

Studying Music

Preschool Classroom

Phase 3



DS and the head teacher
practice the harmonica.



This is a display of orchestra
music written by these 3/4
year old students.

Toward the end of the project, the students created a topic web about what they had learned (Student Music Topic Web 2). They wanted to share their new knowledge with their parents. Teachers guided them by providing the materials and supplies to make graphic representations of their experiences. Students prepared several different products to convey what they had learned about music. They created a mural, a ribbon dance, and several ensembles to perform music for their parents during an open house. They also shared their new musical experiences with others in the community.

Orchestral Mural

Throughout the project students drew many pictures to record their field experiences and the information gained by interviewing guest speakers. One small group of children decided to create a mural depicting the orchestra. They selected white butcher paper for the mural. Everyone started drawing on the huge piece of paper. Soon, someone mentioned that there was not enough room. Someone else wanted to draw a flute but there was one already on the paper. The students stopped and reorganized. The teacher gave students an individual sheet of white paper and a black marker. The teacher brainstormed with the students various instruments to place on the mural. To elicit responses, she gave clues of guest speakers or parts of an instrument. Each person chose an instrument to sketch. The teacher questioned, “How many people should be in our orchestra mural?” The students’ answers were varied:

DS:	conductor	700 people
KE:	piano	150
GR:	Accordion	100

MJ:	violins	100
SW:	flute	80
LB:	ukulele	16
EA:	French horn	3

The teacher introduced a new medium, an acetate sheet for the background of the mural. To prepare for the large drawings, the teachers gave students white paper with black markers. When they were finished, students placed the pictures under the acetate and arranged them with the teacher's help so that they did not overlap. Students and teachers grouped similar instruments together when possible. Some children drew huge instruments and others drew smaller ones. After agreeing on the placement, students traced their picture with a permanent marker.



Students create a rough draft of the orchestra mural.

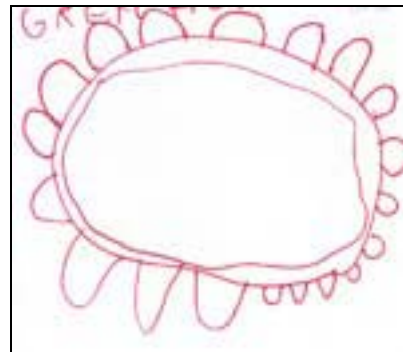


Students paint their orchestra mural on acetate.

The group discussed how to get color onto the mural. Students voted to use tempera paint. At the next project group time, the students painted and painted. Some covered their outlines so thoroughly that you could not see the instrument. They found that when it was flipped over they could see an instrument and the tracing marks but the labels were backwards. The students decided not to change it and they displayed it on the window. After the weekend, they came back to find that the tempera paint had chipped off the acetate. The teacher took the opportunity to teach problem solving explicitly and told the children it was time to go “Back to the drawing board!”



GR drew two instruments for the mural.



GR decided upon the tambourine for the mural.

GR suggested that they use watercolor paint this time. The teacher returned their first sketches to the students and provided a new piece of acetate. The children traced their pictures again. LB made a mistake with the permanent marker. She was upset about her drawing and cried. The teacher provided rubbing alcohol to remove the permanent marker. It worked and brought a quick smile to LB's face. She happily traced her instrument again. The watercolor paint created a soothing effect. The murals hung side by side in the windows. The display of the first and second attempt to complete the final product demonstrated the problem solving that took place in the process of designing and painting the mural.

The Ribbon Dance

Throughout the project, the students who studied movement introduced their work at group meetings and invited others to participate. The assistant teacher initiated the ribbon dance to provide a medium for students to experiment with the relationship between emotions, movements, and music. Students enjoyed creating their own ribbons and practicing during project/activity time. They used different colored ribbons to portray different feelings when they danced. They practiced the ribbon dance indoors in case it rained on the day of the open house. The teacher used a CD of different orchestral selections. As the teacher called out a particular ribbon color, those students having that color came into the circle to dance. The teacher encouraged students to vary their body movements and waves of the ribbon for the different musical pieces. During the open house, all of the students joined in the dance and waved their ribbons to the music. The expressions on their faces during their performance "said it all" to the parents and teachers.



The ribbon dancers display differences in feelings evoked by the music.



DS conducted his orchestra during the parent open house.

Student Ensembles

Student conductors created ensembles with their peers. Each group had a different conductor who used movements that the expert conductor taught them when he came to visit the classroom. When the students wanted the music to end, they opened their arms wide to signal. Most

members of the student ensembles paid close attention and quit on cue. The ensembles played several selections that the student conductors had previously composed. The conductor followed the music symbols written on sentence strips.

Sharing in the Community

During large group meetings, the teachers taught students many new songs. The teacher assistant led the group in *I am So Happy* in five different languages. The head teacher introduced students to “echo songs.” They learned the echo song called *Rain, Rain* by Miss Jackie. When the Care Center of Champaign invited the preschool students to celebrate “Hat Day” with them, the preschoolers were eager to give the residents a performance of their repertoire. The students designed and made their own hats before they went. They had a parade and sang their songs including a number song that they created.



Colorful hats adorn the singers as they ring out the song, *Rain Rain*.

Vocabulary

Throughout the room, teachers displayed pictures of students’ drawings and work related to the music project. The displays featured new vocabulary introduced to the students. The teachers also kept a list of words on the “word wall.” The vocabulary students acquired included:

beat	harmonium	quarter note
blow	instrument	rhythm
bow	keyboard	rock stop
chime	music stand	shake
cello	neck	songs
conductor	orchestra	string
drumstick	organ	strum
echo	peg	tabla
eighth note	play	tambourine
flugelhorn	player piano	valve
glockenspiel	pick	vibrate
grand piano	pipe organ	vibration
half note		whole note

Open House

To culminate the music project, teachers and students invited families to attend an open house that featured various performances, displays, and snacks. The displays highlighted the process of answering the students' questions about music. Exhibits included charts with questions, predictions, and answers given by the visiting experts. Parents saw the three-dimensional models of instruments including the pipe organ. The process of students learning to write and conduct their own music was also displayed. The program brochure invited parents to look around the room and find evidence of the following:

- Korean drummers
- Visit to the Piano People
- Writing our own music
- Representations of musical instruments using play dough and plasticine
- Word wall and vocabulary of instruments
- Make low and high sounds with the pipe organ
- Tap the water glasses to make a song.

The program included students singing echo songs, doing the ribbon dance, and students conducting ensembles. After the students performed, parents walked around the room with their children and explored the displays.



Parents read the wall display
after the student performance.

New or Deeper Understandings

Studying Music gave students a richer understanding of the music found all around them. In particular, students gained specific knowledge about instruments that originated in different cultures and are part of the family traditions of their peers. At a very basic level, students gained some knowledge about the relationship between sound and vibration. Students learned that you could stop the vibration of a chime by placing it against your body or on a clothed surface. They now know that sound travels in sound waves. Physically running and trying to beat the sound wave (slinky) helped them understand how fast sound travels. The students generalized that different sounds come from different objects and they can manipulate and create new sounds by placing various objects inside shakers.

Students learned how to cooperate and make music together. They recognized the importance of having written music compositions and of following a conductor. They learned that music could be written down with specific symbols representing notes and rhythm. Most of all, students enjoyed the music project and became fully engaged in creating, listening, and moving to music. In the next section (Evaluation), the teachers share their reflections about the project and evaluate it by examining the documentation for growth of the group as a whole and for specific students (student portfolios).