

Yes They Can!

Place-Based Learning for the Youngest Music Learners

Ms. Maria Draper

Place-Based Learning

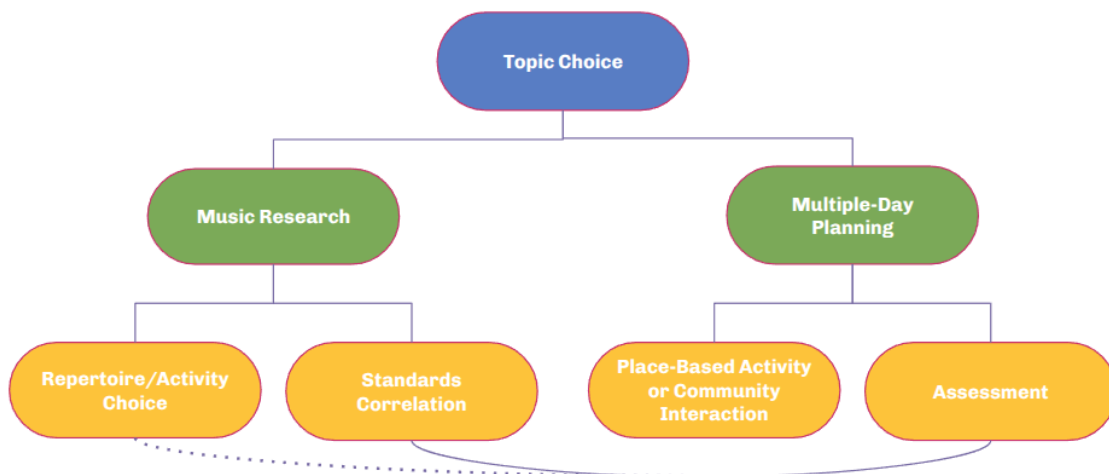
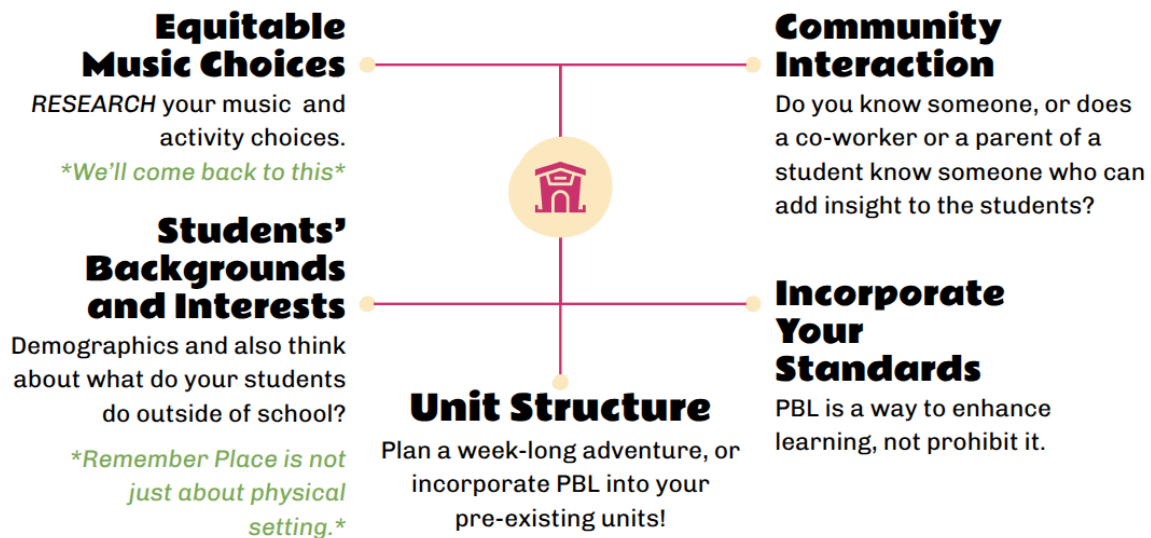
“Place-based education (PBE) is an umbrella term for pedagogical practices that prioritize experiential, community-based, and contextual/ecological learning to cultivate greater connectivity to local contexts, cultures, and environments” (Yemini et al., 2023).

- Traditionally used as a life-science/biology pedagogy
- PBL is great for celebrating the culture and communities around us
 - “Local communities store intergenerational knowledge, skills, and systems of mutual support” (Yemini et al., 2023).
- What is “Place?”
 - Not only where students are physically, but also mentally, emotionally, spiritually, etc.

Benefits of Place-Based Learning within the Music Room

- The Village Approach
 - PBL districts might see parents step up more regarding music.
 - School-community music events contribute to building social capital.
 - Social capital is “critical to community vitality” (Prest, 2020)
 - Easy to incorporate diversity with the community involved.

What Does PBL in Pre-K Look Like?



About YOUR Students

“Research indicates that practices, systems, and structures in school music as a whole leave some children in the cold.” (Salvador, 2019)

- What can you do to make your curriculum/song choice(s) more equitable for your students?

- What is culture?
 - Race/Ethnicity, Socioeconomic Status, Family Structure, Religion, Food Choices, Clothing Choices
- What does Equitable Music Education Mean?
 - Song/Activity Research
 - Look into the history of the songs you are doing. Do they validate or harm your students?
 - Diverse Music
 - From around the world
 - Popular Music!
 - Risking change
 - Take the risk to be equitable not only in your classroom but in the way you personally view these topics.
 - Recognizing the Past
 - Tell your students about the history of songs. Let them know the struggles and successes that came with them.
 - Recognize that songs that you sang in elementary school may no longer be appropriate for our students now.
 - Empowering and Accessible Songs/Activities
 - Choose songs and activities that actively validate your students' cultures!
 - Are they accessible to everyone in your classroom? What can you do to make them accessible?
 - Wheelchair users, blind students, deaf students, autistic students, ADHD students

Example Lessons

North Dakota/Minnesota/Cold Climates

Winter Creative Movement Activity

- Print out pictures of winter and hold them up as you play *Winter* by Vivaldi. Have your students move to the song as you hold up the signs. “Match the picture! How does a snowflake move?”
- Scarves are a fun addition to this activity if you have them!
- My pictures were printed from <https://www.discoverdance.com/>

Germany

Folk Song Lullaby

Du Liegst Mir im Herzen

German folk song



Du, du, liegst mir im Herzen, Du, du, liegst mir im Sinn,
Du, du, machst mir viel Schmerzen. Weisst nicht wie gut ich dir bin.
Ja, Ja, Ja, ja! Weisst nicht wie gut ich dir bin.

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You, you are in my heart.
You, you are in my mind.
You, you cause me much pain,
You don't know how good I am for you.
Yes, yes, yes you don't know how good I am for you.

South Korea

Circle Bridge Game

- Go on a “Music Room Adventure!”
 - “Visit” Korea with google earth, find facts about animals, food, instruments, how to say hello, and what kids look like.
 - This would work for any country, not just this one!
- How to play the game
 - Make a circle, and walk around to the music. When the music stops, freeze!
 - Find a fun version of the song on YouTube!
 - Then, add in your “bridge” kids! When the music stops, their arms go down to catch a friend!

Dong, Dong, Dongdaemun

동, 동, 동대문을

South Korean folk song

Dong, Dong, Dong-dae - mu - neul yeo - reo - ra, Nam, Nam, Nam-dae - mu - neul

yeo - reo - ra, Yeol du - si - ga doe-myeo-neun, Mu - neul dan-neun - da.

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Lifewide Music Teaching

Elementary General Music

Orff Schulwerk
Children's Literature
Instructional Sequencing
Elemental Music Instruction,
Recorder, Ukulele

Adult & Community Music Education

Older Adult Music Learning
and Music Making
Adult Music Making &
Quality of Life
Creativity in Adult Amateur
Musicians
Ukulele, Recorder, Virtual
Instruction

Using Beginner-Friendly Ukulele Skills

In Early Childhood Music and Movement

P R E V I E W

This resource provides information and suggestions for teachers interested in using beginner-level ukulele skills in their early childhood teaching.

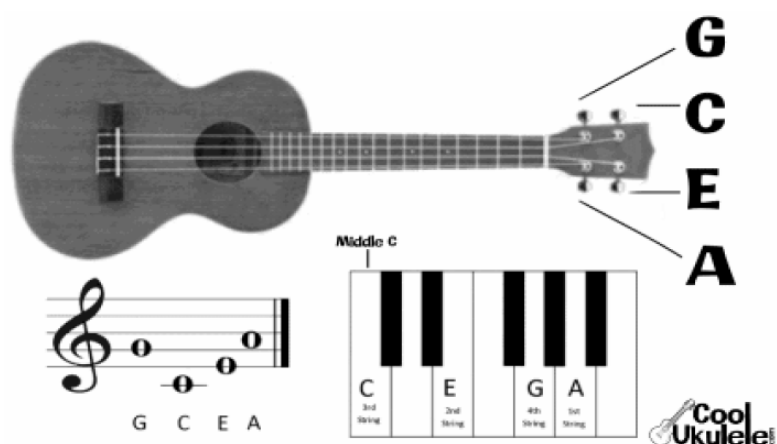
C O N T E N T S

- Tuning and strumming
- Reading chord charts
- Suggested two-chord pairs
- Using down strums to shape meter
- Additional strum suggestions
- Easy picking patterns
- Suggested uses

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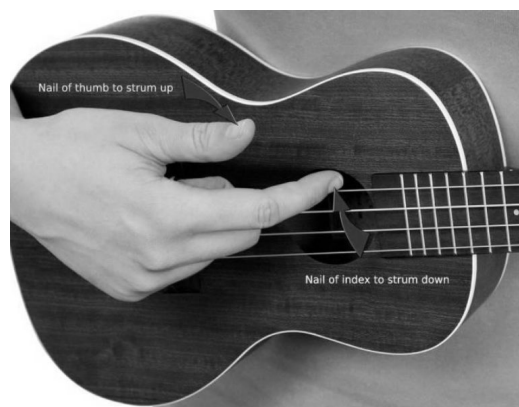
Ukulele Tuning



Strumming

Thumb nail
strums up

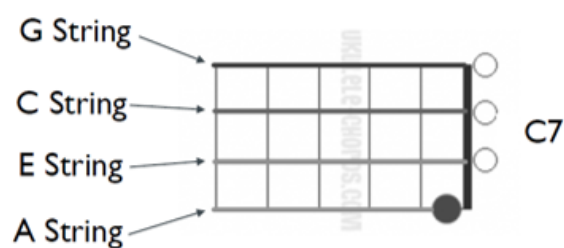
Index fingernail
strums down



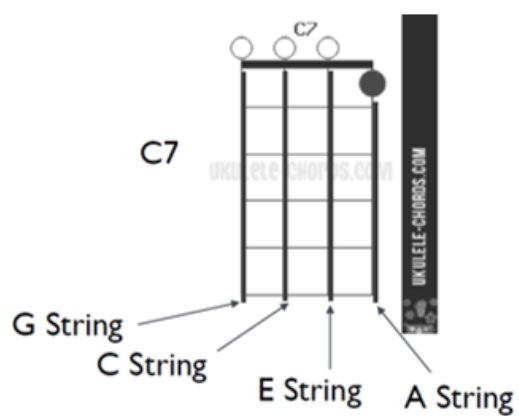
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String Order When Held



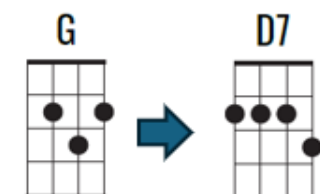
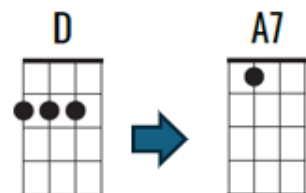
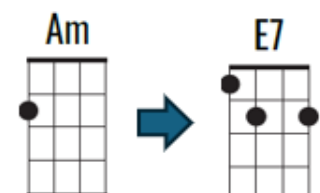
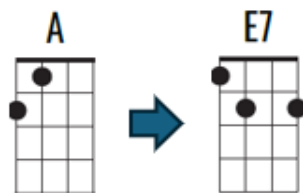
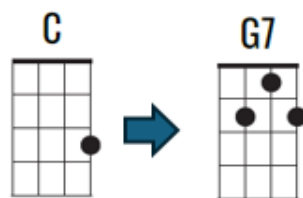
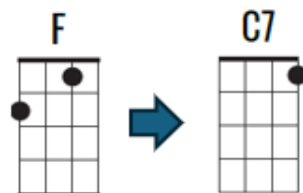
String Order on Charts



Using Beginner-Friendly Ukulele Skills

In Early Childhood Music and Movement

Two-Chord Parings



Using Beginner-Friendly Ukulele Skills

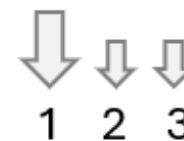
In Early Childhood Music and Movement

Down Strums: Shaping Meter

4/4



3/4



6/8



2/4



Using Beginner-Friendly Ukulele Skills

In Early Childhood Music and Movement

Easy Picking Ideas

Forward Roll

Thumb (T) on C string
Index (I) on E string
Middle (M) on A string



Backward Roll



Waltz Feel

I → Pick both at
M same time



Four Finger Pattern

Thumb (T) on G string
Index (I) on C string
Middle (M) on E string
Ring (R) on A string



Using Beginner-Friendly Ukulele Skills

In Early Childhood Music and Movement

SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

- Vary strength and speed of strums to show meter, tempo, phrasing, and dynamics
- Add slaps, rakes, and other percussive sounds to make the most of one or two chords
- Use keys that are best for ukulele during speech and movement activities
- Start with one chord in keys best for children's singing
- Start with down strums and explore simple patterns that feel comfortable
- Backing tracks/drum tracks can
 - offer support when playing one or more chords
 - allow teachers to choose how often chords change
 - provide an ongoing accompaniment if/when the teacher models hand/arm movement

Caregiver Perspectives on Children’s Musical Experiences

Erika J. Knapp, Ph.D., Texas Woman’s University | Rachel Grimsby, Ph.D., James Madison University
ECMMA Biennial Conference, June 2026

PURPOSE

This study gathered caregiver perspectives on children’s musicking within K-12 public education settings in the United States, with attention to access, inclusion, and the relationship between families and music educators.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do caregivers describe their child’s experience within public music education spaces?
2. What barriers have caregivers encountered regarding their child’s access to music education?
3. Do caregivers feel included in their child’s music program, and if so, what does the music educator do to create a climate of inclusivity?

METHOD AT A GLANCE

DESIGN	DATA	PARTICIPANTS	ANALYSIS
Exploratory mixed methods Multiple case study	5 semi-structured interviews (40 to 60 min, Zoom) Survey, 5 strands, 2 open items	5 caregivers, preschool through high school Survey N = 11, 6 usable	Saldaña (2016) coding, two rounds Frequencies, M and SD; member checks

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS: THREE THEMES

Music as joy and emotional connection. Music functioned as a space of belonging and as an emotional and social bridge for children.

The persistence of social and structural exclusion. Barriers to full participation, peer dynamics, uneven accommodations, and thin pre-service preparation surfaced across cases.

Relational labor: advocacy, communication, and practice. Caregivers carried ongoing advocacy, navigated communication gaps, and called for strengths-based, flexible approaches.

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

The caregiver survey ran in parallel on a six-point scale across five strands: involvement in school music, extracurricular music, peer and teacher engagement, inclusivity and challenges, and caregiver-specific questions. Six of eleven responses were usable, so the quantitative strand is descriptive rather than inferential and is reported as item frequencies, means, and standard deviations.

Item responses tended to spread across the scale rather than converge, echoing the family-to-family variability seen in the interviews. The two open-ended items mapped directly onto the three qualitative themes, so the survey worked less as standalone evidence and more as triangulation that strengthened confidence in the interview patterns.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND PREPARATION

- Treat caregivers as experts on their children and partners in program design.
- Close communication gaps with families through clear, proactive, two-way contact about music learning and needs.
- Build caregiver communication competencies into pre-service teacher preparation, not as a single accommodations lecture.
- Lead with a strengths-based lens that asks what students can do rather than cataloging what they cannot.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Small qualitative and quantitative samples limit transferability, in part because many caregivers were too busy to participate. Next steps include a replication study, a larger-scale survey, and a local phenomenological study using alternative recruitment avenues.

Contact eknapp@twu.edu | grimsbrl@jmu.edu

Grounding literature Darrow (2022); Fitzgerald (2006); Geretsegger et al. (2014); Heiderscheid (2022); Jellison et al. (2017); Knapp (in press); Salvador (2015); Thompson and McFerran (2015); Yinger et al. (2023).



So Many Musical Minds, So Little Time!

2026 ECMMA Biennial Convention – University of North Dakota
Examining one teacher's use of research informed diagnostic assessment in elementary music

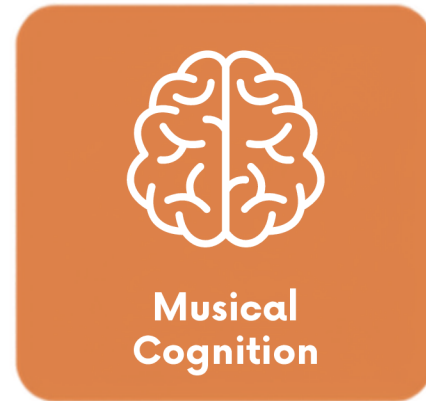
Lara Larsson – Newark Central School District
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Session Objectives

- Examine one in-service music teacher's research informed approach to diagnostic assessment for the purpose of specialized instruction.
- Imagine possible frameworks for implementing realistic diagnostic assessment that can be implemented by music educators in their classrooms.
- Reflect upon current trends in diagnostic assessment for in-service music educators.

Priority Diagnostics

- Musical Cognition:
 - PMMA (Primary Measure of Music Audiation)
 - IMMA (Intermediate Measure of Music Audiation)
- Motor Skills Coordination:
 - Singing Voice Development measure
 - Beat Competency



**Musical
Cognition**



**Motor Skills
(Coordination)**



Music Content



**Social
Emotional Skills**

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Evolving Technology for Assessment



Considerations for Future Research & Practice

- What is the current state of technological tools used for assessment in elementary music education?
- As technology becomes central to student-driven music assessment, particularly through tools that capture student voice and reflection, what happens if that access is reduced or removed?
- As music educators, we are tasked with building community while also collecting meaningful assessment data—so what comes next?

Experiences in an Early Childhood Music Lab: Perspectives from Young Children and Preservice Music Teachers

Samantha C. Webber (presenting author) — swebber2@u.rochester.edu

PhD Candidate, Eastman School of Music

Authors not presenting: Mara E. Culp, Laura Turley, and Zhilin Zhang

- **Session Goal:**

Participants will consider the potential benefits and challenges of lab-based music experiences for very young children and preservice music teachers and reflect on strategies to incorporate children's and families' perspectives and values into their teaching.

- **Preservice Music Teacher Education**

Only about 10% NASM-accredited offer an early childhood (EC) music methods class, and prekindergarten learners are rarely addressed in Elementary General Methods courses (Salvador & Culp, 2021).

Laboratory experiences for preservice teachers can positively influence knowledge acquisition and teachers' behavior, especially lab experiences with children (Metcalf, 1995).

- **Eastman Community Music School (ECMS) Early Childhood MusicLab**

Designed to serve as a field experience site for the Early Childhood Methods Course at the Eastman School of Music while providing free weekday music classes for the community..

Modeled on Donna Brink Fox's early childhood music program at ECMS: MusicTIME Lab: 4–24 months and Music Times Two: 2–3.5 years

- **Participant Experiences**

Caregivers (n = 4)	Children (n = 4)	Preservice Music Teachers (n = 4)
● Valued relating with other parents ● Appreciated one-on-one time with child ● Shared that PMTs brought high energy ● Desired to benefit PMTs' education ● Materials helped extend music making at home	● Non-Speaking Children ○ Arm waving, vocalizations, and body movements ● Speaking Children ○ A child who was not enrolled in the class expressed desire to join sibling's class ○ Emphasized importance of materials, especially instruments ○ Highlighted role of feelings, sound, and movement	● Recognized the value & built comfort with young children ● Valued gaining knowledge, tools, & confidence through hands-on experience ● Attention to children's developmental characteristics ● Learned from peers ● Viewed the lab as a safe place to experiment, make mistakes, and grow ● Struggled to maintain energy level and to move from verbal instructions to actions

Culp, M. E., Turley, L., Webber, S. C., & Zhang, Z.. (2026, June 28–30). *Experiences in an Early Childhood Music Lab: Perspectives from Young Children and Preservice Music Teachers* [Conference presentation].ECMMA 2026 Convention, Grand Forks, ND, United States.

"This project was undertaken as a QI initiative, and as per the University of Rochester's Guideline for Determining Human Subject Research, did not meet the definition of research according to 45CFR46."

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1. Reflect on your own experience as you prepare(d) to be a teacher. What opportunities did/do you have to work with children ages birth–8 years? How prepared did/do you feel to work with 5- to 8-year-olds? 3- to 5-year-olds? Children under 3?
2. What possibilities do you see to create more opportunities that enhance teachers' readiness to work musically with children ages birth–8?
3. How can/do you incorporate children's and families' perspectives and values into your teaching?

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Culp, M. E., Turley, L., Webber, S. C., & Zhang, Z.. (2026, June 28–30). *Experiences in an Early Childhood Music Lab: Perspectives from Young Children and Preservice Music Teachers* [Conference presentation]. ECMMA 2026 Convention, Grand Forks, ND, United States.

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Supporting Young Learners with Down Syndrome in Early Childhood (and Beyond!)

Samantha C. Webber (presenting author) — swebber2@u.rochester.edu
PhD Student, Eastman School of Music

- **Session Goal:**
 - We will explore music and movement activities and curricular design strategies for use with individuals with Down syndrome of all ages
- **Down Syndrome and Development**
 - Nondisjunction is a cell division error resulting in an embryo with a full or partial extra copy of chromosome 21. This is called Trisomy 21, and is the cause of 95% of cases of Down Syndrome. The remaining 5% result from mosaicism or translocation (<https://ndss.org/about>)
 - Most individuals with Down Syndrome experience developmental delays, intellectual disabilities (e.g. issues with memory and retention, speech and language learning delays), and physical symptoms (e.g. low muscle tone).
(<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/down-syndrome/symptoms-causes/syc-20355977>)
 - Many individuals with Down Syndrome experience stigma or social exclusion, which can be intensified as others can visually identify them as a person with a disability (Çaynak et al., 2022)
- **Universal Design for Learning**
 - A beneficial framework for designing learning experiences for all learners, especially those with disabilities.
 - The three principles of UDL guide curricular development with a primary goal of learner agency
 - Multiple means of engagement — making instruction relevant to individual interests
 - Multiple means of representation — presenting information in multiple ways
 - Multiple means of action and expression — honor various ways of responding
 - Learn more at <https://udlguidelines.cast.org/>
- **Considerations for Learners with Down Syndrome**
 - Many individuals with Down syndrome benefit visual or tactile supports (e.g. a visual schedule or a communication board)
 - Repetition and routine
 - Receptive language skills often outpace expressive skills — consider including sign language, which can be a more immediately accessible communication skill
 - Balancing developmental goals with musical goals
 - Physical development — include movements that address cardiovascular fitness, core stability, strength, and balance
 - Social emotional development — social modeling, emotion flashcards presented musically
 - Cognitive development — support numeracy, literacy, and memory
 - Musical development — present rhythmic and tonal patterns; provide ample opportunities for imitation while still encouraging innovation
 - Positive reinforcement
 - High expectations, high support

Webber, S. C. (2026, June 28–30). *Supporting Young Learners with Down Syndrome in Early Childhood (and Beyond!)* [Conference presentation]. ECMMA 2026 Convention, Grand Forks, ND, United States.

Supporting Young Learners with Down Syndrome in Early Childhood (and Beyond!)

Samantha C. Webber (presenting author) — swebber2@u.rochester.edu
PhD Student, Eastman School of Music

Consider your experiences with individuals with Down syndrome. What characteristics have you noticed? How might these characteristics inform your educational approach? If you don't have any experiences with this population, consider why that might be (e.g. structure of the educational system).

What preconceived notions might a person with no experience with this population hold about them? How might these beliefs affect musical interactions? What ideas do you have to promote inclusive environments in educational settings?

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GUIDED IMMERSION THROUGH SONG

Empowering Spanish-Speaking Educators to Build Bilingual Music Communities

Presenter: Madeleine Welch, EdM
Founder, Canta y Baila Conmigo®

Who Is This For?

Although this workshop is rooted in the experience of bringing Spanish into music settings, the principles of guided immersion extend beyond any one language and may be helpful in a variety of multilingual and mixed-language settings.



The Big Idea

We are often taught to think:

Understand → Participate → Belong

But with young children, guided immersion invites a different sequence:

BELONG → PARTICIPATE → UNDERSTAND

- * Children do not need to understand every word to understand that they belong.
- * Music allows children to share experiences before they share vocabulary.
- * Belonging itself helps make understanding possible.

Songs Featured in Today's Session:

- *La morenada*
- *La bella hortelana*
- *La vaca Lola*
- *Yo tengo una guitarra*
- *Cuando canto*

Note: The songs and activities experienced during this session are examples rather than prescriptions. Guided immersion principles can be adapted to many musical traditions, languages, and settings.

Five Principles of Guided Immersion

Guided immersion supports children with many different language experiences—including heritage speakers, multilingual learners, and children who are entirely new to the language. The principles below help children belong, participate, and gradually make meaning together.

1. Belonging Comes First

Children do not need to understand every word to understand that they belong.

Supported by:

- rituals and routines
- shared musical experiences
- honoring individual responses

2. Participation Takes Many Forms

Watching, listening, moving, and joining gradually are all valuable forms of participation.

Supported by:

- movement and physical responses
- listening, observation, and imitation
- scaffolded participation

3. Music Creates Meaning

Music itself helps create understanding.

Supported by:

- movement and gesture
- musical form and patterns
- contrast and surprise

4. Repetition Builds Confidence

Familiarity helps children anticipate, participate, and feel successful.

Supported by:

- shared repertoire over time
- repetition with gradual variation
- predictable routines

5. Joy Creates Community

Playfulness and shared experiences invite connection and risk-taking.

Supported by:

- playfulness and humor
- inviting children into the story
- imagination and wonder



Building Bilingual Musical Communities

Give Yourself Permission

Give yourself permission to bring your language and culture—and the languages and cultures of the children and families you serve—into music spaces. You do not have to choose between authenticity and accessibility. Meaning grows through participation, repetition, and shared musical experiences.

Why Include Children's Home Languages?

Language communicates more than vocabulary.

When children hear their home language in songs, stories, and musical interactions, they may hear:

- My language belongs here.
- My family belongs here.
- My experiences belong here.
- I belong here.

Different languages belonging in the room sends a message that many languages belong in the room.

What I've Observed:

Over the years, I've noticed that it isn't only children who speak Spanish who respond positively when another language is present.

Children who may not understand Spanish often lean in, join the movement, and participate with joy.

Different languages belonging in the room seems to send a message that many languages—and many ways of communicating—belong there too.

Building bilingual music communities does not require everyone to begin in the same place. Through shared musical experiences, children and families with many different language experiences can sing, move, play, and belong together.

May the languages and cultures you bring—and those your children and families bring—find a place in your music spaces.

NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT
THROUGH MUSIC, MOVEMENT, AND LITERATURE

EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC AND MOVEMENT ASSOCIATION

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA

GRAND FORKS, NORTH DAKOTA

JUNE 28-30, 2026

RITA WHITAKER HAUN

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Workshop participants will enjoy FIRST THE EGG by Laura Vaccaro Seeger through activities that include singing, listening, moving, playing simple instruments, and reading.

Process:

Present FIRST THE EGG by singing the “tune” accompanied by playing a vertically displayed glockenspiel. M M S D D M M “First the egg, then the chicken.”

Ask the participants what items they remember and print the list on the white board using a black marker. (Check to make sure: caterpillar/butterfly; seed/flower; tadpole/frog are included on list.) Display matching word/picture cards on hanging pocket chart and practice singing while pointing.

Ask participants to offer suggestions for how the items move and have group enjoy moving as suggested. When the “tune” plays, everyone “freeze”.

Demonstrate instruments: cabasa, triangle, woodblock, finger cymbals, sand blocks, two-tone block. Display instruments in a circle on the floor, a participant sitting behind each instrument. Play the “conductor” game by having participants take turns playing each of the instruments as they move around the circle with the “conductor” offering direction for play/stop.

Discuss what instrument could be used to represent each item on the above list. Match word/picture cards to corresponding instrument word/picture card on the hanging pocket chart.

Play “movement” game: instrument sound signal:

Cabasa=Caterpillar/Triangle=Butterfly; Woodblock=Seed/Finger Cymbals=Flower; Sand Blocks=Tadpole/Two-Tone Block=Frog

Play “card match” game: participants close eyes, hold out hands, word/picture cards are distributed and each participant finds their “matcher”.

Distribute crayons and paper for participants to draw what each item changed from/to. Older participants could discover the “tune” on bar instruments and/or notate.