



VOCAL LEADERSHIP

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Training Manual

SEFTON MUSIC EDUCATION HUB

Forward

MIDAS (Music Improvement Development and Support Visits) clearly identified that many schools required support to develop singing for their pupils. In response, Shirley Court and Stuart Overington have worked with Sefton and Knowsley Music Hub to provide support for curriculum staff in schools through Vocal Leadership Courses. The aim is to improve the experience and quality of singing – whilst having a lot of fun too.

This booklet reflects the course structure and contains what is essentially a summary of what works. If you want to experience how to use it, contact the music hub and book onto the next course.

I'm grateful to Shirley and Stuart for this excellent resource.

CHRIS LENNIE – January 2016

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Chapter One - Where do we start?

IN THIS CHAPTER WE WILL:

- Explore what we mean by engagement and the characteristics of an engaging vocal leader
- Discuss techniques in order to be a more engaging vocal leader
- Identify the importance of high expectations and pupil ownership in order to produce high quality singing
- Look at specific ways in which one can aid pupil ownership within singing sessions

WHAT IS ENGAGEMENT?

ENGAGEMENT IS WITH BOTH THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE ACTIVITY

It is important to understand that we engage our singers on two different levels

- Personal level as Teacher/pupil
- In the activity of singing itself singing in the classroom, singing in choirs, singing as part of a massed choir/ singing day.

5 QUALITIES OF AN ENGAGING VOCAL LEADER

1. Creating the Safe environment to be able to motivate and communicate.

- Be caring and interest everyone as a human being first.
 - Respect for one another
 - Praise
 - Smile, warmth, friendly eye contact,
 - Flexibility
 - Confidence in what you are doing.
-

2. Vocal Health and sound subject knowledge

- Knowing how the voice works and having a variety of strategies to be able to pass on this knowledge to young people in a clear and simple way.
- “If you can’t explain it simply you don’t understand it properly.” Einstein
- Progression in singing

3. Leading by example

- Role as an enabler. To start and finish the song.
- Know what you want from the song.
- Understand *your* body language and how to communicate what you want from the song
- Be a good listener.
- **Appraise** the situation and **apply** your experience and knowledge.

4. Teaching Strategies

- Discipline-clear boundaries and expectations.
- Pace of rehearsal and variety.
- To know when to step back and to stop leading and support.
- Listen and Appraise throughout the session.
- To have fun whilst learning.

5. To Understand Musical skills

- Pitch and Rhythmic accuracy
 - Diction
 - Timbres
 - Dynamics
 - Phrasing
 - Communication & Expression
-

EXPECTATIONS & OWNERSHIP

HAVING GOOD QUALITY EXPECTATIONS

It is vitally important that we have the right expectations for our singers. If they are too low then they will never achieve their full potential and settle with just 'singing along'. If they are too high then they will become disengaged and disheartened and recognise their own progress.

Whilst it is good for us to know these expectations it is even better if we communicate these to the young people and give them ownership of their singing.

Activity

Watch the following YouTube clips and discuss the quality of each performance. How does it compare with what you would expect for singers of that age group?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAJ1w5U7jxI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4CHKIC6QbU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22OBQw4qTyY>

THE VALUE OF OWNERSHIP OF THE SINGING BY THE CHILDREN

Ownership happens when ;

- They are actively involved in the process of developing their own singing as a group.
 - They know and understand your expectations of them as a group.
 - They are actively involved with gestures and can lead some of the singing. Opportunities are given for the children to come and *LISTEN* at the front of the class.
 - They understand what good singing looks and sounds like and have ways in which to identify it.
 - It is a good idea to have a check list of things that they can easily latch on to.
-

A COMMON MUSICAL LANGUAGE

In order to do this you need a language that both you and students can use to assess and evaluate their singing and performing.

We all observe most effectively when we are given things to look out for. Therefore if you give young people specific things to look out for when observing the group we can hope to avoid the “it was good” situation.

THE ‘E’ WORDS & THE ‘F’ WORDS!

‘E’ Words are the good ingredients in singing. There are lots of words beginning with ‘e’ that make good quality singing. If you ask the students they may be able to come up with some but a few good staple words are:

Energy Eyes Enthusiasm Eyebrows Enunciation
Expression Ears

On the other hand ‘F’ words are bad (it may be best not to ask for examples from the groups for this one - especially teenagers)

Fussing Faffing Fidgeting

With these words established you have a flexible resources which you can refer to and add to throughout the time you work with the group. They may themselves find new words or even make up words to describe good or bad features e.g. ... Foghornning!

DETECTIVES AND PEER ASSESSMENT

One of the most effective ways in which to give students ownership over their singing is by getting individuals to listen to the rest of the group. Not only does this give the individual the unique chance to hear what the group sound like all together, it also lets the rest of the class hear from their peers (as well as you,) the chance to listen more carefully.

Each detective gets a card with a series of questions outlining what he or she is looking for. They then can either look out for individuals or assess the whole group. There are a number of different detectives that can be used, below are a few of examples:

POSTURE DETECTIVE CLUE CARD

- Are they standing with feet apart- one foot under each shoulder?
- Are their shoulders down and relaxed?
- Are their knees loose?
- Do they have a tall giraffe neck or are they doing a good Meerkat impression?

TV DETECTIVE CLUE CARD

- Are their eyebrows working to add interest to their facial expression?
- Are they using the right expressions for whatever the song is about?
- Do you believe what they are singing about?
- Are their bodies and face telling the story?

DICTION DETECTIVE CLUE CARD

- Are the words clear?
- Can you hear all the t's and d's at the ends of the words?
- Are all the mouths in a unified shape?
- Is everyone trying to bite into the words like biting into a granny smith apple?
- Is anyone exaggerating their mouth shape so they look and sound distorted?

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Answer the following questions for each of the types of student you may meet below

- How do **you** engage the following?
 - Are there any ways in which you may do this more effectively?
1. The reluctant singer... Classroom situation/choir
 2. The choristerGifted and talented.....within a classroom situation
 3. The reluctant singer in a choir
 4. The "soloist" within a choir!
-

Chapter Two - The Voice as an Instrument

IN THIS CHAPTER WE WILL:

- Explain the fundamental aspects of vocal technique
- Discuss the importance of good vocal knowledge in teaching singing
- Identify engaging ways in which to ensure there is good vocal practice within singing sessions
- Look at the ingredients of a good warm
- Look at the challenges of 'changing voices'

EVERY VOICE MATTERS

OUR OWN INDIVIDUAL VOICE

The voice is an individual instrument, and we should allow children to use whatever instrument they have to the full. Think about a baby. A baby recognises the sounds of its mother's voice. Babies all cry, laugh etc. but they are all unique. There is a difference in our natural voice pitch, timbre, inflection, accent, and expression which is why we recognise people's voices on the telephone.

It is important that we all understand that all babies are born with the potential for a singing voice and therefore we must understand that every voice has potential and must be treated with that respect.

LIMBERING UP - WHY DO WE WARM UP?

Time is against you as always. You really need to get into the song to prepare for the concert and you start to think, do we really need to warm up? The answer is always, "Yes!"

Not only is a warm up important part of the session but, I would argue, it the **most** important part of a session.

- Healthy singing involves the whole body; just as athletes warm up their muscles before a race, singers need to warm up both the body and the vocal folds before singing.
 - A good warm up also helps get rid of any tension in the body, so it should always be fun!
-

- Songs and warm ups that involve actions help focus attention and also demonstrate whether a child is concentrating.
- Brains and bodies need to be mobilised and energised before they receive new information.

THE INGREDIENTS OF GOOD VOCAL TECHNIQUE

The best way in which to approach a warm-up is to think about the fundamental components of good vocal technique which you are preparing your singers to do. The warm up provides the opportunity not only to focus the group but to revise and refresh these before you move onto the main rehearsal.

1. Posture

- The body supports the voice, so standing or sitting badly will affect the quality of the vocal sound.
- Stretch both arms right up above your head and set your eyes on a spot on the ceiling. Drop the arms slowly at your sides while still looking at ceiling. Then drop your head slowly so that you look straight ahead of you.
- The feet should be slightly apart (roughly shoulder width) so that the balance is secure and the knees are not locked. The shoulders need to be open but at the same time relaxed. Check for tension in the necks. The arms should be loose at the side.
- A shake out of hands wrists, feet, ankles, drawing a number 8 with their knees any activities that lead to the whole body feeling “floppy” are what is needed.

2. Breathing

- The best way to learn to breathe in is to concentrate on breathing out and explore what the body does naturally. It is ok to feel a nice rounded tummy full of air!
 - Ladies and young teenage girls find this a problem as they spend most of the time trying to hold tummies in!!
 - Try exhaling on a zzz like a bee and talk about ‘releasing’ when you breathe in.
 - Make sure the shoulders are not rising when you breathe.
-

3. Different Vocal Qualities

- It is important that students learn to use the full vocal range and develop an understanding of voice registers
- Voice registers can loosely be described as 'sections' of a voice and it is really important to understand how to help children access these so they can use their full vocal range.
- Ask the children to imitate the sound of a puppy whining outside a window, wanting you to let him in, or to make throw an imaginary ball high in the air and make a "whee" sound at the top of your voice.
- Getting students to start in the tilt/head register sing or slide down the scale can help avoid vocal 'breaks' (especially with girls 11 - 14)

4. Performance & Communication

- Music, and particularly singing, is a performing art and so expression, intention and communication should always be present in our work.
- Some children are more confident than others. It is often good to use focus exercises to explore facial expression and avoid young people looking at one another at first.
- However it is important that the young people have ownership of the performance. asking questions like what do you think this song is about? How do we want the audience to feel? can be very useful.

5. Ensemble & 'Blend'

- This is not something you would necessarily look at until the group were at a good competence of singing.
 - Encouraging singers to listen across the choir is a simple way in order to increase awareness.
 - Blended sound comes predominantly from unified vowels shapes. Spend time looking at the open vowel sounds and mouth shapes, AH, EH, EE, OH, OO. Find ways of remembering the different shapes.
 - With older, more confident singers, you can get them to individually join the sound adding to it without be noticeable.
-

THE HEAD/CHEST VOICE DILEMMA

Whilst I am not the biggest fan of the terminology 'head' and 'chest' voice (ideally the whole body should be resonating throughout the vocal range!) there is no question that there are different vocal registers:

Speech quality (chest voice). This is the speaking vocal range of a singer (the larynx is in a neutral or resting position). You will hear speech quality singing in pop and music theatre singing. However, if you try to take speech quality too high in your range (above the F above middle C) it will feel very uncomfortable and sound a bit shouted and strained. This is point where you need to open up the next section of the voice – sometimes called *head register* or singing in *tilt*.

Tilt/head register. Children can very easily get stuck in the lower end of their voice and sing only using inflected speech. This may be because they have never had the opportunity to explore their own voice or have never been shown ways to do this. . To visit the next 'section' of the voice the larynx needs to tilt forwards (hence the term tilt!). Children need to use this part of the voice regularly; they need to learn how to make a safe healthy sound in this part of the voice, otherwise they will always find many songs too high.

Of course, you may choose to use speech quality for the lower notes in a song, but children need to learn to make a clear, safe and healthy sound in their higher register or they will always find many songs too high.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT WARM UP

Once we have established what we are warming the voice up to do we now have to decide on the materials we are going to use to do it. There are a lot of materials out there from fun songs to simple exercises which all 'warm up' the voice. What is key, however, is to understand what role each activity is having in the warm up.

PHYSICAL WARM UPS & FOCUS ACTIVITIES

The first part of many warm ups is a focus activity or a physical warm up. The value of these activities are to get rid of tension from the body as well as focussing the group to a teacher-led activity, this is particularly effective when they are led without speaking!

Physical warm ups and focus activities may involve 'copy cat' physical gestures or using simple 'brain gym' movements. A more developed version of this may be learning a body percussion or just call and responding various rhythms.

CHANTS

Chants are a valuable link between using the talking voice and developing the singing voice. They also help teach and embed rhythms and can be a 'way in' to musical material covered later in the session.

Try chanting the rhyme in a variety of different voices e.g. posh, fairy, twangy like an American Cowboy. Give the children opportunities to choose which voice to use. This can be later developed into a two-part canon, with the second group entering on the second line. When the children are confident you can try chanting a four-part canon.

VOCAL EXERCISES, SIRENS AND SIMPLE ROUNDS

Using chants or intoning, a heightened form of speech, prepares the group well to move into vocal exercises.

Try to avoid moving straight into more traditional sung exercises with less confident or experienced groups as this can seem very alien to them. Start by using simple features that come out of speech, always modelling first, for example singing 'Yer, yer, yer, yer, yer' up and down and arpeggio. Use gestures and scenarios to help create an open healthy sound.

You can also take chants and singing them to a scale, for example:

What a to do to die to day at a minute or two to two!

A thing distinctly hard to say but harder still to do!!

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

An effective warmup not only prepares the young people to sing but also guides them into the repertoire/ learning objectives of the session.

Plan an example of a 10 minute warm up for the following sessions:

1. A whole class singing session focussed on pulse and rhythm
 2. A school choir session working on a beautiful, legato song
 3. The final choir rehearsal before a public performance
-

EXAMPLE REPERTOIRE

KS1/2

Chants

All I want is a proper cup of coffee

Made in a proper copper coffee pot

I may be off my dot but I want a proper
coffee

In a proper copper pot

Tin coffee pots and iron coffee pots

They are no use to me [clap, clap]

If I can't have a proper cup of coffee

In a proper copper coffee pot, I'll have a
cup of tea

(Singing Sherlock 2)

To begin to toboggan first, buy a toboggan.

But do not buy too big a toboggan!

Too big a toboggan is too big a toboggan

To buy to begin to toboggan.

(Singing Sherlock 4)

See also - Lickety Split (*Sherlock 2*)

Songs

To the tune of Frere Jacques:

Harry Potter, Harry Potter,

Where's he gone?

Where's he gone?

Run off with Hermione

Run off with Hermione,

Poor Old Ron

Poor Old Ron

I'm alive, alert, awake, enthusiastic,

I'm alive, alert, awake, enthusiastic

I'm alive, alert, awake,

I'm awake, alert, alive

I'm alive, alert, awake, enthusiastic

See also - My Dog is a Good dog
(Sherlock 2)

All round Warm Up

VOCAL WARM UP RAP (*Sherlock 4*)

Kaye Umansky

(To be performed with a steady beat tapped on rhythm sticks or a cow bell)

Gotta energise the body,	Gonna pump those lungs,
Gotta get the body ready,	(Ss, ss, ss, ss, ss, ss,)
Gotta feel that beat	Gonna dive in the lake,
And we gotta keep it steady.	(Wheeee – voice slide)
We're in the mood,	Gonna work those tongues,
We're in the know,	(Stick tongues in and out)
Get ready, get set,	Gonna shiver and shake,
And here we go!	(Brrrrrrrrrrrrrr!)
	Then we strike a pose
	And make a stand.

WARM UP AND STOMP (*Sing Up*)

(Each line is delivered in a call and response form)

Up and a down and a forward and a back x 2 (American accent) - *shoulders move*

Round x2 (Posh voice) - *shoulders*

This way and that way and this way and that way (whispered) - *turn your body*

Touch the ground — — — — up (vocal slide) - *as it says*

Eee ee ee ee ee ee ee ee x2 (nasal witchy sound) - *point fingers*

Shhhh, shhhhhh - *Ski movement*

1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 x 3 - *first clap, then click, the turn around*

EXAMPLE REPERTOIRE**KS3/4****Chants****Cha cha chikka chikka,**

Cha cha chikka chikka,

Cha cha chikka chikka,

Cha cha cha.

Chikka chikka cha cha,

Chikka chikka cha cha,

Chikka chikka cha cha,

Cha cha cha.

Cha cha cha cha cha cha

Cha cha cha.

Mm cha, mm cha, mm cha,

Mm cha, mm cha, mm cha,

Mm-cha mm-cha mm-cha,

Mm-cha mm-cha mm-cha,

Cha cha cha

**How much wood would a woodchuck
chuck,**

If a woodchuck would chuck wood?

I know you got a cheque, gotta check,

I know you got a cheque

I know you got a cheque in the post,
check!

Right, right

Right in the middle of the kitchen floor

I left, left,

Left my jar of Branston pickle

Try also

Various tongue twisters:

To begin to toboggan...

bibeddy bobbedy bibbedy boo

See www.uebersetzung.at/twister/en.htm

Songs

First you make your fingers click,

Then you stamp your feet.

Both hand slap your knees,

And clap on the beat.

(Sing for Pleasure -)

A, B, C, D,

E, F, G,

H, I, J, K,

L, M, N, O, P,

Q, R, S, T

U & V

W, X, Y, Z

Somewhere over the rainbow,

way up high,

Theres a land that I heard of

Once in a lullabye.

My dog is a good dog, yes he is.

My dog is a good dog, yes he is.

For he sits and begs

And he stands up tall

He's shaking his tale all around the hall.

My dog is a good dog, yes he is.

My dog is a good, good, good dog, yes he
is.

My dog is a good, good, good dog, yes he
is.

For he sits and begs

And he stands up tall

He's shaking his tale all around the hall.

My dog is a good, good, good dog, yes he
is.

5 x good, 7x good, 10 x good...

(Singing Sherlock 2)

Rounds

There are a number of rounds available try some of the following:

- Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree
- Shalom, my friends
- Tomorrows another day
- Popocatepetl
- Heigh ho, nobody's at home
- Belle Mama

Various books including Roundabout, Sing for Pleasure books and also see www.totalchoirresources.com

EXTENSION: HOW TO DEAL WITH THE CHANGING VOICE

One of the most feared aspects of working with young people's voices are 'changing voices' the period in which boys (and girls) voices change through adolescence. This is a key period in vocal development and the wrong approach can lead to loss of confidence, vocal technical issues and ultimately disengagement in singing from older students.

There has been a great deal of research into changing voices and lots of studies into how to best work with young people during this age however it is important to stress that there is no ultimate solution. Just as every voice is unique the way and rate in which they change is also unique. As well as this, vocal change is a product of a hormonal change in the young people. This has psychological, physical and social repercussions all of which can effect how young people engage with singing.

VOICES 'CHANGE' THEY DO NOT 'BREAK'

Important things for teachers and children to know about a changing voice

- Boys' voices don't change overnight. What we notice is lower pitches developing so it appears that the change occurs very quickly. However these lower pitches are only a part of the process.
- Puberty in boys can start as early as 10 and as late as 14, however the onset of puberty is trending younger (with girls this trend is at a much faster rate)
- Voice training cannot alter the stage of the change (we cannot change physiology). Nevertheless good vocal training does assist young people in singing through that changing process.
- Generally boys will mimic what they hear from a teacher. If a teacher is singing at the bottom of their range they will do the same and so sing excessively low.

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS WHEN THE VOICE CHANGE...

Boys (usually ages 12 - 18)	Girls (usually ages 11 - 14)
Speaking voice depends first	Speaking voice lowers slightly
Larynx grows about 10mm and drops about an 8ve	Larynx grows about 3-4mm
Thickness of the vocal folds changes	Increased breathiness, huskiness, hoarseness
Baby face drops away: muscle develops	in security of pitch
Brain has to relearn all intricate muscle control	Noticable register breaks
Breaks or cracking in voice may occur	Decreased and inconsistent pitch range

Different researchers have labelled the change in boys' voices in different ways, as shown below.

Less research has been done on girls changing voices but Lynn Gackle refers to them as:

Stage I:	Unchanged
Stage IIa:	Pre - Menarcheal (ages 10-11)
Stage IIb:	Post - Menarcheal (ages 13-14)
Stage III:	Young Adult Voice (15+)

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF CHANGING VOICES

- The more you and the young people understand about the vocal change the easier it is to acknowledge and work with. Allow young people to feel ownership of their voice through the change not feel ashamed about it.
- When warming up encourage young people to use the full extent of their vocal range from the highest sound to the lowest sound wherever their range lies
- Make sure you choose repertoire that fits the voice not the other way around
- Most the time when young people 'don't like' a piece it is either because they haven't tried it or they find it difficult to sing. Be wary of doing pieces you feel they will find 'cool' and try and look at the vocal range instead.
- Be prepared to transpose the music into helpful key if needed. Boy's whose voices are just changing think about C, Db & D major/minor.
- Do not avoid vocal breaks but tackle them head on. Work from above the 'break' downwards with girls in particular.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Much of this information has come from notes from Martin Ashley a leading voice in this field working at edge hill university (ashleym@edgehill.ac.uk)

Other fantastic practitioners include caroline Gale at Guildford County School, Surrey (www.boys-keep-sinign.org) and Don Gillthorpe (don@gillthorpe.co.uk) who has a range of material especially arranged with cambiata parts.

Chapter Three - Repertoire and Beyond

IN THIS CHAPTER WE WILL:

- Discuss the challenges of choosing repertoire for singing within schools
- Look at how repertoire can be used to aid progression in singing and musicianship
- Explain some simple teaching technique to help teach melodies
- Explore the idea of planning for progression, what it means and how we can implement it in our work.

HOW DO WE CHOOSE REPERTOIRE?

Choosing the right repertoire can be key to getting the best out of your young people. There are many factors to consider: what do you need to young people to learn about? how challenging do you want the piece to be? what range should you use? and many more.

WHERE TO START...

Find your baseline starting point: if your first task is just to get them singing, start with repertoire that the pupils enjoy, or that will capture their enthusiasm. Once you have won them over you should begin to stretch them by introducing music that they are less familiar with.

Think about:

- Tuning in voices with songs of a narrower pitch range & Call and response songs which lays the foundation of part songs. (for example: Doobidoo Sue Nicholls from Song Stack, Maleesway Sherlock 2, Jaws Sherlock 2)
 - Variety: e.g. unison and part-singing.
 - Suitability of words and content
 - Expressive techniques: e.g. dynamics, phrasing, legato and staccato.
 - The range of notes - Think about the experience of the children in front of you. Remember that the pitch of a song needs to suit children's voices -not yours! E to D' is a good starting point. (KS3 look at the changing voices section above)
 - If all the songs lie in the chest voice they will never learn to use their head voices.
-

- The B-flat next to middle C is probably as low as most 8 -12 year olds should sing comfortably. Most children should be able to sing an E/F at the top of the stave.
- Be aware that some popular and contemporary songs lie too low for youngsters. Also, many pop songs do not *sound* as they are written in the sheet music.

THE PATH TO PART-SINGING

Whilst part singing is a fantastic thing to aim for in our groups it is important that we do not try and run before we can walk.

A normal progression route in a primary setting may look like this:

Unison Singing

Songs in which all the children sing the same part.

Call & Response songs

Songs in which there is a leader which sings the 'call' and the group echo a 'response' this can be done with either the teacher as the leader or with the class split into two groups.

Rounds

Simple songs which are repeated many times. Different groups can be brought in at points through the melody overlaying the tune to create harmonies.

Unison Songs with descants

These are songs in which there is a main melody that the group sing but then a smaller group can sing a simple harmony which is higher in pitch than the tune.

Partner Songs

These are sets of songs that can be sung at the same time as one another. For example swing low sweet chariot and Oh when the Saints.

In an upper key stage 2 and into key stage 3 we may look to develop this further:

Layered songs/ Ostinatos

Songs which feature repeated melodies or ostinatos that layer to create different parts. These will commonly involve a melody that goes alongside the ostinatos

Simple repetitive harmonies

Here the harmonies are very simple melodically and repetitive so that once learnt they are constantly reinforced through the song

Parallel 'gospel' harmonies

As we begin to develop further we may use gospel harmonies. These harmonies tend to follow the shape and rhythm of the melody but lie either below it (alto) or above it (tenor)

Full 3 or 4 part singing

This is where we look at traditional harmonic choral writing where harmonies work independently from the melody.

As the young people develop it may be that you have to move backwards to move forwards sometimes, especially with changing voices. The important thing is that you take the group with you allowing them to develop as a whole group with the support and confidence of their peers.

I'VE GOT THE SONG, WHAT NEXT?

Choosing the repertoire is one thing but it's what you do with it that count.

PREPARATION IS KEY

It seems obvious but the more prepared you are then the better the session will go. Think about the following:

- How are you going to introduce the song?
- Decide on style, character and speed of the song. How can you get them into the character of the song in the warm up time?
- Look through to see if there are any big leaps that may cause problems . How are you going help them. (Ofsted say "Don't *tell* them how *Show* them how!!")
- Are the rhythms tricky? Would it help to chant it through first!(If they can't say it together they won't be able to sing it!)
- Will actions help them learn the words?
- Do you want actions in the final performance?
- What voice qualities does the song require- Twang, Sob, Aspirate?
- Decide on where you want the children to breathe.
- Are they going to stand together in lines are groups?
- Are you going to have soloists or small groups singing some parts?
- Which warm ups can you use to get into the song? (- song with several leaps or one that lies vocally quite high you may need to do lots of fun sirening with them.)
- If there is a verse and a chorus would it be best to start with the chorus or the verse?

OTHER TEACHING TIPS

find different way in which to introduce new pieces, for example:

- When teaching a song sometimes play or sing to the children/ students and ask them to write down 3 words that they remember clearly. (Young Rider) Ask different people which words they remembered and compare.
 - Repeat the exercise, then ask them what they think the song is about.
 - They have now listened to the song 3 times and so are learning it without them trying to sing along and not really be able to listen to how the melody goes.
-

TECHNIQUES TO TEACH A TUNE

GESTURE: PATTERNING THE MELODY



Pattering is a very simple tool you can use to help singers learning the shape of the phrase. You hold your hand flat out in across you with your palm facing down, as shown here.. Then as you sing the melody you move the hand up and down to show the changing of the pitch.

The image shows two musical staves with lyrics and corresponding hand gesture illustrations. The first staff is for the melody 'Tinkle, little star' and the second is for 'how I wonder where you are?'. Hand gestures are shown above and below the notes to indicate pitch movement.

Staff 1: Tinkle, little star

- Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F#4 (quarter), E4 (half).
- Lyrics: Twin - kle, twin - kle lit - tle star
- Hand gestures: Above the staff, five gestures show the hand moving up for the first four notes and down for the last two. Below the staff, two gestures show the hand moving up for 'Twin' and down for 'kle'.

Staff 2: how I wonder where you are?

- Notes: C4 (half), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (half), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F#4 (quarter), E4 (half).
- Lyrics: how I won - der where you are?
- Hand gestures: Above the staff, seven gestures show the hand moving up for the first six notes and down for the last one. Below the staff, three gestures show the hand moving up for 'how' and 'I', and down for 'wonder'.

Once mastered pattering can become a very effective tool however there are a few key things to remember:

- Make sure that you keep your hand in front of your body and not to your side. This helps the singers to follow you as they only have one point of focus.
- Keep relaxed. If you are too tense then the sound you get back will become angular and tense. Try to make the movements easy and flowing.

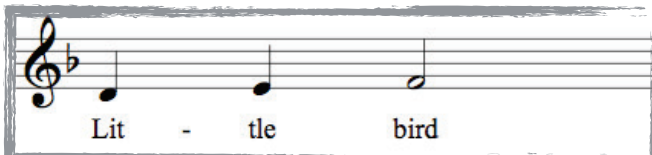
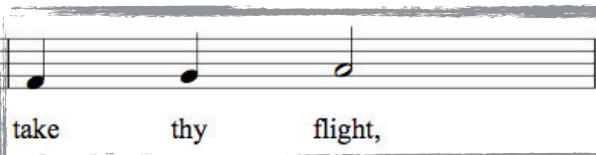
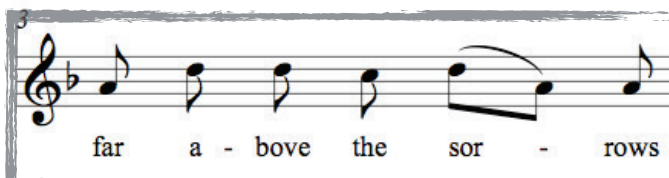
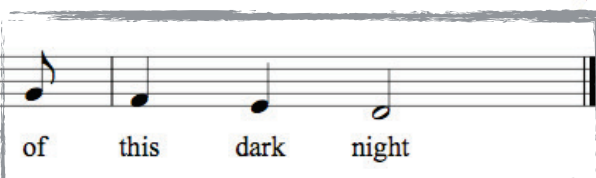
SIMPLE AS A B C

Repetition, when done well, can be the quickest way to learn something. The method below is a pretty foolproof way in which to teach a simple tune and have it remembered and learnt. It is all done as 'Call and response' (meaning you sing something and everyone repeats it back to you). It can feel very longwinded but it does the job!

Most melodies can be split into four sections: A B C D. The method goes like this:

You Sing	A B C D	<i>the whole melody</i>	
You Sing	A	<i>the first section</i>	→ They echo
You Sing	B	<i>the second section</i>	→ They echo
You Sing	C	<i>the third section</i>	→ They echo
You Sing	D	<i>the fourth section</i>	→ They echo
You Sing	A + B	<i>the first half</i>	→ They echo
You Sing	C + D	<i>the second half</i>	→ They echo
You Sing	A B C D	<i>the whole melody</i>	→ They echo

Try it out on the following round:

A	B
	
	
C	D

PLANNING FOR PROGRESSION

IT'S NOT ABOUT LEARNING THE SONG BUT ABOUT LEARNING TO SING

It is easy to start thinking about singing in the classroom or a choir as learning one song after the other. A more helpful way to look at it is that you are teaching the young people to sing, how to use their voices more effectively and about music in it's whole context. Songs are just the tool we use in order to reach these objectives.

Activity

Look at repertoire brought to the session:

1. What potential challenges/learning points does this repertoire present?
2. What are we going to develop through working on the piece?
3. How does it fit into the wider progression (as shown on the previous page)?

As a group look at the following examples and decide how you use the material and approach it within the context of your class/choir

KS 1/2

Kids / Young rider

KS 3/4

Sto Me / Hallelujah

DON'T SETTLE FOR MEDIOCRITY

We have already discussed about having high expectations for our group. But how to facilitate high levels of singing and help train the sound.

Gesture

- Many people will pattern the melody to help the students/children to remember it.
- Once the children are familiar with the melody though the emphasis should be on the phrasing and how to sing the phrases musically.
- The leader needs to give a smooth "rainbow like" gesture or gestures that will help the vocal technique.
- If you always pattern the melody the childrens' singing will always be disjointed.
- The gestures you make have a direct effect on the childrens' singing.

Create the right environment

- Remember singing and indeed all music making is a highly disciplined activity
- It is important to have fun but you should work them hard and don't let them get away with anything other than their best!
- Create an atmosphere that encourages confident and inhibited singing. Pace is important. Energy levels need to be kept high and the activities interesting.
- Word sheets can be a distraction and we often lose children when distributing them, even in choirs when we ask them to refer to music etc.
- I cannot underestimate the importance of eye contact with every single child and when we are reading sheets or music ourselves we cannot be doing that.
- Make sure everyone can see the leader/conductor

Keep a pupil centred approach

- Involve the singers in the rehearsal/singing session as much as possible by asking them to listen to one another.
- Ask the children to mark the class effort out of 10. Then ask them to mark themselves as individuals
- Place pupils who have not found their voices or who have weaker ears between two stronger singers.
- Place the disruptive pupil between two committed singers.
- Ask the children what skills they are learning and relate this to other subjects in the curriculum. You will be surprised what they come up with..Eg. listening skills, ability to conform, team work, communication skills- use an example as someone working on a till in a supermarket- they need to look at their customers, smile, speak clearly, be helpful, positive body language etc.

Activity

Play or show your singers good examples of children singing! Let them compare themselves with others. Otherwise how do they know what they are aspiring to!

KS2 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZO5AgTyu3M&list=PLImpRHvoTp0j_G1MmerCVhiubD_PBV8un

KS1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGsvF7V2mjQ>

KS3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVpCrSGOVJ0>

Chapter Four: Pulling it all Together

IN THIS CHAPTER WE WILL:

- Look at the role of conducting gesture in our work and see how it can have a positive effect in the singing of our group
- Discuss how we should look to structure a session
- Outline what constitutes a positive learning environment

CONDUCTING 1.0

You do not need to be a world class conductor in order to get a choir to sing well however the gestures you use will effect the sound you get back. If you have some effective positive gestures that support your idea for how the song should sound you will find that the learning is quicker and you have to say less. In contrast some gestures will actually make the sound worse and result in you sending the choir mixed messages.

THE FUNDAMENTALS

Recapping some of what we covered in week one there are some features which you should aim to maintain throughout the time you are leading:

1. Stand with good confident posture, modelling what you hope to see in the young people
2. Make regular eye contact with all your singers
3. Try to avoid aimless wandering, it makes you seem nervous and unsure of what you are doing
4. Breathe with the choir

POSITIVE GESTURE VS NEGATIVE GESTURES

Bringing people in	Positive -	Using your whole hand towards them with soft fingers, a welcoming gesture with eye contact
	Negative -	Pointing your finger, tense arms without eye contact
Keeping time	Positive -	A light 'pom'ming gesture just in front of you potentially with a pattern but keeping the movement contained
	Negative -	Large angular or sweeping gestures using the whole arm in large shapes.

Phrasing and melodic patterns	Positive -	Smooth soft gestures with strength in the arm (think of your hand going through water). allow the peak of the arch to go with the high point of the phrase but keep moving though
	Negative -	Detached step-ward gesture just shown the movement in pitch up and down.
Dynamics	Positive -	Broadening and slimming motions across and mainly horizontal plain. Louder dynamics move out and away from the body, quieter in and towards the body.
	Negative -	Over use of up and down gestures (easy to confuse with pitch) lack of strength in the arms.

STRUCTURING A SESSION

Having looked at the various components of a session we can now look at how we put them together. Choose a balance of material. Mixing a more difficult song with easier song, action song and songs in other styles that use different vocal qualities

A MODEL SESSION STRUCTURE

No matter how long or short the session the following general structure is a starting point:

1. Warm ups/focus-(Try and relate this to what is to come)
2. Song to get them going /echo songs.
3. Work on more difficult song, or difficult bits of songs
4. Revise other songs
5. Sing through of favourite song ore recap of one taught earlier
6. Warm down

OTHER TIPS TO SESSION STRUCTURE

- Try to keep the pace of the session by doing a number of pieces at a short time each
- Make sure you have a clear objective to work on in each piece
- Try and avoid having the children stand or sit for too long
- Also try and make sure you have a balance of note learning, developing the singing and performing already learnt pieces.

A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

1. Watch how children walk into rehearsal space
2. Insist on quiet; **never** talk over children chatting, whispering or fidgeting
3. Sometimes do not talk at all in your session unless absolutely necessary.
4. No calling out from children
5. Your voice volume.
6. Pace of rehearsal
7. Variety of groupings, -lines, circle, depending on size of group and space/standing/sitting
8. Use visual clues – make then listen-“ E” words
9. Praise positive behaviour – e.g. “Jodie is really listening beautifully. I saw her use a lot of the “E “ words in her singing.
10. If someone is really badly behaved, sometimes it is better to speak to them away from the rest of the group, rather than making an example in front of the rest of the group.
11. When you do confront bad behaviour in the session you can diffuse the bad atmosphere with humour afterwards, so that the other children are not badly affected (tension)
12. If class teacher does not have good discipline then you will find it more difficult to impose your own discipline. You may need to state your expectations very clearly.
13. Repertoire.- What to choose?
14. Vocal range? B below Middle C and up to F above the octave above C.
15. Wide range of repertoire to select from.

REPERTOIRE SUGGESTIONS

The following publishers and series are recommended as places to find use find useful repertoire

Singing Sherlock series - Boosey & Hawkes (4 books currently available with a 5th soon to be published)

Sing for Pleasure junior song books - a series of books with material for KS1-3 - www.singforpleasure.org.uk

Out of the Ark - school plays, assembly songs and seasonal books - <http://www.outoftheark.co.uk>

Voiceworks series - OUP - repertoire for KS3

	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2	Key Stage 3
Warm-ups	<p>Nursary Rhyme Rap SS3</p> <p>Jimbo Jambo</p> <p>Sherlocks Voice box SS1</p> <p>Dr Knickerbocker SS1</p> <p>Keep Fit Calypso SS1</p> <p>Wesley Bears day at the office SS3</p> <p>Eevrybody Silly song</p> <p>Mr Wiggly and Mr Waggly</p>	<p>Kumala Vista SFP Bk</p> <p>All Warmed Up SS4</p> <p>Lickety Split SS2</p> <p>Crash Beep Beep SS2</p> <p>Grandma Grandma SS2</p> <p>Coffee Pots SS2</p> <p>Che Che Koolay</p> <p>Warm up and Stomp Cannon</p>	<p>Cha Cha Chikka Chikka</p> <p>How much wood would a woodchuck chuck</p> <p>Clap, stomp, slap click</p>
Echo songs/Call and response	<p>Did you feed my cow? S33</p> <p>Calico is a charming cat SS1</p> <p>Come to the pet shop SS1</p> <p>Rosie SS1</p>	<p>Maleezway SS2</p> <p>Hey unglue (Voiceworks)</p> <p>Abeeyo</p> <p>Dolphin Song SS3</p> <p>Mirror SS1</p>	<p>Ooo a Lay lay</p>

Getting into Part singing & Rounds	Wintertime	Shadow SS2 Hey dum Diddley Hay tee dee Listen to the River SS4 Whales douglas Coombes Linsay Music Funmje Alafia (junior voice works)	Sto Me Banuwa Si, si, si Hashivenu Soualle Shalom (round) Penatonic Partners (singing Playgrounds) Belle mama
Partner songs		Breakfast Calypso Bin men in space Are we nearly there yet? Butterflies - Alan simmons Pop idol Ss2 Sporting World The hand jive	Wade in the Water Medley Swing Low / O when the saints / I'm gonna sing Hey mister Miller Yonder come day Native american chants (Voiceworks 1)