

LISBON SCHOOL DEPARTMENT
UNIT DESIGN OUTLINE

Unit Title: Singing: Pitch Exploration – “Finding the Head Voice”

Unit Designers (Content Area, Grade Level Team): Jonathan Carsley, Matthew Watras

Level(s): First Grade Time Span: One Year

Content Area:

Career Prep Health/PE M&C Languages Social Studies
 English Language Arts Mathematics Science & Tech Visual & Perf. Arts

Summary of Unit:

The focus of this unit is to help students engage the muscles that activate the head voice. The finding head voice is fundamental to singing. This is opposed to the chest voice, which is the register used for speaking. Pitch exploration activities help children exercise the correct muscles in their vocal chords for singing in the head voice.

Students began this unit in Kindergarten. It is important to continue this unit in first grade because students finding the head voice can still be a challenge in first grade.

Content Standards/Performance Indicators:

National Standard for Music:

1. Content Standard: Singing alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
 - a. Sing independently, on pitch and in rhythm, with appropriate timber, diction, and posture, and maintain a steady tempo.
 - b. Sing expressively with appropriate dynamics, phrasing, and interpretation
 - c. Sing from memory a varied repertoire of songs representing genres and styles from diverse cultures.
6. Content Standards: Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
 - a. Identify simple music forms when presented aurally
 - b. Demonstrate perceptual skills by moving, by answering questions about, and by describing aural examples of music of various styles representing diverse cultures.
 - c. Using appropriate terminology in explaining music, music notation, music instruments and voices, and music performance.
7. Content Standards: Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, disciplines outside the arts.
 - a. Students devise criteria for evaluating performance and compositions

Revised Maine Learning Result (8/14/07 version)

- A1. Students accurately perform a short musical selection, both instrumentally and vocally, while modeling proper posture and technique, alone or with other.

A3. Students listen to and identify elements of music including meter and simple form and attributes including loud/soft, fast/slow, high/low, and long/short beat durations and steady/strong beat.

D1. Students observe, listen to, describe and ask questions about art forms:

- a. Describe the art form by applying grade span appropriate arts concepts, terminology, skills, and processes as referenced in Standard A: Disciplinary Literacy.

Key Knowledge And Skills Students Will Acquire:

(As a result of this unit, students will know/ understand/ be able to)

Knowledge

- Students will understand the difference between sensations created when the vocal mechanism is engaged for singing (head voice) or speaking (chest voice).

Skills

- Students will be able to imitate (echo) ascending or descending vocal or instrumental glissandi. I.e: Slide whistle or Georgie, the ghost sounds
- Students will be able to follow a visual reference and sing along with ascending or descending vocal glissandi.
- Students will be able to reproduce with their voice approximately the same sound as the shape visually depicted on the pitch pathways cards.
- Students will be able to make various sounds that engage the head and chest such as animal or instrumental that use either high pitches or glissandos.

How students will provide evidence of their understandings:

(Formal and informal assessments – please be specific)

1. Students will participate in pitch exploration activities that engage the head voice through imitation/echo. These activities utilize visual references (pitch pathway cards), aural examples (echo/fragment songs), poems or stories with vocal inflections.
2. Informal assessments can be made by listening to the class echo patterns given by the teacher whether presented vocally or instrumentally.
3. Formal assessments can be made by listening to individuals echo patterns given by the teacher whether presented vocally or instrumentally. These assessments rate each student's ability to sing in the correct vocal register, match pitch, and use good air support and vocal technique (see attached rubrics).

Key Pre-Requisite Knowledge and Skills:

(Before beginning this unit, students should know/ understand/ be able to ...)

Knowledge

Age appropriate vocabulary

Age appropriate concepts such as colors, numbers, shapes and object names

Skills

Age appropriate conversational skills

Age appropriate motor skills

Interpersonal skills

Enduring Understandings:

(To be used as an instructional tool with students. This includes a concept/ theme/issue (the ‘big idea’) that can transfer to other topics, fields, and adult life. Enduring Understandings are purposefully broad and are deliberately framed as a generalization. For example, *Change causes conflict* or *Accurate planning and measurement saves time, money and waste*)

1. Pitch is the highness or lowness of a sound.
2. The human voice serves multiple functions. Ie: speaking, singing, whisper, shouting, etc.
3. Rhythm and pitch occur naturally in everyday speech and each language has its own tonal and rhythmic flow.
4. The head or singing voice uses different vocal muscles than the chest or speaking voice.
5. Vocal glissandi or sliding sounds can be used to approximate pitch.
6. An echo occurs when the teacher sings a phrase and that phrase is imitated or copied by an individual or group of students after the initial sound is presented.
7. Pitches, whether absolute or approximated, when grouped together form contour or shape Ie: ascending, descending, looping, etc.

Essential Questions that Guide and Focus This Unit:

1. What are the different functions of the human voice?
2. What are some activities that you can use to help you find your head or singing voice?
3. What is an echo?
4. How can music (pitch) have shape or contour? How can the singing voice be used to mimic a visual shape?
5. How does rhythm and pitch occur naturally in everyday speech? How does language have its own tonal and rhythmic flow?

Overarching Question(s):

(To be used as an instructional tool with students. An overarching question recurs naturally throughout one's learning and in the progressive teaching of a subject, has no obvious "right" answer, is deliberately framed to provoke and sustain student interest, and raises important questions. For example, *What is the American Dream (is it fact or fiction)?*, *How has changing technology changed society?*, *Why do we need beliefs and values?*, or *What makes a "good decision" good?*

See attached document

Teaching And Learning Experiences Used To Help Students Understand:

(Activities, varied grouping structures, etc.)

Students will participate in a variety of activities that will promote familiarity with the sensations created when the vocal mechanism is engaged for singing (head voice) or speaking (chest voice). These include echo patterns/songs, pitch pathways, and poem/stories. The various activities will involve students in multiple ways, such as imitating animal sounds, making sliding sounds (glissandi), or echoing simple/fragment songs. For more specific example please see the *Book of Pitch Exploration* by Dr. John Feierabend.

How technology will be used to increase student achievement:

iTunes can be used to store and organize listening examples into class playlists.

Laptops or ipods can be used to play listening examples through a sound system.

Whistles such as a slide whistle or sirens

Flashlight

Instructional Resources:

The Book of Pitch Exploration by Dr. John M. Feierabend

Pitch Pathways Cards by Dr. John M. Feierabend

Pitch Exploration Stories by Dr. John M. Feierabend

Slide Whistle and Sirens

Whiteboard, Dry Erase Markers, and Orff Xylophone mallet for roller coaster

Georgie, the Ghost (picture book) by Robert Bright and *Georgie the Ghost Puppet*

Other animal puppets or two dimensional cut outs ie: whale, owl, cat, pig, cowboy

Teaching props: bean bag, flashlight, pipe cleaners or yarn, tape measure, whirligig, magnetic wheel, pop-up puppets, yo-yo, and bubbles

Attach a copy of the unit assessment, including a STANDARDS-BASED rubric or criteria for evaluation of student achievement.