**Lesson Title:** Gardens Grow, Gardens Dance! **Room Requirements & Arrangement:** Open space (if desks and chairs please

**Content Area & Arts Discipline:** Science & Dance move to the perimeter of the room)

**Overview of the Lesson:** The parts of the plant, what **Materials/Equipment:** Boombox,

a plant needs to grow (weather), creatures that inhabit rain music (sound effects),

the garden and help it to grow. The Tiny Seed by Eric Carle, drum/ tambourine, plant diagram/picture,

classical music (performance)

**Grade Level:** Kindergarten Date Lesson Created: April 2014

**Proposed Time Frame:** 30 minutes Lesson Author: Julie White

**Big Idea & Learning Objectives**

1. The student will learn the different parts of the plant and demonstrate these clearly and creatively in their body through movement and shaping.
2. The student will identify and embody the movement qualities of different creatures that inhabit a garden, such as bees, birds, and butterflies. They will also be able to explain how these creatures help a garden to grow and show this in their movement.
3. The student will dance a story about a seed which helps them to understand and recall how weather affects a seed’s ability to grow into a big healthy plant.
4. The student will participate in a guided dance improvisation where they will be both a plant in a garden and the weather that affect it or the creatures that inhabit it.

**Procedures**

***Affective Hook:*** Does anyone know what season it is? Spring! What happens in nature during the spring? That’s right – plants, trees and flowers are growing and there is a lot of rain which is good. Why? Because sun and rain helps flowers to grow. Today we are going to learn all about plants and how a seed becomes a plant when the right weather and creatures help it out.

***Relevance:*** Today we are learning about how and why plants grow. We will be planting our very own “dancing garden” to show what we know too. Why is it important to understand plants and the things that affect them? Why are plants important to us as people? That’s right – they give us oxygen, they can provide food, and they are living creatures just like us. It is important to take care of them and they are also important because they help us to take care of ourselves too.

***Introduction of Concept & Warm-Up*: *Rain, Rain, Rain!***

Have the students sit in a group and ask for a volunteer to tell the teacher once again what two things a plant needs to grow. Sun and rain. The teacher then shares with students that there are all kinds of rain. Have the students do three “scooches” away from each other (to spread out) but stay seated for this. Sitting down, have them try the following (the teacher models/leads each and also identifies them as she goes):

* Little drops of rain (tip toe the feet in front of you)
* Steady rain (march the feet in place in front of you)
* Hard rain (stomp the feet fast in place in front of you)
* Sideways rain (reach both arms to the right and wave them then to the other side; lean the body sideways too)
* Misty rain (hands up over head and as they lower towards the floor twinkle the fingers)
* Drenching rain (have the student sit tall and collapse to the floor again and again, looking soaked)
* Lightning (stab the arms in different directions)
* Thunder (shimmy, shake, vibrate, etc.)
* Wind (moving just the upper body, reach into different directions like the wind is blowing them about; if the students get too “wild” in their movement, ask them to do it in slow motion)
* Sun (make the shape of a sun and then ask students to show the heat of the sun…gently wave their arms side to side)

Have the students stand in place and do each type of rain again. Remind them to “dance on their spot” and encourage them to try new things and to use the whole body when they show something. Play the “rain music” and ask them to keep their voices low so that the music can be heard. The teacher cues the students to try the new type of weather by announcing the next thing; allow 10 – 20 seconds of investigation of each thing in order to encourage creativity and also warm up the body.

*Discussion:* What type of weather affects a garden? The teacher calls on three volunteers to identify something and then immediately stand up in place and show what movement they did to represent it. Thank every student for sharing and tell all students to remember these ideas for later when they will be dancing a garden.

***Investigation of Concept: Dancing a Plant Story***

Have students gather near the teacher and have a seat. The teacher reads The Tiny Seed by Eric Carle. After the story the teacher asks the students to go through the story one more time and tell her what happens to the seed along the way.

* Flys too high and gets burned by the sun
* Lands on an icy mountain
* Lands in the ocean and drowns
* Birds eat the seed
* Lands on the ground and takes root!

The teacher then asks half the class to stand up and find a spot they like on the floor. The other half of the class turns around and watches these students perform. The teacher tells them that just like they experimented with finding movement to show all different kinds of weather, they are now going to find ways to show each sentence that the teacher reads (see above). The teacher reminds them that nothing they choose to do is “wrong” if they are working hard to stay focused, be creative and be clear. She encourages them to move in the free spaces around them and reinforces that touching is not permitted while dancing. The teacher then reads each sentence allowing 10 – 20 seconds after each for the students dancing to explore different possibilities for showing these. The teacher offers suggestions for what they might do (i.e. can you be an icy mountain? What would that look like? What might happen to the seed if it got cold? What does your body do when it is freezing? Show me!) and encouragement for effort (i.e. I see Alex doing a really cool thing back there!). The teacher should also play the drum or tambourine to accompany the movement or have a student do this. At the end of the group dancing, the teacher leads a brief discussion of what was seen. She also insists that performers bow, audience members clap, and then switches groups.

***Development of Concept: BE the Plant!***

The teacher will show the students a diagram/picture of the parts of a plant: seed, cotyledon, seedling, stem and flower. She will then explain how the students will show these different stages of a plant growing in their bodies. The students will face the teacher, and stay in an assigned personal space. The teacher will explain that in a minute they will be planted in a garden and will need to remember how to do this on their own. The teacher will lead students through each stage asking them to say the word as they do the movement that represents it. She should have students try it 2 – 3 times.

* *Seed:* planted in earth (have the student get as small as possible on the floor; balled up)
* *Catyledon:* sprout, roots (have the arms pop off the sides of the body and reach up above their heads, and the legs pop out of their balled up shape and stretch out long along the floor)
* *Seedling:* sprout above ground (the arms begin to rise above the student’s body, slowly lifting them into a crouch position where their feet are strong and “rooted” and their arms are stretched up and reaching. Have them do this in slow motion and give them time to do it).
* *Stem:* stalk forms (have the student slowly stand by leaning right and left until they are completely erect; arms relax and fade to their sides as they do this).
* *Flower:* leafs, branches, fruit and flowers form (ask the student to decide what kind of flower they are and to try to capture this shape in their bodies)

Again, once the students have moved through this once and understand what movement they are to do (and have had a chance to explore the possibilities here a little bit) the teacher asks them to once again start as a seed and go through each plant stage with movement AND saying the stage they are in over and over again as they move (i.e. stretching out long on the floor and saying “cotyledon” repeatedly as they do). This helps them retain this information and codes the body and the mind with the terms. Ask the students to do the stages of the plant a final time without the teacher leading them (saying anything), without them saying the terms, and instead ask them to transition smoothly from one stage to the next and try their best to dance it. Play soft music as they dance. They can show a clear beginning with stillness, an energized middle of their dance, and a clear ending with stillness once again. The teacher can point out great things she sees as they are dancing. Time allowing, one half of the room could perform this at a time and peer feedback could be given in terms of identifying plant stages they see or creativity they appreciate in movement or both.

***Culmination of the Concept: Dancing a Garden***

The class will be divided into three large groups. One group will be the plants, one group will be the weather, and one group will be the creatures that visit the garden. Remind the students that they have explored all three of these things and now is their chance to show all the creative ways they can clearly and creatively demonstrate what they know. Have the three groups sit in their own space around a circle. Before dancing, have students take a minute to review their options for each category. For example, ask them to identify a type of plant and then quickly stand in place and give a movement idea for what it could look like. The teacher should model here to encourage student participation (i.e. potato, and then making an oblong shape on the ground). Have three student volunteers go and then ask them to quickly blurt out other options without taking the time to suggest movement, such as carrots, tulips, blueberries, an orange tree, melon, tomatoes, etc. The teacher can quickly remind students of “weather options” by reading through the list used in the warm-up and asking students to do each sitting in place. Finally, for the creatures, the students can recall the story read to them earlier. Tell this group that they will either be a butterfly, a bird, or a bee. Have students stand in place on the circle and moving in their own spot, try being a bird, a bee, and finally a butterfly. As they are moving, the teacher can tell them how these creatures help to scatter seeds and pollinate plants.

Once the review is complete, directions need to be shared and clearly. The “plants” will go plant themselves in the center of the circle. The music will play and the teacher will guide them through their stages until they are a tall beautiful plant of their choosing. They end in a shape but this shape can move as long as it stays in one spot (they are rooted). At this point, the creatures are free to stand and dance through the garden, interacting with the plants. They are not to touch them, but they should visit as many as possible. Encourage them to visit every part of the garden and to try each creature if they can. Let this group dance 30 – 60 seconds and then sit down. Finally, the weather group enters in. These students are rain, thunder, wind, sun, etc. and encourage the “plants” to respond to whatever is around them. If they have sun near, they can reach their limbs, if they are being rained on, they can droop, if they have wind blowing them, they can bend. Again, the “weather” does not physically touch the plants but they do relate to one another. 30 – 60 seconds of dancing and then they sit. Everyone claps for the “plants” as they had to work hard to hold their shape.

Time allowing, the groups switch roles and at least get to try being one other thing; ideally, they get to be all three. The teacher is focused on safe interaction during dancing and giving feedback on what she sees that is clear, creative and fully danced. Playing soft classical music during this time helps with classroom management as well and keeps energy at an appropriate level.

***Closure:*** Today we learned all about plants – what stages they go through when they grow, and what creatures and weather can help them grow big and strong. It was wonderful to see you dance a garden and show me what you know with your body. Great job everyone.

***Dismissal:*** Ask the students to choose their favorite creature and dance them to their place in line.

**Extended Learning Activities**

* Lead students through an exploration of specific kinds of plants and help them to make these shapes clear in their bodies. Choose plants that are low (potatoes, carrots, melon), medium (ocra, spinach, strawberries), and high (blueberries, oranges, tomatoes). Choose different categories too, such as fruit and vegetables in this example.
* Reread the book and have the entire class dance each part of it. Give students transitional “improvisation movement” (guides for what to do and where to do but leaving specifics to them) for transitional parts OR have them freeze in tableaus or shapes waiting for the next “action section.”
* Give each student or small groups of students their own plant and ask them to find a way to show this plant through movement or shape. Let this be the plant they dance in the garden. If it is a small group, have different students represent different stages of the plant and connect with one another physically to show that they are still one plant.
* Have the student make up their own type of plant – its shape, its fruit, its name, its colors. Have the student make a dance about this plant.