



Identifying Rhythm in Poetry- Maya Angelou

6th Grade/Yelkovich, Pulliam/ Austin Sargent

Learning Objective/Exit Outcomes:

Students will be able to analyze Maya Angelou's poem Life Doesn't Frighten Me and identify distinctive elements as they relate to mood, genre, and rhyme scheme.

Students will be able to identify rhyme scheme and analyze rhythm as they read the poem aloud.

Students will be able to use multiple elements of body percussion to enhance the natural rhythm of the poem.

Students will be able to allocate certain sounds of body percussion to narrative elements of the poem including operative words, rhyme, and descriptive language.

Students will be able to draw conclusions about the poem and about rhythm based on their personal opinion and experience.

Integration Area/Subject:

ELA, Music

State Standards:

ELAGSE6RI1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

ELAGSE6RL2: Determine a theme and/or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

ELAGSE6RL4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone

MSGM6.CR.1 Improvise melodies, variations, and accompaniments.

- a. Improvise simple accompaniment (e.g. bass bordun/ostinato on Orff instruments, simple rhythms on unpitched percussion).
- b. Improvise simple rhythmic and melodic variations.

MSGM6.CN.1 Connect music to the other fine arts and disciplines outside the arts.

- a. Compare two art forms and summarize their common characteristics (e.g. between a musical art and another type of performance art, visual art or literary art).
- b. Recognize the interrelated principles between music and other subject areas.

Materials/Playing Space:

A copy of the poem "Life Don't Frighten Me Now" for each student

Description:

Students should be somewhat familiar with Maya Angelou's poem "Life Doesn't Frighten Me". This strategy was used in the Introduction/Teaching phase of content learning.



Start with a quick introduction to Body Percussion (Clap, Lap, Snap, Stomp) and have students practice these sounds as they relate to music vocabulary; tempo, volume, pitch, and rhythm.

To strengthen the integration have students identify how these sounds sound differently. (What is the sound difference between a clap/snap?, What does a stomp sound like v. what does a lap sound like?) Make sure students know that some sounds are bright, some are muffled and dark, some are loud, and some are soft.

Now begin to unpack the poem. For our classes, students started with the first line and identified operative words. Then a volunteer was asked to pick a sound to correlate for each of those words. Make sure students can tell you WHY the sound relates most strongly to the word.

Repeat this process for each line, calling on different students each time. After each sound is established, invest time in making sure the rest of the class is reading and playing along. Use as much of the poem as you want, until students are comfortable and confident in associating sound.

To debrief, have students describe the sound scape that has been created, and see if it parallels the perceived mood and opinion of the poem. Students should be able to describe how the Body Percussion affected the mood and understanding of the poem, and how the mechanics of the poem informed their musical compositions.

Notes:

Depending on your student's level of comfort, you could assign other stanzas of the poem to small groups or partners. Give students lots of room to create their own rhythm, but make sure to ask investigative questions (Why did you choose this sound, what does it represent?)

You could also use the smart board to write in rhythmic notation. Pull up the stanzas of the poem and come up with a "Sound Key" where each sound gets its own symbol. Add the symbols in the words and spaces of the poem for a visual reference.