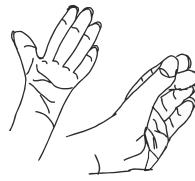


Conducting (part of Classroom Management)

Hold your hand out in front with the fingers together and thumb lower (imagine working a sock puppet). Students have followed your hand on "roller coaster" rides, now they need to watch for when the hand is open as a starting signal, and when the hand is closed as a stopping signal.



conductor

music leader

The signal most conductors or choir leaders use for stopping music, is to begin with an open palm and then bring the fingers together so that singers are able to see when the thumb touches the fingers "STOP!"

Classrooms these days are busy busy places. Students come and go to various "extra help" places. Students work in small groups on many projects, and seek help from their neighbours as well as from the teacher. Learning is often a team effort. Music class may be one of the few times during the day when all attention is, hopefully, focussed on the conductor/teacher. A conductor's hands and eyebrows are key aids to ensemble music.

Lack of student attention in music class has its own built-in consequences. The one student voice that continues to sing after the conductor has signalled a stop, reminds everyone to pay attention.

The techniques used in conducting may be helpful at other times in the school day to both get and sustain class attention. Regular music classes will increase student ability to focus over longer periods of time.

Conducting Starts and Stops/Making or Echoing Sounds

"Imagine that you are out on Halloween night. Open your ears, what do you hear? (take several ideas) Now its your turn to make the sounds of Halloween. When my hand is open, make cat noises. When my hand closes, then the sounds need to stop right away. A music conductor uses their hands to show musicians when to play or sing. Ready --watch my hand. (Repeat with several other sounds e.g. owls, doors creaking, wind howling, ghosts moaning. The last time, invite students to make any Halloween sound which will result in an interesting cacophony.)



conductor

music leader

Hold your hand out in front with the fingers together and thumb lower (imagine working a sock puppet). Students have followed your hand on "roller coaster" rides, now they need to watch for when the hand is open as a starting signal, and when the hand is closed as a stopping signal.

Focus on Listening

Learning Music Concepts



Most, if not all, of the children will probably know the first verse of "Head and Shoulders" --BUT, they may not know the version you sing. Ask children to listen as you sing. If any child begins to sing with you, then immediately stop the song, gently remind them to listen, and start again. An important component of learning in music is the ability to listen.

The teaching focus for "Head and Shoulders" in September is on varying tempo/speed. Language learning is easier when we are young. Using the Italian musical terms will enrich student vocabulary. Begin by using one word for "fast," one for "slow," and one for in the middle.

presto = fast/quickly allegro = lively andante = slowly/stately

1 "You might know the song I'm going to sing now. Think the words in your head while you listen to me sing. Try the actions while you are listening." (Sing all verses of Head and Shoulders, Key C, first note G(so), count-in: 1,2,3,4. Touch each body part as it is named.)

If you are new to teaching songs, don't worry too much about how to begin singing the song, simply launch right in. A later lesson will explore ways to begin songs with groups. Experienced song teachers may want to begin each song with a "ready" pattern, e.g. singing "one, two, ready, listen(or sing)" on the same pitch as the first note of the song.



Use the hand drum and movement patterns as a way to have students travel to their desks, the mat, or a line at the door ready for the next school activity. Keep the drum handy in the classroom as this activity makes a helpful transition between teaching blocks (2-3 minutes) during the day.



Visualizing in Music

There is a connection between thought and the sound that comes from the lips. When students are singing flat --simply asking them to visualize a unicorn's pointed horn above their foreheads will raise the pitch. Collect helpful images for music lessons.

Listening Ears

*like a rabbit's ears, these ears can hear even the smallest, softest sounds

Magic Lips

*lips that move as if sound is coming out --good for rehearsing words while listening to the pitch of teacher or recording

Time Management

When the amount of time for music is "fixed" ...

Not Enough Time?

Every teacher and class has its own pace for learning/teaching. Beginning September music lessons may take longer than expected. Be patient with yourself and the class. It takes time to get used to moving smoothly between several activities in one teaching block e.g. sitting and singing, moving around the classroom, listening to CD music. If everything in the plan doesn't get finished, earmark it for the second weekly music time. In this curriculum, new ideas are presented in the first music time each week. The second music time is for practice, building on songs, enrichment activities and singing, singing, singing. If you only have one music period a week, choose a few activities/ideas from the second weekly lesson to include in your music time.

However, the opposite can also be true. Sometimes everything on the music plan will be done way before the "music" time is finished. As the year goes on, you will accumulate ideas to use during the "extra" time. If you are the classroom teacher, then extra time is always welcome. If you are a "visiting" music teacher, or you want a plan for a supply teacher, you may want to prepare for unexpected extra time with some of the ideas below.:

Extra Time?

*Raid the school library for picture books with "musical" stories i.e. anything with musical instruments in it or stories from opera or ballet. Picture books with a strong rhythm-rhyme are spoken music. Many familiar songs have had picture books built around them --check with the school librarian, or at a local library for ideas.

*Keep a few CDs in your bag e.g. Sharon, Lois, Bram; Raffi; Disney Favourites. If your classrooms have access to computer technology, try the CanDo1 DVD's for karaoke singing.

*Copy the words to one of the songs in the curriculum (you have permission to copy any or all of the songs in this curriculum) and ask students to illustrate it. The song may then be added to a reading file, or taken home to be shared with parents. (Note: Most Grade One songs will be learned by rote/listening, but then provide an excellent "success" at reading source.

One or Two Music Lessons a Week?

Some primary students are fortunate enough to have two music periods in a week/cycle.

Repetition = Practice!

Wonderful!

"Read it again! Sing it again!" Young children have a voracious appetite for repetition. A second weekly music class is an opportunity to solidify learning with repetition/ practice (a staple of all music). CanDo1 covers all essential parts of the music program by following the first lesson offered for each week. Everything in the "second lessons" is offered as enrichment. **Don't try to do it all** -- choose the best fit for you and your class.

If you have only one music time a week, skip the "second lessons". With experience, music lessons go more smoothly and faster ---use the extra material to fill spaces or to be offered to a split grade classroom.

Warning!

CanDo 1 includes enough ideas to cover drama and dance for Grade One --- but only if there are at least two "performance art" periods a week. Attempting to cover music, drama and dance in one period a week will probably result in nothing being done well, -- which is frustrating for teacher and students.

Classroom Management

In Primary Grades, I usually teach from a seated position with the children sitting on a rug in front of me. This allows for movement during the lesson and a clear line of sight between me and the children. Standing for periods of singing to encourage proper breathing is easily accommodated. As I saw Ms. Reiser and Madame Matteu's classes for a limited time weekly, and wanted to be able to call children by name, I began using a seating chart with the children sitting in rows. I found this provided a simple way to track when children had opportunities to play instruments, be the conductor, etc. using simple symbols right on the seating plan. Having students sit in rows provides an easy way to divide the class for rounds or games. I wish I had thought of this when I had a school full of names to learn in a short time.

Part of my practice is to include individual responses with echoes and flashcards in as "matter of fact" way as possible. Instead of having an official testing time for "in tune" singing, I prefer to listen as we learn. Often simply walking around during group singing provides sufficient information. The seating plan gave me a way to quickly note when students needed individual help with pitch or rhythm, or were successful. The seating plan was then used as a reminder for report card time.

Now I use small stickies – one per child, on a clipboard. In this way, if children need a change of place, it is easily done.

Classroom Set Up

I want the children's focus to be on me as the conductor during music classes. If I am using computer technology to display words for a song, then I stand beside the screen. It's important to keep the interaction between singers and conductor!

When I use CD tracks to teach a song, I want the dvd player beside me for quick stopping/starting phrases to be echoed. The basic pattern for teaching songs to primary children is to have them listen to focus their attention on pitch, and then sing. Teaching a song without putting the words "up," helps students develop listening skills. After the initial teaching has been done, then words may be posted for reading.

Taking Turns

Showing students how you keep track of who has had a turn will cut back on some of the plaintive comments of "I've never played that instrument."

Music is fun, and I want students to enjoy it. I have found it's easier for everybody to enjoy when firm, clear rules are set up and followed --with a very close adherence in the first few weeks. Every teacher needs to decide what works best for them. Some simple rules I use are below.

Just as everyone must participate in gym or math, so everyone will sing, it's part of school.

If a student makes a sound with a musical instrument before instructed to do so, the instrument passes to someone else.

When the "stop/look at me" signal is given -- **everything stops immediately.** (An audible signal can be difficult in music class where sound is part of the lesson. For group work times, flick the classroom lights. Teacher silence and hands on the head --all students copying, works well when students are gathered together on the carpet.)

Complicated questions, from students who take private music lessons, are discussed after music class time.

Instruments are only played by students who are trying to sing or participate with actions.

Just as people have eyes/skin of different colours so people have voices that are different. Every voice is welcome in music class.



Using consistent instruction patterns will facilitate "active" activities. I begin my instructions with "When I say the word "go," then ..." If anyone moves before I say the word "go" then everyone returns to beginning places and I give the instructions again. Using a count-down for the moving time gives a reason to move quickly.

Starting a Song ... begin with the basics!

A singing "basic" for groups is being able to start together, on the same pitch/note, and then to be able to stop together. All of the songs on the CDs are sung in the same key (the pitch) as they are written in the lessons. If you learn to sing the songs by listening to the CD, you are learning them as they are written. Many of the songs have suggestions for an accompaniment (music played while singing) played on the glockenspiel. These notes may be played with the CD for practice or performance.

Some of the songs may feel too high for your voice ---that's because the songs are written in a child's voice range. Middle C and lower are too low for young children, even though they are comfortable for most adults. A few songs go as high as "E" to encourage students to stretch their voice range. If you are teaching a song that is too high for your singing voice, use the CD for learning/teaching the song. Then, once the tune has been learned, use the glockenspiel count-in given in the lessons. The first note in a song is usually lower than the following notes, thus easier for adults to sing. It's important to include opportunities in music class for students to sing without using the CD tracks. Singing without a musical accompaniment encourages students to listen to their voices. Singing without the teacher's voice leading helps students be independent singers and gives opportunities to assess student learning.

Practice playing the song's first note, singing it/humming it, then playing the note as shown in the "count-in". If you are a confident singer, play the song's first note, and then sing a bit of the first line to remind students of the key and tempo, a simple hand movement will then tell the class when to begin singing. Stopping, whether at the end of a verse, the song, or part way through, is signalled by holding a hand up with fingers and thumb open and then closing the first finger and thumb. When they touch, singing stops.