THE ENJOYMENT OF TEACHING:
HOW SONG CAN PAVE THE WAY

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ENJOYING CHILDREN THROUGH SINGING

"Each time we enter a classroom with our students, we create an environment for learning. Whether we intend to or not, we set the stage for how our students feel about themselves and us, as well as school, learning, and classmates, when they are in our presence." Bennett & Bartholomew 1997, 164

When we aim to engage, intrigue, and focus students, we are contributing to the quality of their learning and our satisfaction with teaching.

"The way we plan for, think about, and react to our behaviors and our students' behaviors can make a difference in the energy, enjoyment, and satisfaction we feel as we pursue the principles and practices that help us be the teachers we want to be."
Bennett & Bartholomew, 1997, 161

"Informative feedback may be used to show interest or recognition, to encourage, to describe, or to evaluate. (Bartholomew)

To show interest or recognition: *"What an interesting way of thinking about that!" "As you explained your idea, I could picture what you mean!" "I see your idea."*

To encourage: *"I have never thought of that interpretation before. Tell us more about your thinking." "You are really making connections. Keep imagining!"*

To describe: *"Your explanation was so vivid that we could imagine ourselves in that scene. We saw ships, water, activity on the shore, and the main character of the song." "Your movements were such a surprise! We saw you coordinate them with the music and correlate them with the meaning of the words."*

To evaluate: *"That is a clever idea and one that I hadn't thought about . . . such imagination you're using! You gave us an excellent description, because you used words that helped us picture your idea." "For me, your description was a little difficult to understand. Let us observe as you demonstrate your idea. The combination of words and movements may give us some additional clues."*

When discipline problems begin to surface during your lesson, look first (a) to your own *energy level*, then (b) to the *clarity* of behavior expectations for the activity, (c) to the level of *interest* that the activity holds for the students, and (d) to the *potential for success* that students feel toward the activity.

Be aware of the perils and profits of praise. "Praise can have potentially negative rather than positive effects on a student's learning, motivation, and self-concept." Feelings of embarrassment, manipulation, inferiority, and superiority can be generated when a teacher uses lavish and indiscriminate praise in the classroom. (Bennett, 1989)

Be aware of the perils and profits of rewards. "Once good habits are established, it is harmful to praise a person every time." "It is possible to erode a person's love of something [such as learning] by handing out too much reward at the end." "If people find internal reward in a task, too much external reward will weaken the internal motivation." (McGinnis, 1985)

Some retooling (for you and your students) may be necessary if questions in your classroom are asked primarily for the purpose of getting right answers. Questions that elicit imagining are not fact questions, they are thought questions.

Although some answers may warrant further explanation or elaboration, questions such as, *"What do you think?" "What might happen then?" "What could that mean?" "What did you hear?" "What might you see?"* and *"What would you do if . . .?"* have no wrong answers.

DEVELOPING LISTENING SKILLS THROUGH SINGING

Ideally, *listening* is active, focused, and meaningful. Meaning can come from recognition, imagination, accomplishment, connection, and social interaction.

Consider how listening is engaged in three contexts:

1. Introducing a song: *"Listen to this song, and I'll ask you what it's about." "As you listen to this new song, think about where you might hear it." "As you listen to this new song, think about what it might mean."*

2. Leading a song game: *"Voices ready." "Here comes the song." "Each time you hear the word 'pass' change directions." "Is your song ready?" "Listen for Jesse's invitation."*

3. Studying musical sounds: *"Antiphon me as we sing Three Blind Mice." "Chin the whole song and listen for any unisons." "Put the rhyming words in your inner hearing." "Move only when you hear the words 'this' or 'that.'" "Put the words in your hands by tapping them as we sing."*

LITERACY AND SINGING

"What makes music musical? Although the words are inadequate, musicality can be described as the spirit, flow, life, shape, and grace that is inherent in music. If music study is hard work without the grace and charm that musicality brings, it can have disastrous effects:

- It can desensitize young children to the flow and beauty of music.
- It can cause resistance and animosity toward studying music.
- It can stunt young people's musical growth.
- It can construct barriers between experiencing music and studying music."

<div align="right">Bennett & Bartholomew, 1999</div>

Song dotting is a strategy in which practiced movement (tapping) to the rhythm or beat of music is transferred to paper. In this way, students simultaneously produce and notate the sounds they hear, using a notation system that all can write, read, and study. Unlike conventional notation, song dotting needs no prerequisite knowledge of musical elements; all that is needed is knowing the song and moving to the rhythm or beat.

What Song Is This?

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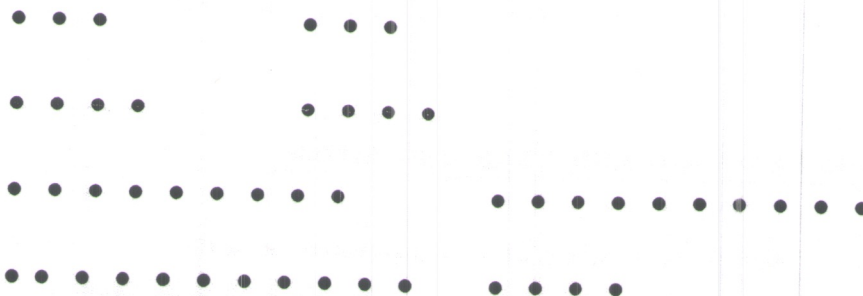
SINGING IN PARTS, LISTENING IN WHOLES

The goal of part-singing is to sing interdependently, to listen to and blend with other voices, not to outsing them.

Three primary ways to introduce part-singing are ostinati, rounds, and partner songs.

Part-listening should be taught at the same time as part-singing. By offering students challenges for listening (*"Can you sing your song, listen to mine, and not get mixed up?"*) and by avoiding words and phrases that suggest a competition between groups (*"Which group will be the best singers?"*), you will be fostering musicality.

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PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

from
SongWorks 1

1. Students have the right to be treated with respect and dignity for their ideas, skills, and stages of development.

2. Students deserve an engaging learning environment in which they feel safe enough to demonstrate freely their understandings and skills through various types of participation.

3. Student learning is the responsibility of both teachers and students.

4. Learning is holistic and constructive.

5. A teacher's attitudes, behaviors, and methodologies should be compatible.

6. Accurate and constructive feedback helps students become independent learners.

7. Quality of life is enriched through music and singing.

PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING MUSIC

from
SongWorks 2

1. The major goal of music study is the development of a responsiveness to music.

2. The musicality that is critical to music performance is just as important in music study.

3. The fundamental skill in music behavior is listening.

4. The way music sounds rather than how it looks guides the selection and presentation of patterns for study.

5. A distinction exists between skills and concepts that are musically easy and those that are musically simple.

6. Song provides direct involvement for making music and studying sound relationships.

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