Children’s Singing

- An Overview of Existing Research About Children’s Singing and the Implications for Teaching Children to Sing (Hedden, 2012)
- Short patterns before whole songs
- Whole group, small group, and solo singing

Continuous Rating Scale for Solo Singing

4 = Student sings entire tonal pattern accurately.
3 = Student sings tonal pattern with minor intonation error(s).
2 = Student performs the pattern in singing voice.
1 = Student performs the pattern in speaking voice.
Children’s Singing

- An Overview of Existing Research About Children’s Singing and the Implications for Teaching Children to Sing (Hedden, 2012)
  - Short patterns before whole songs
  - Whole group, small group, and solo singing
  - Neutral syllables before text
  - Learning songs by rote/immersion

Composition in Elementary Music?

- Teachers’ beliefs regarding composition in elementary general music: Definitions, values, and impediments. (Shouldice, 2014)
  - Survey of 245 Michigan elementary music teachers:
    - Definition of composition?
    - Value of composition?
    - Impediments to composition?

Value of Composition?

- Musical understanding
- Creativity
- Self-expression
- Ownership!
  - “Teaches kids that they can also be music inventors.”
  - “Students need to be aware that they have the power to create music.”
  - “Kids usually love it because they get to [make] ‘their own’ music.”

Impediments to Composition?

- Time
  - Not enough contact time
  - Takes too long
- Logistics
  - Too many students
  - Not enough instruments
  - No technology
Definition of Composition?

- **Complexity?**
  - “create a whole musical piece;” “entails the use of rhythm, pitch, melody, instrumentation, using music notation to create an original piece of music”
  - “creating something new musically, whether it be a simple ostinato pattern, or a lengthy complex piece;” “can be as simple as creating an interesting rhythm or melody”

- **Notation?**
  - “written in some form;” “process of notating musical ideas”
  - “by ear, or written;” “may be strictly aural;” “one does not need to know notation in order to compose”

What does this mean for my classroom?

- Composition is valuable!
- How might we incorporate composing…
  - quickly?
  - simply?
  - without instruments/technology?
  - without notation?

Effects of Harmonic Accompaniment

- The Effects of Harmonic Accompaniment on the Tonal Improvisations of Students in First through Sixth Grade. (Guilbault, 2009)
  - (Quasi)Experiment of 419 Michigan elementary music students (late August-early May)
  - Treatment = “root melody”/bassline (80% of songs) performed…
    - On pitched instruments
    - Using voice recordings
    - By teacher/researcher as students sang a song
    - By students as teacher/researcher sang a song
    - By a student(s) as another student(s) sang a song

Snow Day

In the winter it's every kid's dream,
As snowflakes begin to appear,
That suddenly there'll be a blizzard,
And they'll cancel school for the year.

Though most kids are willing to settle,
And I am inclined to agree,
They could merely close school for one day—
One day off would be just fine with me.

A day free from all forms of homework,
A day without science or math,
When you leave all your school books at home—
And run out the door with a laugh.
Effects of Harmonic Accompaniment

- Post-test: Students individually improvised an ending to an unfamiliar major tonality/duple meter song without text—recorded and rated by three judges in terms of tonal syntax and implied harmonic changes.
- Students who experienced chord root accompaniments vocally improvised with a stronger sense of tonal syntax and more clearly implied harmony!

Students’ Musical Self-Concepts

- An Investigation of the Musical Identities, Self-perceptions, and Motivation of Elementary Students in Relation to their Experiences in School Music Classes (Shouldice, 2019)
- Case study of 8 fourth-grade students (Sept-Dec)
- Students’ musical self-concepts are extremely fluid and malleable and are influenced by:
  - Judgements from others (e.g., teachers, peers, family members)
  - Comparisons with others (made by self or by others—Recorder Karate???)
  - Outcome after struggling (success or failure?)

Lack of Effort

Success

“I Can!”

Lack of Effort

Failure

“I Can’t!”
Want More?

- Research journals
- NEW “Research to Real Life” blog!
  - https://everydymusicality.com/research-to-real-life-blog/
- Teacher research/Action research?
- Get in touch!
  - heathershouldico@gmail.com