

Curriculum Project: Crossing Boundaries

Rationale: Music lessons that emphasize rhythm and wordplay can help Expanded Transitional Kindergarten students (ages 4-5) with phonemic awareness skills like syllabification, which is foundational for early literacy. Participation in quality music programs also helps strengthen executive function skills, like self-regulation and decision-making. Animals are a strong point of interest for students, while songs and percussion instruments from different cultures are used to illustrate their universality and for students to make personal connections. While Japan, Thailand, and Polynesia were not examined in this particular seminar, I use artifacts and musical samples from them in the spirit of “crossing boundaries” in Asia and beyond.

Skills/Content Objectives:

**California Preschool Learning Foundations**

*Social Interaction*

3.1 Participate positively and cooperatively as group members.

*Language and Literacy*

2.1 Orally blend and delete words and syllables without the support of pictures or objects.

5.1 Demonstrate, with increasing independence, enjoyment of literacy and literacy-related activities.

**California Arts Standards for Public Schools: Music**

PK.MU:Cr1. With substantial guidance, explore and experience a variety of music.

PK.MU:Cr3.2. With substantial guidance, share revised personal musical ideas with peers.

Differentiation: visuals for vocabulary support; repetition; hand gestures; kinesthetic activity; rebus sentences; realia; peer or adult support; formative assessment

Materials:

[“Tanka Tanka Skunk” by Steve Webb](#)

[“Hear the Lively Song”](#) (with adapted lyrics)

[“Kaeru no Uta”](#)

## Lesson Plan Day 1: “Skunka Tanka”

Objective: Students will use animal names to create rhythms to fill one or two 4-beat measures.

### Instruction:

Opening/engagement: Discuss with whole class:

- “Do you have a pet?” and/or “Name your favorite animal.”

State objective: “Today, we will use animal names to make music.”

Direct instruction/Guided practice:

- Hold up pictures of animals (skunk as “Skunka,” elephant as “Tanka,” beaver, bat, donkey, etc.)
  - Say their names, ask students to repeat, then stick them on chart paper
- Read “Tanka Tanka Skunk” by Steve Webb, emphasizing beats and rhythm by patting one hand lap along with phrases in the book.
- Read first few pages to model.
- Subsequent pages, read and ask students to echo/repeat while patting their laps to the beat

Independent practice (as part of dismissal process to go to centers):

- Model choosing 2-3 animals from chart paper to chant one or two measures
  - Example: [donkey - duck - donkey - bat]  
                                  x      x      x      x
- Ask students to choose 2-3 animals from chart paper and chant their new rhythms
- Provide support as needed:
  - Suggest animals for student
  - Offer to chant their selection first, or try it together
  - Allow students to try with a partner if desired

Assessment (informal): Observe students’ ability to fit animal names within 4 or 8 beats, with or without support.

Sample Animal Picture Cards



Skunka



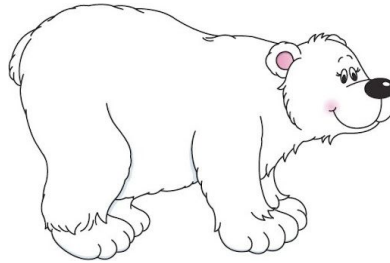
Tanka



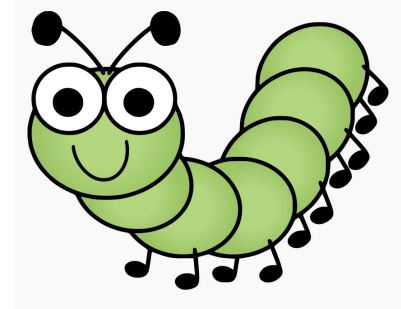
cheetah



lion



polar bear



caterpillar



donkey



duck



otter

Lesson Plan Day 2: "Hear the Lively Song"

Objective: Students will use language and percussion (scraper) instruments to participate in group music-making.

Instruction:

Opening/engagement: Whole-group discussion/share

- Hold up "Tanka Tanka Skunk" by Steve Webb and ask, "How did we use a book/animal names to make music yesterday?"

State objective: "Today, we will use frogs to make music."

Direct instruction/Guided practice:

- Briefly explain the origins of the instruments:
  - [Wooden frog](#) originating from Thailand
  - [Guiros](#) originating from South American countries
  - Ukulele (played by teacher)
- Model singing the song (with adapted lyrics), using a wooden frog to play along:  
*Hear the lively song of the froggy in the pond*  
*Crik-crik-crikety-crik, brrrr-ap!*
- Display Rebus sentences with lyrics and read/sing together
  - Pass out instruments. Students will receive alternating frogs and various guiros, while some will not receive one. Each time the song is sung, students pass their instruments clockwise so that everyone gets a turn to play something different.

Independent practice (as part of dismissal process to go to centers):

- Accompany students on ukulele as they repeat the song and play on instruments

Assessment (informal): Observe students' ability to engage in singing and/or playing, as well as passing instruments at the appropriate time.

### Lesson Plan Day 3: “Kaeru no Uta”

Objective: Students will use language and percussion (scraper) instruments to participate in group music-making.

Instruction:

Opening/engagement: Lead class in singing through “Hear the Lively Song”

State objective: “Today, we will sing and play a song about frogs in Japanese.”

Direct instruction/guided practice

- Briefly explain where Japan is, using a globe or map available in classroom
- Model singing the song, pointing to syllables written on chart paper
  - *Kaeru no uta ga*
  - *Kikoete kuru yo*
  - *Gwa, gwa, gwa, gwa*
  - *Gero, gero, gero, gero, gwa, gwa, gwa*
  - Sing song again, using wooden frog to play along (“*Gwa, gwa, gwa...*”)
- Ask students to repeat/echo line by line as I sing
- Pass out instruments. Students will receive alternating frogs and various guiros, while some will not receive one. Each time the song is sung, students pass their instruments clockwise so that everyone gets a turn to play something different.

Independent practice (as part of dismissal process to go to centers):

- Accompany students on ukulele as they repeat the song and play on instruments

Closure:

1. Students volunteer to play in front of classmates.

2. Discussion:

- Where did our instruments come from?
- How do we use instruments to make music?

How do we help each other make music?

Assessment (informal): Observe students’ ability to engage in singing and/or playing, as well as passing instruments at the appropriate time.