

From the President

Happy March!

It is amazing to think that we are more than halfway through our school year, and are only a few short weeks away from our annual SongWorks conference. This newsletter centers on the concept and use of song dotting. I value song dotting for many reasons. As a very tactile person, being able to “feel” the rhythm of a song is a powerful tool that aids in my own embodiment and understanding of a song.

I love teaching others about song dotting. When I utilize this practice with young students or pre-service music teachers in the university setting, I observe high levels of engagement and satisfaction. I wonder why such a range of music makers finds this activity so captivating. I found some answers in an article* entitled, “The Power of Touch” (Konnikova 2015). Konnikova writes, “The more we learn about touch, the more we realize just how central it is in all aspects of our lives—cognitive, emotional, developmental, behavioral—



Taryn Raschdorf
Virginia Beach, VA



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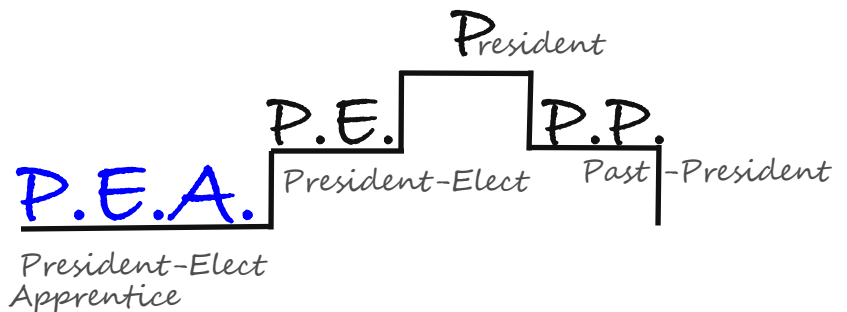
from womb to old age. It's no surprise that a single touch can affect us in multiple, powerful, ways." This is so true! In the SongWorks classroom, students may experience a game, mapping, ideographing or song dotting. These activities call forth a responsiveness in students to connect to music cognitively, emotionally, developmentally, and behaviorally. Humans respond to music. Even toddlers bob their bodies to show their response to music! As you read this newsletter, consider: The simple tapping of a marker on paper may lead students to a deep level of thinking and understanding.

Applications are currently being accepted for the **President Elect Apprentice** position. The application process is quick and easy; I encourage anyone who has been thinking about becoming a leader in the SongWorks community to apply. If you have questions, concerns, or just want to know a little more about the position, please do not hesitate to contact me through email or phone—I would love to chat!

Click the link below to go to the application -

[President-Elect Apprentice \(PEA\) Application.](#)

I look forward to receiving your applications, by March 28th!



-Taryn

*Konnikova, Maria. "The Power of Touch." *The New Yorker*, March 4, 2015.

**Not a current member of
SongWorks Educators Association?**

JOIN or RENEW

It's quick and easy! Go to

www.songworkseducatorsassociation.com

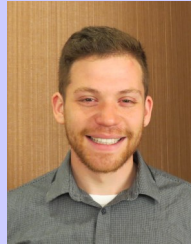


SongWorks: Playful Teaching, Vibrant Learning

2018 Conference Sessions and Presenters!

Conference Chair

Max Mellman, NJ
MEI President-Elect



Authentic Connections through Social-Emotional Learning

Angelie Timm, CO

A Journey Through Glass Houses: Stepping from Listening to Notation

Dr. Anna Langness, CO



The Music of Poetry, the Poetry of Music: Literacy Connections in a SongWorks Poetry Lesson

Beth Cain, AZ

So Early in the Morning: Bringing Sunshine to Young Singers' Voices

Beth Gadbaw, CO



Biography Breaks: Meaningful Music Exploration through Integration

Dr. Brittany Nixon May

**Getting into Notation:
Is There a Rush?**

Dr. Douglas Bartholomew, MT



**Playful and Meaningful Assessment
with Ideographs**

Emilee Knell, UT

**The Folk Song-Game:
An Aesthetic Experience**

Dr. Fleurette Sweeney, NS



**Playing with Tradition:
Valuing a Spirited Process for Folk Dancing**

Jake Harkins, VA

**Ukulele:
Never Too Young to Play the Blues**

Judy Fjell, MT



**SongWorks Made Me Fearless!:
My Tales of Teaching in Unusual Settings**

Kate Smith, BC

**Bobby to Bach:
Connecting the Music of Past & Present with
McFerrin and Johann**

Molly Feigal, MN





**Aspiring to Excel:
The Power of Better**

Dr. Peggy D Bennett, MT

Seven-Ten and the Scottish Snap

Susan Kenney, UT



**Teaching with a Global Focus:
Using SongWorks Strategies with Multicultural Music**

Samantha Smith, PA

**Principles at Play:
SongWorks Practices in My Classroom**

Vicky Suarez, TX



FEATURING:



Observation Lesson

Betty Phillips, OR

&

2018 Emerging Pioneers

Nan Fitzpatrick and Taylor Crevola

&

Sturdy Songs in Action!

These will be mini-sessions presented throughout the conference

ANNOUNCING

2018 EMERGING PIONEERS

Nan Fitzpatrick has, for the past five years, been teaching music as a parent volunteer, then as a paraprofessional at Caleb Greenwood Elementary in Sacramento, CA. This year, Nan added a second, local school, Tahoe Elementary. Nan created a course of study for students in grades Kindergarten through six that incorporates musical concepts of notation, music appreciation, instrument instruction, and vocal performance. The structure of music class intends to inspire learner attributes such as inquiry, reflection, risk-taking, problem solving, and caring. In Summer 2017, Nan completed Level 1 SongWorks Certification after completion of the SongWorks in Action course. She has been a member of SongWorks Educators Association since 2015 and continues to incorporate the principles of learning and teaching music into her instruction.



Nan Fitzpatrick
Sacramento, CA

Taylor Crevola teaches in the Middle School Communications classroom at Serendipity Center, a therapeutic school in Portland, OR. Taylor first attended a SongWorks Conference in April 2017. The experience lead her to pursue further study during this past summer, attending the SongWorks in Action course. She lives in Portland with her husband and her brother. Taylor is passionate about using music and play to engage children with Autism, and also tutors students with dyslexia and teaches piano lessons. Taylor holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and Foreign Languages from Lewis & Clark College.

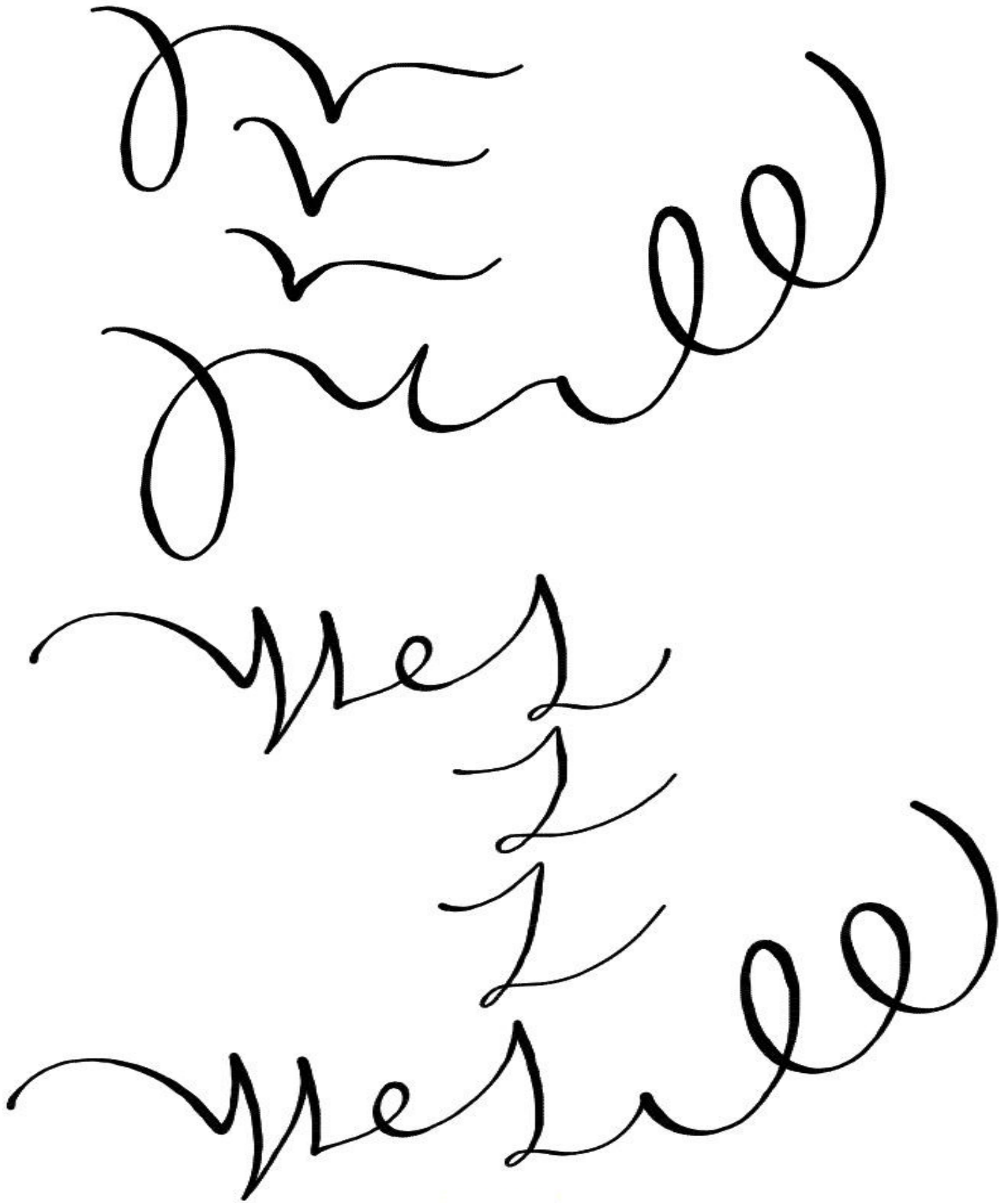


Taylor Crevola
Portland, OR

Since 2011, SongWorks Educators Association has inducted 44 Emerging Pioneers into the Fleurette Sweeney Fellowship program. These early and mid-career teachers have deepened their relationships with SongWorks through year-long mentorships with an established member of MEI who guides them through regular reflections on their teaching, and prepares them to share what they've learned with their SongWorks colleagues at the annual MEI conference. Many Emerging Pioneers have become the torchbearers for the future of SongWorks Educators Association and the SongWorks way of teaching.

MYSTERY MAP: March

How cheerful it is when we run into old friends unexpectedly!



Check back next Newsletter for the answer!

Want to submit a "mystery map" or "ponder this pictograph" or "decode these dots" from one of your favorite songs/masterworks? Don't be shy! Submit maps or ideographs or song dot scores for consideration to jeharkins@fcps.edu

2018 VISITING SCHOLARS

Brent Gault is professor of music education at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. He has taught elementary and early childhood music courses in Texas, Wisconsin, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Indiana. He specializes in elementary general music education, early childhood music education, and Kodály-inspired methodology. He has training in both the Orff and Dalcroze approaches to music education.

Gault has presented sessions and research at conferences of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association, Dalcroze Society of America, International Kodály Society, International Society for Music Education, Organization of American Kodály Educators, and National Association for Music Education. In addition, he has served as a presenter and guest lecturer for colleges and music education organizations in the United States, Canada, China, and Ireland.

Articles by Gault have been published in various music education periodicals, including the *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *Music Educators Journal*, *General Music Today*, *Kodály Envoy*, *Orff Echo*, and *American Dalcroze Journal*. He is the co-editor (with Carlos Abril) of *Teaching General Music* (2016, Oxford University Press) and author of *Listen Up! Fostering Musicianship Through Active Listening* (2016, Oxford University Press).

In addition to his duties with the Music Education Department, Gault serves as the program director for the Indiana University Children's Choir, where he conducts the Allegro Choir. He is a past president of the Organization of American Kodály Educators.

Martina Vasil is Assistant Professor of Music Education and the Director of the Orff Schulwerk and Dalcroze Summer Institute at the University of Kentucky. She teaches undergraduate courses in general music methods and graduate courses in research, popular music, and social justice in music education. She also supervises student teachers and cooperates with the College of Education to admit music education candidates into the Teacher Education Program. Martina has seven years experience teaching K–8 general music and 4–8 instrumental music in Pennsylvania, working in public charter and parochial schools in rural, suburban, and urban areas.

A long-time member of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association (AOSA), Martina was a Local Conference Chair for the 2011 AOSA Professional Development Conference, serves on the AOSA Research Interest Group, and is a mentor for AOSA's Digital Mentorship Program. She is Vice President of the Kentucky Orff-Schulwerk Chapter and is Second Vice President of the Pittsburgh Golden Triangle Chapter. Martina serves on the Planning Committee and is the Technology Coordinator for the Mountain Lake Colloquium for Teachers of General Music Methods. She is the faculty advisor for the University of Kentucky CNAfME chapter and the Kentucky Eurhythmics Society.

Martina has publications in the *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, the *Missouri Journal of Research in Music Education*, and the *Orff Echo*. She has presented her research at the International Society for Music Education World Conference, National Association for Music Education Eastern Division Conference, the National Association for Music Education Research and Teacher Education National Conference, the Association for Popular Music Education National Conference, the Mountain Lake Colloquium for Teachers of General Music Methods, the NYU/Steinhardt IMPACT Conference, the Kentucky Music Educators Annual Clinic, New York State School Music Association Winter Conference, the Ohio Music Education Association Professional Development Conference, and the West Virginia Music Educators Association Conference. Martina's primary research interests are culturally relevant pedagogy, Orff Schulwerk, and secondary general music. For her dissertation, she examined how teachers integrated both popular music and informal music learning practices into their secondary music classes to enact change in music education.



Brent Gault
Bloomington, IN



Martina Vasil
Lexington, KY

2017 EMERGING PIONEER: REFLECTION

Presenting Song Dotting to Teachers: If I Can Do It, You Can Too!

Halle Davis

In September, I organized and hosted a workshop for the elementary music teachers in my school district. Because I see so many aspects of literacy within the SongWorks strategies, I chose to focus on literacy for my presentation. I decided to introduce song dotting because it is very accessible, and I thought my colleagues would find it interesting to see how this strategy can act as a bridge toward standard notation.

Luckily for me, I had just returned from the 2017 summer course SongWorks In Action. That course covered the scope and sequencing of pre-dotting and dotting activities. "Yay summer course!" I chose the song "Come and Follow Me" for this presentation because I had demonstrated its use as a singing game to this same group of music teachers a few weeks prior.

Just as if they were students in my own classroom, I began with a secret song clue by tapping the rhythm in my palm. After a few guesses, one colleague suggested that, "It might be that line song we sang last time." We sang the song to see if it would match my secret song clue, and it fit. We tried several suggestions as the "students" offered new ways to perform the rhythm of the song: on our heads, on our elbows, with our feet.

So many aspects
of literacy within
the SongWorks
strategies...

After assessing that all were comfortably performing the rhythm, I split them into pairs to come up with a way to perform the rhythm collaboratively. I had practiced with my 1st grade classes prior to the workshop, and just like the 1st grade students, my colleagues were immersed in their partner work as they created movement ideas to perform the rhythm. We then re-grouped and I demonstrated how one could begin the next lesson by playing "Guess the Syllable," a game where one taps the rhythm of a song on the whiteboard and stops on one of the sounds/syllables. Students have to guess on which syllable sound was stopped.

After a few rounds of "Guess the Syllable," I prompted, "Watch what happens when my marker cap comes off." I proceeded to create a song dot score while singing the song. We re-read my score and checked to make sure that all the syllables were accounted for. I then invited a few colleagues to song dot on the board. We compared and contrasted our song dot scores as we prepared to make our own individual scores on paper.

Just as we had done at the summer course, I had each participant practice dotting the song with their capped marker before we made any marks. Next, the caps came off, and everyone sang accurately in rhythm as they dotted. We closed the caps, re-read our scores, and did a quick tour around the room to read each other's scores.

After a quick demonstration of how one could introduce stems by adding them to the song dots, I showed teachers how to transition these scores into standard notation. Finally, I opened up the floor for comments and questions.



Halle Davis
Santa Barbara, CA

My colleagues found the lesson and strategies to be something they could take back to their own classrooms. As a group, we discussed the possibilities of using a song dot score for highlighting and organizing certain sections, words, or notes of a song.

Since close reading is a big focus in our school district, my colleagues agreed that song dotting holds many possibilities. A few weeks after the workshop, one of my colleagues reported that she had just gone through the pre-dotting activities with her students to great success!

As a young teacher, I am thrilled that these sturdy strategies give as much to others as they do to me. Presenting a SongWorks strategy to music teachers was both fulfilling and fun. If I can do it, I bet you can too!

Close reading is
a big focus
in our
school district

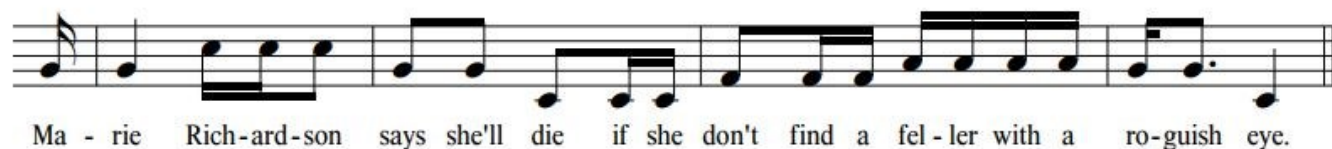
Halle Davis teaches K-3 general music and 4-6 instrumental music in Santa Barbara, California. Halle was introduced to Music EdVentures and Songworks during her time at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music where she received a Bachelor of Music Degree in Violin Performance and a Master of Music Teaching. In addition to teaching, Halle plays violin with the Santa Barbara City College Orchestra and enjoys spending time with her family and their dogs.

**2017 Emerging Pioneer, Hallie Davis,
shares this as her fourth and final assignment to fulfill her
Fleurette Sweeney Fellowship for Emerging Pioneers award.**

January Pictograph Revealed!

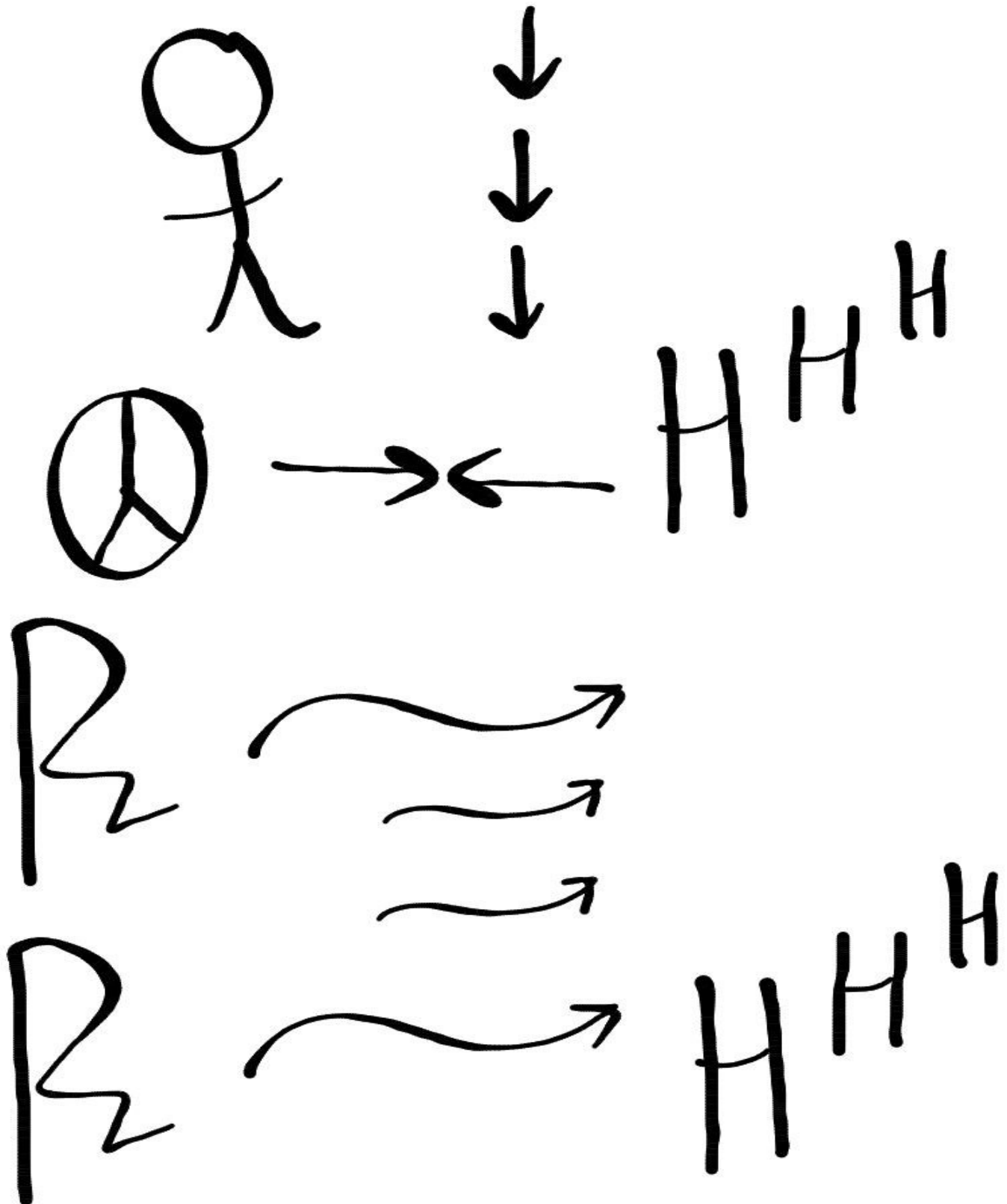
Rain, Rain

*Snow, Snow was substituted to inspire the pictograph in the January Newsletter



PONDER THIS PICTOGRAPH: March

The ending cluster of the A and B sections of this pictograph score appear identical.
That's not an accident!



Check next Newsletter for the answer!

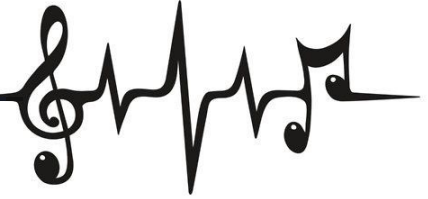
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IN PRACTICE: Music Literacy for Children

Part 5 of 6*

Jake Harkins

A Musical Evolution of Notation



Song Dotting: Notating a Musical Responsiveness

Mapping and ideographing clusters provide an accessibility to expressive flow of larger phrases and structures within music. These notational techniques capture a phonological awareness of meaningful aural perceptions. In turn, song dotting mirrors a phonemic awareness—an auditory awareness of specific individual sounds within a given cluster or phrase. Dotting takes smaller gestures, stress patterns, and clusters from vocal articulation, to corporal tapping, to encoding meaningful symbols.

Simply, “Each dot represents a single, unitary sound” (Richards and Langness 1984).

Dotting individual syllables and stress patterns of musical sound (with or without text) provides a more specific visual representation of the information within that cluster. Dotting a cluster of musical sound, within the context of a whole song, still entails preserving musical flow by honoring clusters of sound, not bar lines or metric notation. Dotting leads to the further discrimination of similar and different sounds—faster/slower, longer/shorter, higher/lower, louder/softer, to name a few.

When a student song dots, he/she is multitasking a variety of traditional literacy skills such as one-to-one correspondence, encoding, procedural knowledge, phonological awareness and phonemic awareness.

When students are creating dots to music in real time, as the sound source or not, they are **encoding**. When students read dots to music in real time, they are **decoding**. When students encode or decode dots, a psychological attentiveness interprets present, remembered, and even imagined sounds. As the brain discriminates, sorts, categorizes, compares and translates sounds to symbols, the auditory, visual, and kinesthetic perceptions occur with a context.

The following 4 reflections share combinations of various song dotting practices: teacher-made dots, student-made dots, procedures for song dotting, following dots and creating dots, extension activities, and more. As you read these reflections, consider your own context and how you might adapt their models with regard to:

- **Introducing** song dots as a visual representation of sounds
- **Following** teacher-created and modeled dot scores
- **Creating** song dots in real time by the teacher and/or student
- **Exploring** song dot scores by “finding” texts, and/or clusters of previously-highlighted pitched or rhythmic content by identifying corresponding dots
- **Evolving** song dots’ visual content to exist with meaning among “traditional notation” by connecting aural and visual perceptions (identifying/discriminating qualities of sound (i.e. faster/slower, higher/lower) within a context)

Dotting
takes smaller gestures,
stress patterns,
and clusters
from vocal articulation,
to corporal tapping,
to encoding
meaningful symbols.

"Song Dotting: A Sound to Symbol Approach" by Leah Steffen

What an incredible tool—song dotting! I remember the first time I experienced a lesson using song dotting and thought to myself, "Why haven't I been doing this all along?" What a solid way for students to begin writing and reading what they hear.

Singing, moving, and responding to "[High Stepping Horses](#)" (click for score), or Proud Prancing Ponies, is a lovely way to bring the kinesthetic and visual together while introducing song dotting. Here is a lesson I present to my Kindergarten students as a beginning song dotting experience.

Embody the Song through Kinesthetic Experiences

Day One and Two:

- Follow the High Stepping Horses lesson up to "Moving through Space" from the Sturdy Song section on the website.

Day Three:

- Use a [secret song](#) (click for more information) approach from the resource section on the SongWorks website until students have identified the song.
- Chin (singing on a neutral syllable such as "loo" or "bum") the first 3 phrases and use Gordon syllables (or rhythmic language of your choice) for the cadence phrase: di du-da-di du-da-di du.
- Singing the whole song, model tapping your own arm with 2 fingers to the rhythm of the cadence (with text, or chinning, and/or rhythmic language for the cadence). Have students join the movement.
- Repeat the song using the Gordon syllables on the cadence phrase and tap the fingers down the leg. Repeat again using the other leg.
- Begin the song again from the beginning, and move your feet in rhythm with the Gordon syllables during the cadence phrase; students perform the same.
- Ask the class to stand and move like a high stepping horse on the first three phrases and then while singing Gordon syllables put the rhythm of the cadence phrase in their feet.

Bring Prior Experiences to Symbol

- Go to the board and look at a combination ideograph and song dot score of High Stepping Horses.
- Ask the students what they notice and gather their responses.
- All sing and read the score while following the pictures and dotted cadence phrase.
- To provide playful repetition of reading practice, students are given choices: chin the song, use the real words, use rhythm syllables on the cadence (or a combination of these choices).
- After several turns singing and following the score from their seats, ask for volunteers to come up and show how they read the song (before teacher models). The volunteer may track the score while singing alone or with the group.



High Stepping Horses is in "short short long" form.



"Why haven't I been doing this all along?"

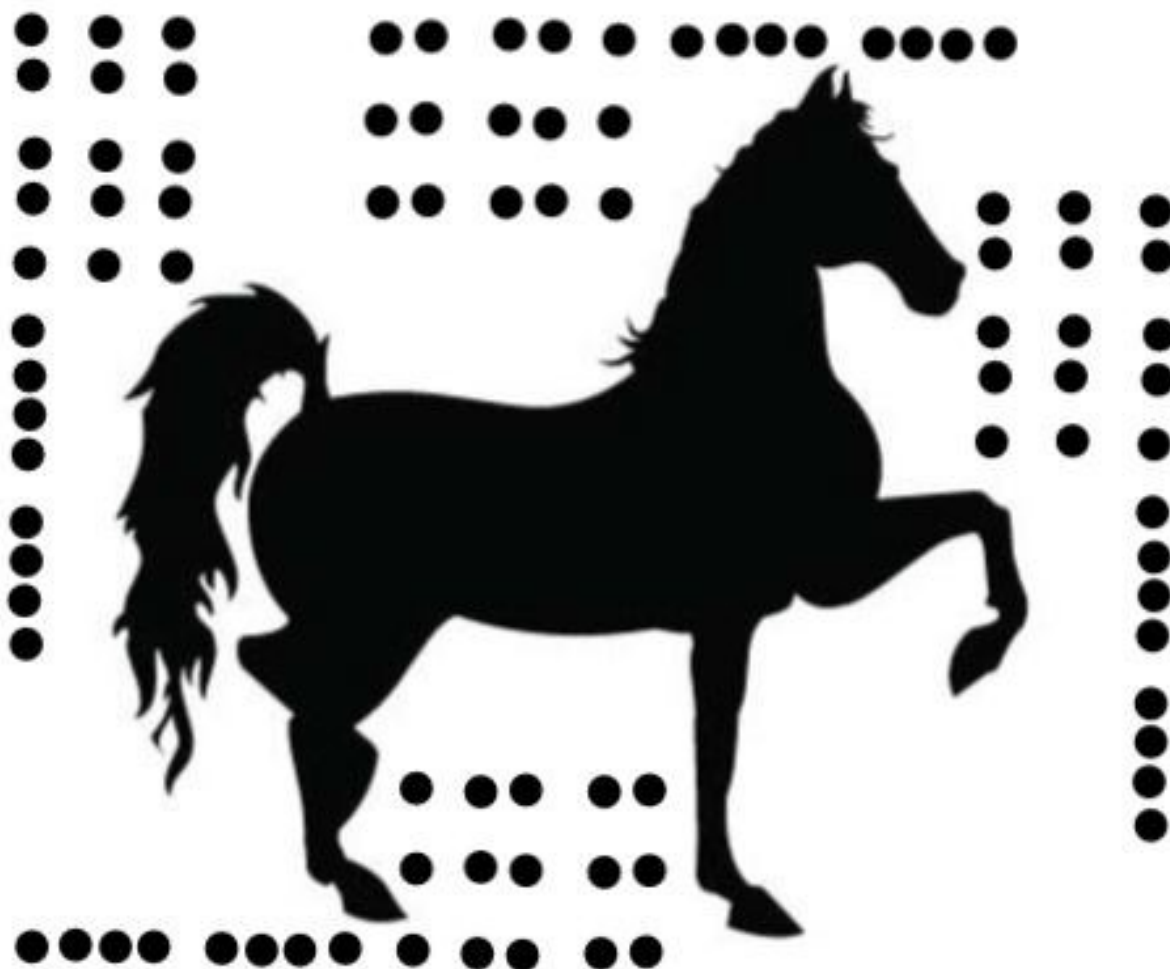
Day Four:

Hand out individual papers containing the ideograph but not the song dots.

- Ask the students if they know what song it is.
- Sing the song and encourage students to track the score with their finger. Ask if they notice anything that's missing.
- Discuss their thoughts.
- Hand out markers and with the caps on practice putting in the dots.
- Invite the students to do this one more time, take the caps off their markers and touch the paper as they sing the cadence.
- Sing it again, and have students check their answers using their finger to touch the "dabs" they made.
- Turn the "dabs" into large dots right before the class leaves the lesson. Consider using the word note heads to label the large dots.

Managing the Song Dotting Process

I have discovered not all children are ready to take their marker caps off and scribe at the same time. Likewise, some students have such aural/kinesthetic/visual awareness that they are ready to successfully create a song dot score without any (cap-on) practice turns. Be sensitive to this, and allow opportunities for "growing" and "glowing" students to create dot scores at a pace that is comfortable for each of them.



“Song Dots: Rhythm and Meaning and Joy, Oh My!” by Max Mellman

Song-dotting is a practice of turning tappable rhythm into meaningful notation. In my music classes, song-dotting is an essential skill along the pathway to music literacy, becoming part of my students' musical vocabulary. I use song-dotting to 1) teach rhythm while 2) preserving musicality and meaning, and 3) to experience the joys inherent in the process itself.

1 RHYTHM

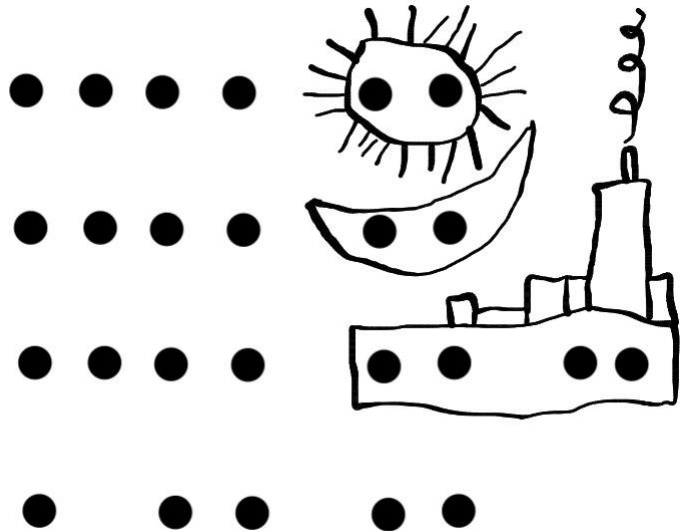
One sound, one dot. Introducing rhythm notation is as simple as dotting the cadence “just like me” in Johnny Get Your Haircut, and letting students touch the notation in time with their voices. With this three-note phrase, sound is already being visually arranged in time.



As students become familiar with reading language clusters and musical phrases in dots, they can start notating entire songs in song dots. Sharp and regular consonants make songs like Black Cat particularly appropriate for this type of activity. When the dots are all notated, students can identify sounds that “feel slower” by attaching stems to those dots, and faster sounds with a stem-and-flag. We can bring even more clarity to the sounds by “chinning,” or singing the song on a neutral syllable.

2 MEANING

Every song dot has a meaning that can be unlocked, using the song as a key. A song-dot score for “Sally Go ‘Round the Sun,” for example, has fun characters hiding inside its dots: the sun, the moon, and the chimney pot (in a cluster of dots). Whether in a teacher-prepared score or their own song-dot script, students can identify the secret dots by tracking the notation while singing the song. Once they've identified the dots, they can draw pictures of those characters above their respective dots and clusters.



Uncovering the meaning behind a score of song dots can also become the motivation for reading the score. When I write a secret song on the board in song dots or in full rhythm notation (especially if it's there before the students arrive, and they haven't had a chance to hear the marker against the board), students can't help but touch it and try to solve it. I'm surprised by how many songs the students remember from previous years, and want to check against the notation. Sometimes, in comparing previous repertoire with the current score, students will make connections that even I am unaware of. It turned out recently that “du-dudeh-du-du” was the rhythm of the opening phrases in Frog's in the Meadow, Shalom Aleichem, and Hey Tommy Turkey.

The meaning and music behind song dots brings them to life. This knowledge is why we are filled with pride when our students run up to us in the hallway with a page full of seemingly-random dots, exclaiming, “Look, I made a score for A-Hunting We Will Go!” We know the musical thought behind that page.

3 JOY

Children love song-dotting: it is academic, accessible, and musical. Being able to scribe their own song dots is particularly empowering for the children. They have created the notation, and they recognize that this is directly related to how formal music notation actually looks. You can hear the joy and the concentration in students' singing as they read song dots. And reading their own notation is a fun way to check and edit their work.

There's something irresistible about a marker, a song, and a canvas. I've encountered students song dotting at unexpected times. Sometimes, while I'm introducing a song at the beginning of a lesson, one sneaky student will pick up the marker behind me and start dotting the song on the board.

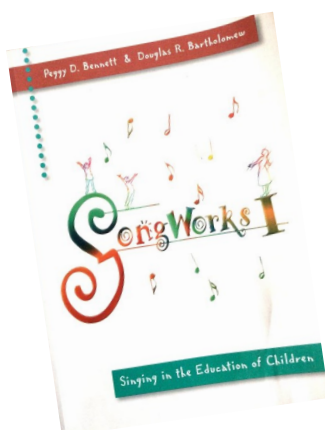
I've seen plenty of students finish mapping a song, only to turn to the backs of their papers and start dotting it. During my beginning band sectionals, students dot their repertoire and add pitch names on the whiteboard to help teach each other to play.

Song dotting is a key part of my music curriculum. It is a straightforward way to represent and study rhythm. The meaning behind the dots compels us to decode them. Working with song dots is fun—we never lose the music! And the value of song dots is easy for other educators to recognize. There are so many ways to work with songs dots. If you are ever in need of song dotting inspiration, you can always ping our vibrant community on Facebook, call up a fellow SongWorks educator, or refer to your *SongWorks I & II* textbooks.

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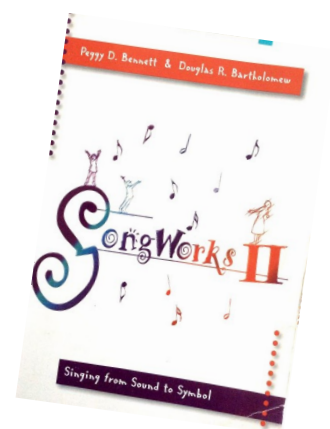
SongWorks

by Peggy D. Bennett and Douglas R. Bartholomew



Available at

songworkspress@gmail.com



[“The Magic of Notating with Song Dots” by Danielle Solan](#)

One of the best-kept secrets in music education is song dotting—a powerful strategy for teaching music notation. While conventional notation can overwhelm children with symbols and terminology, song dotting is immediately accessible and flows from our natural response to rhythm. It works like magic.

Song dotting is simultaneously making and notating music. While singing a song or listening to music, students read or write one dot for each syllable.

Song dotting is powered by listening. It teaches students to listen and respond to aural details. It can facilitate an evolution from sound to meaningful conventional notation. It is the act of singing a song while tapping a marker across paper leaving a rhythmic footprint of the music.

From a visual perception, the dotting process is easy to understand because it allows students to read and notate music using one basic symbol, the song dot.

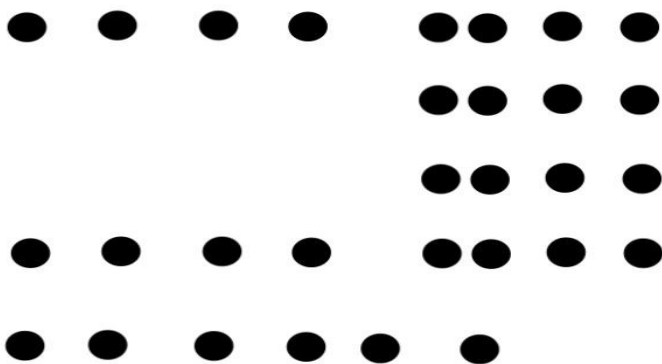
As listening skills deepen, students may learn how to embellish dots by adding rhythmic markings like stems and flags, or pitch information. Discovering how to read a song dot score can feel like solving a puzzle.

SONG DOTTING WITH MY STUDENTS

When I challenge my second grade students with a first dot score reading, they figure out how to read the notation from start to end during the song. This sampling deals with the song “The Muffin Man.”

Post the following song dot score.

Mystery Song:



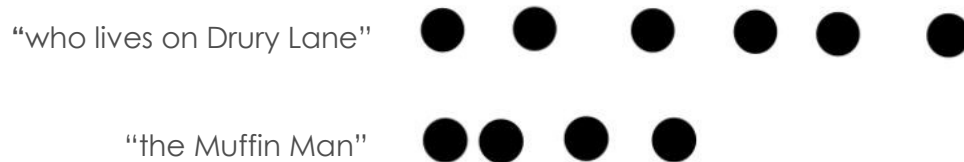
Detective Work:

1. Sing the song “The Muffin Man.”
2. Follow the dots with your finger as you sing “The Muffin Man.”
3. Do the same with the chorus of “A Rig a Jig Jig.”
4. Which song is a better fit for the score? Answer: “The Muffin Man”
5. How are these two songs similar and different?
5. How would you change the score to make it fit “A Rig a Jig Jig”?

Song dotting
is simultaneously
making
and notating
music.

HIGHLIGHTING MEMORABLE CLUSTERS

As absorbing as it can be to read or create song dots for a whole song, it also serves a strategic purpose to focus on a specific cluster of the song such as “who lives on Drury Lane,” or “the Muffin Man.”



Highlighting parts of the music to be studied by providing playful and repetitive opportunities to listen and respond fosters embodiment (place into the body) of rhythmic and/or pitched content of the music. This is a vital step to preparing students to create their own song dots.

Using “the Muffin Man” as the chunk for study, tell students to touch their thumbs together or clap as “the Muffin Man” pops up in the song. Another challenge may be to “mute” the whole song and sing only the selected phrases out loud. When these experiences integrate student ideas, the students are more likely to invest in the learning.

FOLLOWING & CREATING DOTS

Students may be presented with dots for the highlighted cluster. While the whole song is sung, students hone listening skills by anticipating the phrase, then following and touching it with precision.

In another literacy study experience, that cluster of dots may be provided within the visual context of the whole song (perhaps all song dots, or a line map, or ideograph score).

Students may dot a whole song (or be provided a song dot score), and be asked to identify a specific chunk by underlining or drawing a box around the chunk, e.g. “the Muffin Man.”



EVOLVING Dots to Conventional Notation

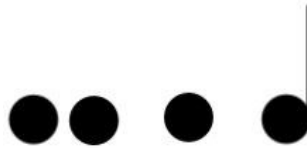
Once students can “read” or “create” their own song dot scores, I explain that adult music scores are dots “all dressed up.”

After dotting or following a highlighted cluster or chunk, the fundamental skill of listening is further explored. I encourage students to “notice where your finger speeds up or slows down or ‘sticks’ to a dot.”

“Your goal is to identify the slowest word or syllable in this part of the song.”



We listen, discuss, and identify “man” as the slowest sound and that it is the third note in cluster in the score. “Let’s add a stem with no flags to indicate this word is slower than the others. This is called a quarter note.”



We add a stem and a flag to make them eighth notes. Depending on your goal and context, you may feel comfortable doing the same process to discover and notate the sixteenth note anacrusis.



We always check our work by singing and re-reading the notated phrase. We’ll read using the song’s text, chinning, and singing on rhythmic syllables.

WHAT’S THE GOAL?

Evolving dots to conventional notation using a cluster of a song—such as the cadence or a repetitive rhythmic chunk—is a worthy challenge. It certainly seems most appropriate as a first step, before converting an entire song dot score into traditional notation, if that is your end goal. An example I use with 2nd grade follows.

Final Assessment – the Muffin Man

Name: Danielle

- 1) Make song dots for the song, “The Muffin Man.”
- 2) Find and underline all instances of the chunk “the Muffin Man.”
- 3) Notate the rhythm onto the song dot score for all occurrences of this chunk.



*Assessment Tip: depending on the skill you are assessing, consider starting students with a “template” (where you have already provided the song dots).

Here is an example of a template for the song Hot Cross Buns.



In addition to formal assessments, such as described above, a rewarding closure to a dotting activity is re-reading and self-assessment. After many song dot scores have been created, I might ask students to find their “best attempt” and draw a box around it. Students sing and read their own dot scores, then swap papers to read their friends’ music writing, and then give each other feedback.

Often, during dotting activities, students become independent in their literacy tasks, and you have time for personal interactions with individual students. I value this time to circulate and observe students at work. Watching a student song dot, or study their work product, is one way I assess student aural and kinesthetic responses to music.

During this time, I can differentiate instruction and challenge students to higher-level-listening and literacy tasks on their dot scores, and/or coach students who need extra support with the task of creating song dots.

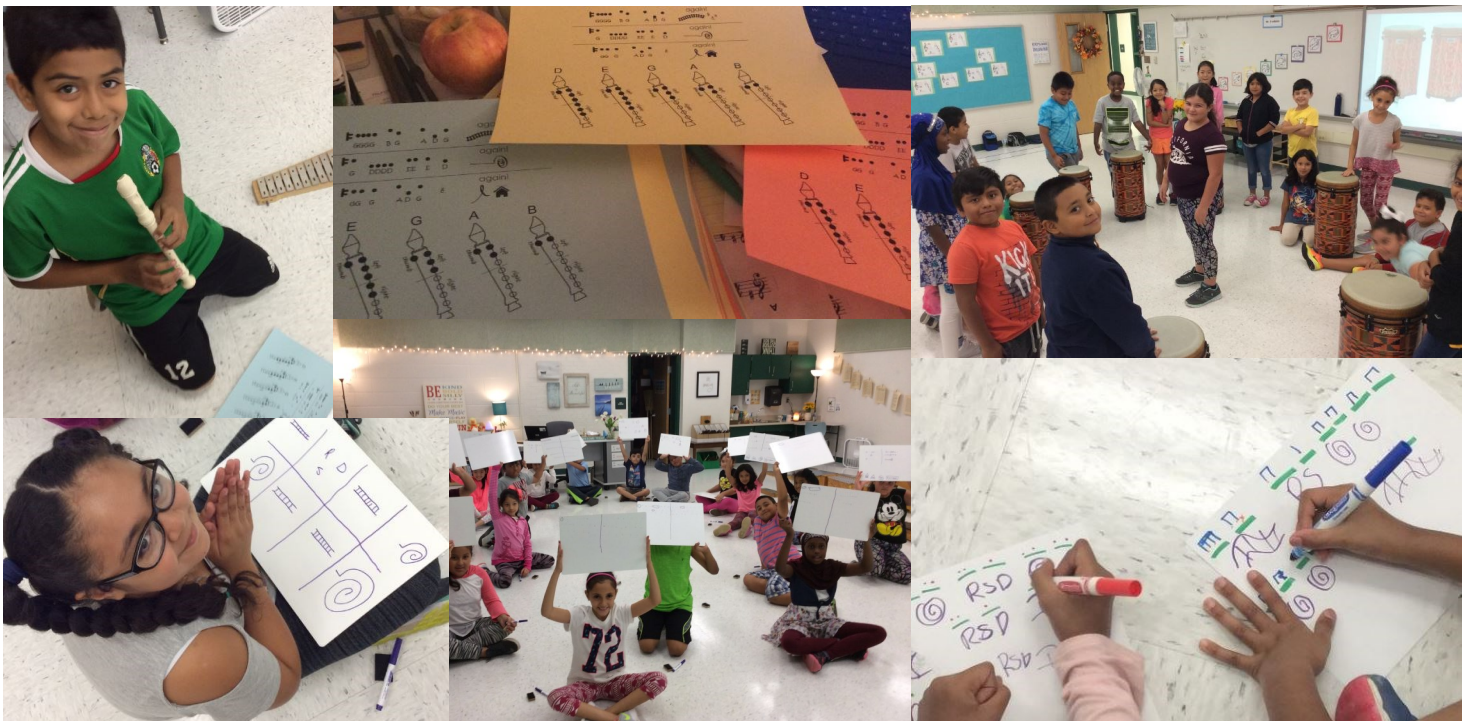
CONCLUSION

There’s a big wide world of music out there. I encourage you to enjoy the variety and try song dotting for any song you and your students enjoy singing. By doing so, your students will start the journey of becoming life-long music lovers who listen thoughtfully to music they care about.

Once, after reading a song dot score with a preschool class, one student said: “Ooh, that’s magic!” When I asked what he meant by that, the boy explained that he could hear music when he touched the dots: “I mean, when you tap, it makes a sound. Tap, music. And then another tap, there’s another kind of music. Tap, tap, tap. Music.”

Jake Harkins’ fourth graders created and studied song dot scores in balanced form for “Goin’ Down the Railroad.” They later added solfege to the dots and played the melody on recorder. During a different week, they created pictograph score arrangements of clusters, added the associated song dots (and rhythmic information), and shared their compositions in a drum circle.

Try song
dotting for any
song you and
your students
enjoy singing



“Difficulty Dotting: Choices I Make to Support my Context” by Jake Harkins

Ask a Kindergarten teacher, and they are likely to tell you that one-to-one correspondence can be a challenge—visually, aurally, and kinesthetically—for many young children. From counting to reading, tracking individual parts of a larger whole is a skill that requires intentional scaffolding, playful repetition, and consistent practice across the curriculum.

Initial dotting activities are often confusing for my students—a largely ESL (English as a Second Language) population. The English language itself is not innate or internalized in most young students, and many older students experience similar difficulties with syllabic perception. When creating experiences for students, I am careful to remember that reading or “following” a song dot score is a different skill and experience from writing or “creating” song dots.

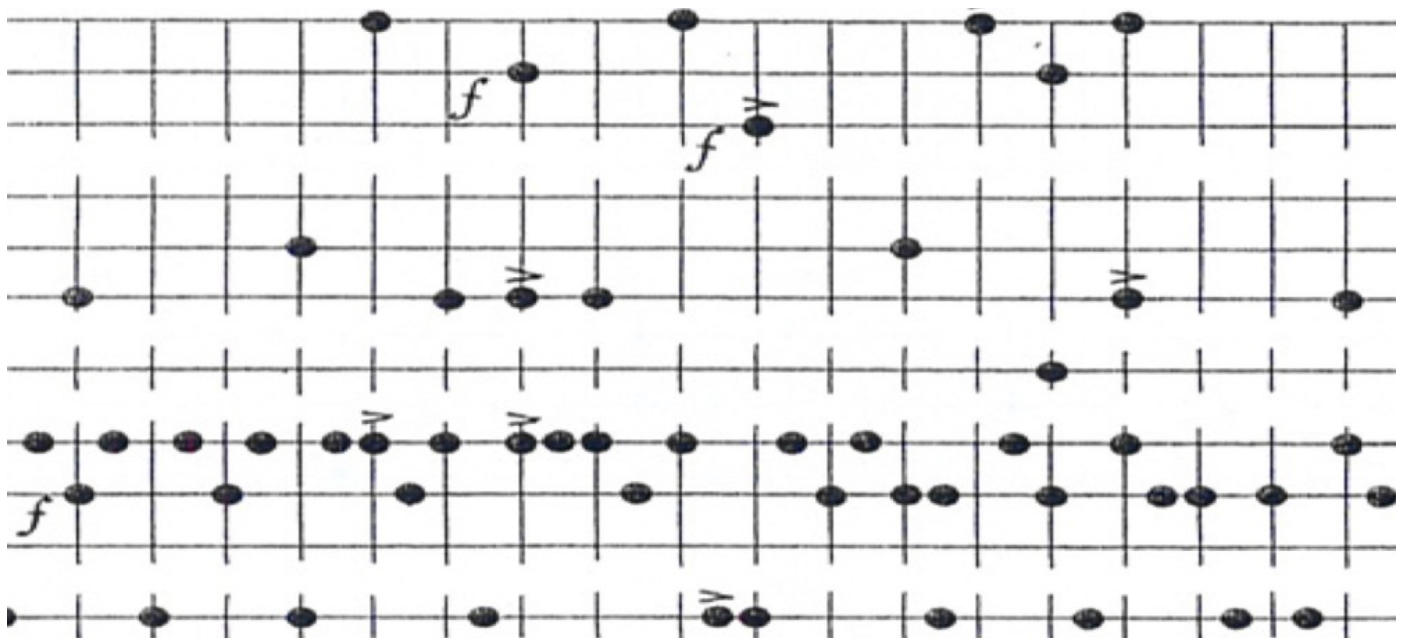
Reading or
“following”
a song dot score
is a different skill
and experience
from writing or
“creating”
song dots

DECODING DOTS: Five Thoughts

1. Before dots are presented for study, I prefer to have my students, especially younger ones, feel confident in **reading either a line map or pictograph score of a given song or cluster**.
2. In my context, I intentionally choose decoding to be students' first experiences with song dots; that is to say **reading already prepared song dot scores** before creating their own song dots. Depending on the grade level, this may be a full song (such as an entire song dot score of “Seasick Sailor” for 5th grade), or a cluster of a song (such as the cadence chunk of “Sally Go Round” for 2nd grade).
3. In first experiences with dotting, I typically select a **cluster** from the song to dot and read, not the entire song. (For my more advanced students who have been dotting for years, I can show them a full song in song dots, and they are comfortable going right into detective work.)
4. Song dot scores may lead to a variety of **higher level thinking puzzles** beyond simply touching dots while listening or singing. These tasks may include finding specific words, finding pitch or rhythm clusters, or studying melody or rhythm.
5. A song dot score should not be underestimated as **a playful experience in and of itself** while decoding a song. When students are provided with a dot score, an exponential puzzle of treasure hunts ensues: highlighting texts, rhythmic, and pitch patterns for study.

ENCODING DOTS: Five Thoughts

1. When I observe that students are consistent and comfortable with decoding song dots, I will **model encoding, or creating the dots in real time**. This may be for the same song they have been decoding, or another known song for which they have not seen song dots.
2. Whenever we create song dots together in my classroom, we do so in “real time” so as to **preserve the natural flow and musicality of the language** and corresponding melodic and rhythmic context. However, if we want to check a song dot score a student has made, we often playfully slow it down, so our eyes and fingers may touch every syllable/dot.
3. Often, **if students are newer to song dotting**, they will give one dot per word, not syllable, or per beat – for some sections or clusters of a song, and not for others. This inconsistency isn't something that bothers me. I'll often ask the class if they noticed why there are fewer dots in a line for a given phrase than we need. Students then become self-aware of this (developmental) mistake.
4. “Dotting does involve more than moving accurately to a pattern or song. It also involves **recognizing the way in which a pattern is composed of individual sounds in a series**. Students who are not accurately dotting a pattern may not be abstracting the individual sounds of the pattern.” –*SongWorks Pilot Book, p. 124*
5. Be aware of the **different experiences and challenges of “listening” for sounds when dotting**. We can hear two fingers clapping on the palm of a hand, but not one finger tapping on the nose. Likewise, we can hear a marker on a white board or paper on the floor with the cap on, but not usually with the cap off. This difference/challenge may be playful and exciting for some students, and confusing and complicated for others.



“Psappha” by Iannis Xenakis, 1976. Multi-percussion solo in which the score is dots on graph paper, with each horizontal line representing a different tambour/instrument, and each vertical line representing a common pulse.

CREATING SONG DOTS: a Playful Pathway

Once we have tapped a given cluster or song in many different playful ways—often student selected (finger on our nose, down our leg, with our elbow on the floor, etc.)—I will take a marker in my hand, and tap it on my hand. I will then do the same on the board with the cap on. While I do so, we are listening for “each and every sound” of the song.

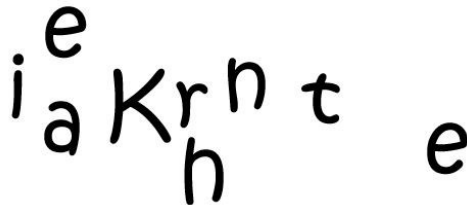
Then, with cap off, I will dot in one place. Students usually giggle or give puzzled expressions. Remember, at this point of encoding, my students have had many experiences reading dot scores, so they know something is strange.



I'll then ask a student (with a lengthy name) to spell their name, and as they spell each letter I write it as so:

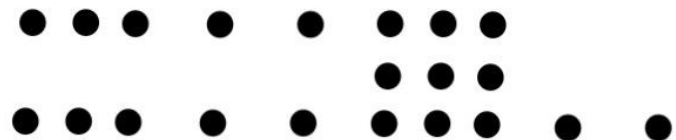


I ask students, “How can we make this easier to read?” When they say spread or space out the letters, I will do so like this and the same with the dots.

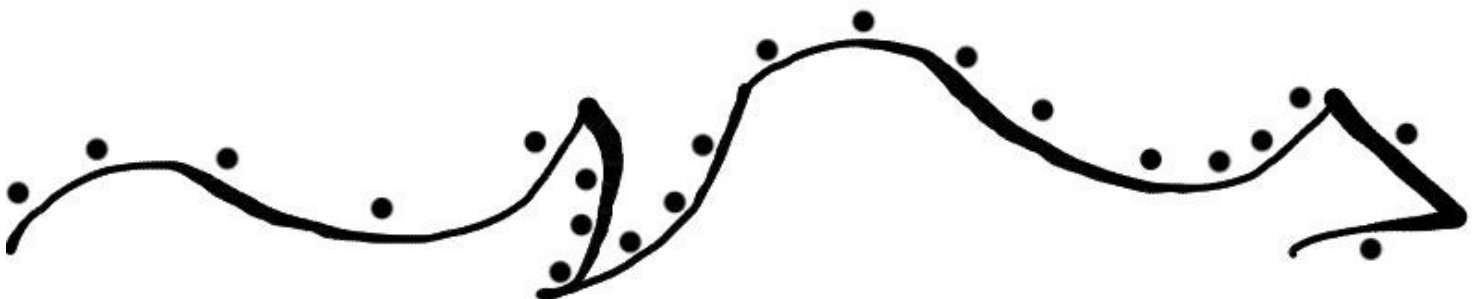


We discover that (like letters in a sequence or cluster/word) for song dots to make sense, a line, moving from left to right, works well.

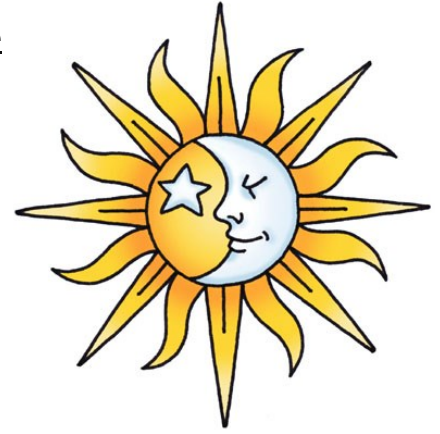
Katherine



*My more experienced dotters will create dots on line maps, which move around, forward, down, backward, etc.



SALLY GO ROUND: a 1st Grade Melodic Study of the Cadence



Day One

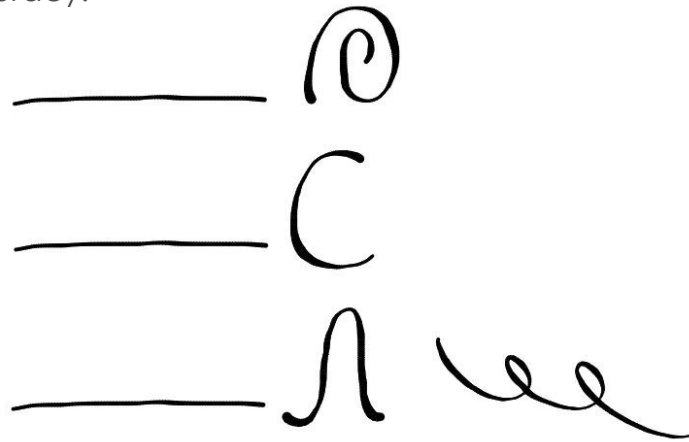
- I introduce the song through a variety of listening tasks.
- We unfold a song-game experience.

Day Two (not necessarily consecutive)

- The song is brought back as a secret song.
- The game is reviewed and played again.
- Students experience a variety of antiphonning singing experiences, with the cadence cluster always remaining isolated from the rest of the song, but intact as a whole cluster (sung by the students or the teacher).

Day Three

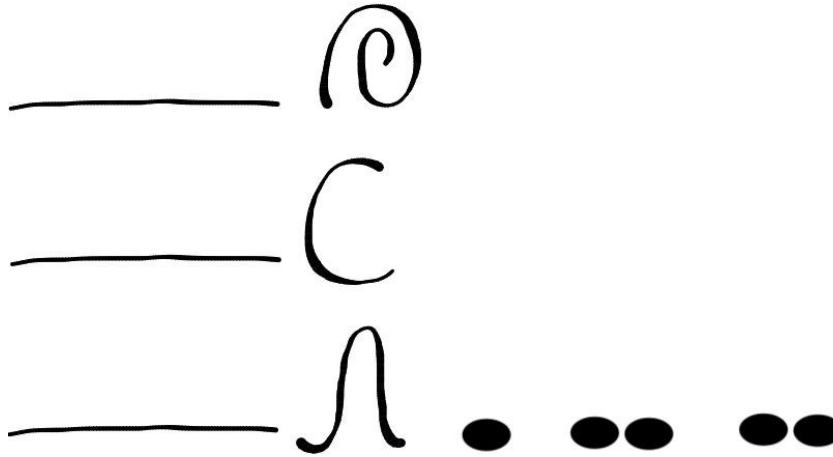
- I sing the song from the beginning while skipping, and pause my body to tap the cadence (still while singing) on my shoulders. Then I begin to skip and sing again from the beginning, finding a new place to tap, such as on a knee, during the cadence.
- I gesture to the students to rise, and join the play, finding a new place to tap each time (on a friend's shoulder, on their own elbow, on the wall, etc.)
- I show the following ideograph, and students model reading it for the class. I provide feedback on accuracy.



The following song dot cluster is shown, and students turn and talk with a partner to discuss which section of the song fits the dots (some students may say the first two, if they accidentally only give "Sally" one dot instead of two). This leads to rich discussion and awareness of syllables vs. words. This connection linking the sounds of the syllables and the appearance of the song dots is so satisfying and feels complete as it is. The specific information is meaningful and readable. Though later study may draw the ear and mind to hear and describe further specifics about pitch or rhythm, this symbol is the opener to that further understanding.



Students come to the board to test their ideas while reading the dots as the class sings. Once the dots have been identified as belonging to the cadence (yes, I use this word starting in Kindergarten), the following visual is shown, and students are given their own printed scores to touch and read while singing.



Day Four

- The above visual is displayed again, and students explain what they see and what they know/remember.
- Students are invited to join my motions, while we sing the whole song. Each time we reach the cadence, I model a variety of ways to show the melodic contour M MR R D while singing the text "every afternoon."

*Sitting criss cross, M: hands on knees, R: hands crossed on knees, D: hands on floor

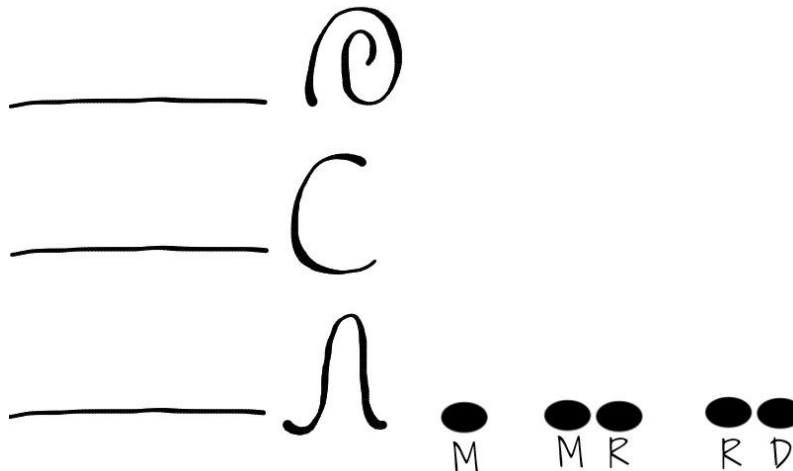
*Sitting on knees, left arm pointing up, D: right finger on left elbow, R: finger on middle of arm, M: right finger touches top of fingers on left arm

*Standing, M: hands on hips, D: touch toes, and students are asked to show R: (knees)

*Standing, M: finger on forehead, D: finger on chin, and students show R: (on nose)

- We sing from the beginning again; at the cadence I model using Curwen hand signs for Mi, Re, Do with one hand. We repeat, using the other hand on the cadence.
- Finally, I sing the solfege Mi Mi, Re Re, Do when arriving at the cadence, signing with both hands.

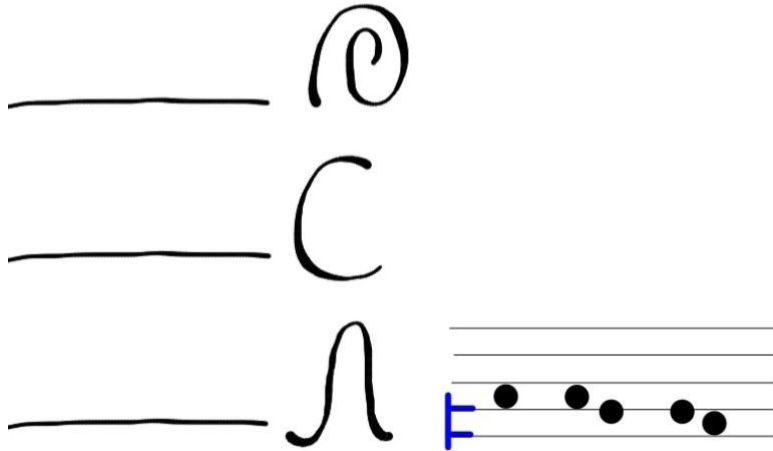
Students are invited to look at the cadence cluster again and discuss with a neighbor which dots receive which solfege (Mi, Re, Do). I've found students are most successful in first identifying the last dot as "Do." Then we label the other dots.



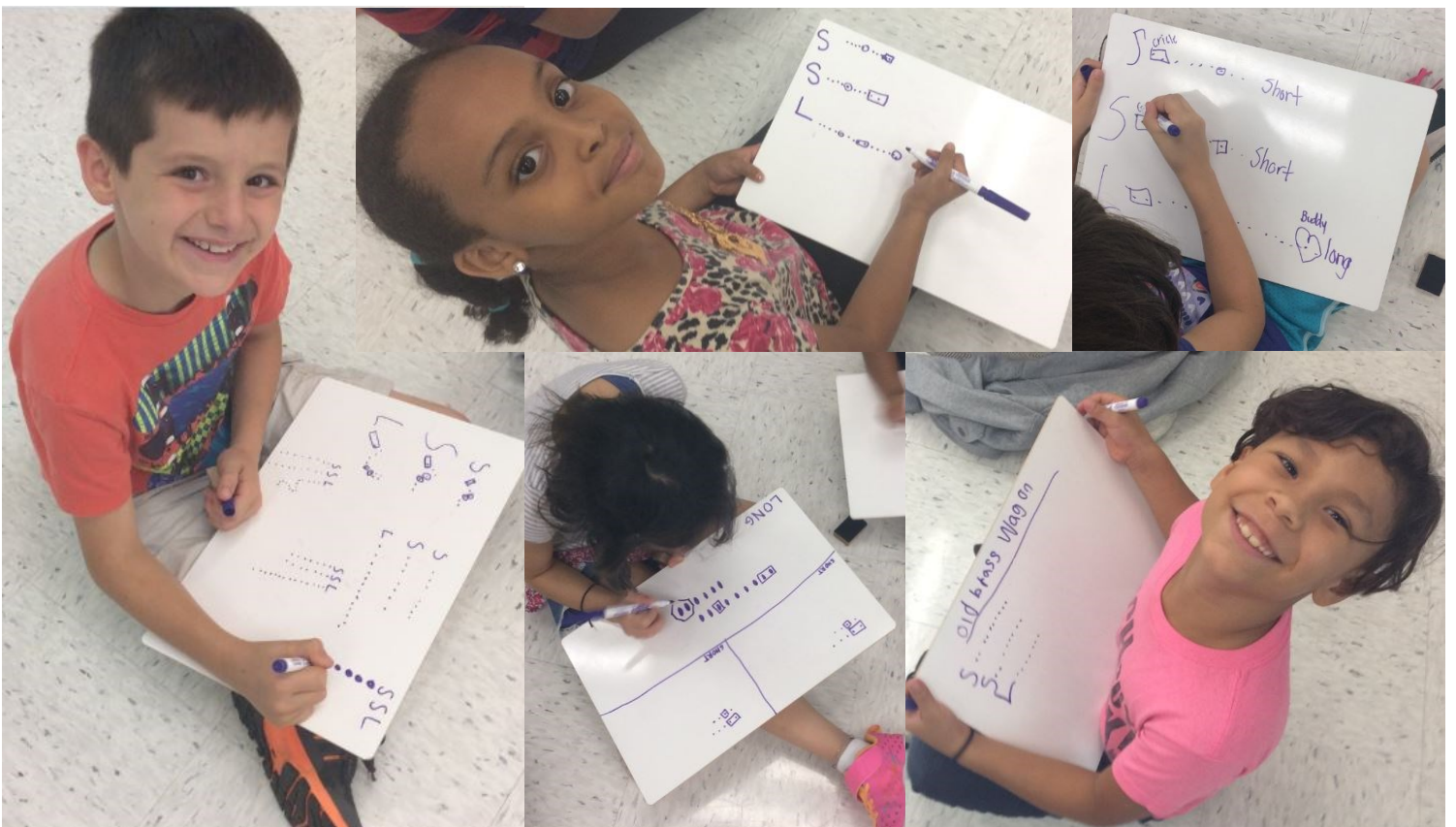
While this activity could end here, other extensions may occur. Students can:

- Make a “secret handshake” inspired by the hand signs with a partner for the cadence of the song
- Play these cadence notes on a barred instrument set up in the pentatonic mode
- Add stems and flags as a rhythmic study

I choose to have students place the dots on a “Do” staff and play these notes on the tone chimes while reading the pitches. We do not add the rhythm stems.



Jake Harkins' third graders enjoyed song dotting “Old Brass Wagon.” They previously mapped the form (short short long), and later studied the solfege, placed it on a staff, and played it on barred instruments. Zoom in to notice all the different ways these students created short short long form using their song dots!



Coda to IN PRACTICE: Song Dotting by Jake Harkins

Dotting is a valuable notation tool that students can read and scribe themselves. Depending on the presentation, context, and instructional goals, dotting may naturally evolve into a musical and meaningful understanding of traditional notation.

Prior to dotting or reading dots of an entire folksong or masterwork, students may find great comfort, confidence and success in dotting cadence chunks or re-occurring clusters/patterns of rhythm, text, or pitch. Why is dotting and studying a cadence chunks' rhythmic and/or pitched qualities so powerful? For one, we remember best what we heard last. Also, when we select a cadence chunk for study, it entails whole song repetition to reach the cadence for study. The cadence provides musical closure. Additionally, in folksong lyrics, the cadence often packs a powerful punchline.

What's
in a dot
among
other dots?

"Dotting clusters provides kinesthetic embodiment of musicality" (Bennett, 2016).

What's in a dot among other dots? The study of a single dot can include its stress, weight, dynamics, and duration **in relation to other dots**. Remember, a song dot out of the context of a cluster holds no meaning. Song dots may activate auditory, visual, and kinesthetic perceptions simultaneously. Tapping and dotting are an embodiment of sound, taking us from the phonological—general awareness that sound is occurring—to the phonemic—hearing the individual parts—and syllabic awareness of sound.

From dotting, students can begin to develop a vocabulary of meaningful symbols by transforming dots into rhythmic and pitched notation. When students discriminate dots as slower and faster from one another, their auditory perception is affirmed by adding corresponding stems and flags to those dots. Additionally, solfa study may be associated with dots, which are then placed on a traditional staff (with or without traditional rhythmic information).

The four authors in this column shared their own reflections on various song dotting practices: teacher-made dots, student-made dots, procedures for song dotting, following and creating dots, and extension activities. Remember to consider your own context as you plan playful experiences for

- **Introducing** song dots as a visual representation of sounds
- **Following** teacher-created and modeled dot scores
- **Creating** song dots in real time by the teacher and/or student
- **Exploring** song dot scores by finding texts, and/or clusters of previously highlighted pitched or rhythmic content by identifying corresponding dots
- **Evolving** song dots visual content to exist with meaning among traditional notation by connecting aural and visual perceptions (identifying/discriminating qualities of sound (i.e. faster/slower, higher/lower) within a context)

CHECK BACK in the next Newsletter for IN PRACTICE's final publication: Blended Notation.

DECODE THESE DOTS: March

At first glance, the A and B sections of this song appear in perfect echo form. However, careful attention to each syllable sung and dotted, and clusters of language, show that the A section has an extra dot the last time the echo chunk appears due to an extra syllable, and the B section has an extra dot the first and last times the echo chunk appears (due to an anacrusis).



Check back next Newsletter for the answer!

Want to submit a "mystery map" or "ponder this pictograph" or "decode these dots" from one of your favorite songs/masterworks? Don't be shy! Submit maps or ideographs or song dot scores for consideration to jeharkins@fcps.edu



2018 MN Workshops

March 10

Music Literacy Pathways

May 5

Standards in Action:
Vibrant Planning Based on the Standards

9:30-11:30 A.M.

St. Catherine University
Music Building, Room 202
2004 Randolph Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105

R.S.V.P. to Molly Feigal at:
feigalmj@hotmail.com

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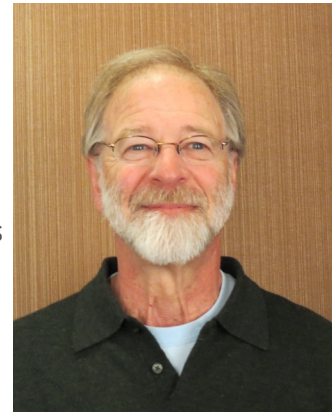
**Sound to Symbol  
approach  
involving the  
whole person**

## Do We Think of Dots as Notes?

### Doug Bartholomew

Song dotting is a kind of magic. When we can tap a rhythm accurately, we can use a marker to dot it. Dotting lets us transfer our kinesthetic experience of a musical phrase or rhythmic pattern onto paper, leaving a visual residue of that rhythmic action. It's a notation that captures how many "notes" are in a song or pattern and presents them as dots. It makes visual our own aural experience of the rhythm.

Dotting seems to make the transition to more conventional notation almost immediate. The dots can be made into noteheads with ease. They can sprout stems (up or down), flags then hook onto the stems, flags can turn into beams, and so on. One would think that dots are the Rosetta Stone of the sound to symbol transition. This might not be the whole story.



**Doug Bartholomew**  
Bozeman, MT

Unlike maps and ideographs, which focus on the musical units we hear, dotting focuses on individual things. Is this a problem? Maybe not, but if we want to put listening first, using what and how we hear as the basis for our transition to conventional notation, we should be mindful of this difference between notes and musical units as we proceed.

This might  
not be the  
whole story

Thinking of dots simply as notes may let notational conventions (beams, measures, and so on) affect how we treat the dots. We might take a "point at every dot" perspective of reading, rather than thinking of groups of dots as "musical words," as in the groups of dots that represent "the mulberry bush." We might tend to group dots into their "beamed" or "measured" groups rather than letting the sound of the music group the dots. And in the obvious (to us) sequence of "dot, stem, flag, beam" we might forget that the dots also represent the tonal "notes."

Dotting is not just a way to get to conventional notation. It is also a way to see how music could be notated, like maps and ideographs. Dots give us a way to analyze a song, finding interesting elements, like special words or repeated patterns (pitch or rhythm), to show how "notes" can look on a staff, as well as just to show how the rhythm of a pattern, like "the mulberry bush," can be notated. Dotting can be used as a way to develop the kind of precise listening skills that make further discoveries possible.

We don't hear music only "note by note," and we don't want to perform it in a "note by note" way. To that extent we probably shouldn't treat dots as "just" notes. Dotting is a way of linking the tonal and rhythmic patterns we hear (and feel) to tonal and rhythmic notation.

---

**Douglas Bartholomew** taught music education and theory courses at Montana State University and at the University of Windsor, Ontario, and taught middle school music in Omaha, Nebraska and Muncie, Indiana. He is co-author (with Dr. Peggy D Bennett) of *SongWorks 1: Singing in the Education of Children* and *SongWorks 2: Singing From Sound to Symbol*.

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### LEVEL I

#### SongWorks in Action

A "hands on" approach to teaching music to children

### LEVEL II

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SongWorks Certification faculty

Peggy Bennett, Anna Langness,  
Terolle Turnham and Marilyn Winter

with spotlight lessons by  
SongWorks Certified Interns

SongWorks Certification registration form and brochure are on the SWEA website.

Want a financial incentive to attend the course? If your invitation to a colleague new to SongWorks results in their enrollment in the course, you get a reduction in your tuition fee. Sound like a good idea? It is!



New earlier **DATES:**

**July 9-13, 2018**

New **LOCATION**

**University of WI at River Falls**

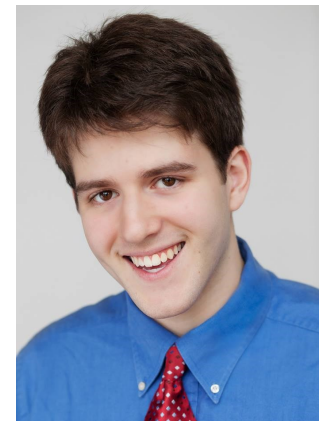
- Classes will be in Ann Lydecker Living Learning Center.
- Housing will be in The Ames Suites within the Living Learning Center.
- Meals will be on campus in the Riverside Commons.

Contact:

Terolle Turnham, Executive Director

[terolleturnham@icloud.com](mailto:terolleturnham@icloud.com)

Following SongWorks in Action this past summer, I volunteered at Anwaj Choir's music camp outside Bethlehem following my tour of Israel and Palestine with Voices 21C. I was nervous about my teaching—most of the kids didn't speak much English, and it's intimidating enough to walk into a teaching situation with a group of students you've never met! After one particularly rough session, I decided to shift gears entirely and try out some SongWorks games I'd learned at the certification course in July. They went so well! We did "Come and Follow Me," "High Stepping Horses," and "Shoo Fly" (not from the conference, but from my memory banks). I was able to teach with very little spoken language, and the kids had a lot of fun leading games and taking turns. Thanks, SongWorks!



**Chad Putka**  
Providence, RI

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is to search for and practice ways of making music and interacting with people that preserve and celebrate the dignity of both. As a guiding principle, this purpose will focus our work on:

1. Practices that foster interactive, facilitative learning environments.
2. Strategies that empower the learner within the context of music experience and study.
3. Networks that encourage collaboration between diverse disciplines, professionals, and interest groups.

Any Member of SWEA can receive a copy of the SWEA Policies and Procedures Manual and By-Laws by contacting Past-President Ruthanne Parker at [ruthanne.fisher@gmail.com](mailto:ruthanne.fisher@gmail.com)

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