Lesson Plan: Exploring Beat and Rhythm

Age:

5-10 years.

Lesson duration:

90 minutes
- Introduction/Review exercise (10m)
- Part 1: Beat/rhythm exercise (20m)
- Break (5m)
- Part 2: Programming exercise (20m)
- Break (5m)
- Part 3: Animation exercise (20m)
- Performance/Critique (10m)

Number of students:

Up to 10.

Rationale:

Students will learn to identify and synthesize beat and rhythm. They will use these skills to express themselves musically. They will use observational and compositional skills to explore these musical concepts.

Objectives:

Students will understand what is meant by a steady beat and rhythm. Students will be able to compose their own rhythms and program a composition. Each beat will be associated with a frame in an animation in order to ground the rhythm in something physical.

LESSON

Introduction:

Begin by asking students to sit in a circle and explain that in today's lesson they are going to learn about the musical concepts of beat and rhythm.

Review:

Start with a review of the "cups" lesson: Can they identify the rhythm in each "action" in "Hot Cross Buns"?

Part 1:

A. Beat:

1. Ask students to feel the pulse of their heart beats. What other beats can they identify? (Rain drops from a gutter?)
2. Explain that in music there is often a steady (heart) beat that stays the same throughout.
3. Have the students keep the beat during "Hot Cross Buns".

B. Rhythm:

4. Listen to "Hot Cross Buns". Is it a steady beat? Is there ever a variation? Follow the rhythm of "Hot Cross Buns" by clapping on each syllable—"Hot, Cross, Buns, One, A, Pen-ny, Two, A, Pen-ny..." Then ask the students to copy you.
5. Practice both the beat and rhythm of "Hot Cross Buns" for a few minutes so all students can have a chance to understand how to keep the beat and create rhythm. (Half of the students can copy the beat, half the rhythm.)
6. Write down the rhythm in any notation. Compare it with the code in the action blocks. Discuss which notes are longer, which are shorter. Do both actions add up to the same length?

Break

Part 2:

A. Rhythm Ruler

1. Use the Rhythm Maker to create a beat and a rhythm.
2. Experiment with different beats and rhythms.
3. Export the rhythms from the Rhythm Maker to create action blocks.

B. Composition

4. Use these action blocks to make a composition.
5. Experiment with different drum sounds at different parts of the rhythm.

Break

Part 3:

1. Using the digital camera, take photos of "dance moves" to associate with different rhythm notes.
2. Use the Avatar block to insert an image inside of each note.

Performance/Critique:

1. Have each student perform their composition.
2. Engage in a discussion about the beat and the variations in the rhythm: Is it fun? Is it musical? How would you change it? Why did they choose a particular drum for a particular rhythm? Why did they choose a particular image for a particular rhythm?

Extras:

- Have the students count the beats in their compositions.
- Have the students count the notes in their compositions.
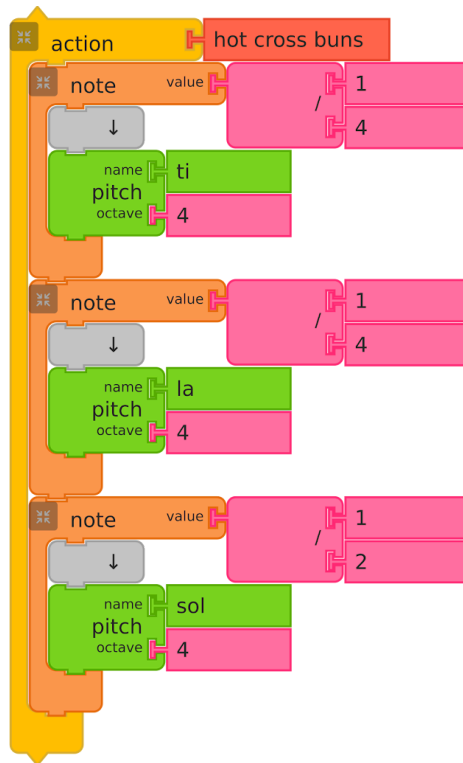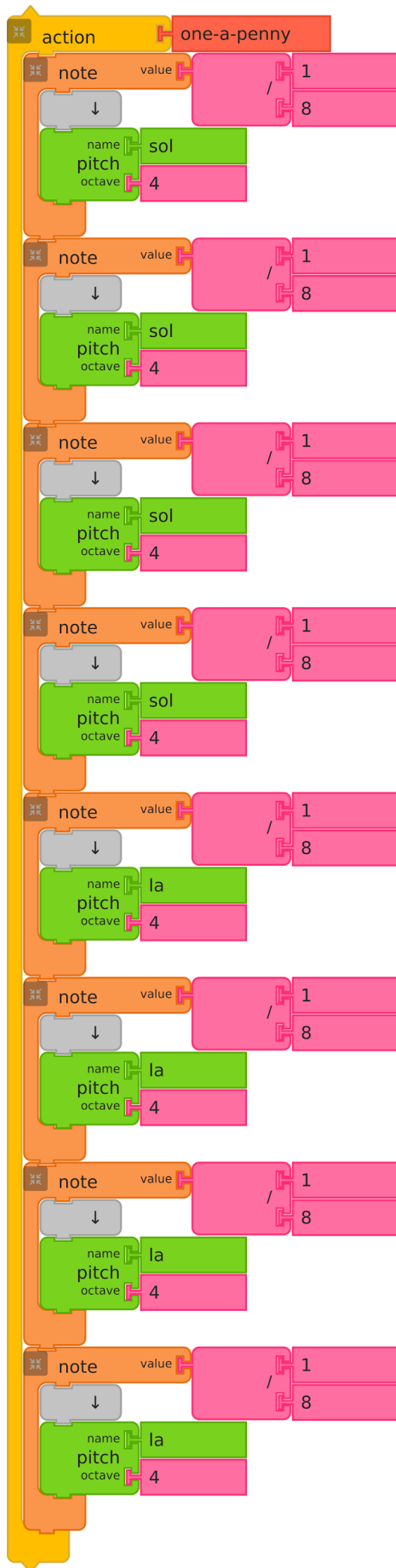- Are they the same?

Key events:

- Introduction of key concepts- beat and rhythm.
- Ask students to follow clapping the beat and rhythm to the song "Hot Cross Buns".
- The students create their own rhythms using Rhythm Maker
- The students create their own composition using Action Blocks exported from Rhythm Maker
- The students use different instruments for different parts of their rhythms.

Materials:

- Anything that can be used as a drum
- Paper and pencil for annotation
- Music Blocks software
- Digital camera (or another source of images for the animation).

Assessment:

- Observe participation and clapping of beat and rhythm.
- Examine the notation of the rhythm
- Do the compositions include a steady beat?
- Do the compositions include variations in rhythm?

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▶	1/1

▶	1/1

▶	🎵↓	📋↓	↩	👆	2	☒	🥁

▶	1/2	1/4	1/4

▶	1/3	1/3	1/3

start
- forever
  - repeat 3
    - note value / 1 / 3
      - ↓
      - drum kick drum

start
- forever
  - note value / 1 / 2
    - ↓
    - drum snare drum
  - repeat 2
    - note value / 1 / 4
      - ↓
      - drum snare drum