Singing in the Classroom

Imelda Shirley

September 2020
Warm-up
Overview:

• Building a rationale for successful singing in the classroom

• Establish a flexible singing pedagogy in the classroom
KEEP CALM
and look at the
BIGGER PICTURE
Singing in the Classroom

- **WHY?**
- **WHAT?**
- **HOW?**

- Strategy
- Technique/pedagogy
- Repertoire/resources
- Context/opportunity
- Relationships
- Creativity
How?

• Reflect
• Share
• Interact – chat and Padlet
• Analyse
• Flexible thinking
• Look with fresh eyes
• Re-booting the joy!

If you do what you’ve always done, you’ll get what you’ve always got.
1. Why?

- **Why** is singing important to children?
- *Padlet (post –it note 1)*
2. What?

• **What** is our role as leaders of singing in the classroom?

• Padlet (post-it note 2)
Relationships

Some Implications:

• Positive value & experience
• Teacher must not ‘hog the space’
• High expectations
• Engaging, enthusiastic teaching
• Social, emotional and cognitive well-being
• Fostering positive learning behaviours for progress

Powell and Tod (2004)
Strategy

Behaviour for Learning

Intent: *What* are you doing & *why* are you doing it? (Curriculum)

Implementation: *How* are you doing it? (Pedagogy)

Impact: *How* do you know it’s working? (Assessment)

Powell and Tod (2004)

www.singforpleasure.org.uk
Tongo

Why is this a useful song?

What are its features and qualities?

What do want the children to learn?

What’s its potential?
Why Tongo?

Features, Qualities & Challenges

• A work song (context)
• Call and response – intro 2-parts
• Long phrases
• Language
• Rhythmic interest (contrasts)
• Limited pitch range
• Short but interesting
• Repetitive and ‘catchy’
• Breath control/phrasing
• Vowels/choral blend/ensemble
• Children LOVE this song!

Teaching and learning activities

• Related warm-up ideas: rainbow arms, spaghetti/chewing gum phrases,
• Vowels work: ooh – cocktail sticks, The Blue Cockatoo flew to the Zoo
• Pitch matching games: soh-me games – Hello! How are you? Change key…
• 2-part work (c+r) solo/tutti (texture)
• Consonant work – ‘ch’, ‘b’
• Invent new verses/change the words
• Play with the material – repetition – contrasts
• Children to lead once familiar

MODELLING IS KEY!
Links to National Curriculum for Music?

For starters...

Singing:
• I can sing in tune, with a good sense of pulse and rhythm (& blend/phrasing…)
• I can explain the importance of correct breathing, phrasing and posture
• I can sing confidently, showing an increasing awareness of musical features (inter-related dimensions)

Listening:
• I can make improvements to my own and others work and explain using musical vocabulary
• I can listen with concentration…describing what I hear and how I feel about the music using musical vocabulary

Performing:
• I can maintain independent part in a group showing awareness of other performers (singers)
• I can perform (sing)expressively
• I can follow simple performance directions and lead with greater independence
How do we approach classroom singing?

- Repertoire of pedagogy and songs - planning
- Know the song – no…REALLY know the song!
- Know how you’re going to teach/present (SfP) MODELLING
- Clear goals about what you want to achieve: LTP/MTP/lesson plans & how it fits into a whole school framework for progression
- Immersion: vocab, wider context, listening, other rep (sticky learning)
- Opportunities to share/perform, evaluate, improve
- Values and attributes
Drunken Sailor

Why is this a useful song?

What are its features and qualities?

What do want the children to learn?

What’s its potential?

Padlet (post-it note 3)
What Shall we do...?

Features, Qualities & Challenges

• Working song (Shanty) (Context)
• Strong beat
• 2/4 metre/ensemble
• Rhythmic interest (repetition)
• Verse and chorus (structure)
• Two-part singing (harmony)
• Language – narrative/expression
• Wordy/enunciation/phrasing
• Vowels/choral blend/ensemble

Teaching and learning activities

• **Related warm-up ideas**: focus on lips, tongue, teeth – whispering, pirate phrases
• **Expressive melody**: change mood - sad, lazy, excited, angry etc. (tempo and dynamics)
• **Pitch**: could change pitch – a semitone each verse. Hocketting/ Internalising (traffic lights)/ensemble. Children to lead each part?
• **Pulse and Metre**: ball games, body percussion – rowing – sing as you work!
• **Rhythm**: ostinato, drones, (based on words) invent new verses – conventional notation?
• **Texture/Structure**: add accompaniments; create sea-scape, chords
• **Cultural Capital**: listening to and learning other Shanties, context, pirates
• **Plan a performance**: could be around a narrative or a class arrangements – graphic notation?

www.singforpleasure.org.uk
Links to National Curriculum for Music?

Some highlights...

Singing:
• I can sing in tune, with a good sense of pulse and rhythm
• I can explain the importance of correct breathing, phrasing and posture
• I can sing confidently, showing an increasing awareness of musical features (inter-related dimensions)

Listening:
• I can make improvements to my own and others work and explain using musical vocabulary

Composing and Improvising:
• I can develop musical ideas within given structures, combining layers of sound (ostinato)

Notation:
• I can use a variety of notations to represent musical intentions

Performing:
• I can maintain independent part in a group showing awareness of other performers (singers)
Pedagogical repertoire

• All of this is pedagogy is **applicable to every song!**
• We need to give ourselves permission to have thinking time and space to be inquisitive about the songs we want to use
• Take a risk – remember to add a dose of challenge!
• See the bigger picture
• Allow space for flexibility and addition of other ideas...from you and your children
• Space for the ‘What ifs...?’ and ‘I know!’ = creativity and immersion – “flow” (Diving deep!)
• Then we really are –’Re-booting the joy!’

www.singforpleasure.org.uk
LET’S TALK ABOUT THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM
We’re not alone!

• #CanDoMusic
• @singforpleasure
• www.ism.org
• www.musicmark.org.uk
• TriBorough Music Hub
• https://www.triboroughmusichub.org/school-services/music-education-recovery-curriculum/
A few positive starting points:

- Quiet singing – Hooray!
- Smaller groups
- Repertoire choices
- Flexible ideas
- Technology
- Champion singing in inventive ways
And finally...

Summary

• Step back and look at the bigger picture
• The 3 Rs:
  - Re-visit
  - Re-new
  - Re-boot
• Repertoire of pedagogy and songs

Challenge!

• Choose a song and search out its potential.
• Why is this a good song?
• Warm-ups?
• What are its key features?
• How am I going to draw these out?
• How can I make it more interesting/challenging?
• Wider context and resources?
Thank you for listening!
References:

  
  https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273428150_The_Benefits_of_Singing_for_Children

- Ashley M (2020): *Children and School Singing During the COVID-19 Pandemic*. (Music Mark and SingUp)
  

  

- Warm-up: *Hip-Hop!* (Lucy Drever)  
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zk0rnswuqc&t=108s