

## Celebrating Thanks with Indigenous Foods in the General Music Classroom

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INE (Institute for Native Serving Educators) & DINE (Dine Institute for Navajo Educators)

Ethnoecology of Indigenous Foods: Relearning our Local Food Systems

Professional Development Program

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### Author Note:

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## Introduction

Yá'át'ééh, Hello, my name is Denisa Smiley, Tábááhí nishlí, Ta'neeszahnii bashishchíín, Áadóó Áshijíhi dashicheii dóó Kinłichiini dashinálí. I am Water Edge Clan, born for Tangle People Clan. My maternal grandfathers are the Salt Clan and my paternal grandfathers are the Red Towering Clan. This is how I am known to the Holy Ones and to my Dine people. I am originally from Navajo, N.M. and my father's side of the family are originally from Rock Point, AZ. I grew up on the Navajo Reservation and I attended Kayenta School District from primary to high school.

I have taught music for 27 years and I currently teach at Cartwright School District. My district is located in Phoenix and serves over 14,000 students. There are 20 schools in the Cartwright School District; four middle schools, five K-8 schools, and eleven K-6 elementary schools. I currently teach general music, guitar, and choir at Justine Spitalny STEAM K-8 school. Spitalny is the smallest school in our district with 652 students enrolled. The student demographics of our school are 93.3% Hispanic/Latino, 3.8% Black, 1.4% White/caucasian, 1.5% Native American Indian. The Native American enrollment currently stands at ten: 2 Hopi, 3 Navajo, and 5 Gila River Tribe. The Cartwright School District has implemented a Land Acknowledgement statement:

*“The Cartwright School District is located on the ancestral homelands of The Hohokam Ancestors and Akimal O’otham and Pee Posh, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Communities or SRP-MIC. And serves you from many of Arizona’s 22 Native American communities and beyond including; The Dine (Navajo), Hopi, Apache, Pascua (Yagui Tribe), Gila River, Tohono O’odham, Ak-Chin and Bitterwater Communities. We acknowledge the rich oral history culture of these communities and their ancestral ties to the land since time immemorial. We must also acknowledge the history and presence of Colonization that has shaped our relations and the healing work we must embark on to realign our past. We are dedicated to this goal by naming the original people of this land, learning the history of our relations in our classrooms, and decolonizing our service of shared liberation for all groups impacted by systemic relations.”*

I attended Northern Arizona University, and I graduated with a bachelor's in music, in 1997. I received my Master of Arts in Education from the University of Phoenix, in 2007. I achieved National Boards Certification in Music in 2022. I am currently the district lead music teacher at Cartwright School District. I am familiar with Kodály and I am certified in Level 1 Carl Orff-Schulwerk. Kodály provides a structured path for music literacy, while Orff offers a creative framework for improvisation and exploration. I created music lessons using both teaching methods and included speech, body percussion, and movement. The Orff instruments include; bells, chimes, glockenspiels, metallophones, xylophones, and timpani. In addition, I included Native American Instruments; taos drums, gathering drum, rattles, gourds, rain sticks, bird whistles, and Native American flutes.

The music curriculum that I have access to is Quaver Music, Essential Elements Music Curriculum, Share the Music, and Spotlight in Music from Macmillan/McGraw-Hill. It is from these sources that I will design a unit to reflect our lesson on Indigenous foods. My topic is

called Celebrating Thanks with Indigenous Foods in the General Music Classroom. The context encompasses the sacredness of native and traditional foods alongside giving thanks. The grade level is designed for 5th-grade, however grades 3-5th can draw from these lessons in the general music classes. There are currently three 5th-grade classes at my school. The curriculum fits best during the Month of November, because of Native American History Month and the Thanksgiving holiday. Students will learn about Navajo history, culture, and several traditional foods and how they are prepared. This curriculum will explore the story of Thanksgiving from a Native American perspective. The end goal is a Native American musical performance that highlights Indigenous foods. The curriculum unit has both the Arizona State Standards and the Dine standards. I hope this curriculum will help to enrich your programs during the yearly school performances of “Thanksgiving.”

## **Rationale**

What do we think of when we hear about the First Thanksgiving? Most of us probably think of Pilgrims and Indians, but most of us may lack the history of Thanksgiving. So how do we begin to learn about both sides of the Thanksgiving Story?

The Fourth World Documentation Project (F.W.D.P) has given both the history of the Pilgrims and Puritans, Wampanoag Indians, Squanto, and Samoset. According to F.W.D.P., the Puritan “Pilgrims” were refugees from England. They were a group of people who strayed from the mainstream culture of England. They believed that they were the “Chosen people” in the book of Revelations. In order to achieve this, the Puritans attempted to purify themselves, then spread their beliefs to others. They also believed that the New World was the “Kingdom of God,” also foretold in the book of Revelation. Therefore, their intentions were “to take the land away from its native people to build their prophesied “Holy Kingdom,” (F.W.D.P.) The Puritans knew that they were overpowered and outnumbered by the powerful Indian tribes, so they “laid low” until more people arrived on the Mayflower ships.

The Wampanoag Indians are a part of a bigger group of Native American Tribes, known as the League of Delaware. Although the Wampanoag Tribe did not fully trust the white people, they were very hospitable and charitable to those in need of assistance. A well-known native among the Wampanoag was Squanto.

Squanto was the only baptized Christian and English-speaking native among the Wampanoag. Therefore, the Puritans considered Squanto to be the angel sent by God to “provide for the survival of his chosen people.” So, how did a native learn English? A quote from Google, “Squanto knew English because he was kidnapped by English explorers, taken to Europe, and lived in England for several years, where he learned the language. He was also sold into slavery in Spain by an explorer named Thomas Hunt, where he learned some Spanish, and was later freed by friars. His experience made him a valuable translator and cultural mediator when he returned to his homeland and met the pilgrims.” Squanto, along with 27 other natives, were kidnapped by Spanish Explorers and sold as slaves. Fortunately, Squanto managed to sail to England, where he met his friend John Weymouth, along with Samoset. Samoset is another native who learned to speak English. Originally, Squanto and Samoset were members of the

Pokanokit Wampanoag Tribe. When they both returned to their native land, they discovered that their entire tribe had died of a foreign disease brought by the white settlers.

“There is no simple way to characterize the range of feelings Native Americans bring to this holiday. Many celebrate it, others ignore it, and some use it as a time to reflect on a history marked by painful and costly encounters with the people who colonized the continent and since have written most of the history,” (Goodman, p.1). I grew up in the 1970’s and 1980’s, like most children, I was taught at school to make pilgrim hats, and feather headbands. I saw my friends wearing pilgrim hats and I specifically remember I would rather wear the feather band with the boys. The school cafeteria would serve turkey and gravy. We were taught about the Eastern Native American tribe and a person named Squanto who helped the starving pilgrims to teach them to hunt, fish, and grow plants on the earth. Earth, this we knew.

The U.S Thanksgiving holiday was put into an annual event in 1941, and is celebrated with a meal of turkey, stuffing, cranberries, yams, corn muffins, and pumpkin pie with whipped cream. “The Thanksgiving menu springs from the soil of the Americas,” (Fabricant. p.1). Although the first Thanksgiving had no turkey. “Turkey may not have been served, neither was pumpkin pie.” Today, many families have extended the meal to more family recipes and dishes. My own family continues to celebrate with all these traditional fixings along with our Indigenous foods. Still many Native Americans view this day as morning, or “to get away from the Pilgrim version of Thanksgiving in favor of their own culture,” (Bond, p.1).

For the Navajos, Thanksgiving was once celebrated twice a year, once in the Spring and again in the Fall. However, today the Navajos celebrate Thanksgiving alongside the rest of the nation, on the last Thursday of November. Many believe that Thanksgiving was another holiday tradition the Navajos have adopted from the mainstream. However, the Navajo believe that giving thanks came with the beginning of cultivation.

In the Navajo origin story, there are stories that relate to the origin of crops such as; watermelon, honeydew, cantaloupe, squash, beans, and corn. The process of planting had several procedures in which to give thanks, recognition, and prayer. There are two main thanks that are performed to the Holy Deities of the Navajos, one is held in the Spring and the other in the Fall. Around the year when the rain comes around, and the time when the seeds may be planted, it is the time when the Navajos pray for good crops and plentiful growth. Around October, when all the plantings have ripened, the Navajos have a feast to give thanks to the Spiritual people for the harvest. In this way, the Navajos are respecting the Holy Deities in remembrance of their gift to the people. These two forms of Thanksgiving have been celebrated since the beginning of farming.

The Gregorian calendar has set everyone on a path alongside Christian holidays. This calendar has greatly altered our ceremonies because of the workdays. The workdays moved many traditional ceremonies to the weekends. Many other ceremonies like Harvest celebrations moved from Late October to one day of giving thanks on November 24th. This “whiteman” calendar has shifted the Dine way of life. “The Navajo Nation Council finds that the Dine Life Way must be protected and assured by incorporating these fundamental laws into the Navajo Nation Code in the manner that will openly acknowledge and recognize their importance and would generate

interest to learn among all Dine,” (Navajo Nation Council Amending Title 1, p.1). For this reason, the Navajo origin of Thanksgiving should be known to our youth and why we celebrate. “To tell the tale of the Pilgrims, you also have to tell the story of the people who were already here before them,” (Cavanagh, p.1).

A quote from Chief among the Cheyennes and the Dakotas to the Great Chief at Washington. “Once only Indians lived in this land. Then came strangers from across the Great Water. No land had they; we gave them of our land. No food had they; we gave them of our corn. The strangers are become many and they fill all the country. They dig gold—from my mountains; they build houses—of the trees of my forest; they rear cities—of my stones and rocks; they make fine garments—from the hides and wood of animals that eat my grass,” (Curtis, [p.xv](#)).

There are many correlations and ways we can still keep our culture and celebrate some of these holidays, but with a Native American mindset. As for Thanksgiving, I’d like to think that the Native Americans sat down and enlightened the Pilgrims with profound thoughts about the creator. Just as many people do when they speak to a Native Americans and become awe stricken about how we generally think. That is wishful thinking, because we know the Thanksgiving Feast as we perceive it to be, was actually a meeting place for negotiating a treaty that would “secure the lands of the Plymouth Plantation for the Pilgrims” (F.W.D.P)

I selected this particular topic because every year I feel the need to explain myself about celebrating Thanksgiving. It is meaningful to our community and students because Thanksgiving is more than a national holiday. It is a time to focus and learn from many Native American Tribes. The Navajos have their own origin story of Thanksgiving.

## **Instructional Guide**

Ch’iiyáan, food is our identity, spirituality, and connection to the earth. Our plants and animals are a part of the earth, and they provide for us.

### **THE NAVAJO ORIGIN STORY-THANKSGIVING**

*After the Great flood, when everyone settled in the new land, the people remembered the things they had left behind in the lower world. However, Turkey was the only one who visited the four sacred mountains and asked for some offering the Spirit People could give to the people. They gave him seeds and told him how to plant and tend to them. He tucked seeds beneath his wings and was especially enormous, caring for all the seeds in the world. He hurried to catch up with the people who had already started to ascend into the next world. This is the reason for his delay. They instructed him to plant the seeds in all four directions before the evening sunset. Turkey did as they instructed and the next morning, his fields had all sprouted. In the East, there was white corn. In the South, there was blue corn. In the West, there was yellow corn, and in the North, there was black and multicolored corn. All about the corn field were plenty of other*

*crops. When harvest came, Turkey invited everyone, and held a feast to give thanks to the Spirit People. From this day on, the Navajos give thanks to the spiritual people who gave us food.*

~ Grandpa Johnson

Many Native Americans tribes including the Diné say our Earth is our mother. She is Nihímá Naahasdzáán, our Earth Mother. “The Diné have always been guided and protected by the immutable laws provided by the Diyin, the Diyin Diné e, Nahasdzáán and Yádiłhił; these laws have not only provided sanctuary for the Diné Life Way but as guided, sustained and protected the Diné as they journeyed upon and off the sacred lands upon which they were placed since time immemorial,” (Navajo Nation Council Amending Title 1, p.1).

The Diné, Navajos, believe everything has duality or male and female. “Here where the sun would rise in the future, blackness rose up and whiteness rose up. There where blackness and whiteness rose together First Man ‘Átsé Hastin came into being. With him was a white ear of corn of white shell which was kerneled completely over its end.” (Michales, p.16). “Here (in the west) blueness and yellowness rose up. When they rose up together, First Woman ‘Átsé ‘Asdzáán came into being. A yellow ear of corn of abalone shell, completely covered at the end with kernels, came into being with her,” (Michaels, p.16).

In the Navajo tradition everything created has been put in place by the Holy Ones. There are stories and songs for everything, because Earth is a sacred time and place. The foundations of earth, the sky, the four sacred mountains, and the four directions are the pillars of the earth. In all four directions there are purposeful meanings/representations in each place. In the east, Ha'a'aah, representing dawn and new beginnings, in the South, Shádi'aah, is planning, in the West, E'e ah, representing sunset and life, and in the North, Náhookos, is rest. The Navajo teachings, Inaa, or a way of life, include cooking and preparing.

The home itself is a sacred time and place, the Navajo's hogan is a circle, and when we enter any home, we enter clockwise E, S, W, N. The center of the hogan is where fire is kept, and toward the NE is the kitchen. In the kitchen are traditional cooking tools that hold meaning and representations: the grinding stone, tsésaashjéé, represents the earth, and the smaller stone, tsésaashch'íní, represents the sky. When we use the grinding stone, we are cooking with mother and father, who provide for us. The stirring sticks, ádístiin, are used to cook and stir, and they are given to a young woman during the Kinaaldá ceremony.

Local wood, such as juniper, cedar, and díwózhii are used for firewood. “Wood is rooted in Mother Earth, the womb. She nourishes our wood and cares for it. Our wood and our trees project into Father Sky, and therein they, too, are nourished and strengthened. Wood provides shelter and warmth. ~Steve Darden,” (Hooker, p.46).

The Navajo pottery are natural clay pots used for cooking. “We Navajos use our pottery. You can boil water in these pots. In the old days, this was all we used,” (Hooker, p.96). The Navajos also used a slab of stone to heat over a fire for cooking. The earth is our oven, and hot stones were heated to use as a cooking surface. “Lee’ Shibéézh is a good example for pit roasting, which really is steaming, as we know now; lee in the ashes/ground + shibéézh it is cooked/boiled,” (Michaels, p.31).

The animals are sacred because they provide for us. The animals eat vegetation from the earth, and they are the medicine needed to heal our bodies. There are also many teachings for hunting and giving thanks for a good hunt. The preparation of the animals is also a teaching; skinning, slicing, and various parts of the animals are all used for food and ceremonial purposes. “Animals are an ancient fit from the Holy people ~ Diyin Diné. When born the animals are infants. We, the Navajo, care for them through the process of herding. When they grow, they provide for us. ~Steve Darden,” (Hooker, p.55).

The plants that grow on the earth are our food and medicine too. The natural elements help plants to grow; the earth, air, water, and the sun. A plant cycle is also a circle and the process of seed to maturity is in the Dine way of life. The seed that is planted in the earth (Mother Earth) supported by water and natural sunlight (Father Sky). The roots spread, stretch, and draw in nutrients from the earth, springing forth to create food & medicine. The berries are a sweet treat and a reminder of the goodness of the earth. We share these with our animal brothers and sisters, too. The watermelon, Ch’éehjiyáán, is one of the seeds given to us by the holy ones to remind us of earth's sweet delights. It is refreshing and full of nutrients after a hard day's work.

In the Navajo traditions, Nitsikees, or the thought process of observing, thinking, reflecting, and understanding, is how we learn. The order in which I presented this paper is the very application of Nitsikees, and how the food is introduced in a ceremony. I grew up learning both Navajo tradition and the teachings in the Native American Church (N.A.C). In the N.A.C ceremonies, the water is passed around first because water is a replenishing or rebirth of ourselves. “Father Sky embraces Mother Earth, much as a husband and his wife. Water flows throughout the world and embraces the earth, propagating life. ~ Steve Darden,” (Hooker, p. 34). The next food item is corn. Why corn? Think about it. In the beginning, corn and earth were used to create man and woman. It is our center, our being. Next is fruit, grown from our mother earth and father sunlight. As parents, we enjoy giving our little one's sweet delights, and fruit is given to the children of the earth. The last is meat, this is the strength the medicine needed to heal our bodies and muscles.

Thanksgiving is a good time to learn about Indigenous foods and the teachings of Native American cultures. On these special occasions when a beautiful table is set with a bountiful

amount of food we must reflect on gratitude, food, and family. It is for this reason; I celebrate and enjoy Thanksgiving.

What kinds of food did my ancestors prepare and eat? I wonder how many food preparations were passed down. So, I asked my family. The ladies were preparing and making food for my grandmother's 94th-birthday. I asked them to share with me some traditional foods they knew. My auntie, Belinda, from Dinnebeto was very knowledgeable. She spoke so fast that my writing could not keep up, so I asked If I could record her. With her permission, I transcribed and compiled her words onto recipe cards. (see Navajo Recipe Cards, appendix)

## **Teaching Plan**

While selecting songs for this curriculum. I gathered songs from Quaver, Essential Elemental Music Curriculum, and Spotlight in Music by McMillain, but I also created my own songs to reflect my topic. There are many Thanksgiving songs and songs about food, but none from a Native American perspective. One day, I kept singing various songs to myself and I started to write and out came a multitude of simple melodies that I fashioned in an Orff arrangement. It is these songs that I plan to teach to my students and bring a fundamental outlook on Native American Foods.

### ***Lesson Plan: You Are Unique!***

*Theme:* Expressing Identity through Music.

*Grade Level:* 5th-grade

*Material:* [Clan relationship worksheet](#) (pay), [worksheet 2](#) (free), [Navajo clans](#) (best one), 4 directions placed around the room.

*Song:* [Dine \(Navajo\) Four Sacred Mountain Song](#), [You-nique](#) song from Quaver

#### ***Dine Standards:***

- Culture 2 PO 1. I will retell my cultural teachings of earth and sky
- History 1 PO 1. I will explain my maternal clan family and its historical origin.
- Language 3 PO 3. I will demonstrate my cultural knowledge in an oral presentation

#### ***Dine Learning Objectives:***

- I can listen to the reading of the Code of existence
- I can discuss why it is important to learn my clan
- I can list some characteristics about myself that are unique to me.

#### ***Arizona State Standards:***

- Connecting 10.a. Explain why particular pieces of music are important to your family or cultural heritage.
- Responding 8.a. Demonstrate and describe expressive attributes and how they support creators'/performers' expressive intent.

**Learning Objectives:** Students will be able to

- List characteristics that are unique to them.
- Re-tell my clan or part of their family story or genealogy
- Perform a song about being unique.

**Procedure:**

The Dine have always been thankful and given thanks to the mighty creator and to our Mother Earth for providing for their children. We are the five fingered people who are the children of the Earth. First, let's think about how Native Americans think. In the Dine, "we are the image of our ancestors, and we are created in connection with all creation".

1. *Read the Navajo Code of Existence:*

"The Holy People ordained,  
Through songs and prayers, That,  
Earth and the universe embody thinking,  
Water and the sacred mountains embody planning,  
Air and variegated vegetation embody life,  
Fire light and offerings sites of variegated sacred stones embody wisdom.

These are the fundamental tenets established.

Thinking is the foundation of planning.

Life is the foundation of wisdom.

Upon our creation, these were instituted within us, and we embody them.

Accordingly, we are identified by;

Our Dine name,  
Our Clan,  
Our Language,  
Our life way,  
Our shadow,  
Our footprints.

Therefore, we were called the Holy Earth-Surface-People.

From here, growth began, and the journey proceeds.

Different thinking, planning, life ways, languages, beliefs, and laws appear among us,

But the fundamental laws placed by the Holy People remain unchanged.

Hence, as we were created and with a living soul, we remain Dine forever."

(Navajo Nation Council, Title 1, Chapter 1, p.1)

This is a lot to take in for a 5th-grader; however, they need to know that this is an important part of knowing who you are. Explain why it is important to know your clan, because this is the key to their connection to the Earth, Sky, and to our people. Therefore, I started with this lesson, because it is one's identity.

2. *Explain that part of what makes us unique is our family and where we come from. Use the clan worksheet to explain that genealogy is the study of family history.*
  - a. SW asks their family to help fill in the chart.
  - b. SW practice saying their clan
  - c. SW memorizes saying their clan everyday.
3. *SW put their clans in 4 quadrants then their name in the center*
  - a. SW add pictures to represent their clan

Tábááhí  
Water's Edge Clan



Mrs. Smiley's Clan



Áshijíhi (Salt Clan)



Ta'neeszahnii  
Tangle People Clan



Kinłichiini (Red Towering House)

4. *SW listen to the song, “You-nique” from Quaver. If you have access to Quaver, please note there are worksheets, Orff accompaniments and much more.*
5. *SW talks to someone sitting next to them and shares their unique characteristics.*
  - a. What is one thing you are really good at?
6. *SW listens to “Four Mountain Song”*
  - a. Explain why this music is describing the memories or feelings associated with it.
7. *SW shares with someone sitting next to them and shares their clan or genealogy.*
  - a. Call on a few students to share their clan worksheet

**Assessment:** I know my clans and I can say it in Navajo. (see Clan forms). I can say nice words to myself because I am unique.

**Exit tickets:** Ask students to write down or draw what they learned about themselves or their family, how it connects with music.

## ***Lesson Plan: People of the Corn***

*Theme:* Traditional Cooking tools & Different Types of Corn

*Grade Level:* 5th-Grade

*Materials:* Corn Pollen Model, pictures of corn field, picture of [corn maiden \(Hopi\)](#), [corn maiden](#), free coloring corn page [Here](#), [Map of Turtle Island](#), Pictures of Tsédaashjéé (Grinding Stone), Pictures of Tsédaashch'íni (small hand-held grinding stone), Different types of corn

*Songs:* [Ramilda Cody Corn Grinding Song](#), lyrics found in the CD insert.

*Navajo Vocabulary Words:* Tsédaashjéé (Grinding Stone), Tsédaashch'íni (small hand-held grinding stone), White corn (Naadąął ɬigai), Yellow corn (Naadąą Łitso) blue corn (Naadąą Dootł'izh)

### ***Dine Standards:***

- Character 1 PO1: I will develop personal goals to express relationships.
- Language 4 PO4: I will recite songs or poems to an audience
- Government 2 PO2: I will show ways to sustain my mental health through Dine Teachings.

### ***Arizona State Standards:***

- Connecting 10.a Explain why particular pieces of music are important to your family or cultural heritage
- Connecting 11.b Describe how context (e.g., social, cultural, historical) can inform a performance.

***Learning Objective:*** At the end of the lesson, students will be able to

- I can recite the Navajo Corn Model with movements
- I can relate the Corn Model teachings to everyday skills at school
- I can listen for Navajo key words in the song

### ***Procedures:***

1. Show pictures of a corn field, corn stalk, and corn.
2. Discuss with students that corn is an important Indigenous food for most Native Americans.
3. Recite the Navajo Corn Model with movements. The Navajo Corn Pollen Model is a teaching based on the growth of a corn-stalk, symbolizing human development, and well-being. It is described in four stages:
  - a. Thinking (Nitsahakees): representing the roots, which anchor and support the plant.
  - b. Planning (Nahat'a): representing the stem which grows upward and frames the structure of the plant

- c. Living (Iina): represents the leaves that take in nourishment and provide for the plant life.
- d. Reflection (Sihasiin); represented by the tassel which spreads pollen and ensures future growth.

### CORN POLLEN MODEL

Here I stand, my feet touching the ground  
 My connection to the earth (touch feet)  
 For mobility and for flexibility (touch knees)  
 For balance (touch hips)  
 For nutrition and hunger to learn (touch belly)  
 For the love you give and love you receive (cover your heart)  
 For our ancestors (arms outstretched)  
 For the kind words, breathe in and breath out (4 times)  
 For a calm brain (touch head)  
 My ears for active listening (touch ears)  
 My eyes, for the observation (touch eyes)  
 For the things you'll learn today (one hand on forehead, one hand on back of head)  
 For the vision in the future (extend hand forward)  
 For reflection on the past (extend backwards)  
 For mental health, physical health, (reach hands high)  
 Climb the ladder, get your pollen, bless yourself  
 Back to Earth

4. TW write out the vocabulary words Tsédaashjéé (grinding stone), Tsédaashch'íní (hand grinding stone), Akaan (flour), Naadąą ałtóoi (yellow corn), Naadąą ałgái (white corn), Naadąą dóótlíizh (Blue corn), naaddąą nímáaz (round corn)
5. SW listen to [Ramilda Cody “Corn Grinding Song”](#) . Listen for the key words (above)
6. SW listen to the [teaching of the grinding stone](#).
  - a. After the video, discuss some of the Navajo teachings from the video.
  - b. The Dine teachings, “First Man “Átsé Hastin” came into being. With him was a white ear of corn of white shell” and “First Woman Átsé ‘Asdzáán” came into being. A yellow ear of corn of abalone shell,” (Michaelis, p.16).

**Assessment:** Students were able to recite the entire Corn Pollen Model with movement. Students were able to identify keywords or vocabulary in a song. Students were able to relate the Corn Pollen Model to everyday school practices, such as active listening in school and observation.

**Exit Tickets:** Ask students to write down one thing they learned from the Navajo presenter in the video and how it connects with the music they heard.

**Extension:** Color corn, free coloring corn page [Here](#).

## **Lesson Plan: Corn, Beans, Squash....and Potatoes!**

**Grade Level:** 5th-Grade

**Materials:** Song: "Corn, Beans, Squash....and Potatoes!" by Denisa Smiley

Iroquois Poem, [Corn, Beans, & Squash Video](#), [Cherokee Version of Corn, Beans, & Squash](#).

Book: [Squanto's Journey: The Story of the First Thanksgiving](#) by Joseph Bruchac

**Instruments:** Barred orff Instruments, Native American Instruments: gathering drum, rattles, squash gourd, corn ear-shaped scraper, different fruit shakers.

### **Dine Standards:**

- Culture 3 PO3: I will recognize the edible plants in my environment.
- Character 4 PO4: I will practice life skills from my relatives.
- History 3 PO1: I will research the cultures and lands of other neighboring Indian tribes.

### **Arizona State Standards:**

- Creating 3. a. Describe the rationale for making revisions to the music based on evaluation criteria and feedback from your teacher
- Performing 4. c. Read and perform using notation (e.g., syncopations)

### **Learning Objective**

- I can sing a simple song
- I can accompany a simple song on instruments
- I create rhythm patterns for simple song

### **Procedures:**

1. Read Iroquois Poem

*We Return Thanks ~ An Iroquois poem*  
*We return thanks to our Mother, the earth,*  
*Who sustains us*  
*To the rivers and streams,*  
*That run upon the bosom of the earth*  
*To the three sisters- corn, beans and squash*  
*That support our lives*  
*To the winds,*  
*That move the air, banishing disease*  
*To the descending rains*  
*That give us water and cause all plants to grow*  
*To the moon and stars,*  
*That give us light when the sun is gone.*  
*We return thanks to the sun,*  
*Who looks upon the Earth with a fatherly eye.*

*~prayer which opens and closes Iroquois spiritual and political gatherings*

Lets learn a little more about [Corn, beans, and Squash video](#)

Corn, Beans, Squash... and Potatoes!

Denisa Smiley

\* remove [F] : B

1. Stir it up		Stirring xylophone	whole note
2. Slice it up		guiro	half notes
3. Grind it up		Sand blocks	quarter notes
4. Add some salt		Cubasca	eighth notes

5. dice it up		Caterpillar	sixteenth notes
6. Chop it up		wooden castanets	triplets
7. Husk the cob		Ratchet	half notes
8. wash it off		Rainstick	whole note

2. ELL Standards: Ask students if they like to cook? What can they make? Do they help cook at home? Discuss and share with partners.
  - a. Sentence Stems: I enjoy cooking with my \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_, One of my favorite things to make is \_\_\_\_\_, My mom/father do the cooking, but I help with \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. Discuss the importance of corn, beans, squash, but also potatoes.
  - c. Show pictures of Navajo small potatoes (see food appendix) What is your favorite potato dish?
3. Activity: SW sit in a circle (criss-cross) **put both hands facing up on knees**. Instruct each student to place their R-hand on the hand of the person to the Right. It should look like R-hand on top and L-hand under. One person will start: pass the beat one time all around the circle. You may need to try a couple of times to get a steady beat. Next add one bean bag and pass the beat all around. Once you can successfully pass the bean bag

and more. Try passing beat to speech words “Corn, bean, squash, I like to cook, Corn, bean, squash” (STOP)

- a. Try passing on the beat, all kinds of various fruit shakers: banana, strawberry, orange, apples, lemon, mango, egg shakers
- b. Make it a game. If you have the apple, you're the Bass Xylophone, if you have the banana, you're out, if you have the corn shaker, you get the first pick.

4. Rhythm: Whoever has the bean bag will get to play an instrument and everyone else is on movements. After #4 sing the song “Corn, bean, squash” again and repeat the (b) section.
  - a. 1. Stir it up (whole note) stir xylophone 2. Slice it up (half notes) guiros 3. Grind it up (Quarter notes) Sandblocks 4. Add some salt (eighth notes) Cabasa.
  - b. 5. Dice it up (sixteenth notes) Caterpillar, 6. Chop it up (triplets) wooden castanets, 7. Husk the cob (half notes) Ratchet, 8. Wash it (whole note) rainstick
  - c. SW create a new rhythm and cooking EX: “Mash it, peel it, mince it..”
5. Layer in Orff instruments: **\*Remove F and B bars on the xylophones**  
Bass: pat on legs (Corn, rest, corn, rest, beans and squash) transfer to C-c,  
Metallophone: pat on L-leg then R-leg (Low, high, Low, high) transfer to C-G, c-g  
Xylophones: practice cross over, say “low, middle, high” transfer to CC-G-c
6. Performing:

As a class, decide how you want the song to go, try it, change it, and guide it to this:

Introduction: BX: 4 times, Metallphone enters after bass plays 2x

A-sing “Corn, beans, squash”

Interlude: BX 4 times, Metallphone enters after bass plays 2x

B-play “Corn, beans, squash”

Interlude: Bx 4 times, Metallphone enters after bass plays 2x

A-Sing/play “Corn, beans, squash”

C-first 4: slice it, stir it, grind it, salt.

A-Sing/play “Corn, beans, squash”

C-next 4: dice it, chop it, husk it, wash it

A-Sing/play end on “and potatoes” (STOP)

**Assessment:** Do you like the revisions we made to the song? Could we add dynamics? Where can we add some Native American Instruments? Discuss with students that I can sing a simple song and accompany the song on instruments. I can create new rhythm cooking.

**Extention:** Tie this lesson back into the story of Squanto, Read page. 17 “In the Moons that followed...The English learned from our people how to grow corn.” (2000. Shed) Watch a video of the [Cherokee version of the Three Sisters](#). This is a great resource, and it also has a recipe, [Three Corn Sister Stew](#), [Navajo Version of Seeds video](#) (Start at 4:00min to hear about beans.)

**Lesson Plan: Sacred Seed Song by Denisa Smiley**

*Grade Level:* 5th-Grade

*Materials:* plant cycle poster or pictures, video [Plant cycle for kids](#), [Seed saving video](#), Recorders, or [Dood](#), Drum, Thunder Tubes, lighting sheet, & wind maker tubing

**Dine Standards:**

- Culture 3 PO 2. I will classify the land and water beings in my environment
- Culture 3 PO 3. I will recognize the edible plants in my environment.
- Culture 4 PO 4. I will recite songs and poems to an audience.

**Arizona State Standards:**

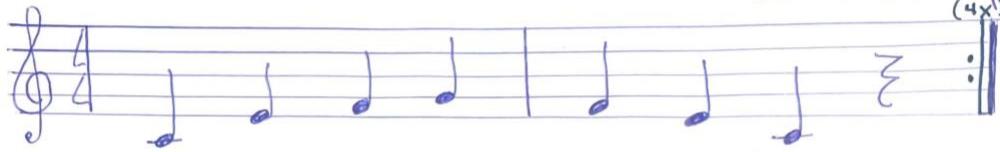
- Performing 4.a. Demonstrate and explain how the selection of music to perform is influenced by personal interest, knowledge, purpose, and context.
- Performing 4.c. Read and perform using notation.
- Connecting 11.a. Explain relationships between music and other content areas (e.g., dance, visual art, dramatic arts, literature, science, math, social studies, language arts)

**Learning Objectives:** At the end of the lesson, students will be able to

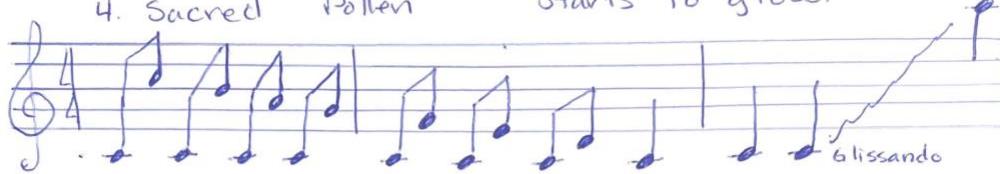
- SW name the plant cycles
- SW play scale going up, down, and alternating intervals using proper mallet technique

## Sacred Seed Song

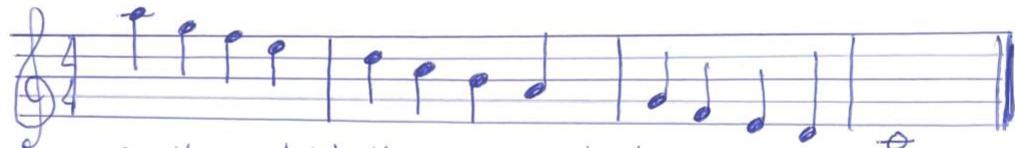
Denisa Smiley  
(4x)



1. Here's a seed I hold so dear.
2. Ancestors they carried it here.
3. Mother Earth please let it grow.
4. Sacred Pollen starts to grow.



water each day      Soon leaves and stems  
and watch it sprout      and flowers bloom



See the sun light, then a new seed starts to grow a-gain.

### Procedure:

Phase 1: Imitation (chanting and movement)

- Watch plant cycle video.
- Student own space, each time the teacher plays a triangle change: become a seed, sprout, seed to plant, plant to blossom, fruit, regenerate
- Groups of 5: Bring out a collection of non-pitched percussion instruments (rhythm sticks, hand drums, woodblocks). Students may use various instruments/movements to demonstrate their assigned plant cycle.
- This time TW played the melody on the recorder or Native American Flute. Have group 1 act out their movement with non-pitched percussion

This time TW played the melody on the recorder or Native American Flute. Have group 2 act out their movements with non-pitched percussion, etc...Phase 2: Exploration (instruments)

- TW will sing “Do-mi-fa-so-fa-mi-do”, Students will echo using Curwen hand signs
- TW will sing “Do-do, Do-ti, Do-la, Do-sol, Do-fa, Do-mi, Do-re, Do-do”, SW echo
- TW will sing “Sol-fa-mi-re-Do-ti-la-sol-fa-mi-re-do”
- TW display words to song: sing entire

- Transfer melody to Orff instruments (xylophone, metallophones, glockenspiels)

Phase 3: Improvisation and Creation (composition and choreography)

- Play the melodic phrase: challenge students to use proper mallet technique. Allow them to perform their creations for the class.
- Perform: have each group perform their choreography.

Phase 4: Final performance (synthesis)

- Bring it all together: Combine all the elements:
- Think about adding Native American Instruments: Gathering Drum
- Think about adding elements of nature: light (female) rain storm with body percussion & heavy thunder rain (male) with thunder tubes, lightning shields, & wind maker tubings.
  - The whole class sing, show seed
  - The whole class sing, show roots
  - The whole class sing, show stem
  - The whole class sing, show leaves
  - The whole class sing, show flowers

**Assessment:** I can identify a plant cycle; I can play a scale going up and going down. I can alternate intervals in a scale going up, I can demonstrate proper mallet technique on the xylophones.

**Exit Ticket:** Students will verbally tell me one of the plant cycles and or movement to the Corn Pollen Model.

### **Lesson Plan: Squanto's Journey.**

**Grade Level:** 5th Grade

**Material:** Book: [Squanto's Journey: The Story of the First Thanksgiving](#) by Joseph Bruchac, Song: "Tsiothwatase:Tha" An Iroquois Social Song and Dance as sung by members of the Mohawk Nation, Share the Music book, p. 228, CD 5(23), recording of Carlos Nakai Native Flute player, Quaver Medieval period lesson with Monk recordings, and Quaver's song "Oh, How Lovely" (If you do not have access to Quaver use this [youtube version](#))

**Instruments:** Native American Flutes (if none use recorders or [dooD](#) instruments), Taos Drums or gathering drums (if none use hand drums), Native rattles (if none maracas) Picture of water drum/rattles ([Onondaganation website](#)), Pianos, ocean drums, thunder tubes, wind tube, chains

### **Dine Standards:**

- History 3 PO 1. I will research the cultures and lands of other neighboring Indian tribes
- History 3 PO 2. I will compare Dine and a neighboring tribe's historical timeline.
- Character 4 PO 2. I will show thankfulness for my relatives' values.

### **Arizona Standards:**

- Responding 5.7.a. Explain how music listening is influenced by personal interest, knowledge, purpose, and context.

- Connecting 11.a. Describe how context (e.g. social, cultural, historical) can inform a performance.
- Performing 5.b With an appropriate level of independence, rehearse to refine technique, expression, and identified performance challenges.

**Learning Objectives:** at the end of lesson, students will be able to

- Sing or hum parts of the vocables in the Iroquoise Round Dance Song
- explore Native American sounds on a Dood, Native Flute, or recorders
- build cultural appreciation for music history to captivate an audience with a read-along book, Squanto's Journey.

**Procedure:**

1. Look at the song: “Tsiothwatase:Tha” An Iroquois Social Song and Dance.
  - a. Ask students: Are there any English words in the song?
  - b. Pronounce the vocables: “he-yo-he-yo-ha-hi-yo-ha-ya” These are called vocables.
2. SW listen to the recording and follow along with the music using the guides a, b, c, d, e.
3. Ask students what kind of instruments they hear?
  - a. Picture of water drum/rattles ([Onondaganation website](#))
4. Listen again, this time try “humming” to the melody. Hum each phrase.
5. Add Taos drums, rattles, and try singing with the recording.
6. Call and Response using the Recorders: TW plays each phrase and SW echoes. SW practice their parts. Play along with the drum and rattle.
  - a. \*\*\*I originally thought of teaching my students each phrase of the song on recorders. However, my students insisted on learning the song on piano keyboards. I think this would be easier for them. It is also a great way to learn notes on the piano. I also figured they would learn the melody more accurately and be able to transfer it onto the recorder later.
  - b. On a different day, I will revisit this song and have students do a notation lesson: SW writes the notes to the song and plays it on the piano.

Tsiothwatasé: Tha  
ROUND DANCE      Iroquoise Social Dance

he yo he yo ha hi yo ha ya

he yo ha hi yo ha ya he yo ha hi yo ha ya

he yo ha hi yo ha ya he yo ha hi yo ha ya

he ya he ya ha he ya he ya ha yo

Pitch release  
or  
Fall

7. Connection to Book:
  - a. Play a recording by Carlos Nakai "Native Flute"
  - b. How does the music make them feel?
  - c. What instrument do you hear? (show a Native American flute)
8. Continue with story: TW read the story
  - a. Page 1 Start recording, ["Song for the morning star"](#) (Carlos Nakai). & read page 1 and stop at (:56 seconds) there is a pause. Ask students, does this music match the story?
  - b. Page 2 ocean drum. Squanto captured. At the end of the page, pause and have students use instruments to make wind sound, use an ocean drum for waves, chains rattling, and stormy sounds. What kind of mood does this music create?
  - c. Page 3 monk (use Quaver Medieval Resources) Squanto arrives in Spain/England. Listen to early [monk](#) and hymns. What does this music sound like? Squanto arrives in England, listening to the Quaver song "[Oh, How Lovely](#)" What do you hear in this music? Discuss that Squanto experienced both worlds, his native world and the Old Europe world. He must have heard both kinds of music. [Bells](#) were especially present in England and monasteries.
  - d. Page 4 resume Carlos Nakai recording (:56-2:16)

- e. Page 5 Squanto Returns home. Use drums and song “Tsiothwatase:Tha” An Iroquois Social Song and Dance At the end when Squanto travels back, students play drums. Do you think Squanto would have been excited? Play the drums at a quicker tempo.
- f. Page 6-7 Each page turn play one phrase of Tsiothwatase:Tha on the recorder
- g. Page 8 Song “Sacred Seed Song”
- h. Page 9 Read to END then play the song “Corn, Beans, Squash” (previous lesson)

**Assessment:** I am able to make connections with music history and storyline. I can sing “Tsiothwatase:Tha” with the vocabels. I can play the song on the recorder or piano.

**Extension:** Recorders: allow students to create soft trills and explore making their own found sounds using Native American flutes or a recorder or a dood. Experience with making the recorder sound like a bird. When Squanto teaches them how to hunt, use recorders for the bird sounds in the forest sounds.

### **Lesson Plan: Giving Thanks**

**Grade Level:** 5th-Grade

**Materials:** Quaver Music Curriculum, song: [Thanksgiving at our house, worksheet](#) (make own worksheet by drawing a plate and fork/spoon), [Thanksgiving Rhythm Clapping](#)

**Instruments:** Glockenspiels/ woodblocks, alto xylophone, bass xylophone, bass metallophone, bass xylophone bars, woodblock, various fruit shakers

**Dine Standards:** Character Building Standards & Dine History Standards

- Character 1 PO 2. I will demonstrate respect and value of my immediate family.
- Character 4 PO 1. I will demonstrate thankfulness for my extended family.
- History 2 PO 2. I will demonstrate my cultural knowledge gained from my immediate family.

**Learning Objectives:** At the end of this lesson, students will be able to

- SW learn the words to the song
- SW discusses what kinds of food they have on their Thanksgiving Table.
- SW draws pictures of the food they have for Thanksgiving.

### **Procedure:**

1. Setting: Ask students if they have ever travelled to someone else’s house for Thanksgiving. Who has traveled and where?
2. Movement: TW add a patch-pat on legs “Driving (rest, rest), far away (rest)” a student shares out loud where they travel to. Repeat patch patterns and pick a new student.
  - a. Do they know that the Navajos have traveling songs?
    - i. Encourage students to ask their parents (uncles) about these Navajo traveling songs.
3. Singing: SW listens to the song, “Thanksgiving at our house”, and learns the words to the song.
  - a. SW discusses what happens when their cousin comes to visit?
4. Movement: Say and pat the bass xylophone part “Driving (rest rest), far away (rest)”

- a. \***Takadimi:** (Ta, Ta, Rest, Rest/Ta, Ta, Ta, Rest). Once students are able to successfully carry this rhythm. Add the Orff part.
- 5. Development: Divide the class into two groups.
  - a. Group 1 will pat “Driving (rest rest), far away (rest). \*See above
  - b. Group 2 will snap **Takadimi:** (R,R,Ta,Ta/R,R,R,R/R,R,Ta-di,Ta)
  - c. See Quaver for additional Orff parts. I am only adding two parts.
- 6. Performance: Once students can perform, have the group transfer their parts to the Orff instruments; group 1 Bass xylophone and group 2 on Alto glockenspiels or woodblocks.
- 7. **Extension:** Rhythm clapping: [Rhythm Clapping](#)
- 8. Drawing: Hand out worksheets for students to draw their favorite food they like to eat for Thanksgiving.
- 9. Discuss traditional foods. Do they know about traditional foods? Perhaps a dish that their grandmother makes or is unique to their family.

**Additional notes:** When teaching this lesson, feel free to omit the Orff part and learn only the song. If you do not have a classroom Orff set, you can substitute other instruments for the xylophone part. Try adding woodblock to Group 1 and various fruit shakers to Group 2.

**Assessment:** I can play my part independently on an instrument or body percussion. I can share some foods we have during Thanksgiving. I memorized a song for our concert.

### **Lesson Plan: Time to Eat by Denisa Smiley**

**Theme:** The Navajo Teachings around the table

**Grade Level:** 5th-Grade

**Material:** Song: “Time To Eat” arranged by Denisa Smiley, & Disney’s [“Be Our Guest”](#) from Beauty and the Beast, and Navajo Recipe Cards (see appendix), [EEMC Be Our Guest](#)

**Instruments:** xylophones, metallophones, and glockenspiels, various percussion instruments: small drums, wood blocks, triangles, jingle clogs, rhythm sticks, tambourines, guiros, maracas.

### **Dine Standards:**

- Government 2 PO 3. I will describe ways to maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Character 2 PO 2. I will develop wise things in my personal life.
- Character 4 PO 2. I will show thankfulness for my relatives’ values.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- SW plays the melodic ostinato and creates a speech part.
- SW shares a traditional food learned from their relative or family member
- SW Watch a video on corn preparation and food making

### **Procedures:**

1. First set the table: Ask, Does your family sit at the table for dinner? Are you allowed to have your phone at the table? Have a discussion about how time around the dinner table is important, because it can lead to stories.
  - a. One visit, my dad sat at the table and looked at the salt and sugar. Then he told me some Navajo history about salt and sugar. (see Food Recipe appendix)

2. Ask students: What is your favorite stew? Do you know how to make your favorite stew? Use Navajo Recipe cards (see Appendix) to show some traditional Navajo stews. When Dine families get together there is usually some type of stew or maybe a few types of stew being prepared. Ask students to name some Navajo stews. One of my favorite stews is Neeshjizhii, or steamed corn stew. This soup takes hours to prepare because it is made from dried steam corn that needs to be rehydrated.
3. SW watch [video on Neeshjizhii](#). In the olden days, there were no ovens, so many Native American tribes made earth fire pits, basically an oven in the ground. Naadąq łee' shibéésh is corn that is cooked all night in a pit in the ground. It is covered with more husks, and topped with dirt and a fire is started on top of the corn. All night, the corn is heated in the pit. "When the pit is thoroughly heated up and only red-hot charcoal is left, throw the unhusked corn into the pit all at once, stacking them up to the very top of the pit." (Michaelis, p.31). In the morning, the corn is dug up and taken out to enjoy. Some corn is set out to dry in the sun. This particular corn is shelled off the cob and is called Neeshjizhii. I will show pictures of making Neeshjizhii stew with lamb meat.
  - a. SW watch video on [preparing Neeshjizhii](#). Other traditional soups: [Dumpling stew](#), [Dumpling stew and Fry bread](#), & [Squash soup & Three sister stew](#)
4. This next part is an Orff arrangement that I created called, Daa oh są', which means Time to eat. It is a speech ensemble that is spoken in rhythmic chant, and the melody part can be played on Orff instruments. This can be used in English only or Navajo.
  - a. In my home, I say "Daa Oh są" when it is time to eat. I then ask my kids "did you wash your hands? "Nihilá' tánéígishish?"
  - b. Ask students: What does your family say when it is time to eat? Do you wash your hands every time you prepare food or eat?

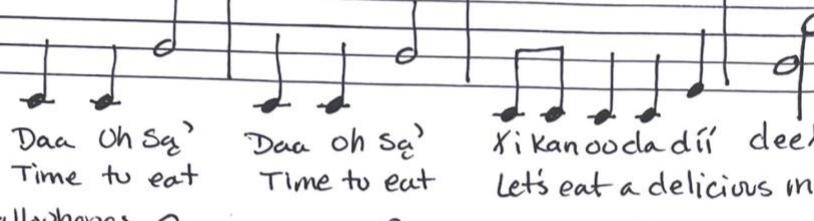
## Time To Eat

Daa Oh Sa'

Denisa Smiley

## A section

Hand鼓 (Hand Drums) 4/4



Daa Oh Sq' 1st-G  
Time to eat 2nd-C

Daa Oh Sq' Time to eat

Ki Kan oo da di' deet Let's eat a delicious meal.

Metallophones 4/4



Daa Oh Sq' Time to eat

Bass 4/4



A Spoken/mallet sticks tap

A handwritten musical score for a vocal piece. The score consists of a single staff with ten measures. The first measure starts with a '♩' (quarter note) followed by a 'x' (rest). The second measure starts with a '♩' followed by a 'x' (rest). The third measure starts with a '♩' followed by a 'x' (rest). The fourth measure starts with a '♩' followed by a 'x' (rest). The fifth measure starts with a '♩' followed by a 'x' (rest). The sixth measure starts with a '♩' followed by a 'x' (rest). The seventh measure starts with a '♩' followed by a 'x' (rest). The eighth measure starts with a '♩' followed by a 'x' (rest). The ninth measure starts with a '♩' followed by a 'x' (rest). The tenth measure starts with a '♩' followed by a 'x' (rest). The lyrics 'Shi báu lika nisin' are written below the staff. The tempo is marked as 'mp' (mezzo-pianissimo).

Handwritten musical score for 'I want something sweet' with lyrics 'Ashihsaa naah'.

Score details:

- Key signature: C major (no sharps or flats).
- Time signature: Common time (indicated by 'C').
- Tempo: Moderate (indicated by 'M').
- Dynamic: *mf* (mezzo-forte).
- Instrumentation: The score uses a single line for a vocal or melodic instrument.
- Notes and Rhythms: The score consists of a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with rests and a fermata (a vertical line with a bracket) placed above the notes.
- Text: The lyrics 'I want something sweet' are written above the staff, and 'Ashihsaa naah' is written below the staff.

ff

Please, pass the salt.

Shie-i ?

## CODA (ENDING)

1. Imagine there are all kinds of foods on the dinner table and they see their favorite. Hold it in their mind, when we get to them they will say "I'll have some \_\_\_\_\_ please."

2. Everyone will sing the melody. Part A: “Time to eat, Time to eat, let’s eat a delicious meal”.
  - a. Add some barred Orff instruments CC-G, CC-G, CC C C G
  - b. Go around the room and everyone will share their favorite food.
  - c. Learn the Navajo Phrase by Echo chant: “Do oh sq’
3. Divide students into two groups.
4. Part A: “Wait, go wash your hands!” Each time with Dynamics p (soft), mp (moderately soft), mf (moderately loud), ff (very loud).
  - a. Tap mallet sticks together and say the phrase with dynamic markings
5. Part B: is a series of guests saying individual phrases. One guest will say, “I will have soup! Repeat the chant and the second guest will say, “I will have something sweet.” The third guest will say, “Please pass the salt.” Continue in this fashion with “please pour me some tea”, “I’ll have some coffee, please”, Please pass the fry bread”.
  - a. Add rhythm instruments: small drums, wood blocks, triangles, jingle clogs, rhythm sticks, tambourines, guiros, maracas.
  - b. Extend the lesson to a Thanksgiving Table
    - i. SW create some phrases for Thanksgiving such as: I want turkey, I’ll have a dinner roll, I’ll have some mashed potatoes, please pass the gravy.
6. Part C: Coda (ending) Everyone will repeat four times “Doo shá téého naashádó” Each time different dynamics (ff, f, mf, mp) touching R- knees, repeat touch L-knees, repeat touch their arms, repeat swipe whole self.
  - a. \*Dine Teachings: I once observed an elderly man blessing himself with the food that he had just eaten. He rubbed the “fat from Mutton” on his joints and said something in Navajo. Later, I asked my mom what he said, “Doo shá téého naashádó”, which means no harm will come to my legs. My aches will not hurt.
  - b. Bass xylophone can roll on C-G while everyone says the phrase 4x.
7. Performance: ABACA Form
  - A: chant
  - B: responses
  - A: chant
  - C: coda
  - A: chant. At the end, “Mmmmm this is good, Thank you for a delicious meal”
8. Clean up: Who does the dishes? Speaking of dishes. Do you have broken dishes at home?
  - a. Did you know that it is a Navajo Tradition that we do not keep broken dishes? Ask your grandparents and relatives, Why?
  - b. Watch a video of Disney’s “Be Our Guest”. Ask students: How was the character, Belle, treated as a guest? served with paper plates? I see more and more homes converting to using paper plates. My dad was happy to be served on dishes, and he commented, “back at home, (rez) everyone is now using paper plates. He said that cooking tools and dishes have feelings. They like to be displayed and used. To this day, I use real dishes everyday, and I only use paper plates at camp or at a B-B-Q. This is a Dine teaching, too.

**Assessment:** I can name some Navajo words or phrases. I retell how a traditional Navajo soup was made, I can tell the wise teaching of an elderly man after he ate dinner, and why it was important to the Navajo people. I can play a simple melodic ostinato on the xylophone.

**Exit Ticket:** SW write down a speech part “I’ll have some \_\_\_\_\_, please.”

**Lesson Plan: Deconstructing the song, “Colors of the Wind”**

**Grade Level:** 5th-Grade

**Materials:** Song, “Colors of the Wind” from Disney’s Pocahontas, [sign language tutorial](#), Family Recipe Cards (see appendix), blue corn meal, water, juniper ashes, Navajo stirring sticks, ádistsiin. [The Making of Disney’s Pocahontas video](#)

**Instruments:** none

**Dine Standards:**

- History 3 PO 1. I will research the cultures and lands of other neighboring Indian tribes
- History 4 PO 1. I will practice Dine culture teachings
- Language 4 PO 2. I will use appropriate facial expressions, gestures, or dramatize to support my presentation.

**AZ State Standards:**

- Connections: 11.b. Describe how context (e.g., social, cultural, historical) can inform a performance.

**Learning Objectives:**

- I can follow the entire song with sign language
- I can sing the entire song with a singing voice, expression and gestures.
- I can retell some Native American view points in this song.
- I can read lyrics and find the messages and make connections to their meaning.

**Procedure:**

1. SW listen to the Disney song, “Colors of the Wind” by Alan Menken and Stephen Schwartz. From Wikipedia: “Schwartz wanted to write a song for the film wherein *Pocahontas* confronts the [Eurocentrism](#) of [John Smith](#).<sup>[3]</sup> “Colors of the Wind” was the first song written for *Pocahontas*. According to Schwartz, the song “influence[d] the development of the rest of the film.”
  - a. SW watch a clip from [The Making of Disney’s Pocahontas video](#) (0-2:00 min)
2. The Title of the song was influenced by a [letter from Chief Seattle](#), and located in the United States Congress Library, reads: “The wind that gave our grandfather his first breath also received his last sigh. The wind also gives our children the spirit of life. So if we sell our land, you must keep it apart and sacred, as a place where man can go to taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow flowers.”
  - a. The Navajos have songs and prayers about the wind. The four sacred directions. Encourage students to ask their grandparents about the songs and ceremonies of the Wind way.
  - b. “You can own the Earth, and still/all you’ll own is earth until/you can paint with all the colors of the wind.” Discuss what they think this means
3. Discuss with students some of the native teachings they hear in the song. For example: “*Every rock and tree has a name*”. Do they know that the medicine man knows the sacred names of some of these animals and elements in nature? It is a sacred knowledge

of the Dine teaching. For this part, it is their wonder to ask their grandparents, because it is sacred knowledge that is not taught or said or written down.

4. Discuss the words in the song “*The only people who are people are the people who look and think like you*” and in the video they see a bear. Do they know the bear is one of the [clan protectors](#) and does have a sacred name, too? Discuss what other sacred animals are mentioned or heard in the video, such as: heron, eagle, bear. Do they know of some animal stories? Encourage the students to ask their grandparents or elders to tell these stories during the Winter.
5. The elements also have a sacred name, such as wind, “*rainstorm, and the river are my Brothers*” see page 2 of the [letter from Chief Seattle](#). We are related to all this “*In a circle, In a hoop, that never ends.*” In the Dine teachings we are related to the animals and certain animals are key protectors and there are many animals that have a story. Take a look at the words “*If you walk the footsteps of a stranger, you'll learn things you never knew you never knew*”.
  - a. Resume [The Making of Disney's Pocahontas video](#) (11:15-end)
6. What does “*Blue corn moon*” mean? Use Recipe Cards to show pictures of Mrs. Smiley’s Blue corn meal. My students here in Phoenix had never seen a blue corn or knew about a blue corn meal. While showing them the Recipe cards, slides, they called it “Black corn”. Do they know about different types of corn?
7. First, invite students to talk about what they know about how to prepare blue corn. Has anyone helped make it? If so, what was used to make blue corn meal?
8. SW will watch a video of a blue [corn meal](#).
9. If available, the teacher will show the stirring sticks (Ádístsiin), which are made out of a plant called Greasewood, (Díwózhii). Watch the video [Adistiin](#). Next, talk about Blue corn, sw watch a video about Native Corn.
10. Next, learn some of the sign language to the song “Colors of the Wind”. Many tribes had sign language, because there were many different tribes, I’m sure we had to communicate with neighboring tribes, too.

**Assessment:** I can sing the entire song and I can sign language the entire song. I can tell my partner what new Native American teaching I learned from singing this song. I like Mrs. Smiley’s Blue Corn Meal:)

**Extension:** Mrs. Smiley will demonstrate how to make blue corn meal for class.

### **Lesson Plan: Healthy Dine Nation Rap**

**Grade Level:** 5th Grade

**Material:** Quaver Rap Lesson. If you do not have Quaver access, you may use any rap back beat, [Example 1](#), [Example 2](#), [Example 3 \(Ethnic Hip-Hop beat\)](#), [Famous Native American Rap \(Def-i\)](#), [back beat with mouth video](#), Quaver Beatbox lesson (if you have access)

### **Dine Standards:**

- Government 2 PO 3. I will describe ways to maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Language 3 PO 2. I will use appropriate facial expression, gestures, or dramatization to support my presentation.

- Culture 3 PO 3. I will recognize the edible plants in my environment.

**Arizona Standards:**

- Performing 4.b. Demonstrate understanding of the form in music selected for performance.
- Creating 4.b. Present the final version of personally or collectively created music to others and explain your creative process.

**Learning Objectives:** at the end of the lesson, students will be able to

- Write lyrics to “Food Rap”
- create a music form ABA or ABACA
- Perform a rap with a backbeat.

**Procedure:**

1. SW create a rap using:  
“Put that Junk Food Down!  
Do Not have it Around”
2. Using back beats students will jot ideas down or “freestyle” what comes to mind.
  - a. SW writes lyrics and starts rehearsing their rap.
  - b. SW watch a video with [Beatbox with mouth](#). Try it.
3. Try putting their rap in an ABA musical form or a Rondo form ABACA
4. Share with class. \*Extra credit if your group has a beatbox person:)
5. SW watch a video clip about a famous Navajo Rapper (Def-i)
6. Listen to Mrs. Smiley’s Rap, DJ start that beatbox: [“Rap Old School Underground”](#)
  - Form A: Put that junk food down! Do not have it around!
  - Form B: Eat fresh food, fresh vegetables, and nuts
  - Form A: Put that junk food down! Do not have it around!
  - Form C: No artificial beverages, or blue no.5..... Yep, No Monsters!  
No chips, no fake cheese, or red dye....Yep, No Taki's!  
No sugar, no sweets, or candies.... Yep, No gummies!
  - Form A: So put that junk food down! Do not have it around!

**Assessment:** Are students able to come up with a food topic to rap about? If not, did they use the example and add to it? Did the rap lyrics flow with the beat? Are students able to make simple sounds with their mouths for backbeat?

**Lesson plan:** [“Go My Son” \(version 1\)](#)

**Grade level:** 5th-grade

**Materials:** Recording of “Go My Son” by composers Arlene Nofchissey Williams (Navajo) and Carnes Burson (Ute). Share the Music p.254, CD 6 track 9, “Go My Son” arrangement by Denisa Smiley (Navajo), sign language [Version 3-Native American Sign Language](#)

Orff instruments (xylophones, metallophones, glockenspiels), Unpitched percussion instruments: native drum, rattles, shells.

**Dine Standards:**

- Language 4 PO4: I will recite songs or poems to an audience
- Government 2 PO2: I will show ways to sustain my mental health through Dine Teachings.

**Arizona Standards:**

- Connecting 10.a Explain why particular pieces of music are important to your family or cultural heritage
- Connecting 11.b Describe how context (e.g., social, cultural, historical) can inform a performance.

**Learning Objectives:** Students will be able to

- Identify the composer and cultural origins of the song, “Go My Son”.
- Create and perform an original body percussion or instrumental ostinato to accompany “Go My Son”
- Describe how the song’s message of pursuing education relates to its Native American context.

**Procedure**

Introduction (Imitation and Cultural Context)

- Engage: Begin by saying the Corn Pollen Model from the last lesson. Focus on words “Climb the ladder”
- Introduce “Go My Son” and share the cultural background of the song, explaining that it was written by two Native American students to encourage young people to get an education. The song references the historical advice of Navajo Chief Manuelito, who saw education as a “ladder” to a better future for his people.
- Display pictures of Native American way of life, their homes, clothing. The Native Americans were forced to assimilate and their children were sent to boarding schools. Show pictures of a [Navajo young man in native attire](#) and his tuxedo.
- Echo-Sing: Play a recording of “Go My Son” and have students echo-sing each phrase after you. Focus on the words and the simple, memorable melody.

"Go My Son"

words and music by Carnes Burson  
and Arlene Nofchissey  
arr. by Denisa Smiley

All Barred Instr.

\*remove C & F

1. Go my son, go and climb the ladder. Go my son, Go and earn your feather.

rattle

Guiros

Drum

Go my son, Make your people proud of you.

rattle

Guiros

Drum

shake

### Exploration (Movement and Body Percussion)

- Guided Movement: Listen to the song again. Ask students to explore how their bodies can move to the beat and mood of the music. Start with simple movements like patting knees on the beat or swaying.
- Body Percussion Ostinato: Teach the class a simple ostinato (a repeating rhythmic pattern) to accompany the song.
  - Ex: "Go, My Son.." pat-pat
  - "...Go, and climb the ladder" hands motion step up like a ladder
  - "...Go, my son..." pat-pat
  - "...Go, an earn your feather" (Improvise)
  - "...Go, my son..." pat-pat
  - "...make your people proud of you." (Improvise)
    - Allow students to improvise-make up their own movements.
- Watch Go My Son ([Version 3-Native American Sign Language](#))
  - Try the sign language with the song. Did we have any similarities to our improvised movements?

### Creation (Adding Instruments)

- Introduce instruments: Arrange students around the Orff instruments. Before playing, set the instruments in D-pentatonic scale by removing the C and F bars.

- Instrument Ostinato: Assign instrument groups to play a simple ostinato that complements the vocal melody.
  - Bass xylophones/Metallophones: play D (Half note, quarter, quarter)
  - Alto xylophones/Metallophones:
    - Play A-G-G “Go My Son” sign language “go & climb the ladder”
    - play A-G-G “Go My Son” sign language “go & earn feather”
    - play G-E-E “Go My Son” sign “Make your people proud of you”
  - Unpitched percussion: accompaniment ostinato patterns
    - Rattles/maraca (Q,Q, EE,Q) \*say (Ta, Ta, Ta-di, Ta)
    - Guiros (Half note, Q, Q) \*say (Too, Ta, Ta)
    - Native Drums (Q,Q,Q,Q) \*say (Ta, Ta, Ta, Ta)

\*Say and play: Have the class practice their parts using “Takadimi”

Verse 1	Verse 2	Verse 3
<p>Go, my son, Go, and climb the ladder. Go, my son, Go, and earn your feather Go, my son, Make your people proud of you.</p>	<p>Work, my son, get an education. Work my son, learn a good vocation. Climb, my son, go and take a lofty view</p>	<p>On the ladder of an education You can see to Help your indian nation, then Reach my son and Lift your people up with you.</p>

### Performance and Connecting

- Perform the full song as a class, layering the voices, body percussion, and instruments together. Guide students to listen to each other and balance their sound.
- Reflect and Connect: Lead a discussion to address the standards.
  - Ask students how the song’s meaning (context) influenced their performance choices. How did the lyrics affect our tone on the instruments? Did we play softer?
  - Have students share other songs that are culturally important to them and their families, or discuss why music is important to our own culture.(Think of a song that is important to you or your family?)
  - Listen to other versions of Go My Son ([version 2-famous Native Americans \\*Omit Buffy Saint Marie](#)), [Go My Son \(Version 2-Choir with movement\)](#)

### Assessment:

- Informal: Observe students’ participation in the echo-singing, movement, and instrumental activities.
- Formal: Have students perform their part on vocal or instrumental parts.

### Mrs. Smiley's Curriculum Bundle

The prayer within me. I think about this a lot lately, it is about hope. A powerful prayer that was spoken a lifetime ago and it is still unraveling within our people, within me. I think perhaps, our elders spoke these sacred words on our behalf and they linger until we are ready to grasp. My grandfather once spoke of the prayers that our ancestors spoke. Even though it was said way back, it is still here, we are still here. In this mindframe, I have hope for the future. May these lessons help educate the whole child. Upon thinking in this manner, about prayers of long ago, then perhaps our neighboring tribes spoke this way, too. It is with this mindframe that I celebrate Thanksgiving because it is Hozho or the Beauty Way.

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## Appendix



Recipe by Denisa Smiley, Navajo NM

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### Blue Corn Mush Taa'niil

Taa'niil. I learned this from my Shinali (paternal grandmother). Boil some water, take out a cup of water and add juniper ash to water, stir. Mix back into pot. Use stirring sticks and slowly add blue corn meal. Always turn your stick clockwise when cooking. It will slowly thicken. Top with honey, and fresh fruits. 4 cups water, 2 cups blue corn meal, 1 Tbsp juniper ash



 Recipe by Denisa Smiley from Navajo, AZ

## Kneel Down Bread ~Ntsidigo'i Cooking with the Earth.

Ntsidigo'i- Fresh corn is husked then grinded. The mixture is placed in a cleaned corn husked and another corn husk is placed on top to cover. The way the corn husked is folded over looks like a knee, hence the name kneel-down bread. The bundles are placed underground and cooked. Today, we use cuisinart food processor and our ovens to bake the ntsidigo'i. Traditionally, the entire family worked on the corn field and prepared this at the corn field. I remember, in my childhood the entire family would come together to make the traditional corn ntsidigo'i and also the "Rock Point Special" meat mixture with sheep blood. Very tasty.



1/3

 Recipe by Denisa Smiley from Navajo, AZ

## Steamed Corn Stew Neeshjizhii

To make this stew you'll need dried steamed corn. In a pot of water, boil the corn for 2-3 hours or all night in a slow cooker. The longer cooking process is needed to rehydrate the corn and tenderize the mutton. The longer you cook the stew the more flavorful the base of the stew will be. This is everyone's favorite and I always try to make this during Thanksgiving, Birthday's, and family get togethers. It's so delicious there will be no leftovers. .



Recipe by Ms. Elouise Willson & Theresa James, Monument Valley, UT

## Navajo Potatoes Nímasii Yázhí

During a N.A.U. DINE field trip to Monument Valley High School, we heard from elder Elouise Wilson and school Principal, Ms. Theresa James. They talked about Nímasii yázhí, a small potato that grows only near canyon walls. This plant is very hard to regrow and they had tried different methods to plant. Traditional, this potato is boiled in the Navajo clay pots. When boiled in a regular pot "gleesh" white clay must be added to water to take out the bitterness. Using the Navajo pot is ideal, because it naturally removes the bitterness.



Recipe by Denisa Smiley from Navajo, NM

## Mutton Dumpling Stew Ał'k'ineeshbízhii

This is a traditional Navajo stew that I learned from my mother.

Cut up mutton and boil 30-40 min. Make dough with 3 cups flour, 1 ½ Tbsp baking powder, 1 tsp salt. Mix about 1 cup warm water into flour mixture and knead dough until it comes together. Take a golf size ball and spread dough until a disc forms then continue to stretch. Tear apart and drop into stew. You can also roll a couple of dough balls and make longer noodles. The rest of the dough use to make fry bread. To thicken stew mix about 2 Tbsp of flour and water and add to stew. Cook stew for another 15 min then serve with fry bread. I once made this soup in college because there were a lot of Navajo students craving homemade stew.



Shared by Calvina Barry from Rock Point, AZ

## Chiitchin (Sumac Berries)

### Preparation:

Wash berries when picked then set out to dry. Inspect with hands to check if they are dried evenly. Once they are dried, use a blender or small chopper to grind into powder-like substance. Sift to remove seeds.

### Ingredient:

¾ cup of grinded chiitchin  
6 quarts water bring to boil for 15 min.

### Method::

Bring water to boil for 15 min. Add powdered chiitchin to water and stir. For thicker texture: add Flour.



Recipe by Belinda Johnson from Dinebeto, AZ

## Yucca Fruit Tsá'ászi'niteelí

**Yacca Fruit**, When ripen, a fruit will come out that looks like small bananas. First wash and bake in an oven (5-10 min) or until fruit is soften. Remove from oven and squeeze the fruit, which will release seeds. Discard peel, and return the seeds to the oven to bake a while longer. Enjoy as is or as a topping. To keep, stored in a ziplock bag and freezed.

This fruit is how our ancestors survived long ago.



Recipe by Belinda Johnson from Dinebeto, AZ

## Roasted Corn ~ Cooking with the Earth.

**Roasted corn:** wash white corn, let it dry, get sand and sift it. Put sand in a pan and heat. Use a long stick for a stirring stick. Once sand is heated add dry corn and the sand will help cook it. Once finished, pour onto a screen to remove dirt. Items will be hot, carefully splash hot salt water onto corn.



Recipe by Belinda Johnson from Dinebeto, AZ

## Turkey (Tazhii) cooked underground

**Turkey underground:** cooked and baked all night in a ground pit.

My Aunties said the bones come right off and the meat tastes different. She also noted you can cook sheep meat in the ground. It tastes delicious, too.



Recipe by Belinda Johnson from Dinebeto, AZ

## Goat Milk Popsicles

**Goats Milk Popsicles.** First, make simple syrup by boiling equal parts of sugar & water, remove from heat and add goats milk. Stir at a low temperature, careful not to burn. Remove from heat and let mixture thicken. Next, use snow from outside. Mix snow with thickened goats milk and store outside or top of hogan beams to make a frozen treat. Enjoy!



Recipe by Maggie Johnson from Navajo, NM

## Blue Corn Biscuits Naadą́łees'áán Dootłizhí

Naadą́łees'áán- cooked directly on the ground, baked on hot ashes. To prepare, mix 2 cups blue corn meal with 2 Tbsp. juniper ashes & slowly add hot water to make a thick texture. Pat out in oval shapes and place directly onto ashes. Bake until the outside is hardened. This may take more than 25 min depending on the heat of ashes. Remove most of the ashes.

My grandmother said these are small bundles that are given to medicine man or Yeibacheii



Recipe by Kathleen Smiley from Navajo, NM

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## Wild Onion Stew Azaa' Aleeh

My mother also shared a traditional wild onion stew, called Azaa'aleeh. This is an herb enriched soup made with wild onions and is thicken with flour. My mother learned how to make this from my late Shináli Asdzáqan.



Retold by Tom Smiley from Rock Point, AZ

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## Is it Salt or Sugar?

One evening, while sitting around the table, my father once shared why sugar is called 'Ashjíjh Łikan. The people once called sugar, Łigai 'nah zhoosh, because it describes a white substance, but then salt is a white substance too. To prevent the confusion sugar is now called, 'Ashjíjh Łikan, which translates to "sweet salt." Pepper is 'Azeedích' íí Łiinaigii.

My father also shared that long ago, dishes were clean with sand and water, because there was no dish soap. The sand was especially good to clean oil from pans.