**Bucket Drum lesson**

* Getting Buckets  
  5gallon buckets are expensive! Ok, not as expensive as an instrument, but for what they are, they are expensive! So, one day I had a brilliant idea! Ask the cafeteria manager if they have empty 5 gal buckets that they are just going to throw away. And....they did! Woo-hoo free buckets!! The only downside: it will take a few weeks to gather enough buckets for an ensemble. Another option is to Check with Lowes or Home Depot. Lowes donated ours and gave me enough for a full class to use.
* Plan B: The Dollar Tree! I got several different shaped (different sounds) buckets. They had mop buckets that sound great! I also got some popcorn bowls and mini trashcans without the lids. It is really nice to have different timbres.
* Drumsticks: Wooden mallets can be used, but I was lucky enough to have some old drumsticks donated from the high schools in our district.
* I collaborated with our Art teacher. I asked him to work in art to paint and decorate the buckets with the students.
* He took the buckets outside and sprayed a primer base coat and then a coat of white plastic spray paint. After the buckets dried he took the 3rd and 4th grade arts classes outside and allowed them to decorate the buckets with acrylic paints. The kids had a great time and the buckets turned out amazing.

**How to Teach**

* In my class, we reviewed note values. I didn't spend a ton of time on values that they don't see when drumming. We covered quarter, eighths, sixteenths and quarter and eighth rests. Our main focus was counting! Everyone has their own way to teach this. I just made sure that there was no confusion on the eighth notes and counting 1 &. [HERE](https://docs.google.com/file/d/0BwHk3-6B6Bouejd1Y0VPSE00dGs/edit?usp=sharing) is a PDF of my smartboard presentation. (For some reason, when I saved it as a pdf my drawn eighth rests have disappeared. Just pencil them in when you use this)
* We did a bunch of rhythm echoes! I think this is a great method to get kids to perform without all the stress of reading, especially when they are beginners. We started out with body percussion, then did a day of Boomwhackers and now on the buckets.
* Boomwhackers were a great help in this unit. We played echo patterns, poison, pass the rhythm and several tunes from the [Boomwhacker song book](https://docs.google.com/file/d/0BwHk3-6B6BouaTQtVHdTUWpyd0k/edit?usp=sharing). 6th grade really enjoyed this and it helped them develop their skills when playing together. It also made everyone more responsible for their part.   
    
  Music and Teaching Materials
* A great intro to this unit was ["Boom Sha Boom"](http://www.originsonline.org/educator-help/boom-sha-boom)! This was fantastic! Everyone loved it and it really served the purpose of learning to play together and listen across the ensemble. Once we knew the words, I had them close their eyes and chant. When they were successful at that, they then closed their eyes and said the chant to themselves, silently. It is very entertaining to watch!
* I found a great site when I was researching materials for this unit. [Bucket Drumming Stuff](https://sites.google.com/site/mrmossmusicteacher/bucket-drumming-stuff) from Mr. Moss Music Teacher is a wonderful resource. You can download rhythm exercises and ensemble pieces here. Fabulous! And the sequencing is great! If you can't download them from that site, try [HERE](https://docs.google.com/file/d/0BwHk3-6B6BoubzhOdlRFTUpWSWs/edit?usp=sharing) for the pre-levels and [HERE](https://docs.google.com/file/d/0BwHk3-6B6BouQnR1Z0t5Qkc4S28/edit?usp=sharing) for levels 1-7.
* When we finally started drumming with the buckets (week 5), I took the time to hook up the metronome to the loud speaker and make them follow the beat. As awful as that was, the results were miraculous! They are so excited and wanted to go so fast. I stared them off at 120 and it was a huge failure. I turned it back to 80 and they were a million times better instantly. I also set the met to subdivide eighths and made them play straight eighths at different tempos for a while.
* Also, I ALWAYS COUNT THEM OFF WITH THE SUBDIVISION!!!!! (1 and 2 and ready and go now). They melt down without it.
* I taught them a modified version of Eight on a Hand. We play eight clicks (4 eighths) on the right hand, 8 on the left, 8 with hands together and 8 eight with hands alternating. Set the met at 100 and use the eighth note subdivision. We play through it once, fix hand, posture, etc. then loop it 2 or 3 times. This really helps coordination, especially with the left hand.
* I am planning to use "Sonata for Seven Rulers" by Cathy Blair. I found it in an old Activate magazine and thought it would be a perfect "end of the unit fun song". I did buy wooden rulers and yard sticks and painted them with glow in the dark paint like the piece suggested.