



CLASS ACTIVITY: ENSEMBLE CAPTAIN

OVERVIEW

In this activity, students will explore working as a musical ensemble while creating their own rhythmic patterns.

SPACE CONSIDERATIONS: Students will need space to divide into ensembles of different sizes.

INSTRUCTIONS

Begin by discussing the different types of ensembles we see in musical performance. In this activity, students will focus mainly on duos, trios, and quartets. A duo consists of two musicians, a trio consists of three musicians, and a quartet consists of four musicians.

Divide the class into duos and assign numbers 1 or 2 to each duo member. In that order, students will take turns in their duos being the Ensemble Captain. The student that is Captain will model different musical ideas through body percussion (snapping, clapping, stomping feet, etc.) for the other member of their duo to follow. Encourage Captains to think of ways to alter the musical idea they are presenting (i.e. volume, tempo, etc.) to make the activity more challenging for their duo partner. Signify to groups when it is time to switch Ensemble Captains.

Once each member of the duo has had a turn as the Captain, divide the class into trios and assign numbers 1, 2, or 3 to each trio member. Repeat the activity. Encourage Captains to think of creative new ways to model musical ideas, so as not to repeat what their other trio members have already done. After each member of the trio has had a turn, divide into quartets and repeat.

Once students have finished performing in their quartets, open the class up for discussion about their experience working as a musical ensemble. How was performing in a duo different from performing in a trio or quartet? Did you prefer being the leader, or being the follower? Why? What are some other musical groupings you can think of?

OPTIONAL

Have the entire class perform as an "orchestra" and choose one student to act as the "conductor."