



Drumming for Student Engagement



Engagement through rhythm...

Our Student Engagement Strategy harnesses the power of rhythm to address key factors of engagement. Tailored for specific groups and informed by research on engagement and drumming, these sessions include the use of rhythmic analogy to encourage students to practise patterns of thinking and behaviours that enhance engagement. Rather than being a prescriptive program, our Engagement Strategy is flexible in delivery and completely responsive to each school's or student group's needs. Our student engagement sessions are delivered by qualified teachers and include a development meeting and evaluation of outcomes.

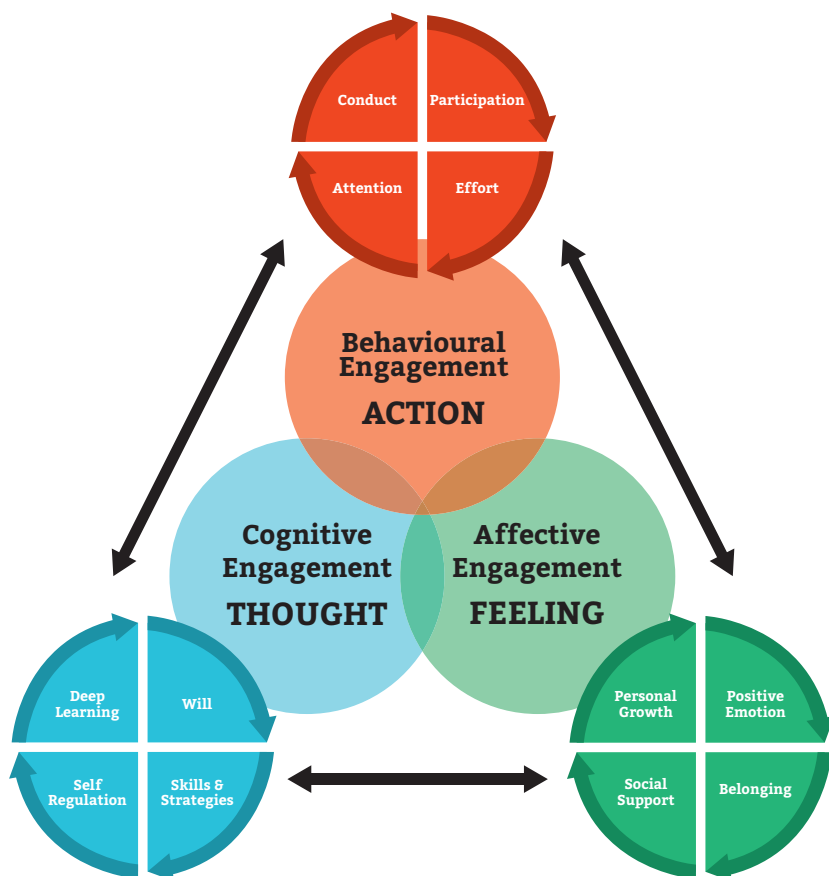
Who is this experience for?

- Students at-risk of disengagement from school.
- Students who could benefit from personal and social development.
- Schools looking to boost the culture of behavioural, cognitive and emotional engagement amongst their student cohort.



Addressing behavioural, cognitive and emotional engagement

The tridimensional model of student engagement is a popular conceptualisation within current academic literature and education discourse. The following diagram summarises the three dimensions of student engagement and the aspects of each dimension that could help schools determine a focus for the student engagement drumming sessions. Drumming is a powerful activity, as it has the potential to engage students through action, cognition and emotion.



If you would like to know more about how drumming can address any of these specific engagement outcomes, please get in touch with us!

Addressing Australian Curriculum content

Personal & social capabilities

Building personal and social capability is at the core of our Student Engagement Strategy. Through the use of rhythmic analogy, students are encouraged to reflect upon and build skills around self-management, self-awareness, social management and social awareness. In addressing these core capabilities, participants develop skills around managing themselves, relating to others, developing resilience and a sense of self-worth, resolving conflict, engaging in teamwork and feeling positive about themselves and their achievements. Through building personal and social capabilities, young people become more engaged at school and in life.

Music

Creating exciting music plays a huge role in our strategy for growing high levels of student engagement. As well as being teachers, our facilitators are also skilled musicians. We want to inspire students through facilitating the creation of music that sounds and feels great! West African rhythms are taught as the foundation upon which all engagement content is explored. The musical content of our sessions addresses the skills, knowledge and understanding within the Australian Curriculum music content area.

Why West African rhythms?

West African drumming has unique points of musicality that set it apart from other musical styles, including: polyrhythmic complexity; syncopation; rhythmic interrelationships and communication; a structure marked by repetition and continuity; and an emphasis on a participatory, social culture of music-making. Each of these unique musical features provides powerful opportunities to address different aspects of student engagement. The syncopation and polyrhythmic complexity inherent in African rhythms is challenging and supports the investment of cognitive engagement. The repetitious and cyclical structure of African rhythms also presents natural opportunity for building persistence and striving for mastery through multiple attempts. The rhythmic interrelationships and connectedness between parts in an African drumming ensemble provide a natural platform for building social skills and relationships. Additionally, the very fact that African drumming is characterised by a participatory context encourages active engagement, as it is a style of music that only truly comes to life when everyone is involved.




How and why is drumming engaging?

The drum is a powerful vehicle through which to teach about and foster engagement. Both research and feedback from student participants indicate that drumming engages in a multitude of ways:


Accessibility

Drumming enables participation through offering accessibility to all students.

Providing an activity that is both achievable and enjoyable sets up students to experience success. Drumming can be effectively differentiated and rhythm parts layered to cater for a wide range of ability levels at once. The accessibility of the djembe drum broadens the scope of student engagement.



“Drumming makes me happy and confident that I have some kind of skill.”*



“Drumming has taught me how to control myself.”*

Physicality

Drumming allows for physicality and embodied cognition.

Our strategy offers an exciting and different learning modality. Physical movement is a powerful way in which to increase energy and engagement. The combination of the physicality of drumming, alongside the application of cognitive strategies, result in students being actively engaged and consequently better primed for learning.

Social benefits

Drumming encourages social interaction and instils a sense of belonging.

The coordinated rhythmic movement of drumming has a powerful unifying effect. Drumming is an activity that encourages synergy amongst players and a high degree of collaboration. Student participants have reported that our drumming strategy enabled them to build positive relationships with others, provided them with a sense of belonging and helped to develop a better awareness of others.

“Drumming has enabled me to connect with others through teamwork and communication.”*

“Drumming has taught me that you can always pick yourself back up and start again ‘til you get it right.”*

Challenge

Drumming builds persistence and learning resilience.

Persistence is an integral characteristic of successful learners. Through tackling the challenges presented by learning increasingly complex rhythms, students learn how to build a strong, confident learning mentality. Drumming is an excellent vehicle through which to build resilience around making mistakes and recovering positively to make the most of learning experiences.

*Feedback provided by participants in Student Engagement drumming sessions.

Therapeutic benefits

Drumming fosters positive emotion and supports emotion regulation.

Drumming makes you feel good! Student participants overwhelmingly attribute drumming with positive affective states, particularly feelings of happiness, excitement and calmness. In addition to making them feel good, the students have described how drumming can lift them out of angry, anxious or sad moods. Similarly, studies are also showing that drumming can be effectively utilised to regulate emotions and even have positive physiological benefits for participants.


Drumming acts as a vehicle for mindfulness and flow.

The repetitive stimulus of drumming a rhythm elicits increased levels of focus and attention. Research indicates that rhythmic entrainment and synchronisation through drumming can offer particularly powerful and therapeutic experiences of flow – a state of deep engagement. Drumming can be a very effective form of movement meditation, thus enhancing student wellbeing.

“Drumming lets me take emotions out without having to speak.”*

“Drumming makes me feel calm, relaxed and in the zone.”*

*Feedback provided by participants in Student Engagement drumming sessions.



“Drumming helps me focus in on one thing. It helps me concentrate.”*

“Drumming has taught me that not everyone is the same, that we all make mistakes, and that you can always do better.”*

Transferability

Drumming equips students with cognitive skills that support learning.

Learning transfer occurs when something learned in one context is used to assist learning in other contexts. Learning to drum West African rhythms utilises a vast range of executive function skills related to working memory and involving the conscious regulation of action, thoughts, emotions and general abilities that support learning. Building these skills helps develop more confident and adaptable learners.

Drumming provides powerful analogies that enrich understanding of self and others.

Our strategy utilises the drum as a communication tool, helping to articulate learning that can be otherwise difficult to convey. Participants will be guided in drawing analogies between their drumming experiences and comparable aspects of their lives - particularly in relation to personal development, social interactions and approach to learning.

Celebrating success and engaging with the wider community

We like to incorporate performance opportunities as an end-goal to our drumming sessions, in order to celebrate student achievement and encourage further engagement with the wider community. These performance opportunities are curated according to the unique needs of each student cohort.

Whilst engaging in our drumming sessions at their school, participants are also welcome to attend our In The Groove community drumming classes free of charge. These classes are held weekly across various locations in North East Victoria. Learning to drum empowers young people with the ability to connect with others through the universal language of rhythm. Linking in with a local drumming community provides participants with an ongoing sense of belonging.

"Our drumming performance was AMAZING - a really nice experience. It was different to get out in the community and have people join in with us and try. I would do it every day if I could."*



Structure of delivery

We can be flexible in our delivery of sessions and cater for individual school/organisation needs. However, to optimise student engagement outcomes, we suggest allowing for a weekly, 60-minute session, over 8-10 consecutive weeks. This fits nicely into a school term, and enables enough consistency in the delivery to properly address the core student outcomes as determined by the school.

All instruments provided

We provide all of the drums and percussion instruments required. The djembe drums utilised for our student engagement sessions are of a high quality, as we want to provide students with the best and most exciting learning experience possible!

Cost

Program cost varies according to the number of sessions delivered, duration of the sessions, number of student participants, reporting requirements and travel time. Please contact us to arrange for a quote.

Want to know more? Contact us for further information:

@ info@inthegroove.education

📞 0429 862 277

🖱️ www.inthegroove.education

*Drumming and Student Engagement thesis paper and reference list of academic papers can be accessed through the education page on our website
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