

LESSON PLAN: Drum Fills and a Crash

Objective:

Students will be able to play complicated rhythms by associating them to commonly used words.

Resources:

Any song recording

Procedures:

- 1 Listen to the recording of a song you're working on in class, or a favorite of one of the students. Notice where the cymbal crashes are in the song. They almost always occur at the beginning of a verse or chorus, or the repeat of a part of the chorus. After observing this in a couple of songs, point out that a cymbal crash is a way for the drummer to say "We're at the beginning of a new section!"
- 2 Listen to a progression that repeats over and over, like the "Axis of Awesome" progression. This is a really good one to use because there is a different chord in every measure before it repeats, therefore making the return to the beginning more obvious. You can play this progression for them on a guitar, keyboard, or use a jam track. If you have a student who can play a chord progression over and over while you teach this concept that would be even better.
- 3 Tell students that when it comes back to the beginning each time you'd like them to use their right hands to hit an imaginary crash cymbal in the air while saying "crash". As the progression continues cycling around to the beginning, imitate this exaggerated crash cymbal motion while saying "crash" each time you get back to the first beat of the first measure. Repeat until it's obvious they are aware of where this is.
- 4 Describe a fill as something that leads to a crash, helping "build up" to the crash. Use words from the lesson plan "Rhythms Made Easy With Words" and imitate what a couple of fills might sound like leading to a crash. For simplicity begin each fill on beat 2 of the last measure in the progression, and just like in the other lesson plan use the right and left hands on the desk or your lap to "play" the fill.
- 5 Invite volunteers to make up their own "drum fill" using these words. At this point you can invite the entire class to do "Classroom as Drumset" (see lesson plan) in accompanying the fills your students create. This activity is great ear training, as it makes everyone who participates aware of fundamental structures happening in music.

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

National Core Arts Standards (Music): Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Example: General Music MU:Cr1.1.3 b. Generate musical ideas (such as rhythms and melodies) within a given tonality and/or meter. Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.4 a. Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, and form) in music selected for performance. Example: Harmonizing Instruments MU:Pr4.2.H.1a Identify and describe important theoretical and structural characteristics and context (social, cultural, or historical) in a varied repertoire of music that includes melodies, repertoire pieces, improvisations, and chordal accompaniments in a variety of patterns (such as arpeggio, country and gallop strumming, finger picking patterns). Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

