

Research to Real Life: Applying Recent Research to Elementary General Music

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I. Introduction: Importance/value of research?

II. Children's Singing (Hedden, 2012)

* Young children can sing short patterns more accurately than whole songs.

Frog Song

Traditional

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the 'Frog Song'. The first staff is in 3/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It contains the lyrics: "'Ga - gung' went the lit - tle green frog one day, 'Ga - gung' went the lit - tle green frog. 'Ga -". Above the notes are fingering indicators: 'I' above the first note, 'V' above the second note, 'I' above the third note, and 'V' above the fourth note. The second staff continues the lyrics: "gung" went the lit - tle green frog one day, and his eyes went 'Ga - ga - gung!". Above the notes are fingering indicators: 'I' above the first note, 'V' above the second note, and 'I' above the third note. The music ends with a double bar line.

* Children benefit from whole group, small group, and solo singing experiences.

- Add finger puppet on “ga-gung” and invite st. to sing in solo.

- Rating scale for assessment:

4 = Student sings entire tonal pattern accurately.

3 = Student sings tonal pattern with minor intonation error.

2 = Student performs the pattern in singing voice.

1 = Student performs the pattern in speaking voice.

* Children may benefit when singing is introduced on neutral syllables before text.

* Learning a song by rote or immersion may be more effective than phrase-by-phrase.

Rote Song Teaching Procedure:

1) T sings song for st.

2) St sing resting tone when T pauses/gestures during song.

3) St move to microbeats while T sings song.

4) St move to macrobeats while T sings song.

5) St move to simultaneous macrobeat/microbeat while T. sings song.

6) St close their eyes and sing the song silently in their heads, raising their hands when they are finished.

7) St sing song (without T).

OR play/pretend something to “trick” students into hearing the song repeatedly!

- Stir a different ingredient into a big pot of soup each time the teacher sings the song.

- Make pizza, acting out a different step each time the teachers sings the song. (Stir, roll dough, poke, toss, “tick-tock” while baking, slice, eat!)
- Bake cookies. (Stir, roll dough, use cookie cutters, “tick-tock”, frost, eat!)
- SNOW DAY! (wake up/stretch, jump for joy, build a snowman, sledding, snow angels, snowball fight?)

What Shall We Do When We All Go Out?

Traditional

What shall we do when we all go out, all go out, all go out?

What shall we do when we all go out, when we all go out to play?

III. Composition in Elementary General Music (Shouldice, 2014)

Value of composition?

Impediments to composition?

Definition of composition?

Composing a Melody for a Poem

- 1) Try chanting poem in duple meter, then in triple. Vote to choose meter.
- 2) Try chanting with major chords, then with minor chords. Vote to choose tonality.
- 3) Echo/improvise a few tonal patterns in the chosen tonality.
- 4) As a group, try improvising pitches for “In the winter.” Invite an individual to share an idea, and have the class echo. Have class sing again and add on improvisation for “it’s every kid’s dream.” Invite another individual to share an idea, and have the class try. Continue adding on new improvisations until you have an entire composed melody!

“Snow Day” (excerpt) by Barbara Vance

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.

Other Simple Composing Ideas?

- Create a four-beat rhythm (“bah” or instrument) to perform as rhythmic ostinato. (Add rhythm syllables? Notate?)
- Combine created rhythm with chord roots to a familiar song to create a harmonic accompaniment.
- Create a variation by improvising a new tonal pattern to replace a repeated pattern in a song.

IV. Effects of Harmonic Accompaniment (Guilbault, 2009)

Experience with “root melody accompaniments” (i.e., chord roots/basslines)

(List of standard tunes with simple basslines: <https://everydaymusicality.com/resources/>)

- Model/sing chord roots while students sing the song.
- Teach students to sing chord roots by rote.
- Invite students to sing chord roots while you sing a song.
- Divide students into two groups: song and chord roots; switch!

Extensions...

- Let students choose whether they will sing song or chord roots.
- Invite students to sing song/chord roots in partners.
- Ask students to sing song and/or chord roots independently as a duet (with teacher or another student).
- Play chord roots on an instrument (e.g., xylophone, boomwhackers, recorder)
- Expand to full chords! (3-part vocal harmony, boomwhackers, resonator bells, ukulele)

Vocal/Tonal Improvisation Activities?

- Improvise a song ending.

Unfinished Song

Heather N. Shouldice

Swing feel

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 6/8 time. The top staff is a melody line starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The bottom staff is a bass line starting with a bass clef and the same key signature. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, while the bass line consists of quarter notes. The piece ends with a double bar line.

- Improvise Q & A phrases.
- Improvise melody for a familiar chant.

V. Students’ Musical Self-Concepts (Shouldice, 2020)

Students’ musical self-concepts are extremely fluid/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?)
- Beliefs/effort/outcome cycle

VI. Conclusion: Finding and/or doing research?

Widely recognized journals (but require access):

- Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education
- International Journal of Music Education
- Journal of Research in Music Education
- Music Education Research
- Research Studies in Music Education

Journals included with NAFME membership:

- Update: Applications of Research in Music Education
- General Music Today
- Journal of Music Teacher Education

Open access journals:

- New Directions: A Journal of Scholarship, Creativity and Leadership in Music Education (<https://www.newdirectionsmsu.org>)
- Visions of Research in Music Education (<http://www-usr.rider.edu/~vrme/>)
- Research and Issues in Music Education (<https://ir.stthomas.edu/rime/>)
- Action, Criticism and Theory for Music Education (<http://act.maydaygroup.org>)

“Research to Real Life” blog!

- <https://everydaymusicality.com/research-to-real-life-blog/>

Get involved!

- Teacher research/Action research?
- Connect with a music education faculty member at a local college/university to inquire about collaborating and/or to let them know you would be willing to allow them to conduct a research project in your classroom!

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