is about being present through your mental processes, so that you are not consumed with the turning of the mind or in other words, your internal dialogue. It is about the “totality of mental processes-conscious, subconscious, and hyperconscious-not simply to the faculties of intellect, recollection, or emotion” (Miller, 1995, p. 30). Insofar of the process, the participant or self is agitated, making it difficult to create collaboration, be playful or dancing in the conversation. That is why it is indispensable to have mindfulness and rhythm, to make available a set of tools integral for personal and community development. In this space, leaders and innovators are created and hopefully in time, they will collaborate with others in areas seemingly impossible.

The ability to mindfully collaborate with others can heighten creativity. Even those who have not learned the skills for rhythmic mindfulness can still be creative and it is demonstrated differently for everyone. As in the words of Twyla Tharp (2002), a world-renowned American choreographer, “We all have strands of *creative code* hard-wired into our imaginations. These strands are as solidly imprinted in us as the genetic code that determines our height and eye color, except they govern our creative impulses” (p. 12). These creative impulses determine how we tell our stories to others, they inform our intuitions and form our broad interpersonal relationship web. Effective collaboration cannot take place without mindfulness, which in turn is unity and transformation.

Unification

Through the work in active listening and locating one’s internal rhythm, to honest communication and the importance of mindful collaboration, the individual or group may arrive at a point of unification. It is inevitable that in doing this work they will arrive at creating unity within themselves, the work place, community, classroom, school and everywhere else in their

daily lives. When an individual puts into practice the tools offered, they will result in the ability to locate their potential, both intra and interpersonally.

Lesson Plan

Rhythmic Expression

Theme: Building communication.

Goals: Students will be able to perform rhythmic and consecutive beats in sequence without instructor assistance. They will be able to recall what they learned, to play it back and create their own beat.

Objective:

The objective of this skill-based exercise is for participants to develop their rhythmical expression. To facilitate intrapersonal awareness and interpersonal relationship development.

This exercise requires active listening, nonverbal communication and body movement. It can be modified for participants of all abilities. It is imperative that participants listen to one another and to themselves, for self and social group development.

Materials:

We will need drum sticks for all participants, Djembe drums and other percussion instruments.

Introduction:

1. **Body Scan.**

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1.a. Intention: to bring participants present, by noticing one's body. Notice any tingling or sensations and adjust accordingly, starting with the toes, all the way up to the head.

2. Color Match.

2.b. Intention: To create mental imagery by associating a color with how you are feeling now. Think about a color that represents how you are feeling right now and why? Following this will be a call and response.

3. Call and response.

3.c. Intention: To create rhythm expression and movement.

Procedure:

I will play patterns on the drum which will allow students to interpret using their drum sticks.

We will repeat the patterns several times to build familiarity. Then participants will have an opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned.

PATTERN 1: R-L-R-L-R (5:4)

PATTERN 2: R-L-R-R-L (5:4)

Questions:/ Debrief:

Can anyone play what they remember alone? What was the pattern? What do you like about this?

What don't you like about this? Does anyone have any questions? Does this remind you of anything in your past experiences? Have you experienced anything like this before? What was that like?

Conclusion:

We will conclude the activity with a jam session, where I will facilitate a play-along using the drum and students will play the patterns they've just learned and together we will create a jam.

Evaluation:

Students will be asked to perform the patterns to demonstrate what they have learned. In this case, they will play the patterns in the cycle of four consecutively. Once completed, it will be evident that they learned a rhythm and can play the beat consecutively and in sequence.

Self-expression

You are now in the space of total emersion with your internal rhythm. Your communication comes from a place of honesty and you can mindfully collaborate with others. In this space, participants may undergo an out-of-body experience, they may feel like floating as if you are outside of your own body. Full self-expression is about being totally emerged in the experience, so that your expression is not based on other people's thoughts and perception, but based on your ability to be your authentic self.

In a controlled environment, the aim is to develop interpersonal skills and to "facilitate initiative, engagement, self-expression and mutual understanding. It makes available a space for joy; to fully express love, build lasting bonds and strengthen our individual spirits.

Conclusion

DRUMS AND WELLNESS

In the process of playing drums, we can develop a variety of methods and skills, which supports our interpersonal relationships. Music is an integral part of society, it brings people together and heals wounds. At the heart of music is rhythm, and rhythm, makes available a space for joy, to fully express love, build bonds and strengthen our individual spirits.

Leaving your comfort zone is not easy, though what is on the other side of risk is an abundance of growth. The development of SEL skills through drums will take leaving one's comfort zone, to enter the challenge zone, where they may discover their true power. In the process of that, feeling touched, moved and inspired. As a result, we develop valuable intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, to become active agents of change in our society. When listening, communication and collaboration are used intentionally, our self-expression becomes aligned with our whole spirit in rhythm. With the development of our internal rhythm and the embodiment of music, healing can take effect, breakthroughs can occur and individual transformations can take shape. My intention is to use these tools to train and development future leaders and innovators using drums, for personal and cognitive development. The future is bright and I am excited by what it may have in store for all of us.

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