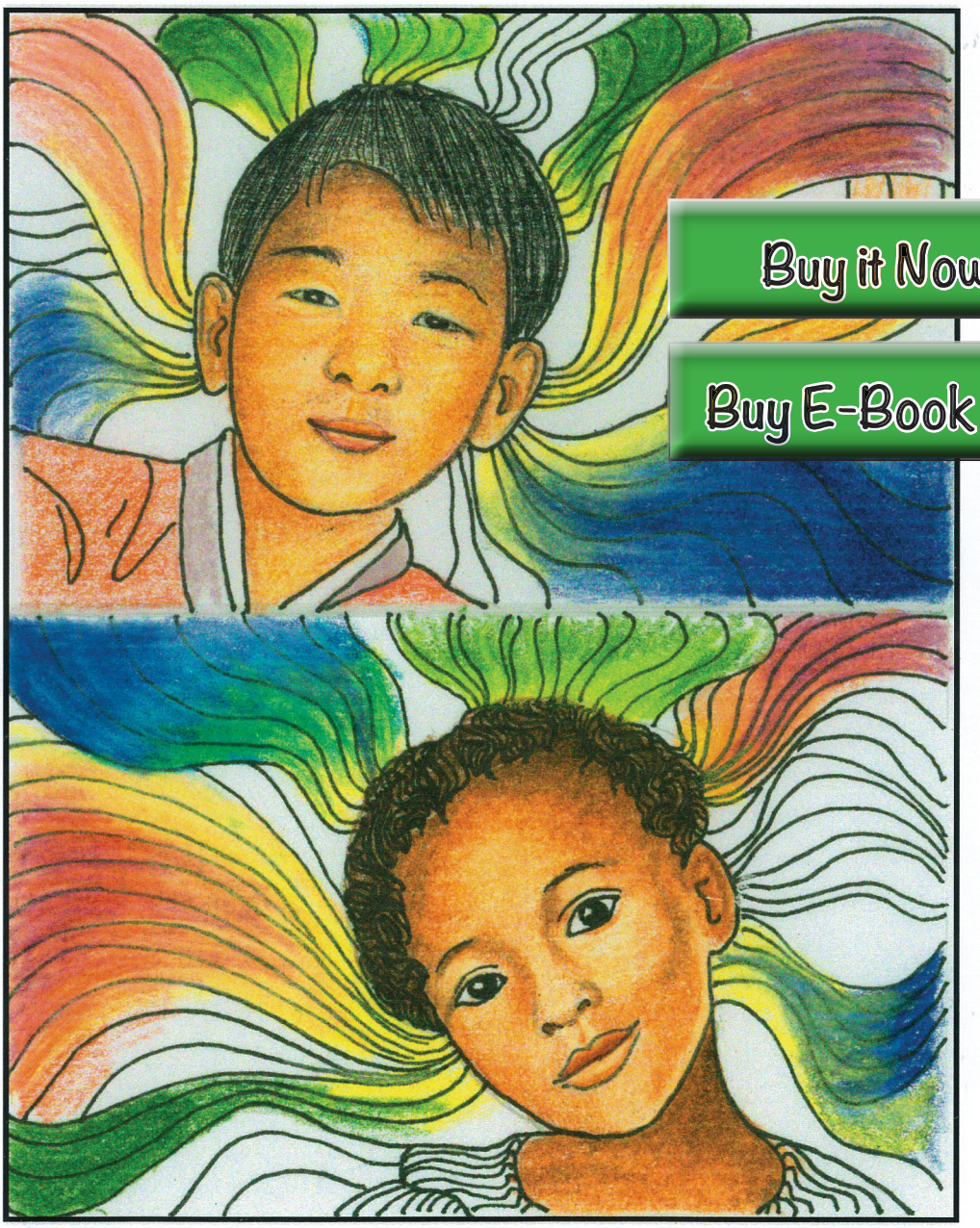
Music Moments
To Teach Academics



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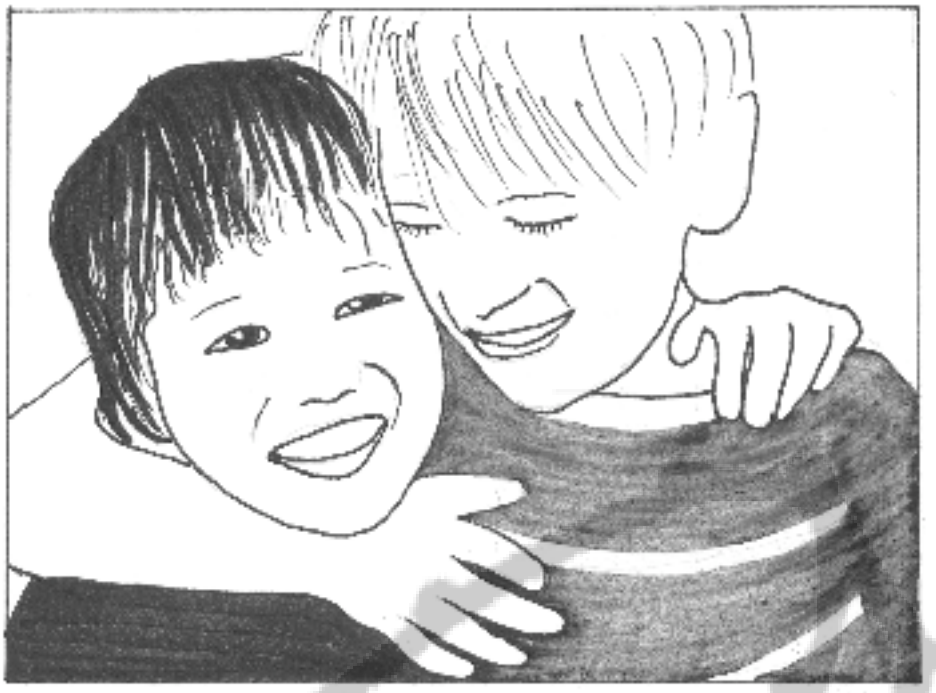


Chapter One:
Introduction To Music Experiences

Music Moments To Teach Academics: Introduction To Music Experiences

MUSIC IS A LANGUAGE

Music is a language common to all the people of the earth. It can express thoughts and emotions where words fall short. It is a form of communication that can be traced back to the earliest times of man and has only grown in depth and diversity over the ages. Through music, our heritage is preserved and passed on from generation to generation. Music can celebrate the joy of individuality while building people together in a community. Throughout the ages, music has been associated with healing, rituals, gatherings, spirituality, history, mathematics, science, social studies and much more and still is today.

A great deal of time is spent in our educational systems developing verbal and visual skills, while our aural vocabulary, to some extent, is virtually unexplored. Children receive little or no training in listening skills and yet this ability or disability will affect their success in many areas. As a focus on standardized tests has returned, many music programs are being cut out as frills, but are they?

Recent research supports music as an intelligence or a way of knowing, both as a separate discipline and to support learning in other disciplines through integration (see Bibliography). Howard Gardner has stated in his theory of multiple intelligences that all people have musical/rhythmic intelligence that can be nurtured and developed to enhance other intelligences. By experiencing music to learn, children are challenged to use divergent, creative thinking to solve problems and answer questions. They are able to stretch their abilities and are supported in learning via exploration. Music activities motivate children to learn by nurturing self-esteem and creating a group excitement and energy towards the learning. When music experiences are inclusive, they provide a model for cooperative learning instead of competition, which tends to exclude and discourage many students. Music is also linked to increased memory function, where students can retain up to 90% of the material learned with fewer review sessions. Current studies regarding brain research also point to musicking (actively creating or engaging in music) as a means of developing new synapses between neurons, right and left brain integration, enhanced sensory integration and building multiple brain functions (cognitive, emotional and motor abilities).

INCLUSION

It is important to emphasize that the model for participating in music experiences in this book is one of inclusion. Music belongs to every person and each of us has musical ability. It is our heritage, our birthright. This is a difficult concept to accept in modern American society, which promotes competition over a collective approach: those who are talented perform, those who are not will watch and listen only. This view of music is not widely held by the rest of the world. In many cultures, there is no word for “art”. Music plays an important role in the daily life of the

Chapter Two:
Approaches To Integration

THREE APPROACHES TO MUSIC INTEGRATION

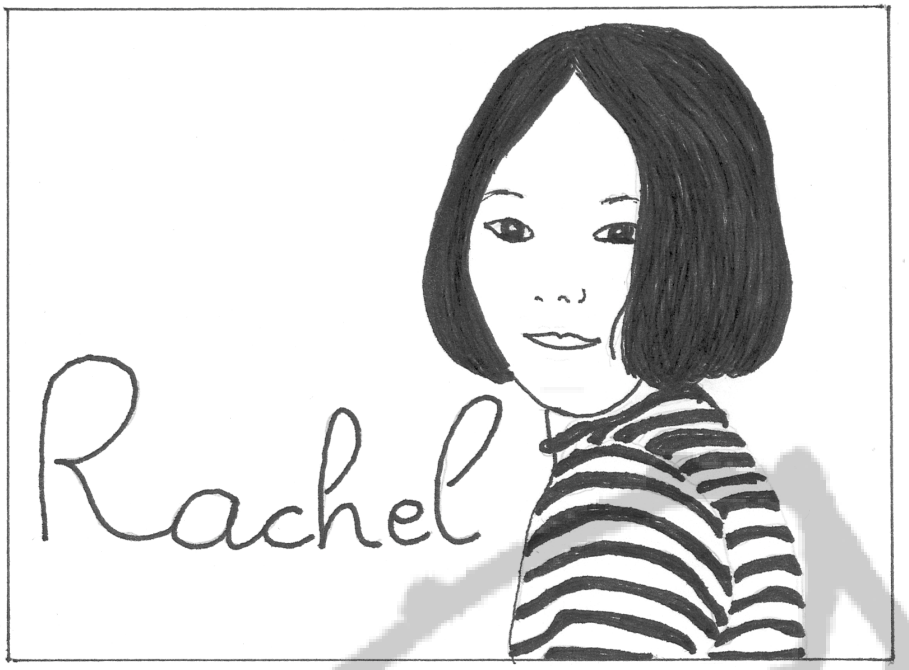
Music integration can be approached in a variety of ways. From background music to active music making, each has its strengths and connections to learning. While music making and creating are by far the most integrative in regards to brain systems, it is important to begin where you feel comfortable and confident. This may simply mean playing appropriate background music during various classroom activities as a start. Once you have a few successes to build upon, you can challenge yourself and your students to take a few risks and participate in more active experiences with music. Be prepared to be surprised by your musical abilities and those of your students! Remember, you do not need years of music training to create interesting and exciting music moments. An open mind and a good sense of humor will go a long way towards facilitating enhanced learning through music in your classroom.

It is important to note that the common thread that runs through each of these three approaches is the aesthetic nature of music. As students participate in music activities, they develop skills in recognizing and appreciating beauty and can identify and express their own feelings and emotions with a refined sense of self. This allows them to recognize these same qualities in others, and in the local and global communities. Through music experiences, students gain understanding of what makes us uniquely human and the artistic vocabulary to articulate it.

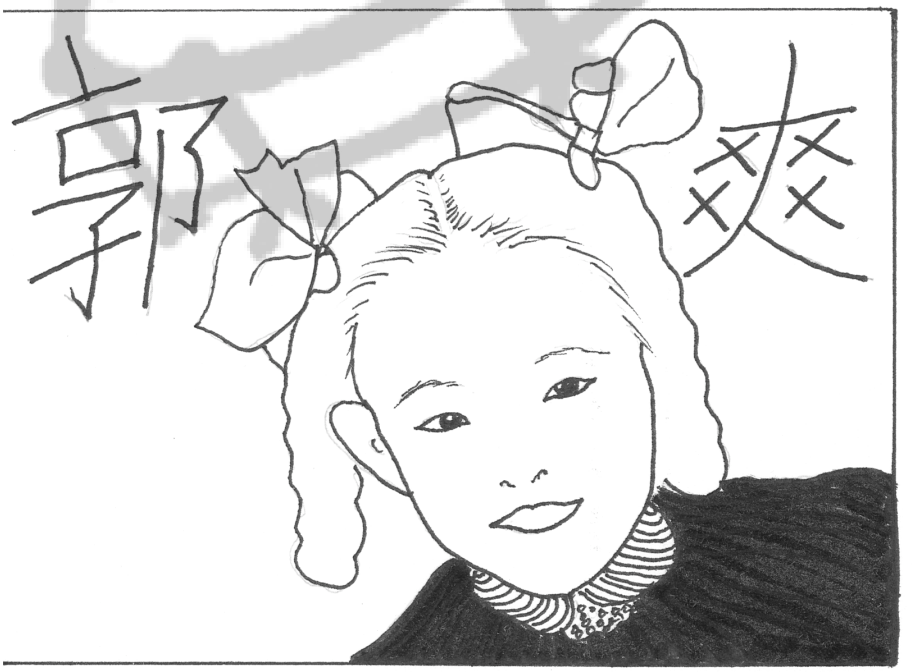
SUPPLEMENTAL

This mode of integration includes playing background music to support the learning environment or atmosphere. Examples of academic activities that this approach would be used with are "silent" reading, test taking, journal reflection, study skills, focus or concentration work, visualization, and other kinds of seat work. Music can also be used to support transitions, like clean-up time, preparation for recess, beginnings and endings of class or changing subjects. Playing West African music softly in the background while reading a story from Ghana would be a great example of the supplemental mode of integration. While studying deep ocean life, taped whalesong is playing in the classroom. In this approach, the music serves to support learning in another subject at a surface level. This is the least active model for integration, but its value is in creating an educational tone that works with the emotional brain and nervous system. Research has identified specific kinds of music to be particularly supportive for certain activities (i.e. The Mozart Effect, see Bibliography), although it is somewhat controversial in educational circles. What we do know, from current brain scans (PET), is that many areas in the brain are activated simply by listening to familiar and unfamiliar music and that different styles of music are processed uniquely in the brain to create varying responses.

This is why a particular kind of music is playing when you are shopping in the grocery store, waiting on hold on the telephone or watching a commercial on television; music creates a physical response in our minds and bodies. Since music influences several brain and body systems, it



Chapter Three:
Language Arts and Music



The Alphabet

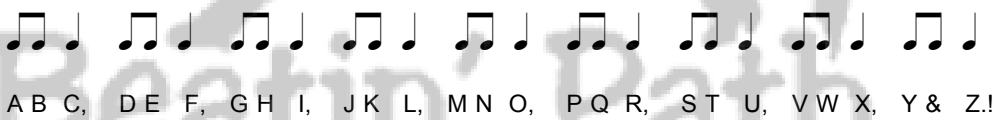
1. Speak/whisper/sing the *Alphabet Song*: (to the tune of *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star)*; then, try singing the *Alphabet Song* backwards (a great brain game!).

   A B C D E F G, H I J K L M N O P, Q R S T U V, W X Y and Z,
   Now I know my ABC's, next time won't you sing with me?

2. Chant the alphabet using a steady pulse. Change the pitch of your speaking voice between high and low for each letter (A = high, B = low, C = high, etc.).

3. Chant the consonants out loud; chant the vowels in a whisper; reverse.

4. Chant the alphabet using a fast-fast-slow pattern for groups of three letters:



5. Sing the alphabet using the pitches so and mi (5-3) motive.

   A C E G etc.
   B D F

6. Chant the alphabet with a steady pulse. Each person claps or plays an instrument on the first letter of their first name.

7. Inner hear the alphabet pulse chant in your head. When we get to the first letter of your first name, say that letter out loud.

8. Walk around the room and chant the letters of the alphabet on a pulse in groups of two (loud/soft, strong/light, accented/unaccented):

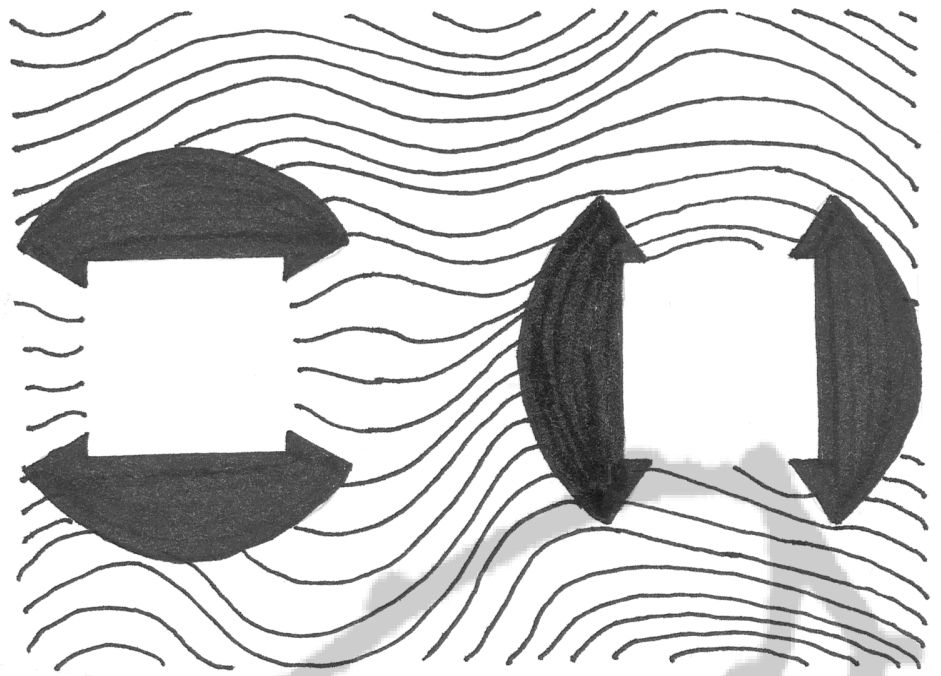
   A B **C** D **E** F **G** H etc.

9. Walk around the room and chant the letters of the alphabet on a pulse in groups of three (loud/soft/soft, strong/light/light):

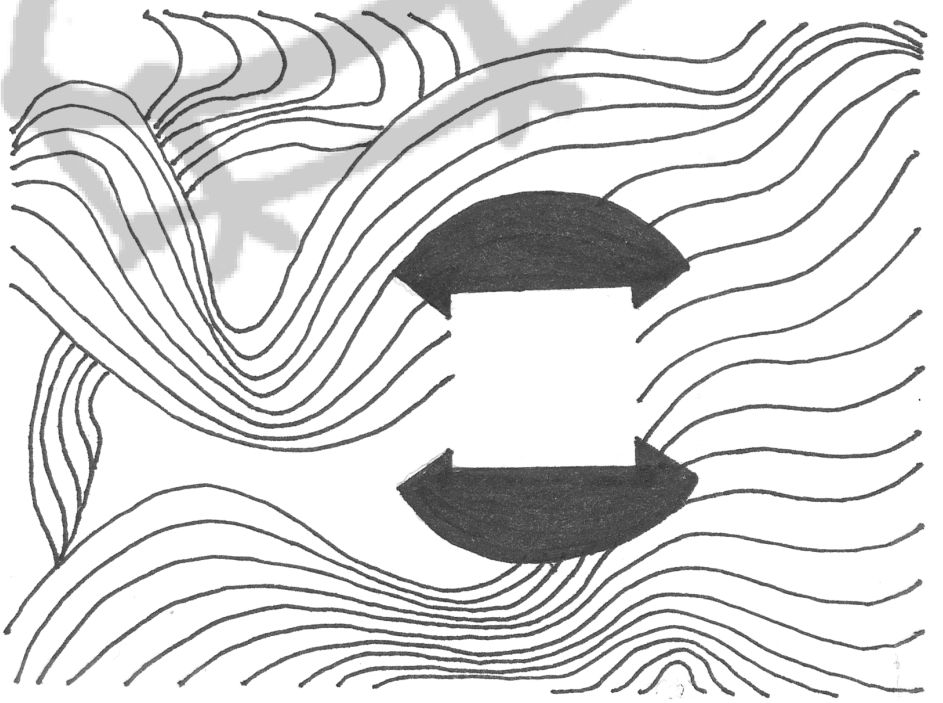
   A B C, **D** E F, **G** H I, etc.

10. Chant the letters using different rhythmic patterns and/or rests (pauses):

    A B C D E F G H I J K L M N OP Q



Chapter Four: *Mathematics and Music*



Numbers And Counting

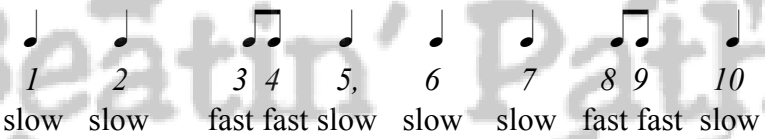
1. Speak/whisper/sing the numbers from 1-10 or 1-20 on a steady pulse. Play a pulse with clapping or instruments while you think the numbers silently in your head.

2. Sing *This Old Man (Knick Knack Paddy Whack)* with your elementary class.

3. Chant the numbers on a steady pulse, changing the pitch of your voice between high and low for each letter (1 = high, 2 = low, 3 = high, etc.).

4. Chant the odd numbers loudly; chant the even numbers softly; reverse.

5. Chant the numbers using a fast-fast-slow pattern for groups of three letters: 123, 456, 789, 10 11 12, etc. Experiment with other rhythmic patterns:



6. Sing the numbers using the pitches so and mi (high and middle):

7. As a class, count the numbers from 1-20 using a steady pulse. Each person secretly chooses two numbers that they will shout and play their instrument on (some numbers will not be chosen and there will be silences on those pulses). Students will need to follow the counting in their heads. (*Idea adapted from Anne Green Gilbert*)

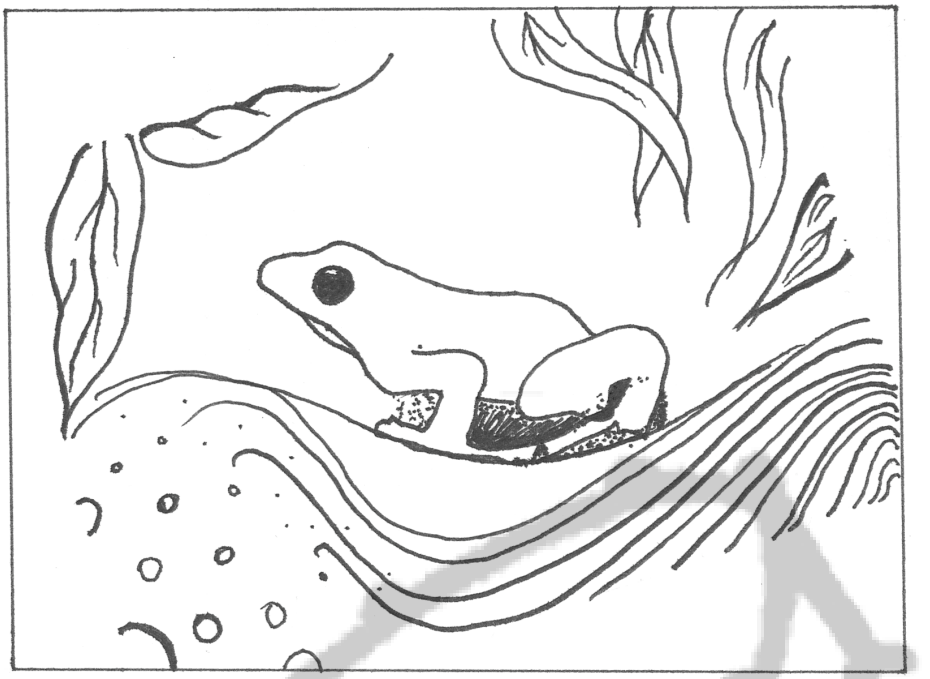
8. Chant the numbers with a steady pulse. Each person claps or plays their instrument on their birth date number (day, not year).

9. Walk around the room and chant the numbers on a pulse in groupings of two (loud/soft, strong/light, accented/unaccented):

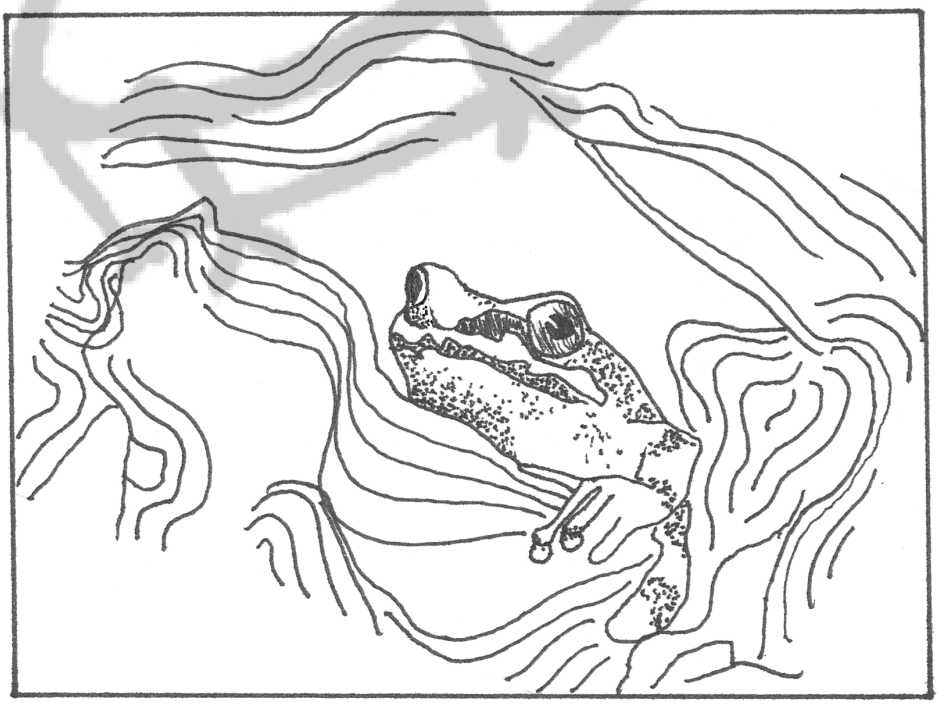
1 *2* **3** *4* **5** *6* **7** *8* **9**

10. Chant the numbers using different rhythmic patterns and rests (pauses).

11. Create chants to count by 2's, 3's, 4's, 5's and 10's.



Chapter Five:
Science and Music



Seasons

1. Use Antonio Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, a set of pieces from the Baroque period. Compare and contrast the music in terms of the four seasons or for inspiration to write poetry or prose. For a contemporary musical setting of the seasons, see the piano-jazz version by George Winston.

2. See *The Children's Corner* for songs and orchestrations for young children (K-3) that are grouped by season.

3. Create a soundscape for each season, either as a class or in small groups, using the sounds of spring, summer, fall and winter.

4. Look for other songs about the seasons and sing them as a class.

5. Write a chant or tune about the seasons. Each small group can create a musical presentation for a different season. Perform the entire piece as a rondo:

A *Winter, summer, fall and spring,*
Challenges and changes bring. (repeat)

B *Winter group presentation*

A *All together*

C *Summer group presentation*

A *All together*

D *Fall group presentation*

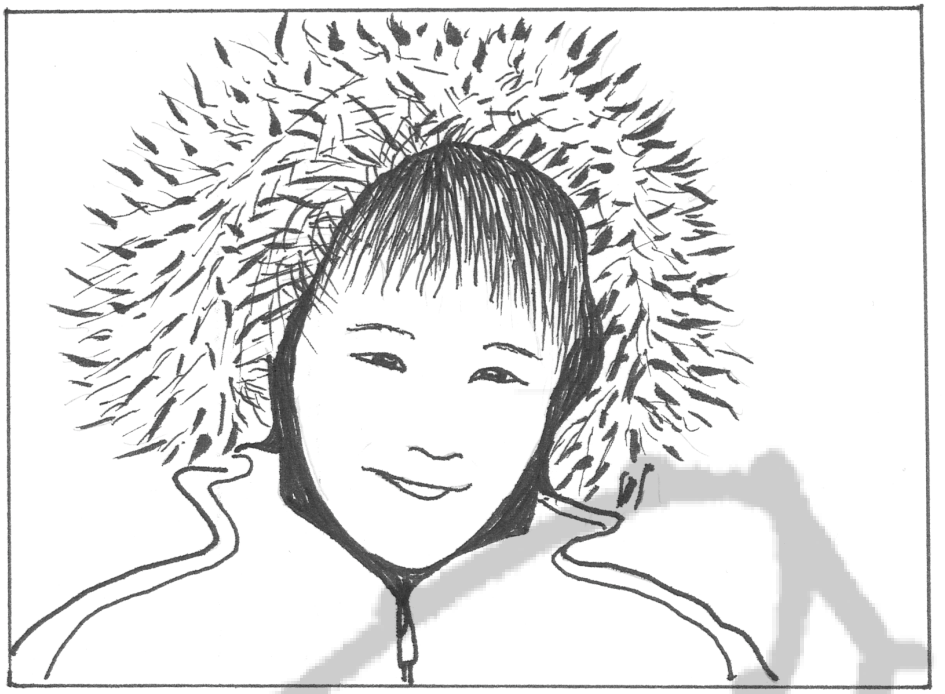
A *All together*

E *Spring group presentation*

A *All together*

6. Ask a question in four pulses; your partner has 4 pulses to answer:

Question: *What are the sounds of spring?*
Answer: *Birds and bees and living things!*



Chapter Six:
Social Studies and Music

Calendar and Holidays

1. Chant the months of the year rhythmically. Add a steady pulse instrument accompaniment or use body percussion. Play the rhythm of the words while you think the names of the months:

January,	*February,*	*March,*	*April,*
May,	*June,*	*July,*	*August,*
September,	*October,*	*November,*	*December.*

2. Stand in a circle. Sing or chant the following song and play the game. When the group sings *January*, those born in January dance and play their instruments to the beat in the middle of the circle, then return to their spots. Repeat the song for each month:

Everybody born in January, dance around,
Everybody born in January, dance around.
Tra la la la (clap clap clap), Tra la la la (clap clap clap)
Everybody born in January, dance around.

3. Write a series of events on the board from the past, present and future. Divide the class into three groups: woods, metals and drums. Read the first event on the board and the appropriate group plays their instrument to indicate the correct answer. You can also use a chant for the entire group to say and play between each event.

Past, present, future (clap) past, present, future (clap)
Place the time on the line, past, present, future! (clap)

woods - past *metals - present* *drums - future*

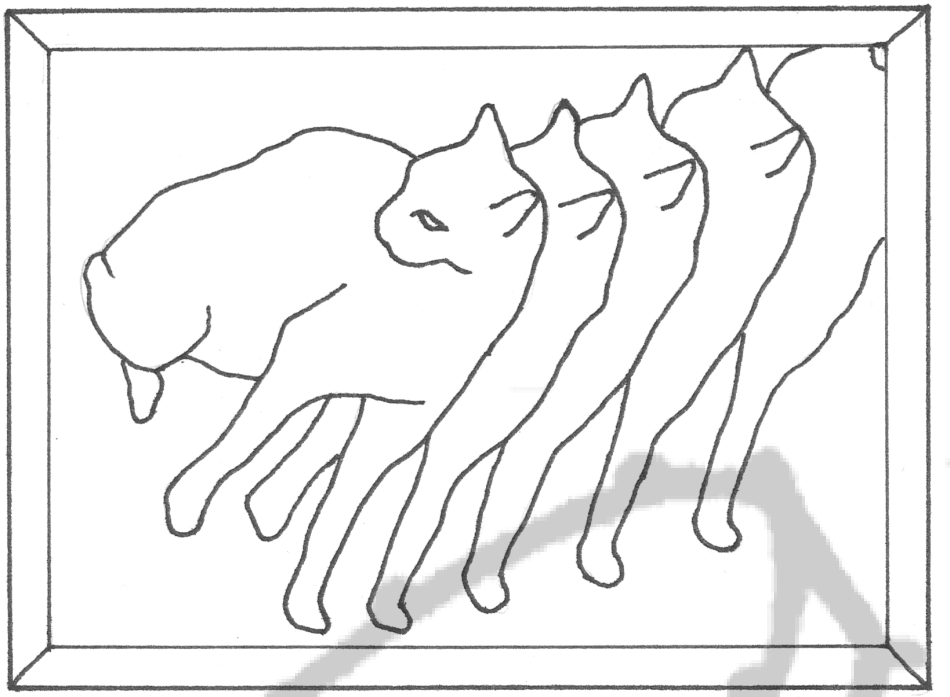
4. Look on the calendar and select various holidays to research. Include holidays celebrated outside of the United States. Small groups can create a rap or song to a familiar tune about their assigned holiday. Information can include customs, traditions, origins and date.

5. Here is an old chant to learn the number of days in each month:

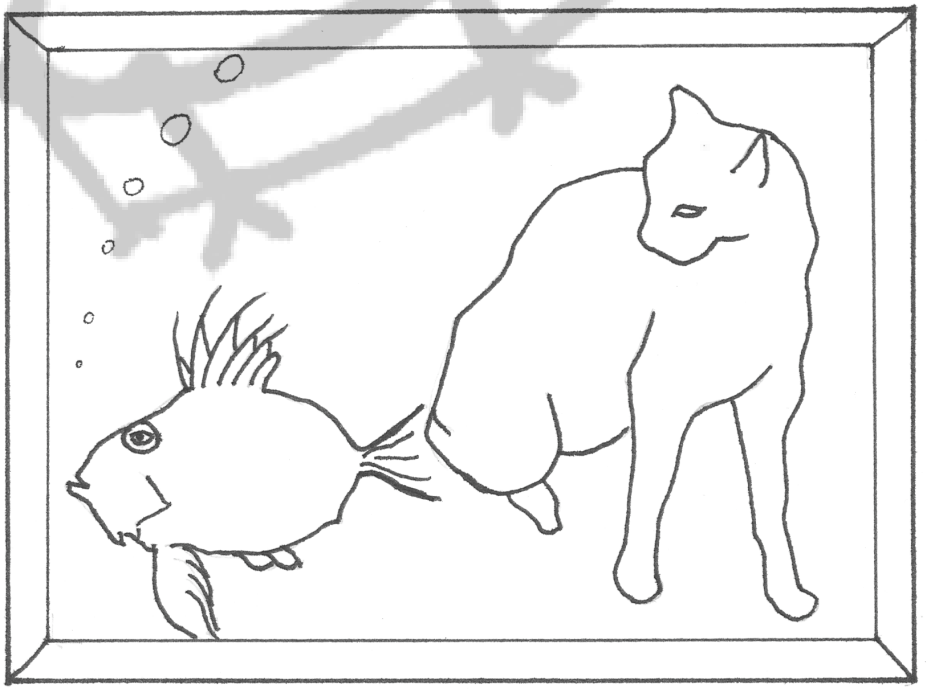
Thirty days has September, April, June and November,
All the rest have thirty-one, except for February, just for fun,
It has only twenty-eight and twenty-nine on a leap year date!

6. Chant the days of the week. Make up or borrow a tune for the words. Add a pulse with body percussion or drum. Play all instruments once together on the exclamation point of this chant:

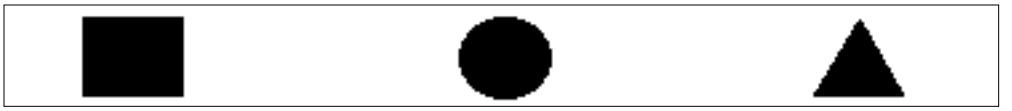
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday!



Chapter Seven:
Visual Arts and Music



1. Music: *Music For Creative Dance, V. 2, #7 Pathway Puzzle, E. Chappelle.* Use the three contrasting styles of music to practice making straight, curved and zig zag lines. Use the same music to practice making shapes: squares, circles and triangles:



A B C

2. Music: *Music For Creative Dance, V.3, #2 Rock'n Stop, E. Chappelle.* Use this pause song to practice making jagged lines and designs. Follow the pulse of the music with the movement of your hand. On the pause, change mediums or colors. Use the same music to practice making different kinds of triangles.

3. Music: *Music For Dancers, Too! #2 Strong & Light, K. Nichols.* This song is written in an A B repeated form. The A section is in a meter (grouping) of three pulses (strong-light-light), great for practicing curvy lines and loops, vertically, horizontally and diagonally. The B section music is grouped in twos (strong-light) and works well for practicing straight lines. Use the same music to practice making shapes or letters with straight lines and curved lines.

4. Explore the lines of Southwest art while using music for inspiration. Music suggestion*:* *Music For Creative Dance, V. 2, #14 Andean Altitude*. This selection is short so set your CD player on repeat or use other examples of music from the library.

zig zag (mountains) *straight (plains)* *curved (sun, river)*

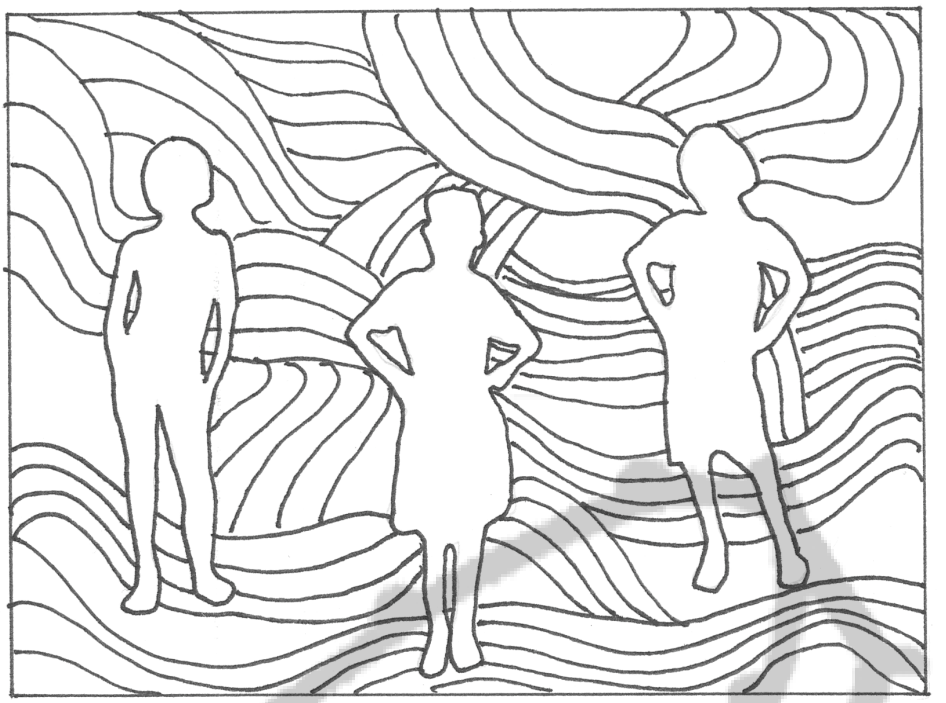
5. See Chapter Four (*Mathematics And Music*) for additional ideas about lines and shapes.

6. See the Discography for selections to support relaxation for artwork and to practice brush strokes in the air.

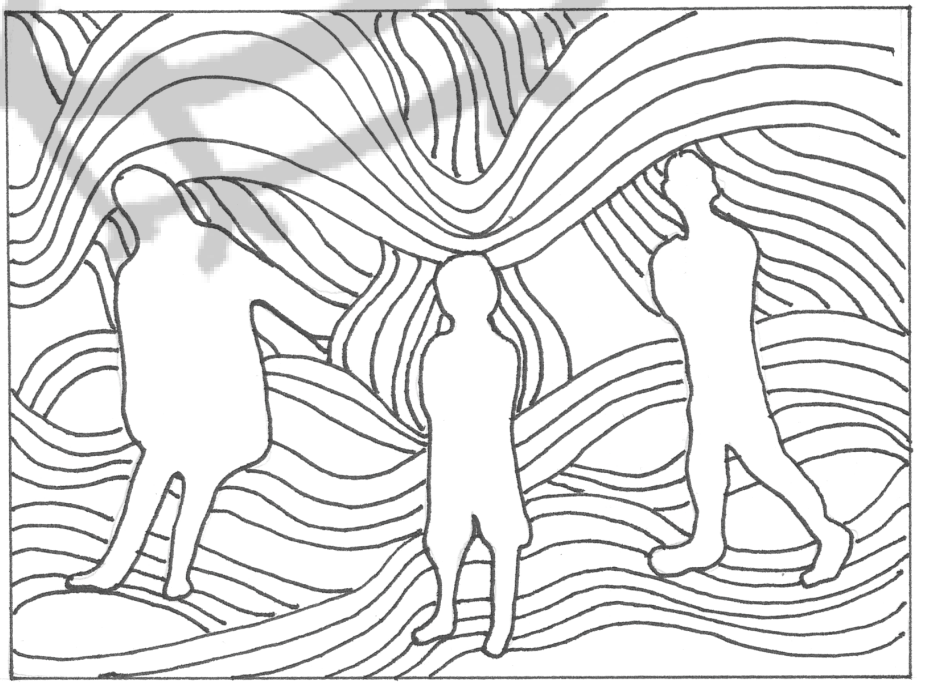
7. Show several musical scores to the students. Allow them to take any shape, line or symbol they see in a musical score and use them to create an original picture.

8. Compare and contrast pointillism and staccato symbols in music. Use this technique to create a picture.

9. Create an original painting. With a group, improvise music to go with the painting.



Chapter Eight:
Wellness and Music



The Human Body

1. Place your palm over your heart and tap the pulse-rhythm with your other hand on your lap, desk or drum. Is the pattern even or uneven?

2. Run around the space and repeat the above exercise. Has the pulse of your heartbeat changed? How? Take several deep, slow breaths. How does this effect your heartbeat? Play these differences on your desk or instrument.

3. Hold your breath comfortably for several seconds. This is like a fermata in music. How does this effect your heart-pulse? Now, let your breath out in a big burst (sforzando).

4. Inhale deeply while placing your hands around your ribcage. What do you notice? Exhale fully.

5. Is your breathing slow or fast? Loud or soft? Create a steady pulse of upbeats (inhale) and downbeats (exhale).

6. Inhale deeply and exhale with a sigh on a vowel sound. Repeat for all of the vowels.

7. Inhale deeply and exhale on a high pitch sliding to a low pitch. Repeat, starting on a low pitch and ending high. Can you repeat the exercise using loud to soft and soft to loud? Try it using a hum. How can you hum if your mouth is open?

8. Inhale fast and exhale slowly; Inhale slowly and exhale fast. Inhale slowly and exhale slowly. Inhale fast and exhale fast.

9. Inhale a full breath and release on a pulse of hisses: S S S S S S S S. Try double hisses (SS SS SS SS) and triple hisses (SSS SSS SSS SSS) using a steady pulse.

10. Combine the rhythmic patterns of the heart and lungs by playing them together on two different instruments:

Heartbeat Pattern	Breath Pulse
♪ ♩ ♪ ♩	𝅝 𝅝
ta dum ta dum	*(r i s e m e l t)*
hand drum	rainstick

11. How would your heartbeat pattern or breath pulse change if you had one of the following conditions? Play these changes on instruments. Start with regular patterns and then change them.

Chapter Nine:
Pedagogy:
Tips for Success

1. Be positive. Sometimes kids portray a negative attitude toward music activities because it is "cool". If you are positive and energetic, and confident with your attitude towards music, your class will follow you. Provide older students with information about music, the brain and learning so they know that your motivation is to help them be successful.

2. Integrating music into your curriculum is not an easier method of teaching, but a better one that will enhance your students' learning and energize you as a teacher.

3. Use a "trial and error" approach as you get started with these music experiences. Trust that you know your students and that, together, you will figure out the best way to apply the suggestions in this book and create your own.

4. Take time in class to do team building activities using music and by other means. This helps to create a group synergy where students "buy in" to what is happening in the classroom. Spending time building the community of the group will save time and energy later and can prevent conflicts and competition from happening in class. Foster a cooperative learning model where I win when you win.

5. Structure provides a framework for creativity in any field. Give students the skills, structure and safety net they need to step out and take risks. At the same time, the less *you* do, the more *they* do, so allow space for them to try out new ideas, make mistakes and create successes for the group to build upon.

6. Spend some time gathering materials (CD's, songs, books, instruments and other music props) and building a quality, support system for your music endeavors. See the Resources section of this book for suggestions of excellent materials. Your support system can include online resources, local music specialists and musicians, and community music organizations.

7. As you integrate quality music experiences into your curriculum, be open to the students' suggestions and provide opportunities for them to listen to "their" music. A good rule of thumb is that music used in the classroom must not offend any person or any group of people. Kids understand the idea of community and generally want to do things that benefit the group. Always preview anything you plan on sharing with the students and if you have a question, ask your supervisor or a supportive colleague.

8. Create a pleasant learning environment that takes into account the lighting, sound, color scheme and space in the classroom. Here are some general suggestions to get started. You and your students can discuss others as the school year goes along. You will spend quite a bit of time together in the space and it is important that it supports learning.