

**Influencing Writing Skills through Clapping Games in the
General Music Classroom**

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ABSTRACT

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Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this impact study is to examine the correlation between writing skills and the ability to perform clapping games. Four fifth grade classes at Franklin Elementary School will participate in a philosophical study comparing The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) writing scores and proficiencies in clapping games, as well as an empirical study examining the impact of clapping games on writing skills. All classes will be taught the same song material, but only two of the classes will include clapping activities during their instruction.

Rationale

On many playgrounds around America, clapping games are being played and passed on to other children; however, this activity is not limited to American culture but extends itself to other societies and is universal among all children (Brodsky and Sulkin 1129). While undervalued by many adults (Curtis 422), the benefits of clapping games go beyond the rhythmic and social skills necessary to execute this activity. Recent studies have begun to show connections between writing skills and clapping games, yet little research has been done to investigate whether spontaneous music activities such as clapping games have an impact on child development (Brodsky and Sulkin 1129).

This study will investigate whether or not writing scores gathered through the New Jersey PARCC exams correlate with a student's ability to perform clapping activities. Students in four fourth grade classes will be given a pre-writing prompt to assess writing skills and then be taught the same song material but using two different strategies, one with clapping games and one without.

To simulate spontaneous music activity as questioned by Sulkin, students will be encouraged to improvise new lyrics to known clapping games. At the conclusion of a six week study, all students will complete a post-writing assignment to examine whether or not the exposure to clapping games during instructional time influenced the students' writing skills.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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RATIONALE

On many playgrounds around America, clapping games are being played and passed on to other children; however, this activity is not limited to American culture but extends itself to other societies and is universal among all children (Brodsky and Sulkin 1129). While undervalued by many adults (Curtis 422), the benefits of clapping games go beyond the rhythmic and social skills necessary to execute this activity. Recent studies have begun to show connections between writing skills and clapping games, yet little research has been done to investigate whether spontaneous music activities such as clapping games have an impact on child development (Brodsky and Sulkin 1129).

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the same song material but using two different strategies, one with clapping games and one without.

To simulate spontaneous music activity as questioned by Sulkin, students will be encouraged to improvise new lyrics to known clapping games. At the conclusion of a six week study, all students will complete a post-writing assignment to examine whether or not the exposure to clapping games during instructional time influenced the students' writing skills.

EXPECTED FINDINGS

Through this project, students showing a proficiency in learning and executing clapping games should also show higher proficiencies in writing using The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) writing scores. To further investigate this correlation, four fourth grade classes will be taught the songs and chants to several clapping games with only two classes not participating in the clapping activities throughout the study. Each class will also be asked to complete a pre, mid, and post writing assessment to measure growth when exposed or not exposed to clapping games. It is predicted that the classes taught the clapping games will show greater improvements in writing skills than those classes not exposed to these activities.

Chapter 2: More Than a Clapping Game

IMPORTANCE OF THIS STUDY

Music advocacy groups are constantly stressing the importance of music education across all grade levels and its impact on child development. Campaigns such as the Broader Minded advocacy group in conjunction with the National Association for Music Education have shown music's influence on mental, physical, emotional, and social aspects of development. Research has also shown its influence on other subjects such as mathematics and language. However, much of the music research showing these correlations involves music written by the masters or by adults for students, while very few studies have examined the spontaneous singing games of children and none examining handclapping games specifically (Brodsky and Sulkin 1112).

Having learned handclapping games as a child, I found great pleasure in the skills required to execute them well, especially at a faster tempo. It was from these experiences as a child that I decided to incorporate these games into my own lessons to reinforce tempo. While many of my students have been able to learn and perform these games quickly, others struggled and sometimes never mastered them. When broken down, one can see the complex skills necessary to execute these activities. First there is the ability to maintain a steady pulse; followed by the spatial reasoning necessary to make contact with a partner's hand; next is the ability to cross the midline engaging one's bimanual coordination; and finally, incorporating speech and often times melodies that accompany these movements.

In a recent study, Brodsky and Sulkin examined the correlation between music, specifically handclapping games, and its impact on student achievement, motor skills, and verbal memory. Their results concluded that students who were more skillful at performing handclapping games were more efficient students; were at an advantage in regards to verbal

memory; and benefited more from these activities as opposed to music appreciation classes (1111). This study also took into consideration the research examining the transfer effect; more specifically the near and far transfer effect, where the near transfer effect might involve skills such as learning to play the piano and its correlation with fine motor skills such as handwriting. Whereas the far transfer effect might examine the influence of spontaneous music making on language development and writing skills, skills that are not closely associated with music making.

Unfortunately, there are very few studies that examine the transfer effect in regards to children's natural spontaneous singing games (Brodsky and Sulkin 1113). These songs and chants must serve some sort of evolutionary purpose, as they do appear in most cultures. To help contribute to this area of research, two of my four fourth grade classes engaged in handclapping activities to examine the correlation between a far transfer effect such as writing skills and this specific type of singing game.

CLAPPING GAME EVOLUTION

From this point forward, I will simply refer to handclapping games as clapping games. In many cultures, clapping games are popular among young children especially girls. While their exact purpose is still unknown, researchers have hypothesized that they serve evolutionary purposes in child development with archeological evidence dating them back to ancient Egypt, and documentation of the activity has been found in African, Asian, European, and North American cultures (Brodsky and Sulkin 1129). Today, clapping games still exist on the playgrounds across the world. Curtis noted in her survey of children's playground activities in Keighley, West Yorkshire that clapping games were not only popular among girls whose first

language was English but also by children whose first language was Bangla or Punjabi (421). In fact, these clapping games were played both in English and Punjabi.

Like folk songs, clapping games have survived mainly through an oral tradition, passed on by children on the playground. Their complexity, once the movements are mastered, is part of the appeal to onlookers who will eventually take part in the game and continue this oral tradition. Another appeal of the clapping game lies within the lyrics. Certain songs and chants contain lyrics that may offend adults and teachers making them somewhat taboo yet more enticing (Harwood 6). When teaching one of the songs used in my study, a few girls in almost every class excitedly added the line “kick your boyfriend out of town”. I was aware of this different version but purposely chose not to use it because of its content. Other clapping games contain similar jocular phrases that again, appeal to children.

Because of their folkloric like tradition, clapping games often times evolve, reflecting the present culture. Merrill-Mirsky examined these contemporary versions in three Los Angeles schools in which the old clapping games were often modified in some way, and the new ones were composed using television commercials as a source of inspiration (47). Another study found that one melody had several variations, which then provided nine different clapping games (Curtis 435). In addition to incorporating popular culture, children’s singing games often contain “non-lexical words also known as nonsense words” (Merrill-Mirsky 49). In my study, a few of the songs and chants contained these types of words and phrases such as “Bobo-ski watten totten. Ah-ah ah-ah, boom boom boom”. This song in particular was then expanded upon by one of my students using pop culture and contemporary references and was taught to her by another friend.

It is interesting to note that many of the studies have involved girls, but in my own experiences I have found that the boys in my classes are the ones that request these clapping

games. Harwood notes the trend of clapping games played amongst African American girls and their appeal by using lyrics that encourage shaking and dancing (5). She also noted that older girls tend to stop playing these games once they are passed on and played by younger children. In another study, boys interviewed knew of the clapping games but gravitated towards games of skill and agility, while girls took part in noncompetitive games that required cooperation (Merrill-Mirsky 48).

In contrast to the traditional way that clapping games are taught and viewed on the playground, I teach them in both a cooperative and competitive atmosphere. The process begins cooperatively wherein most cases the students do not know the clapping game, and thus they are partnered with several different students throughout the activity and given time to practice the song once it is somewhat learned as a class. After a short practice period, the competitive aspect is introduced through an elimination game. Students showing competence in both the movements and the singing of the song at a faster tempo progress to the next round until there are only two students left standing. This competitive approach encourages all of my students, especially the boys. The students are then encouraged to practice outside of music class, in which most cases they do, and come back enthused to compete again.

MUSIC, MOVEMENT, AND LANGUAGE

When I first started teaching, one of my first objectives for my first and second graders was to establish the steady beat. We would start off together, but quickly I would listen and watch as the beat got faster and faster until I had to signal to stop. It wasn't until a few workshops later that I learned that each child has his or her own steady beat, and that this beat was typically much faster than the one I was trying to establish. Gerard and Auxiette found that two-thirds of children were able to maintain a steady beat for a short period of time when asked

to clap along with music, but greater success was found in children who were asked to clap and sing a song at the same time (101-102). It appears that humans have an evolutionary advantage when acquiring beat perception. Very few species have the ability to develop vocal learning, and no studies have shown the ability to develop a steady beat in any animal (Patel 100). Like language, children can develop a sense of rhythm through auditory processes; however, when paired with other modes of learning such as visual and kinesthetic means, children develop a stronger sense of beat and rhythm. In a study examining multimodal ways of learning rhythm, Persellin concluded that younger children benefited from a combination of auditory and kinesthetic means of learning (314).

Establishing the steady beat in my students became easier once I learned to first follow each individual child's beat in first grade, and at the same time continuously reinforcing the beat through listening and movement activities. However, I found some of my students to be passive listeners and so this multimodal approach of listening and moving was not enough for these learners. Research has also shown that there is a strong correlation between music, movement, and language. There is a greater increase in phonemic awareness at an early age when paired with music, especially when that music is accompanied by movement such as tapping or clapping the steady beat or emphasizing syllables through body percussion. Gromko studied the effects of music instruction on phonemic awareness in kindergartners and found that children receiving four months of music instruction that included kinesthetic activities as well as visual representation of the beat showed significant gains in "phoneme-segmentation fluency or the ability to codify the sound properties of a spoken word" (206). Another study examining beat synchronization or the ability to tap a steady beat and training in maintaining a steady pulse

showed a possible improvement in phonological awareness and reading (Tierney and Kraus 14985).

One of the main pedagogies that I use in my teaching and also used in this study is the Orff approach. This approach emphasizes the connection between language and movement. Maintaining a steady beat or using body percussion often accompanies rhythmic speech. It is through developing rhythmic fluency in poems and speech coupled with body percussion that children can develop the skills necessary for reading fluency (Mizener 12). If this is the case in regards to reading, then language skills should also be developed through phonemic awareness. Using these acquired skills to rewrite the lyrics of a known clapping would thus fulfill the improvisational and compositional aspect of the Orff approach.

BRAIN PLASTICITY AND THE TRANSFER EFFECT

As mentioned before, Brodsky and Sulkin were interested in the transfer effect when examining clapping games' influence on student achievement, motor skills, and verbal memory. When examining this transfer effect, one has to examine a growing field of study known as brain plasticity. "The concept of brain plasticity implies that the brain is adaptable, and includes all the mechanisms responsible for the brain capacity to change in response to incoming stimulation, our activities and thoughts" (Johansson 50). Through brain imaging, scientists have been able to study the plasticity of the brain and its ability to adapt with some form of internal or external stimuli. More specifically, the musician's brain has been studied, and research has shown that the bimanual motor activity necessary to perform on an instrument can cause changes in brain structure (Johansson 55). For my study, the bimanual motor activity will be the ability to perform clapping games, especially those that involve crossing the midline of the body.

Some evidence has shown that musical training can influence other areas such as language and the ability to distinguish prosody in speech thus demonstrating the transfer effect (Habib and Besson 281). Children appear to have a more adaptable brain, but there appears to be a window for learning and perceiving expressive qualities in speech and music. In another study determining whether or not there is an optimal period for learning and perception, children ages 8-10 showed a decrease in discernment of perceiving expressive qualities compared to six to eight year olds (Heller and Athanasulis 21). However, more research is necessary to determine music's effect on the brain, especially in regards to the transfer effect and subject areas outside of music. Thus, this study examines children's spontaneous singing games and how they can affect writing skills through movement and word prosody.

Chapter 3: Details of the Study & Research Findings

PARTICIPANTS

Participants in this study included four fourth grade classes from Benjamin Franklin Elementary School in Westfield, NJ. The Westfield Public Schools are located approximately twenty-five miles west of New York City, and the town of Westfield is considered to be an affluent area performing well above state averages on the SAT's, ACT's, and PARCC tests. Benjamin Franklin Elementary School is the largest elementary school in the district with 570 students in grades one through five. Class sizes range from 20 to 22 students per class, and each class receives general music instruction for 45 minutes once a week. While research has shown that clapping games are not played as frequently by older children, fourth graders were chosen due to the fact that the majority of them took the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) tests starting in third grade, and these test scores were made available in the following 2015-2016 school year. The correlation of the writing scores from the PARCC tests will be discussed later.

STUDY DESIGN & PROCESS

The study began in January 2016 after the holiday break and commenced after six weeks of implementation. Two fourth grade classes meeting on Mondays were designated as the control group and did not receive instruction that included clapping games, but they still were exposed to the chants and songs of the clapping games without the kinesthetic activity. The other two fourth grade classes were taught all of the clapping games and will be considered the experimental group throughout this study. Song material included "My Landlord", "Double This, Double That", "Lemonade, Crunchy Ice", "Bo-bo Ski Watten Totten", and "Long-legged Sailor".

During week one, students in all four classes reviewed the clapping game “My Landlord” from *120 Singing Games and Dances for Elementary Schools*. This song was taught as a clapping game in third grade, so the students were enthusiastic to perform this known song. However, the controlled groups were instructed to sing the song without performing the clapping game. Using a template (Appendix A) all students were instructed to rewrite the lyrics of “My Landlord” using the rubric below as a guide. Scores from this rubric served as the pre-assessment for each of the classes. Students had prior experience in third grade with rewriting small portions of other songs such as replacing one word with their own but never an entire song. An example of my version of the song was given for the first two lines only. It is interesting to note that some students in the experimental groups were observed performing the clapping games alone as they rewrote the lyrics.

New Lyrics Rubric

	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point
Lyrics rhythmically fit original song.				
Lyrics are mostly different from original song.				
Rhyming words at the ends of phrases.				

As the students completed the assignment, I did offer assistance to those whom struggled with their rewrites. Most common was the question of whether or not a word rhymed. After the students completed this assignment, they were encouraged to share their lyric rewrites with a friend and then with the class. While some of the rewrites did not fit the original song rhythmically when I first read them, the students’ performances of their versions slightly modified the syllables by elongating or truncating certain words.

For the experimental groups, the clapping game that accompanies “My Landlord” was performed and recorded using a Xiaomi Yi 1080p Camera, which is similar to a GoPro Camera. This was positioned above the students to allow a full view of the classroom using the wide-angle perspective. Students were given a chance to practice as a group before the elimination rounds began. After this initial practice round, students were then scored based on their second performance of the clapping game. Scoring was based on the following: (Appendix B)

- Knowledge of the movement sequences.
- Accuracy of movements during the performance.
- Knowledge of lyrics.

Week two of the study began with a simple clapping game called “Double This, Double That”. This game did not involve crossing the midline and consists of three basic moves found in clapping games; clapping one’s own hands, hitting the palms of a partner’s hands directly in front, and then hitting the back of a partner’s hands with the back of their own hands. Again, the controlled groups only learned the chant without the movements. To encourage the spontaneity found in the rewriting of clapping games, students were asked to rewrite only the words “this” and “that”. An example of this would be “ice” and “cream”. Students were allowed to work with a partner during this activity and were then asked to share their new versions with the class.

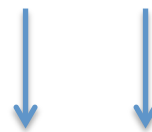
During this second class, students were also taught “Lemonade, Crunchy Ice”. In one of the controlled groups, a few of the girls began performing the clapping motions that accompany the song. They were told that while the song does contain these movements, they would not be learning them that class period. It was quickly becoming apparent to me that the students in the controlled groups were not enjoying the chants and songs as much as the experimental groups. Because of this, I had decided that after the study was finished I would go back and reteach the

games with the movements. However, in the experimental groups, I found the students to be more enthusiastic about the activities including the rewrite activities. Also after viewing the video I noticed that some students struggled more than expected with the clapping movements involved with “Lemonade, Crunchy Ice”. While it does not cross the midline, it does involve both hands starting either palm up or palm down, and then they move either up or down as they make contact with their partner’s hands. The hands then flip over to go the opposite direction. Some students would start in the correct position, but would then end up with both hands facing in the same direction and at the same height.

Fig. 1 Correct Starting Position



Incorrect Starting/Ending Position



During week three, students reviewed “Lemonade, Crunchy Ice” and were asked to rewrite the lyrics of this chant independently. Because many students struggled with the first rewrite of “My Landlord” when only given the first two lines as an example, I decided to include my own version as an example of an entire rewrite of the piece. This was included on the worksheet and served as a guide. Students were instructed not to copy my version, although some did and changed only a few words in their version.

Fig. 2

- Original Version: “Lemonade. Crunchy Ice.”
- Teacher’s Version: “Almond milk. In a bowl.”
- Student’s Version: “Chocolate milk. In a cup.”

Because the students in the experimental groups enjoyed playing the clapping games, time for their rewrites was shortened and was extended into the fourth week.

Week four's clapping game was "Bo-bo Ski Watten Totten", a song that I had introduced into my lessons the previous year. I found that some students with older siblings and friends had already learned this piece and were excited to sing it in class. This clapping game was also the first new one containing a melody, non-lexical words, and involved crossing the midline in several different ways. At the end of the song, students were encouraged to replace the body part mentioned in the song, which was also the body part that they could not use when sung again. For example "please don't show your eyes to me" followed by "please don't show your elbows to me". The controlled group sang the song in this manner as well but without the clapping activity.

Week five began with a review of "Bo-bo Ski Watten Totten" and quickly transitioned into learning "Long-legged Sailor", a clapping game consisting of several verses with contrasting motions for the adjective "long" which then becomes "short", then "bow", etc. This activity was video recorded during the experimental groups' lessons and was used to find the mean value of performance for each student.

The sixth and final week of study concluded with a review of "Long-legged Sailor" and a final rewrite of the song using the same format as "Lemonade, Crunchy Ice". This was also used as the post assessment for all of the classes to see if the presence of clapping games, specifically the kinesthetic mode of learning improved writing skills in the experimental groups. Students were instructed to work independently without the aid of other students and myself.

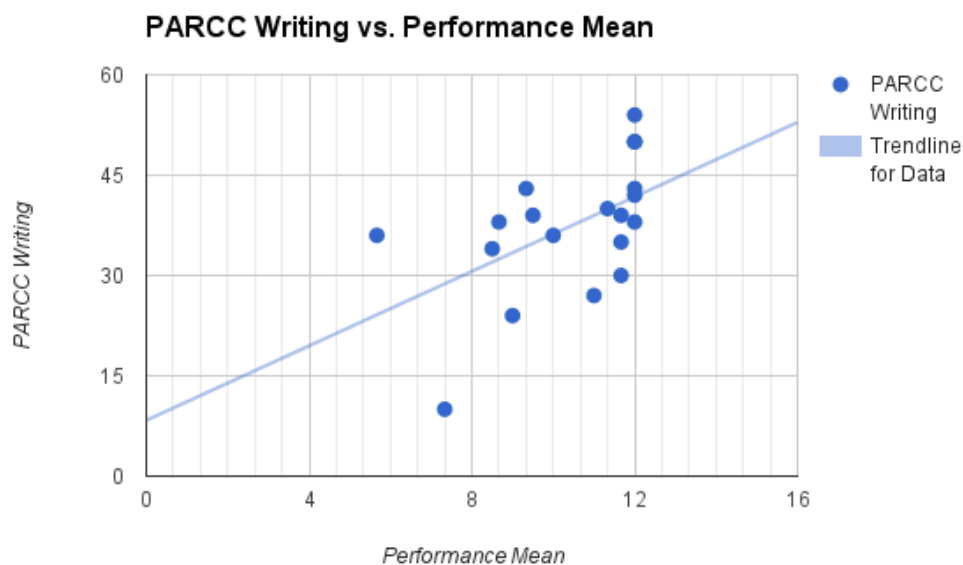
RESULTS OF STUDY 1: PARCC SCORES AND ABILITY TO PERFORM CLAPPING GAMES

The study was broken into two sections. The first being a philosophical study to compare the writing scores from the PARCC test, a standardized test administered in the state of New Jersey, and the ability to perform clapping games. Unfortunately, four of the students do not have

PARCC writing scores, because they were either new to the school and moved from out of state or because they opted out of the test. The latter was an option given to families, because the test was new to the state.

After viewing the video performances for each student, a score was given for three different categories (Appendix B), and a total performance score was calculated. Three different clapping games were used to determine the performance mean for each student. In the following chart for experimental group 4J, many of the students scored very well in the area of clapping performance while PARCC scores varied. There is some evidence showing that students who scored higher on the writing portion of the PARCC test also scored higher than the class performance mean of 10.476. There were also several students who scored well on the writing portion of the PARCC test but fell below the performance mean.

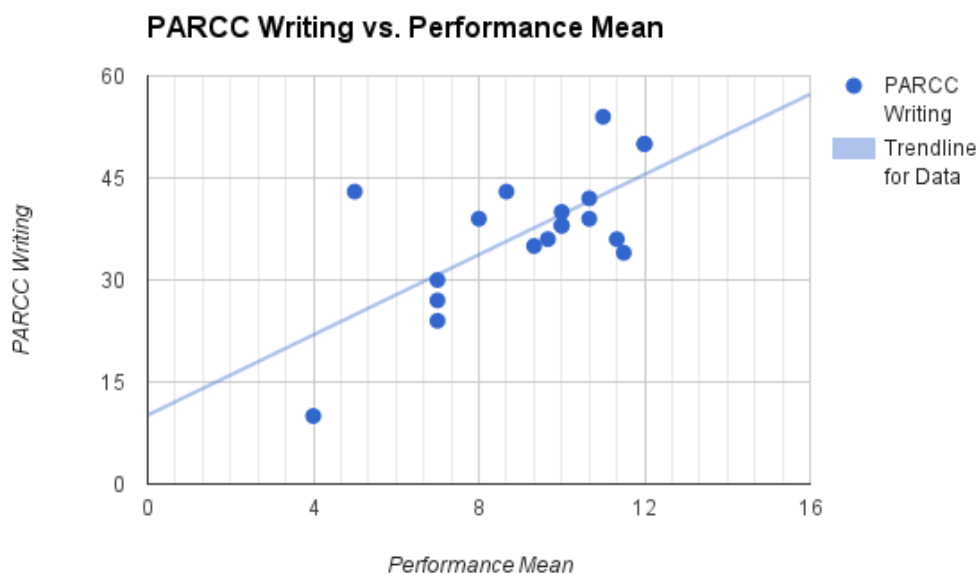
Fig. 3 – 4J PARCC & Performance Chart



In the case of experimental group 4MU, the correlation of PARCC writing scores when compared to clapping performance mean shows a clear trend between the two. While many of

the participants were absent during the second video recording due to a band concert, performance scores were still averaged between the first and third performances. The average performance mean for the entire class was 9.571. Students performing above average on the writing portion also performed above average according to the performance data showing a stronger correlation between the two.

Fig. 4 – 4MU PARCC & Performance Chart



When comparing the two experimental groups, there is a slight variance in the correlating scores of performance and writing. However, both show that the majority of students performing close to or above the performance mean tend to have higher writing scores. The reliability of the PARCC writing scores is questionable though. There are factors that may have contributed to a student's performance on this portion of the test such as technology and time. All students were required to complete the PARCC test electronically including the writing portion. Students were also allotted a specific time complete each portion of the test. With these two factors in mind, students who struggled with typing may not have been able to complete the writing portion, or

put down their thoughts clearly as opposed to the majority of their writing which is done by hand in the classroom. It would be interesting to collect the data from this year's writing portion of the PARCC test and compare it to each student's clapping performance scores since both would reflect the student's current developmental capacity. Again, the writing scores used for this study were from April and May of 2015 and when the students were in third grade.

RESULTS OF STUDY 2: IMPACT OF CLAPPING GAMES ON WRITING SCORES

The empirical study employed involved all four classes, and a pre, mid, and post writing assignment (Appendix A) was used to determine the writing growth percentage. The average of the mid and post assignments were averaged to help determine the final growth score.

The control groups that were not exposed to clapping activities are seen in the first two figures below (figures 5-6). Overall, most of the students in control group 4B (Fig. 5) showed some growth in their rewriting of the lyrics over the course of six weeks. The average growth in this class was 30%. In control group 4C the average growth was 18%, and again most of the students showed some improvement in their lyric rewrites.

Fig. 5 – 4B Writing Growth Percentage

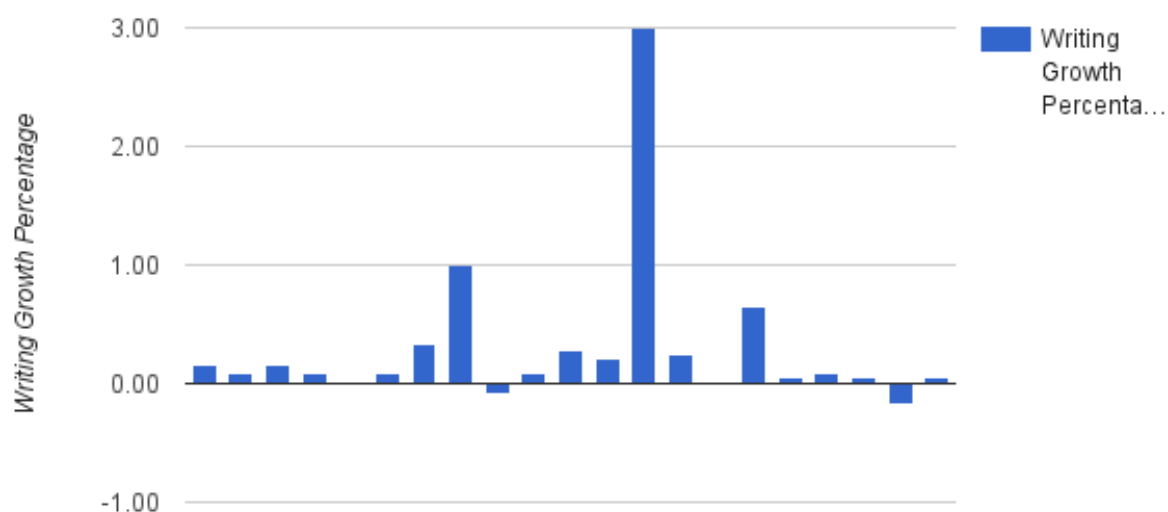
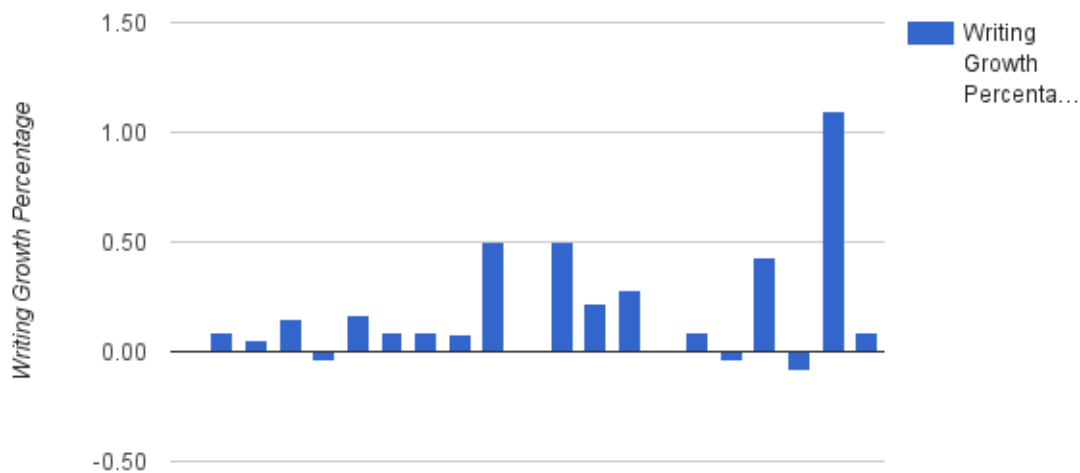


Fig. 6 – 4C Writing Growth Percentage

The experimental groups were given the same writing tasks but were taught the clapping games that accompanied the songs and chants. In figures 7-8, there is a slight contrast between the two classes. In experimental group 4J there was an average of 12% growth, and in experimental group 4MU there was only an average of 2% growth with ten of those students showing a decline in their writing. When compared to the control groups, both of these experimental groups performed below what was expected at the onset of this study. In fact, the experimental groups' growth was less than that of the control groups.

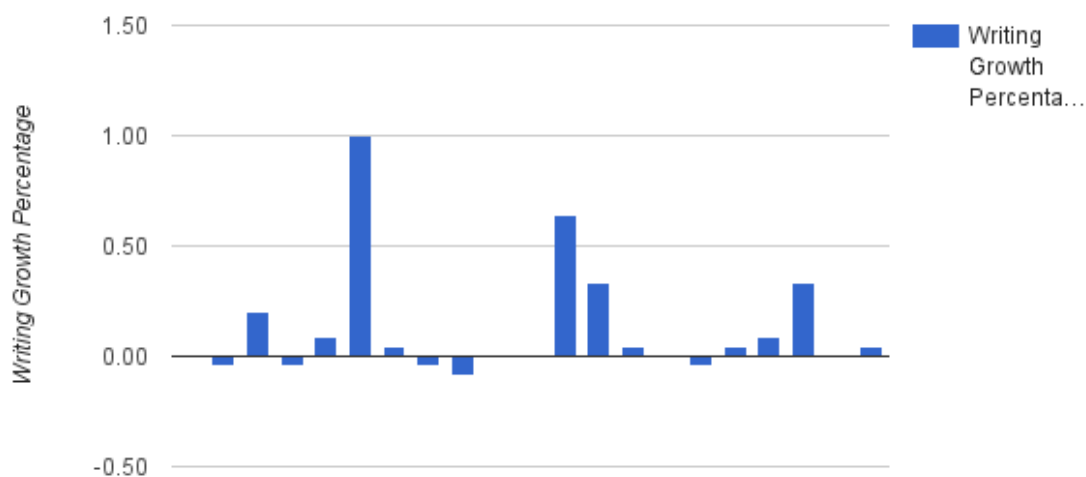
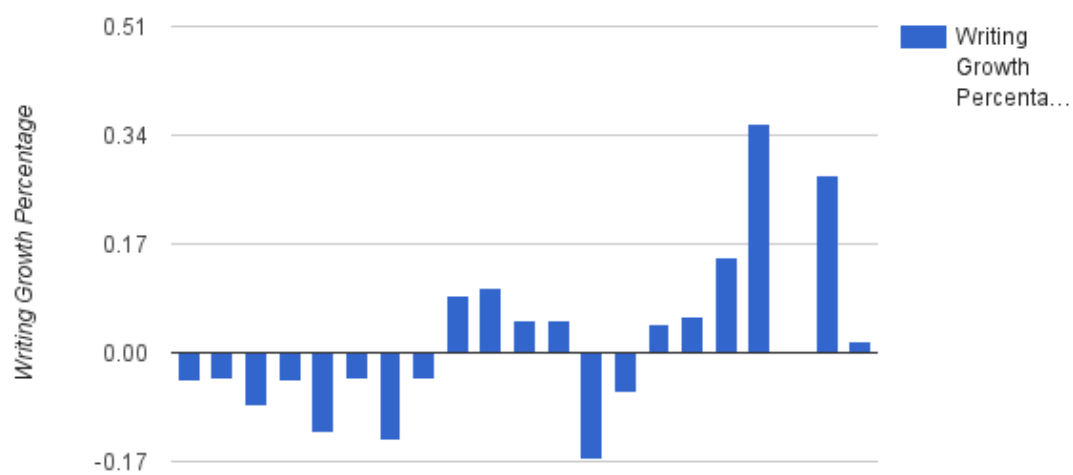
Fig. 7 – 4J Writing Growth Percentage

Fig. 8 – 4MU Writing Growth Percentage

Chapter 4: Conclusion

When questioning why the experimental groups performed below the control groups, I had to look at all aspects of the study from the way it was implemented, to the school's events during each week, to the classroom teachers' experience as a fourth grade teacher. First there is the way that the study was implemented. While all of the classes learned the same chant and song material, the controlled groups had much more time to complete the assignment when compared to the experimental group. Because the process of learning the clapping games was eliminated, both classes gained at least fifteen to twenty more minutes to complete this task. During that time, students would have been able to edit, ask questions, and refine their lyric rewrites. In contrast, the experimental groups were only given between ten to fifteen minutes to complete the assignment. In fact, many students were unable to complete the assignment and were given a short period of time during the next class to finish it. This limited amount of time could have caused the students to work hastily which may be reflected in their lower writing scores.

When looking at experimental group 4MU, there may have been other contributing factors outside of the limited time that would have impacted the lyric rewrites. This class often has four to six students absent at a time due to the rotating band lesson schedule that occurs during this period. Many students missed the learning of the clapping games, came during the middle of the writing assignment, or missed the majority of the class altogether. During the midpoint rewrite, about half of the class was absent due to a band concert and about thirty minutes of a forty-five minute class was spent viewing the concert. This lesson was pushed back a week, so it did cause some disruptions in the consistency of this study. One last factor could have been that four of the students have IEP's for language arts and struggle with reading and

writing. With all of these contributors affecting this class over the course of the six-week study, the lower results seem logical to me.

The classroom teachers in my school are very competent, caring and hardworking individuals. However, there is something to be said about experience. The two controlled groups have veteran teachers that have been teaching fourth grade for a number of years. They're very seasoned and understand the curriculum well. In the case of the experimental groups, both of their teachers are either in their first or second year of teaching fourth grade. One of them was a second grade teacher last year and was new to Franklin School. While I haven't observed their teaching practices within their own classrooms, this may have been a contributing factor.

In the philosophical study, it appeared that the clapping performances correlated with the PARCC writing scores as expected; however, I was hoping to see greater improvement in writing during the empirical study. As stated before, other contributing factors could have influenced these scores. For any future studies using this one as a model, I would suggest allotting more time for the experimental groups to complete the writing task or assigning the writing tasks as homework. Another idea would be to assign a different writing task to all of the students that did not involve rewriting lyrics to a chant or song but instead focused on short narrative. So that the students were comfortable with the lyric rewrites from the start of the study I used a song that they were very familiar with. In fact, they often requested this clapping game at the end of class in third grade and still request it in fourth grade. If the first lyric rewrite would have been an unfamiliar song or chant, then there might have been greater growth among all of the classes.

During the empirical study, I was hoping to find a connection with the far transfer effect. It appears to be inconclusive with the research that has been previously done, but as stated

earlier, there are very few studies involving the spontaneous singing games of children and virtually none examining the transfer effect between these songs and writing skills. Sulkin's study involving the transfer effect focused on student achievement, verbal memory, and motor skills. Using both of these studies, it would be interesting to re-examine the handwriting, overall academic achievement, and verbal memory of my own students to see if it would align with Sulkin's results.

This study has taught me several things about clapping games and writing lyrics. First, my students have always loved clapping games. I begin this activity when I first have them in second grade, and it is one that they continually request each year. Unfortunately, teaching several games within six weeks seemed to dampen the experience. In my research, authors have stated that students enjoy learning these games and practicing them over a period of time. I only gave my students one to two classes for each song to learn several of them. By giving my students several weeks in between each clapping game, I allow them to practice and master the activity so that they feel more competent in the end. Then there was the task of rewriting lyrics. As seen in the experimental group time is a contributing factor. Like a composer or author, students need time to be creative, edit, and share their work. Everyone works at his or her own pace and trying to confine creativity to a short amount of time isn't viable. I did, however, learn that I truly enjoyed the process of this study. It has inspired me to be a life long learner as an educator and to seek out other studies that I would love to explore in my own classroom. Years ago one of my cooperating teachers said that the classroom is a lab and to experiment with my own teaching practices. Even after nine years of teaching, I believe this holds true today, and as music teachers we should explore all of the possibilities that stretch us to be better teachers.

APPENDIX A: Lyric Rewrite Worksheets

My Landlord

1. My landlord rang my front **doorbell**.
2. I let it ring for a long long **spell**.
3. I went to the window. I peeked out the **blind**.
4. I asked that man what was on his **mind**.
5. He said, "money honey, oo-**wee**."
6. He said, "money honey, oo-**wee**."
7. If you want to get along with **me**.
8. If you want to get along with **me**.

Directions: Rewrite the lyrics to "My Landlord" to create a new song with the same melody but different words.

Example: 1. The garbage man came down the street.
 2. The smelly trash smelled like rotten meat.

Title: _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5 & 6. _____

7 & 8. _____

New Lyrics Rubric

	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point
Lyrics rhythmically fit original song.				
Lyrics are mostly different from original song.				
Rhyming words at the ends of phrases.				

Total Score: ____/12

Lemonade, Crunchy Ice

1. Lemonade. Crunchy ice.
2. Sip it once. Sip it twice.
3. Lemonade, crunchy ice, sip it once, sip it twice.
4. Turn around, touch the ground, FREEZE!



Directions: Rewrite the lyrics to “Lemonade, Crunchy Ice” to create a new game with the same chant but different words.

Almond Milk

- Example:*
1. Almond milk. In a bowl.
 2. With a dog. With a mole.
 3. Almond milk, in a bowl. With a dog, with a mole.
 4. Wink an eye, slap your thigh, FREEZE!

Title: _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

New Lyrics Scoring Rubric

	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point
Lyrics rhythmically fit the original chant.				
Lyrics are different from the original chant.				
Similar rhyme scheme.				

Total Score: _____/12

Long-Legged Sailor

1. Have you ever, ever, ever in your long-legged life
2. Seen a long-legged sailor with a long-legged wife?
3. **No, I've** never, ever, ever in my long-legged life
4. Seen a long-legged sailor with a long-legged wife.



Directions: Rewrite the lyrics to “Long-Legged Sailor” to create a new song with the same rhythm but different words.

Yummy Sticky Muffin

- Example:*
1. Will you gobble, gobble, gobble up a yummy sticky muffin
 2. With a yummy sticky turkey, and a yummy sticky stuffin?
 3. **Yes, I'll** gobble, gobble, gobble up a yummy sticky muffin
 4. With a yummy sticky turkey, and a yummy sticky stuffin.

Title: _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

New Lyrics Scoring Rubric

	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point
Lyrics rhythmically fit the original song.				
Lyrics are different from the original song.				
Similar rhyme scheme.				

Total Score: _____/12

APPENDIX B: Clapping Game Performance Rubric

Name: _____		Class: _____		Date: _____
Song Title: _____				
Movement	4	3	2	1
Knowledge of the mov't sequences.	Knows all movements in the correct sequence.	Knows most movements in mostly the correct sequence.	Knows some movements and struggles with the sequence.	Does not know movements or the sequence.
Accuracy of mov't performance.	Performs movements fluently with the correct hands and no errors.	Performs most movements fluently with some hesitation with the correct hand most of the time.	Performance is hesitant (waiting on partner) with some errors.	Performance is very hesitant (may not move) with many errors or gives up.
Language	4	3	2	1
Knowledge of lyrics.	Performs clapping sequence while singing/saying all of the lyrics.	Performs clapping sequence while singing/saying most of the lyrics.	Performs clapping sequence while singing/saying some of the lyrics.	Performs clapping sequence but does not sing/say the lyrics.

APPENDIX C: Writing and Performance Scores

Non-Clapping Rewrite Scores

4B (Non Clapping Game Class)

Song: MY LANDLORD - Rewrite Scores				
	Lyrics Rhythmically fit original song.	Mostly different lyrics.	Rhyme Scheme	TOTAL
1	4	4	2	10
2	3	4	4	11
3	3	4	2	9
4	3	4	4	11
5	3	4	3	10
6	3	4	4	11
7	2	4	3	9
8	3	1	2	6
9	3	4	4	11
10	4	4	3	11
11	3	2	2	7
12	2	4	1	7
13	1	1	1	3
14	3	4	1	8
15	3	4	4	11
16	2	4	1	7
17	4	4	3	11
18	4	4	3	11
19	4	4	3	11
20	4	4	3	11
21	3	4	3	10

4B (Non Clapping Game Class)

Song: LEMONADE - Rewrite Scores				
	Lyrics Rhythmically fit original song.	Mostly different lyrics.	Rhyme Scheme	TOTAL
1	4	4	4	12
2	4	4	4	12
3	4	4	3	11
4	4	4	4	12
5	4	4	4	12
6	4	4	4	12
7	4	4	4	12
8	4	4	4	12
9	4	3	2	9
10	4	4	4	12
11	4	4	3	11
12	4	2	3	9
13	4	4	4	12
14	4	4	3	11
15	4	4	4	12
16	4	4	4	12
17	4	4	4	12
18	4	4	4	12
19	4	3	4	11
20	absent			0
21	4	4	4	12

4B (Non Clapping Game Class)

Song: LONG LEGGED SAILOR - Rewrite Scores

	Lyrics Rhythmically fit original song.	Mostly different lyrics.	Rhyme Scheme	TOTAL
1	3	4	4	11
2	4	4	4	12
3	4	4	2	10
4	4	4	4	12
5	4	4	3	11
6	4	4	4	12
7	4	4	4	12
8	4	4	4	12
9	4	4	3	11
10	4	4	4	12
11	2	4	1	7
12	3	4	1	8
13	4	4	4	12
14	3	4	2	9
15	2	4	4	10
16	3	4	4	11
17	3	4	4	11
18	4	4	4	12
19	4	4	4	12
20	3	4	2	9
21	3	4	2	9

4C - Non Clapping Game Class

Song: MY LANDLORD - Rewrite Scores

	Lyrics Rhythmically fit original song.	Mostly different lyrics.	Rhyme Scheme	TOTAL
1	3	4	1	8
2	4	4	3	11
3	4	4	2	10
4	4	4	2	10
5	4	4	4	12
6	3	3	3	9
7	3	4	4	11
8	3	4	4	11
9	2	3	1	6
10	2	3	1	6
11	4	4	4	12
12	3	3	1	7
13	3	3	3	9
14	4	3	2	9
15	1	4	1	6
16	4	4	3	11
17	4	4	3	11
18	2	4	1	7
19	4	4	4	12
20	2	1	2	5
21	3	4	4	11

4C - Non Clapping Game Class

Song: LEMONADE - Rewrite Scores

	Lyrics Rhythmically fit original song.	Mostly different lyrics.	Rhyme Scheme	TOTAL
1	4	4	2	10
2	4	4	4	12
3	4	4	3	11
4	4	4	3	11
5	4	4	4	12
6	3	4	4	11
7	4	4	4	12
8	4	4	4	12
9	2	3	1	6
10	3	4	3	10
11	4	4	4	12
12	4	3	3	10
13	4	3	3	10
14	4	4	4	12
15	1	2	1	4
16	4	4	4	12
17	4	4	4	12
18	4	3	3	10
19	4	4	3	11
20	4	4	4	12
21	4	4	4	12

4C - Non Clapping Game Class

Song: LONG LEGGED SAILOR - Rewrite Scores

	Lyrics Rhythmically fit original song.	Mostly different lyrics.	Rhyme Scheme	TOTAL
1	2	2	2	6
2	absent			0
3	3	3	4	10
4	4	4	4	12
5	3	4	4	11
6	3	3	4	10
7	4	4	4	12
8	4	4	4	12
9	3	2	2	7
10	2	4	2	8
11	4	4	4	12
12	4	3	4	11
13	4	4	4	12
14	4	4	3	11
15	2	4	2	8
16	4	4	4	12
17	4	3	2	9
18	absent			0
19	3	4	4	11
20	4	4	1	9
21	4	4	4	12

Clapping Game Class's Rewrite & Performance Scores

4J - Clapping Game Class

Song: MY LANDLORD

	Knowledge of the movement sequence	Accuracy of movement performance	Knowledge of Lyrics	Total	Lyrics Rhythmically fit original song.	Mostly different lyrics.	Rhyme Scheme	Total Writing
1	4	4	4	12	3	4	4	11
2	4	3	2	9	4	4	4	12
4	4	3	4	11	3	4	3	10
5	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
6	4	3	4	11	3	4	4	11
7	4	4	4	12	2	2	1	5
8	4	4	4	12	4	4	3	11
9	2	2	4	8	4	4	4	12
10	4	3	4	11	4	4	4	12
11	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
12	3	2	3	8	4	4	4	12
13	2	2	3	7	2	4	1	7
*14	3	2	2	7	3	4	2	9
15	4	3	4	11	4	3	4	11
16	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
17	3	4	3	10	3	4	4	11
18	Absent			0	4	4	3	11
19	4	4	4	12	4	4	3	11
20	4	2	4	10	3	4	2	9
21	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
22	4	4	4	12	3	4	4	11

4J - Clapping Game Class

Song: LEMONADE, CRUNCHY ICE

	Knowledge of the movement sequence	Accuracy of movement performance	Knowledge of Lyrics	Total	Lyrics Rhythmically fit original song.	Mostly different lyrics.	Rhyme Scheme	Total Writing
1	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
2	4	4	4	12	4	4	3	11
4	4	4	4	12	absent			0
5	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
6	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
7	2	2	4	8	4	4	3	11
8	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
9	3	3	3	9	4	4	4	12
10	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
11	4	3	4	11	4	4	4	12
12	3	2	3	8	4	4	4	12
13	3	2	4	9	4	4	4	12
*14	1	1	4	6	absent			0
15	3	2	3	8	4	4	4	12
16	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
17	3	2	4	9	4	4	4	12
18	3	3	4	10	4	4	4	12
19	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
20	3	2	4	9	4	4	4	12
21	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
22	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12

4J - Clapping Game Class

Song: LONG LEGGED SAILOR

	Knowledge of the movement sequence	Accuracy of movement performance	Knowledge of Lyrics	Total	Lyrics Rhythmically fit original song.	Mostly different lyrics.	Rhyme Scheme	Total Writing
1	3	3	4	10	4	2	4	10
2	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
4	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
5	absent			0	3	4	4	11
6	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
7	2	2	3	7	3	4	2	9
8	4	4	4	12	3	4	4	11
9	absent			0	3	4	4	11
10	4	4	4	12	4	3	3	10
11	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
12	3	3	4	10	4	4	4	12
13	2	1	3	6	4	4	3	11
*14	1	1	2	4	4	4	4	12
15	absent			0	4	4	3	11
16	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
17	3	4	4	11	3	3	3	9
18	4	4	4	12	4	4	3	11
19	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
20	3	2	4	9	absent			0
21	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
22	4	4	4	12	4	4	3	11

4MU - Clapping Game Class

Song: MY LANDLORD

	Knowledge of the movement sequence	Accuracy of movement performance	Knowledge of Lyrics	Total	Lyrics Rhythmically fit original song.	Mostly different lyrics.	Rhyme Scheme	Total Writing
1	Absent			0	4	4	3	11
2	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
3	3	3	4	10	4	4	4	12
4	4	3	4	11	4	4	3	11
5	3	2	4	9	4	4	4	12
*6	3	2	4	9	4	4	4	12
7	4	3	4	11	4	4	3	11
8	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
9	4	4	4	12	3	4	4	11
10	2	1	3	6	3	4	3	10
*11	Absent			0				0
12	Missed due to Band.			0	3	4	3	10
13	4	4	4	12	3	4	3	10
14	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
15	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
*16	4	3	4	11	4	4	3	11
17	Missed due to Band.			0	2	4	3	9
18	4	4	4	12	3	4	3	10
*19	2	1	3	6	2	3	2	7
20	4	4	4	12	3	4	4	11
21	3	3	4	10	3	3	3	9

4MU - Clapping Game Class

Song: Lemonade, Crunchy Ice

	Knowledge of the movement sequence	Accuracy of movement performance	Knowledge of Lyrics	Total	Lyrics Rhythmically fit original song.	Mostly different lyrics.	Rhyme Scheme	Total Writing
1	band			0	4	3	3	10
2	3	2	4	9	4	4	4	12
3	4	4	4	12	3	4	4	11
4	2	2	2	6	3	4	4	11
5	3	3	4	10	3	4	4	11
*6	band			0	4	4	4	12
7	4	4	4	12	4	4	3	11
8	band			0	4	4	4	12
9	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
10	3	2	2	7	4	4	4	12
*11	absent			0	absent			0
12	band			0	3	4	3	10
13	3	3	4	10	4	4	4	12
14	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
15	2	2	4	8	4	3.5	4	11.5
*16	4	3	4	11	4	4	4	12
17	band			0	3	4	4	11
18	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
*19	1	1	2	4	2	4	3	9
20	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
21	band			0	4	4	4	12

4MU - Clapping Game Class

Song: LONG LEGGED SAILOR

	Knowledge of the movement sequence	Accuracy of movement performance	Knowledge of Lyrics	Total	Lyrics Rhythmically fit original song.	Mostly different lyrics.	Rhyme Scheme	Total Writing
1	3	3	4	10	4	4	3	11
2	4	3	4	11	4	3	4	11
3	3	3	4	10	4	3	4	11
4	3	3	3	9	4	3	3	10
5	3	2	4	9	4	3	3	10
*6	4	4	4	12	3	4	4	11
7	2	2	3	7	2	3	3	8
8	4	3	4	11	4	3	4	11
9	4	4	4	12	4	4	4	12
10	3	2	3	8	4	4	2	10
*11	3	3	4	10	4	3	2	9
12	1	1	2	4	4	3	4	11
13	4	4	4	12	2	4	3	9
14	band			0	3	3	2	8
15	4	4	4	12	4	3	4	11
*16	3	3	1	7	4	3	4	11
17	2	2	3	7	3	3	2	8
18	4	4	4	12	4	4	3	11
*19	2	1	2	5	4	4	2	10
20	4	4	4	12	3	3	4	10
21	4	4	4	12	4	4	3	11

Total Writing Growth Percentages from All Classes

	Landlord Total	Lemonade Total	Sailor Total	PARCC Writing	Writing Growth Percentage
B1	10	12	11	58	0.15
B2	11	12	12	34	0.09
B3	9	11	10	42	0.17
B4	11	12	12	47	0.09
B5	10	9	11	40	0.00
B6	11	12	12	48	0.09
B7	9	12	12	40	0.33
B8	6	12	12	40	1.00
B9	11	9	11	N/A	-0.09
B10	11	12	12	43	0.09
B11	7	11	7	39	0.29
B12	7	9	8	33	0.21
B13	3	12	12	30	3.00
B14	8	11	9	15	0.25
B15	11	12	10	60	0.00
B16	7	12	11	53	0.64
B17	11	12	11	29	0.05
B18	11	12	12	41	0.09
B19	11	11	12	35	0.05
B20	11	absent	9	42	-0.18
B21	10	12	9	N/A	0.05
				Average Grow	0.30

	Landlord Total	Lemonade Total	Sailor Total	PARCC Writing	Writing Growth Percentage
C1	8	10	6	24	0.00
C2	11	12	absent	43	0.09
C3	10	11	10	45	0.05
C4	10	11	12	50	0.15
C5	12	12	11	54	-0.04
C6	9	11	10	34	0.17
C7	11	12	12	51	0.09
C8	11	12	12	60	0.09
C9	6	6	7	28	0.08
C10	6	10	8	29	0.50
C11	12	12	12	40	0.00
C12	7	10	11	34	0.50
C13	9	10	12	41	0.22
C14	9	12	11	38	0.28
C15	6	4	8	N/A	0.00
C16	11	12	12	36	0.09
C17	11	12	9	40	-0.05
C18	7	10	absent	42	0.43
C19	12	11	11	36	-0.08
C20	5	12	9	34	1.10
C21	11	12	12	43	0.09
				Average Grow	0.18

	Landlord Clapping Total	Landlord Writing Total	Lemonade Clapping Total	Lemonade Writing Total	Sailor Clapping Total	Sailor Writing Total	PARCC Writing	Writing Growth Percentage
J1	12	11	12	12	10	10	40	0.00
J2	9	12	12	11	12	12	N/A	-0.04
J3	11	10	12	absent	12	12	39	0.20
J4	12	12	12	12	0	11	43	-0.04
J5	11	11	12	12	12	12	35	0.09
J6	12	5	8	11	7	9	24	1.00
J7	12	11	12	12	12	11	38	0.05
J8	8	12	9	12	0	11	34	-0.04
J9	11	12	12	12	12	10	N/A	-0.08
J10	12	12	11	12	12	12	30	0.00
J11	8	12	8	12	10	12	38	0.00
J12	7	7	9	12	6	11	10	0.64
J13* IEP	7	9	6	absent	4	12	36	0.33
J14	11	11	8	12	0	11	39	0.05
J15	12	12	12	12	12	12	42	0.00
J16	10	11	9	12	11	9	36	-0.05
J17	0	11	10	12	12	11	27	0.05
J18	12	11	12	12	12	12	50	0.09
J19	10	9	9	12	9	absent	43	0.33
J20	12	12	12	12	12	12	50	0.00
J21	12	11	12	12	12	11	54	0.05
							Average Grow	0.12

	Landlord Clapping Total	Landlord Writing Total	Lemonade Clapping Total	Lemonade Writing Total	Sailor Clapping Total	Sailor Writing Total	PARCC Writing	Writing Growth Percentage
M1	0	11	0	10	10	11	34	-0.05
M2	12	12	9	12	11	11	47	-0.04
M3	10	12	12	11	10	11	42	-0.08
M4	11	11	6	11	9	10	34	-0.05
M5	9	12	10	11	9	10	47	-0.13
M6* IEP	9	12	0	12	12	11	35	-0.04
M7	11	11	12	11	7	8	44	-0.14
M8	12	12	0	12	11	11	36	-0.04
M9	12	11	12	12	12	12	49	0.09
M10	6	10	7	12	8	10	36	0.10
M11* IEP	0	absent	0	absent	10	9	41	
M12	0	10	0	10	4	11	38	0.05
M13	12	10	10	12	12	9	15	0.05
M14	12	12	12	12	0	8	43	-0.17
M15	12	12	8	11.5	12	11	42	-0.06
M16* IEP	11	11	11	12	7	11	24	0.05
M17	0	9	0	11	7	8	30	0.06
M18	12	10	12	12	12	11	30	0.15
M19* IEP	6	7	4	9	5	10	35	0.36
M20	12	11	12	12	12	10	42	0.00
M21	10	9	0	12	12	11	24	0.28
							Average Grow	0.02

APPENDIX D: Lesson Timeline

Week 1 – Video Tape

Song	Non-Handclapping Classes	Handclapping Classes
“My Landlord” (source)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rewrite lyrics independently using template. - Share in class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perform clapping game to song. - Rewrite lyrics independently using template. - Share with friend. - Perform in class.

Week 2 – Video Tape

Song	Non-Handclapping Classes	Handclapping Classes
“Double This, Double That” “Lemonade, Crunchy Ice” (non-midline crossing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learn chant/song without clapping game. - Rewrite “this/that”. i.e. “ice/cream”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learn “Double This, Double That” clapping game as a warm-up. - Rewrite “this/that”. i.e. “ice/cream”. Share. - Learn “Lemonade, Crunchy Ice” clapping game.

Week 3

Song	Non-Handclapping Classes	Handclapping Classes
“Lemonade, Crunchy Ice” (non-midline crossing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rewrite lyrics independently using template. - Share with friend. - Perform in class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review “Lemonade, Crunchy Ice” clapping game. - Rewrite lyrics independently using template. - Share with friend. - Perform in class.

Week 4

Song	Non-Handclapping Classes	Handclapping Classes
“Bo-bo Ski Watten Totten”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learn chant/song without clapping game. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learn “Bo-bo Ski Watten Totten” clapping game. - Improvise verbally next body part in sequence.

Week 5 – Video Tape

Song	Non-Handclapping Classes	Handclapping Classes
“Bo-bo Ski Watten Totten” “Long-legged Sailor”	- Learn chant/song without clapping game.	- Review “Bo-bo Ski Watten Totten” clapping game. - Learn “Long-legged Sailor” clapping game.

Week 6

Song	Non-Handclapping Classes	Handclapping Classes
“Long-legged Sailor”	- Review “Long-legged Sailor” without clapping game. - Rewrite lyrics independently using template. - Share in class.	- Review “Long-legged Sailor” clapping game. - Rewrite lyrics independently using template. - Share in class.

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