

# Manitoba Arts Education Curriculum Programming “Exemplars of Learning”



*This exemplar includes*



*appropriate for grades*

K

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

## Who are the Inuit?

A Music and Dance Learning Experience



This exemplar includes student experiences in

## *Music*

### *Music Language and Performance Skills*

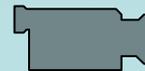
Students...created an Ajaaja song melody by improvising question and answer phrases containing syn-co-pa patterns.

### *Understanding Music In Context*

Listened to, responded and learned to sing examples of Inuit music.



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### *Creative Expression in Music*

Created soundscapes based on Inuit descriptors for snow.

### *Valuing Musical Experience*

Participated actively in the music making and creating activities. They performed for each other and shared personal responses.

This exemplar includes student experiences in



## *Dance*

*Dance  
Language  
and  
Performance  
Skills*



Students demonstrate understanding of 'Space' by experimenting with and creating movement using levels, pathways and turns.

*Creative  
Expression  
in Dance*



Students create movement in response to musical stimuli.

*Understanding  
Dance In  
Context*

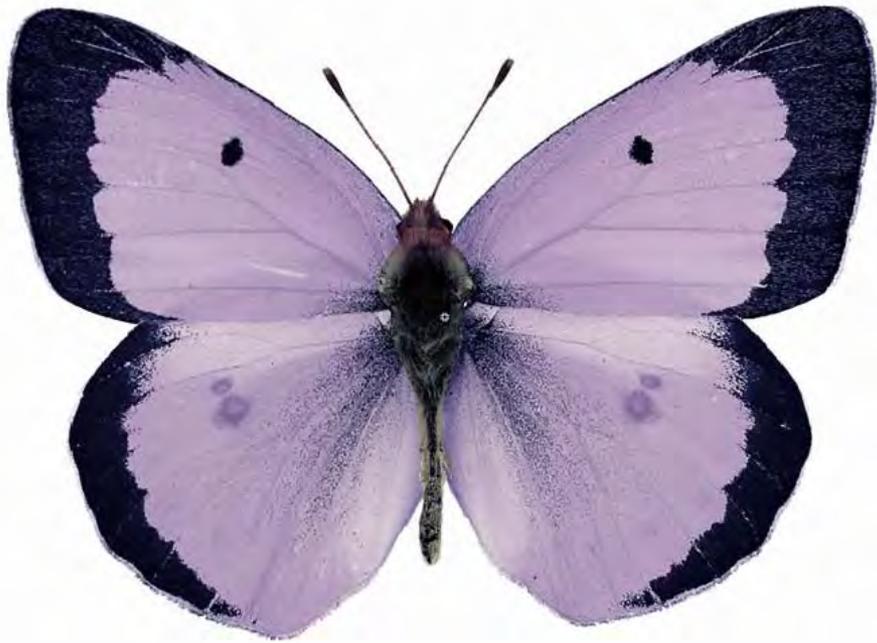


Students create their own movement to accompany Inuit drum dancing.

*Valuing  
Dance  
Experience*



Students view each others' performances, ask questions and comment on movement ideas.



**Every student deserves to know the joy of dance** and to learn in and through active, developmentally appropriate dance experiences.

Through *dancing*, students learn about the world around them and the world beyond, experiencing dances from diverse cultures and times.





***Every student is a music maker***, one whose growth and learning are best realized within rich, meaningful, hands-on music-making experiences. In becoming young musicians, students learn to sing and play the music of a variety of places, times, and peoples, as well as to improvise, arrange, and compose music. As increasingly reflective and artistic music-makers, students gain skills, understandings, and attitudes that enrich them in many ways, enabling and inspiring them to continue making music for the rest of their lives.





# The Learning Context

## ***The Big Idea:***

Who are the Inuit? How can we experience and explore their lives through music and dance?

***The students*** in this exemplar were in Gr. 4. They were learning about the Inuit in Social Studies program and were interested to find out more about the Inuit people.

***Prior learning*** included experiences using syncopated rhythm and creating music. The students were comfortable working in groups. They were experienced in establishing compositional criteria, sharing and analyzing their work with each other.

***Classroom setting & resources included*** a music room with a classroom set of barred Orff instruments, assorted non-pitched percussion. The music and classroom teachers collaborated to design learning experiences to explore interrelated outcomes. This learning experience evolved over a period of two months.



# Overview of teaching and learning experiences

## ***First the students***

- asked questions about the Inuit to generate ideas for learning
- viewed pictures of the North and learned to sing an Inuit weather chant
- created soundscapes to represent Inuit descriptors for snow
- used movement to explore music concepts
- choreographed movement and set it to an Inuit poem

## ***Next they***

- listened to examples of Inuit throat singing and recorded their responses in a listening log
- learned to sing a segment of Stephen Hatfield's "Nukapianquaq" (goose chant)

## ***Then they***

- listened to and learned to sing an Ajaaja song
- accompanied the Ajaaja song with Inuit Drum Dancing
- created an Ajaaja melody by improvising question and answer phrases containing syncopated rhythms on barred instruments

## ***Finally the students***

- listened to a recording of 'Free' by Susan Aglukark and recorded their responses in a listening log
- discussed and explored Western influences on Inuit music
- recorded the Goose chant and Ajaaja song for their individual CD portfolio
- reflected on their learning (written)
- created a class DVD demonstrating their Inuit music and dance learning for portfolio night



# First ... as invitations to learning,



the students viewed pictures of the North, explored fiction and non fiction and reflected on their personal experience and knowledge of the Inuit.

## **Learning Conversation:**

*I wonder what sounds you would hear in the North?*

*What are the seasons like? How cold is it?*

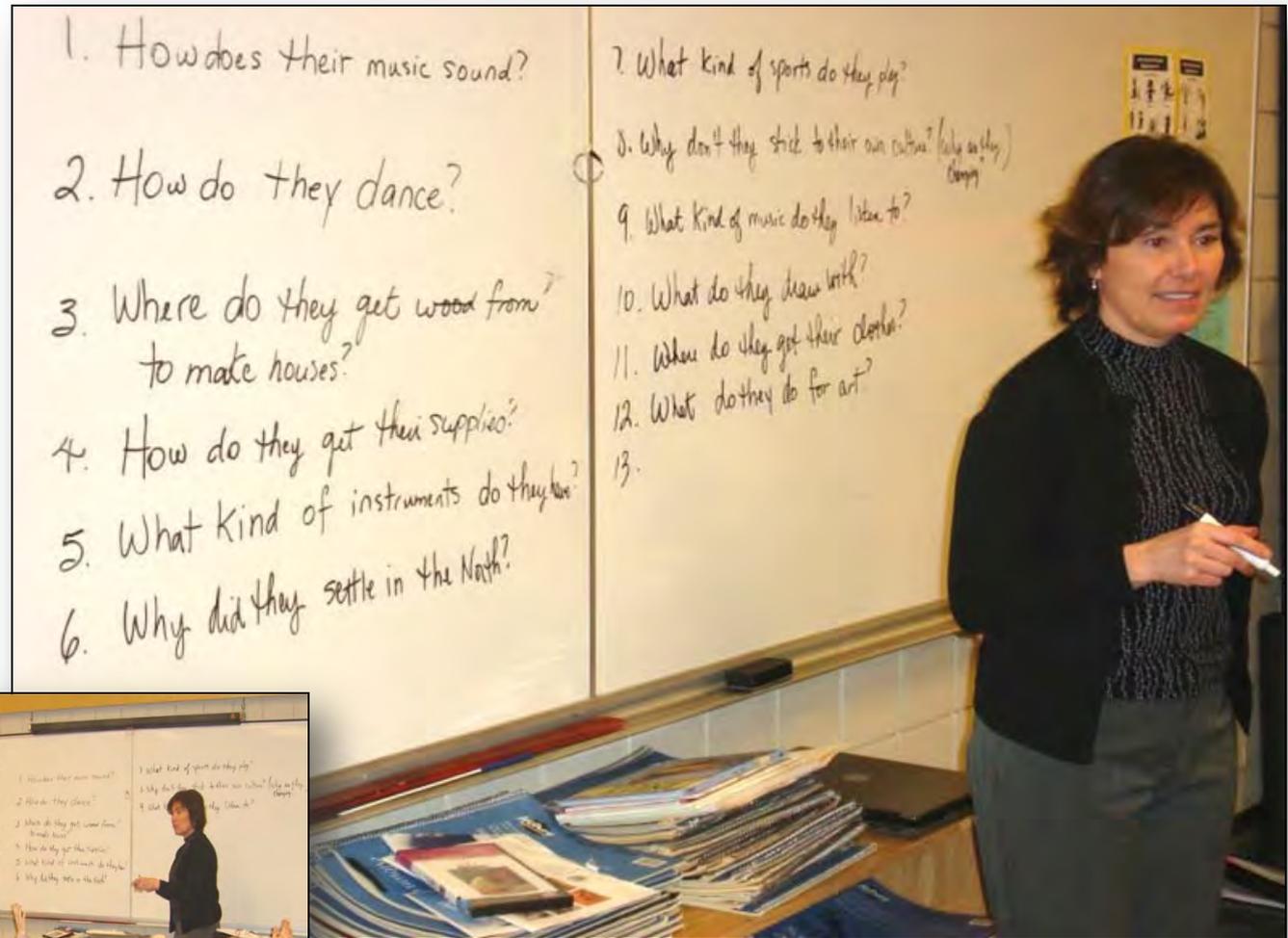
*Who lives there?*

*Why do the Inuit live there? What do they do?*

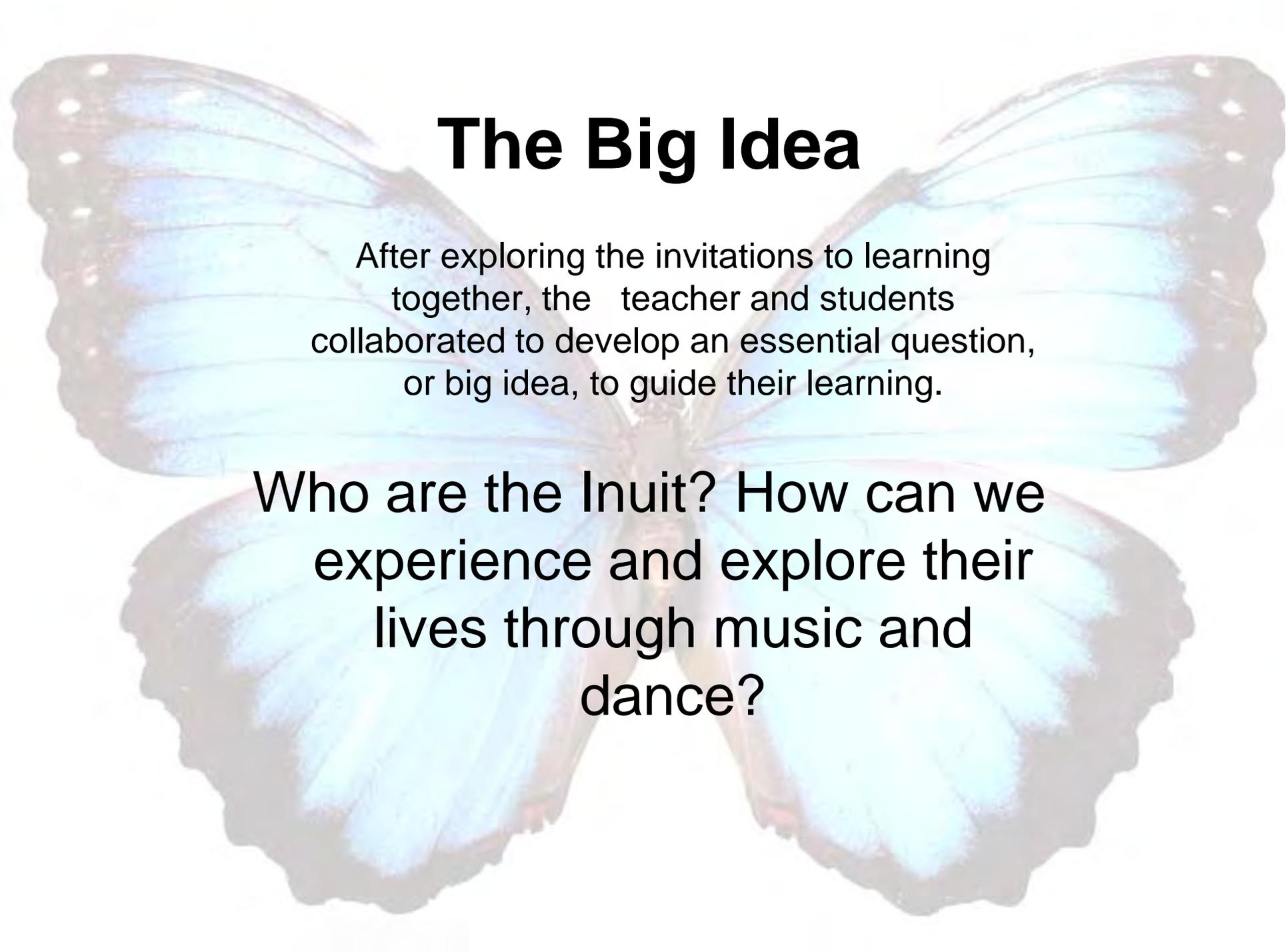
*Where would you want to go, if you went up North?*



The students were given an opportunity to ask more questions about the Inuit. These questions were used to generate ideas for student learning.



 See appendix for info on inquiry process



# The Big Idea

After exploring the invitations to learning together, the teacher and students collaborated to develop an essential question, or big idea, to guide their learning.

**Who are the Inuit? How can we experience and explore their lives through music and dance?**



The students learned to sing an Inuit weather chant (English text) by echoing the teacher phrase by phrase.

Through guided listening, students determined musical characteristics of the chant.

*Inuit Shamans sang songs asking the spirits for help. A weather chant might be sung asking for good weather on a hunting trip.*

### ***Learning Conversation:***

- 1. How many different pitches do you hear? (Student response: Three)*
- 2. How would you describe the movement of the pitches?( student responses: repeated, by step, one large jump).*
- 3. Would this be sung fast or slow and why? (student response: slow, medium. It was an important song. It was serious).*

### **Weather Chant**

Inuit Weather Chant found in:  
Barron,J. *Ride With Me: A Journey From Unison To Part Singing*,  
Frederick Harris Music Company  
Ltd. (1993).

*In Music Language & Performance Skills, students play and sing by ear, reproducing simple melodies, rhythms, and accompaniments  
K-4 (M-L2)*



The students in groups of four, created sound scapes based on Inuit descriptors for snow. Each group had a different descriptor.

Inuit words for descriptions of snow:

Qanuk-snowflake

Kaneq-frost

Kanevvluk-fine snow particles

Natquik-drifting snow

Nevluk-clinging particles

Muruaneq-soft deep snow

Qetrar-crust on fallen snow



*In Creative Expression in Music, students are able to collaborate with others to develop and extend musical ideas. K-8 M-C 2.5*



Students presented their soundscapes to each other and were given an opportunity to answer questions or explain their instrument choices and playing techniques.



*In Creative Expression in Music, students make interpretive musical decisions, demonstrating understanding of a variety of ways in which expressive devices can be used 3-4 M-C3.*

*In Valuing Musical Experience, students reflect on, share, and explain personal responses (e.g., feelings, thoughts, images) evoked by various pieces of music and music-making experiences 2-4 MV3.1*



# Next

the students explored movement and space.

They explored space in response to different musical stimuli.

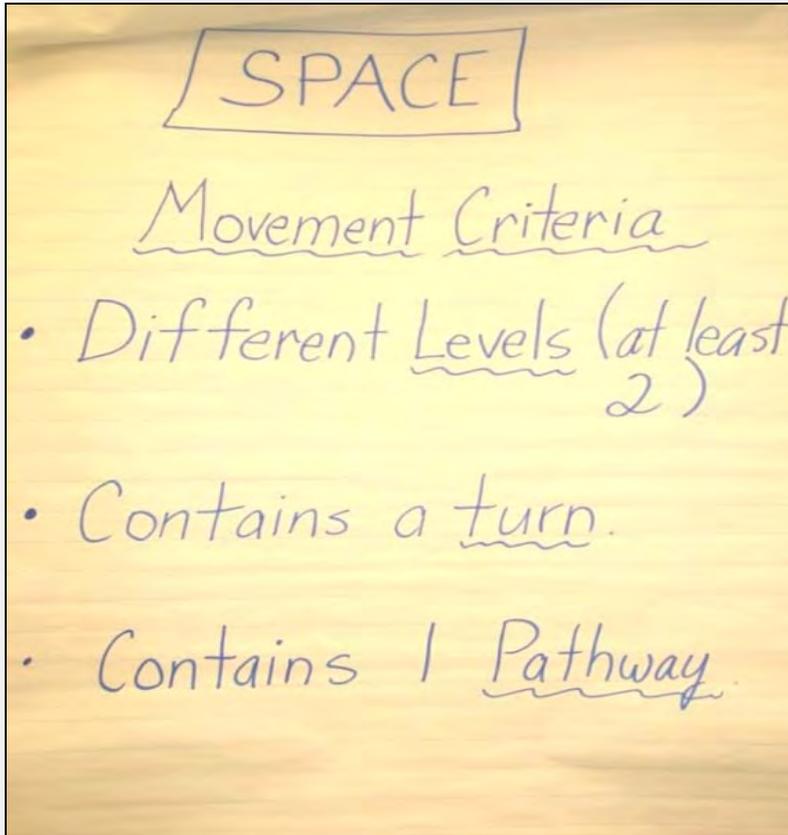
They experimented with different levels, turns and pathways.



*In Dance Language & Performance Skills, students use movement to demonstrate understanding of **space** in dance: personal and general space, dimensions, directions, levels , and pathways K-4 DA-L1.2*



**Students** were placed in groups of four and choreographed movement to the musical sounds based on set criteria.



*In Music Language & Performance Skills, students use movement to explore music concepts, enhance music-making, and express ideas (e.g., use movement to show high and low, steady beat ) K–4 M–L1.8*



Students then performed their choreographed movement to their classmates for feedback and an opportunity to explain their movement ideas.

### ***Student Comments:***

*I liked how they moved their arms as they changed to a low level.*

*I liked how they changed smoothly to their next move when the sound changed.*

*I liked that everyone knew what they were supposed to do.*



*In Valuing Dance Experience, students describe and give reasons for own preferences regarding dance experiences DA-V3.2*

*In Understanding Dance in Context, students engage and/or interact appropriately as participant, audience member, and performer*



# Then students

suggested that a class work be created using one movement idea from each group. The teacher added an Inuit poem in conjunction with the musical cues and the work was recorded for portfolio night.



## *The Great Sea (Uvavnuk)*

*The great sea has sent me adrift,  
It moves me as the weed in a great river,  
Earth and the great weather move me,  
Have carried me away  
And move my inward parts with joy.*

Inuit poem found in: Colombo, J, *Poems of the Inuit*, Toronto, Oberon Press,(1981).

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*In Valuing Dance Experience, students engage consistently and constructively in dance learning experiences*  
*K-4 Da-V1.1*

## Listening Log



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade 4

Title Katutjatut

Composer(s) \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you hear any voices? Man Woman Child

If there are voices, how many? two

2. What is the tempo? fast and slow

Are there changes in tempo? Yes

3. What is the dynamic level? loud

Are there changes in dynamics? no

4. What is the pitch range? low and high

5. The articulation is: smooth (legato) separated (staccato)

6. Do you hear any patterns? it is an ostinat

7. What does this music make you think of? it is a different religion!

Listen to the second song before answering the following questions.

8. How is this song similar or different from the first one?

It is the same because they are doing animals!  
It is different because it is different pitches!

Then students listened to examples of Inuit Throat Singing and recorded their responses in a listening log.

*In Understanding Music in Context, students perform, listen to, describe, and compare music representative of different times, places, social groups, and cultures (include: music from past and present, global, Canadian, and Manitoban cultures, including First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) 3-4 M-U1.1*

They learned to sing 'Goose Chant' from Stephen Hatfield's choral piece, 'Nukapianquaq'.



Throat singing was a traditional Inuit vocal game played to entertain children. Generally it was done by two women facing each other. Usually meaningless syllables were used which could portray cries of animals and birds. One person led with a short rhythmic motif and the other rhythmically filled in the gaps.



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*In Music Language & Performance Skills, students play and sing by ear, reproducing simple melodies, rhythms, and accompaniments K-4 ML2.1*

*In Understanding Music in Context, students perform, listen to, describe, and compare music representative of different times, places, social groups, and cultures (include: music from past and present, global, Canadian, and Manitoban cultures, including First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) 3-4 MU1.1*



**Next** students listened as the teacher sang another type of Inuit song to them (Ajaaja Song), using Inuit language text.

***Learning Conversation:***

- 1. Is this song more similar to **Throat Singing** or the Inuit **Weather Chant** and why? (Student responses: Weather Chant. It has a melody. It is medium speed. I think it has words. There are repeated pitches. There is some step movement.)*
- 2. What kind of song do you think this is? What is it about? (student responses: I think it was for entertainment. I think it was religious.)*
- 3. What do we use songs for? (Student responses: to listen to, weddings, ceremonies, entertainment, dancing)*
- 4. What kind of instruments might be used to accompany this song? (Student responses: drums, shakers)*

*In Understanding Music in Context, students describe a variety of purposes and roles for music in daily life, in own community and in other places and times 3-4 MU 3.1*



# Then

students learned to sing the Ajaaja song (see reference below).

## **Learning Conversation:**

1. *How many syn-co-pa rhythms are used in this song? (Student response: 4)*
2. *Looking at the English words, why might a song about fishing be important to this person? (Student response: Maybe it was his first fish. Maybe they were really hungry and needed it for food).*
3. *What might your personal song be about? (Student responses: first goal, riding a two-wheeler bike, catching a fish)*

*Almost all adults had their own Ajaaja song. An **Ajaaja song** was a personal song about notable events or experiences from their daily life. The song was accompanied by a hoop shaped drum called a **qilaut**. The drum had a handle and had caribou skin stretched across its rim. A drumstick was used to hit the rim.*

*Ajaaja Song (adapted from a Copper River Woman's song) in: Roberts,H. ,Jeness,D. **Songs of the Copper Eskimos**. Ottawa: F.A. Ackland, 1925*

*In Understanding Music in Context, students perform, listen to, describe, and compare music representative of different times, places, social groups, and cultures (include: music from past and present, global, Canadian, and Manitoban cultures, including First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) 3-4 MU1.1*

Then students created their own drum dance (in pairs) in the 'Aton' style.

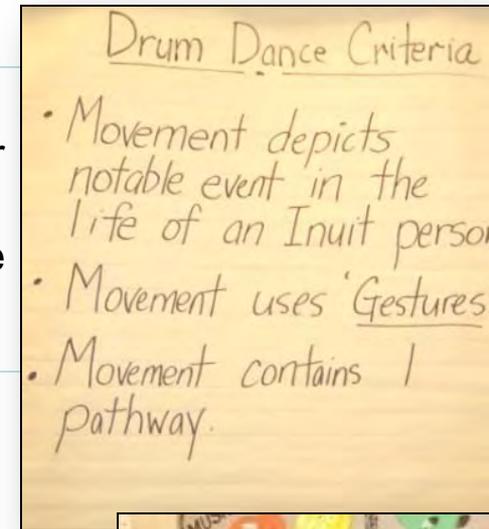


### **Teacher Explained...**

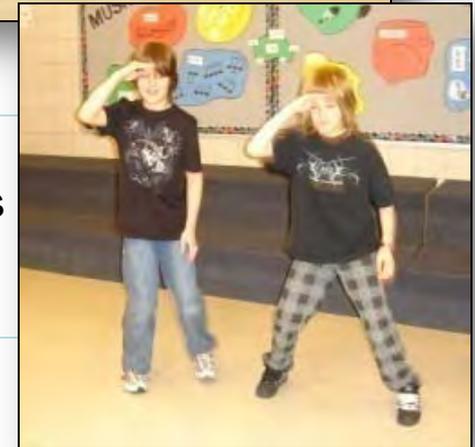
The **Aton style** of dance was used by the Western Inuit (Copper River, Mackenzie Basin). The drum was played by one of the singers in the circle. The dancer danced with more gestures and movement.

**Pisik style** of dance was used by the Inuit of the east (Labrador, Hudson Bay). The dancer wielded the drum himself while people around him in a circle accompanied in the singing. The dancer moved slowly round with slightly bent knees.

Students and teacher together set criteria for the Drum Dance creation.



Students worked in pairs to develop dance ideas.



*In Valuing Dance Experience, students participate in discussing and establishing criteria for successful dance learning experiences (e.g., criteria for components of well-developed dance idea, quality performance, effective audience) K-4 DA-V4.2*

*In Creative Expression in Dance, students collaborate with others in developing dance ideas K-4 DA-C2.6*



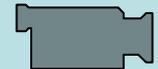
Students performed for each other two groups at a time.

Students in the circle tried to determine what notable event idea was portrayed through the movement. They were asked how gesture was used to portray the movement idea.

Students were given an opportunity to comment on and ask questions about the movement ideas.



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*In Dance Language & Performance Skills, students demonstrate understanding that **motion factors** (time, weight, and flow) and **gestures** can be used to create an endless range of movement qualities*  
**K-4 DA-L1.4**

*In Understanding Dance in Context, students demonstrate appreciation of dance as a means of experiencing and exploring own and others' lives (e.g., feelings, values, stories, events, cultures)*  
**K-4 DA U3.3**



**Next** students created their own *Ajaaja* melody on barred instruments using question and answer phrases containing syncopated rhythm.

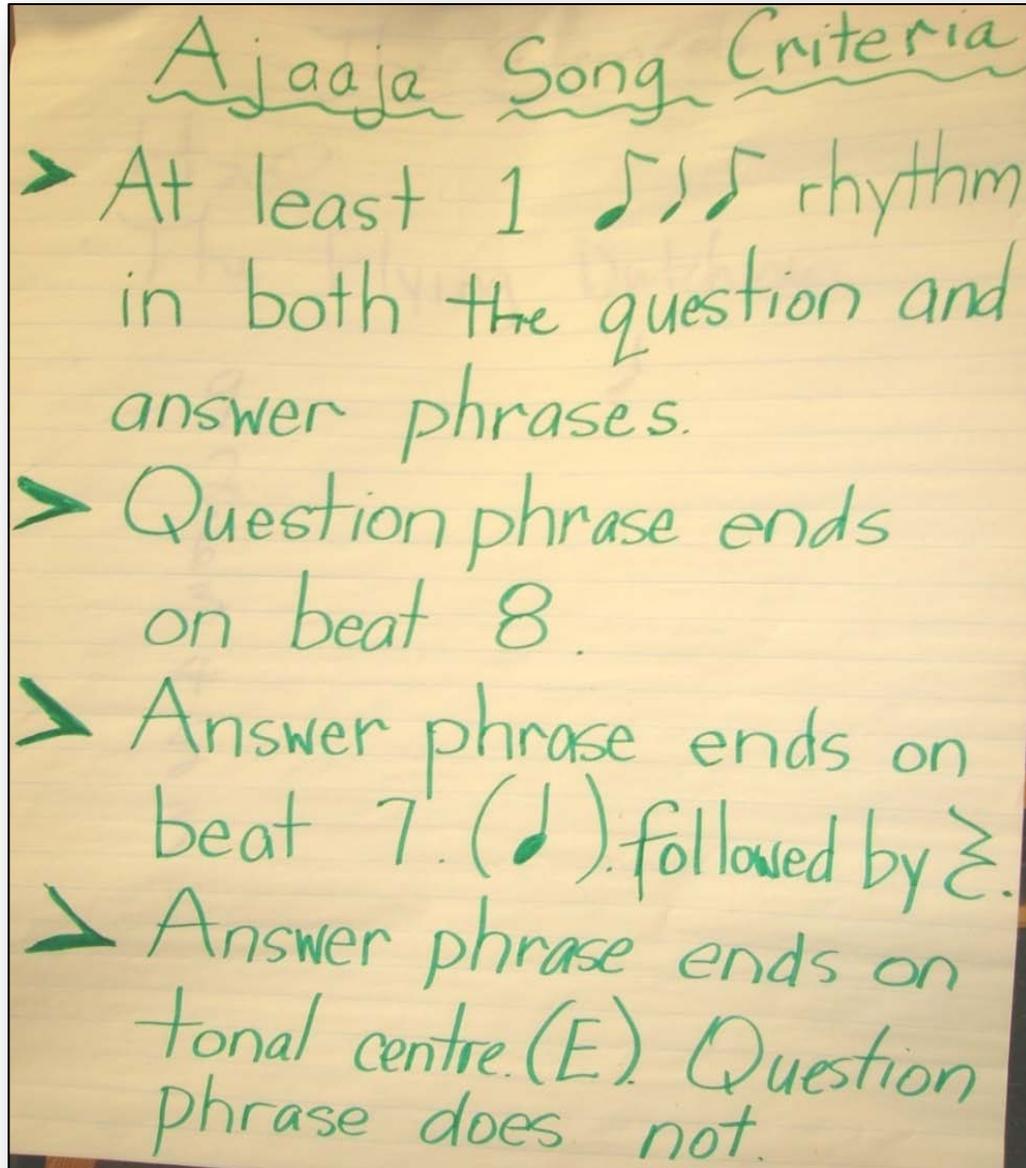
Students first practiced phrase lengths by walking to a steady beat played on a hand drum. Students switched direction to indicate answer phrases. They stopped on beat seven and clapped on beat eight.

The teacher then played a rhythmic question containing one syncopated rhythm. Students were given an opportunity to practice an answer phrase containing at least one syncopated rhythm and stopping on beat seven.





Students set criteria with the teacher for their *Ajaaja* melody.  
They then practiced with a partner.



*In Music Language & Performance Skills, students improvise simple rhythmic and melodic questions, answers, and variations 3-4 M-L1.6*



Students performed their Ajaaja melodies for each other.

Students performed their Ajaaja melodies on barred instruments with their partner. Each took a turn asking a question while the other answered.

The Ajaaja melodies were accompanied by the beat played on a hand drum.



*In Music Language & Performance Skills, students perform and demonstrate understanding of increasingly complex rhythmic and metric concepts (e.g., syncopation, compound metres) 4M-L3.1*

Title Free

Composer(s) Susan Aglukark

1. Do you hear any voices? Man  Woman  Children

2. If there are voices, how many? 2

3. What instruments do you hear? Drum, Base guitar, Shaker, Recorder

4. What is the tempo? Slow and Fast

5. Are there changes in tempo? yes

6. What is the dynamic level? medium loud

7. Are there changes in dynamics? yes

8. The articulation is:  smooth (legato)  separated (staccato)

9. What does this music make you think of? my Dog  
Flash, she loves music!

10. How does the song make you feel? Sad! Sad  
Sorrow

Next students listened to the song "Free" by Susan Aglukark and recorded their findings in a listening log.

*In Valuing Musical Experience, students reflect on, share, and explain personal responses (e.g., feelings, thoughts, images) evoked by various pieces of music and music-making experiences 2-4 MV3.1*

Using the song 'Free' as an activating source for discussion, students looked at possible influences on Traditional Inuit music.



### **Learning Conversation:**

1. *Would you consider this song to be traditional or modern and why? (Student responses: modern because of the bass guitar and drums. Both because some of the song has Inuit words. Part of the song has an old person singing a song like an Ajaaja.)*
2. *Where do you think that instruments like the violin and the mouth harp came from? (Student responses: Explorers, trappers).*
3. *How do you think instruments like the bass guitar and drumset became part of modern Inuit music? (student responses: They heard it on the radio. They listened to rock music and liked it.)*
4. *Do you think the Inuit sing their traditional songs today? (Student responses: Not as much. Not really. Sometimes).*
5. *Why do you think they might not sing them as much? (Student responses: They don't hunt that much anymore. They don't have to worry about the weather any more. They live in houses. They listen to the radio. They watch T.V. for entertainment.)*
6. *How do other groups in Canada maintain their culture? (Teacher: For example, I sing in a Ukrainian choir. Student responses: We have French Immersion in our school. My mom and dad speak to us in German at home. I take Ukrainian dancing).*
7. *How might the Inuit be preserving their culture? (Student Responses: They still do their art. Maybe they still do their dances and songs for special times).*

# Finally

students reflected on what they had learned.

See next page for transcription of student reflection.



## REFLECTION

### INUIT MUSIC AND DANCE

I LEARNED: all about the inuit culture and learned what throat singing and even learned how to sing one. I learned

an Ajaaja song, and how the inuits were losing it's tradition because of the <sup>contact</sup> white people.

Throat singing is something the women used

to do to entertain the children when the men were out hunting.

an Ajaaja song is special song each inuit had about something special that happened in their lives. I learned about question and answer. Question has 8 beats and answer has 7 beats and also a rest.

I AM BETTER AT moving to poems and music and also a rest better at understanding people's cultures.

I WOULD LIKE TO IMPROVE IN question and answer, and moving to poems.

I WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT the inuit language and how they are getting back to their culture.

### **Student Written Reflection:**

***I learned** all about the Inuit culture, I learned what throat singing is and even learned how to sing one. I learned an Ajaaja song, and how the Inuit was loosing it's tradition because of contact (with) the white people. Throat singing is something the women do to entertain the children when the men were out hunting. An Ajaaja song is a special song each Inuit had about something special that happened in their lives. I learned about question and answer, Question has 8 beats and answer has 7 beats.*

***I am better at** moving to poems and music. I am better at understanding people's cultures.*

***I would like to improve in** question and answer and moving to poems.*

***I would like to learn more about** the Inuit language and how they are getting back to their culture.*

## REFLECTION

### INUIT MUSIC AND DANCE



I LEARNED: about AJAJJA  
Songs! An AJAJJA  
song is about something  
that is special or important

to you. The Inuit make a circle  
and the people in the middle  
dance. They dance about what is special or  
important. We are making our own AJAJJA  
songs! It is cool!

I AM BETTER AT singing high in the songs!  
I am not very good on low  
pitches!

I WOULD LIKE TO IMPROVE IN doing more movement  
in the circles!

I WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT how the Inuit  
live and more about how  
they dance!

*In Valuing Musical Experience, students reflect on, share, and explain personal responses (e.g., feelings, thoughts, images) evoked by various pieces of music and music-making experiences 2-4 MV3.1*



Students chose material they wanted to use to demonstrate their learning on portfolio night. They chose to:

Record  
'Goose Chant'  
and the Ajaaja  
Song on their  
individual CD

Record  
the Drum Dancing  
and movement to  
the Inuit poem on a  
DVD for parents to  
view

Perform  
their Ajaaja melody  
for their parents on  
portfolio night.

*In Creative Expression in Music, students share own musical ideas, compositions, and interpretations with others through performances, composition portfolios, and/or sound/video recordings K-4 MC3*

*In Creative Expression in Dance, students share own dance ideas, choreography, and interpretations with others through performances, choreography portfolios, or video recordings 8 DA-C3.3K*

# Commentary



## **Music Teacher Comments:**

*“I was surprised at the interest and fascination with Inuit culture that students demonstrated in their wonderings, conversations and class discussions.”*

*“I was equally surprised at how eager they were to share their learning with other students, teachers, guest teachers and guest artists in the school on their own volition.”*

## **Classroom Teacher Comments:**

*“The students are more engaged and focused.”*

*“They were able to transfer new learnings into class from the music class.”*

*“As the unit developed they displayed a greater sense of appreciation for the Inuit culture.”*

*“As a result of this unit, they have expressed an interest to study other cultures.”*

# Commentary



**Teacher Question:** *“How did this unit help you in your learning?”*

**Student Comments:**

*“I understand so much more about the Inuit. How they dance and how they sing.”*

*“It was a very interesting way to learn music.”*

*“It made me want to know more about the Inuit.”*

*“It made me appreciate their culture.”*

**‘Learning Through the Arts’ Artist Comments:**

*“Your students must be learning Inuit music because they insisted on singing a Goose chant for me and explained what Throat Singing was.”*

**Parent Comments:**

*“I had no idea what a ‘question and answer’ phrase was. I am impressed that my daughter can explain it to me and show me on the instrument.”*



# Evidence of learning

Learning was demonstrated in many ways.

- Students were able to explain their learning to the music teacher, other teachers, other students and their parents.
- Students were able to describe and demonstrate question and answer phrases to each other and to their parents.
- Students were able to set criteria and determine whether they had met all of the criteria.
- Students reflected on their learning both verbally and in written form.



# Future Learning

The students are now ready to create a composition which would demonstrate their learning of new concepts and skills. Continuing on the Northern/Inuit theme (perhaps Northern Lights), a group composition could be created, notated and performed.

To include learning of dance elements, the composition could be recorded and movement created to accompany their work.



# Appendix: Learning Across the Curriculum

This unit was designed as an integrated study between music/dance and the study of Inuit culture in a Gr. 4 Social Studies program. Music and Dance curricular outcomes were explored and developed through the medium of Inuit culture.

The classroom teacher addressed curricular outcomes in Social Studies, Language Arts, Science, Math and Art using Inuit themes.

Although this unit was designed to be used in an integrated unit, it would be equally relevant and meaningful as an independent unit of study.

# Appendix:

## Resources

### Print

Inuit descriptors for snow  
LINGUIST lists.1239:Eskimo 'snow'  
<http://www.linguistlist.org/issues/5/5-1239.html>

Inuit poem: *'The Great Sea / Uvavnuk'*  
in: Colombo,J, *Poems of the Inuit*.  
Oberon Press, Toronto, 1981.

Hatfield,S, *Nukapianquaq*. Boosey &  
Hawkes Inc., 1993.

Ajaaja Song (adapted from a Copper River  
Woman's song) in: Roberts,H. ,Jeness,D.  
*Songs of the Copper Eskimos*. Ottawa:  
F.A. Ackland, 1925

### Tools and materials

- Paddle drum ( a hand drum could be used as it sounds somewhat like an Inuit drum.)
- Barred instruments
- Listening Logs (guided listening sheets)
- Reflection sheets

### Audio

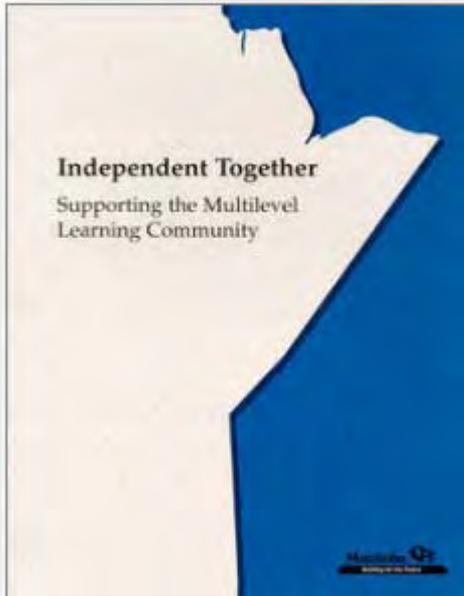
Aglukark,S, Big Feeling, EMI Music  
Canada. Capitol Records Inc. 2003

Canada. Inuit Games and Songs.  
Music and Musicians of the World: Enesco  
Collections AUVIDI.

Tullaugaq, A., Amarualik,L. Katutjatut  
Throat Singing. CD. Inukjuak, Nunavik,  
Q.C: Inukshuk Productions Inc. 1998

# Appendix: Manitoba Education Resources

## Independent Together: Supporting the Multilevel Learning Community



For more information, see:

[Independent Together:  
Supporting the Multilevel  
Learning Community](#)

“The basic inquiry process is similar for students of all ages.

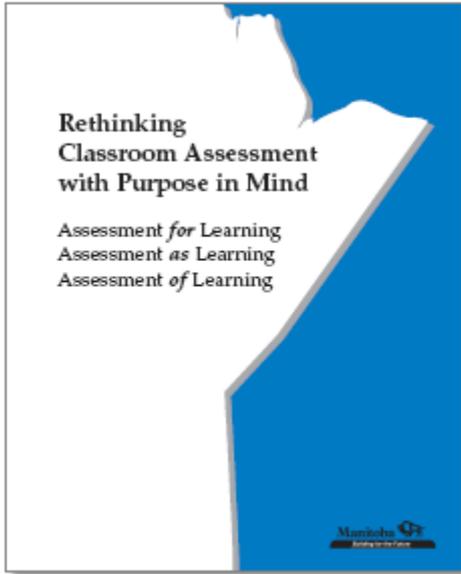
### Students

- pose questions and explore ways to answer them
- locate and manage information from various sources
- process and synthesize their findings
- share their findings on an ongoing basis, supporting each other in their research
- reflect on and celebrate their inquiry findings with a community audience .”

Independent Together 6.3

# Appendix: Manitoba Education Resources

## Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind



For more information, see:  
[\*Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind\*](#)

“Classroom-based assessment has tremendous potential to enhance student learning. When assessment is designed with purpose in mind, learning for all students can improve...

As implied in the title, *Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind*, identifying the purpose of any assessment is critical for its effective use.

This document identifies three purposes of classroom assessment: assessment *for* learning, assessment *as learning*, and assessment *of learning*” (*Rethinking Classroom Assessment*, Foreword, p. 4).

# Why was this exemplar a valuable learning experience?

## *Language, Tools and Performance Skills*

Students developed understanding of **space** in dance and that **motion factors** and **gestures** create movement qualities. In music they improvised simple rhythmic and melodic questions, answers, and variations. They sang by ear, reproduced simple melodies, rhythms, and accompaniments and performed increasingly complex rhythmic and metric concepts.

## *Creative Expression*

Students identified, explored, and selected ideas from a variety of sources as starting points for music and dance creations. They collaborated with others in developing ideas and they valued risk-taking as a component of the creative process. They shared their own music and dance ideas and interpretations through performances.



## *Understanding in Context*

Students listened to, described, compared and performed Inuit music and dance. Dance and music were a means of experiencing and exploring their own and others' lives.

## *Valuing Experience*

Students described and gave reasons for personal responses evoked by various pieces of music and music-making experiences. They established criteria for successful dance and music learning experiences. All students participated actively in dance and music learning experiences.