



Instrument Project

Owl - John Sweeney: Preschool 1

Background

This project is called The Instrument Project; the children are ages 2.5 years to 4 years old. There was a total of 29 children who participated in this project. The project started January 15, 2019 and ended June 5, 2019. The educators that helped support learning and provided provocations were Alyssa Williams, RECE; Emily Rattray, RECE; Michelle Hiebert, RECE, and Simone Haughton, RECE.

Phase 1: Beginning the Project

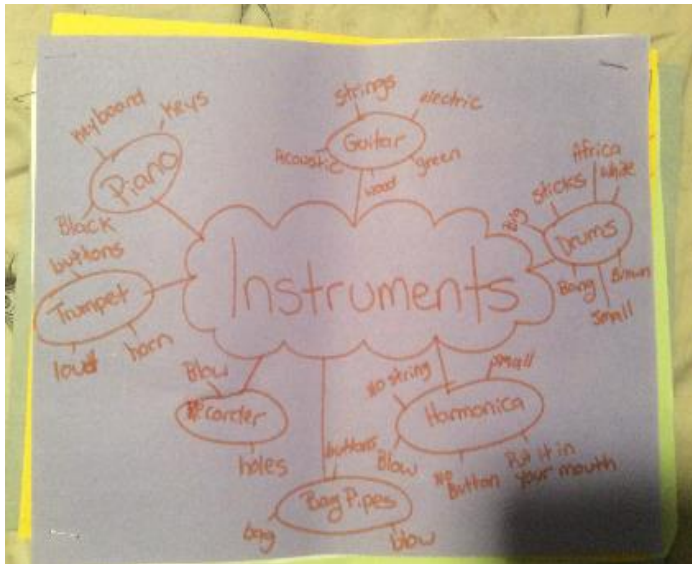
In Preschool 1 we started to have a special day called “Child of the Day” where parents were able to come into the classroom and help us celebrate their child. On Enoch’s special day, he and his dad came in telling Emily about a couple of Ethiopian songs that Enoch really enjoys listening to. We then played the songs in the classroom that day and the children showed great enthusiasm and excitement and began to dance around! This then led to us taking turns listening to our favourite songs while singing along or following each other’s dance movements. Each day the educators put on music from different countries around the world.



Milana looked so surprised when we put on some Russian children’s music. She had a huge smile on her face and danced around with the other children. We found some Greek music that was very upbeat and sounded like the singer was singing very fast, which led to us talking about how each type of music made us feel. When we listened to Mozart, Paisley said it made her feel relaxed and Isaac A. said it made him feel good. Next we put on the song, “I like to move it,” and most of the class began dancing right away. Colton said it made him feel so good! Ali said it made her want to move. Next we listened to a guitar solo and then a drum solo. Michael, Jonathan and Jacob said they wanted to play the drums and Paisley asked, “Why is the boy not singing?” With the interest we were seeing, we asked the questions; What do you know? What do you want to know? and Who could you ask?

What do you know?	What do you want to know?	Who can you ask?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drumming on, banging on rock and roll! -Michael (3 years) • Guitars have strings. Drums have drumsticks. - Isaac A. (3 years) • Piano! I have a piano at my house. It has brown sticks; Ukuleles have strings like guitars. – Enoch (3 years) • Drums! – Amilia (4 years) • Harmonica – you have to blow to make it work. - Jacob (3 years) • Guitars have strings. –Eliora (3 years) • You play guitars. Drums made sounds. –Paisley (3 years) • Guitars – it plays *pretend to play and make guitar noises* - Alexandra (3 years) • Drumming with sticks – Evangeline (2.5 years) • Guitar music, sad music – Ryker (2.5 years) • Dad pushes the buttons on the piano and it makes sounds. – Emma (2.5 years) • Daddy plays music, pink music! –Liliana (2.5 years) • Pianos make music. –Caleb (3 years) • Somebody got me a piano for my birthday. I am learning how to read music. -Aria S. (3 years) • Mom and dad love going to concerts – Quinn (3 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to play music – Liliana (2.5 years) • Different kinds of guitars. How to play guitars. – Paisley (3 years) • Why is it hard to play harmonica? – Jacob (3 years) • Sounds – Eliora (3 years) • Why do you have sticks for drumming? –Evangeline (2.5 years) • How does a piano make music? – Colton (3 years) • I want to learn how to play guitar and piano. - Emma (2.5 year s) • How guitar works? – Quinn (3 years) • How to play drums? – Caleb (3 years) • How did piano is made? How to play the piano? - Aria (3 years) • Which instruments are made by machines and which are 100% handmade. –Michelle (educator) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Teacher - Liliana (2.5) • A music player – Paisley (3 years old) • A mommy and daddy – Emma (2.5)

- Guitars takes batteries. My guitar works when I pull on strings. –William (2.5 years)



From the what do you want to know, we found that the children were interested in music, harmonicas, drums, guitars and pianos. From this, and with the collaboration of the children, we did a Web. As you can see, as the research progressed, the children honed in on four types of instruments and their counterparts/evolution.

Phase 2: Developing the Project

From our experiences and conversations, Michelle brought in her guitar as a provocation to share with the children. Ali said, "Wow! It's so pretty!" Jonathan and Isaac L were very interested in strumming the strings and played very well together. Hudson, Caleb, Hayden, George, Noah and Milana all took turns checking out the guitar and strumming the strings.



To engage our families and involve them in our learning, we invited each family to let us know the different types of music they listen to at home that we could introduce into the classroom. We were able to listen to some family favourites while also learning some of the history behind the music that our families love. If anyone played an instrument, we asked if they could contribute to our learning.

With that invitation, we're happy to say that Hayden's dad, Adrian, brought in his musical instruments and played some songs for us. He brought an East African drum called a Djemba, some shakers, a Turkish drum, a tambourine and a guitar! He explained to the children that depending on the circumference of the drum and the cover on the cylinder, the drum will make a different sound. It also makes a different sound depending where on the drum you hit it.



All of the children had a chance to play every instrument and then we sang *If You're Happy and You Know It*, *ABC's*, *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* and a made up song about animals! Afterwards, we had a little jam session with all of the instruments Adrian brought in as well as the instruments we have in our classroom. What a fun experience!



The children were invited to make shakers using paper towel rolls, rice, and wax paper. They were able to decorate their shakers using glitter glue, feathers, pom-poms and tissue paper. While they shook their shakers, Michelle brought out her guitar and accompanied the children who were engaging in other instruments such as bells, drums, ukuleles and recorders. This allowed the children to explore a variety of sounds and feelings that were being expressed while we played with them.





Field study

A very special visitor came to see the children to help us with our musical instrument project. Michelle's friend, Jesse Parent, came to play his guitar and harmonica for the children. He was also able to answer some of our questions we wanted to know about musical instruments.

Jesse is a local musician and makes music for a living. He



played us one of his songs, showed us how the harmonica and guitar work and even let everyone try out his guitar - which is older than our teachers and Jesse! Then we all sang *ABC's* and *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*. Jesse told us how he learned how to play guitar by taking music lessons from other musicians. He explained that learning

how to play an instrument takes a lot a practice and discipline. He also talked about the different kinds of guitars and what they do, such as electric guitars are used more for rock and roll, they can be very loud, but need to be plugged in to an amplifier in order make the loud sound; acoustic guitars are used more for country music and they can be plugged in to an amplifier, but they

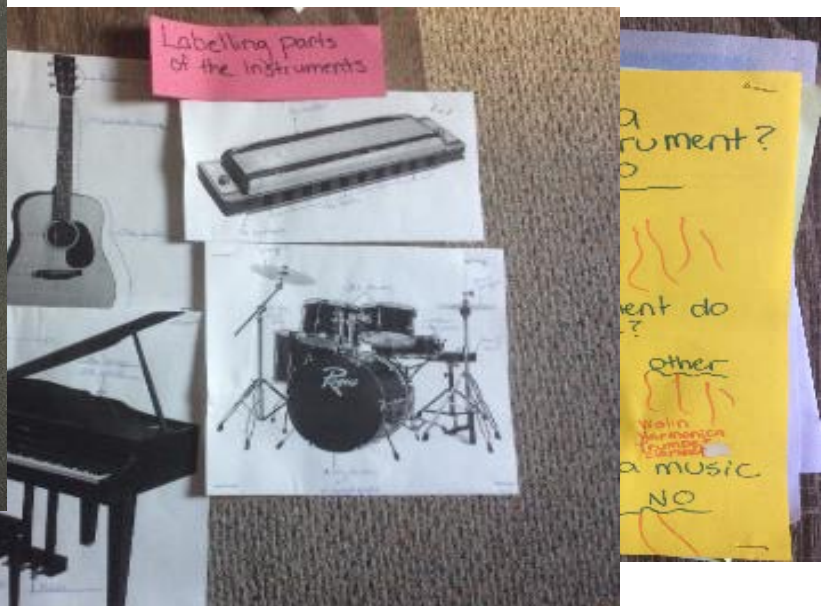
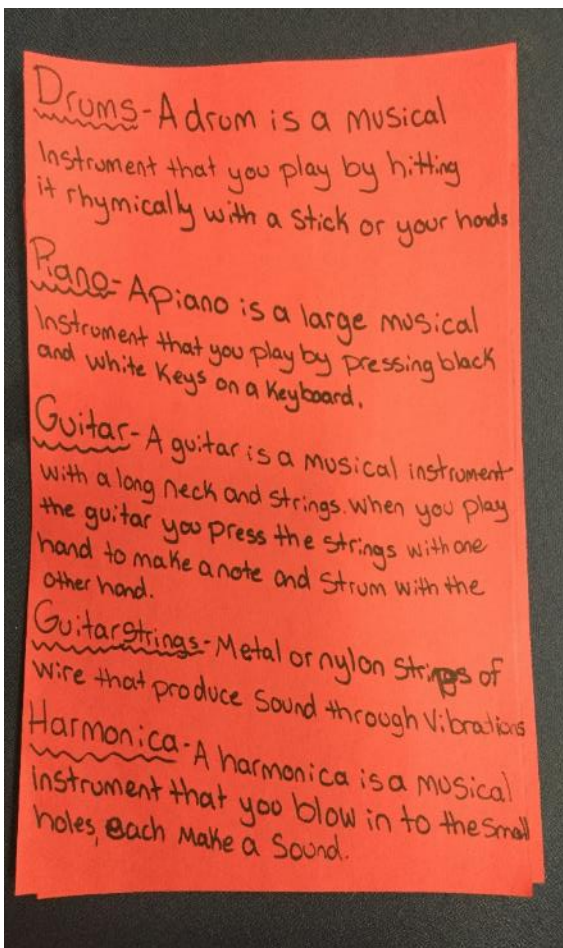




don't need to be in order to make music. Jesse also explained how a piano makes music. He told the children that if you press on a piano key, the key is attached to a string on the inside of a piano and as the string moves it makes a sound.

Lastly we learned how guitars are made. Jesse explained that in the past, a person would take a piece of wood and shape it, then attach the strings and all of the other parts that make up a guitar. It took hard work and a lot of time. Now a days, guitars are made inside factories by machines. Let's not forget, Jesse also showed us why a harmonica is tricky to play! Every part of the harmonica makes a sound. It all depends on how your lips and tongue are placed and the amount of air that you blow into a harmonica to make the sounds. After our visit from Jesse, we were able to label the different parts of a guitar, harmonica, piano and drums.

We gathered the children who were interested in the instrument project and asked them if they were able to label the parts of the instruments. They were able to label some of the parts but needed help with the unfamiliar words and parts. Together we came up with definitions for each of the instruments we were learning about. Several of the children and an educator went around the childcare centre, asking the staff questions about musical instruments.



We had a special guest come in who was a music teacher that brought in several different musical instruments for the children to use. She showed the children the variety of octave that is used when singing a song. The octaves help show the key that we would use with the instruments. She would sing “Aaaaah,” and then would use an instrument and start singing along. We sang a song about the different body parts we have and she would ask the children, “What else do we have?” Enoch said, “We all have ears.” Noah shouted out, “We have hands!” and waved his hands at the music teacher. Aria got to shake the tambourine, banging it loud with her hand. Milana was shaking a shaker and dancing around the classroom while she tried to sing along with everyone. Quinn enjoyed the singing and dancing with friends and all of the children enjoyed learning how to use their octaves to sing and help regulate their noise level when playing with different musical instruments. It was wonderful to see the interest the children showed when listening to Guess the Name (lessons about singing and playing different instruments).



Phase 3: Concluding the Project

The children worked hard to create their own guitars using paper mâché. With a little assistance from Alyssa, the children were able to dip and place the wet newspaper onto a tissue box and paper towel roll. When the paper mâché was dry, the children were able to paint their guitars. Some children wanted to use brown, while others used blue and red.



Using the Instruments that the children made and some store bought ones, Emily and the children came up with a song about instruments that was sung for our spring concert.

Our Instrument Song

I like the way my drum goes bang, my drum goes bang, my drum goes bang, I like the way my drum goes bang, when I hit it with my stick!

I like the way my guitar goes strum, my guitar goes strum, my guitar goes strum, I like the way my guitar goes strum, when I strum it with my pick!

I like the way my tambourine chimes, my tambourine chimes, my tambourine chimes, I like the way my tambourine chimes, when I hit it on my hip!

*I like the way my harmonica sounds, my harmonica sounds, my harmonica sounds, I like the way my harmonica sounds, when I blow it just like this *blow**

*This is the way our instruments sound when we play them in our band *free play instruments**

The project never really ended. We found the children's questions were answered and it became part of the classroom fabric.

Teacher Reflections

Alyssa Williams, RECE:

The children were very engaged in this project, learning about new instruments, listening to different types of instruments, playing instruments with their friends and even building some instruments. I learned about some new instruments, their sounds and how the making of some instruments can be very time consuming. The children and I enjoyed playing songs on the instruments we had built. We would have our own band in the classroom singing *Wheels on the Bus*, *Fire Truck*, and *ABC*. The children learned how to label different instruments and even the sounds they make. By playing these instruments in the class and singing songs with their peers, I felt it helped build the children's confidence to sing and play their instruments in front of their parents at the spring concert.

Emily Rattray, RECE:

The children and I really enjoyed this project. They were engaged, showed curiosity on how instruments were created and played, as well as excited to learn. I feel as if we co-learned throughout the project as I did not have much knowledge about instruments before this project started. I knew how to play a few instruments but did not know how instruments were made or the variety of sounds certain instruments could make. We enjoyed playing a "Guess which instrument this is" game and after playing it a few times, some of the children were able to correctly label the sound to the instrument. It was fun to be able to play the instruments in the classroom together during our "Band practice". The children took turns sharing the different



instruments with each other and some of the children even showed the younger ones how to hold and play the instrument correctly. I observed a lot of leadership skills being developed through encouragement and helping others, as well as patience through turn taking and building self-esteem through practicing and playing instruments in front of peers.

Simone Haughton, RECE:

I had previously done a drum project and learned from this project that you could bring in your prior knowledge and scaffold the children's learning without controlling the outcome. You should always meet the child at their level and their interests. I also found I was able to embrace what fellow educators are teaching the children without taking over or being overpowering. Be an observer while also be willing to learn and not teach. I enjoyed learning the they are not called little guitars or big guitars the all have a specific name. I also liked see the harmonica being the classroom.

Michelle Hiebert, RECE:

I was so excited to see this project begin. I loved watching the children express their thoughts and feelings as to how music affects them, to discuss which instruments they liked and which they were not impressed by and to see their love of music grow. We had a lot of special guests come in and share their knowledge of instruments with us and I believe that truly made the project extraordinary! The part I learned the most about was how instruments made their different sounds and how guitars are all made by hand. As I moved to a different center before this project was completed, it was so nice to be able to come to the Spring Concert and see the children playing their guitars that they made and singing the songs we had practiced over and over again. It truly brought the project full circle for me as an educator.