

Rhythm and Song

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Author Note:

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Introduction

Yá'át'ééh, Florisa Peshlakai yinishyé. Tódich'ii'nii nishłı́. Dibéłzhíní báhshishchíín. Honágháahnii dashicheii. Naakai Diné dashinalí. Hello, my English name is Florisa Peshlakai, and my Navajo name is "the girl with the long hair." I am Navajo and of the Bitterwater People clan born for the Black Sheep People. My maternal grandparent's clan is of the One-Walks-Around clan, and my paternal grandparent's clan is the Mexican People clan. I was born in Tuba City, Arizona, and raised in Black Mesa, Arizona. My mother's family is from Black Mesa, Arizona, and my father's family is from Navajo, New Mexico. I currently reside in Page, Arizona, where I teach preschool at Page Unified School District; I have taught here since 2015. I graduated from Monument Valley High School in 2011. I received my Bachelor of Psychological Sciences in 2015 and my Master of Education in 2017 from Northern Arizona University. This is my second year as part of the Indigenous Early Childhood Educators Professional Development Fellowship. At the young age of 5, my father died. Therefore, I was raised by various mother figures, which included my grandmother, aunts, and my eldest sister. Of my mother's nine children, I am the third youngest. I am now a mother to an eight-year-old. Additionally, I am an aunt to ten nieces and nephews. I hope my paper provides some background information and can be a resource in your classroom.

Context

Classroom Demographic

Page Preschool is part of the Page Unified School District in Page, Arizona. The school district population is about 90% Native American (the majority are Navajo) students. The city is located on the border of the Navajo Reservation. A few nearby Navajo communities are Lechee, Coppermine, Bitter Springs, Marble Canyon, and Kaibeto. Some students travel on the bus to school; the longest bus ride is over an hour away.

Page Preschool is one of many preschool programs in Page. There are several church-affiliated preschools and one Head Start program. Head Start is free to low-income families; therefore, their program is usually one to fill up quickly. Page Preschool is not free to all; Quality First does offer scholarships to our students who qualify.

The students at Page Preschool are mostly Navajo students (approximately 90%). The preschool program is an inclusive preschool program, so many students are on Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Page Preschool is a high-quality four-star rated Quality First program. The preschool program is play-based, meaning students are seen learning through play, where they acquire more language and vocabulary that is meaningful to the learners. The preschool program operates four days out of the week, and the staff has one working day a week to prepare, sanitize, and attend any needed professional development training.

Currently, we have five open classrooms with some half-day students (3-year-olds) and full-day students (those headed to kindergarten). Each classroom has at least one paraprofessional to assist the Teacher. The classrooms vary in class size from twelve to eighteen students; my classroom has eighteen students and two paraprofessionals. Our preschool program also has one outdoor classroom setting, which we utilize on a rotating basis.

Rationale

One of my fondest memories is of me singing along with my late grandmother. I do not recall the lyrics nowadays, but when I hear the song's tune, I vaguely recall the lyrics and cadence. I also remember learning some songs at Navajo Head Start, a preschool program located on the Navajo Reservation. The songs from preschool were not traditional Navajo songs; instead, they were songs about a dog, and the other was about herding sheep. I also recall listening to KTNN (a Navajo radio program) with my grandmother. She would be cooking breakfast before the sun rose; I would hear the sound of her shredding potatoes and boiling coffee with the sounds from the radio echoing through the living area. There would be Navajo Song and Dance songs and Navajo gospel songs, and the news would be delivered in the Navajo language on the radio station. As a young preschooler, I did not know much about what was being said on the radio, but I would get a general idea because my grandmother spoke only Navajo. I was often fascinated by the drumming, or the light guitar being played with the Navajo songs; it would often feel comforting.

Some Navajo language contributors (2019) found that the 2015 census reported that 170,000 enrolled Navajos spoke the language. Today, the language is not heard or used often in my daily life. Sheilah Nicholas (States News Service, 2019) reported that immersing our young learners in their native language would show exponential growth in our language preservation. I decided to do the lessons centered around rhythm and songs because the Navajo culture has countless songs that many are gatekeeping or not being taught at any age level. Singing is a hands-on, engaging experience that teaches skills like patterning, counting, and increasing language skills using the mind and body. Our students learn other songs in English so easily that one can imagine how quickly they may learn a song in their native language. Furthermore, learning one Navajo language song could motivate the families and children to want to learn and know more. Nowadays, social media platforms feature many Navajo singing artists. Often, viewers have a diverse response to the performance. Some will praise the singer, and some criticize the performer; others will skip on by. I found myself in a position where I would "listen" to only the well-known performers, making my viewpoint slightly biased. I was biased in my viewpoint because I did not listen to the stories in the songs; I did not really appreciate the art form that many try to identify with. When I recognized my own downfall, I immediately started looking for resources to try to learn some songs for my preschoolers. I enrolled in the *Phoenix Indian Center's* Zoom sessions to learn a few songs during the wintertime. Some songs were more challenging for me to learn, but I also had to consider that I have not spoken much Navajo since my grandmother passed in 2018. Some songs were also long, which made me consider the length for my preschoolers to learn. I felt the more repetitive songs would inspire them to be more successful with learning.

Topic Summary

Self-Identity

Singing is a form of art. Singing is used to tell stories, reinforce cultural knowledge, and is used to bless one's self and our environment. The Navajo culture is centered around our environment, highlighting the importance of our Mother Earth and Father Sky. Additionally, the Navajo culture is big on self-identity. Our identity is known through our family lineage and our clanship relationships. The students will learn the importance of our environment and increase their self-identity through songs. The increase in self-identity is significant because it would also increase the student's self-esteem and confidence (Pulido-Tobiassen and Gonzalez-Mena, 1999). Building self-identity is crucial in building a community in the classroom because it makes the students feel like they belong and have a role. This would then translate into their home community acknowledging that they have a culture that is unique to others and an important role in helping to revitalize the language and culture.

With this curriculum unit, the students will see others alike in stories and hear their traditional language firsthand, allowing them to feel comfortable expressing themselves in other outlets such as dramatic play or drawing of themselves in the art center. In this way, the students will also increase their self-awareness of recognizing they are teachers. Self-awareness is as crucial as self-identity. Self-awareness teaches young people to recognize their strengths and weaknesses and judge their character (Improving Your Child's Self-Awareness Skills, n.d.). Using the language would increase the students' vocabulary, sentence structures, and cognitive skills to recall information. I hope the students will learn at least one song entirely in Navajo so they can feel confident in learning other words and phrases. They can also teach their family, which would give the students the confidence to express themselves in a new healthy way.

Songs and language of a Diné

Navajo culture is centered around our Four Sacred Mountains. The mountains are Mount Blanca (east; representing thinking), Mount Taylor (south; representing planning), San Francisco Peak (west; representing life), and Mount Hesperus (north; representing reflection). These four mountains represent our stages of life from birth to death (the circle of life). Additionally, each mountain is represented by a color. We have a white shell, turquoise shell, abalone shell, and obsidian or black jet shell (Navajo Sacred Mountains).

These mountains are essential in Navajo culture because they all teach how our tongue and language hold power over us beings. Elders often remind the young ones to watch what they say because it could become true. In this manner, we are encouraged to speak of only good things we would like to bless ourselves with; saying anything negative about ourselves and others would bring bad things into our lives. Songs to a Diné (Navajo) is an outlet for storytelling, and it is used to bring peace and understanding to those needing healing. Therefore, singing songs brings us harmony and builds a connection to our environment.

Before the era of mass technology, the Navajo people spoke to tell the history and educate the young on the path in life. Oral history was the main source of maintaining our cultural identity. In this manner, the elders could teach cultural practices, songs, prayers, and taboos. When our culture became modernized, there are now some media forms that tell our stories, like the Coyote stories that are now on *Youtube* or *Tiktok*, and we have many young writers who want to connect

with our young learners. Because Navajo was an oral language and not a written one, there are a few problems with the translation process. Webster (2013) brought up a point of examining how the use of phonological iconicity and punning are important when interpreting Navajo verbal art (poetry, lyrics, storytelling) due to its presentational features and voice. When translating Navajo verbal art, the Navajo language is not straightforward like English. Navajo is more descriptive, and when there is no "word" for the English translation, the Navajo language often leaves interpretation up to the listeners or, in some instances, the readers.

Boarding Schools

Four years before the Treaty of 1968, Navajos endured four years of slavery at Fort Sumner, where Kit Carson and his army attempted to eradicate the Navajo people from inhabiting the land and using resources (Sells, 2020). At this time, Kit Carson had killed or starved many Navajo people and leaders. His mass murder did not stop at the people; he continued to kill the livestock the Navajo people owned while also destroying fields of growing crops in the area. For the Navajo people to be released from the Long Walk, they had to agree with the United States Government. During this time, the Treaty of 1868 was signed. Part of the treaty told the Navajo people to send their children off to boarding schools. The Native American children were assimilated at the residential schools by having their long sacred hair cut short or shaved. Their clothing style was quickly changed, and their Navajo names were instantly changed to an English names like John or Sara. Residential schools were not the school system that we are familiar with today. Residential schools at this time were rough and abusive. The school did not allow children to practice their language or culture; students were often disciplined harshly if they were caught doing any of these cultural practices (Austen, 2021). Children repeatedly attempted to flee home but were caught and brought back or never found. Recently, some historic residential school sites have been investigated, and thousands of unnamed graves have been found (Austen, 2021). The traumas associated with residential schools contribute to a large portion of why the traditional culture is struggling to be revitalized.

I know my mother attended a residential school when she was young. Growing up, she often would tell little stories of her school days but would not speak in great detail. A few of our conversations included that she attended a school in California and was not allowed to go home on breaks or holidays; she was fostered by a White family who had her baptized as a Catholic though she does not participate in the religion. My mom only attended school up to the eighth grade because she did not want to be away from her parents any longer; she was homesick and had no idea how the family was doing.

What Cultural Revitalization Looks Like in the Classroom?

As stated before, our Navajo language and culture are not being spoken or taught enough. The first step to revitalizing the culture would be introducing the students to the culture and language, which should plant the seed of curiosity in the students. Teaching the language and culture in the play-based classroom allows the students to act out what they are learning in a safe and creative environment. This way, the students will increase their curiosity and recognize there is more to our culture than what is expressed by the media and very little that they are exposed to. Secondly, families would partner with the Teacher in the learning process. Partnering with the families plays a vital role as an educator. I feel social media and other technology usages have

hindered families' ability to teach our young ones language and vocabulary. In today's society, it has become the norm to put a phone or tablet in front of the young as we pass the time at the grocery shop while waiting or traveling. Though indulging in technology is not bad, I do notice it has lessened our time spent teaching our young ones vocabulary and conversational models.

With a partnership between the home and the school, I can see the process motivating our families to seek teaching opportunities. Sells (2020) did a study in Rough Rock, Arizona, where the study's underlying results were evident in homes where the families were trying to preserve the Navajo language and culture. Therefore, the most important step is to partner with the families in the teaching process. This would increase the family's knowledge and confidence in using the Navajo language at home, especially when counting and labeling household items. Additionally, teachers play an important role in introducing cultural topics and language to the students, increasing the students' self-identity, and building school and home relationships.

Alignment with Standards

The standards in this unit are from the Arizona Early Learning Standards. The activities will each have their own standards they will meet, but a general overall theme will include the following: (a) social-emotional standard 1.1 self-awareness; (b) approaches to learning 1.2 curiosity; (c) language and literacy 1.1 receptive language understanding; (d) math 2.2 patternings; (e) science 1.1 exploration, observations, and hypothesis; (f) social studies 2.2 rights, responsibilities, and roles within the community; and (g) fine arts 1.1 improvises and connects with visual arts.

Social-Emotional

Students will recognize their culture in the lessons and increase their self-awareness with their peers. Students will see their family as a resource to ask questions and continue some language usage with them. Students will use their clans as an extension of their identity, and they will use the song as a self-affirmation that they are important beings on Mother Earth protected by our four sacred mountains.

Approaches to Learning

Students will show curiosity as they ask questions about the unit. Students will feel safe exploring the language and practicing the language daily. Students will want to learn about the drum and attempt to make their Navajo cadence or songs during play with peers.

Language and Literacy

The students will increase their language skills in both English and Navajo as they sing songs daily. The students will begin to improve their vocabulary usage from our unit. Using their senses, the students will hear what is being said and be able to state the word or phrase to the Teacher.

Math

As the students drum, the students will recognize patterns, learn to count, and begin to understand symmetrical patterns in the drum designs. As the students start to recognize patterns,

they can create their own sound patterns. In this unit, the students will learn to count to 10 in Navajo and in English.

Science

In science, the students will use their senses to connect with the patterns of the drum. The students will use their prior knowledge to make judgements about what would happen to the vibrations of the water as one drum, and the students will learn about the environment around them as we discuss the four cardinal directions and their importance to the Navajo people.

Social Studies

Rights, roles, and responsibilities within a community are vital to this unit because it requires the teachers, students, and families to connect to share what they know and to ensure the songs and language cards can be used at home. It inspires the families to want to teach the language and culture at home, even if it is not a lesson in this unit.

Fine Arts

Improvises and connecting with visual arts will be used in the unit because it asks the students to make their own hand drums using a few oddities found in the classroom. The students will also be asked to drum, which requires a drumstick; if there are none available to use in the classroom, the students will have to make one or improvise with classroom items. The students will also engage in fine arts while singing or drumming for the lessons in the unit. Using their senses, they can sing along to finger-play songs, memorize chants, and sound patterns to a drum.

Teaching Strategies

The lessons will follow a holistic approach. Holistic education supports the student's development socially, emotionally, ethically, spiritually, and academically (What is Holistic Education?, 2020). This approach is beneficial, especially in this curriculum, because it allows students to look at their community and think critically about what they can learn. Furthermore, the Teacher will provide several different opportunities for the students to digest their new learning in various ways. This will enhance the relationship between the student, the Teacher, and the community.

A few teaching methods used in the curriculum unit are pre-planned lessons, initial open-ended discussions, and experiential learning, allowing the students to do hands-on learning. The unit is about singing and rhythm, requiring the students to learn the song, sing the song, use their hands for finger plays, and become familiar with the drum. The group discussions would allow the students to reflect on their knowledge and apply it to our lessons. An example of this would be, recognizing that songs they hear on the radio have a chorus (a repeated verse), just like the song they will be learning.

Whole Group Instruction

Whole group instruction would happen during circle time, where the students would read and introduce the topic and then be introduced to everyone simultaneously. At this point, the Teacher would build the background knowledge to the lesson and introduce the new vocabulary. Whole group instruction benefits the students by allowing them to reflect on the new topic before diving into the small group lesson. I will use some teaching strategies: read-aloud, total physical response (TCP), guest speakers, movement, and asking open-ended questions to elicit discussions. Reading aloud would inspire the students to use books to seek information and connect it back to their daily lives. Total physical response (TCP) teaches the students vocabulary words with movement. While using TCP, the first part is having the students only do the actions while the Teacher models both the vocabulary and the action. After several repetitions, the Teacher would mix the vocabulary terms at random without prompting the students with the actions. Guest speakers show the students that there are community members who are like them and hold important knowledge they can aspire to know more about. Some guest speakers are pow-wow dancers, drum groups, and community helpers. Open-ended questions can happen anytime during the day, allowing deep, meaningful conversations and incorporations of new vocabulary terms.

Small Group Instruction

Small group instruction would happen shortly after circle time, where the students could dive more in-depth into the new topic. At this time, the Teacher would have the students break into small groups with the help of a teacher and a paraprofessional so they can complete one of the lessons. This is an important factor because it allows the students to work hands-on. Additionally, it would enable the students to ask questions to understand the topic better and increase their language and listening skills. I would use a few small group strategies: hands-on play, modeling, sign language, memory games, and STEM activities. The hands-on play would happen during center time, where the Teacher turns the centers into meaningful play activities. Like turning the dramatic play center into a hogan with some tools to make fry bread or putting drums in the literacy center so the students can drum and sing. Modeling allows the students to see what the Teacher expects them to learn and follow along, like an "I do, you do." Sign language incorporates new terms with an attached action so the students can learn new words. Memory games can be done in small groups because they can be done effectively and would have the students learn to solve problems and work actively together. STEM activities can be done any time during the school day, like incorporating new science experiments to build on the students' curiosity and creativity.

Family Engagement

Family engagement would happen on Seesaw (an app that the Page Preschool uses for distant learning) and with flashcards brought home. Also, handouts on the importance of reading and speaking (especially the Navajo language) are tremendously beneficial to the young child. These family engagement activities are meant to provide families with the support and confidence to continue the teaching process at home. These family engagement activities are not meant to hinder or diminish the family's knowledge. The preschool also incorporates a family night in our units, and this family night would be a family feast where the families bring a traditional family dish to share. This would show the students that we are all similar in holding family traditions (even if they are not Navajo) and allow families to bond and connect.

Student Assessment Plan

This assessment is an introductory unit to Navajo songs and rhythms; therefore, students are not required to be proficient in singing the songs. The students are expected to be familiar with patterns and syllables, make a hypothesis, and contribute to a discussion following a pre-assessment or formative assessment type. Page Unified Preschool uses *Teaching Strategies GOLD* for their assessment data, so each assessment would require an observation piece and what standards it would apply to on *Teaching Strategies GOLD*. In the appendix, I have included a checklist of my observation checklists for my classroom. Teachers may use them if their school uses *Teaching Strategies GOLD* as well. Otherwise, they can cater the list to their school's reporting method.

| Learning Goal | Assessment | Assessment Format |
|---|----------------|---|
| Morning Question Objective: The students will be able to answer a question using four or more words with increasing vocabulary and sentence structure. | Pre-assessment | Observation: <i>Teaching Strategies GOLD</i> checklist. Goal: The ability to use and understand new vocabulary terms. |
| Song: The Four Sacred Mountain Song Objective: The students will be able to participate in singing the song in the Navajo language. | Pre-assessment | Observation: Teaching Strategies GOLD checklist or video recording Goal: The ability to learn Navajo terms and sentence structure. |
| Song: Baby Shark (Navajo) Objective: The students will be able to sing and do the finger play to Baby Shark in Navajo. | Pre-assessment | Observation: Teaching Strategies GOLD checklist or video recording Goal: The ability to recall Navajo vocabulary terms with actions. |
| Song: Go My Son (hand motions) Objective: The students will be able to sing and follow hand motions to the song Go My Son. | Pre-assessment | Observation: Teaching Strategies GOLD checklist or video recording Goal: The ability to listen and follow two-step or multiple-step directions to recall a song. |

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| <p>Drumming to the Music Objective: The students will use a drum independently and sing a song, with 3 out of 4 done in tune with one another.</p> | <p>Assessment</p> | <p>Observation: Teaching Strategies GOLD checklist or video recording Goal: The ability to listen to a drum and create a meaningful song while working together.</p> |
| <p>Syllables with the Drum Objective: Using the drum, the students will count out syllables to new vocabulary words they have learned in the unit with 80% accuracy.</p> | <p>Formative</p> | <p>Observation: Teaching Strategies GOLD checklist or video recording Goal: The ability to use a drum to distinguish syllables.</p> |
| <p>Drum Making Objective: The students will be able to follow a recipe with 80% accuracy to make a drum.</p> | <p>Pre-assessment</p> | <p>Observation: Teaching Strategies GOLD checklist or video recording Goal: The ability to follow multi-step directions to create a drum.</p> |
| <p>Vibrations in the water (science experiment) Objective: The students will discuss their findings of the science experiment using a complete sentence.</p> | <p>Assessment</p> | <p>Observation: Teaching Strategies GOLD checklist or video recording Goal: The ability to create a hypothesis and test it to understand water and sound waves.</p> |
| <p>Flash cards to Four Sacred Mountains Objective: With 80% accuracy, the students will begin to memorize the four sacred mountains in Navajo.</p> | <p>Pre-assessment</p> | <p>Observation: Teaching Strategies GOLD checklist or video recording Goal: The ability to recall the names of the four sacred mountains.</p> |
| <p>Memory Game of Navajo Numbers 1 - 10</p> | <p>Assessment</p> | <p>Observation: Teaching Strategies GOLD checklist or video recording</p> |

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|--|----------------|---|
| Objective: The students will be able to play a memory game with 80% accuracy. | | Goal: The ability to play a memory game with their peers while gaining new vocabulary terms. |
| Scaffolding Literacy with Flute Music Objective: The students will be able to follow multiple-step directions of drawing using a three-point grip. | Assessment | Observation: Teaching Strategies GOLD checklist or video recording Goal: The ability to practice fine motor movements while following multi-step directions. |
| Four cardinal directions - TPR sequence Objective: The students will follow the gestures from the teacher as she points and says the four cardinal directions in Navajo. | Pre-Assessment | Observation: Teaching Strategies GOLD checklist or video recording Goal: The ability to learn new vocabulary terms in Navajo using TPR sequence. |
| Squishy Book for Navajo Colors - Feely Book Objective: The students will find various colors of items around the classroom or environment to make a Navajo color squishy book. | Pre-Assessment | Observation: Teaching Strategies GOLD checklist or video recording Goal: The ability to learn the colors in the Navajo language. |
| Read aloud: The Four Sacred Mountain Song (Figure 8 appendix) Objective: The students will be able to echo the book with the teacher, recognizing the song pattern as they sing/read. | Pre-Assessment | Observation: Teaching Strategies GOLD checklist or video recording Goal: The ability to recognize predictable texts and engage in reading. |

Classroom Activities

Morning Questions

Objective: The students will be able to answer a question using four or more words with increasing vocabulary and sentence structure.

Standards:

- LL1.1 The child demonstrates an understanding of directions, stories, conversations, and nonverbal cues.
- LL1.2 The child uses verbal and nonverbal communication for a variety of purposes; to share observations, ideas, and experiences, problem-solve, reason, predict, seek new information, and make connections.
- LL1.3 The child understands and uses increasingly complex vocabulary.

Materials:

- Pocket chart or velcro chart
- Yes, No response label cards
- Student names
- Printed questions (Figure 1 Appendix)

Directions:

Every day of the unit, the students will be asked to answer one of the following morning's questions about songs and Navajo culture. In my class, the question is asked first upon arrival after greeting the students. After reading the question to the student, the student places their name next to their response. I then ask an extended question to elicit language and build vocabulary.

Morning Questions the students will be asked:

- Have you seen a hand drum before? Attach a photo of a hand drum next to the question.
- Do you know someone who sings songs?
- Do you like to sing?
- Have you heard a flute before? Attach a photo of a flute next to the question.

Song: The Four Sacred Mountain Song

Objective: The students will be able to participate in singing the song in the Navajo language.

Standards:

- SS1.1c Describes/discusses own cultural or familial traditions
- SS1.1e Develops an awareness of their personal and family history
- SS2.3 The child demonstrates awareness of locations within and around their community and of the environment
- LL1.1a Engages actively in finger-plays, rhymes, chants, songs, poems, conversations, and stories
- FA2.1b Sings to familiar rhymes, songs, and chants
- FA3.1 Creates and connects with creative movement and dance
- FA2.1a Experiments with a variety of instruments, vocalizations, sounds

- FA2.1d Responds to different styles of music and music representative of a variety of cultures

Materials:

- Song sheet (figure 2 appendix)
- Hand drum (optional; this should be used later when students are familiar with the song)
- Pictures of the four sacred mountains in a clockwise visual representation (figure 3 appendix)

During whole group instruction, the students will be introduced to the song a few lines at a time until they can comfortably sing it with an adult's help. As stated above, do not use a drum or any instrument until the students are familiar with the lyrics. While singing the song, point to the mountain the students are singing about so they make a connection with the cardinal directions and the Navajo terminology.

Song: Baby Shark (Navajo)

Objective: The students will be able to sing and do the finger play to Baby Shark in Navajo.

Standards:

- LL1.1a Engages actively in finger-plays, rhymes, chants, and songs, poems, conversations, and stories
- LL1.1b Demonstrates understanding and follows directions that involve one step, two steps, or multiple steps
- FA2.1b Sings to familiar rhymes, songs, and chants
- FA3.1 Creates and connects with creative movement and dance

Materials:

- YouTube - Baby shark in Navajo
<https://youtu.be/aG11LytdDU>
- Flash cards or cards with the Navajo picture and the Navajo word for a few of the words in the song (figure 4 appendix)

The Teacher will play the video, and the students will follow the Teacher's hand movements to the song. The Teacher will inform the students of some of the Navajo vocabulary words in the song. Some words would be grandma, grandpa, shark, mom, dad, and baby. Over time, the students will begin to develop an awareness of the lyrics with the Teacher by attempting to sing the song themselves.

Song: Go My Son (hand motions)

Objective: The students will be able to sing and follow hand motions to the song Go My Son.

Standards:

- LL1.1a Engages actively in finger-plays, rhymes, chants, songs, poems, conversations, and stories
- LL1.1b Demonstrates understanding and follows directions that involve one step, two steps, or multiple steps
- ATL2.1b Sustains attention when engaged in an age-appropriate activity
- ATL1.2a Shows interest in learning new things and trying new experiences
- FA2.1b Sings to familiar rhymes, songs, and chants
- FA3.1 Creates and connects with creative movement and dance

Materials:

- Lyrics to the song Go My Son
- Go My Son song
- Video of Go My Son <https://youtu.be/cHRyQs1luVc>

The Teacher will tell the students the song's meaning by going over the lyrics one line at a time or pausing the music one line at a time to discuss the meaning of the lyrics as a whole group. Afterward, the Teacher will play the Go My Son tutorial video, and the students and teachers will follow along. At the end of the unit, the students will be proficient in singing and making the hand motions to the song.

Drumming to the music

Objective: The students will use a drum independently and sing a song, with 3 out of 4 done in tune with one another.

Standards:

- LL1.1a Engages actively in finger-plays, rhymes, chants, songs, poems, conversations, and stories
- FA2.1b Sings to familiar rhymes, songs, and chants
- FA3.1 Creates and connects with creative movement and dance
- FA2.1a Experiments with a variety of instruments, vocalizations, sounds
- FA2.1d Responds to different styles of music and music representative of a variety of cultures
- SS1.1c Describes/discusses own cultural or familial traditions

Materials:

- Drum
- Drum stick

The Teacher will first sing a song without the drum with the class. Next, the Teacher will introduce the drum. The Teacher will demonstrate to the class how to use a drum while going over the sounds the drum makes. The Teacher will then demonstrate a drum pattern with the beats. Next, the Teacher will allow the students to become familiar with the drum. Finally, the Teacher will have the class sing a song while drumming to the song, with 3 out of 4 sessions

done in tune with one another. This could be done with any songs that the students are already familiar with.

Syllables with the drum

Objective: Using the drum, the students will count out syllables to new vocabulary words they've learned in the unit with 80% accuracy.

Standards:

- FA3.1 Creates and connects with creative movement and dance
- LL1.1c Demonstrates understanding and follows directions that involve one step, two steps, or multiple steps
- LL2.3f Identifies and discriminates syllables in words
- M1.1 Counts out loud
- M1.3 Compares numbers and quantities
- M1.4 Counts to tell number of objects

Materials:

- Drum
- Drum stick
- Word cards (appendix)
- Graph chart for extension lesson

The Teacher will show the students several examples of them drumming the syllables to a few words like apple, tree, boat, banana, and louder. Afterward, the students will have a turn. The Teacher will read a word to the students, and the students will attempt to identify the syllables in the word. With the proficient students, the Teacher will graph the results so the students can determine which syllable count had the most, least, and equal amounts.

Drum making

Objective: The students will be able to follow a recipe with 80% accuracy to make a drum.

Standards:

- SE1.1e Demonstrates developmentally appropriate cultural curiosity and responsiveness
- SE2.d Expresses feelings of satisfaction in independent activities
- ATL2.1b Sustains attention when engaged in an age-appropriate activity
- ATL2.2 Persistence: the child demonstrates the ability to maintain and sustain a task
- LL1.1c Demonstrates understanding and follows directions that involve one step, two steps, or multiple steps
- LL2.1b Demonstrates and understands that print conveys meaning and that each spoken word can be written and read
- PDH&S1.2a Uses fingers, hands, and wrists to manipulate a variety of tools and materials
- FA1.1 Improvises and connects with visual arts

Materials:

- Recipe of instructions for students to read (appendix)
- Duct Tape
- Wax Paper
- Aluminum can (recycled fruit, vegetables, or soup can)
- Scissors

The Teacher will have a drum already made to show the class. The Teacher will read the instructions to the students. The students will get their set of materials. The students will "read" the instructions and make their own drums. The Teacher will assist the students that need help. When the students are done, the Teacher will allow them to use their drums to sing a song, count syllables, or just beat the drum to create a rhythm.

Vibrations in the water (science experiment)

Objective: The students will discuss their findings of the science experiment using a complete sentence.

Standards:

- LL1.1b Engages actively in finger-plays, rhymes, chants and songs, poems, conversations, and stories
- LL1.1c demonstrates understanding and follows directions that involve one step, two steps, or multiple steps
- LL1.2g Uses culturally relevant responses such as eye contact, turn-taking, and intonation while having conversations with adults and peers
- LL1.3a Uses rich vocabulary across many topic areas
- PDH&S1.2a Uses fingers, hands, and wrists to manipulate a variety of tools and materials
- ATL1.2a Shows interest in learning new things and trying new experiences
- FA2.1a Experiments with a variety of instruments, vocalizations, sounds
- S1.2 The child researches their own predictions and the ideas of others through active exploration and experimentation
- S1.3 The child analyzes data and forms conclusions about their investigation
- S1.4 The child discusses, communicates, and reflects upon the scientific investigation and its findings

Materials:

- YouTube site: <https://youtu.be/ivSS0Q8J5LY>
- Water
- Tuning fork
- Bowl

Directions:

The Teacher will watch the video on *Youtube*. The Teacher will fill the bowl with water and prepare the tuning fork. The Teacher will tell the students that they will see what happens to the water when sound is heard, but first, they need to predict what they think will happen. The

Teacher will write down everyone's response and begin. The students will hit the tuning fork and put it in the water or near the water to see what happens. The students will each hit the tuning fork at different variations to see what happens when it's loud or quieter. The class will review their predictions and come up with a conclusion of their observations.

Flashcards to Four Sacred Mountains

Objective: With 80% accuracy, the students will begin to memorize the four sacred mountains in Navajo.

Standards:

- LL1.1b Engages actively in finger-plays, rhymes, chants and songs, poems, conversations, and stories
- LL1.1c demonstrates understanding and follows directions that involve one step, two steps, or multiple steps
- LL1.2g Uses culturally relevant responses such as eye contact, turn-taking, and intonation while having conversations with adults and peers
- LL1.3a Uses rich vocabulary across many topic areas
- SS2.3a Describes directionality and/or location within the community
- SS2.3c Recognizes that people share the environment with other people, plants, and animals

Materials:

- Flashcards for Four Sacred Mountains (appendix)

The students will review the Four Sacred Mountains using flashcards. The students will point in the direction of the location of the mountain. The students may take a copy home for additional practice. The review will help with the song the students are learning in this unit.

Memory Game of Navajo Numbers 1 – 10

Objective: The students will be able to play a memory game with 80% accuracy.

Standards:

- AL1.1a Seeks interaction with others
- AL1.1b Demonstrates independence during activities, routines, and play
- AL2.1a Displays ability to pay attention when engaged in an activity
- AL2.2 The child demonstrates the ability to maintain and sustain a task
- LL1.1b Engages actively in finger-plays, rhymes, chants and songs, poems, conversations, and stories
- LL1.1c demonstrates understanding and follows directions that involve one step, two steps, or multiple steps
- LL1.2g Uses culturally relevant responses such as eye contact, turn taking, and intonation while having conversations with adults and peers

- LL1.3a Uses rich vocabulary across many topic areas

Materials:

- Two copies of each card with numbers 1 - 10 in Navajo

Directions:

The Teacher will explain the game's objective and guide the students through a few examples. When the two cards are turned over, the students state the name of the numbers in Navajo and English before turning them back over and grabbing them both if they have the same. The Teacher will turn over all the cards and give each student a turn to turn two cards around to see if they're the same. If not, the Teacher will tell the student to turn them back over and have the next student go. If the students have each gone four times or more (depending on the interest of the students), you may have the cards stay turned over until the game is completed.

Scaffolding Literacy with Flute Music

Objective: The students will be able to follow multiple-step drawing directions using a three-point grip.

Standards:

- LL1.1b Engages actively in finger-plays, rhymes, chants and songs, poems, conversations, and stories
- LL1.1c demonstrates understanding and follows directions that involve one step, two steps, or multiple steps
- LL1.2g Uses culturally relevant responses such as eye contact, turn-taking, and intonation while having conversations with adults and peers
- LL1.3a Uses rich vocabulary across many topic areas
- LL3.1a In the writing process, uses a variety of writing tools, materials, and surfaces to create drawings or symbols
- PDH1.2a Uses fingers, hands, and wrists to manipulate a variety of tools and materials
- PDH1.2b Uses eye-hand coordination to perform simple tasks
- FA2.1a Experiments with a variety of instruments, vocalizations, sounds

Materials:

- Marker
- Markerboard
- Eraser
- Flute music or instrumentals

Directions:

The Teacher will give the students instructions on opening and closing their marker lids. The Teacher will also inform the students that they are not allowed to draw until the music starts, and

there is no talking as soon as it starts. The music is their signal to start and stop - once the music stops, the students stop drawing. The Teacher will do one example and play the music indicating the students to begin. The first thing the students will draw are lines from top to bottom (like a bunch of 1's) until the music stops (the Teacher will pause or stop the music). The students will show the Teacher their boards, and the Teacher will have them clear their boards. Next, the students will draw circles until the music is stopped. After clearing their boards, the students will then draw zig-zag lines.

Four cardinal directions - TPR sequence

Objective: The students will follow the gestures from the Teacher as she points and says the four cardinal directions in Navajo.

Standards:

- LL1.1b Engages actively in finger-plays, rhymes, chants and songs, poems, conversations, and stories
- LL1.1c demonstrates understanding and follows directions that involve one step, two steps, or multiple steps
- LL1.2g Uses culturally relevant responses such as eye contact, turn taking, and intonation while having conversations with adults and peers
- LL1.3a Uses rich vocabulary across many topic areas

Materials:

- Four sacred mountain names in Navajo

Directions:

The students will follow a series of directions. The Teacher will sign language or point in the direction as the Teacher says the four cardinal directions in Navajo. The students do not have to say the directions; they are expected to copy the gesture. Eventually, they will learn to use the Navajo language with the action.

Squishy Book for Navajo Colors - Feely Book

Objective: The students will find various colors of items around the classroom or environment to make a Navajo color squishy book.

Standards:

- LL1.1b Engages actively in finger-plays, rhymes, chants and songs, poems, conversations, and stories
- LL1.1c demonstrates understanding and follows directions that involve one step, two steps, or multiple steps
- LL1.3a Uses rich vocabulary across many topic areas
- AL1.1b Demonstrates independence during activities, routines, and play
- AL2.1a Displays the ability to pay attention when engaged in an activity

- AL2.2 The child demonstrates the ability to maintain and sustain a task

Materials:

- Ziplock bag
- Packaging tape
- Marker
- Various items around the room to put into the bag

Directions:

The Teacher will inform the students of the lesson. The students will each be given a color and asked to find colors of that item around the room or environment to place into the bag (keeping in mind the size of the Ziplock bag). After, the students will put all the purple items into one bag, all the red items in one bag, and so forth. The Teacher will label each Ziplock bag with the Navajo name and the English written color. The Teacher will then tape the bags together at the top to make a book. The Teacher will read the book to the class. The students will be able to read the book in the literacy center.

Read aloud: The Four Sacred Mountain Song (Figure 8 appendix)

Objective: The students will be able to echo the book with the Teacher, recognizing the song pattern as they sing/read.

Standards:

- LL1.1b Engages actively in finger-plays, rhymes, chants and songs, poems, conversations, and stories
 - AL2.1a Displays ability to pay attention when engaged in an activity
 - AL2.2 The child demonstrates the ability to maintain and sustain a task
 - LL1.3a Uses rich vocabulary across many topic areas
 - LL2.5j Demonstrates reading fluency by use of phrasing, intonation, and expression in shared reading of familiar books, poems, chants, songs, nursery rhymes, or other repetitious or predictable texts.

Materials:

- Print of Figure 8 in appendix

Directions:

The Teacher will first review the book with the students. The Teacher will inform the students that the book is the song they've been learning. The Teacher will inform the students with echoing. The Teacher will first read/sing the phrase, waiting for the students to echo. They will repeat for the rest of the read-aloud.

Resources

Austen, I. (2021, June 7). How Thousands of Indigenous Children Vanished in Canada. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/07/world/canada/mass-graves-residential-schools.html>

The article discusses the thousands of unmarked graves found at residential schools in Canada. Additionally, it discusses the abuse and the horrific history behind the residential schools' purpose.

Improving Your Child's Self-Awareness Skills. (n.d.). https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hub/287778/file-231442306-pdf/improving_self-awareness.pdf%3Cb%3E%3C/b%3E#:~:text=Self%2Dawareness%20helps%20children%20to

The article discusses several outlets to increase self-awareness and describes in length why it is important.

Navajo Sacred Mountains | Navajo Code Talkers. (n.d.).

<https://navajocodetalkers.org/navajo-sacred-mountains/>

The website explains the Navajo sacred mountains. It has in depth information about the location, colors, and meaning behind each mountain.

Pulido-Tobiassen, D., & Gonzalez-Mena, J. (1999). Supporting healthy identity development excerpt from a Place to Begin. Retrieved June 25, 2022, from https://www.teachingforchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/ec_supportinghealthyidentity_english.pdf

The article discusses the importance of self-identity especially for our young children.

Sells. (2020). Parental Influence on Navajo Language Preservation. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Sells did a study in Rough Rock, Arizona where she had several participants influence their young ones with the Navajo language. Sells discussed the importance of the Navajo language and its decline in usage among our children. Sells further reported some factors that motivate young people to learn the Navajo language.

States News Service. (August 1, 2019 Thursday). KEEPING ANCESTRAL LANGUAGES ALIVE AND RELEVANT TODAY. States News Service. <https://advance-lexis-com.libproxy.nau.edu/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5WPX-FXX1-DYTH-G0MK-00000-00&context=151683>

The newspaper article highlighted the importance of the preservation of our language. Additionally, the author discussed adults wanting to learn the languages to continue their knowledge to help in the preservation process. It begins with the homelife of our young ones to be immersed in the language.

Webster. (2013). "The Validity of Navajo Is in Its Sounds": On Hymes, Navajo Poetry,

Punning, and the Recognition of Voice. *Journal of Folklore Research*, 50(1-3), 117–144. <https://doi.org/10.2979/jfolkrese.50.1-3.117>

Webster wrote about the Navajo language and its interpretations being vastly different among readers or interpreters because the language often uses puns as descriptors. The reason behind it is that the language is descriptive language and often, there are no direct words to use from English to Navajo. Because of the usage of puns, the translation of poems from Navajo poets is often left to a bit of a debate.

What is holistic education? understanding the history, methods, and benefits. What is Holistic Education? Understanding the Benefits | American University. (2020, May 13). Retrieved June 6, 2022, from <https://soeonline.american.edu/blog/what-is-holistic-education#:~:text=Holistic%20education%20is%20a%20comprehensive,in%20an%20integrated%20learning%20format>.

The website highlighted holistic education in a summary form. Holistic education was described as supporting the child's development socially, emotionally, ethically, spiritually, and academically.

Wikipedia Contributors. (2019, June 5). Navajo language. Wikipedia; Wikimedia Foundation. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navajo_language

From the site, the most useful information I found was the statistics on our Navajo language speakers. I also read that the language has been used less since Navajo students began attending school and converting to Christianity.

Appendix

Figure 1: Morning Question Example

Have you seen a flute before?



Have you seen a hand drum before?



Do you know someone who sings songs?



Do you like to sing?

Figure 2: The Four Sacred Mountain Song Sheet

Dził Dadiyini

Héí yéí yaaga, héí yéí yaaga
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shí diné nishłí
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shí diné nishłí

Dził dadi yiniiga' binénáshá
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shí diné nishłí
Dził dadi yiniiga' binénáshá
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shí diné nishłí

Ha'a'aahjigo éí Sisnaajiniga' binénáshá
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shí diné nishłí
Ha'a'aahjigo éí Sisnaajiniga' binénáshá
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shí diné nishłí

Shá'di'ááhjigo éí Tsoodzilga' binénáshá
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shí diné nishłí
Shá'di'ááhjigo éí Tsoodzilga' binénáshá
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shí diné nishłí

E'e'aahjigo éí Dook'ǫ' oosłidga' binénáshá
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shí diné nishłí
E'e'aahjigo éí Dook'ǫ' oosłidga' binénáshá
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shí diné nishłí

Náhookosjigo éí Dibé Nitsaaga' binénáshá
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shí diné nishłí
Náhookosjigo éí Dibé Nitsaaga' binénáshá

Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shí diné nishłí
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shí diné nishłí
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shí diné nishłí
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shí diné nishłí



[Dził dadiyinni.mp3](#)

Figure 3: The Four Sacred Mountain Chart Visual

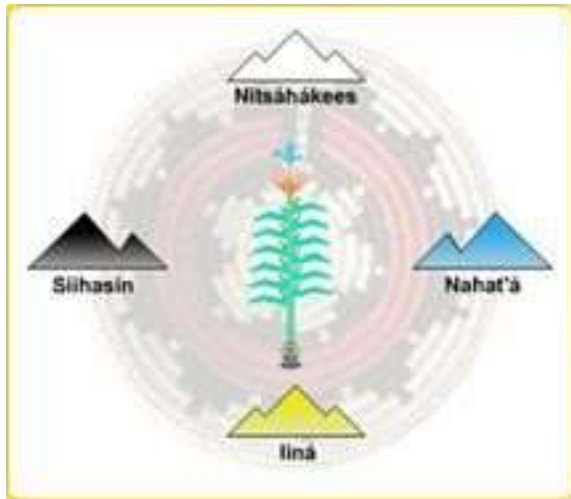


Figure 4: Baby shark vocabulary cards

Łóó'shkéii amá



Łóó'shkéii awéé'



Łóó'shkéii acheii



Łóó'shkéii másąń



Łóó'shkéii zhé'é

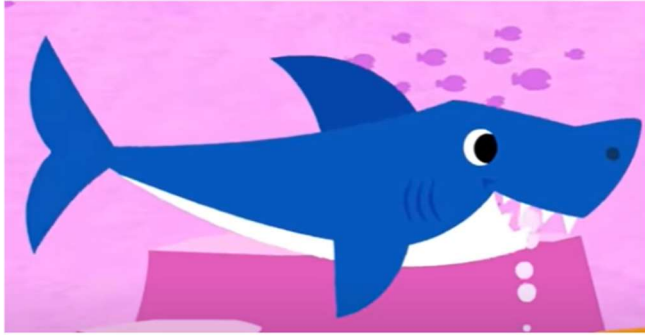


Figure 5: Word cards for syllables lesson

| | |
|--------|----------|
| Apple | Banana |
| Forest | Mountain |

Peaks

Water

Shells

Boulder

Ladder

Sand

Tsoodził

Sisnaajíní

| | |
|-------------|----------------|
| Dibé Nitsaa | Dook'o'ooslíid |
|-------------|----------------|

Figure 6: How to make a drum recipe

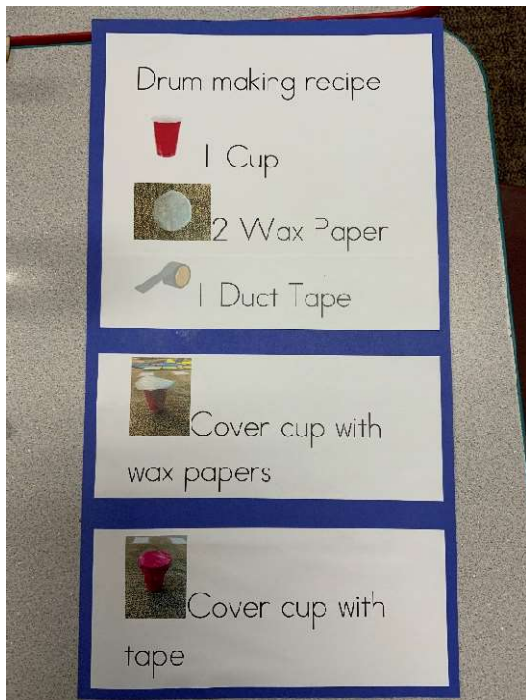


Figure 7: Flashcards for Four Sacred Mountains



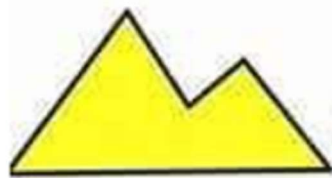
Tsoodzil



Sis Naajinj



Dibé Nitsaa



Dook'o'osliid

Figure 8: Memory Game of numbers 1 - 10 in Navajo

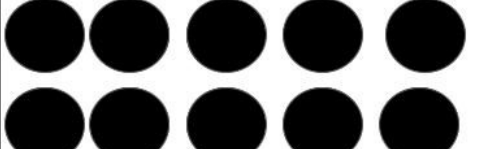
Nine
náhást'éé

9



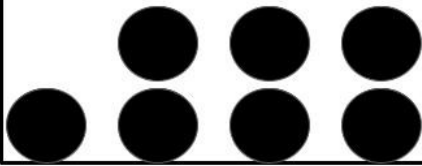
Ten
neeznáá

10



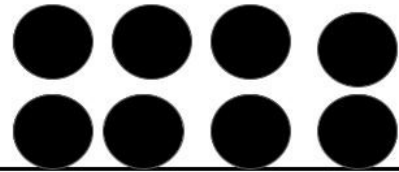
Seven
tsosts'id

7



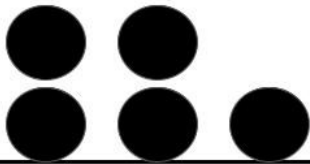
Eight
tseebíí

8



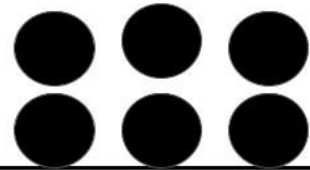
Five
ashdla'

5




Six
hastaq̄

6



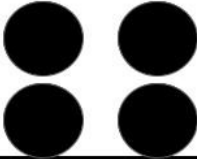
Three
táá'

3




Four
dij'

4



One
t'ááŁá'í

1



Two
naaki

2


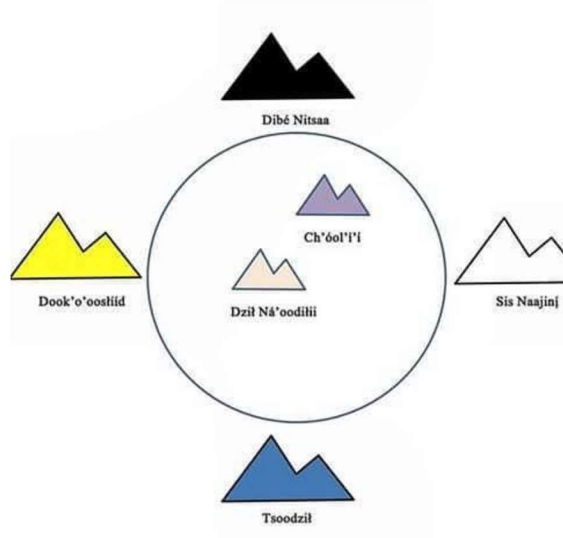


Figure 8: Four Sacred Mountain Song Read Aloud

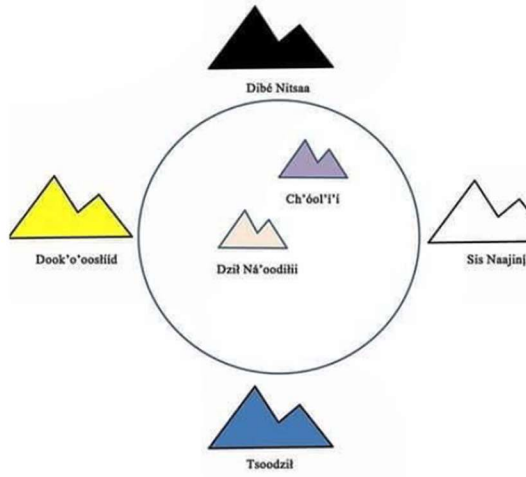
Four Sacred Mountain Dził Dadiyinii



Héi yéi yaąąa, héi yéi yaąąa
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shí diné nishłj
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shí diné nishłj



Dził dadi yiniiga' binénáshá
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shi diné nishłį
Dził dadi yiniiga' binénáshá
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shi diné nishłį



Ha'a'ahhjigo éí Sisnaajíníga' binénáshá
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shi diné nishłį
Ha'a'ahhjigo éí Sisnaajíníga' binénáshá
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shi diné nishłį

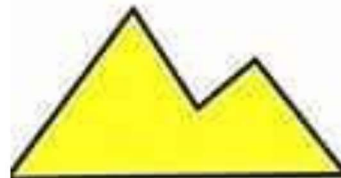


Shá'di'ááhjigo éí Tsoodzilga' binénáshá
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shi diné nishłı
Shá'di'ááhjigo éí Tsoodzilga' binénáshá
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shi diné nishłı



Tsoodzil

E'e'aahjigo éí Dook'o'oosłíidga' binénáshá
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shi diné nishłı
E'e'aahjigo éí Dook'o'oosłíidga' binénáshá
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shi diné nishłı



Dook'o'oosłíid

Náhookqsjigo éí Dibé Nitsaaga' binénáshá
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shi diné nishłj
Náhookqsjigo éí Dibé Nitsaaga' binénáshá
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shi diné nishłj



Dibé Nitsaa

Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shi diné nishłj
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shi diné nishłj
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shi diné nishłj
Shóó wóó wóó'óó, shi diné nishłj

