

5-15-2013

# Sounds in the neighborhood : a curriculum for six and seven year olds

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## Recommended Citation

Rubinow, R. (2013). Sounds in the neighborhood : a curriculum for six and seven year olds. *New York : Bank Street College of Education*. Retrieved from <http://educate.bankstreet.edu/independent-studies/117>

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**Sounds in the Neighborhood**  
**A Curriculum for Six and Seven Year Olds**  
**By Rachel Rubinow**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master  
of Education Bank Street College of Education  
2013

## **Foreword**

As a musician, I have spent most of my life experiencing the world through sounds. I have always been very cognoscente of sounds and spent many hours as a child imitating them. It is because of my background in music that I decided to create and implement this study. It is my hope that this curriculum will not only speak to those children who are auditory learners, but to all learners who can benefit from opening up their ears and experience the world through a whole new sense.

## **Abstract**

### **Sounds in the Neighborhood A Curriculum for Six and Seven Year Olds By Rachel Rubinow**

This study of the sounds in the neighborhood comes from a larger neighborhood study within the first grade class. Students will have the opportunity to gain more information about the neighborhood by solely listening to the sounds and making sense of these sounds. This curriculum is best served towards the end of the year, in conjunction with the larger Neighborhood Study, after students have already done some research about neighborhoods and have a sense of what they are about.

The Sounds in the Neighborhood Curriculum gives students another cognitive experience to heighten their awareness of neighborhoods and what encompasses a neighborhood. It will help to guide students to be able to make sense of the world and their place in the world, which is developmentally appropriate for this age level. This project will give students the opportunity to go out into the neighborhood and explore the hearing sense, which will create meaningful experiences inside the classroom for children to reflect on their new discoveries. Included in this study are detailed lesson plans for each activity and field trips with possible extensions, as well as examples of children's work.

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## **Rationale**

The Neighborhood Sounds Curriculum, an integrated curriculum in a larger neighborhood curriculum, is intended for six and seven year old children. The focus of this study is on the sounds heard in the surrounding neighborhood of the school. This study supports the appropriate development of six and seven year olds as they move away from self and begin to explore the outside world.

### **Cognitive Development**

By the age of six and seven years old, children are still very involved in self, but are more apt to explore friendships and interactions with others at this point. They are starting to take into account other people's point of views, while at the same time comparing themselves. "Competition and rivalry are part of the human condition and children of this age often strive to fit in to be like the others" (Aves and Bradley, 2006, 15). Though children of this age are able to navigate these new interactions and feelings, during this stage adult support is encouraged as the children begin to make meaning of this new social dynamic.

Through the practice of these social interactions, children are beginning to speak and think more abstractly. "They will now be asking all sorts of interesting questions and articulating novel ideas. Children's statements can often convey something well beyond the literal words once they start to enjoy language" (Aves, and Bradley, 2006, 16). Thinking more abstractly helps children to be able to explore the outside world with a more open approach because they are able to make many more inferences and take into account others' point of views.

These social interactions are crucial to children's learning, as they are able to open their eyes and ears to many perspectives and ideas. Vygotsky believed that children's cognitive growth is supported by these social interactions as well as the interactions by teachers. "Children are capable of doing much more in collective activity or under the guidance of adults" (Vygotsky, 1978, 87). This thought that children can benefit from and gain knowledge through the help of adults and peers comes from Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. "It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential developments determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, 86). It is up to the adult to provide experiences that are challenging, yet developmentally appropriate enough to allow the children to succeed.

In his book *Experience and Education*, John Dewey speaks about the importance of experiential learning in schools. According to Dewey, it is up to the teacher to "not only be aware of the general principle of the shaping of actual experience by environing conditions, but that they also recognize in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experience that lead to growth" (Dewey, 1938, p.18). The experiences most definitely lead to growth and should therefore be well thought out before implementing.

"Since children's experiences begin in the immediate communities in which they are brought up and since these communities are functioning in terms of present-day culture, it is the school's job to begin with the children's own environment, whatever or wherever it maybe" (Mitchell, 1934, p.8). A

neighborhood study allows children to look outside of home and school (which they know so well and are very comfortable with) and focus on new surroundings where they can take a look at the people in communities and eventually make sense of their place in a community; a developmentally appropriate study.

### **Benefits of Auditory Learning**

In the school setting, teachers strive to best support their students. In doing so, one must take into account all the different learning styles that encompass a classroom. "Observation alone is not enough. We have to understand the significance of what we see, hear and touch" (Dewey, 1938, p. 68). It is for this reason that Lucy Sprague Mitchell believed whole-heartedly in experiencing the world by using all of the senses.

"It has been suggested that developing an understanding of the link between the sounds of speech (phonemes) and the signs of print (letters) is the basic task facing the beginning reader and writer" (Ball & Blachman, 1991, p. 51). Studies have shown that phonemic awareness, or sound recognition of letters, help students to become successful readers. "The most effective phoneme awareness instruction includes attention to the connections between the sound segments of speech and the written symbols that represent those sounds" (Ball & Blachman, 1991, p. 54). As a result of this, "heightening phoneme awareness may help prevent some children from experiencing early reading and spelling failure" (Ball & Blachman, 1991, p. 52).

Frances Santore began a literacy program called Sounds in Motion, which is a program that is intended to "improve general listening skills by introducing the concept of whole body listening and doing weekly activities that would focus on



auditory perception and discrimination of consonants that often are misarticulated” (Santore, 2006). The sounds are combined with body movements that help children distinguish the different phonemes. This program is currently being used at the Bank Street School for Children starting with the Kindergarten classes. As the students are coming into the first grade, they have a heightened awareness and knowledge of phonemes and seem to be much more confident in their sound spelling as well as reading abilities.

### **Implementing the study**

Understanding the importance of auditory learning, I looked at the Neighborhood Study, which was implemented in our first grade class and designed a parallel curriculum using the ear as the dominant sense. The larger Neighborhood Study begins by tapping into the children’s prior knowledge about neighborhoods to find out what they already know. They are given the opportunity to ask many questions and generate as many ideas as they have about this topic. Thereafter, the class will go out and experience firsthand about the immediate surrounding neighborhood. Throughout the study, teachers are guiding discussions in large meetings where children have the opportunity to strengthen their social and cognitive growth.

This growth continues as the children build on their cognitive experiences throughout the study. They will be dissecting the neighborhood into various categories and studying these categories by questioning, experiencing, and recreating them in the classroom. For example, after studying the food category of the neighborhood, the children might decide to create a restaurant in the block area

where they can make sense of the restaurant through the actual construction as well as playing in the restaurant and experiencing the jobs firsthand. Throughout researching neighborhoods and finding out how they function, the class will also have the opportunity to practice mapping their neighborhood while discussing the possible reasoning behind the relationship of where places are on the map. Once they become “experts” on neighborhoods, they will begin creating their own city out of cardboard boxes in the classroom. Each child will have his or her own box to recreate an outdoor space (store, park, fire station, restaurant, etc.) in order to make up a classroom neighborhood.

In this parallel study, the students will be focusing on utilizing one sense, hearing, to understand the outside world through a new lens and make sense of the neighborhood in a different way. By having another cognitive experience by learning through sounds, the study will be enhanced and the children will have a larger understanding of the neighborhood. Based on the information that they have already learned through observational walks, children will have the opportunity to build on their knowledge by continuing to make meaning of the neighborhood, purely through the sounds that they hear.

Children have been constantly exposed to various sounds in their own neighborhoods, but likely have not explored these sounds and where they come from. This in-depth study will allow students to make sense of the sounds that they hear and be more attuned to the world around them. They will have the opportunity to compare the sounds in different areas and decide what this information tells us about the neighborhood and specifically the people in the

neighborhood. Children will eventually be able to take this information that they have learned through this curriculum and begin to innately use it to help them make meaning of the world around them. Through this social studies curriculum, the children will be exposed to many other areas of study as well, thus enhancing the cognitive skills that they will be building upon to create a rich learning environment.

### **Background Information**

This curriculum has been implemented in a first grade class in the private school setting on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. The mission of the school is to “improve the education of children and their teachers by applying to the educational process all available knowledge about learning and growth, and by connecting teaching and learning meaningfully to the outside world.” (Mission, n.d.) In keeping with the mission, the education at this school is largely based on discovering the outside world through experience. Students are expected to build on prior knowledge through many field trips and hands on experiences inside the classroom in order to gain new meaning of the world around them. This curriculum was designed for an urban setting and would be best suited in the urban setting.

These investigations are meant to be part of the daily classroom life as a portion of the academic day. This curriculum is best managed in a class with more than one teacher in the room, where it can be implemented in small groups, though can be executed as a whole class as well. This study should take approximately six to eight weeks though the length can vary based on the needs and interests of the students. The order of experiences can be changed and might be altered based on the questions and interests of the students. The results will vary and students will

pick up on different ideas each time. This is the beauty of this curriculum. It is up to the teacher to be flexible and listen to the students in order to make this the most meaningful experience as it can be.

## Key Concepts, Essential Questions, Skills and Areas of Curriculum

### Concepts:

- Cooperation
- Interdependence
- Community
- Diversity

### Essential Questions

- What sounds will you hear in the neighborhood?
- Who or what makes these sounds?
- What do these sounds say about the neighborhood?

### Skills:

- Observing through listening and recording
  - Visualizing
  - Take Notes of sounds using pictures
  - Record sounds on voice recorder
- Interviewing
  - Generating questions
  - Asking questions to obtain relevant information
  - Listening
- Writing
  - Picture book of sounds
  - Poetry of sounds
  - Pictures of visualizations
  - Lists of visualizations
  - Thank you letters

### Areas of curriculum:

- Math
  - Sorting sounds into categories
  - Graphing how many sounds in each category
  - Counting/tallying various sounds
- Reading
  - Read alouds
  - Visualization
- Writing
  - Interviewing service people about siren noises
  - Generating questions
  - Drawing pictures to represent sounds
  - Labeling pictures
  - Generating lists of sounds heard

- Sound poems
- Creating a book of sounds
- Writing thank you letters
  
- Art
  - Drawing visualized sounds
- Technology
  - Recording sounds
  - Editing sounds
- Field Trips
  - High Traffic Street (with many businesses)
  - Low Traffic Street (more residential)
  - Fire Station
  - Police Station
- Music
  - Listening to the sounds
  - Recreating city sounds for Box City

## Lesson Plan 1

**Title of Activity:** Introduction to the Sounds in the Neighborhood Study

**Purpose/Goal:** The purpose of this discussion is to introduce the Neighborhood Sounds study. The idea is to find out what the students already know about the sounds in the neighborhood and any questions that they might have moving forward.

**Materials Needed:** Social Studies Notebooks (notebooks which are dedicated solely to the social studies curriculum where children have the opportunity to keep their thinking about the social studies curriculum in one place (Appendix1,2)), Chart paper, Markers

**Lesson:** Introduce this study as part of the larger neighborhood study. While they are thinking about what they have already seen and know about the neighborhood, teachers will be asking questions such as, “what sounds do you think you might hear in this neighborhood and why?” Teachers will then have students work individually in their social studies notebooks on creating a list of ideas about what they might hear in the neighborhood. They may choose to write and draw and both are acceptable. The students will then come back to the meeting area to make a list of the sounds that they think will hear. The teacher will be writing this list on chart paper during this discussion. Once they have come up with the list, the teacher will explain that the class will be going on listening walks to find out more information about the neighborhoods through a different sense. There will be time for questions.

**Assessment:** Teachers will be assessing the students’ knowledge based on their comments and questions in our discussions as well as the information provided in their social studies notebooks, for those who show their work other than verbally.

**Follow up by teacher:** Teacher will create a trip sheet based on the list the children made for the chart and their lists in their notebooks. This will be used on many future listening trips. (Appendix 3)



## Lesson Plan 2

**Title of Activity:** Listening Trip (On a high traffic street with many businesses)

**Purpose/Goal:** Students (ideally in small groups) will have the opportunity to go out onto the sidewalks with a teacher and test out their predictions by doing some listening. They will observe what they are hearing and gather information based on what they hear.

**Materials Needed:** Clip Boards, Trip Sheets (previously made by teachers based on the information provided by the students in the previous discussion, Appendix 4), pencils

**Background Information:** Teachers will preview this trip to find a spot where the children can sit or stand without getting in the way of foot traffic. Prior to the trip, the teacher will discuss with the students what will happen on the trip, as well as the trip sheet and explain what is expected of them and how to use the sheet. The teachers will hold on to the clipboards initially.

**Lesson:** After a brief discussion about the trip, students will walk with the teacher to a street with high traffic and many businesses. The students will face away from the street (toward a building), close their eyes, and begin listening without trip sheets to practice this exercise and get an idea for what they might hear and how it feels to only use one sense. After a few minutes the students will have a chance to discuss what they heard the most. At this point, the teacher will hand out the clipboards with the trip sheets as well as pencils, and the students will begin the exercise again, only this time, they will tally each time they hear a sound on the sheet. (There should be space for an “other” category for students to add sounds that they might not have thought about in the previous discussion.) The students will have the option of sitting or standing based on their own needs/wants.

**Assessment:** The students' questions, comments during the trip and trip sheets will be used as an assessment to determine their understanding.

### Lesson Plan 3

**Title of Activity:** Post Trip Discussion

**Purpose/Goal:** The purpose of this discussion is to debrief about the trip and gather information found on the trip. This discussion gives students a chance to get their thoughts out as well as listen to other ideas by peers in the class.

**Materials Needed:** Social Studies Notebooks, Chart Paper, Markers, Pencils

**Background Information:** The chart made in this discussion will be referred to and continued throughout the study.

**Lesson:** Students will have a chance to talk for a few minutes about the process of using only one sense, since they have likely never done this before. After this short discussion, the students will be asked to go to their social studies notebooks and choose a few sounds that they heard. They will be asked to record these sounds phonetically (ex. “Varooom”) and draw a picture of the object, person or animal that makes that sound. On the bottom of the page, the students will write what this sound tells people about the neighborhood. After this exercise, the children will come back to the meeting area to create a list. After students have shared, they will be asked to think about why they would hear these particular sounds and what these sounds tell us about the neighborhood.

**Assessment:** Students will be assessed based on comments made during discussions as well as thoughts written in their notebooks. They will also be assessed on the use of the phonetic spelling in their notebooks.

## Lesson Plan 4

**Title of Activity:** Field Trip to Fire Station

**Purpose/Goal:** This trip will serve as dual function for the students. It will be in conjunction with the neighborhood study, therefore students will be able not only gain more information about service providers, such as the fire station, but to inquire about the sounds that the students hear coming from the fire trucks as well.

**Materials:** Notecards with children's questions

**Background Information:** Teachers will have made arrangements with the fire station ahead of time. They will also inquire about having a tour of not only the station, but the fire truck as well. Teachers will ask that they specifically discuss the sounds that help the fire fighters during an emergency. With the students, teachers will have a discussion about this trip prior to going. During this discussion, students will generate a list of questions that they will use to ask during this trip, such as, "is there more than one sound that the fire truck makes?" or "is there a sound that tells you when there is a fire at the fire station?" Teachers will put these questions onto notecards for the students to hold onto during the trip.

**Lesson:** As a whole group, the class will go to the nearest fire station to learn more about the purpose of the fire station as well as the sounds that the trucks produce and the meaning of the sounds at the station. They will take a tour of the fire station and the fire truck. During the trip, students will have the opportunity to ask their pre-existing questions as well as any further questions that may arise. Teachers will take notes during this time so that students can fully listen to the answers.

**Assessment:** Students will be assessed based on comments and questions about the field trip. Further assessments of this trip will occur during the writing of "Thank you" letters.

## Lesson Plan 5

**Title of Activity:** Thank you letter to the fire station

**Purpose/Goal:** Students will have a chance to share what they have learned through this activity. They will learn the value in writing “Thank you” letters.

**Materials Needed:** Social Studies Notebooks, Pencils, Drawing Materials, Chart Paper, Markers

**Lesson:** Students will begin by going to their social studies notebooks to write and draw about what they have learned on the field trip to the fire station about the various sounds that were discussed, such as sirens or bells (Appendix 5). After a period of time, the class will come to the meeting area to begin writing the “Thank you” letter as a whole group. The students can what they have written in their notebooks to help them with ideas for the letter.

**Assessment:** Students will have a chance to write and share about what they have learned from the trip to the fire station and all the sounds produced by the trucks or made at the station. This information will be used as an assessment of what they have taken in from the trip.

## Lesson Plan 6

**Title of Activity:** Listening Trip (On a more residential, low traffic street)

**Purpose/Goal:** Students (ideally in small groups) will have the opportunity to do another listening trip, but on a quieter street to have the opportunity to compare the difference of the two types of streets. They will make observations and gather information about what these sounds tell us about the neighborhood based on what they hear (Appendix 6).

**Materials:** Trip Sheet, Clipboards, Pencils

**Background Information:** Prior to the trip with students, teachers will take a pre-trip (without children) to find an area where the students will be able to sit or stand on the sidewalk and have room to work without getting in the way of traffic. Teachers will use the same trip sheet for all listening trips for consistency. They will have the sheets and clipboards set up prior to the trip. There will be a small discussion with the students about the trip before leaving.

**Lesson:** Before leaving on the trip, students will have the opportunity to make predictions about what they think they might hear on this trip (based on previous walking trips to this specific location). At this point, they can ask questions that they might have about the trip or the sounds that they might hear, such as, “How will we know the difference between a car and a truck?” At which point, the teacher might ask, “how do you think you would know?” They will have an opportunity to go over the trip sheet again for clarification of what they will do when they arrive at the destination. Once they arrive, the teacher will have the students face away from the street, towards a building and close their eyes. The students will have the opportunity to just listen, without the trip sheet. After a few minutes, they will share a few things that they heard. The teacher will then hand out the clipboards

and the students will continue to face away from the street, choosing to sit or stand. They will begin tallying the sounds that they hear on this street.

**Assessment:** The students will be assessed based on their questions and comments on and before the trip, as well as the information on their trip sheets.

## Lesson Plan 7

**Title of Activity:** Post trip discussion and comparison

**Purpose/Goal:** The purpose of this discussion is to gather information learned on this trip and compare and contrast the previous neighborhood listening trip. Students will have the opportunity to hear their peers' ideas as well and be able to build on these ideas. They will be gathering more information about what these sounds tell people about the neighborhood.

**Materials:** Social Studies Notebook, Chart Paper (already started), Markers, Pencils

**Background Information:** Teachers will have the sounds chart that has already been started ready for the discussion (Appendix 7).

**Lesson:** Before doing any sharing, students will go to their social studies notebooks and record (phonetically) the sounds that they heard on the second trip. They will be asked to choose different sounds to record from the first trip that they went on. They will draw a picture to go along with the sound. On the bottom of the sheet, they will write about information that these sounds tell us about the neighborhood. The students will then come to the meeting area to share their sounds. The teacher will record the sounds (phonetically as the children spell them) on the chart paper. They will not only share the sounds, but the information that these sounds give us, as well as where these sounds come from. After completing the list, teachers and students will talk begin to compare and contrast the two listening trips. Teachers will ask the students to think about the rest of the neighborhood. Are these the only sounds that we will hear? Do these streets always sound the same? Why or Why not?



**Assessment:** Students will be assessed on the comments made during the discussion. For those students who are not as comfortable sharing verbally, they will be assessed on the information provided in their social studies notebooks.

## Lesson Plan 8

**Title of Activity:** Sounds Poetry Writing

**Purpose/Goal:** Students will incorporate the trips and discussions that they have been having about the sounds in the neighborhood and create poems based on the sounds that they have been hearing.

**Materials Needed:** The book, *Sky Scrape, City Scape: Poems of City Life*. Sounds Chart, New Chart Paper, Markers, White Paper, Pencils, Drawing Materials (colored pencils, crayons, etc.)

**Background Information:** Teachers will have the sounds chart visible on the wall for children to refer to.

**Lesson:** Teachers will begin by referring to the list of sounds that the students have already created. She/he will then explain that the class is going to think about we can use these sounds to create a poem. At this point, the teacher will read a few poems out of the book, *Sky Scrape, City Scape: Poems of City Life* selected by Jane Yolen. After listening to a few of these poems and with guidance, the children will notice the similarities of the sounds that are in the poems and the sounds that they have compiled, through questions such as “what do you notice about the sounds in these poems?” They will then make up a poem as a class based on their sounds chart. The teacher will ask the class if anyone has an idea of how to start the class poem after hearing some of these poems, using the list of sounds that they have already created. He or She will then ask for more volunteers. After compiling a whole group poem (Appendix 8), the class will have the opportunity to begin working individually to create their own poem based on these sounds. This will carry on to another work time for students to finish. Once students are finished with their poems, they will have the opportunity to publish one in a class book. Students will have an opportunity to share their poems if they choose (Appendix 9).

**Assessment:** Teachers will assess based on comments and questions during discussions as well as determining the connections of sounds into their poetry.

## Lesson Plan 9

**Title of Activity:** Listening trip (high traffic street with any businesses)

**Purpose/Goal:** Students will have a chance to listen without trip sheet. They will not have the sheet to give the ideas of what they might hear and they will not have the distraction of the sheet so that they can fully listen and take in the sounds. They will have to fully rely on their ears to make sound observations. This is also an opportunity for students to capture the sounds that they hear and feel are important for their “box city.”

**Materials Needed:** Recording Device, Paper and Pencil (for teacher to record)

**Background Information:** Teachers will be prepared to take notes on what the students are saying so the children can fully listen without any other elements. Prior to this trip, the students will have a discussion with the teachers about the important sounds that they will need to capture for their “box city” in the classroom.

**Lesson:** After a brief discussion about the trip, students will walk with the teacher to a street with high traffic and many businesses, similar or the same as the first trip. Once they arrive at their destination, students will have the opportunity to record various sounds that they feel will be important to include in their “box city.” Before they begin recording, they will try to decide as a group who will record what sound, as there will likely be only one recording device. They will also be aware that some sounds might not occur, in which case, they will have to decide on another sound to record.

**Assessment:** Teachers will be listening to the comments and questions that students have about this task. They will also be noticing what the students choose to record and why.

## Lesson Plan 10

**Title of Activity:** Trip to Police Station

**Purpose/Goal:** This trip will serve as a dual function for the students. It will be in conjunction with the neighborhood study, therefore students will be able not only gain more information about service providers, such as the police station, but to inquire about the sounds that the students hear coming from the police cars as well.

**Materials:** Notecards with children's questions

**Background Information:** Teachers will have made arrangements with the police station ahead of time. They will also inquire about having a tour of not only the station, but a police car as well. Teachers will ask that they specifically discuss the sounds that help the policemen during an emergency. Teachers will have a discussion with the students about this trip prior to going. During this discussion, students will generate a list of questions that they will use to ask during this trip, for example, "Are there different sirens that mean different things? Or, "How does the loud speaker work in the police car?" Teachers will put these questions onto notecards for the students to hold onto during the trip.

**Lesson:** As a whole group, the class will go to the nearest police station to learn more about the purpose of the police station as well as the sounds that the cars produce and the meaning of the sounds. They will take a tour of the police station and the police cars. During the trip, students will have the opportunity to ask their pre-existing questions as well as any further questions that may arise.

**Assessment:** Students will be assessed based on comments and questions about the sounds heard or learned on the field trip. Further assessments of this trip will occur during the writing of "Thank you" letters.

## **Lesson Plan 11**

**Title of Activity:** Thank you letter to the police station

**Purpose/Goal:** Students will have a chance to share what they have learned through this activity. They will learn the value in writing “Thank you” letters.

**Materials Needed:** Social Studies Notebooks, Pencils, Drawing Materials, Chart Paper, Markers

**Lesson:** Students will begin by going to their social studies notebooks to write and draw about the various sounds, such as the different sirens and alarms that they have learned on the field trip to the police station. After a period of time, the class will come to the meeting area to begin writing the “Thank you” letter as a whole group. The students can what they have written in their notebooks to help them with ideas for the letter.

**Assessment:** Students will have a chance to write and share about what they have learned from the trip to the police station. This information will be used as an assessment of what they have taken in from the trip.

## Lesson Plan 12

**Title of Activity:** Listening and Recording Trip (On a more residential and low traffic street)

**Purpose/Goal:** This is an opportunity for students to capture the sounds that they hear and feel are important for their “box city.” This will also be another chance to listen without a trip sheet, this time on a quieter street. They will have to really listen without having the distraction of the sheet or being able to rely on the sounds, which were already provided on the sheet. They will have to fully rely on their ears to make sound observations.

**Materials Needed:** Recording Device, Paper and Pencil (for teacher to record)

**Background Information:** Teachers will be prepared to take notes on what the students are saying so the children can fully listen without any other elements. Prior to this trip, the students will have a discussion with the teachers about the important sounds that they will need to capture for their “box city” in the classroom that we do not already have.

**Lesson:** After a brief discussion about the trip, students will walk with the teacher to a street that is more residential with low traffic, similar or the same as the previous trip. Once they arrive at their destination, students will have the opportunity to record various sounds that they feel will be important to include in their “box city” that we have not yet included in our recording. Before they begin recording, they will decide as a group who will record what sound. They will also be aware that some sounds might not occur, in which case, they will have to decide on another sound to record.

**Assessment:** Teachers will be listening to the comments and questions that students have about this task. They will also be noticing what the students choose to record and why.



## Lesson Plan 13

**Title of Activity:** Editing Sound Recordings

**Purpose/Goal:** Students (in small groups) will need to decide what sounds should be included in our “box city” and why. Based on the information they have learned throughout this unit, they will be deciding which sounds to keep and how many sounds we will need.

**Materials Needed:** Recording Device, Computer, Social Studies Notebooks, Pencils

**Background Information:** This will be an ongoing project in conjunction with the “box city” project. Students will return to this process a few times before it will be completed.

**Lesson:** Before listening to the recordings, students will refer to their Social Studies Notebooks and decide what they think were the most important sounds in the neighborhood and why. They will find a blank page and write the information that they have decided and why they came to that conclusion. The small group will then have a chat about the decisions that have been made. At this point, the group will begin the editing process. They will listen to the sound clips and decide what should be cut and what should be left. Each group will have a chance to help with the editing process. After each group has finished, they will have completed their “city music” to go along with the “box city” in the classroom.

**Assessment:** Teachers will gauge the knowledge learned through the comments, questions, and writings in the students’ notebooks.

## Lesson Plan 14

**Title of Activity:** Culminating Activity

**Purpose/Goal:** The students will have a chance to culminate the sounds curriculum with the recording as well as a book that they will make together as a class. They will take the knowledge that they have learned and put it all together in this final project.

**Materials Needed:** Card Stock, Pencils, Drawing Materials, Sharpies

**Lesson:** Students will think about a particular sound that stands out to them from their various trips. Once they have decided on a sound, on top of the page, they will write phonetically, the sound that they are thinking about. They will then sketch a picture (in pencil initially) underneath, utilizing the whole page, to match the sound that they are visualizing. Once they have finished sketching in pencil, they will have a chance to outline the picture in sharpie before they begin coloring their picture. Children will have a chance to share their page with the class before the teacher binds them together in a book.

**Assessment:** The students will be assessed based on their visualizations and the sounds that represent what they are visualizing.

## Possible Extensions

**Art:** Students can begin to think about sounds as colors. When you hear this sound, what color comes to mind and why? What makes some sounds bright colors and other sounds dull colors? Will we all see the same colors in sounds?

**Science:** Students can begin to explore where sounds come from. How is the sound produced? What makes a high-pitched sound? What makes a low-pitched sound? They can begin to explore with materials to discover the science behind the sounds produced.

**Music:** After exploring sounds in science, students can make musical instruments and create their own sounds. Alongside the poetry lesson, the students can bring their poems to life by creating melodies to go with them. They might choose to create a band with the instruments that they make as well as sing their song about neighborhood sounds.

### **Other Neighborhood Trips:**

**Subway Station:** After going on various trips outside the neighborhood, students can begin to explore the sounds of the subway stations. Students will have the opportunity to listen for new sounds. Are these sounds that are heard on the streets? What do these sounds say about the neighborhood? Are there any similar sounds heard?

**Park:** Students can begin to experience nature through sounds. They can think about the similarities and differences between the sounds on the streets. What are these sounds and what do they tell us about this neighborhood? Who creates these sounds that we are hearing?

**By the River:** To go along with the nature sounds heard in the park, students can explore the different sounds created by the river and surrounding area. What sounds do you hear near the river? What creates these sounds? What do these sounds tell us about the surrounding neighborhood?

## Reflection

After having the opportunity to implement this study, I feel confident that the sounds component of the neighborhood curriculum significantly enhanced the learning of the students in my class. Not only were they able to experience the neighborhood through a different sense, but also they were able to broaden their ability to think about the neighborhood in a different way. Through this investigation, I began to notice that children were implementing these skills in other areas as well. In general, students were becoming better listeners in the classroom, they began incorporating sounds into their writing, and they started to develop a new appreciation for sounds and began to create them through various mediums around the classroom.

After going on a few of these listening trips, I began to notice a difference in the conversations that occurred in our meetings. Initially, children would engage in meetings by answering teacher-guided questions. Children were much more apt to answer in their own way, without taking into account what another student had just said. After a few trips, students began to really listen to their peers and not only comment on what they had to say, but were building off of others' ideas. The meetings began to flow much more conversationally and children seemed much more engaged now that they were listening.

As well, students really seemed to be incorporating these skills into their literacy. Not only were they noticing sounds written in their books, but they were beginning to utilize sounds in their writing as well. More and more children were actively incorporating sounds into their stories, which in turn made story writing

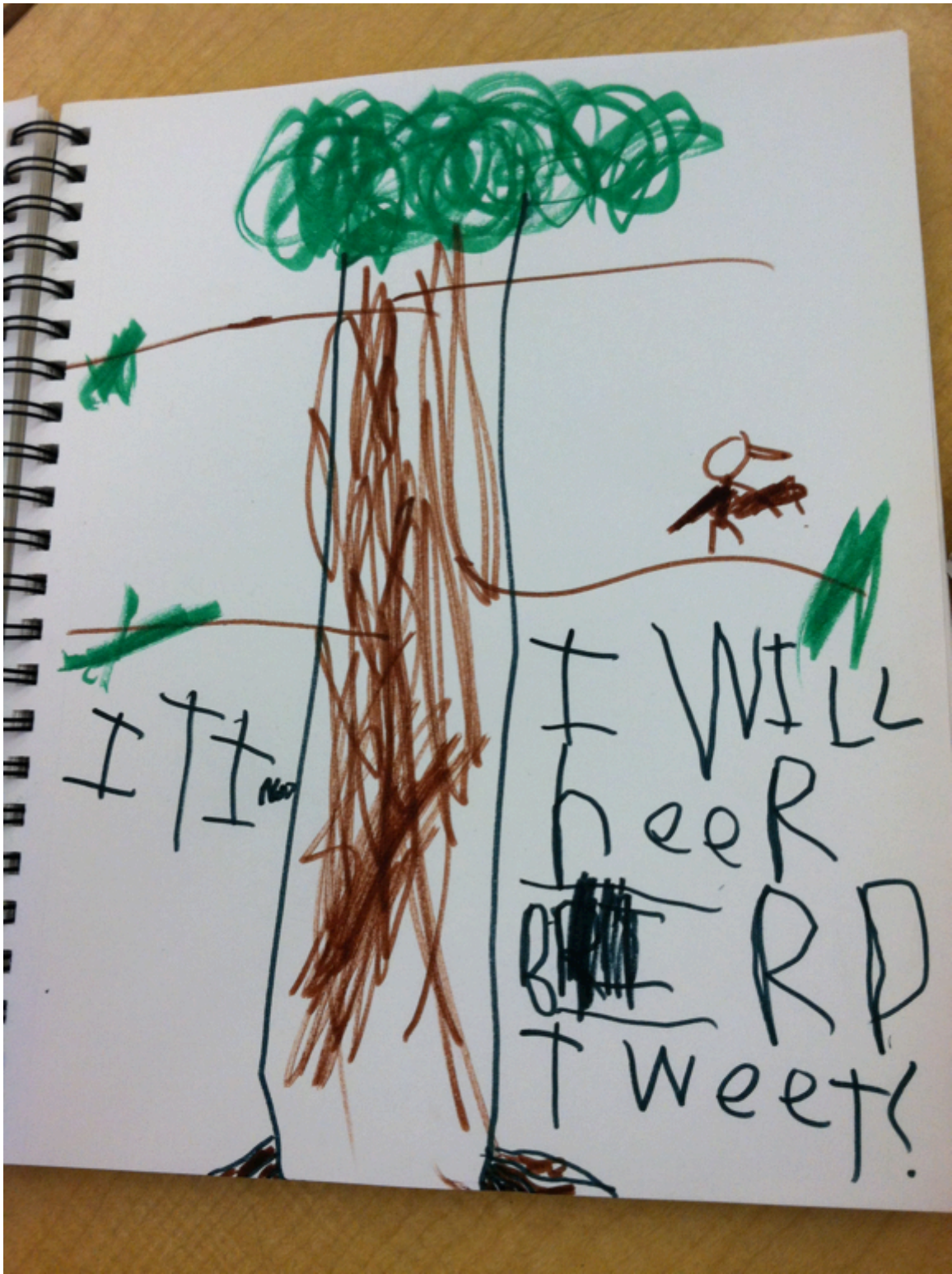
more interesting for these students. There was a sense of accomplishment and pride coming from the students when they were able to incorporate these sounds and they seemed genuinely thrilled to put these skills into action.

It seemed that during and after this study children were much more attuned to various sounds and how they can create them in the classroom. During work times, children would figure out ways in which they could create sounds with various mediums in the classroom. One child would put a few marble maze blocks (blocks with holes for the marble to turn) on his fingers to create a beat, which reminded another child of castanets. As he continued with his beat, a few other children decided to join in, finding other materials that would make different sounds. Slowly, more and more children were joining in on the sounds, some emulating the rhythm with their voice. Before I knew it, there was an entire symphony being made out of classroom materials.

As I reflect on the study, I believe that it is best implemented in small group work. Though it is possible to take an entire class to do a listening walk, there are far fewer distractions in a small group. As well, students have a chance to be in a more intimate setting and those that feel more comfortable sharing in a small group have that opportunity. Looking forward, I would love to incorporate more trips as well as activities. In a longer study, children could have the opportunity to experience the sounds of different neighborhoods in the city. As well, I would love to explore more of the science aspect of this curriculum. Children would have the opportunity to explore how sounds are made and what makes higher and lower pitches. That being said, I feel confident that not only has this current neighborhood

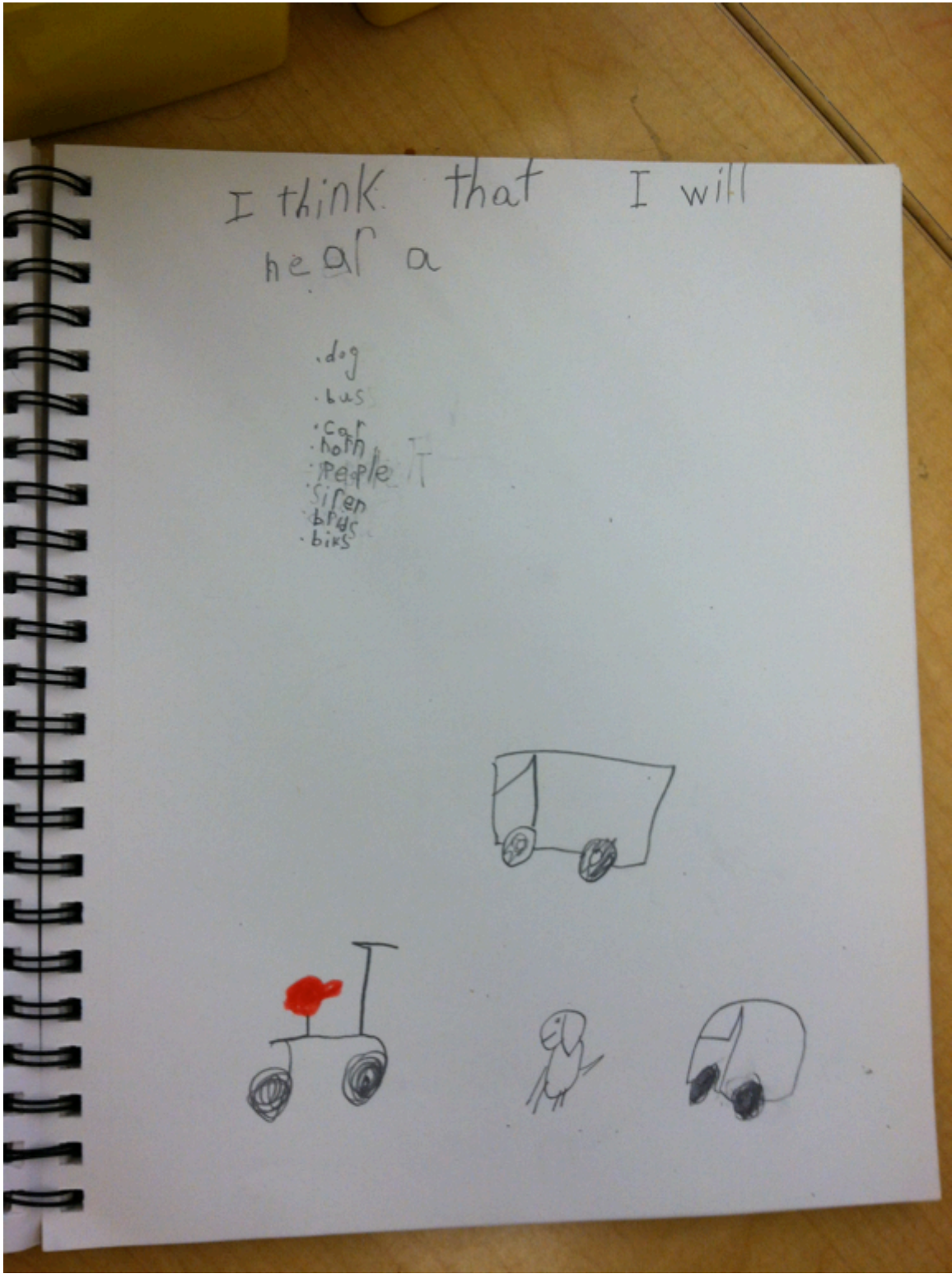
sounds curriculum made children more aware of the sounds surrounding them in the neighborhood, but it has also made an impact on the way that they learn as well. The fact that we are seeing these changes in their everyday studies proves to me that incorporating sounds into the curriculum has only benefitted the learning of these children.

Appendix 1





Appendix 2



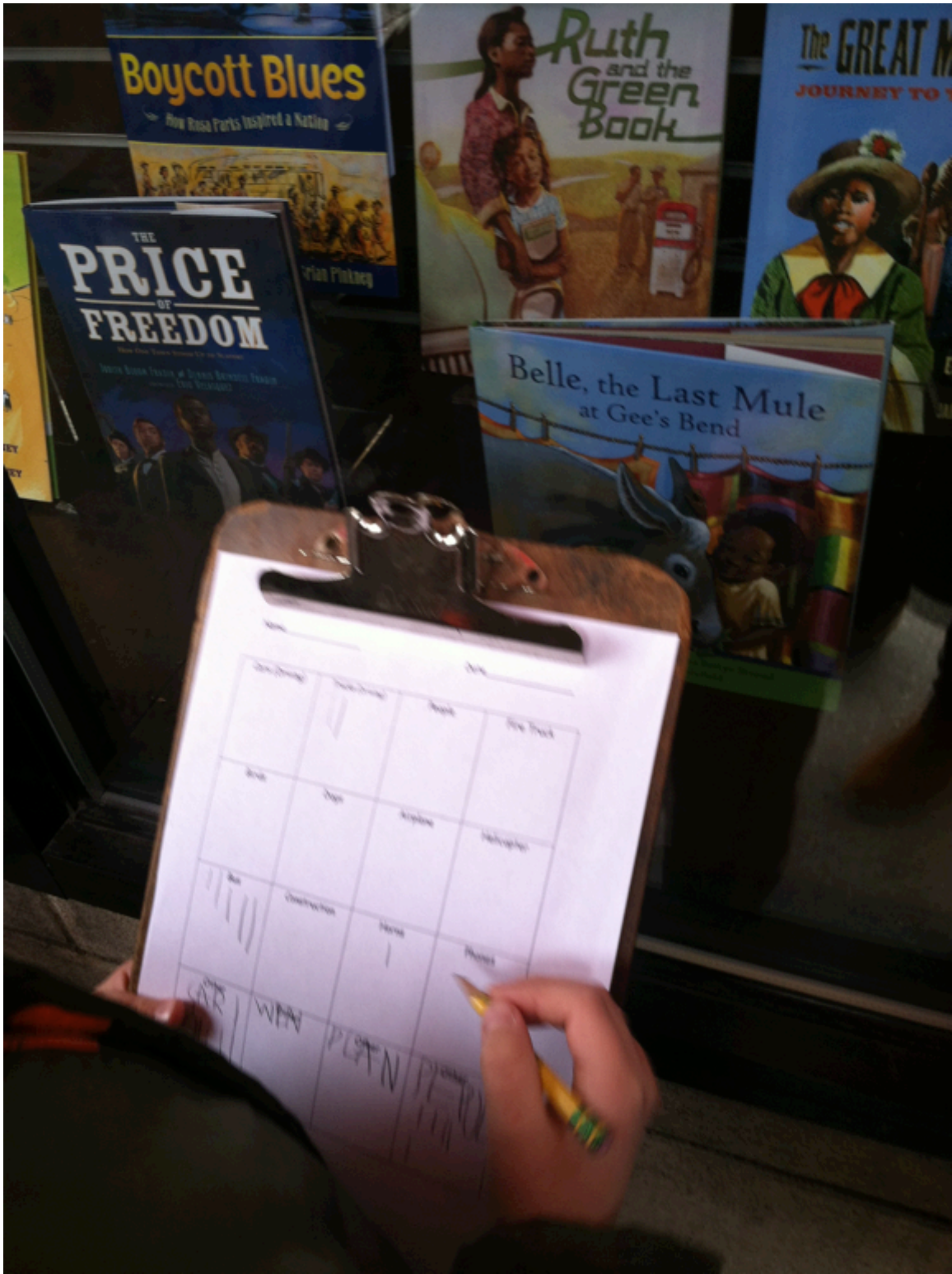
### Appendix 3

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Cars (Driving)	Trucks (Driving)	People	Fire Truck
Birds	Dogs	Airplane	Helicopter
Bus	Construction	Horns	Phones
Other	Other	Other	Other

Appendix 4



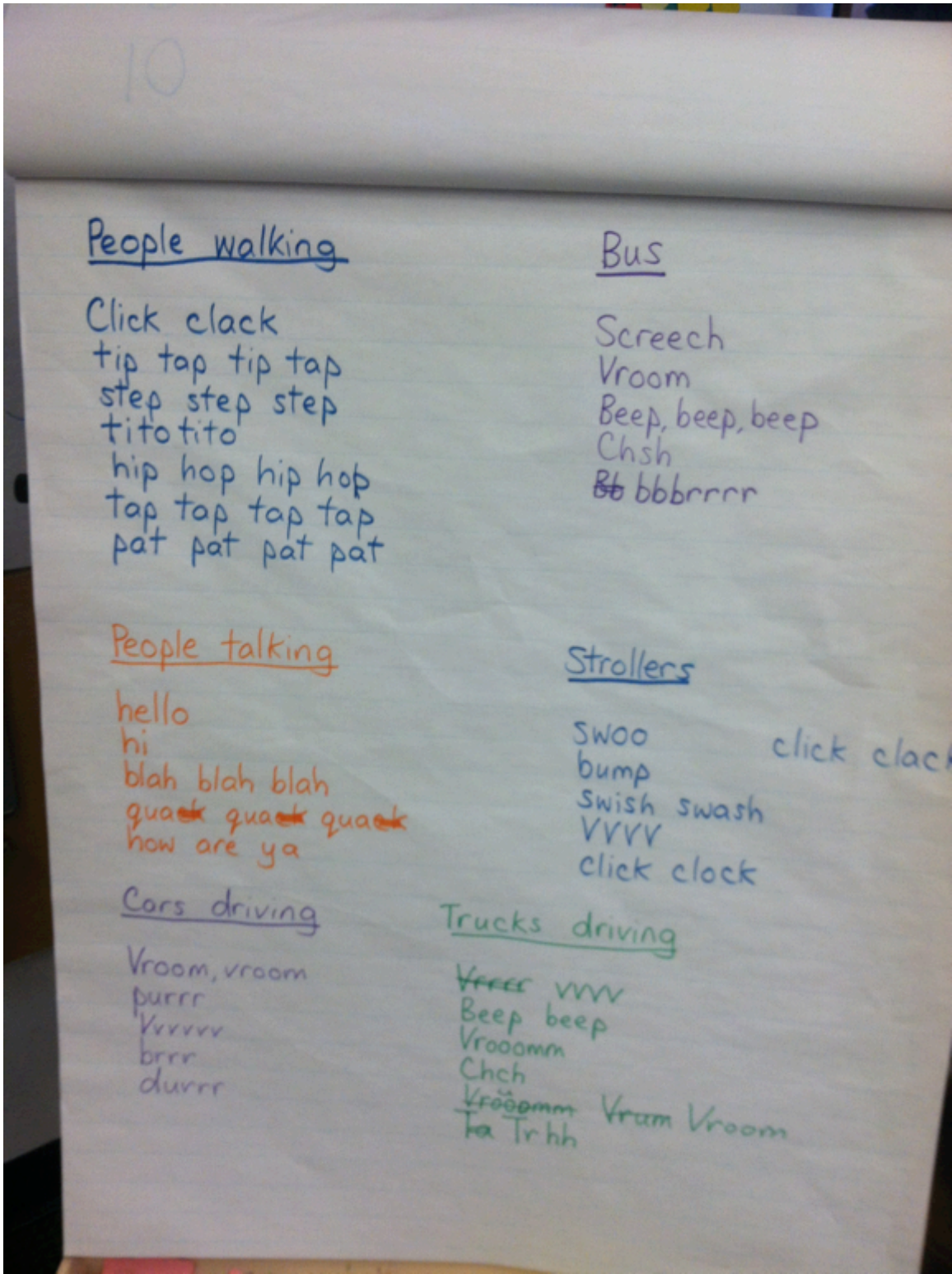
Appendix 5



Appendix 6



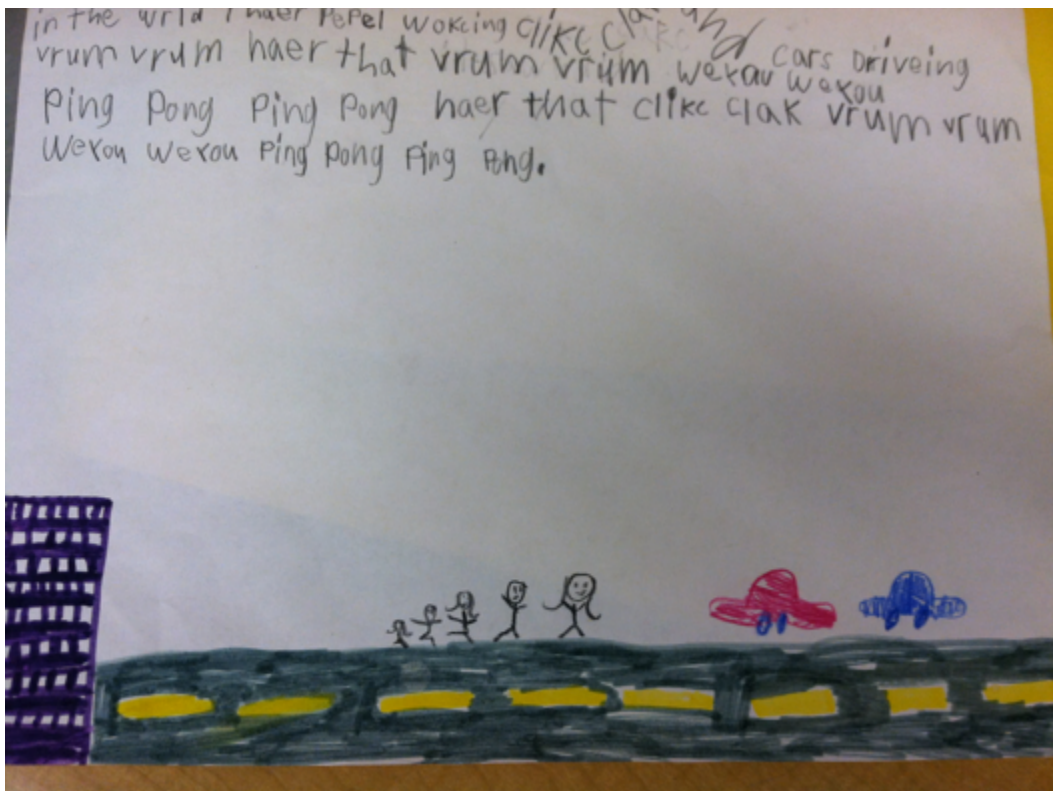
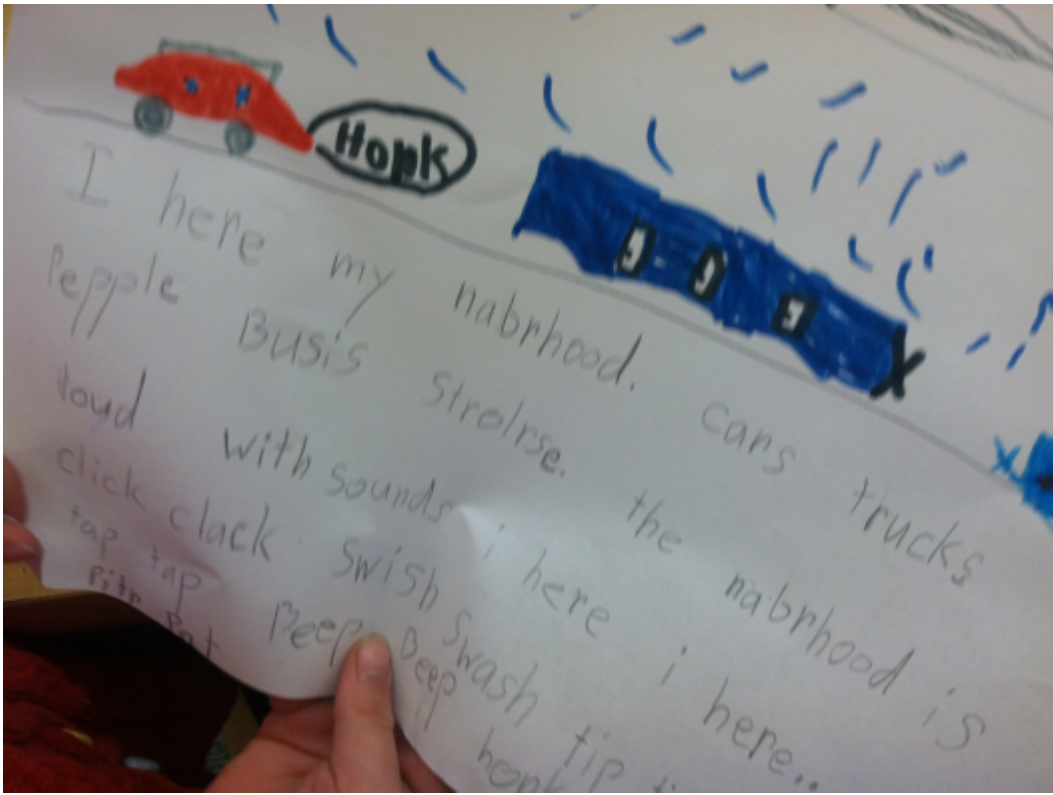
Appendix 7



Appendix 8

click clack  
splish splash  
tip tip step step  
tip tip step  
I hear shoes walking  
and I hear boots splashing  
tap tap tap tap  
tap tip,  
splish splash

Appendix 9





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