

CLEVER STICKS ACTIVITY PLAN

AP2: Conducting

Year Group R - 6

Learning objectives

Children develop their understanding of:

- how to follow signals (NC PoS 1b,1c)
- how to improvise in response to signals (NS PoS 2a)
- the need to have rules when playing as a group (NC PoS 1c,2b)

Resources

- instruments and beaters

Activity

This is probably one of the first activities you will want to do with your class, as it establishes some basic procedures, such as stopping and starting, which you can incorporate into many other activities.

Introduction

Once instruments and beaters have been given out, explain to the children that they are a band or an orchestra and you are going to be their conductor. (You may wish to talk to them about whether, and where, any of them have seen a conductor before.) Show them two signals - one meaning "start" and the other meaning "stop". Explain that when they are given the start signal, they can play anything they like as long as they keep an eye on you and stop on the stop signal. Try this out a few times so that children get used to watching out for the stop signal while they are playing. You can vary the length of time between the start and stop signals.

Extension

Once you have established the basic procedure, you can extend this activity, eg:

- Divide the class into about 4 groups. Use the same signals, directed at individual groups, so that only one group is playing at any time.
- Alternatively, say that once a group has been given the start signal they music keep going until they are given the stop signal. In this way, you can have more than one group playing at a time.
- Do either of the above with pairs or individual children instead of groups.
- For any of these activities, once you have demonstrated them and children are familiar with the procedures, invite children to be the conductors.
- Once the start and stop signals are established, you can add other signals, e.g. for getting louder, quieter, faster, slower, making short sounds, long sounds

Comments

When allowing the children freedom to 'play anything they like' you may want to add some limitations, such as not damaging the instruments.

Metallophones tend to continue vibrating after children have finished playing them. You may need to show children how to dampen the sound by putting their hands on the bars.

There is no "correct" start or stop signal. You and the children can choose what signal to make. However, the activity will work best if the signals are clear and easily distinguished from each other.

When grouping children, you may wish to separate out the xylophones, metallophones and glockenspiels, to highlight the different sounds they make.