

Music Squirrels



L1

**Children learn
as they play.
More importantly,
in play, children
learn how to
learn.**

O. Fred Donaldson

Storing knowledge regarding fractions through music play.

Welcome to the concept of Educational Knowledge Storage! It's probably been around for ages under another name but when I started to think about this activity, all I could think about was squirrels storing nuts.

The simplicity of an approach based on nature appeals to many students and gives a fun context to their mahi.

For me it's the idea that so much of what children learn happens outside formal learning events. Those moments when through play or exploration, students learn some nutty-nugget that will be useful later on.

In this activity, students will engage in clapping games that will build the synapses required for the understanding of fractions later in their learning journeys. It's not assessed. Assessing this activity would formalise the experience for both teacher and learner. Let's just have fun with this one. But if asked, you can tell people that the kids are "saving some skills for later"!

Method

1 Start by telling the short story

2 Ask the children to clap once

Tell them that's 'one'

3 Ask the children to clap repeatedly — but every two seconds approximately

Perhaps a metronome (either an actual metronome or one on the computer) might be useful here.

4 Tell them the distance between the claps is 'Autumn'

One clap for all of Autumn is Fluffy's singular nut.

Two claps for all of Autumn are Furry's two nuts. Half the time passes between claps.

Four claps for all of Autumn are Fuzzy's nut haul. A quarter of the time passes between the claps.

Eight claps are Dave's remarkable effort. An eighth of the time passes between the claps.

5 Divide into groups

Have the students divide into four groups who will clap the patterns for the various squirrels.

6 Fractions

When you eventually look at fractions, you can remind the students of their work on this patterning.

7 Techniques

When the students look at music notation later in life, they will see the nut metaphor as mirroring the technique of writing music down.

One nut = Semibreve
Two nuts = Minim
Four nuts = Crotchet
Eight nuts = Quaver

8 Rhythmic patterns

There are a lot of ways in which to use rhythmic patterning as a focus activity and for developing group cohesion.

Four Squirrels

Once upon a time there were four squirrels, Fluffy, Furry, Fuzzy and Dave.

At the beginning of every Autumn, the four friends would collect nuts to last them all through the long days of winter.

Every time they found a nut they would alert their friends by clapping.

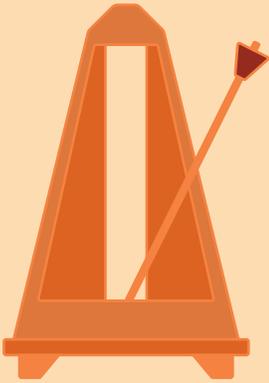
(Demonstrate by 'finding' a hidden nut and clapping)

Now this particular autumn, the four friends were successful in finding nuts but they found a varying number. Fluffy found one for the whole of her time searching. Furry found two. Fuzzy found four. And Dave, well Dave was very busy and found eight.

They put all of the nuts together (because that's what friends do) and had plenty of nuts to last the winter.

Equipment

A metronome



Extra Resources

See below for an excellent resource regarding Reading Rhythm for Kids

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7Uio5x3edk>

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5he1sCixSLM>

For the very advanced students

 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTpJk_-Hw7M

Have a look on google for more ideas.

Curriculum links

Music

Communicating and interpreting in music

Share music making with others.

Respond to live and recorded music.

Number and Algebra

Number strategies

Use a range of counting, grouping, and equal-sharing strategies with whole numbers and fractions.