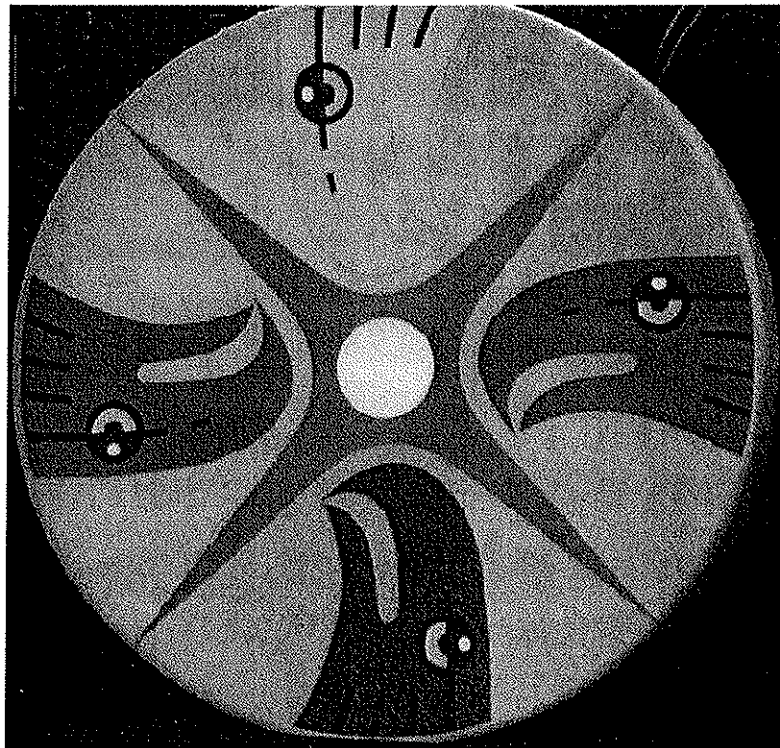


EARTH SONGS

CURRICULUM GUIDE

STUDENT'S GUIDE



Artist: Glenn Patterson

Learning and Teaching in an Indigenous World

WELCOME!

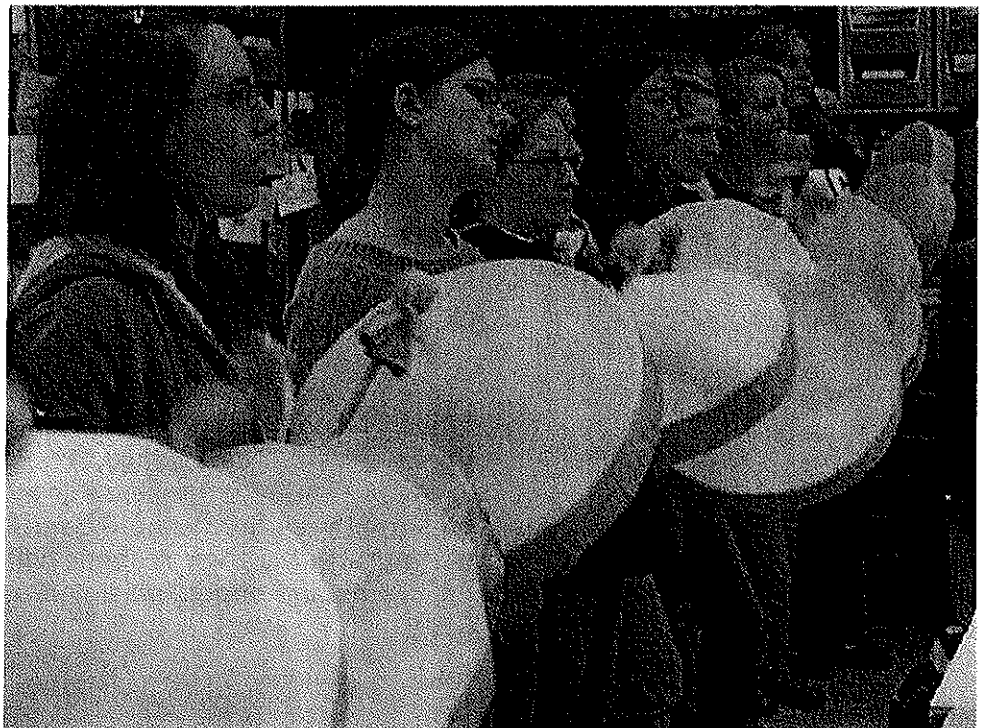


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Welcome to the Earth Songs curriculum guide for students. This guide is designed to provide teachers with background information to facilitate the use of the Earth Songs in the classroom in a meaningful, informed and respectful manner.

The Gift

In the fall of 2007, a community of learners created four original songs inspired by traditional Indigenous music of Western Canada and the West Coast. Each song group was supported by an Indigenous song-maker. At the end of the term, the songs were gifted, along with a fifth song created by Songhees Nation member, Bradley Dick, to the Faculty of Education through a ceremony. In addition, four deer-hide hand drums were created and also gifted to the Faculty of Education. The intent of the gifts was to create songs that could be used freely by educators (instructors and students) to learn about and practice the art of Indigenous song making. The songs do not belong to any particular Nation or family and therefore can be used and shared freely. However, it remains imperative to acknowledge the songs' origins as composed by a community of learners in the Fall 2007 UVIC Education course called *Learning and Teaching in an Indigenous World* held on Coast Salish territory (or in the case of Bradley Dick's song, that he be acknowledged as the composer each time it is used).



Introduction

Music and song is an important part of many Indigenous cultures, including Coast and Straits Salish Nations, whose territory is the southern part of Vancouver Island and along the southwest coast of British Columbia and Washington. Victoria is located on Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ territory, which includes Esquimalt, Songhees, Tsawout, Tsartlip, and Pauquachin and Tseycum Nations. It is a sign of respect, wherever you live, to find out whose traditional territory you are on because every part of Canada is someone's traditional territory.

In Coast Salish communities, music is comprised of the sounds of the drum and song, and is played for many reasons. As it is in many of the worlds' cultures, there are different songs for different occasions, such as marriages, deaths, traditional games, spiritual and ceremonial events, and of course just for fun.

Some songs belong to individual families, some of whom have handed their songs down through the generations for hundreds and thousands of years. Other songs belong to ceremonies or masks that are owned by families. Only the family who owns a song can decide who can use it, and at least one member of the family must be present when the song is used. Songs are shown respect by being remembered and sung. It is a great disrespect to a song if it is not sung, or worse, if it gets forgotten. In many cultures, songs are thought

to be alive because when we sing them, we are giving them the life-giving breath from our lungs. And like anything that is alive, songs need to be shown a great deal of respect.



Photo courtesy of UVic Photo Services

Some Indigenous people believe that the sound of the drum is like the heartbeat of a nation. Most drums are made of wooden rings with an animal hide stretched across one side. Some nations have a teaching that when a person makes their first drum, they must give it away to show that they are generous and are of good heart. Drums are often thought of like a relative to a drum holder. So the drum is treated the same way an honoured relative, by keeping it warm, and having a good and safe place for it to stay. Like songs, drums are also used for many purposes. For example, a healer may

use a drum in healing ceremonies, and sometimes drums were used to ready for war. More importantly, when a person holds/owns a drum it is their responsibility to take care of that drum while they hold/own it. Together, drums and songs are a very important part of Coast Salish life.

The following is a suggested introduction for Indigenous songs and drums to elementary age children.

First and foremost, the teacher should be confident with their introduction and their use of the drums and songs. Here is a brief example of how you could introduce these songs to elementary age children within the context of a lesson about Indigenous Music.

These songs were created by a group of students at the University of Victoria. They were inspired by Indigenous ways of making songs. Different from many Indigenous songs, these (4) songs do not belong to any single family or Nation. That means that anyone can learn them and sing them. However, it is still always important to always explain where the song(s) came from and how you came to be able to use the(se) songs.

(In the case of Bradley's song, he should be acknowledged each time the song is taught to a new group of students or performed publicly.)

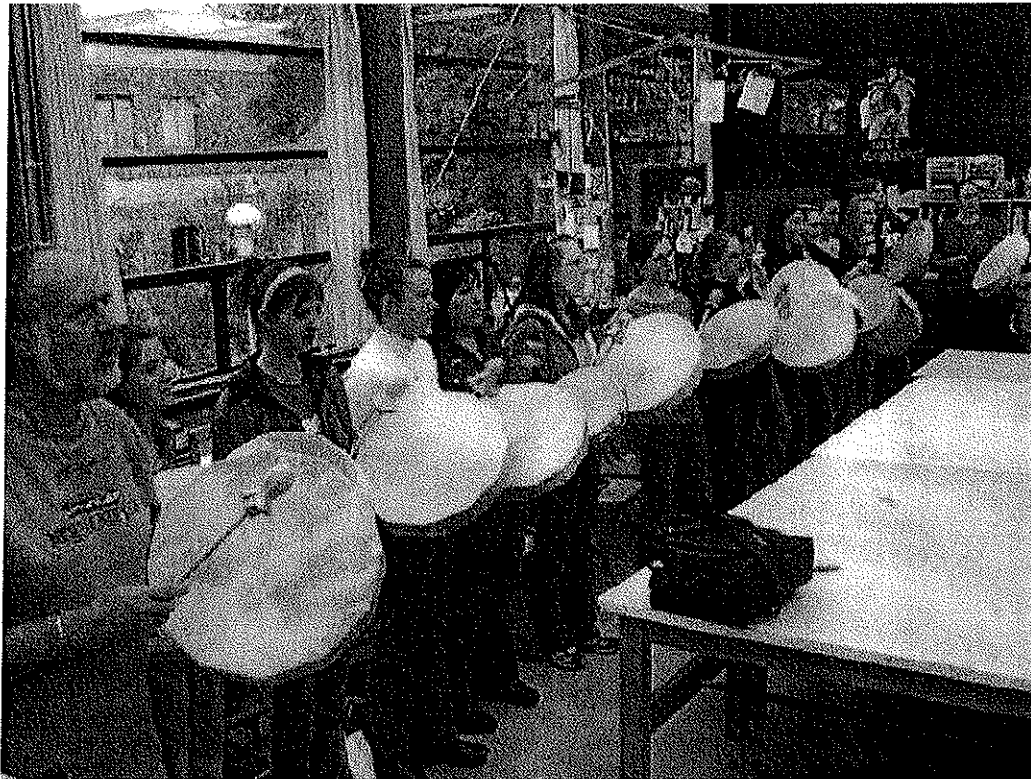


Appropriate and respectful ways to use the songs.

The five songs and drums were gifted to the Faculty of Education in the spirit of education and sharing to teach students, while carrying a message of understanding amongst peoples. The appropriate and respectful treatment of these songs is to keep them alive through use! It is a Coast Salish belief that a song is shown disrespect when it is not remembered and used, unless it is ceremonially "put away" for some reason.

Therefore, it is not only appropriate to use the songs, but it is imperative for ensuring the health and life of the song.

— Any positive show of life and breath shown to the songs is healthy and productive.



—Songs, like people, are alive and play an interactive role in their environment. It is not uncommon for songs, or people, to change over time.

—Indigenous music reflects the vibrancy and resiliency of Indigenous cultures.



Photo courtesy of UVic Photo Services

—If the songs are used as a learning instrument that encourages discussion, then you are beginning to see their versatility and usefulness in the academic environment.

How are these songs the same as songs created in traditional circumstances by West coast First Nations peoples? How are they different?

The four songs that were created by the students have some distinct similarities and differences from traditional First Nations music. The Faculty of Education songs are similar in that they were created by people of the earth (hence the name Earth Songs) on Coast Salish territories; and were created with the guidance of Indigenous teachers Butch Dick, John Elliot, Glenn Patterson, Bradley Dick, and Fabian Quocksister with good thoughts, good hands and open hearts. These are important principles for Indigenous people in the process of creating music.

What is different between your songs and traditional Coast Salish songs is that families typically own traditional songs and pass them down through inheritance. Many traditional songs are very old, and many have very specific spiritual purposes that are not open for public listening. Also,

First Nations traditional music is entwined with the histories of the peoples, which include a legacy of subjugation and colonisation. For the first half of the twentieth century, ceremonial practices were banned. This included singing, drumming and dancing. The ability to sing, drum and dance was outlawed for First Nations peoples for 68 years. Many communities resisted this discriminatory ban by continuing to perform their songs in the darkened rooms of peoples' homes. As such, traditional Coast Salish music is laden with the stories, histories,



laughter, sadness and strengths of many generations of First Nations people. This is important to bear in mind when playing the songs, because as the beat of the drum resonates through your bodies, and the song bursts from your lungs to fill the air, the ancestors from this territory are undoubtedly stirred and gather to rejoice in the music in which they participated during their lives. These songs are made from this land, in the spirit of the Indigenous peoples from time immemorial.

Drums

What is the best way to introduce the drums to elementary age children? Again, an example of a brief specific text to use would be really helpful.

Much of the information provided for the songs can also be applied to the drums, as drums and songs together form an integral part of most Indigenous music, including Coast Salish music. However there are a few important points pertaining specifically to the proper care and use of the drums:

- A drum is considered “alive” and needs to be treated as such.
- Each drum should have its own carrying case/bag.
- Because the drum is made of deer hide, it will become flat at times when cold or changing temperatures and humidity, some can be warmed by gently rubbing the surface with the hand in a circular motion while others will require a open fire to warm the drum near.
- A drum should never be used when the drummer has consumed any mood/ mind altering substance. A period of four days is generally required to pass between the use of such substances and picking up a drum.
- It is not appropriate to touch someone else’s drum without the drum holder’s permission.



It is important to acknowledge that these songs and drums were made in the fall 2007 UVIC Education course titled *Learning and Teaching in an Indigenous World*, which has been offered five times thus far. This course emphasizes learning and teaching using the following principles of the Lil'wat Nation of Mount Currie, BC, shared with permission of Dr. Lorna Williams:

Lil'wat Principles of Teaching and Learning:

Cwelelep: being in a place of dissonance, experiencing uncertainty in anticipation of new learning, to spin like a dust storm.

Kamucwkalha: the felt energy indicating group attunement and the emergence of a common group purpose. Group is ready to work together, to listen to one another and speak without fear.

Celhcelh: each person is responsible for his/her learning. It means finding and taking advantage of all opportunities to learn and maintaining an openness to learning. Each person must take the initiative to become part of the learning community by finding his/her place and fitting into the community. It means offering what knowledge and expertise you have to benefit the communal work being carried out.

Emhaka: each person does the best he/she can at whatever the task and keeps an eye on others to be helpful. It means to work respectfully and with good thoughts and good hands.

Responsibility: each person is responsible for helping the team and the learning community to accomplish the task at hand in a good way, entering the work clear of anger and impatience.

Relationship: throughout the course each person will be conscious of developing and maintaining relationships—with the people, the task, the teachers and guides, and the communities beyond the learning community. It also means relating what you are experiencing to your past knowledge and to what you will do with what you are learning.

Watchful listening: an openness to listening beyond our own personal thoughts and assumptions, being aware and conscious of everything around you as you focus on the task at hand.

Axekcal: how teachers help us to locate the infinite capacity we all have as learners. Developing one's own personal gifts and expertise in a holistic, respectful and balanced manner.

Kat'il'a: finding stillness and quietness amidst our busyness and need to know.

Good Hand: to work with positive intent and an open heart.

This guide was created with the curiosities of the current Music Education faculty in mind. We hope it will be useful to student teachers and educators alike.

Special thanks to:

Butch Dick

Bradley Dick

John Elliot

Glenn Patterson

Fabian Quocksister

for sharing their knowledge and wisdom, and for their contributions to the *Learning and Teaching in an Indigenous World* course.



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