**BRAIN-TARGETED TEACHING**

**LEARNING UNIT**

**Name: Katie Cole**

**Dates (Allocated Time): Two 30-min classes per week for approx. 3-4 weeks**

**Unit Topic:/Title: Unit on Spirituals**

**Grade Level: 4th grade**

**Content Standard(s):**

* **MD ELO Content Outcome 2: The student will demonstrate an understanding of music as an essential aspect of history and human experience.**
* **MD ELO Content Outcome 3: The student will demonstrate the ability to organize musical ideas creatively.**
* **National Standards for Music Education Standard 4: Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines;**
* **National Standards for Music Education Standard 9: Understanding music in relation to history and culture.**

**Learning Unit Overview:**

**Learning Goal: Students will demonstrate an understanding of spirituals as an essential aspect of African American history and human experience. They will also develop knowledge about the musical structure and the textual characteristics of African American spirituals.**

***Brain Target #1***

**Emotional Connection:**

**-Developing a connection between students and the topic by asking them to reflect on “what is a slave?” and “what it would be like to be a slave?”**

**- Incorporating dramatic presentations as a way of assessing student knowledge and comprehension of the topic**

**-Allowing students to share their own musical heritage (by making a virtual song collection) in order to better understand the historical importance of spirituals (interpersonal connection).**

**-Allowing student choice, especially when they are able to either illustrate or to choreograph moves to their favorite spiritual**

**-Allowing students to take artistic risks during dramatic presentations, illustrations/choreography, and when composing**

***Brain Target #2***

**Physical Environment:**

**-Displaying pictures of Harriet Tubman, historical pictures of the Underground Railroad in order to incorporate visual authenticity to set the stage for our unit**

**-Displaying student dramatic presentations of the Underground Railroad to personalize learning.**

**-Displaying African-American art to give further insight to the African American culture and how African American history informs their art.**

***Brain Target #3***

**Concept Map / Advanced Organizer  
(feel free to use an online tool):**

**Learning Goals:**

**Learning Goal: Students will demonstrate an understanding of spirituals as an essential aspect of African American history and human experience. They will also develop knowledge about the musical structure and the textual characteristics of African American spirituals.**

**Introductory “Big Picture” Activity/Assessment of Prior Knowledge**

**Students will fill out a KWL chart and then a Class Concept Map answering the question:**

**What are the main characteristics of spirituals (both textually and musically) and what role did they play in the lives of African American slaves?**

***Brain Target #4***

**Activities for Teaching Mastery of Declarative/Procedural Knowledge**

**Objective 1: Students will demonstrate an understanding of some spirituals as “signal songs.”**

**Activity 1a: Students will discuss the text of “Follow the Drinking Gourd” to discover the code words and their meanings and will sing the song as a class.**

**Activity 1b: After exposing the students to recordings of several gospel groups singing spirituals, they will have a chance to reflect upon what they heard. In groups, students can choose to choreograph their favorite spiritual or to individually make an illustration of their favorite spiritual.**

**Objective 2: Students will learn and perform African American spirituals to discover their musical structure of call-and-response form and verse and refrain form.**

**Activity 2a: Students will discover “the call” and “the response” of “Swing Low” (I will sing the call and they will sing the response, and vice versa.) Students will also discover the call and response parts of other known spirituals, such as “Michael Row the Boat Ashore,” and “This Little Light of Mine.”**

**Activity 2b: Students will discover the verse and refrain form of “Chatter with the Angels” by singing the song and then labeling the verse “A” and the refrain “B”. They will also discover the verse and refrain form (or AB form) of other known spirituals, such as “When the Saints Go Marchin’ In” and “Free At Last.”**

**Activity 2c: After singing spirituals with call-and-response and verse/refrain forms, students will perform these spirituals on their recorders.**

***Brain Target #5***

**Activities for Extension and Application of Knowledge**

**Learning Goal: Students will apply their knowledge of spirituals by composing their own.**

**Objective: Through composing their own spirituals, students will demonstrate the ability to organize musical ideas and sounds creatively.**

**Activity: Students can compose an aural or a notated spiritual for their recorders or for their voice. They can choose to write a spiritual in either call-and-response form or in verse/refrain form. They will have time in class as well as at home to complete this project. Worksheets with compositional parameters (minimum of 16 measures in G Major) will be given to students to serve as a guide. Students will also be given blank staff paper and a link to free online staff paper at** [**www.blanksheetmusic.net**](http://www.blanksheetmusic.net)

**In order to facilitate the composing process, students will be given a list of online resources:**

**University of Denver’s “Sweet Chariot: The Story of Spirituals”**

[**http://ctl.du.edu/spirituals/History/index.cfm**](http://ctl.du.edu/spirituals/History/index.cfm)

**PBS’s “Jubilee Singers: Sacrifice and Glory”** [**http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/singers/index.html**](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/singers/index.html)

**PBS’s “This Far by Faith: African American Spiritual Journeys”** [**http://www.pbs.org/thisfarbyfaith/**](http://www.pbs.org/thisfarbyfaith/)

**Authentic History’s “African American Spirituals”** [**http://www.authentichistory.com/1600-1859/3-spirituals/index.html**](http://www.authentichistory.com/1600-1859/3-spirituals/index.html)

**After they compose their spiritual, they can choose to perform it for the class. If they write the spiritual in call-and-response form, either I can sing/play the response or they can choose to have another student sing/play the response.**

***Brain Target #6***

**Evaluating Learning**

**- Rubric for dramatic presentation**

**- Positive peer feedback (students will be invited to list what they liked about each group’s dramatic presentation)**

**-Teacher feedback (constructive suggestions or praise) on in-class voice and recorder performance**

**-Rubric for drawings or choreography of their favorite spiritual**

**-Students can refer to their KWL chart to evaluate what they did not know in the beginning and what they have learned. The concept map will also allow students to evaluate their learning.**