



Movement

The act of singing, as well as any act of music making, involves movement, even the simple movement of moving the lips and vocal mechanism. Movement, therefore, is an essential ingredient in performing songs, and it is also an essential ingredient in developing singing skills.

Moving to songs can:

- Involve general, free, expressive actions coordinated with the flow of the whole song or specific sections within the whole song.
- Involve prescribed, specific demonstrations of sound patterns.
- Involve combinations of these.

Therefore, movement can be seen and used as both an expressive mode and a demonstrative mode for experiencing and studying music.¹

Movement can be prescribed or improvised or it can be teacher directed or student directed. Within SongWorks processes, most movement ideas are student generated.

Why Movement is Used in Education

Teachers can use movement to:

- Motivate and engage students in a learning process. One needs only to observe the delight on children's faces as they move to music to realize the importance of movement in their lives.
- Coordinate movement with the beginning and end of a song. Ideally, movement activities take place while a song is being sung which gives a framework for starting and stopping.
- Highlight various elements of the music such as beat, rhythm, melodic flow, or words.
 - “With a partner, find a way to move to the phrases in this song.”

- “How many times is the phrase ‘E-I-E-I-O’ sung in the song Old MacDonald? Is the pitch of that phrase going upward or downward? Find a way to move downward when we sing, ‘E-I-E-I-O’.”
- Cause students to focus their attention on others. “Did you see how Ann was moving? Let's sing the song and move just as she did.”
- Energize singing. “Swing your arms out to the side, chest level as we sing, ‘Hi Ho the Derry O’.”
- Have fun. Who among us has not noticed that movement, music, and laughter or joyfulness almost always accompany each other.
- Express one's interpretation of a song or piece of music. “As we sing, act out the meaning of the words of the song.”

Introducing Movement to Your Students

- “Let's think about and list all the ways we can move.” (Discussion and listing on the board or large pieces of paper take place.)
- “When we are in school, we need to act with safety in mind. If we were moving about the room, what kinds of actions might be unsafe?” “What actions would be safe?” (Discussion and listing take place.) “Ann, keeping in mind the things we have discussed, show how you can move about the room safely.”

Continue collecting students until everyone is moving safely. It may take some classes more time than others to move without bumping or acting in an unsafe manner. Until you are assured that all can move in a safe manner it is best to let fewer numbers move at a time.

- For a lesson plan to introduce Movement to you students see, [All Together Now](#) at this site.

Bibliography

Bennett P. D. & Bartholomew, D.R. (1997). SongWorks I: Singing in the education of children. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.