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Perspectives

A Publication of the Early Childhood Music & Movement Association

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Assessment is vital informative tool in the world of early childhood music and movement, allowing teachers to educate parents and caregivers about developmental music learning. In your communities, assessment can facilitate communication both by inducing you to make your program goals explicit at the outset of classes, and also by providing data for you to share during parent-teacher conferences.

To make your program goals explicit to your parents and caregivers host an orientation meeting for them at the beginning of your program. Parent orientation meetings serve several important purposes. First, these meetings provide parents and caregivers the opportunity to meet you, the teacher, face to face and become acquainted with other families within the musical community. These “parents only” meetings allow parents and caregivers to give you their undivided attention. Second, orientation meetings provide the opportunity for you to discuss the upcoming schedule of classes and distribute materials and resources. Third, an orientation meeting can be used to educate parents and caregivers about how early childhood music classes are structured to meet the musical needs of young children. Often, parents are in need of accurate information on musical development in early childhood. Take time to elaborate on how young children move through musically developmental stages and refer to your own personal experiences of children in your classes. With information from research journals and other articles, you can present parents and caregivers with the most accurate information on the musical and movement behaviors of young children.

By providing them with this information before music classes begin, they will be more likely to understand why music classes are structured as they are, what their roles are within the class, and what to expect from their young child.

It is important for early childhood music and movement educators to track how our young pupils progress in their musical development. Take time to observe, document, and maintain careful records of the musical growth of the young children in your classes. This process will help you to communicate information to parents who have a natural desire to know how their children progress musically. Informal conversation throughout the term provides opportunities to discuss children’s musical responses in both class and home contexts. However, scheduling parent-teacher conferences may provide a more formal, direct approach. Consider reserving the last class of the term, or set aside an evening, to talk with each family. Ten-minute meetings afford time for you to share your observations in a one-on-one conversation with parents or caregivers. These educational sessions also allow an opportunity for parents and caregivers to ask questions to further clarify their child’s musical and movement progress.

Assessment may be used as a means of communication with parents and caregivers about music and movement in early childhood. Through assessment, a foundation for knowledge and understanding is built, creating support and advocacy for music in the life of the young child.
The positive role that music and movement play in people’s lives is well known, but to witness the beauty of music and dance in another culture is exciting!

Recently, my husband and I adventured to Alaska. We were fortunate to meet indigenous people from many regions of Alaska and the Yukon, as well as participate in their music making. Drums were played and songs were used to accompany their dancing. How their stories came alive with their dancing! Children as young as babies were participating. There, the music is passed down through aural-oral tradition. The young learned the music and dances by watching and doing alongside the older participants.

Since many of these people live very close to Russia there was a definite Russian influence on many of the songs and dances. The respect these people had for their families and their beautiful, yet extremely challenging environment were evident in everything they did. An Inupiak teenager explained how their invented games and activities helped develop skills for survival such as strength for hunting in the extreme northern climate, and skills for positive social interaction.

I am now sharing the games I learned with my students and they love them! Certainly many of you have stories to tell about the role music and movement play in different cultures. Please consider sharing them with us!

This is the year of Regional Conferences for ECMMA. Regional conferences are an opportunity to gather and network with colleagues closer to home. The dedicated ECMMA regional representatives have put together valuable professional development opportunities for teachers. More conference information is available in this issue of Perspectives as well as on the website.

Speaking of the website, so much is happening! Webmaster Jeremiah Calvino and Managing Director Rick Townsend are working diligently to provide more online benefits for ECMMA members. We truly appreciate their hard work and vision for this organization.

It is time for the Nominating Committee to seek new Executive Board members for the 2010-2012 term. Please consider volunteering for a board and/or a committee position. You will find that working with other incredible, passionate, and talented people is very rewarding! I would be happy to talk with you about the responsibilities. Contact me with questions, or to nominate a colleague or yourself for the board.

Sincerely,
Jan Vidruk - President, ECMMA
What a joy and responsibility we have in fostering the musicality of each young child in our care. They blossom as individuals, creating a unique garden for us to tend to and help them grow musically as human beings. We foster the musical development of each flower in our musical garden when we are aware of how each flower grows. This is the essence of assessment in early childhood music and a common theme among the feature articles in this issue of Perspectives. Joy Galliford, Herbert Marshall and Jennifer Bailey, and Diana Dansereau have contributed fine articles on how to use assessment to inform your teaching practice, including helpful resources for you to monitor the musical growth of the flowers in your garden.

Angela Barker has provided an interesting research review on the relationship of developmental tonal aptitude to singing achievement and you will find a review of the book, BRIDGING – Assessment for Teaching and Learning in Early Childhood Classrooms, PreK-3 by Lisa Gruenhagen. Notable Notes, intended to be duplicated and distributed to parents, caregivers, and administrators, was penned by Rebekka Cleland. And don’t forget about our latest department—This Business of Music—by Christopher Wolfe! Here you will find practical advice pertaining to your business matters. Do you have a business-oriented question for Christopher? Send it to me at editor@ecmma.org for possible inclusion in the next issue.

Look for the formal announcement of the first ECMMA Perspectives Peer Review Board in this issue. We are fortunate to have a range of expertise on the board and are grateful for the board’s willingness to serve ECMMA in this capacity. I urge you to submit an article for consideration—whether it aligns with the theme of an issue or not. As ECMMA continues to expand, so does the scope of Perspectives.

Welcome to the Spring issue of Perspectives!

Suzanne Burton
Editor, ECMMA Perspectives
Reliable child assessment is a critical component for a quality program in early childhood education. Such an assessment not only is a valuable tool for a teacher in gauging the developmental needs of the student, but it is essential to document the effectiveness of the program in meeting those needs. Making those assessments reliable, however, is a challenge in that they are dependent largely on the observations of the teachers themselves.

Several assessment tools are available to assist teachers in their decisions, but the ability to obtain or apply such tools often is absent in many, perhaps even most, preschool classrooms. Those classrooms frequently are operated privately rather than by the public education system so they often are staffed by preschool teachers with little or no professional training in the field of education. However, when the process and purpose of assessment is demonstrated to those preschool teachers, they are eager to put the tool in practice and find the result to be a transforming experience for both themselves and their students. That was the finding of a recently completed three-year study by the University of Miami Music Education Department in collaboration with the Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Miami, Florida.

The four goals of the study, funded by a grant from The Children's Trust of Miami-Dade County of Florida, were to: (1) implement an age-appropriate music curriculum for the total population of the schools which were intervened; (2) train non-music preschool teachers to deliver the music curriculum; (3) involve the parents of participating children through home activities that reinforced the concepts in the music curriculum; and (4) determine if significant increases in skills occurred among those children engaged in the music program as compared to those students in non-intervened schools where there was no formal music curriculum.

Three assessment tools were used to gather pre-test and post-test data. The Woodcock Johnson-Revised Test of Cognitive Abilities (Woodcock & Johnson, 1989) was utilized to measure gains on linguistic and non-linguistic functioning. The five linguistic subtests, selected in consultation with a neuropsychologist at the University of Miami, were Visual-Auditory Learning, Incomplete Words, Sound Blending, Listening Comprehension and Delayed Recall-Visual-Auditory Learning. Non-linguistic subtests included Visual Closure, Sound Patterns and Spatial Relations.

The second test was the Music and Movement Test (Jordan, 2001), which was used to measure beat competence, motor flow, coordination, and expressive response to music. Twenty percent of the three- to five-year-olds participating
in the study were randomly selected both for this and the Woodcock Johnson test.

A third tool was the Galileo System, a developmental rating scale already employed by the schools in the study to rate gains in gross and fine motor skills, language and literacy ability, early math, social/emotional development, creative arts abilities, and approaches to learning. All of the participants in the study were measured by these developmental standards.

Of these three tools, only the Galileo System required teachers to rate the children. Their assessments were based on observing each child individually and as a part of a small or large group on a daily basis during the implementation of the music curriculum. It was during that process that Dr. Joyce Jordan and I, the University of Miami researchers responsible for this project, found that most of the observational assessments recorded were not gathered objectively. Furthermore, most of the teachers were unable to identify the indicators within the domains of the Galileo System that were accomplished through the music activity.

It became obvious that inflated or deflated child assessments resulted from factors that could be discounted, if not completely eliminated, when teachers have evaluating tools that give them confidence that they can be objective. Among those factors were the time required in making a judgment lacking an impersonal measurement, a desire to impress administrators and parents, or an unconscious prejudice for or against a child based on something unrelated to the educational situation.

The conclusion was that, since the Galileo System was the only tool that would provide the data for 100 percent of the participants, it was critical that teachers learn the basis of assessing student activity and become skillful at evaluating accurately and objectively the level of a child’s engagement.

As one of the researchers, my task was to study the Galileo System and, on a weekly basis, share with the teachers an understanding of the purpose of the indicators within each domain and then decide which ones would be accomplished if the children mastered each activity in the music curriculum. This exercise provided me with the opportunity to learn about a tool that, while not in common use in my world of music, is invaluable for any educator seeking to impact the lives of preschoolers. It was fascinating to see how many indicators were accomplished when a child was completely engaged in a particular music activity. It was exciting to see how learning the technique of using those indicators to objectively assess the progress of the children made the teachers enthusiastic about the music program, transformed their attitudes toward certain children, and resulted in many of the students, previously withdrawn and rejected by the group, realizing their self worth and happily joining and being accepted by the group.

Educating preschool teachers about the technique of assessment, while a relatively simple task, was challenging. The key to their success was experiencing every part of the assessment process just as their students had to experience each music activity. We began by asking the teachers to observe the children's level of participation for the specific weekly activity on a daily basis. At the conclusion of the week, the music specialist prepared a class roster, led the music activity and asked the preschool teachers to observe the level of participation by the

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children. The teachers then were asked to assign a number to each child, the number 1 representing complete absorption in the activity, the number 2 indicating sporadic absorption, or the number 3 meaning the child displayed no interest in the activity.

Typically, the teachers had no difficulty assigning the number 3. However, deciding which child should receive a 1 or 2 became a not-so-simple, time consuming challenge that disclosed the subjective nature of the assessments done by most preschool personnel. In a vivid example, I stopped the class to ask a particular teacher what number she had assigned a certain student and to explain her reasoning. I had observed her giving a child a 1 when the indicators called for a 2. After thinking about her answer, the teacher replied, “Well, I saw him do it yesterday so I am going to give him a 1 today.” Her honesty provided a learning opportunity and as the music specialist, my reaction would chart the course that would lead to my success or failure as a mentor for the remainder of the project.

Exercising the best listening posture I could to assure the teacher that I had the utmost respect for her honesty and genuinely was interested in her opinion, I explained the importance of assigning numbers based on what was observed at that moment and not on what occurred yesterday. The interaction allowed us to discuss her choice in relation to objectivity and the importance of her decision on the assessment system and its consequent impact on the formation of the child’s self image. The incident also provided the occasion to demonstrate that the knowledge of and skill in applying objective assessment techniques greatly reduced the time devoted to decision-making and were an aid in overcoming such negative factors as a personal preference for or against a particular child. Furthermore, the situation elicited the observation that the existence of objective assessments derived from the techniques under study—in contrast to inflated subjective assessments prompted by fear of disappointing children, parents and administrators—not only built teachers’ confidence in their own performance but were a convincing asset when teachers were seeking approval from administrators to employ the recommended music curriculum.

Once confidence in their mentor and the skill level of the teachers was built up through the study of particular techniques, their own confidence in their ability to conduct and assess the music activities was raised. With the process in place and successfully implemented in the targeted schools, the study ended with findings for the Galileo System indicating significant gains from pretest to post test on all domains with a large associated effect size.
Now I am involved in delivering this curriculum to a group of children and teachers in a different school. They are learning to implement the assessment process. As the music specialist, I am observing the same challenges as witnessed in the grant study.

During a January training session to learn about growth among both teachers and students and to identify and address concerns, teachers were asked to put in writing their assessment observations. I explained that their observations would be a part of this article in order to increase the awareness of the powerful impact of assessments.

Following are some of their observations:

**Ms. Gloria**

“For the first part of this exercise, I observed my class more ready to follow instruction. The eyes light up when they hear something new and different. For example, they used the music sticks to perform at the Christmas show and did a marvelous job. They stop at the signal and started when it was the right time. Jeremiah has really amazed me. He does not speak clearly but we look at him observing the other children and following the routine. He claps and tries to sing the words.”

**Ms. Rosa**

“In our class, the discipline that they learn is incredible. They are learning to follow directions, increase their vocabulary, and enjoy the music and share with their family. Bradley has difficulty with articulation but he is singing every time with the music. He enjoys and participates in all of the music activities. In my classroom, the children are using the folding song to fold their blanket after rest time. They are singing about big squares, big rectangles, little squares and little rectangles.”

**Ms. Wendy**

“As a class the children have been improving a lot. Their listening skills have developed more and more. The children also understand that it is fun to follow directions and they are learning that it is just good to listen. Samuel has been learning to take turns. He knows that doing something good means doing a good job and this makes him happy. He has also learned that making his teachers happy is important too.”

**Ms. Jennilee**

“As a class, it is hard to have all eighteen children focused, participating, and on the same page at the same time. Yet, during these musical activities, everyone is in one accord. Even though we have one student who does not sing along, he is still there, watching and listening and learning. During music, I am the happiest because the children can be children, have fun, and still gain so much as they learn.”

**Ms. Natalie**

“One thing that I have noticed in my children is that they really interact together during the music activities. When I ask them to make a circle for large group, they don’t listen. Yet, when I sing the song, “Come and Make a Circle,” they come right over and make a circle. They are really learning how to listen. I have one child in my class who has a language impairment. He never gets involved in the
activities. However, when we have the music activities, he is so happy. He can’t wait to do it again and again.”

These personal observations were extremely valuable to me as their mentor. What they shared helped me once again to remember why I need to continue teaching the assessment process to preschool teachers such as Ms. Gloria, Ms. Wendy, Ms. Jennilee and Ms. Natalie. Each day that I share music with them and their children I am given the opportunity to transform all of us as we experience the process together.

Early childhood assessment continues to be of growing interest for our world today. I encourage each of you to use assessment as an agent for transformation in the classroom. The process works just as well for parents as it does for teachers and their children. The needed component is a willing individual with a passion for making an impact through music. ☺
What’s Really Happening Here?

Understanding Our Children and Our Teaching Through Assessment

By Diana R. Dansereau, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Music Education - Boston University

Young children love our music classes! Their faces light up when they sing, dance, and play, and they delight in their musical interactions with their parents and us. For many parents, witnessing their child’s bliss during music class is indication of its value and reason enough to return regularly. For some teachers, having joy-filled classes and enthusiastic reactions from parents and children are indicators of success. But what’s really happening in our music classes? We sense that children benefit from these experiences…but how? What are the musical benefits? Are we able to encourage musical growth in our children? Can we articulate the value of our work to others?

When we ask what’s really happening with our children’s musical development during music class, we begin to see our classes not just as moments for musical fun, but as opportunities to affect children’s musicianship. We evaluate our methods and materials, not only for their potential to engage, but also for their value in stimulating musicality. As reflective practitioners, we learn about the quality of our teaching and hone our approaches with the deliberate goal of creating more constructive experiences for children. Assessment is a key step in understanding what happens in our music classes. It can be a window into our children’s developing musicality, a mirror reflecting our effectiveness as teachers, an information source for lesson planning and establishing learning goals, and an opportunity to enrich the musical experiences we provide for children. By introducing assessment into our approach, we understand the music learning that occurs during our classes and better articulate the value of our work.

Because the primary goal of music class is encouraging children’s musical development, it is important that our assessments focus on musical growth. In this article I have chosen to focus on three aspects of musical development that can be effectively assessed during, before, or after early childhood music and movement classes: children’s engagement in musical activities, developmental music aptitude, and singing voice achievement.

Assessing Engagement

Prior to assessing a child’s musical development, we must ensure that she is comfortable expressing herself musically. It does little good to attempt to evaluate singing when a child is reluctant to engage in singing during class!

Most of us have had children who were shy and hesitant to participate in our activities. Often, as we continue with our classes, these children become more
comfortable and eventually engage in activities. This was my usual tactic until I met Sam and Maddie, two children in separate three-year-old classes, and tracked their engagement in music activities. Both children indicated an initial shyness during our classes, so I noted those activities in which they would participate and those from which they would abstain. This informal assessment led me to discover patterns in their behavior that weren’t previously apparent to me. Sam freely engaged in instrument playing and moving activities, but opted out of all singing activities, while Maddie engaged in any type of musical activity, but only after having a certain level of familiarity with it. My tracking revealed that Maddie needed to experience an activity over the course of two to four classes before she would participate (see Appendix A).

My assessment of engagement consisted of writing anecdotes of the children’s responses on my lesson plan. These anecdotes revealed important information about the children. I realized that Sam was hesitant toward singing, leading me to plan more vocal exploration and pre-singing activities, which helped him to become comfortable using a singing voice in class. Maddie’s assessment revealed that she needed repetition to become adequately comfortable with our activities. This information reinforced the importance of repeating songs within, but also across multiple classes. Both of these findings allowed me to understand these children’s responses and preferences and plan activities that helped them to engage comfortably in music class.

To use this assessment in your class, identify a child who seems reluctant to participate. During class, observe that child’s responses and record the response on your lesson plan or engagement chart. Pay attention to whether the child is partially or completely participating in the activity. Look for patterns of response – does the child engage in certain activities like Sam, or demonstrate a delayed response to activities like Maddie? A child demonstrating selective response will need to feel safe and affirmed to overcome hesitancy. A child responding after a delay will require repetition of activities across and within class periods. Both situations require different, but deliberate teaching strategies.

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1 All names are pseudonyms.

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### Appendix A

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<tr>
<th>Engagement Chart — Maddie</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Class 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hello Song</td>
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<tr>
<td>Singing Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basar Down</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stirring our Brew</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rain on the Green Grass</td>
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Assessing Developmental Music Aptitude

Music aptitude is one’s potential to achieve in music. Gordon (1986) asserted that everybody possesses some level of music aptitude, that this aptitude can be nurtured early in life, and can increase or decrease until around age nine. Prior to age nine, music aptitude is referred to as developmental music aptitude, and after age nine stabilized music aptitude. Gordon posits that a child’s music aptitude is never higher than at birth and that music stimulation and a quality music environment are needed to keep aptitude from decreasing (Gordon, 1990).

Gordon (1986) stated that a child possessing “a high degree of music aptitude who does not receive appropriate early environmental influences will lose his [music] potential” (pp. 18-19) and that the quality of one’s early musical environment is the most powerful factor in determining the extent to which one can become musically creative (Gordon, 1989). Ball (1991) found that without active musical involvement, there can be a loss of a child’s music aptitude between ages five and six, and that music aptitude is not developed by mere “exposure” to music but through active participation in singing and moving to music (Ball, 1995).

The notion that early childhood music engagement effects a child’s music achievement and influences a child’s potential to learn and make music is compelling.

Appendix B
Singing Voice Development Measure — Developed by Dr. Joanne Rutkowski

1 “Pre-Singer” does not sing but chants the song text.
1.5 “Inconsistent Speaking Range Singer” sometimes chants, sometimes sustains tones and exhibits some sensitivity to pitch but remains in the speaking voice range (usually A2 to C3).
2 “Speaking Range Singer” sustains tones and exhibits some sensitivity to pitch but remains in the speaking voice range (usually A2 to C3).
2.5 “Inconsistent Limited Range Singer” wavers between speaking and singing voice and uses a limited range when in singing voice (usually up to F3).
3 “Limited Range Singer” exhibits consistent use of limited singing range (usually D3 to F3).
3.5 “Inconsistent Initial Range Singer” sometimes only exhibits use of limited singing range, but other times exhibits use of initial singing range (usually D3 to A3).
4 “Initial Range Singer” exhibits consistent use of initial singing range (usually D3 to A3).
4.5 “Inconsistent Singer” sometimes only exhibits use of initial singing range, but other times exhibits use of extended singing range (sings beyond the register lift: B3-flat and above).
5 “Singer” exhibits use of consistent extended singing range (sings beyond the register lift: B3-flat and above).

See the Bird

Traditional
Arranged by Diana Dansereau, 2009

Adapted from “A Longitudinal Study of Elementary Children’s Acquisition of Their Singing Voices” by Joanne Rutkowski and Martha Snell Miller, Fall-Winter 2003, 22 (1) issue of UPDATE: Applications of Research in Music Education. Used with permission.
Assessing music aptitude can offer valuable information about a child’s musical capabilities informing the implementation of activities aimed at a child’s strengths and weaknesses. Tracking a child’s music aptitude over time may indicate the effects of your instruction on a child’s music potential.

Audie (Gordon, 1989) is a test of developmental music aptitude that consists of two subtests: rhythm and tonal, for children between three to four years of age. Each subtest is a five-minute game played while listening to an audio recording. The child is asked to listen to a “special song” (a three-note pattern) and then answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’ upon hearing ten subsequent tonal or rhythm patterns to indicate whether she has heard the special song. For the tonal subtest, each example that differs from the special song was composed so that the rhythm of the special song is maintained, but with altered pitches. For the rhythm subtest, each example differing from the special song consists of the same pitches, but the rhythm is changed. Each subtest yields a score, ranging from 1-10 with 10 being the highest possible result.

The Audie kit consists of instructions, profile cards for charting a child’s developmental music aptitude, and two pads of game sheets. The assessment can occur before or after music class, or parents can administer it at home.

Assessing Singing

Singing is the paramount musical activity in early childhood music classes, and is crucial to encouraging musicality in children. Sims (1993) stated “singing is the most intimate way for children to make music and to express themselves through music” (p. 19). McDonald and Simons (1989) asserted that “the earlier vocal instruction is begun, the better” (p. 91) and Scott-Kassner (1993) maintained that early childhood “vocal play and continuous singing are crucial in the development of accurate singing.” From a policy perspective, the importance of singing in early childhood music education was emphasized in 1994 when MENC: The National Association for Music Education published the Prekindergarten Music Education Standards (MENC, 1994). “Singing and playing instruments” is the first content standard, and MENC suggested that children ages two to four should be encouraged to “sing a variety of simple songs in various keys, meters, and genres, alone and with a group, becoming increasingly accurate in rhythm and pitch” (p. 11). It is MENC’s belief that children who meet these standards will be ready to learn music in kindergarten.

Rutkowski’s (1996) Singing Voice Development Measure (SVDM) (see Appendix B) was designed to help music educators understand a child’s singing competency and track her singing development. The measure provides information on a child’s use of singing voice and range, as opposed to measuring intonation accuracy, and is reliable with children as young as three years of age.

The measure requires approximately one minute to administer and consists of the adult playing the pitches of the first measure of the criterion song (See the Bird) on an instrument, singing measure one, then cuing the child to echo-sing those pitches. Then, measure two is played (in order to re-establish accurate pitch), sung by the adult, repeated by the child, and so on, until the child has sung all eight measures of the song.

Recording the child’s singing is helpful in making an accurate evaluation. To assess the singing, listen to the recording and determine which pitches of the song the child accurately sang. Then, compare those pitches with the ranges described in SVDM and identify the child as a pre-singer, speaking range singer, limited range singer, initial range singer, singer, or within one of the inconsistent stages.

Administering SVDM during a music class could be problematic, so consider asking parents to bring their child a few minutes before class or to stay afterward. After you are familiar with the measure and stages, you can assess a child’s singing voice in real time, or when the child is singing a different song during music class.

Results from the SVDM will influence several decisions you make when planning music classes, including...

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1 For more information about Audie, see http://www.giamusic.com/products/P-3303.cfm
2 Gordon’s Primary Measures of Music Audiation (Gordon, 1986) can be used to assess the music aptitude of children in Kindergarten – Grade 3, and Intermediate Measures of Music Audiation (Gordon, 1989) is available for children in Grades 1 – 6.
the selection of songs and patterns that reflect the singing capabilities of the children. Knowledge about each child’s singing voice allows you to vary your instruction and set measurable goals for a child’s singing development.

**General Assessment Tips**

In addition to using the three assessments from this article, the following tips may help you assess the music learning that is occurring in your classroom.

- **Videotape classes.** Because you are undoubtedly very busy during classes and your attention is constantly shifting, it’s easy to miss important child behaviors. Reviewing videos of your classes allows you to analyze your teaching and observe and track children’s responses. Be sure to obtain parent permission prior to videotaping.

- **Ask for parent observations.** Parents can offer insight into the child’s responses to classes and share valuable information about the child’s musical behaviors at home. Parent feedback can be shared via email, or before or after class. Take care to record all parent input.

- **Take notes.** Keep a pencil and sheet of paper or small notebook next to you to jot down your observations. Or, add a column to your class list or lesson plan for observations during class. Take a few minutes after each class to record your thoughts – keeping track of ideas for the next class, interesting child responses, or reflections on teaching.

- **Target assessments.** These assessment techniques can be applied independently or in combination. Initially introduce one or two, and/or choose to assess a small group of children. This will allow you to grow comfortable with the tools, while eliciting a manageable amount of information. What we learn about a small number of students or one aspect of musical growth can inform our teaching to all of our students.

**Summary**

Incorporating assessment into your music classes will provide information about your children’s musicianship that has implications for your teaching, including lesson planning, song selection, and goal setting. Collecting information on children’s engagement in musical activities, developmental music aptitude, and singing voice achievement will deepen your understanding of the children in your classes and the impact of your work on their musicianship. Such an understanding can lead you toward examining aspects of your teaching and enhancing the educational power of your program. Only when we have a clear sense of what is really happening in our classes, can we strengthen our teaching, enhance children’s music learning, and accurately and substantively describe the merit of our programs.

**References**

Observing and Communicating Early Childhood Music and Movement Development

by Herbert D. Marshall,* Ph.D. - Baldwin-Wallace College
and Jennifer M. Bailey, M.M. - Farmington Public Schools

Introduction

As colleagues, we have taught early childhood music and movement classes together, and together we have developed assessments for the young children in our classes. We recognize that early childhood music and movement instruction occurs in many guises and diverse settings. Yet, using assessment to improve instruction is a process that will benefit all practitioners. Currently, Ms. Bailey is a one-person enterprise, administering and instructing her own program in suburban Detroit on Saturday mornings. She sees children with their parents. Dr. Marshall also sees children with parents, but his program is part of the outreach department of Baldwin-Wallace College Conservatory of Music in Berea, OH. His classes meet on Tuesdays. After age three the children phase into Dalcroze or Suzuki classes. Dr. Marshall is assisted by undergraduate interns and service-learners who are music education students. Our hope is that our experiences in different formats, yet with similar goals, will provide you with assessment ideas and techniques that will fit your unique early childhood music situation.

While our programs are structured quite differently, the role of assessment is the same: we observe, document, and communicate our learners’ development to improve our instruction, individualize instruction, and include the parents/caregivers in their child’s musical development. This is a common definition of assessment, shared by many of our public school counterparts. Yet, unlike them, the tools in our arsenal do not include standardized tests, bubble sheets, and computer-generated report cards. Rather, we set musical goals, observe the learners during age-appropriate music and movement activities, document their behavior and learning, reflect upon these observations, modify our instruction, and summarize learner development in a way that will be meaningful to the parents/caregivers.

Developmental Curricular Goals

Observing learners will be more systematic if you have a set of objectives and criteria upon which to base your curriculum. Our curricula are based on A Music Learning Theory for Newborn and Young Children (Gordon, 1997) and MusicPlay (Valerio, Reynolds, Bolton, Taggart, & Gordon, 1998). Gordon’s theory

---

Herbert Marshall, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Music Education at Baldwin-Wallace College Conservatory of Music. He is the classroom and early childhood specialist and teaches infant and toddler classes, assisted by undergraduate interns. He completed ECM training through GIML as well as workshops in Laban and Weikert. Dr. Marshall also serves as a clinician, consultant, adjudicator, and conductor, and teaches workshops for the Gordon Institute of Music Learning.

Jennifer Bailey, M.M., teaches elementary general music for the Farmington Public Schools in Farmington, Michigan. She is also the program director for Little Music Makers Early Childhood Music program. She is the President of the Gordon Institute of Music Learning as well as a faculty member. Jennifer is a frequent presenter at state and regional music education conferences.
Applying preparatory audiation, the document features seven stages grouped into three types of musical development: Acculturation, Imitation, and Assimilation (p. 33) and includes the Laban movement descriptors of Flow, Weight, Space, and Time. Using a developmental theory such as preparatory audiation as a basis for observing and documenting learning provides a construct for assessing musical growth in children (See Appendix A). In a setting where there are multiple instructors, agreeing on a theory of how children develop music and movement skills—and basing assessment on this theory—will help coordinate and unify your instruction.

Documentation

There are many ways to document children’s music and movement behaviors. Because of our teaching environments, we are both using low-tech systems that are efficient and flexible. Ms. Bailey has designed a form (See Appendix B) that she can quickly mark at the end of each class, with one form used per learner. She keeps them in a binder and marks the date when she observes a child performing a target skill. If a skill is consistently observed three weeks in a row, she considers it mastered and focuses on the next skill. She takes notes to record what seems to prompt a targeted response (e.g., teacher or parent engagement) and to describe any exceptional behavior such as a child improvising a song, demonstrating an interesting movement, or reacting unexpectedly to an activity.

Dr. Marshall’s form is also set up as a checklist (See Appendix C), with the dates pre-assigned, thus, the form needs to be updated with each semester. His undergraduate teaching assistants study Gordon’s early childhood music stage theory and are familiar with the

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Appendix A - MusicPlay at Baldwin-Wallace College

Besides the obvious social and school-readiness development, we’ve been observing the children’s musical and movement behaviors. Some of these behaviors seem to happen in a predictable sequence, while others are just a menu of ways children choose to participate in and respond to music. This documentation helps us individualize instruction and choose activities that reinforce and challenge the children. What we haven’t seen so far constitutes our goals for our next class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tonal development</th>
<th>Rhythmic development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hears and follows sounds</td>
<td>Hears and follows sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sings a response</td>
<td>Chants/moves a response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sings a related response</td>
<td>Chants/moves a related response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentional breath before singing</td>
<td>Intentional breath before chanting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sings the dominant</td>
<td>Briefly maintains microbeat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sings the tonic</td>
<td>Briefly maintains macrobeat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sings stepwise patterns</td>
<td>Chants/moves 2-beat duple pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sings a perfect 5\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>Chants/moves 2-beat triple pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sings a perfect 4\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>Chants/moves 4-beat duple pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sings M or m 3\textsuperscript{rd}</td>
<td>Chants/moves 4-beat triple pattern</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Movement Development – has demonstrated

- Free: FLOW: Bound
- Direct: SPACE: Indirect
- Strong: WEIGHT: Gentle
- Accelerates: TIME: Slows own

---

1 Rudolph Laban (1879-1958) was a pioneer in elucidating the fundamentals of movement. Flow, weight, space, and time are the effort factors he used to describe movement. You can learn more about Laban at http://www.limsonline.org/index.html, http://www.laban.org/index.phtml and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf_Laban

2 We acknowledge that there are other parental music models; you should seek one that fits your philosophy of early childhood music and movement. Our goal here is not to promote one schema, but to provide a model for assessment in early childhood music and movement.
terms on the form. Through team meetings and video examples, his assistants are taught to recognize learners' responses and label them according to the target skills found on the form. During 15-minute breaks between classes, the undergraduate assistants record musical development for each learner; they may consult the videotape of the class for clarification. Dr. Marshall checks their work and makes any necessary corrections on the form. Once a week there is a team meeting at which the intern for each class summarizes childrens' responses, the development of the learners is discussed and necessary modifications in activities are made.

For another example of this team-observation approach, readers may be interested in the article by Valerio, Seaman, Yap, Santucci, & Tu (2006). In it, the authors provide a helpful model of target behaviors and definitions (p. 19) used by a team of early childhood specialists to observe and code behaviors. The team provided 32 sessions of music instruction and focused on two toddlers' vocal behaviors. The researchers viewed video-tapes of the toddlers and developed a coding system to describe the toddlers' vocal behaviors. With a reliable set of criteria, the team was able to draw conclusions about what kinds of adult behaviors may elicit more responses from children. Clearly, a specific list of descriptive criteria with keen observation can greatly enhance our instruction and our understanding of how young children learn music.

**Observation**

During the regular flow of our classes, we notice the sounds, movements, and the focus of the learners, documenting their responses on our observation forms. Sometimes we react to these behaviors, incorporating the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix B — Observation Record</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Name:</strong> ___________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acculturation - T</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hears musical sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows musical sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR – unrelated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR – related w/o purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR – T D Diatonic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assimilation – R</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acculturation – R</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hears musical sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows/anticipates ms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR – unrelated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR – related w/o purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR – 2 beat D 2 beat T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acculturation – M</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breathing/limbs suggest aural perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows/anticipates mvmt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR – related w/o purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR – F W S T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other:</strong> ___________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* JBailey2009
learner’s response into the next activity. Other times we simply make a mental note for future pedagogical reference. The parents/caregivers notice that we respond to the learners and keep a log of their child’s skill development (one young mother jokingly accused Dr. Marshall’s students of evaluating her parenting skills—we had to show her the form and explain the terms to reassure her that her son was the focus of our observation!).

By being transparent about our observation strategies, we empower parents/caregivers to continue the process outside of class. This is particularly helpful for the parent whose learner is a reluctant participant but displays musical behaviors in the car and at home. For parents who are expecting a formal class with learners seated, answering questions, the fact that we are constantly observing learners’ responses throughout the duration of our classes (often without eye contact) is a revelation. Even when music class is unstructured and informal, having specific target skills and descriptors for the musical growth of their learner makes the process of assessment more grounded and substantial. Understanding our emphasis on skill development—especially their child’s individual musical development—helps parents and caregivers shift their preconceived paradigm of a class about performance skills or music information to a class about developing musical cognition and skills.

We try to notice the little things: a child who is not yet vocalizing but is moving her lips in sync with you is probably audiating the song, but may not be ready to vocalize. In one of our classes, an older learner was not willing to sing tonal patterns aloud, but when her little sister attends class, she will take on the role of teacher and sing tonal patterns to her younger sibling. Structuring class to encourage this interaction provides an opportunity to document both learners’ tonal development.

As your observations indicate mastery of certain skills, you can either adjust your teaching to highlight

---

**Application**

To apply the assessment strategies that we have provided, try the following in your early childhood music and movement classes:

During class, freeze after a song or activity. As learners respond, validate these responses by imitating a movement, chanting a rhythm pattern, or singing a series of characteristic tones from the song you are performing. Briefly share your “teacher’s inner-monologue” with the parents. Reveal your process of labeling and responding to the children. Because the parents/caregivers just experienced live musical examples, the terminology will make more sense. Also share that observing what is not happening or what a child is struggling with is important to your instruction. Explain that you glean information when a child does not react or respond and that this also guides your instruction. Then, demonstrate how you will develop readiness for the desired behavior, or note that you may need to find a more compelling song or activity to help engage the child in the activity.
what has been mastered or present new challenges to your learners. If you notice that the children are not coordinating their breath before they sing or chant, you might place special emphasis on blowing a scarf into the air, or taking a breath before jumping. Be purposeful in how you model the breath and mention to parents what you’re looking for so that they can be good models as well. The learners will grasp the concept better having been

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name: ___________________________</th>
<th>Age: _____</th>
<th>Semester: ___________</th>
<th>Class Time: ___________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Appendix C — Observation Record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tonal</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Imitation</th>
<th>Assimilation</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hears musical sounds</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Shedding egocentricity</td>
<td>Recognizes lack of coordination</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows musical sounds</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Imitation w/ precision</td>
<td>Accurate arpeggiation patterns</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR – unrelated</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>m3rd</td>
<td>Breath coordinated w/ singing Tonal solfege</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR – related w/o purpose</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>P5th</td>
<td>Creates/Improvises pattern</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR – T D Diatonic</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>P4th</td>
<td>Mvmt coordinated w/ singing</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhythm</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Imitation</th>
<th>Assimilation</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hears musical sounds</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Shedding egocentricity</td>
<td>Recognizes lack of coordination</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows/anticipates ms</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Imitation w/ precision</td>
<td>Breath coordinated w/ singing</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR – unrelated</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>4 beat D</td>
<td>Mvmt coordinated w/ chanting</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR – related w/o purpose</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>4 beat T</td>
<td>Rhythm syllables</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR – 2 beat D</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>P4th</td>
<td>Creates/Improvises pattern</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 beat T</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>P4th</td>
<td>Creates/Improvises pattern</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mov’t.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Imitation</th>
<th>Assimilation</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breathing/limbs suggest aural perception</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Shedding egocentricity</td>
<td>Recognizes lack of coordination</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows/anticipates mvmt</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Imitation w/ precision</td>
<td>Breath coordinated w/ mvmt</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR – related w/o purpose</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Stationary</td>
<td>Uses body weight effectively</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Locomotor</td>
<td>Pulse macro/micro D</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Pulse macro/micro T</td>
<td></td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Laban Elements (circle): **Flow:** Free-----Bound   **Weight:** Strong-----Gentle   **Space:** Direct-----Indirect   **Time:** Accel.-----Slow

Other: __________________________________________________________________________  HDMarshall2009
Appendix D — Sample of Progress Report
Little Music Makers Progress Report

Child’s Name: ___________________________ Semester: __________

Your child’s stage of musical development:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tonal</th>
<th>Rhythmic</th>
<th>Movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Absorbs musical sounds</td>
<td>☐ Absorbs musical sounds</td>
<td>☐ Follows movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Follows musical sounds</td>
<td>☐ Follows musical sounds</td>
<td>☐ Anticipates movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Randomly responds to</td>
<td>☐ Randomly responds to</td>
<td>☐ Demonstrates flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patterns or songs</td>
<td>patterns or chants</td>
<td>movement with limbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Purposefully responds to</td>
<td>☐ Purposefully responds to</td>
<td>☐ Moves isolated body parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patterns or songs</td>
<td>patterns or chants</td>
<td>(body awareness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Sings step-wise patterns</td>
<td>☐ Chants 2 beat patterns</td>
<td>☐ Moves with props</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Imitation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tonal</th>
<th>Rhythmic</th>
<th>Movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Observes in class but does</td>
<td>☐ Observes in class but</td>
<td>☐ Moves with flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not respond to pattern</td>
<td>does not respond to pattern</td>
<td>☐ Moves in response to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instruction*</td>
<td>instruction*</td>
<td>music (move &amp; freeze)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Sings tonal patterns but is</td>
<td>☐ Chants rhythm patterns</td>
<td>☐ Moves isolated body parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unaware that his/her</td>
<td>but is unaware that his/her</td>
<td>(body awareness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pattern is inaccurate</td>
<td>pattern is inaccurate</td>
<td>☐ Jumps with body weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Sings tonal patterns with</td>
<td>☐ Chants 4 beat patterns</td>
<td>☐ Locomotor movement:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leaps (e.g. do-mi-so)</td>
<td></td>
<td>walk, run, march</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Moves to a steady micro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>beat (pat, rock, sway)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assimilation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tonal</th>
<th>Rhythmic</th>
<th>Movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Observes in class but does</td>
<td>☐ Observes in class but</td>
<td>☐ Moves with flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not respond to pattern</td>
<td>does not respond to pattern</td>
<td>☐ Moves to and in response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instruction*</td>
<td>instruction*</td>
<td>to music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Sings tonal patterns with</td>
<td>☐ Chants rhythmic patterns</td>
<td>☐ Jumps with body weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accuracy in a light, singing</td>
<td>with accuracy in the same</td>
<td>☐ Locomotor movement:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voice quality</td>
<td>tempo as the teacher</td>
<td>skips, gallops, hops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Consciously takes a breath</td>
<td>☐ Consciously takes a</td>
<td>☐ Moves to a steady macro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before singing</td>
<td>breath before chanting</td>
<td>beat (pat, rock, sway)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Creates or improvises</td>
<td>☐ Creates or improvises</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>different tonal patterns</td>
<td>different rhythm patterns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This phase typically occurs after the child has been musically active. We believe the child is comparing the accuracy of his response to those of the adults around him. This “observation” phase is a normal part of early childhood music development and should not be misconstrued as disinterest on the child’s part.
provided with so many good models in class, and the parents can continue to develop this skill at home.

**Communication**

In our early childhood music and movement programs, parents receive a composite progress report of the learner’s development for that semester (See Appendix D). Prior to the last class meeting, summarize your observations in a one-page, user-friendly format. Give the summary to parents with your contact information so that they can approach you with questions. Provide an explanation of terms, or a website address where they can go to learn more. We have found that parents are hungry for information on their young child’s musical development and that their feedback is almost always positive. One mom remarked in response to receiving a musical progress report for her child, “Now that I know what you’re looking for I can look for this at home.” We feel that sharing our observations of and preparation for their child’s musical development is further motivation for parents to continue their child’s musical instruction. Ms. Bailey calls it “affirming the musical childhood.”

**References**


Smart parents are taking advantage of music-enriched activities. Research tested to produce above average academic results, Montessori Mozarts’ easy to follow lesson plans with sing-along CDs is ideal for use in the preschool classroom and the car ride home at the end of the day, offering an easier solution to busy families wishing to spend an evening at home together.

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*Dr. Marshall would like to acknowledge the support of his interns and assistants in B-W’s MusicPlay program: Jayne Alcorn, Kathleen Arrasmith, Samantha Cepullio, Olivia De Jesus, Sarah Husted, Sarah Mather, and Laura Schupbach.*
Early childhood music educators spend a good deal of time and energy creating optimal learning environments that will nurture and foster musical growth in their young students. Much has been written about the activities that are necessary for musical development: singing, listening, moving, creating, play, and exploration. While no early childhood music curriculum would be complete without a broad range of musical experiences, singing is fundamental to every child’s musical development. Therefore, music teachers could benefit from knowing not only the factors that effect children’s singing capabilities but also the effect that singing has on overall musical development.

In the featured study, Hornbach and Taggart (2005) investigate a possible relationship between children’s singing achievement and developmental tonal aptitude in music. Related research has offered mixed findings on the nature of the relationship that may exist between these two areas. Using scores from the Tonal subtest of the Primary Measures of Music Audiation (PMMA)(Gordon,1986) some studies indicate a positive connection between singing ability and tonal aptitude (Guerrini, 2002; Jaffurs, 2000; Phillips & Aitchison, 1997); whereas others have found little evidence of a relationship between the two (Atterbury & Silcox, 1993; Mota, 1997; Phillips, Aitchison, & Nompula, 2002; Rutkowski, 1986, 1996; Rutkowski & Snell Miller, 2003).

Central to determining the nature of the link between singing achievement and developmental tonal aptitude, Hornbach and Taggart chose to focus on children of varying ages and in diverse settings. Specifically, their study sought to determine 1) the relationship between singing achievement and tonal aptitude in students from kindergarten to grade three, 2) the effect of age on the same relationship, and 3) the effect, if any, of school setting or age on singing achievement alone.

Children participating in the study (N=162) were kindergarten, first-, second-, and third-grade students randomly chosen from two elementary schools in separate public school districts in Michigan. While both elementary schools were identified as having strong general music programs with similar curricula, the researchers noted that solo singing was emphasized more during instruction by the music teacher in School 2. Additionally, School 1 was characterized as ‘rural/suburban’ and School 2 as ‘suburban/urban,’ both had diverse socioeconomic populations, and both offered music instruction twice weekly for 30 minutes.

Hornbach and Taggart used two criterion measures: the PMMA Tonal

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subtest (Gordon, 1986) and a ‘test of singing achievement’ developed by the researchers. The PMMA Tonal subtest measures a child’s ability to aurally discriminate whether two tonal patterns, ranging from two to five notes, are same or different. The singing achievement test, designed by the researchers, was a 5-point continuous rating scale that evaluated singers’ key stability and ability to match melodic contour (see Figure 1).

Prior to meeting with the researchers, the students were taught the folk song “Bow Belinda” (see Figure 2) during four of their regular music classes by their music teachers. For the test conditions the researchers divided the students into small groups (three to five children each), reviewed the song with each group, and asked the students to sing the song individually. If a child declined to sing alone in front of the peer group, accommodations were made so that s/he could sing for the researchers only. Before each child sang the song, one of the researchers played the beginning pitch (“G”) on a soprano recorder and established tonality by singing so-la-so-fa-mi-re-ti-do on a neutral syllable.

Students’ performances were audiotaped and later rated by the researchers and an independent judge (also an experienced music educator) using the Singing Achievement Measure. The Tonal subtests were scored in compliance with PMMA guidelines found in the test manual.

The results of the study and subsequent discussion provided by the researchers offered interesting insights into the singing abilities of the children tested. As shown by the means and standard deviations of the judges’ composite scores for the Singing Achievement Measure, the singing scores for both schools showed a steady increase with each successive grade level from kindergarten through second-grade (see Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 1. Singing achievement measure.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rating</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Figure 2

**Bow Belinda**

Traditional

Transcribed by A. Barker, 2009

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Comparatively, the third-grade singers’ scores were slightly lower than the second-grade scores, though still higher than the kindergarten and first-grade scores. The authors suggest that, while not statistically significant, the dip in third-grade singing achievement scores may have been due to peer pressure or lack of ease on the part of the older students to sing in front of the group.

In examining the means of the Tonal Subtest scores, the researchers found that, with the exception of School 1 third-grade, the test means increased with the grade level (See Table 2).

At the onset of this study, Hornbach and Taggart were interested in determining whether or not a relationship existed between the singing achievement scores and developmental tonal aptitude scores of elementary-age children. The results showed that, regardless of the grade level or school, the correlation between the children’s singing scores and tonal test scores was weak and not significant (see Table 3). Therefore, the researchers were led to conclude that children’s achievement in singing did not appear to affect or be affected by tonal aptitude.

A statistical comparison of the singing achievement scores showed no significant interaction between schools and grade levels. A two-way ANOVA indicated a significant main effect for “school” and singing achievement with School 2 scoring significantly higher than School 1 in all grade levels. A significant main effect was found for “grade level” with second-grade having the highest means, followed by third-grade, first-grade, then kindergarten. Based on these results, the researchers surmised that 1) singing achievement is most likely developmental, 2) singing achievement and tonal aptitude appear to develop independently, and 3) singing is a learned skill and can improve with instruction.

In conclusion, the underlying theme of the present study was that singing is the foundation of a child’s musical experience. The outcomes of the study indicated that singing is a developmental and learned phenomenon. While all children have the capacity to sing, it is incumbent upon music educators to provide their students with proper instruction for tone production (e.g., modeling the use of the head voice) and appropriate musical material, which is suitable for a child’s range and tessitura. Although a direct relationship between developmental tonal aptitude and singing achievement was not identified in this study, the researchers emphasize the need for continued research regarding the instruction of singing for children at all levels of their musical development and education.

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>School 1</th>
<th>School 2</th>
<th>Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total correlation coefficient for School 1 is .184. Total correlation coefficient for School 2 is .229. p > .05 for all correlations.
References


**ECMMA New Members**

We welcome these new members from 11/01/08 - 1/31/09.

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- Zoe Johnstone – Baltimore, MD
- Lili Levinowitz – Princeton, NJ [New member to Center for Music & Young Children's Institutional membership]
- Jane Roets – Ellington, CT
- Lisa Stover – Skippack, PA
- Janet Tebbel – Bryn Mawr, PA
- Stephanie Terry – Brookeville, MD
- Montessori Mozarts – Tecumseh, ON Canada [Supporting Business]

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- Wendy Nelson – Mountain View, CA

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- Nancy Palmer – Silver Spring, MD
- Wendy Nelson – Mountain View, CA

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Certifications from 11/01/08 - 1/31/09.

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**Level II - New**
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**Level II - Renew**
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Book Review

Bridging – Assessment for Teaching and Learning in Early Childhood Classrooms, PreK-3

Authors Jie-Qi Chen and Gillian Dowley McNamee
Book Review by Lisa M. Gruenhagen, Ph.D.
Coordinator and Assistant Professor of Music Education
Hartwick College, Oneonta, New York

Rich, authentic, and playful experiences in early childhood provide a strong foundation for learning. Ongoing assessment, in everyday context, that informs planning and teaching is key to supporting children’s learning. In Bridging: Assessment for Teaching and Learning in Early Childhood Classrooms, PreK-3, Chen and Dowley McNamee introduce an assessment process, grounded in research and piloted by practitioners, that merges curriculum planning, implementation, and authentic assessment to create a holistic, performance-based approach.

Bridging is a curriculum-embedded planning and assessment tool designed to help early childhood teachers uncover children’s understanding, construct individual learning profiles, and use this knowledge to inform their planning and teaching. It consists of 15 activities in five curricular areas – language arts and literacy, visual arts, mathematics, science, and performing arts. The activities are designed around national early childhood learning standards and offer a foundation upon which teachers can expand as children’s understanding develops. To accurately illustrate a child’s developmental level, each curricular area includes three complementary activities representing diverse aspects of learning. For example, in music, children have the opportunity to participate, experience, and make music in different ways through singing, movement, and playing instruments. Teachers observe children during active engagement in classroom activities. The Bridging assessment process pairs materials and activities with rubrics that allow teachers to look at children’s learning from two perspectives: what (content) a child has learned – key concepts and skills; and how (process) a child learns – the ways in which she engages in activities. Bridging provides a way to gather, organize, and interpret observations of children that informs planning and teaching.

Chapters 1 and 2 in Section I, A Guide for Teachers, focus on assessing the content of children’s learning, describing how the rubrics assess content, and providing details on constructing learning profiles. Chapter 3 focuses on how children learn, introducing a concept called the working approach – the way a child engages in an activity and how she interacts with materials and responds to demands of a given task. In chapter 4 the authors discuss the importance of observing children while they are actively engaged in meaningful activity. Additionally, the authors discuss criteria used to develop and choose the assessment activities, ending with a brief discussion about the importance of play. Chapter 5 outlines the task parameters in the Bridging assessment process: goals, key concepts, materials, structure of activities, and grouping. Chapter 6 identifies five features of the teacher’s role: decision maker, participant, observer, interpreter, and translator. Section II, Implementation of Assessment Activities, details logistics, offers suggestions on interpreting assessment results, and describes how to connect results to teaching. Descriptions of the five curricular areas are provided, with instructions for implementing the 15 activities. The final section includes a facilitator’s guide for use in teacher education and professional development programs.

Bridging is clearly written, provides actual classroom examples, and is a thorough and easy-to-use resource for understanding and implementing authentic, performance-based assessment in early childhood education.
Contracts

We all enter into contracts on a daily basis, but don’t pay much attention most of the time. I’m not too concerned about my contractual obligations in the purchase of a fish taco or set of guitar strings, but buying a house or leasing a commercial building for a music school—well, that’s a different story. So, what exactly is a contract? Simply put, it is an exchange of promises which can be enforced by law, i.e., if we have a contract and I don’t do what I have obligated myself to do, I may be required to pay you compensation for your loss.

In general, a contract consists of an agreement whereby one party has accepted the offer of another. In a more sophisticated contract, the agreement is the result of negotiation by the parties, and each party promises to do one or more things in consideration of the promise(s) received from the other party. The parties must be adults, the negotiations free of deceit, and the subject matter legal.

The foundation of U.S. contract law is “freedom of contract,” meaning the parties have very wide latitude to agree to whatever they want. For centuries, courts have explained that the contract is the law between the parties. In other words, the specific terms of the contract (price, quality, timing, etc.) are pretty much whatever you agree to. There are very few rules, which can be both a blessing and a curse. You have the opportunity to negotiate virtually everything, but you are bound by the contract you have negotiated and agreed to. It is extremely rare for a court to change the terms of a contract after the fact, so if you’ve decided you no longer “like” your obligations, you’re probably stuck.

Buyer’s Remorse ("I shouldn’t have bought that; I’m paying too much.") and Seller’s Remorse ("I shouldn’t have sold that; I agreed to too little.") are no reason to void a contract. “But I made a mistake!” Too bad. You agreed to the contract. Next time, be more careful. Recall the ancient Latin maxim, “caveat emptor,” or “buyer beware.” This advice applies equally to the seller. Know what you’re doing, keep your eyes open, think it through and exercise due diligence before signing on the dotted line, because after the deal is done it’s extremely difficult to undo. Once you’ve signed, you’re committed.

Speaking of signing, many people mistakenly believe that a contract is valid only if it is in writing. This is not exactly accurate. Contracts involving real estate or obligations expected to take more than one year to complete must be in writing, but most verbal contracts are perfectly valid. The problem arises when the parties later disagree about the terms of the contract and all they have is a historical conversation. Obviously, a written document, signed by both parties is the best evidence in proving the terms of a contract.

In the next issue, we’ll look at negotiating terms and getting to a final agreement, so be sure to forward your questions to the editor.
Guidelines for Submission

Please note the following guidelines when submitting an article for review:

1) Submissions will range from 800-3000 words.

2) Authors should follow recommendations in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association for research-based manuscripts. Articles of a philosophical or historical nature should follow The Chicago Manual of Style. Please consult the editor for any questions relating to publication style.

3) Manuscripts should be sent electronically to the editor in this format:
   - Title page
   - 200 word abstract
   - Body of article
   - References and/or bibliography.

4) Send text in MS Word and all images in either .gif or .jpg format. Be sure your files are clearly marked as to their appearance in the manuscript.

5) Send manuscripts to Perspectives Editor, Dr. Suzanne Burton, at editor@ecmma.org.

6) Authors will be notified upon receipt of the manuscript by the editor. Manuscripts will be reviewed by two members of the editorial board in a blind review process.

7) Criteria for rating manuscripts in order for reviewers to decide whether to accept, accept with revisions, or reject a manuscript are:

**Interest and Research Articles**
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- Consistency with work/research in the field
- Clarity of ideas
- Writing style
- Grammatical construction

**Research Articles**
- Design of the research
- Presentation of research purpose and problem(s)
- Sound methodology
- Presentation of results/findings
- Interpretation of findings
- Conclusions
- Discussion and implications for profession

By submitting your manuscript to ECMMA, you indicate that your material is not currently published or submitted for publication elsewhere—in print or online.

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Perspectives

Coming up in the Summer 2009 issue Music in the Home...

**Feature Articles** by PATRICIA ST. JOHN, WENDY VALERIO and ALISON REYNOLDS
**Book and Resource Review** by ANNE MCNAIR
**Notable Notes** by JULIA PRIEST
**Research Review** by JOYCE JORDAN-DECARBO

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