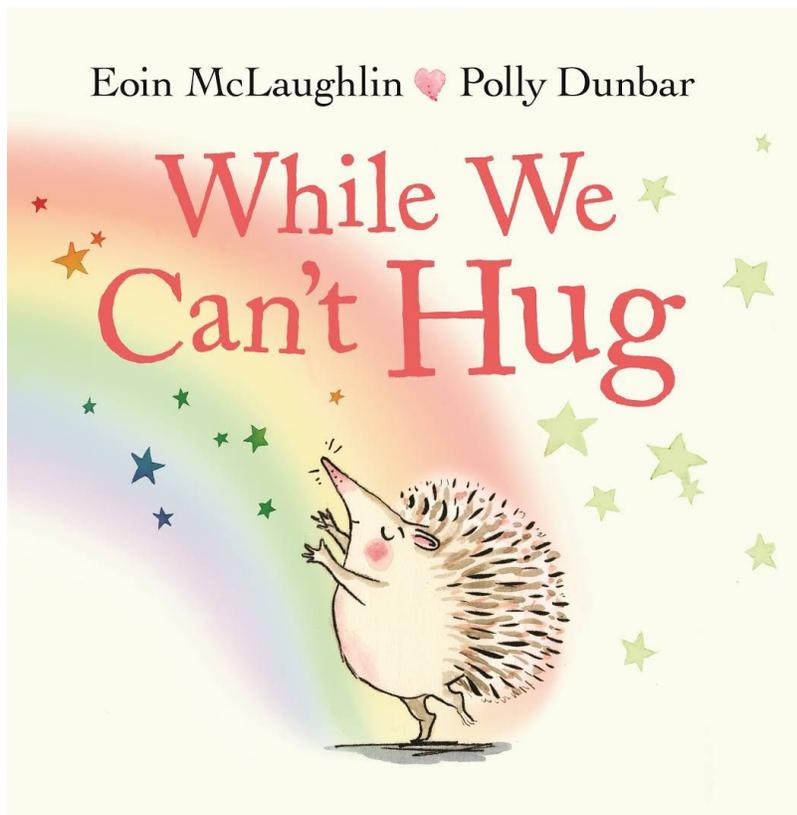


An Elemental Exploration of “While We Can’t Hug”

Book by Eoin McLaughlin and Polly Dunbar

We share this collection of Lesson Ideas in connection with the Great Kindness Challenge - <https://thegreatkindnesschallenge.com/> and in plenty of time for Valentine’s Day! The board members of ACEMM are hoping to spread a little bit of love out there to all of our friends far and wide through with the beautiful book, “While We Can’t Hug,” by Eion McLaughlin



<https://www.faber.co.uk/9780571365586-while-we-cant-hug.html>

Lesson idea by Crystal Pridmore

I found this beautiful book sitting in the window of my favorite independent bookstore, the Napa Bookmine, over winter break. The title immediately caught my eye, and I was overcome with emotion as I flipped through the pages. I teach in Southern California, and I have been teaching virtually since our schools suddenly shut down in March 2020. I often tell the students that one of the things I miss the most about in person music class is getting to greet each of them at the door with a high five, a hug, or a silly dance. We have come up with an entire nonverbal language over the course of this school year to communicate over our virtual classroom. As we continue virtual learning indefinitely and slowly reopen into a hybrid classroom, hugs and high fives will be off the table for the foreseeable future. What a blessing it was to read this book that helps children understand that there are many ways to show someone that you love them, even if you can't hug.

I imagine that this book will find a place in families for many years. There are many health or distance related challenges that might prevent a family or friend from hugging. Friends move away and family members become medically fragile through illnesses and treatments. This book is an important tool for anyone who needs to help their child navigate expressing affection when touch is unavailable.

Read the Book and Introduce the Song:

Begin by asking the students how playing on the playground, visiting some family members, or attending school is now than it was last year. Ask if any of them have thought of creative ways to show someone that they love them without touching them. Say that the book we are about to read is all about two best friends who want to give each other a great big hug, but they are not allowed to right now. Instead, they use their imaginations to come up with the many ways they can show each other that they love them without touching.

Introduce the song:

While We Can't Hug

Crystal Pridmore

♩ = 90

Voice

There are many ways to show you care

Ukulele

When your heart is full of love to share.

Think of all the ways that you can send a

bit of joy and glad - ness to a friend.

You can get an ostinato effect on your ukulele by simply picking the top two strings in a C-G pattern. Sing the song through once and ask the students to listen. Read the story and sing the song after every page. Invite the children to join you after the third listening.

Rhythm Word Chains

Ask the students to come up with their favorite way tortoise and hedgehog showed each other they loved each other in the book, OR come up with their own! Write everyone's ideas down on a white board in person or digitally. Next, ask students to turn those ideas into rhythms. Here are some ideas to consider, you students will come up with a lot of ideas, yours there, and mix in some of these if you need some variety.

The image shows a musical score for a rhythm word chain. It consists of six staves, each with a treble clef and a common time signature. The lyrics are written below the notes. The notes are simple, using quarter and eighth notes with stems, and are connected by horizontal lines to indicate rhythm. The lyrics are: "Blow a kiss!", "Paint a pret - ty rain - - bow!", "Send them a spec - ial note!", "Sing the same song!", "Make sil - ly fac - - es!", and "They can do a dance to - geth - er!".

For older students make longer phrases and create a speech piece with one and two measure speech loops. It can be a lot of fun to add body percussion to these as you build them. The textures get very rich!

Invite students to work with a partner to string two or four different rhythms together to create a rhythmic ostinato. They can use body percussion or unpitched percussion to chant their ostinatos while the rest of the class sings the song again. If teaching virtually, the teacher can sing the song for the A section and invite each student to clap and say their ostinato one at a time in between.

Concrete to Abstract Movement:

Lesson Connection Idea by Casey Goryeb

Inspired by Kris Olson's Workshop at the AOSA Virtual Symposium 2020

Question for students: What is a hug?

Allow for students to respond with any words that they think of for hugs.

Demonstrate what a hug looks like by hugging yourself or a stuffed animal.

Pose questions: what would it look like to hug someone shorter than you? Taller?

Two people at the same time? A dog? A cat? A baby? A room full of people you love?

How does a Koala hug? How do you hug with just one hand? Can you hug someone without using your arms? Etc.

Ask students to imagine the sensation of hugging even if they can't in real life.

Allow students to explore these different movements in their space and describe the physical and emotional sensations of a hug.

This could be its own C section with some additional music underneath or be incorporated into the A section; the teacher sings while students move.

Creative Movement Extension

Lesson connection idea by Drue Bullington

Here is a fun creative movement extension that reinforces the use of concrete and abstract movements.

<https://youtu.be/iZjmYkYTXUc>



The video features “The Entertainer” by Scott Joplin (from a player piano roll that he actually “recorded” himself! How fascinating!), and ideas from the book “While We Can’t Hug.”

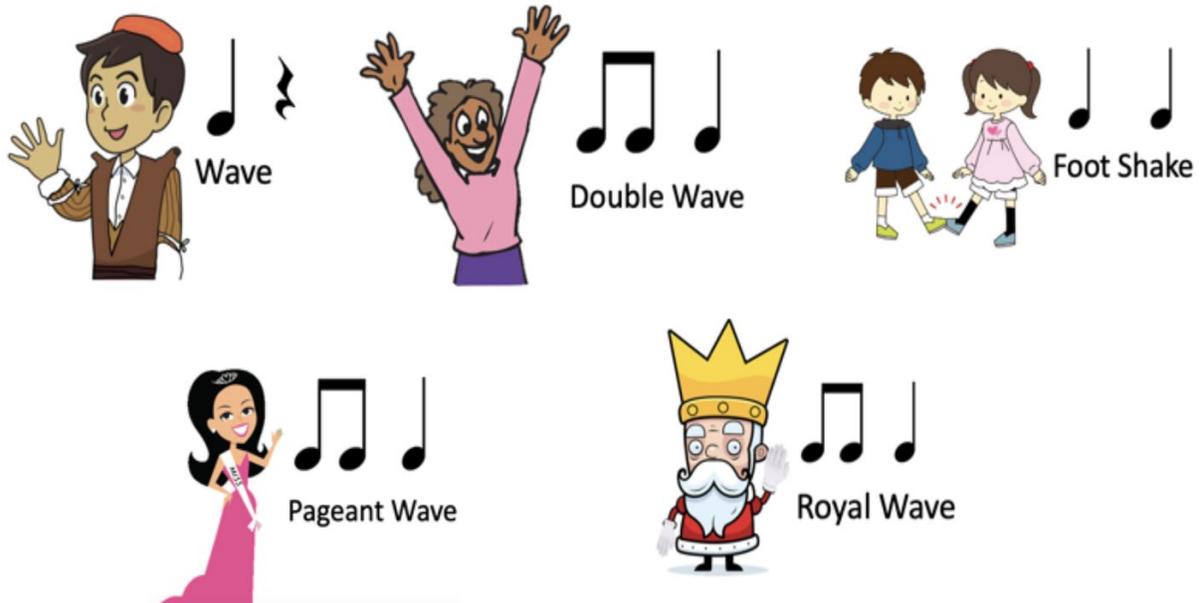
1. First watch, listen, and move to the video.
2. Then, during certain parts the teacher chooses, take away the video images but allow the music to keep going, and let the students create their own movements without being prompted.
3. In the third hearing, use no video, just the music, in-person students can choose someone across the room to “work with” in sharing greetings and interacting, sometimes mirroring, and sometimes leading.
4. Virtual students can focus on others and mirror their movements at times, and at others make up their own.
5. Consider putting the music on again and just showing the pictures of the book and have the students dance the story.
6. What other music could you use to dance the story?
7. Could you try telling the story with unpitched percussion and movement?
8. What if you used the video and have the students play unpitched percussion!
 - a. For instance, only shakers move and play when the smile section occurs!

9. What do your students think should happen next!? Try some of their ideas!

Rhythmic Building Brick / Contactless Gesture Extension

By David Thaxton

[Google Slides Presentation Here](#)



While We Can't Hug / Contactless Greeting Jam

This is an extension to the *While We Can't Hug* book and lesson plan that can be explored across many different grade levels with possibilities for speech, movement and electronic instrumental ostinati.

Preparation

Preparation can be as simple as a reading and short discussion of the book, but may include the song and other activities.

Discuss alternatives to physical greetings like handshakes, hugs, and high fives.

The Moves

With a rhythmic background playing (see below) echo speak each greeting on the slides. Some brief explanation may arise for some gestures such as:

“Pageant Wave” (elbow-elbow-wrist-wrist-wrist)

“Royal Wave” (Palm towards face, small circular motion)

“Snappy Salute” (Faster than normal, and may include whip-like sound effects)

“English Salute” (Arm arcs up with palm out)

Make a sequence

Make an example:

- Using the final slide, choose a four-gesture sequence. (Like Air five, Hee Haw, Hang Loose, WOOT)
- Practice performing as a sequence.

Small Group Work:

- In small groups, partners, table groups or breakout room groups, students decide on a contactless greeting sequence of four gestures.
- Practice sequence gestures and speaking the gesture names
- Modifications:
 - o Younger grades may do better by choosing one slide to create sequence from
 - o If classes struggle with the sequence of two-beat patterns, you may extend it by adding two beats of rest after each one
 - o Older grades may use the slides containing all the gestures
 - o Digital learners may open the slides and drag and drop gestures into the purple boxes

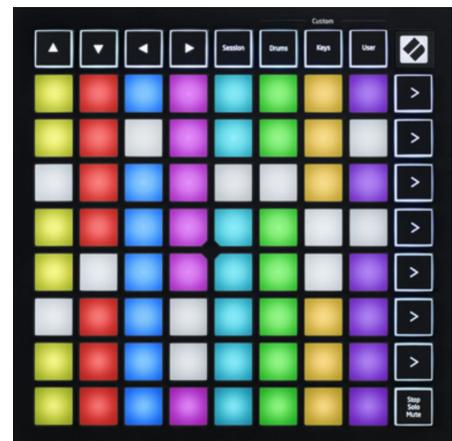
- o Further examples may be made by creating a whole-class sequence, dragging and dropping gestures into the boxes as decided on by students
- Movement refinement
 - o Groups may further modify sequences with additional movement and form
 - Split between individuals
 - Perform in pairs
 - Use different levels
 - Perform in canon
- Perform
 - o With background music accompaniment, groups may share their sequence individually, or concurrently as a whole class.
 - o Distance learners may access the looping software and perform and share with software such as Flipgrid, Google Classroom or others.

Accompaniment

The music that might typically accompany such an activity may not be accessible with restrictions on barred instruments, non-pitched percussion, world drums and such. Fortunately, there are electronic options that can be accessed both for in-person and digital learning models.

A MIDI Grid Controller, such as [Novation's LaunchPad Mini](#) gives opportunities to create loop-based accompaniments with programs such as Logic Pro (Mac), Ableton Live, or web-based midi loops.

- Logic Pro: This Mac based program includes a "Live Loops" feature that can use preset or user-created loops from GarageBand or Logic Pro. I have created a series of GarageBand files that contain recordings of different Orff mallet



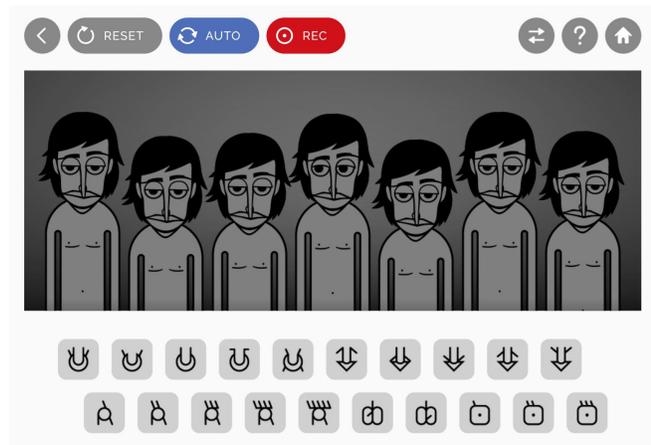
percussion and Non-pitched percussion. These can be imported into Logic Pro and used to spontaneously create ostinato-based accompaniments.

- Ableton Live: Similar to Logic Pro, Ableton is available to both Mac and PC users, and can be used with pre-recorded loops, or you can record your own.

Web Based Loops: Novation offers a sample array of looping choices that can be immediately controlled with the LaunchPad, but can also be controlled without one, directly on your browser from their [Intro Website](#).

- Another Fun app to pair with this exercise is

[Incredibox](#). Loops can be arranged by dragging different wardrobe options to the animated performers. **(At first, the shirtless male characters may seem shocking. With my own students, we addressed*



it by comparing it to seeing men and boys shirtless on the beach or at the pool. Very quickly the shirtlessness goes unnoticed as students are drawn in by the engaging nature of the loops they can create. It is best to know your students. Be mindful of how they might react and anticipate the appropriateness for yourself as well as have a strategy for getting them past any weirdness they may have about it.)

These loop accompaniments can create captivating and groovy additions to the gesture performances. Playback can be for the whole group, or with individuals (especially distance learners) using their own access to the software/website.

Hopefully, your students will have an engaging experience working with the musical elements and connection with each other in this activity.

We at ACEMM are so happy to have the opportunity to share these ideas with you! We hope you find ways to connect with your students in these challenging times and promote kindness in your classrooms and schools as much as possible. After all, in making music together aren't we so fortunate to be a part of the great kindness challenge that never ends!?

From all of us at ACEMM, we hope you stay safe, stay healthy, and keep the music alive in the hearts and bodies of our favorite musicians: you and your students!

We create opportunities, YOU make the difference!

Drue Bullington, *President*

Crystal Pridmore, *Vice President*

Lissa Ray, *Secretary*

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