

ABSTRACT

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COMPOSING IN A SECOND GRADE MUSIC CLASS: CROSSING A WATERSHED AS CHILDREN BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND SONG AS STRUCTURE

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Many children have little opportunity in school settings to develop their natural propensity to create music. The purpose of this collective case study was to describe and interpret the experiences of seven-year-old children as they composed and shared songs in a second grade music class during sixteen class sessions over an eleven-week period. The primary research questions were: What processes do children use to compose songs and what is the nature of the songs that the children compose? How do interactions with others in the classroom influence children's song compositions? In what ways do the children's songs and the processes used to produce them indicate development in musical thinking?

Twenty-three boys and girls participated as class members of the case study. Three children were selected as focus case study participants and their voices were individually recorded as they composed. Children completed three composition projects: a whole class song, a small group song, and a song created individually or with a partner. Data collected included video tapes of class sessions, recordings of songs in progress and final performances, picture song books made by the children,

individual recordings by three case study children, and interviews of three case study children, their parents, and their classroom teacher. Findings included support for theories that children around the age of seven have reached a watershed of cognitive thinking ability enabling them to construct, remember, and perform composed songs that resemble the vernacular. Children's songs and processes were indicative of a path of development of musical thinking. Some children worked alone or together to produce stylistic and melodic variations and to modify their songs, incorporating tonal and rhythmic structures that made their songs memorable. Leadership, control issues, gender bias, confusion between speaking and singing voices, and reading fluency problems affected composing processes and content of the songs. A major aspect of the teacher role was to bring awareness of musical structures to children. Future research possibilities include the importance of singing as a tool in instrumental composition, memory for composed songs, and the connection between musical aptitude and ability to compose songs.

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WATERSHED AS CHILDREN BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND SONG AS
STRUCTURE

By

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Prelude

How I Became Interested in Studying Children Composing Songs

I have been engaged in musical processes since I was a child within the family culture. My mother taught me how to sing and how to harmonize by ear. She took me to adult choir practice and pointed to the alto part as she sang, encouraging me to sing along. She enrolled me in piano lessons and church choir, and taught me dozens of songs. She bought me a guitar when I was sixteen, which I taught myself to play. Our family created and performed musical puppet shows together using hand puppets that my mother made, so we were often engaged in the creative process. When in high school I assisted with children's choirs in my church. It was a natural transition for me to enter the field of music education.

I have taught general music for more than twenty seven years. Throughout those years, I have engaged students in my classroom in various ways to create music for classroom instruments such as recorder, bells, and various percussion instruments. In the early 1990s I added song construction with fourth and fifth graders, following suggestions I found in Jackie Wiggins' book, *Composition in the Classroom: A Tool for Teaching* (1990). Frequently, these songs were constructed as a group effort. A few years later I learned about a model of spontaneous singing developed by John Feierabend, which he labels the *arioso*.

In this model, the teacher or child invents the song as he or she sings. I have modeled spontaneous song construction and have provided time in class for children to share their spontaneous songs, mostly with kindergarten and first grade children.

Young children generally like to engage in making up songs spontaneously. When they know there will be class time in which individuals may share spontaneous songs, some children worked on ideas ahead of time, outside of class, writing down text or drawing pictures about which they intend to sing. I have provided music exploration centers in my classroom, and one of the most popular centers is the “singing picture” center. The center contains blank paper, crayons, colored pencils and baskets of wooden shapes for tracing. Children draw a picture, and then sing about it for the class. The class listens politely and applauds each child who sings. Most children generate narratives about their pictures.

I also engage first and second graders in spontaneously singing given phrases that are excerpts from public domain poetry. Two phrases from a poem, sung by a child and a partner, constitute spontaneous question/answer constructions. When I discovered the children’s enthusiasm and competence for this activity, I began modeling the composition of songs with first and second graders in which I use my own poems as the lyrics. I compose these songs in the presence of the children in various song forms that can be found in many of the songs we learn to sing together, such as echo, verse/refrain, cumulative, numerical sequence and simple four-phrase songs. Children want to help with these songs, and consequently, the songs are frequently group constructions.

Several years before this study I began to incorporate small group song composing activities in my second grade classes, using four-phrase poems. Children in pairs or groups of three practiced until they could sing their phrases together consistently. They also made a small picture song book illustrating the text. The

children shared their songs and books with each other in class. I worked out accompaniments for their songs on the guitar, finding that most of the children's songs were intuitively structured with a simple, implied harmony. I made tape recordings of the groups singing their songs and notated their songs, pasting a copy of the notation on the back cover of their picture song books.

I believe that if I model how to compose songs, and we work on constructing some songs together in class, that children will know how to construct their own songs outside of class. Some children have shared songs with me that they composed outside of music class, but other than conversations I have had with the children about their songs, I have not had any real evidence of how these children composed songs. Questions about children composing songs led me to engage in this study.

I wondered how children decided upon words and melody. When children worked on songs at home, did parents, or anyone else living at home, know of these composing activities? Did children experiment with melody, or did a melody arrive complete? How did groups of children blend their individual ideas of melody into one melody? Was the group melody the same from one class period to the next, a few days later? How important was the performance of one's song, in what kind of setting? One time a first grade child sang "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," and insisted that she had made up the song all by herself. She was not sure why others in the class knew it as well, but she did not remember anyone teaching it to her, and it was in her head, therefore she must have made it up. I wondered at what point, in a child's cognitive development, she becomes conscious of her own composing process.

I began this journey in order to seek answers to these kinds of questions.

Dedication

To my mother, Marguerite L. Beem,
who taught me how to sing.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Most Exciting Day

“We have now composed our very own song.” I announced to the class. “Cool!” exclaimed Allen. The following Friday, during music class, Miss Dunmore’s second grade class lined up to go down the hallway to perform their song for kindergarten classes. *“This is the most exciting day of my life,”* proclaimed Allen as we filed out of the room. I asked him why. “Because I get to sing for the kindergarten teacher I had when I was in kindergarten,” he explained. The atmosphere was electric. As I glanced at the line of children who were bobbing along, smiling broadly, I was very glad the arrangements had worked out and we were being welcomed as performers in five kindergarten classrooms. It was as though we were going to perform our original song, “Apples,” in Carnegie Hall.

The children in the first kindergarten class were all sitting on a large, colorful oval rug. We filed in and surrounded the class in a circle. Jared hid behind Allen, peeking around his shoulder self-consciously. I introduced the two classes to each other and gave a brief explanation of how we made up our song. I played a short guitar introduction, and the children sang boldly, with confidence and beauty. When the song was finished, the teacher prompted the kindergartners to applaud. She exclaimed what a wonderful song it was. She was particularly surprised and pleased when Allen and Jared presented her with a picture songbook and tape. I explained that this was a picture song book that we had made for them, and a tape of us singing, which they could keep in their classroom.

The rest of the five performances were similar except that Allen and Jared took over the book and tape explanation without my encouragement. It happened quite naturally: They began to talk when they handed the book and tape to the teacher and I remained quiet. With each performance Jared hid himself less. By the last performance he stood in full view.

When we returned to the music classroom we had ten minutes remaining. I asked the children what it meant or how it felt to them to perform their own song today. Sarah quickly raised her hand to share. She told the class that she had announced on her bus that morning that it was her *most exciting day ever* because her class was singing their song for the kindergarten classes.

The Problem

There are many children who have little opportunity in school settings to develop their natural propensity to create music that is meaningful to them (Kennedy, 2000). Csikszentmihalyi & Custodero (2002) explain:

Young children express themselves through spontaneous melodies and rhythms; they improvise with their voices and with objects they turn into instruments. In the preschool years, children freely produce original musical material, and later, compose music from the culture. But after starting formal schooling, this creative impulse is often supplanted by a perception of music as expert performance, where the goal is to replicate rather than generate. (p. xiv)

It is important for children to have opportunities to create music as well as to perform and listen to music (Barrett, 2003). In 1994 congress passed the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* (Public Law 103-227), which mandated standards in all subject areas. In anticipation of this legislation, MENC leadership developed defining

statements of what students should know and be able to do in music. The *National Standards for Arts Education* was published in 1994. The music standards that were part of the *National Standards for Arts Education* are based on musical knowing (reading and notation, and understanding music in relation to history, culture, other arts, and other disciplines) and musical doing (create, perform, and perceive or listen). Creating is defined as one of “the fundamental music processes in which humans engage” (p. 26), the others being performing and responding to music. This definition is significant, because creating is defined as fundamental: important in its own right, not just a means for understanding music. Content standard 3 states: “Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments” (p. 27) and includes improvising short songs. Content standard 4: “Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines” (p. 27), includes composing and arranging short songs.

A few years later, another MENC initiative, *Vision 2020*, also declared the importance of composition in the schools (MENC, 2000). *Vision 2020* was a project spearheaded by a group of music education visionaries who met in Tallahassee in the fall of 1999. This group produced a document called the *Housewright Declaration* (2000), which included the statement, “Music making is an essential way in which to understand music and music traditions. Music making should be broadly interpreted to be performing, composing, improvising, listening, and interpreting music notation” (Madsen, 2000, p.220). The declaration was presented to music educators at the MENC National Conference in Washington, D.C. on March 8, 2000, providing a further impetus for the inclusion of composition and improvisation in the schools.

Even with the National Standards and the Housewright Declaration proclaiming the importance of composition, elementary general music teachers are spending little or no time teaching composition skills to their students (Orman, 2002; Strand, 2006; Rathmell, 2007). What is the reason for this omission? Abril & Gault (2006) reported that principals in Colorado valued listening skills the most and creating music the least. They reasoned that school principals may not realize that creating and composing music as a learning outcome could support a highly favored general educational goal, developing creativity. Some music teachers themselves do not consider composition a valuable activity in relation to other activities and often use composition as a means for the accomplishment of other learning objectives (Strand, 2006). Strand suggested that “a solution to this problem may be to provide preservice and inservice teachers with more training in composition pedagogy informed by research” (p. 165).

Teacher training may be a dominant factor. Glover (2000) claims that in the UK music teachers are trained as performers who see composition as a musical activity reserved for talented people. They are less likely to engage their students in composing than classroom teachers, who are accustomed to guiding their students through the creative process in other subject areas. The lack of composing experience among music teachers was identified in the United States in the late 1960s by evaluators of the Manhattanville Music Curriculum Program. Teachers were not themselves creators of music, and therefore felt insecure leading activities in which their students compose (Mark, 1986). According to Glover (2000), “There is surprisingly little clarity as to what children’s own music sounds like, what can be

expected of children as composers, or how composing in school might connect to the musical worlds beyond” (p. 2). Therefore, teachers need to know what to expect in terms of children’s capacity and interest in composing.

Music educators also need skills in planning lessons that involve composition (Hanley, 2002, p. 138). The organization requirements of composing activities can discourage music educators from engaging their students in composing on a regular basis. In particular, music teachers lack models of classroom composition pedagogy. “Although there is a growing body of research on different aspects of children’s musical and compositional development and processes, little sense of this has filtered through to curriculum approaches, particularly for younger pupils” (Glover, 2000, p. 3). Hickey (2003) argued that “the research community needs to provide music teachers with manageable pedagogical strategies for music composition” (p. 49). With appropriate pedagogical strategies, teachers can help children continue to develop the improvisational skill that seems to begin naturally in early childhood.

According to Glover (2000):

With encouragement this propensity for music-making works its way through into pre-composition and early composing work, as an emergent ability much akin to the acquisition and development of language. All children begin on this path and there is good reason to think that all will continue if the environment and climate are conducive to sustaining it. (p. 19)

Song composition, in particular, is one way for young children to create music that is meaningful to them. The dictionary definition of song is: (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*, 2002): “a metrical composition adapted for singing, esp. one in rime and having a regular verse-form.” Glover (2000) recognizes two currently used meanings for the term, “song:”

that of making a song in the standard, vocal sense
 that of making an instrumental piece, called a ‘song’ in a usage also
 found on drum machines and some composing software. (p. 29)

For the purpose of this study, ‘song’ refers to a piece that is constructed by and for the singing voice.

Why Songs Rather Than Instrumental Pieces?

I chose to study the activities of children composing songs rather than instrumental pieces because songs are prevalent in a young child’s world (Barrett, 1999; Elmer, 2000). A child’s world is filled with songs from the time he is born. Children experience lullabies, play songs, chants, and songs they hear on the radio, television and recordings. Campbell (1998) studied children “musicking” between the ages of four and twelve. According to Campbell, children make up their own vocal music. “Their self-initiated music is characteristically vocal rather than instrumental, so that along with the rhythms they produce in their bodies, song is more precisely the point of much of their own musicking” (pp. 190-91). Young children invent spontaneous songs as an integrated component in their imaginary play. “Song and story are fundamental and familiar forms of language use. For children, hearing these and making their own are easily related activities” (Glover, 2000, p. 63).

Singing is a portable way to express musical meaning. It requires no instruments other than the one with which we were born. A child can sing his or her song anywhere. It does not require mallet skills, finger dexterity, or the ownership of an instrument. In a world of technology, singing provides a non-technological and important way to express music (Jorgensen, 1997, p. 86). Singing provides a vehicle of personal expression for children through which they can convey meaning

(Campbell, 1998). According to Campbell, children convey meaning in their songs, not only through the melody and words, but also through the manner in which they sing. “Singing is intimate musicking, as the voice is the sound from within, the human source of musical sound” (p. 188). According to Sloboda (1985):

In particular, it is the *voice* and the human body in rhythmic movement which form the motivational mainspring of music. If music departs too far from this mainspring, it will cease to have deep meaning and power for us. (p. 268)

Singing is an important medium for creating, even in the midst of a technological age in which much of our music is produced on computers and synthesizers.

Songs can be the building blocks of deeper musical understanding. For example, singing songs and composing songs will help children understand more deeply about musical structures (Barrett, 2003). Merrill (2002) elaborates: “By singing, listening to singing, thinking about singing, and creating with their singing voices, children become intelligent music makers” (p. 37). By the end of first grade, children can construct their own songs, both individually and collectively. A song can be an important vehicle for composing in second grade (Jorgensen, 1997, p. 86; Glover, 2000, p. 63).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to describe and interpret the experiences of 7-year-old children as they composed songs and shared songs in the context of a second grade music class during sixteen class sessions over a period of eleven weeks. I focused in particular on the composing processes, the songs composed, and peer interactions of three children while composing. I also considered development as it

relates to musical thinking and children's abilities to compose. Studies of children composing and sharing songs in music class settings inform music educators who are interested in gaining further understanding of the complexity of children composing in a natural setting. This complexity includes aspects of composing such as generation of musical structures, the influence of social interactions, the role of memory in the composing process, emerging awareness of process and product and the watershed development of cognitive processing that takes place around the age of seven.

Research Questions

This study focused on children composing songs in a second grade music class. The primary research questions were:

1. What processes do children use to compose songs and what is the nature of the songs that the children compose?
2. How do interactions with others in the classroom influence children's song compositions?
3. In what ways do the children's songs and the processes used to produce them indicate development in musical thinking?

Research Setting and Overview of the Methodology of the Study

In order to address these questions, I designed a case study of three second grade students and their peers composing songs in a music class. The study took place in a primary school, grades Pre-K to 2, located in a small rural town in a middle Atlantic state. Many of the families that populate the town have ancestry dating back

to the town's founders in the mid 1700s. The town borders beautiful, forested mountains containing a large amount of park land. Sports such as hunting and fishing are still commonly practiced. The town is also bordered by farmland. Many residents are employed in a local factory, and others commute long distances to large cities to work.

Children were of mixed reading and math levels within classes in the school. At the time of the study the school had a population of 450 children. The make-up of the selected second grade class, consisting of 23 children, reflected the makeup of the general school population: The social-economic status (SES) of this public school was divided as follows: 19.5% FARM, 80.5% non-FARM, and 11% special education students. [Note: FARM is an acronym for Free and Reduced Meals.] There were no students receiving special education services in this particular class. However, seven students were labeled "targeted readers," meaning they were reading below grade level and received specialized reading instruction.

The three children chosen for the case study were selected by purposeful sampling. As first graders, they had demonstrated their enjoyment of creating music and the ability to create music through spontaneous singing and improvisation. They also had average or higher musical aptitude, and average or higher general musical abilities as determined through a variety of routine assessments.

The children were scheduled for music classes in a dedicated music room twice a week for 40 minutes each. The research took place at the beginning of the school year, extended for eleven weeks, and included sixteen class sessions. During this period of time the children completed three composing projects.

The first project consisted of composing a song in ABA form together as a class, producing a picture song book and a recording of the song, and performing it for five different kindergarten classes. The second composing project was a small group effort. The children chose partners with whom to work. Eight groups formed. Each group chose a poem from among a collection of public domain poems made available to them. Students worked together to compose a melody for the poem. Some groups composed a contrasting “B” section, and all groups created a picture song book, recorded their song, and shared the song and book with a kindergarten class. The third and final project was a disappearing number song such as *Six Little Ducks* or *Five Green and Speckled Frogs*. For this composition the children could choose one partner or work alone. Half of the class chose to work alone, although children worked alongside of each other and could consult with each other. The children chose their own subjects, wrote the lyrics with guidance, created picture song books, recorded themselves singing their songs, and shared their songs and books with small groups of kindergartners who rotated from composer to composer in their classroom.

Sources of Data

The three children selected for the case study wore individual microphones and tape recorders for the purpose of audio-taping their processes and interactions while they were composing. I collected 33 audio tapes from these three children, as well as worksheets and picture song books, which I copied so that I could return the books to the children. I interviewed the three students, their parents, and their classroom teacher.

I collected data from the entire class as well, not only as context for the three case studies, but in order to include important data that emerged from class composition experiences. A volunteer video-taped the sixteen class sessions. Audio tape recordings that all of the children made in class in the recording studio, which was set up in a supply closet, provided additional data. A digital recorder that I kept with me at all times provided instant feedback to children as they worked. With this digital recorder I recorded a number of songs in progress of various children in the class. Worksheets completed by the children became an important record of the processes of children. In order to define my own experience with song composition in a second grade classroom, and to reflect daily on experiences of the children, I kept a journal.

I transcribed the class video tapes, the three selected children's audio tapes, and the interviews. I notated all of the children's songs from audio tapes and digital recorder. A peer who was a music teacher and professional musician checked the song notations against the recordings for accuracy. We then discussed her findings, listening to songs together to insure accuracy.

I used coding procedures (open, and axial) to label the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and organized the data in my computer using *Ethnograph* v5.0 (Seidel, 1998) software. I used open coding to begin to analyze product, process, interaction and development. Axial coding procedures led to deeper issues such as memory, structure, and specific social issues. I set up a framework based on themes that emerged. This framework became the basis of my interpretation of the data.

The exact meanings of the terms, *improvising*, and *composing*, are often debated. I hereby define them for the purpose of this study.

Definitions

Improvising

Improvising is simply spontaneous exploration that takes place within a musical context – a tonal or rhythmic context, or a harmonic context (Martin, 2002). An improvisation may be the end result, a performance in the moment without an opportunity to edit and revise. It may also be a process through which a composer finds musical ideas, a source of inspiration. Sometimes the difference between improvisation and composition is indistinguishable (Burnard, 2000). For example, Improvisations can be well-planned and there can be improvisational moments within a composition.

Composing

Oxford English Dictionary Online (2002) defines composing as follows: “To put together, make up. To construct artistically. To make by putting together parts or elements; to make up, form, frame, fashion, construct, produce. In music, compose means to invent and put into proper form” (1989). Carlin (1998) defines it: Composing is a generative gesture, plus revision, in an expressive medium. It is not just a first response (e.g., improvisation), but an ongoing, intertwining [interweaving] combination of exploration, editing and polishing. (p. 40)

A composer has the opportunity to revise. The performance takes place after the composition has been created, not during the creation.

Folkestad identified the difference between improvisation and composition in terms of the performer: Improvisation is “instant composition performed by its creator.” A composition is “a product which can be separated from its creator and performed without the presence of its composer” (Nilsson & Folkestad, 2005, p. 23).

Oral Composition

If some variation takes place during performance of a song, is the song still a composition? Variation was a characteristic of the oral tradition in ages past. Sloboda (1985) discussed characteristics of oral music. Without notation or recording devices, it was not possible to check one person’s version of a song against another’s. “Although a basic pattern or kernel may be retained, successive performances demonstrate significant differences of detail and elaboration” (p.245). Also, oral music is dependent upon context. “Oral music cannot be detached from its context ... and a degree of its ‘meaning’ is supplied by the context” (p. 247). Does the oral composer intend exact notes? “The oral musician is less likely to have turned every element over in his mind, searching for the *exact* notes to capture his exact meaning” (p. 247). For the purpose of this study, some variation is an acceptable part of the oral tradition of composed songs.

Researchers have studied the processes and products (instrumental pieces or songs) of student composers, developmental stages in musical thinking, and the influence of the interactions of peers and teachers on composition process and product. In the next chapter I will discuss findings on these aspects of composing.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

In this chapter I will present an overview of the literature that relates to creative thinking in music, including definitions of various forms of the term, *create*. I will then discuss the creative experience of composition in terms of process. This section begins with a definition of the creative process in general terms followed by a description of the creative processes of several composers, a discussion of children's processes as composers, sources of musical ideas, and the role of memory in the creative process.

The next section in this chapter focuses on another aspect of process and product: development. It is not certain how children's musical processes and products vary according to age and stage, but there are some theories about development of musical cognition as it relates to composing. I will discuss these theories as they apply in particular to seven-year-olds composing songs. The final section will examine social conditions that impact composing in a classroom setting, including peer interaction, and the teacher's role.

Creative Thinking in Music

In music education research, *creating* most often refers to activities such as composing and improvising. For some researchers acts of listening and analysis are also acts of creating (Webster, 2002). Elliott's (1995) definition of *creating* is as follows: "Creating is a particular kind of making or doing that results in tangible

products or achievements that people deem valuable, useful, or exceptional in some regard” (p. 216). To call a product *creative*, according to Elliott, means to apply a value judgment to that product. The term, *creative*, when used to describe a work, is a “congratulatory term that singles out a concrete accomplishment that knowledgeable people judge to be especially important in relation to a specific context of doing and making” (Elliott, 1995, p. 216). Hickey (2002) wrote a comprehensive summary of creativity research in the arts, anchored on a definition of *creative* by Mayer (1999): “A creative product is one that is both novel (to its creator) and is ‘appropriate’ or ‘valuable’ in the context of a domain, and a creative person is one who produces creative products” (in Hickey, 2002, p. 398).

Smith (2005) identified a basic problem with definitions of *creative* that mix perspectives. From the psychological perspective, creativity involves freedom of thought, novel ideas. The value or appropriateness of the product, a social consideration, does not mix with this perspective. Smith argued that the reason for adding the term, *valuable* to the description of novel was to distinguish a creative idea from a crazy idea. In order to make this distinction and be consistent with the psychological domain, Smith offered the following definition of *novelty*.

For an idea to be deemed creative, and not just deviant, it has to relate to reality, at least reality as understood by professionals in the domain at issue. Novelty can only be defined in relation to what is not novel, that is, conventional and acquiescent, in line with enlightened but traditional understanding of the matter. Craziness is divorced from any such relation. A creative idea may appear odd, impracticable and the like, but it is not without relevance. (p. 294)

Peter Webster (2002) argued that *creativity* is the basis of *creative thinking*. According to Webster (2002, p. 26), “*creativity in music* really is: the engagement of

the mind in the active, structured process of thinking in sound for the purpose of producing some product that is new for the creator.” Webster uses this definition of *creativity in music* as the basis for his definition of *creative thinking*:

Based on this working definition, I continue to believe that creative thinking is a dynamic process of alternation between convergent and divergent thinking, moving in stages over time, enabled by certain skills (both innate and learned), and by certain conditions, all resulting in a final product. (p. 26)

In this definition Webster has defined a creative process by which a product is created. Fritz (1991), a composer and teacher of the creative process, defined a creator as one who “is able to love something that does not yet exist—even in the imagination—and bring it into existence. From nothing, something is formed” (p. 16). A creative process is a method by which someone brings something such as a product or work of art into existence.

Creative Experience: Process

A General Creative Process

Can creative process be a generalized process, applicable in a variety of circumstances? Fritz (1989) identified three major stages in a general creative process: germination, assimilation and completion.

1. Germination: Conceive of the idea. Choose what you want to create. Move from a general idea to a specific vision.

2. Assimilation: The idea develops and grows. You are taking action. You hold your vision in comparison to the current state of the product. This creates a state of mind that Fritz calls “structural tension.” Fritz calls the comparison of vision to actual progress “current reality.”

3. Completion: The idea is born – comes into existence as its own entity. Finish, follow through, and learn to live with your creation. (pp. 54, 155-162)

Fritz uses this process to create musical compositions as well as other products, such as visual art, written materials, the re-structuring of a business, and planning of a new business. He teaches people worldwide how to apply this creative process to the “creating” of their own lives.

Webster used Wallas' stage theory (1926) as a foundation for the process of musical thinking in his *Model of Creative Thinking Process in Music* (2002, p. 27). Wallas' four stages were: Preparation (initial planning), incubation (subconscious imagery, informal thinking), illumination (craftsmanship, motivation toward closure), and verification (feedback sought, final drafts completed) (Webster, 1987, pp.166-167). Webster modified the titles of two of the stages. *Incubation* became *time away* and *illumination* became *working through*. This four-part creative process, with slightly different wording, lies at the heart of Webster's model: preparation (exploration, primitive gesturals and planning), time away (to be defined by Webster in the future within the context of current brain research), working through (revising, editing and forming new ideas) and verification (rehearsal and polishing). This process involves a cycle of divergent and convergent thinking, and is framed by enabling skills and enabling conditions (personal considerations, and social/cultural considerations). The process is initiated by product intention, such as “compose,” and ends with a creative product, such as “composed music.”

Fritz based his theoretical model on personal experience and the study of creators who use various modes of creating. Sloboda (1985) based his theory of

creative process on composers' own accounts. He described a four-part compositional process of which composers are conscious: a) General idea; b) Theme, brought by inspiration, which is then worked upon for transformation, extension, and development; c) Intermediate form, which is modified and transformed; and d) Final form. Next, I will briefly describe the creative processes of three composers whose processes reflect elements in the models of Webster, Sloboda and Fritz.

Composers' Creative Processes

Mozart began composing by mapping the structure of a composition, its overall form, along with its melodies and harmonic sequences. He notated the melody and bass lines, and then filled in the details (Jourdain, 1997, pp. 178-179). According to Gardner (1982), Mozart began with an overall plan, or concept of a schema that "draws upon and exploits a prior schema," mapped the details of the plan, imagined the sounds, and filled in the details (p. 362). This process is similar to Fritz's process, which begins in the germination stage with a general idea, and evolves into a specific vision. In Fritz's assimilation stage, as in Webster's "working through" stage, the composer works out the details.

Bruce Adolphe (1999) described his process in terms of two stages: the inspiration stage and the working-out stage, as Webster described it, which also resembles Fritz's assimilation stage. He described his creative process as "body loops." When he is in a body loop, he allows events, emotions or memories to suggest musical ideas, which in turn trigger other emotions or memories, which suggest

musical ideas. His musical ideas come to him as he thinks *in* sound. He explained the difference between thinking *in* sound and thinking *about* sound:

A composer thinks *in* sound, not *about* it. This thinking in sound is informed by ideas of musical order and syntax gained through listening, writing, study and experience. After ideas are formed clearly, *then* it is a good idea to “step back” from the music, to think *about* it. This allows one to edit and make choices that elevate the music beyond a kind of improvisation, to bring it to the higher ground of composition. (pp. 25-26)

Adolphe’s “stepping back” stage sounds like Webster’s “time away” in his creative process model.

Alice Parker (1994), who has arranged and composed many choral pieces, described composers’ creative process: “The composer imagines idealized sound; starts from idea, ends with page; notes, rhythms, markings all as clear as craft allows; the page recalls the imagined sound” (p. 15). Parker, reflecting on her own process, said that she lives with the text for a long time, maybe a year or two, saying it aloud in various ways, thinking about the meanings of the words. Then she speaks the text and allows it to form musical ideas. She works with these musical ideas to structure the vocal composition.

Children’s Processes as Composers

Functioning as teacher/researcher, Carlin (1998) examined the process and product of three students in addition to observations of an entire class of eight and nine year olds as they composed and performed music and stories. Her interest was “in the ways the composers used and transformed sound and musical elements to convey intent” (p. 179). The students were allowed to use any sound sources available in the music room, and were asked to develop a beginning, middle, and end

in their compositions. Carlin described the basic creative process her students used: The students determined their own individual composition goal (germination), explored and revised (assimilation), polished, and performed for the rest of the class (completion). Carlin concluded that process and product are intertwined. In a similar conclusion, Fritz (1989) noted that the process proceeds in direct relationship to the vision of the product.

Wiggins (1990) reported on her experiments with group composition in her classroom. Her studies evolved into systematic classroom research on compositional process (1992, 1994, 1995). Wiggins (2003) described the compositional processes of students that she had observed in her studies. The first phase (germination) involved getting started with text and musical material holistically conceived by the students. Students then worked with the details of the material (assimilation), organizing, evaluating, revising, and refining. Finally, they rehearsed, followed by performance (completion). Feedback received after the performance influenced the next composition project. Wiggins (2003) concluded from her study of children's processes that children bring a great deal of musical ability and knowledge to the classroom. She argued that "we often underestimate what our students can do" (p. 162).

Summary

The compositional processes described above are similar in nature and include three or four stages, beginning with the birth of musical ideas (germination) and ending with polishing and performing (completion). The germination stage begins inside the head, where the cognitive events that take place are hidden from view. A

question naturally arises: “Where does the music come from?” In all of the processes described here, according to the literature, the generation of a musical idea is required in order to begin the creative process of composition (germination). In the next section, I will examine literature that considers the sources of musical ideas.

Sources of Musical Ideas, or Inspiration during the Creative Process

Inspiration is born in the unconscious, drawing from tonal and stylistic knowledge, according to Sloboda (1985). According to Adolphe, improvisation has a role in inspiration. When there is not as much time to spend thinking in body loops, he improvises, allowing the music to trigger emotions. A musical pattern will jolt his memory, provoking a “loop” from ideas to emotions and back to ideas. “Composers mine their improvisations for ideas and then develop the ideas methodically” (Adolphe, 1999, p. 176). Burnard (2000) explored the relationship between instrumental composition and improvisation and its implications for teaching. Her students used improvisation as a source of inspiration for their compositions. Earlier studies also suggested that improvisation often helps to develop the germinal ideas in composition (Bennett, 1975; Aaron, 1980).

A large repertoire of songs, with their tonal and rhythm patterns, provides a basis for musical inspiration. Mozart drew upon and exploited prior schema (Gardner, 1982). Adolphe does the same. “All the music that a composer has heard becomes memory and forms language, without which musical thinking is impossible” (Adolphe, 1999, p. 103). According to Wiggins (2003) new musical ideas form from previously learned musical ideas and come to us as inspiration.

Parker (1994) uses the sound and meaning of the text to trigger musical ideas. Davies (1986) advised her composing students to use a method similar to Parker's. Davies' students worked with text to create songs. She instructed them to "say it until a song comes" (p. 282). According to Davies, the rhythm and meaning of the text can bring musical ideas into the foreground. These researchers and composers identified three sources of inspiration: from the process of improvisation, from previously learned musical material, and from the text. Children need to retain a memory of a musical idea long enough to repeat it, in order to work the material into a musical piece.

Musical Memory and the Creative Process

Ability to remember one's song enables the composer to revise and reflect upon the song. In order to work through the creative process with musical structure and form, a composer must remember, record, or notate musical ideas. Composers use a combination of these strategies. Kratus (1989) concluded that very few 7-year-olds in his study could repeat a melody they had just composed on a keyboard. For 7-year-olds, the use of invented notation is not likely to help the children retain specific memory of melodic and rhythmic structures. Invented notation that recalls pitches and rhythms does not appear until age 10 or older (Bamberger, 1991). If pre-notational children are to put together and revise their musical ideas, how are they to remember them? A child composer can use recordings, and depends heavily upon repetition and musical memory. Understanding some of the basis of musical memory helps us to understand the challenges of composition in the classroom.

Enabling Factors of Musical Memory: Musical Structures

Structural memory, that is, “the ability to extract higher-order structure from sequences of notes,” is the fundamental basis of musical memory, according to Sloboda (1985, p. 246):

In an oral context, the musician uses a stored structure to generate different, but structurally linked, note sequences on different occasions. This ability becomes labeled as ‘improvisation’ in a literate context. When notation (or recording technology) allows for several hearings of the identical note sequence, then a musician can elaborate his structural memory to provide for exact note-for-note recall. (p. 246)

Structural importance of tonal and rhythmic features is referred to as *hierarchy*. For example, the most important feature that establishes tonality is the tonic, followed by the dominant. This is known as *tonal hierarchy* (Thompson & Schellenberg, 2002, p. 466). Clarke (1988) explained hierarchy in musical structure:

The most widespread characteristic of musical structure embodied in music theory is its hierarchical nature. In the parameters of both pitch and rhythm, structures are represented almost without exception as being organized in a series of levels, between which relationships of reduction or elaboration operate. (p. 2)

“Learning and memory depend on hierarchical structuring” (Lerdahl, 1988, p. 244). Some melodies have structural characteristics that make them easier than others to remember. According to Sloboda (1990), “It is easier to remember sequences which conform to conventional rules of tonality than those that don’t” (p. 32). Melodies with 7-tone scales and scales with uneven spacing, such as diatonic and pentatonic, are more easily remembered. Within a tonal system, such as a diatonic

scale, arpeggios and step-wise movement are perceived as easily memorable (Deutsch and Feroe study as cited in Sloboda, 1985).

Tonal and rhythm patterns are the most basic musical structures. We learn tonal and rhythm patterns by echoing them and singing them, in songs and as isolated patterns, until we can hear and understand them in our head without the presence of actual sound. Gordon called this ability audiation. According to Gordon (1988), audiation is a key to musical memory. When we audiate, we hear and understand music in our mind that is not present. We audiate music in the same way that we think language. When we can audiate music, then we can recall chunks of music for the purpose of composing.

Wiggins (2003) supports the idea that children who are composing originate musical ideas in chunks that are complete both melodically and rhythmically. Rhythm divides the music into chunks that our auditory systems can process. Syntax of words can be an aide to the brain in the perception of rhythmic chunking. Therefore, songs may be easier to remember than instrumental pieces. Rhythm units, or *time-span reduction*, is a type of hierarchical structure. Meter aids perception as well. *Metrical structure* is another type of hierarchical structure that aids the learning and memory of music (Lerdahl, 1988).

Recent research indicates that people tend to recall music in phrases (Dalla Bella, 2003; Schulkind, 2003, 2004 as cited in Dingfelder, 2006). According to Snyder (2000), “phrases are the largest unit of musical material that can be accommodated by short-term memory” (p. 38). Phrasing is an example of *grouping structure* hierarchy (Lerdahl, 1988, p. 237). Melodic patterns, meter, rhythm patterns

and phrasing all contribute to the brain's ability to remember the music (Jordain, 1997).

The ability to perform music automatically, without conscious effort, depends partly upon repetition. According to Snyder (2000) there is a 3-5 second window of short term memory in which repetition must take place in order to preserve the memory of a chunk of music, so newly thought musical chunks must be repeated immediately for retention. Chunks with duration longer than 5 seconds will be more difficult to remember. Chunks of remembered music become the basic units of the piece.

The mental categorization or codification of experience is referred to as *schema* (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, 1989). Developing the ability to recall material automatically requires intense practice or repetition, a positive emotional state, and the relation of the material to prior musical schema that involve musical structure (Monteil & Huguet, 1999). Memory is higher for previously heard melodies, or prior musical schema, than for new ones (Thompson and Schellenberg, 2002). According to Snyder (2000), knowledge and categories that are stored in long-term memory control the information that enters our conscious awareness. “What we already know literally determines what we see and hear, which means that we see and hear what we look *for* more than what we look *at*” (p. 11).

Use of Notation and Recordings to Aid Recall in the Creative Process

In addition to the development of one's musical memory in general, and the memory for one's own songs by repetition, notation and recording devices help

composers to remember their songs. There are adult composers of songs who cannot necessarily remember a song or musical idea just conceived, and who rely upon notation and recording devices. Carlin (1998) wrote about her forgetfulness of her own songs. When people asked her to teach them one of her songs, she couldn't do so without looking at her notation. Recordings can be particularly useful during the creative process.

Song composer, Renelle West (2005), records herself experimenting with chords on her keyboard and melodies that she sings to the lyrics she has worked out. She listens to her tape periodically to make sure that the melody does not sound like one she already knows. "Recording the melody part of the process is very important. It keeps me from forgetting what I've done that I liked. From the recording I can memorize the melody line that I've created." West uses recordings to aid her creative process. She memorizes her final products, songs that were carefully composed. According to West, she possesses her songs and remembers them. Children, too, can make use of recordings to aid awareness and memory during the process of composing. By the time they are finished composing, however, children are likely to remember their songs, according to Wiggins. Wiggins (1999) believes that children can remember their songs, given certain circumstances: "students given the genuine opportunity to compose a song can sing it accurately, with all the nuances and meaning they intend it to express. Because they have created it, they truly possess the song and do not forget it" (p. 32).

Creative Experience: Process, Product and Development

Is there an age relationship to developmental stages of musical thinking? In Kratus' (1989) study, children aged 7, 9, and 11 each composed an original piece on a keyboard. The children were given some time to become familiar with the keyboard, and then were given ten minutes to compose their pieces. The seven year olds tended to use more exploration and less repetition. He argued that this was an indication that the children were still in an improvisatory stage of exploring. Kratus (1989) proposed a three-process model of children's instrumental composition: exploration, development, and repetition. A child may make use of all three processes while composing. According to Kratus, a younger child may spend more time exploring, while an older child may spend more time using the processes of development and repetition.

The idea that younger, or less experienced children and older, or more experienced children use differing approaches to composing, resulting in different products suggests developmental stages. Sloboda (1985) related development in musical thinking to structural awareness. According to Sloboda, children between ages 5 and 10 exhibit an increasing reflective awareness of structure. Their songs often have a beginning, middle, and end and the children exhibit increased exactness of pitch within the diatonic scale when singing. (1985, p. 210). Davies (1992) discovered structural processes within young children's spontaneous songs. Evidence of musical cognitive processes identified by Serafine (1988) and Sloboda (1985) provided the framework for Davies' study of children's invented songs in her

classroom. She studied the songs invented by 32 children, aged five to seven, over a period of 18 months. She analyzed the songs in terms of musical cognitive processes.

Davies found that the children in her study could invent initial ideas and group these ideas into phrases. Children made use of alternation and repetition, transformation, abstraction, and hierarchy. They also used closure. Davies suggested that the children used these structures intuitively, not with conscious awareness. Barrett (1996), however, asserted that children as young as five years nine-months were able to make conscious decisions, especially in the realm of form, in her study of children describing, analyzing, interpreting and evaluating sound combinations as they composed. According to Davies (1992), “The role of structure in music is so important that we should expect it to play a crucial, leading part in the young child’s development as a musical thinker” (pp. 21-22).

Swanwick and Tillman (1986) also approached developmental stages in terms of structure. They proposed stages in a spiral compositional process of children, ages 0 to 15 years, based on the analysis of 745 compositions collected from 48 children over a period of four years in Tillman’s classroom. For the purpose of this study, Swanwick and Tillman defined composition broadly and included “the briefest utterances as well as more sustained invention. Composition takes place when there is some freedom to choose the ordering of music, with or without notational or other forms of detailed performance instruction” (Swanwick, 1988, p. 60). Using the ideas of Ross (1984) and Bunting (1977), along with his own conclusions from studying children’s compositions, Swanwick mapped out a developmental sequence.

The sequence consists of four main stages. The first stage is the mastery stage. In this stage, children up to the age of four are absorbed by sensory input such as dynamics and timbre. It is also a stage in which children gradually learn to manipulate the musical materials. When children can manipulate the materials, they move into the second stage, imitation (ages 4 – 9). The compositions in this stage are personal, such as the spontaneous narratives young children sing. Compositions gradually begin to incorporate form. By the end of this stage, children's compositions show an awareness of form, as evidenced in phrasing and patterns, and their compositions show an awareness of the vernacular. Swanwick (1988) asserted that "the vernacular mode begins to appear at around the age of 5 but is more clearly established at 7 or 8" (p. 78). In this stage pieces are "contained within established fairly general musical conventions" (p. 78). He also noted common devices such as syncopation and sequences.

Children then move into the imaginative play stage (ages 10 – 15). In this stage children can use purposeful, imaginative variation. They are gradually able to compose in recognizable style and construct contrasting sections. "Contrast and variation take place on the basis of emulated models and clear idiomatic practices" (p. 79). The last stage (age 15+) is the meta-cognitive stage, in which composing students can articulate ideas about their own thought processes. Some researchers have disagreed with the age ranges proposed by Swanwick, believing that long before children consciously identify form in music they incorporate structure within their own song making (Barrett, 1996, 1998; Davies, 1992; Elmer, 2005; Sloboda, 1985).

Webster (2002) discussed the role of music teachers in the development of children's abilities as musical thinkers and composers: "Music teachers must help students gain this ability to hear music in their heads and manipulate these sounds in increasingly more abstract ways" (p. 20). He stressed the importance of music teachers teaching for independent thought. That implies that students will be independent aesthetic decision makers with the ability to think in sound. "All this is possible only if students are encouraged to "create" music through all the available behaviors" (p. 20). Glover (2000) expressed a three-fold approach to the teacher support of compositional development: "building musical awareness and understanding, supplying skills and technique, and by extending children's experience of the contemporary musical world in which they live" (p. 20).

Enabling Conditions: Social/Cultural Considerations

Interactions with others affect the processes and products of creators. Webster included social/cultural conditions as enabling conditions in his *Model of Musical Thinking* (2002). Glover (2000) considers social and cultural contexts to be important aspects of children's development as composers: "Innate musical inventiveness unfolds in interaction with the child's immediate cultural surroundings" (pp. 19-20). Rogoff's (2003) sociocultural theory of development supports Glover's viewpoint. According to Rogoff, cognitive development takes place as individuals participate in communities. Sloboda's (1985) and Swanwick's (1988) theories of musical development are related to the gradual awareness of musical structures. Musical structures are culturally determined and are not necessarily universal (Storr,

1992). For example, Swanwick's first stage, the mastery stage, consists of children absorbing sensory input from musical sound of the child's cultural surroundings. In stage two, children imitate the vernacular, or characteristic music of their cultural surroundings, including home and school.

In the composing classroom, interactive participants include student composers, peers and teacher (Carlin, 1998, p. 40). Collective learning activity in which students work together in large or in small groups can be valuable. According to Bruner (1996), when the broader culture of the community is functioning at its best, there is mutual support for one another in our life endeavors. In a classroom, mutual support takes the form of knowledge and idea sharing, students helping each other master material, and group reflection, with the teacher in the role of enabler. Bruner calls such a learning environment "mutual learning cultures" (p. xiv).

Often teachers organize children into small groups for composing. Wiggins (2003) found that "The nature of verbal, musical, and physical interaction that takes place within small groups or between pairs who are working together to create original musical ideas impacts both student process and product" (p.160). She also found that when students work with friends as partners the work is more productive. This finding had been reported by Miell and MacDonald (2000), who found that when children are grouped with friends, more communication took place, and children's scores based on the quality of their compositions were higher. According to Wiggins, even when children compose alone the desire for peer acceptance of one's song influences process and product.

Children give and receive feedback within the social climate of composing in the classroom. Kolb (1984) conceived of a cycle of learning in which we take action, assess what we have by reflecting on *feedback*, gain new understanding, and adjust action until our goal is reached. Burnard (2000) identified a strategy used by her students to revise their work: students would stop playing in order to share with each other, receiving *feedback* of their ideas. Wiggins (2003) included feedback as an important component of the creative process, a component which helps children to improve as they begin their next composing projects. Feedback is not only a peer function, it is also a function of the teacher. Feedback can be one method of scaffolding.

Vygotsky (1930/1978) argued that learning is socially constructed. “All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals” (p.57). In regards to the relationship between development and learning, Vygotsky claimed that, “the only ‘good learning’ is that which is in advance of development” (p. 89). He called the difference between the learning potential with assistance and the actual mental development of a child their *zone of proximal development (ZPD)*. Vygotsky proposed that learning creates the zone of proximal development, awakening developmental processes “that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers” (p. 90).

Bruner was influenced by Vygotsky as he defined the teacher role in terms of “scaffolding” (Bruner, 1986, 1996): The role of the teacher is to determine the level of development of the student and the level of potential development, and provide the support, or scaffolding needed for learning to take place in the zone between the two

levels. “As a teacher, you do not wait for readiness to happen; you foster or ‘scaffold’ it by deepening the child’s powers at the stage where you find him or her now” (Bruner, 1996, p. 120). Glover (2000) explained what this means for the teacher of composition:

Teaching composing entails the attempt to work with young composers at the edges of their musical understanding, and, as has been argued earlier, this requires the same kind of de-centering as reading children’s writing or looking at their art. The composer and the listener each bring their own musical understanding and experience to bear and it is on this ground that they meet, with the pupils’ work audibly between. Comprehending children’s musical understanding, or making the best effort we can to do so, is a key to the quality of any teaching interaction which is going to help a child move forward. (p. 36)

How does a teacher effectively give this kind of support, working “at the edge” of the child’s musical understanding?

Wiggins’ (2003) was specific about teacher support, drawing upon her extensive research in classroom settings to summarize the teacher’s role in the classroom when children are composing. According to Wiggins, the teacher lays groundwork before beginning a composing project. When the project begins, ensure at the offset that the students understand the goals and procedures of the project. This allows for uninterrupted working time. Children seek help if they need it. When children seek help, gain an understanding of the intentions of the children before advising. In other words, once the parameters are established, stay out of the way.

One way to lay a foundation for a composition project is through modeling. Modeling can be an important source of information for children who are learning to compose. According to Bandura (1986), “some complex skills can be mastered only

through the aid of modeling” (p. 20). Bandura used the term, “observational learning,” which, he claimed, “is shown most clearly when models exhibit novel patterns of thought or behavior which observers did not already possess but which, following observation, they can produce in similar form” (Bandura, 1986, p. 49).

Children learn the musical language of their culture by observing the musical models in their environment. When the teacher shares her composed songs with the class, modeling and observational learning may be taking place.

Gredler (1992) provided specific steps for designing modeling instruction in classrooms. In order to make the unobservable, internal processes observable, Gredler suggested self-talk. Children can benefit from observing the modeling of composing, with think-aloud components, in which the teacher says aloud what thought processes are occurring as she composes a song. In addition, children can share their thought processes in class discussions. One way teachers can scaffold students is to supply language which supports the child’s train of thought (Glover, 2000).

Summary

Creative process, creative products, development of musical thinking, and social interaction while composing are interactive focuses of musical creativity theory. Seven-year-old children composing songs in a classroom are engaged in the creative process, as defined by Fritz, Webster, and Sloboda. Adult composers and children can utilize similar processes. A composer starts with a musical idea, sparked by improvisation, previously learned material or text. Musical memory, repetition, notation and recordings aid composers in the recall of their songs and musical

material with which they are working. Musical structures are the key to musical memory. Many researchers suggest that children's conscious use of these structures is developmental. The age of seven is particularly important, a "watershed," in terms of development. Children at this age frequently incorporate structure in their compositions and imitate music that is common in their cultural surroundings.

Children generally enjoy composing with friends, providing feedback to one another. When they have a clear idea of the composition task, they can work independently, asking friends or the teacher for help when help is needed. When teachers know the path of students' musical development they can support the students individually in the zone between the level of a student's development and the level of potential development. Creative process, creative products and development of musical thinking are important components of composition in the music classroom, as theorized in this study by Sloboda, Swanwick, Webster, Snyder, Glover and others. All of these components of the composition experience occur by way of social interaction within a sociocultural community as theorized by Bruner, Vygotsky, Bandura, Gredler, Wiggins and Rogoff. This study is situated within this theoretical framework.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter describes the research methodology, the teaching pedagogy and the setting of this study. The study focused on the experiences of seven-year-old children who were composing songs in their second grade school music class. As practitioner and researcher, I conducted an in-depth case study of three of the children as they composed songs in my music class during the first three months of the school year. I studied the children's interactions as they composed, the process, and the songs they composed. In addition, I studied the composed songs of the other children in the class in order to understand more fully the interactions and composed songs of the three selected children.

Case Study Design

In order to develop an in-depth understanding of seven-year-old children composing songs in the natural setting of a music class, I chose a qualitative research methodology employing a collective case study design (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998b; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Scott & Morrison, 2006; Stake, 1998). Scott & Morrison define case study as follows:

The most common use of the term is research which includes the study of a few cases, sometimes one, in which the intention is to collect large amounts of data and study it in depth. Such data is usually, but not always, in alignment with specific approaches to research, namely qualitative and interpretive, with a frequent and specific emphasis upon the use of narrative. (p. 17)

Composing is a complex activity which includes, but is not limited to, process, product, social interaction and cognitive development. These aspects of composing intertwine with one another and, according to some researchers, cannot be studied separately (Nillson & Folkestad, 2005). A case study design allowed me to consider the interaction of all four of these aspects in a natural setting and then narrow my focus on some key factors, such as the development of musical thinking, which affected children's compositional outcomes. When there is interest in an issue or the refining of theory, such as theory of stages in the development of children's musical thinking, the case study might be called an *instrumental case study* (Stake, 1998, p. 88). Because this study extended to three individual cases as well as the entire class, it was a *collective case study*. According to Stake (1998), the cases are chosen because "it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases" (p. 89).

Setting: Naturalistic Research

The case study was situated in my music classroom, located in a primary school in a rural town in the middle Atlantic region. I observed the children composing, collected their work, and engaged in dialogue with the children, their parents, and the children's classroom teacher over an eleven-week period.

Naturalistic research roles can vary according to the membership involvement. My role is one of complete membership (Adler & Adler, 1998), in which the researcher is already a member of the setting, fully involved, and acting as a member,

“so as not to alter the flow of the interaction unnaturally” (p. 86). This natural flow allowed me to introduce composition activities as a continuation and extension of music class instruction. For example, we had sung *Shoo, Fly* and had danced to *Shoo, Fly*, when the children participating in the study were in first grade. The children were easily able to identify the contrasting B section of the song and describe the differences between the two melodies. Most of the children were then able to create songs with contrasting sections. The ability to make use of prior schema and repertoire as part of the natural flow of instruction leads to an efficient use of time.

My established rapport with the children from the previous year also contributed to the natural flow of learning in the music class. Only three children in the selected class were new to the school. I was able to introduce instruction in composition at the beginning of the school year, building on established routines and the developed abilities of the children to create melodies spontaneously to given text. For example, when presented with the poem, *Apples* (Hall, 2001), some children very quickly shared melodic ideas for the phrases.

As a member of the setting, I was able to establish the instructional conditions in which students composed songs. Instructional conditions included established routines, physical setting, and planned instruction. Again, as a member, I had established routines with the children during the previous year as their music teacher. The physical setting was also pre-established. I constructed a basic framework for the instruction, and then planned specific lessons that grew organically from the needs of the class. For the purpose of this study, I was not attempting to interpret the instructional conditions or evaluate the effectiveness of a particular approach to

composition pedagogy, but to provide the conditions in which the children could compose songs in a natural setting so that I could study children composing songs.

This type of qualitative case study is dependent upon instructional conditions which vary in natural settings. An understanding of the specific instructional conditions in the case study can provide music educators with a deeper understanding of conditions in which children can compose in music class. When a child composes a song, there is much knowledge that has developed before the act of composing, much that is occurring as the child composes, and perhaps much that will occur as a result of the composing of the song. Complete membership in the setting can contribute to the understanding of this context.

An additional advantage of complete membership is that I was able to use knowledge of the children gained by normal classroom assessments during the previous year, in first grade. I used assessments of the children to help select possible case study participants who particularly enjoyed improvising songs, and had average or higher abilities and aptitudes in music. I reasoned that children with average or higher musical abilities and aptitudes who enjoyed improvising would be more interesting to observe as composers.

There were advantages to videotaping. At times I was surprised by what I saw in the video tapes. For example, I know that seven-year-old children wiggle a lot, but I noticed in the video tapes that they wiggle even more than I thought. By fast-forwarding the video tapes I could see the movement of the children. The children constantly shifted the positions of their legs. They moved their arms about as well, scratching themselves and touching their faces and clothing. As a daily practitioner, I

have become accustomed to their wiggling. The videotapes made some events, like wiggling, more apparent and revealed events that I could rewind and view repeatedly in order to gain further understanding.

There are some disadvantages to complete membership. As an insider, a researcher may miss details due to familiarity of context and assumptions made about the setting and the children. As practitioner, my attention was under high demand by the students. When the children were working independently I positioned myself near the center of the room in order to make myself available for requests of help. There was a constant flow of children asking questions or requesting a listening ear. This made it difficult to observe the overall context or specific events taking place beyond the focus of the camera. In addition, the demands of teaching are high, and it was difficult to make notations in my journal until the end of the day. Journal notes were an important record of my ongoing interpretation of events that were taking place in the classroom.

Participant Selection

The Significance of the Age of Seven: The Watershed

I chose seven-year-olds for this study because at approximately the age of seven, children typically are ready to think about musical structure (Glover, 2000). Glover calls this development, or stage, a “watershed.” According to the dictionary, a watershed is “a crucial dividing point, line, or factor: turning point” (Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 1989). According to Glover,

Around the age of 6 or 7, children cross the watershed in their musical thinking that brings a new possibility into play in terms of music-making. This is the point at which they become able not just to make, but to think of, musical ‘pieces’ as such. The realization comes that the music they create has its own existence, as apart from the activity of making it. The music can be listened to, sung or played by others, captured and kept, and revisited at any time. (Glover, 2000, p. 55)

In other words, children can *consciously* conceive of a piece of music as an entity or structure, not simply engage in a musical process. Their level of awareness allows them to enter the creative process with a goal in mind.

According to Glover (2000), this mental development at the age of seven reflects Piaget’s theory that children in the concrete operations stage have more flexibility of thought, that is, they can hold several qualities in mind, and notice differences in classes of objects. Composing becomes more purposeful and intentional, and includes the idea of an end product. Improvisation becomes a separate act. The children can work in stages, such as those in process writing, and their ability to think musically in their heads increases (p. 71).

Gardner (1994) also suggested the importance of the musical development of 7-year-olds:

There is an interesting and, I think, important convergence among researchers on the importance of the ages 6 to 7 in musical development. At least for children with adequate musical potential, it is possible to be a participant in the artistic process by the ages of 5 to 7. (p. 196)

This means that around the age of seven, a child has “A working familiarity with and understanding of the general mechanisms of this [musical] symbol system” (p. 197).

Gardner specified the abilities of a reasonably competent 7-year-old:

A reasonably competent 7-year-old should understand the basic metrical properties of his musical system and the appropriate scales,

harmonies, cadences, and groupings, even as he should be able, given some motifs, to combine them into a musical unit that is appropriate for his culture, but is not a complete copy of a work previously known.
P. 197

Early childhood musical experiences typically provide a schema for understanding and identifying musical structures. Sloboda (1985) identified a “developmental trend” between the ages of five and ten, with an “increasing reflective awareness of the structures and patterns that characterize music and which are already implicit in the child’s enactive repertoire” (p. 210). Thompson and Schellenberg (2002) claimed that by the age of 7 children are sensitive to implied harmony. “Because melodies are so often heard with a harmonic accompaniment, listeners gradually learn to associate isolated melodies with plausible harmonic accompaniments, even when none is present” (p. 473).

Can children sing well enough by age seven to be able to compose songs? Studies show that seven year olds typically have a singing range of an octave or more and have enough control over their voices to manage the pitches within the octave (Davidson, 1994). Sloboda (1990) reported that, “the age of seven is when the grasp of tonal syntax becomes particularly apparent” (p. 42). Managing pitches within an octave and apparently grasping tonal syntax do not mean that all children can maintain pitch and tonal syntax. Sloboda advised that teacher support may be needed to help children become aware of pitch and tonal syntax maintenance.

First Grade Assessments

I had identified fourteen children out of 135 first grade students as potential focus children for the case study by considering the results of routine tests. The test

results of the children helped me to remember what I had observed when they were in first grade. I considered these test results because the study took place at the beginning of the school year and there was not sufficient time to allow certain children to emerge as interesting subjects for the case study. I needed to make sure the selected children could sing, would sing, and enjoyed making up spontaneous songs.

1. PMMA (Primary Measure of Musical Aptitude) test scores, in order to identify students who were in the low range of tonal or rhythmic aptitude for the purpose of giving children appropriate help. High: 80th percentile or above. Low, 20th percentile or below. (Gordon, 1986)
2. IMMA (Intermediate Measure of Musical Aptitude) test scores in order to identify students who are gifted in order to give children appropriate challenges. Parameters same as PMMA. (Gordon, 1986)
3. Listening test of students' ability to identify five examples of text as spoken or sung. Using a familiar nursery rhyme, I speak it in a normal voice with no steady beat, speak it in a head voice with no steady beat, speak it quite expressively, chant it with a strong beat, and sing it by improvising my own tune. High: five correct. Average: three or four correct. Low: one or two correct. (Hall, 2004)
4. Assessment of singing ability at the beginning of the school year:
Able to sing the responses on the words "we do" in *Fishpole Song*, in the key of F, demonstrating three pitch placements. High: All three responses on correct pitches; Average: Pitches are close to the correct

ones and go upward or downward correctly; Low: Pitches do not resemble the song.

5. Spring term singing assessment: *Fishpole Song* (Figure 1).
6. Antecedent/consequent spontaneous vocal improvisations with improvised text. High: The child volunteered, and was willing and confident. The child's consequent phrase was pitched in the same key and had the same length and meter as the antecedent phrase. The child ended the consequent phrase on the tonal center pitch. Average: child's consequent phrase had some resemblance to the antecedent. Low: child's consequent phrase had no resemblance to the antecedent.
7. Given several phrases of poetry, student improvised a way to sing the text.

A Description of the Assessments

With the exception of Gordon's aptitude tests, none of these assessments have proof of validity. I devised them and find them useful in guiding my instruction. I am describing them here in order to provide an explanation for the criteria used for choosing the children to include in the case studies.

Gordon's aptitude tests.

Gordon's Primary Measure of Musical Aptitude composite scores of these fourteen children in May of first grade were distributed as follows: four were in the high range, the 80th percentile or above, and the other scores were in the average range, the 21st to 79th percentile. None of these children had low musical aptitude

scores. Intermediate Measure of Musical Aptitude composite scores in May of first grade included five children in the 80th percentile or higher, and four students were in the 20th percentile or lower. None of the students had IMMA composite raw scores of 72 or better, considered by Gordon to be “musically gifted” (Gordon, 1986).

Speak/Sing test.

In the spring of first grade I administered a written speak/sing test to assess the children’s ability to distinguish spoken from sung text. I used the nursery rhyme, “Jack and Jill.” I spoke it in my head voice, spoke it in my chest voice, chanted rhythmically in my normal speaking voice, spoke it very expressively, and sang it. Children circled the word “speak” if they thought I was speaking, and musical notes if they thought I was singing. I had worked with them to distinguish between speaking and singing, and consider this to be a very important but difficult concept. Sometimes when we were improvising melodies with text provided by me, or when students were performing “ariosos,” a child would speak instead of sing. The most difficult example for the students to distinguish was the rhythmic chanting.

Singing ability.

In the fall term, and again in the spring term, I assessed singing ability using *Fishpole Song* (Figure 1).

Fishpole Song

Southern Singing Game

FISHPOLE SONG
By MERLE BUFORD
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All Rights Reserved Used by Permission

Figure 1. Fishpole Song.

Children sang three responses, “we do,” in the key of F to the musical question, “Who’s got a fish pole?” A small amount of time during three different class sessions was used for this assessment, one class session for each of the three responses.

Children took turns echoing me on one response. I scored the students on pitch accuracy, “high” indicating perfect, “average” indicating that pitches were close, and “low” indicating that pitches were completely off. Four out of the five children who had low scores in the fall improved in the spring.

Antecedent/Consequent improvisations.

Frequently, I improvised singing questions for the children using text such as, “What did you do on the weekend? If you want to answer, you have to sing!”

Children volunteered singing answers to the question. I assessed their consequent phrases, listening for pitch management, keyality, tonality, meter, and phrase length similar to the antecedent phrase length. “High” score indicated that all of the above

elements were present. “Average” score indicated that many or some of those elements were present. “Low” score indicated that few or none of those elements were present. I considered volunteering to sing indicative of a level of confidence and enjoyment of creating music spontaneously.

Improvisations with given text.

I frequently placed a few lines of a poem on the board for the children to sing; for example, “Fuzzy rabbit, hop, hop, hop. Let me pet you, stop, stop, stop.” I sometimes sang the first phrase and a student would volunteer to sing the second phrase in response. On other occasions, a student would sing the first phrase and I would sing the second phrase. In some cases, children wanted to sing both phrases. I assessed each child’s ability to sing the text to a tune that makes musical sense, having rhythm, having pitches managed within a key, and showing awareness of tonal syntax such as an ending on the tonic. Again, a “high” score indicated that the child accomplished all of the above criteria. An “average” score indicated that the child accomplished much or some of the criteria. A “low” score indicated that the child accomplished none of the criteria.

Miss Dunmore’s Second Grade Class

The second grade class which I chose for this study consisted of ten boys and thirteen girls. Three of the children were not enrolled in the school in first grade. There were no changes in the class roster the entire year. I chose this class for my study because the roster of children contained 6 students whom I had identified as possible case study participants based on first grade assessments. Table 1 shows the

scores of the members of Miss Dunmore's second grade class when they were in first grade the previous year, except for the three class members who were not enrolled in this school in first grade. The scores show that the majority of children in Miss Dunmore's class had average to high musical ability.

Table 1
First Grade Assessment Results for Miss Dunmore's Class

Assessments	High	Average	Low	No Score
1. PMMA	4	16	0	0
2. IMMA	5	11	4	0
3. Speak/Sing test	10	8	2	0
4. Fall 2004 singing: <i>Fishpole Song</i>	13	1	5	1 Absent
5. Spring 2005 Singing:	14	4	1	1 Absent

Fishpole Song

6. Antecedent/Consequent improvisations, voluntary	9	0	0	11 did not volunteer
7. Improvised melodies to poetic text	14	5	1	0

From the beginning of the second grade, students in Miss Dunmore's class showed enthusiasm for singing, playing classroom instruments, dancing, moving expressively, and doing literacy activities. One boy was a reluctant participant in singing activities. He seemed shy about his voice, using soft, low pitches. There seemed to be few social conflicts, and generally good manners prevailed. Academically, seven of the children went to a reading specialist several times per week for extra help with their reading. These children were reading below grade level, and their reading difficulties related to some of their struggles as song writers. Nine children were reading on grade level, and eight were reading one year above grade level. Math achievement had a similar distribution. No child was a special education student.

Selected Children for Individual Case Studies

I identified six children in this class, using first grade assessment criteria, to be possible case studies. I eliminated one child from consideration because she was sometimes absent from or late to music class due to the need for additional reading

instruction from the reading specialist. This left five children to consider. My goal was to study at least three children, so I decided to begin with the remaining five. I selected the five children and obtained permission from their parents for the study in order to allow for unforeseen circumstances in which one or more of the children would be unable to participate in the study. Of those five, Jasmine was reticent about wearing the microphone, and did not work aloud. When I asked her if she would rather not wear the microphone, she said "yes." Allen was absent several times, and then his tape did not record anything for several sessions due to a malfunction. I explained to him that his tape recorder was not working, and asked him if he minded not wearing it anymore. He said that he did not mind. The three remaining children recorded well, and were willing to wear the microphone. By class session 9 these three children, two girls and one boy, became the three selected children for the individual case studies. Their names, pseudonyms for the purpose of the study, are Sarah, Nathaniel and Jennifer. Table 2 indicates the individual scores on the assessments of these three children.

Table 2
Individual Scores of Selected Case Study Children

	Sarah	Nathaniel	Jennifer
PMMA test	Tonal: 35/88%	T: 35/88%	T: 35/88%
	Rhythmic: 35/97%	R: 31/80%	R: 31/80%
	Composite: 70/95%	C: 66/83%	C: 66/83%
IMMA test	T: 36/95%	T: 35/85%	T: 35/85%
	R: 33/85%	R: 30/60%	R: 30/60%
	C: 69/93%	C: 65/75%	C: 60/75%

Speak/Sing test	5 correct	5 correct	5 correct
Perfect score = 5	High	High	High
Singing ability, Fall, 2004	High	High	High
Singing ability, Spring, 2005	High	High	High
Improvisation of phrases	High	High	High
Improvisation given poem	High	High	High

Ethical Standards

Ethics in research concerns how researchers treat the individuals with whom they interact during the course of the inquiry. The two most important principles of ethics are informed consent and confidentiality (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990).

Informed Consent

The University of Maryland Institutional Review Board (IRB), the school district, and the principal of the school in which this study was conducted permitted this study, and had a complete knowledge of the nature of the inquiry. I informed the parents of all of the students and obtained permission for their children's participation in the study including video taping of children for the purpose of the study (Appendices A and B). I obtained permission from the parents of five selected children for a more in-depth study of these children, including individual audio-taping, interviews of the children and interviews of the parents (Appendices C and

D). I also informed the classroom teacher of the study and obtained permission for ongoing open interviews regarding the children's composition activities in the classroom (Appendix E). I notated the work of the children and presented all notations as their original work.

Protection of Identity

Anonymity is a crucial consideration. I assigned a pseudonym to each child who is mentioned in the study. I protected the security of all notes and tapes, including indicators of identities. These items were either in my possession or locked in a cabinet during the study. Indicators of identities were destroyed upon completion.

Procedure

During the eleven week period children completed three composition projects:

1. Whole class: ABA song based on a 4-phrase poem, *Apples*. (Hall, 2001). Various children in the class contributed ideas for the melody.

Children also created lyrics and melody for a contrasting B section.

2. Eight small groups (7 groups with 3 members, 1 group with 2 members): Each group composed a song with four or more phrases using a chosen poem for the lyrics, among choices which I provided.

Two of the songs had contrasting B sections using text from the poems. Three songs had B sections totally created by the group members. Three songs had no B sections.

3. Partners/Individuals: Disappearing-number song with lyrics written by the children.

Each composition resulted in the construction of a picture song book, a recording, and a performance for children in kindergarten. I chose kindergarten, with the two-year age difference in order to give the second grade children the opportunity to feel as though they were helping younger children.

For the first five of the sixteen class sessions, a variety of normal music class activities took place along with song composing activities for the study. Normal music instruction throughout the year in second grade classes included opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills to make and create music, develop musical literacy skills, and learn about music. The children learned all of these things by engaging in a variety of activities such as singing, dancing, moving expressively, playing games, dramatizing songs, playing instruments, improvising, composing, reading, writing, notating; listening, and discussing together. For the remainder of the sixteen class sessions, activities were designed exclusively for the purpose of composing songs.

The first composition was a class-composed song in ABA form that began with a poem which I had provided entitled, *Apples*. I introduced the Structural Tension Chart (Appendix F) to help children focus on the composition goals, and assess the action steps completed as well as the steps yet to complete. After they composed the song, the children colored pages that illustrated the song. I assembled these pages into seven picture song books using a comb binding machine owned by the school. We made a recording of the class singing the song, and I accompanied on

guitar. We then performed the song for five kindergarten classes, leaving a book and recording with each kindergarten teacher for use in the class book corner. This project took portions of five class sessions to complete.

The second composition project was a small group effort. Each group selected a public domain poem (Dann, 1914; Earhart, 1914; Harris, 1914; Pinnell & Fountas, 2004) that I selected and offered the class. Following the action steps on the Structural Tension Chart (Fritz, 2003b), group members worked to create a melody for the poem, at first working alone, then sharing ideas with the other group members. Five of the groups also created a contrasting B section for their song. The group then colored pages, one per phrase, to make a picture song book. I added comb bindings to the pages. The children shared these songs and books with kindergarten classes, three groups sharing with one class, three with another, and two groups with another. This project took four full class periods to complete.

The third composition was a disappearing number song. We sang several songs that we knew in which something or someone disappeared with each verse until none were left. *Five Green and Speckled Frogs* and *Ten Green Bottles* are two examples of songs that we reviewed. The children then chose one partner or chose to work alone, decided upon a subject that would disappear, and began writing ideas for the lyrics. I provided the children with a guide sheet to fill out as they developed their ideas (Appendix H). I helped the students shape the words into rhythmic phrases with a rhyming scheme. A rhyming dictionary (Young, 1994) was in high demand as we worked with the lyrics. Children then created melodies for their lyrics, created a picture song book, and finally shared their song and book with kindergarten children.

For this sharing, seven or eight of the composers entered one kindergarten class, sat in a ring around the edges of the classroom, and had two or three kindergartners at a time come to them to hear the song and see the book of a composer. This project took seven class sessions to complete.

I began each lesson with a discussion of what had been accomplished and what still needed to be done to reach the goal of composing a song. I used a large Structural Tension Chart (Fritz, 2003b), in order to guide the children through the action steps needed in order to create the song (Appendices F and G). Three mini-lessons evolved from special needs that arose when children were composing the disappearing number songs: Finding the Tonic, Where Does a Tune Come From, and Varying a Known Tune.

Data Collection

Data triangulation consisted of recordings, interviews and filed notes. In addition I collected artifacts such as worksheets and picture song books. Both video and audio tapes as well as digital recordings provided a means for me to see and hear the children composing. An assistant videotaped class sessions so that I could observe processes and interactions as well as hear the songs. The assistant focused the camera on large areas of the class at once. As the teacher, my attention was often focused on certain students and I was unable to observe the entire class simultaneously. These videotapes allowed me to view events taking place in various parts of the classroom. I transcribed interactions and songs that I heard on the tape.

The three selected children wore individual microphones and tape recorders while they were composing and sharing their composed songs. In order to encourage

the children to work aloud, I provided all of the children in the class with small, curved PVC pipes. When one end of the pipe was held over the ear, the other end came close to the mouth, allowing much of the sound to go directly into the ear. In this way the children could hear themselves clearly, even when they were all working on their songs at once. Sufficient sound also went into the attached microphones of the three selected students that I was able to hear their singing on the tapes. I notated all songs that I heard on the tapes, and transcribed all conversations.

In addition, all of the children recorded themselves singing their songs on their own individually designated tapes in a closet recording studio. A parent volunteer helped with the recording process. I notated and analyzed the songs by listening to the tapes, and noted interesting observations regarding the children's songs in my field notes. From listening to these songs I was able to design lessons that supported children's needs. I recorded children on a digital recorder that I kept with me at all times so that I could check their progress. As the digital performances were compared to the other taped recordings, I analyzed differences, in order to better understand the children's processes, their ability to remember the songs they composed, and changes they had made (See Table 3).

The daily journal contained field notes about what happened during the class period. It contained anecdotes of incidents and conversations with the children relating to composition, thoughts about the children's composition experiences, and reflections about my own role as teacher. I kept the journal on my desk so that I could make quick notes during the class or between classes. Mostly, I entered notes at the end of the day. In addition, I entered notes as I watched the video tapes and listened

to the audio tapes. These filed notes assisted me in the interpretation of events that took place throughout the study.

I conducted semi-structured interviews of the three selected children, as well as their parents, using open-ended questions in order to gain a larger perspective on these children's experiences as song composers (See Appendix I and J). The interviews were recorded and transcribed. During the students' interviews I asked each child to make up a song to a four-phrase poem entitled, *Sunny Day* (Pinnell & Fountas, 2004). The purpose was to give the children one more opportunity to create an original song by themselves. I also asked children if they could change the song from the original. I notated these songs and analyzed the results.

The children's worksheets contained their first efforts to create lyrics for their disappearing number songs. From these worksheets I was able to ascertain the level of support that would be needed to help shape their lyrics into rhythmic and rhyming phrases. I also found many drawings that revealed children's ideas about their topics.

Problems with Data Collection

Some minor problems occurred with data collection. Beginning with the sixth class session, the five selected children were wearing a small cloth tool apron. I placed a small tape recorder in one of the apron pockets. Each microphone was attached to the tape recorder at one end and had a clip for fastening to the clothing. However, the clips did not work well. The children would come to me in the middle of an activity and show me that the microphone had come unclipped. I had to devise a better way to attach the microphones. I used badge holders to fasten the microphones to the apron. The microphones still picked up the children's voices.

For the first few classes, two of the tapes were blank. It seems that the children bumped the buttons and inadvertently stopped the recordings. In some of the later classes, when children were working on their picture song books, several of the children were lying on their tummies on the floor, with the microphone buried in the rug. I asked the children to be sure to sit up so that the microphones could not get covered up, but I did lose some taping as a result of their position in relation to the microphone.

Table 3
Lesson Schedule/Data Record

	Date	Lesson	Mini-lessons	Data Collected
1	Fri, Sep 2	<i>Project 1: Whole class</i> <i>compose song from poem</i>	Structural tension chart introduction	Video #1
2	Tue, Sep 6	Editing Expand: Create B part	Adding a contrasting section	Video #2
3	Fri, Sep 9	Edit Illustrate Books		Video #3
4	Tues, Sep 13	Practice Make recording		Video #4

5	Fri., Sep 16	Perform for K Discuss performance	Video #5 Group recording 1 picture song book
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Date	Lesson	Mini-lesson	Data Collected	Date
6	Tues, Sep 20	<i>Project 2: Songs from poems: small groups</i> Choose poems, Practice	New structural tension chart introduction	Video #6 Case study audio #1 Digital recordings
7	Tues, Sep 27	Work on songs		Video #7 case study audio #2
8	Fri, Sep 30	Work on songs and books		Video #8 Case study audio #3 Digital recordings
9	Fri, Oct 7	Practice and perform for Kindergarten classes Discuss performance		Video #9 Case study audio #4 8 group recordings 8 picture songbooks Digital recordings

Date	Lesson	Mini-lesson	Data Collected	Date
10	Tues, Oct 18	<i>Project 3: Number songs</i>	Introduce new chart Choose partners	Video #10 Case study audio #5 Work sheets
11	Tues, Oct 25	Work on developing poems and songs		Video #11 Case study audio #6 Digital recordings
12	Fri, Oct 28	Dr. McCarthy's visit	Finding the tonic	Video #12
		Develop songs for the poems		Case study audio #7 Studio tapes Digital recordings
13	Tues, Nov 1	Illustrate picture song books	Where does a tune come from?	Video #13 Case study audio #8 Studio tapes Digital recordings
14	Tues, Nov 8	Illustrate books	Recognize and vary a known tune: <i>Hush Little Baby</i>	Video #14 Case study audio #9 Studio tapes Digital recordings

Date	Lesson	Mini-lesson	Data Collected	Date
15	Fri, Nov 11	Practice for K sharing		Video #15
		Finish books		Case study audio #10
		Make recordings		Studio tapes
				23 picture songbooks
16	Tues, Nov 15	Kindergarten sharing session		Video #16 Case study audio #11
November (various dates)		Make final CD recordings		Digital recordings Notations
		Interview parents		Transcriptions
		Interview children		
		Interview teacher		

Data Analysis

The use of *Ethnograph* v5.0 (Seidel, 1998) software helped to organize the data, which consisted of transcriptions of tapes and interviews, journal notes, and analysis of notations and worksheets. As patterns developed from the data, I used open and axial coding procedures. Open coding is defined by Strauss & Corbin (1998) as: “The analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data” (p. 101). For example, as members of a group worked to learn each others’ versions of a song, the song became gradually

more tonal and predictable, and the melodic range tended to narrow. This happened in more than one group.

As themes emerged, axial coding took place. Strauss & Corbin (1998) define axial coding: “The process of relating categories to their subcategories, termed “axial” because coding occurs around the axis of a category, linking categories at the level of properties and dimensions” (p. 123). To carry the previous example of open coding into the realm of axial coding, a close analysis of the various versions of the group songs indicated that the songs were evolving into more memorable structures (Snyder, 2000). This analysis revealed a “conditional context in which a category (phenomenon) is situated” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 123). Axial coding thus brings together fragments of data that emerged during the process of open coding. These types of coding, open and axial, guided the interpretation of the data that emerged during the study.

Table 4.
Table of Data Recording and Analysis

Sources of data	Means of collecting	Process
Observations of whole class	16 Videotapes of lessons 23 audio tapes of songs Digital recordings of songs	Open and axial coding
Recordings of 3 selected children as they work	33 Audio recordings from individual microphones	Open and axial coding

Sources of data	Means of collecting	Process
Researcher reflections and observations	Researcher daily journal	Open and axial coding
Perspectives of 3 selected children And final song: <i>Sunny Day</i>	Open interviews, audio-taped	Open and axial coding
Perspectives of parents of 3 selected children	Open interviews, audio-taped	Open and axial coding
Composed songs of the children, whole class as well as 3 selected children	23 final audio recordings notation of songs by researcher	Song analysis of notations Open and axial coding
Perspectives of the classroom teacher	Open, audio-taped interview, recollections in journal	Open and axial coding
Children's worksheets Children's picture song books	Scanning	Open and axial coding

Interpretation

Webster's Model of Creative Thinking Process in Music (Webster, 2002)

served as a framework for this study. Interpretation of creative process was based on theories of Webster and Sloboda (1985, 1990). The work of Swanwick and Tillman (1986) and theories of Swanwick (1988) provided a basis for the interpretation of children's stages of musical thinking as evidenced by their processes and songs. The work of Wiggins (2003) and Glover (2000) provided a foundation of research and theory for understanding the processes, products, development and social interactions of the young composers in this study. Interpretation of teacher role was based on the theories of Vygotsky, Bruner and Bandura.

In order to assess processes and developmental stages in composing, I listened to and transcribed the selected students' compositions and, using a table, described the characteristics of the students' songs, including in-progress versions of songs (See Table 5 for an example of this chart). I omitted rhythmic elements from the assessed characteristics, because the text determined the rhythm. The meter was determined by the children as they chanted their given text. Expressive characteristics included tempo, dynamics, and articulation. I entered notes about the items and looked for patterns.

Interpretation of compositional processes and other data that emerged during the study involved a quest for an understanding of each case and its individual story, as well as understanding across the multiple cases of the three selected students within the context of the class as a whole. Multiple cases provide opportunities for comparisons: "When multiple cases are carefully ordered along a key dimension,

powerful explanations are more likely" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998a. p. 205). I compared the processes, products, interactions and development of the three children. I also found connections among the three children regarding key patterns such as memory, structure and artistic control.

Methods of Validation

A disinterested peer checked my song transcriptions against the recordings of the song compositions and compared songs produced by each selected child over the eleven weeks, looking for accuracy in transcribing. We discussed her findings and I made some adjustments in the transcriptions. Additionally, confirmations of validation arose from multiple data sources: video tapes of the entire class, observation and reflection journal, recordings of all of the children's songs, audio tapes of the three selected children's conversations and composing activity, and audio tapes of interviews with the classroom teacher, selected children and their parents.

In this chapter, I presented a rationale for my research methodology, a case study: the importance of a naturalistic setting, and participant research. I described my role in the study, ethical considerations, and the data I collected in order to answer each of my questions. I provided a framework of how I analyzed and interpreted the data.

Table 5

Example of Table of Analysis of Children's Song Characteristics

Characteristics	Samantha: <i>Snail 1&2</i>	Sarah: <i>Snail 3</i>	Samantha: <i>Snail 4</i>	Sarah & Sam: <i>Snail 5</i>
Melodic range	G4 – F5	C4 – C5	B flat 3 – C5	B flat 3 – C5
	(middle C = 4)			
Tonal Hierarchy	B flat & E flat	B flat, E flat, shift to F	shifting	E flat
Key Stability	E flat	E flat, to F	shifting	E flat
Tonal Center	E flat, ends on A flat	E flat, to F	Shifts to C and G	E flat
Harmony Inferred	E flat, A flat, B flat chords	B flat, A flat, and F chords	A flat, C minor, B flat, to C	E flat, A flat, C minor
Form: phrasing	1 st rises 2 nd falls	Both phrases rise, fall, rise, fall	1st falls, rises 2 nd falls and rises partially	1 st falls, rises partially 2 nd does same

Characteristics	Samantha Snail 1 & 2	Sarah: <i>Snail 3</i>	Samantha: <i>Snail 4</i>	Sarah & Sam: <i>Snail 5</i>
Form: phrases	Rising, falling	Little contrast	Little contrast	Little contrast
Form: Sequences	None	None	None	None
Form: sections	A Spoken section is developed but not practiced with these versions			
Form: Intro, coda	No	No	No	No
Expressive	Tempo is slow	Slow	Slow	Slow
Text Setting	Slow like a snail; Climbing like a snail			
Variation	No	No	No	No
Style	No	No	No	No
Song Similarity	No	No	No	No

Chapter 4: The Composition Experiences of the Class Members

In this chapter I will describe the class composing experiences beginning with the first composing project in which the whole class composed a song together in ABA form using a short poem as the basis of the A section. The notations, observations and descriptions are a compilation from video tapes, audio tapes and journal notes. During the first project the five primary participants (Sarah, Nathaniel, Jennifer, Allen and Jasmine) did not wear individual microphones. During the second composing project, the five children wore individual microphones from sessions six through eight. Beginning with session nine I established Sarah, Nathaniel and Jennifer as the primary participants. The experiences of all of the children together in the class provide a rich context for the study.

First Composing Project (Sessions 1-5): A Class-Composed ABA Song

Session 1: Work With Poem, Find a Melody

The goal for the first project was to model the composing of an ABA song for the children by guiding the class in the creation of such a song, beginning with a simple, four-line poem. The children were to create the A section of a song using the words of a poem as the song lyrics (Hall, 2001):

Apples

Red, yellow, green, for meals or in between

Juicy and sweet, my favorite autumn treat

For snack or lunch, I really like to munch

Apples! Crunch!

They were then to create a contrasting B section using their own words as lyrics. The finished product would contain a repetition of the A section after the B section, resulting in an ABA structure.

In order to encourage success in this project I reviewed with the children a song and movement activity that was structured in ABA form with which they were familiar, *Shoo, Fly*. After we sang and moved to *Shoo Fly* we briefly discussed how the two sections of the song contrasted. I then invited the children to sit in rows on a rectangular rug in front of my chair, which was positioned in the front of the room near the stereo and in front of the dry marker board. I introduced them to the poem that I had written called *Apples*, explaining that we would turn the poem into a song together. I showed them a chart (Appendix F), which I called a *creating chart*. Fritz (2003b) calls such a chart a *Structural Tension Chart*, a term he uses to describe the tension which is created by the difference between a goal and the current reality of one's creation. The top of the chart showed the goal: an ABA song. The bottom of the chart showed what we had, or "current reality" (Fritz, 1991, p. 26). In this case, we had a poem to use for our A section. We also had knowledge of other ABA songs. Action steps filled the space between the final goal and the current reality, from the

bottom up. We began to work on the first action step: “get to know the poem.” We did this by chanting the words together.

I had written M Hall at the end of the poem to indicate authorship. As we chanted the poem, Sarah added “Miss Hall” as though it were a part of the poem. Children giggled, and it immediately became a class joke, with more children joining in to add my name each time. After chanting the poem several times, I suggested that the children start thinking about a tune while they were chanting softly, then whispering, then thinking the words. Several children raised their hands. Thomas, who was a piano student, volunteered that we could make up the tune on instruments. “We could,” I replied. “Let’s sing it for now.” Then James raised his hand and chanted the poem very expressively, his voice rising and falling. When I asked the class if James was singing or speaking, many voices replied, “speaking.” James looked surprised.

Next I called on Sarah, who sang her first version of the complete poem (figure 2).

Apples (version 1)

Sarah

Red, yel-low green, for meals or in be-tween, jui-cy and sweet, my fav-rite aut-umn treat, for
snack or lunch, I real-ly like to munch ap-ples, crunch!

Figure 2. Sarah’s first version of *Apples*.

I asked Sarah if she could sing it again phrase by phrase so that the class could echo. She sang her second version, *Apples 2*, (figure 3) similar to the first, with the last measure differing the most.

Apples 2

Sarah

Red, yel - low, green, for meals or in be - tween, jui - cy and sweet my
favorite aut - umn treat for snack or lunch I real - ly like to munch ap - ples crunch!

Figure 3. Sarah's second version of *Apples*.

I pointed out the spoken words at the end: “Apples! Crunch!” When I asked the class if they wanted to go with that, Allen nodded vigorously, but the rest of the class reacted in a neutral manner or shook their heads.

Chris, sitting in the back row, seemed to be in a world of her own, staring at an object that twirled gently on the end of a string. Every now and then Gracie, also in the back row, would tuck her legs in tightly and tumble backwards, and then roll back to her place in the row. The others were attentive, shifting positions frequently, singing when asked.

I asked Sarah to clarify her last phrase. She sang the third phrase with a higher pitch in the last part (Figure 4).

Apples Clarification

Sarah

for snack or lunch, I real-ly like to munch ap-ples crunch

Figure 4. Sarah's clarification of phrase 3, *Apples*.

I repeated what I just heard and asked her if that sounded correct. She nodded. Her legs were crossed, but she was partly risen up from her position, and every now and then bounced up and down a bit, fully engaged in the proceedings. I asked her to sing her idea for the song one more time. She sang her third version, *Apples 3* (Figure 5). Her third phrase differed from her clarification phrase, sounding more like her first version.

Apples 3

Sarah

Red, yel - low, green, for meals or in be - tween, jui - cy and sweet, my
fav - rite aut - umn treat, for snack or lunch, I real - ly like to munch ap - ples, crunch!

Figure 5. Sarah's 3rd version of *Apples*.

I invited the class to sing the song with her. This version (Figure 6), with Sarah and the class singing together, sounded like Figure 5 for the first two phrases, and Figure 4 for the third phrase.

Apples 4

Class

4

5

Figure 6. The class and Sarah singing together.

I commented to the class that the pitch keeps getting higher. Luke chimed in: “Yes! Like when you did your guitar rrrung (his voice slid upward in pitch)!” I decided to add a guitar accompaniment with some soft chords. I had a guitar near my chair, one that I often used to accompany the children’s or my own singing. As I took up my guitar, Sarah bounced up and down, waving her arms excitedly. “Cool!” she exclaimed. The class sang again, Figure 7, while I accompanied on the guitar. Most of the children sang the last two words instead of speaking them. This version would be the one that the children sang from this point on with the exception of the last two words.

Apples 5

Class

4

5

Figure 7. Class version of *Apples* at the end of the first session.

I asked the children to sing it again so that I could work on the guitar chords. This time the chords did not go well with the music the children were singing, and I could hear several different versions of the song. Luke complained that he could not hear the guitar very well. I told him that I was playing softly in order to figure out the chords. I promised the children I would listen to the videotape and figure out what I did the first time, because it certainly sounded better. “We need to remember our song,” I announced. “I’ll sure remember it,” Sarah called out. When I explained our agenda for the next class, that we would create a B section, several children called out, “Cool!” As I reviewed what we had accomplished on our song creation, Allen spoke: “Cool! We created a whole song!” Sarah commented, “I liked that tune and I’m sure going to practice it.”

Session 2: Expand and Contrast

Four days later we gathered together on the rug again after singing, dancing, and working on rhythm patterns. I had listened to the tape of the previous class composing session and had created a simple guitar accompaniment for the song. First we reviewed our song, as in Figure 8. Sarah said that she remembered it, and agreed to sing it for the class. It sounded like a combination of the first version, on phrases one and two, and the fourth version on the third phrase. I tried to notate as she was singing.

Apples 6

Sarah

Rec, yel - low, green, for meals or in be - tween, juic - y and sweet, my
 fav - rite aut-mun treat, for snack or lunch, I real - ly like to munch ap-ples, crunch!

Figure 8. Sarah's version of *Apples* after several days.

I sang her version back to her, (Figure 9), but I had not quite heard the last phrase the way she had just sung it, and I sang the first pitch of each gesture one step lower than Sarah had sung it.

Apples 7

Hall

Red, yel - low, green, for meals or in be - tween, juic - y and sweet, my
 fav - rite aut - umn treat, for snacks or lunch, I real - ly like to crunch ap-ples, crunch!

Figure 9. Teacher's version of *Apples*.

The class now echoed me phrase by phrase as I sang version #7. Sarah's hand was up, waving in the air. She did not wait to be called on, but shouted out, "Instead of snack, snacks! Snacks or lunch! It didn't sound right, 'for snack.'" Luke added, "What about snacks or lunches?" "Naaaa," replied Sarah. "That doesn't sound right." The word, "snack" became "snacks."

I worked out the chords for the *Apples* version in Figure 9, singing aloud so that the children could hear me working out the chords that would sound best. I did it

again, replacing some chords that did not sound right. As I sang and strummed, Luke smiled and swayed. Emilia mouthed the words. All seemed attentive, even Chris in the back row. When I finished, Luke called out, “You got it!” Sarah exclaimed, “That works for me!” I demonstrated which chords I was using, calling them out by name. Luke said he had seen “that stuff” in a banjo book. A discussion now ensued about people playing instruments. Sean talked about his Mom and a restaurant where she has bands. Georgia said that her dad plays guitar. Sean’s cousin plays drums and guitar. Another child said she had a flute and plays it. Joan has a guitar but a string broke. Samantha’s brother plays trumpet. Sarah’s brother used to play trumpet.

The class sang the song again, as in Figure 10, while I played the guitar and listened carefully to the singing. This version was like version number four. I was hearing several variations of the melody, and asked the children to sing it again for me as I listened. This time I heard some children singing a variation in which the first gesture of the third phrase was a step higher at the beginning, and the second gesture was another step higher as it began.

Apples 9

Class

Red, yel - low green, for meals or in - be - tween, juic - y and sweet, my
favorite aut - umn treat, for snacks or lunch, I real - ly like to munch Ap - ples! Crunch!

Figure 10. Whole class version of *Apples*.

Somewhat the ending had evolved. Children were singing the song in several different variations, but some strong voices were now beginning the last gesture up one whole step higher, to the leading tone. Melodically speaking, the song now sounded like it was going somewhere. The structure (key of C major) now had this pattern for pitches falling on the strong beat of each measure (Note that middle C = C4):

Phrase 1: E and F

Phrase 2: F and G

Phrase 3: A and B

The children still spoke the word, “apples.”

I asked the children if they wanted to make any changes, or if they wanted to move on. Sarah declared, “I think it sounds good.” I asked the children if we were ready to go on with the B section. “Yeah,” many of them replied. James shook his head. “I was too busy over the weekend to think of an idea,” he said. Sarah was still thinking about the section which she had helped construct: “I already sang it and got it stuck in my head the whole weekend. I did it yesterday, the day before that, and the day before that.”

We looked at a new structural tension chart in order to help us plan our action steps for the B section and discussed ways to make the B section different. Joan whispered to Gracie, and then Gracie suggested (for Joan) that we could make it a little higher. James was suggesting words as he sang them on descending pitches. He sang: “picking apples from the tree, eating them – aaach!” He buried his head in his hands, showing frustration. Samantha thought we could sing it a little slower for

contrast. Children were singing softly. Nobody volunteered additional words for James's suggestion. I suggested "picking them for you and me." Children nodded. Joan's hand shot up. She sang *Apples, B Section* (Figure 11).

Apples: B Section

Joan

Pick - ing ap - ples from the tree, pick - ing them for you and me

Figure 11. Joan's suggestion for the contrasting section of *Apples*.

Sarah was nodding vigorously. I confirmed Joan's version of the B section by singing it back, first on solfegge, and then with the words. Joan nodded. I suggested that we put that part in and sing it all to see how it sounded together. "Cool!!!" shouted Allen. "We just made up our own song!" exclaimed Sarah. The class sang the A section as in versions #8 and #9 mixed together, added in the new B section, and we sang the A section once more. On the final word, "crrrunch," Allen tumbled forward. It was time to go, but first Sarah had a thought to share: "I like the way my tune sounded, and I like the new part. I thought it was perfect the way it was, but then when the person said the other sentence that we could add on, I'm, like, yeah. That sounds good with it too." During the next class we would need to refine it. As we prepared to leave the room for lunch, Samantha, Emilia and Mike all came up to me with suggestions: sing "apples, crunch" rather than speak it, sing the B part twice since it is very short, and we should sing for kindergarten classes.

Session 3: Edit and Illustrate

In class, three days later, I made these suggestions to the class on behalf of the three students, and we discussed all three of the ideas. First we discussed “Apples, crunch!” Suggestions included “Take it away” and “Sing it.” Emilia and Joan both made suggestions (See Figure 12).

Emilia's and Joan's suggestions

Emilia's suggestion: *Joan's suggestion:*

Ap - ples, Crunch!

Ap - ples cr - unch!

Figure 12. Two suggestions for final endings of *Apples*.

Children shook their heads. Joan suggested going downward on “crunch” from sol down to doh, as in the example above. Now heads nodded and several said, “Yes.” I then suggested a downward glissando on the word “crunch.” Children nodded and some said, “Yeah.”

Next we discussed the B section. Some of the suggestions were: keep it the way it is; sing the words once, then hum the tune; use neutral syllables the second time, like “la;” and add more words. Joan whispered to Gracie, who suggested adding more words about eating the apples. Someone called out, “eating them with you and me.” Another person sang spontaneously, using the B tune, “Eating apples from the tree, eating them with you and me.” A few children shook their heads. Finally, I

thought of the words, “sharing them with you and me.” The words did not make perfect sense, but children called out, “yeah!” We had our B section.

I then explained how we would share our song: We would make a picture songbook and a tape, perform the song for a kindergarten class, and leave the book and tape with them to enjoy. Sarah exclaimed, “Cool! Cool. Sure! Cooooooool! (descending glissando).

The children now sang the song through from beginning to end. It seemed they were again singing several variations on the A melody at the same time. The B melody was fairly in unison, but the “apples, crunch” was not. Joan raised her hand. Her voice was too soft for me to hear, so her neighbor, Gracie, called out what she was saying. She had a suggestion for both a first and a second ending using the “apples, crunch” (Figure 13).

Joan's suggestion

1. Ap - ples, Crunch!

2. Ap - ples cr - unch!

*Figure 13. Joan's suggestion for first and second endings for *Apples*.*

I asked for hands to show whether the children liked this idea or not. Most hands went up. The period was over.

That evening I watched the video tape and listened carefully to the melodies the children were singing. The version as in Figure 10 of the A section was the most prevalent among the singers. The B section was in the most agreement. The children sang the “apples, crunch” section the way Joan had suggested (Figure 13), ending the A section the first time it was sung with the first ending, and ending the A section

when it returned with the second ending. I notated the sections and learned to sing them well with guitar accompaniment so that I could prompt the children with the song that they had created.

Session 4: Record and Illustrate

At the beginning of the next class I reviewed the structural tension chart for the children so that they could see what they had accomplished and what was left to do. We also practiced the song and I recorded it in order to make tapes for the picture songbooks. We taped several times, and would have listened to our tape in order to improve ourselves, but I had trouble with the recording equipment. The children would have to rely on my critique in order to improve. I worked with the children's singing in order to help them all to sing the same version together in unison, the version most had agreed upon. Also, the children seemed excited, and were singing too loudly, and out of tune. A second taping, as in Figure 14, sounded more in tune and the quality of the children's singing was much improved.

Apples 10 (final)

Class

The musical score consists of two staves of music in common time. The top staff uses a treble clef and the bottom staff uses a bass clef. Chords are indicated above the staff: C, G⁷, C, F, C, G⁷, F, C, G⁷, C, F, C, F, C, F. The lyrics are as follows:

Red, yel - low, green, for meals or in be - tween, juic - y and sweet, my fav - rite aut - umn treat, for snacks or lunch, I
fine

G⁷ F G⁷ | 1C C | 2C |

real - ly like to munch ap - ples, crunch! ap - ples, crirr - unch
G⁷

slower C F C G⁷ C F C G⁷ | rit. | D.C. al fine

Pick - ing ap - ples from the tree, pick - ing them for you and me,
 Eat - ing ap - ples from the tree, shar - ing them with you and me,

Figure 14. Final version of *Apples* as recorded in class.

The children then worked on the picture songbooks. I had pre-printed pages with picture outlines and typed words to the songs, enough to make a picture song book for each of six kindergarten classes and one for the children's own class. There was plenty of coloring and page decoration to accomplish. As the children colored, many sang the song and chattered happily. I could hear Sarah's clear, high voice singing the *Apples* song. "Are we really singing for the kindergarten classes on Friday?" asked several children. "Cool!!!" The children finished their book pages that day in music class.

I then had three days to assemble the seven books. I laminated the bright yellow tag board covers and used comb bindings and a book making machine owned by the school to complete the books. The title and a large apple, colored by children, decorated the front cover. I made seven copies of the tape. By Friday, everything was ready.

Session 5: Practice and Perform

The children were excited to see the finished book. I showed them the final copies of the books that they had colored. I showed them the notation of their song that was fastened to the last page of the book. Some expressed their excitement with words like "Wow!" and "Awesome!" When I announced that we were going down to the kindergarten classes in about two minutes, there was a collective gasp of pleasure. There were also smiles, and whispered sounds of "Yay." We practiced the song. I handed a bag of the books and tapes to Allen and asked Jared to help him distribute

them to the teachers. Allen and Jared seemed pleased. I chose Allen and Jared because Allen had been enthusiastic about the project even though he did not contribute any real song material. Jared was marginal in his participation, but cooperative. He was a boy who loved to explore and be active. He was not very confident of his singing. I wanted to involve him in the project in a positive way. Jared seemed happy to have something special to do.

We then lined up to go down the hallway. "This is the most exciting day of my life," proclaimed Allen as we filed out of the room. I asked him why. "Because I get to sing for the kindergarten teacher I had when I was in kindergarten," he explained. The atmosphere was electric. As I glanced down the line of children who were bobbing along, smiling broadly, I was very glad the arrangements had worked out and we were being welcomed as performers in the kindergarten classrooms. It was as though we were going to perform our original composition in Carnegie Hall.

The children in the first kindergarten class were all sitting on a large, colorful oval rug. We filed in and surrounded the class in a circle. Jared hid behind Allen, peeking around his shoulder self-consciously. I introduced the two classes to each other and gave a brief explanation of how our song came to be made. I played a short guitar introduction, and the children sang boldly, with confidence and beauty and no prompting from me. When the song was finished, the teacher prompted the kindergartners to applaud. She exclaimed what a wonderful song it was. She was particularly surprised and pleased when Allen and Jared presented her with a picture songbook and tape. I briefly explained that this was a picture song book that we had made for them, and a tape of us singing, which they could keep in their classroom.

The rest of the six performances were similar except that Allen and Jared took over the book and tape explanation without any encouragement from me. It happened quite naturally: They began to talk when they handed the book and tape to the teacher and I remained quiet. With each performance Jared hid himself less. By the last performance he stood in full view.

When we returned to the music classroom we had ten minutes remaining. I thought that we should share some closure with each other. I asked the children what it meant to them to perform their own song today, or how it felt to perform their song. Sarah quickly raised her hand to share. She told the class, “I announced on my bus this morning that this is going to be the most exciting day ever, because our class is singing our song for kindergarten classes today!”

Jared said that he was kind of nervous all the way, except for the last performance. He agreed with me that performing takes “getting used to.” Others agreed with this statement as well. Joan used the term, “stage fright.” I asked her what that is. She spoke her reply so softly that I could not hear her. Gracie interpreted for Joan: “Not liking to sing in front of other people.” Now Joan spoke so that we could hear her: “With people I know I have less stage fright.” Gracie added her own comment: “I was scared at first, but on the first one, I knew Mrs. Richards, and when I went to that class, I just felt good. And when I went to Mrs. Herd’s class, I felt good too. I kind of got used to it.” Jasmine said she was not scared, but that she was nervous. A number of others described their fear or nervousness, and told of their increasing comfort from one performance to the next. “You have to get used to it,” someone said.

Others expressed their pleasure. James, the tallest boy in the class, who had an advanced vocabulary, proclaimed: “I feel like it was a pleasure to perform for other kids that some I know, and some I don’t. It was a pleasure to perform for the kindergartners.” Luke wished we could perform for first grade, especially for his former teacher’s class. Brenda added, “What about second grade?” Mike thought that would not be a good idea “because they’re doing the same thing we are.”

The class session was over. As we concluded the discussion, I announced that there was one more copy of the picture song book and tape to take back to their own classroom. The children clapped and said “Yay!” I also told them that next week we would be creating new ABA songs, this time in small groups. Somebody called out: “Will we perform our song for either first grade or kindergarten?” “Yes,” I replied. The performance was an important culmination for the composing assignment. Performing outside of the music classroom for younger children and former teachers was meaningful for the students.

Second Composing Project (Sessions 6-9): Songs Composed in Small Groups

I wanted the children to experience composing ABA songs more independently, but with the support of friends. Small groups could allow this to happen. How to plan for group formation was a challenge. There were many choices to consider such as group size, boy-girl mix, ability mix, free choice of partners, and selected case study children mixed with non-selected children. If I considered ability, would I consider musical, leadership, or reading ability? I wanted motivation to be

high for the project. Choice is motivating (Marchese, 1997) and children produce better compositions with friends than with non-friends (Miell & MacDonald, 2000; Wiggins, 2003). I valued motivation and quality of work, knowing that I could help groups that needed my help if there were reading difficulties. I decided to invite children to find a friend or two with whom they wanted to work.

Session 6: Choose Groups and Poems, and Get Started

Children quickly selected one or two partners and sat with them on the floor. There was one group of two boys and two girls: Sean, Luke, Katie and Joan. I wanted to limit group sizes to two or three children. Katie and Joan wanted to stay together, but Luke did not want to pair up with Sean. I asked Luke to please work with Sean, and the matter was settled, but I was not sure how the two boys would work together. We now had eight groups. Two children were absent and would have to join with these two pairs.

There was another choice to consider. The children could write their own lyrics, or I could provide poems. I decided to provide poems on this project and add the task of lyric writing to the next project. How would the groups choose poems? I read ten public domain poems to the class. The children signaled each other when they liked or disliked a poem. They tapped their partner on the arm and nodded or shook their heads. They also waved or gave thumbs up or down. Sometimes they would whisper about the poem. Then I repeated the song titles and subject matter and asked groups to raise their hands if they liked a particular poem. I handed copies of the poem to the group that liked it. All of the children seemed in agreement with their

group partners except for Jennifer. Her partners, Michelle and Thomas, wanted *Four Seasons*. Jennifer wanted *Wiggly Woo*, which had been claimed by another group. Her face showed her displeasure, and she shoved aside the poem. I asked the children to practice rhythmically chanting their poems. A few seconds later Jennifer picked up her poem and began to work with it.

Table 6 shows the group members and their chosen poem titles. The children in bold print were the original five case study participants. The children whose names are underlined were targeted readers, reading one or more levels below grade level.

Table 6

Group Membership and Chosen Poems

Names	Poem Titles	Sources
Allen , Georgia, Gracie	<i>Soap Bubbles</i>	Harris, 1920
<u>Brenda</u> , Emilia, Jasmine	<i>Wiggly Woo</i>	Pinnell & Fountas, 2004
<u>Chris</u> , Jared, Joseph	<i>A Wish</i>	Dann, 1914
Jennifer , Michelle, Thomas	<i>Four Seasons</i>	Pinnell & Fountas, 2004
Joan, <u>Katie</u>	<i>Hippity Hop to the Candy Shop</i>	Pinnell & Fountas, 2004
<u>Luke</u> , Randy, <u>Sean</u>	<i>Handy Pandy</i>	Pinnell & Fountas, 2004
Nathaniel , Mike, James	<i>Snow</i>	Earhart, 1920 and Pinnell & Fountas, 2004
Sarah , Samantha, Marah	<i>The Snail</i>	Pinnell & Fountas, 2004

Note: Names in bold are the five selected case studies. Underlined names are targeted readers.

I attached the microphones to the five selected children, Allen, Sarah, Nathaniel, Jennifer and Jasmine, before they started working with the poems. This

was the first time that the five selected children wore their microphones and tape players. While children practiced speaking their poems, I attached a cotton tool belt apron around the waist of each of the five children while explaining to them that I was interested in how they composed songs. I had already spoken with each child about this, and they all had agreed to wear the microphone. A small tape recorder was in the apron pocket. The microphone was attached to the tape recorder and was clipped to the shirt. When these five children returned to their groups, there was quite a bit of interest in the recorders. Coincidentally, all five selected children were in different groups from each other. Children were working quickly. Some were even singing.

I made PVC pipe “telephones” available to all of the children so that they could easily hear themselves singing. Many of the children were now using these pipes. Jared and his partner, Joseph, needed help. I helped them to figure out the words in their poem, and showed them how to sit facing each other so that they could hear each other. Sarah came up to me to fix her microphone, which had slipped off of her shirt. Luke and Sean were off-task. I went over to them to help them figure out their poem, which they were not able to read well. Jennifer came over to me to tell me that her microphone had slipped off. It was clear that I would need to find out a better way to secure the microphones.

After a few minutes, I asked each group to chant their poem for the class. Sean and Luke were first. They stumbled over words, reading haltingly. Jared and Joshua were next. They, too, stumbled and hesitated between words. Sarah, Samantha and Marah chanted their poem fluently and rhythmically. Joan and Katie were next.

They, too, chanted fluently and rhythmically. Jennifer, Michelle and Thomas read softly, but fluently and rhythmically as well. Allen, Georgia and Gracie chanted softly, with some hesitation. Nathaniel, James and Mike read rhythmically, with strong, confident voices. Jasmine's microphone had come off again, so I fixed it. Jasmine, Brenda and Emilia blended chanting and singing in a rhythmic rendition of their poem.

In just a few minutes, the eight groups were in four different stages of development with their songs, due to differences in reading ability. Two groups were struggling to read their poems, one group was steady but unsure as they read the poem, four groups read theirs well, and one group was beginning to sing the poem. The period ended. The use of text in composing adds a complication, another dimension of learning, that of language. The six children in the class who had special reading interventions were not able to read fluently. The children would have to work with their poems to become fluent readers in order to be able to sing them. I tried to engage the two reading specialists to help these children read their poems more fluently, but they both said they were too busy with requirements during a time that was already too short. I gave all of the children copies of their poems to take with them and to practice. By the next class session Sean could still not read his poem fluently.

Session 7: Work on Songs

I began the next class session by having the children look at the structural tension chart so that each group could assess their progress, and keep in mind the end

results that we were seeking. Children would then know, by reviewing the actions steps for creating an ABA song, what they each needed to do that day. The task was to create a melody for the lyrics. I reminded the children of the process we used to negotiate the “Apples, crunch” part of the *Apples* song. “You might use a little of each person’s melody, or you might decide upon one person’s melody that you like the most,” I explained. Some of the children brought up the performing aspect of the project. They were already thinking about kindergarten and first grade classes with whom they would like to share their picture song books.

I gave the children a few minutes to work at their seats alone with their poem and a PVC pipe “telephone.” For about five minutes children were softly speaking, and some were singing into their pipes. Some were peeking through the pipes or putting them up to their mouths, and I had to correct these behaviors. I had already put the tape recorder aprons on the selected case study children, and this time I fixed the microphones onto the aprons with special clips that are used for hanging ID tags on peoples’ clothing. This new system worked, and children no longer had to come to me to fix their microphones.

The children then met with their groups and began working together to turn poems into songs. Randy was absent for the previous class. Luke was absent, so Sean did not have a partner for the day. Randy decided to join with Sean. The children worked for about ten minutes. Some groups seemed to develop their songs quickly, and were even working on a B section before the ten minutes passed. Toward the end of the period I stopped the children’s work in order to have each group sing their A section to the class. Some groups said that they were not ready, but some groups

wanted to share. I turned on the microphone that is connected to my stereo system so that they could be heard well.

Session 7: Share the A Section of Songs

Jennifer, Michelle and Thomas wanted to go first, singing *Four Seasons*. They had worked out a way for all of their voices to be heard individually. They sang their first phrase together, Thomas sang the second phrase, Jennifer sang the third phrase, and Michelle sang the fourth phrase. The melody was the same for each phrase. Next, Brenda, Jasmine and Emilia sang *Wiggly Woo*. They also divided the responsibility of singing the phrases. Their poem had a short B section of text, and these girls had already worked out a contrasting melody. This song did not change from this day forward (See Figure 15).

Wiggly Woo

Brenda, Emilia, Jasmine

There's a worm at the bot-tom of the gar-den And hisname is Wig gl-y Woo. There's a worm at the
10
bot-tom of the gar-den, And all that he can do is wiggle all night and wiggle all day, what - ev - er
22
else the peo-ple all say, there's a worm at the bot-tom of the gar-den and hisname is Wig-gl - y Woo!

Figure 15. Wiggly Woo by Brenda, Emilia and Jasmine

Allen, Gracie and Georgia were second. They spoke their poem, *Soap Bubbles*. When the children in the class told them that they were speaking, Allen

said, in surprise, "Speaking?" Georgia said, "We had a tune. We were just scared."

They went off into a far corner of the room to continue working.

Joan and Katie sang third. They wanted to hold the microphone in their hands.

Joan held the microphone. The two girls sang in unison and the melody had shape, although some of the pitches were not diatonic.

James, Nathaniel and Mike followed Joan and Katie. When they approached the microphone, each tried to position himself directly in front of the microphone.

James, the most assertive of the three, took the microphone out of the stand and held it downward slightly to accommodate the two shorter boys. He sang the loudest into the microphone, in the lowest part of his vocal range. The boys sang the text together, but their tunes were not the same. I asked if they wanted to do it again.

James wanted to sing again, but Nathaniel looked doubtful. He wanted to go back and practice some more. James and Mike agreed with Nathaniel. The other groups were not ready to share, and the period ended.

Session 8: Illustrate the Books and Practice

I began the following class period with a review of the structural tension chart, and had the groups raise their hands when I pointed to an action step on which they were working. I had picture song book pages for Nathaniel's group (*Snow*) and Brenda's group (*Wiggly Woo*). These poems came with a B section, and these groups had already been singing a contrasting B part and would be ready that day to work on the books. Nathaniel's group actually had a B part, even though Mike announced that they did not. When I viewed the video tape from the previous class, and listened to Nathaniel's audio tape, it became clear to me that the group had made quite a bit of

progress. The group still needed to agree on details of the A and B parts, but I decided that they were far enough along to begin coloring. I had printed, using a computer, the title page and each page of the book, with a phrase printed at the bottom of the page (landscape layout). The title was also printed on a colored tag board cover to be decorated.

I thought that by starting these groups on their books, the other groups might be motivated to work harder on their songs so that they would be ready for their book pages the following class. Children stayed on task. Two groups who had spoken their poems the week before developed a melody. Two more groups developed B sections. Some children sketched images of their poems on their poem page while they were working that day. Joan and Katie (*Hippity Hop to the Candy Shop*) each drew a candy shop with a bunny standing outside (Figures 16 and 17).



Figure 16. Katie's drawing

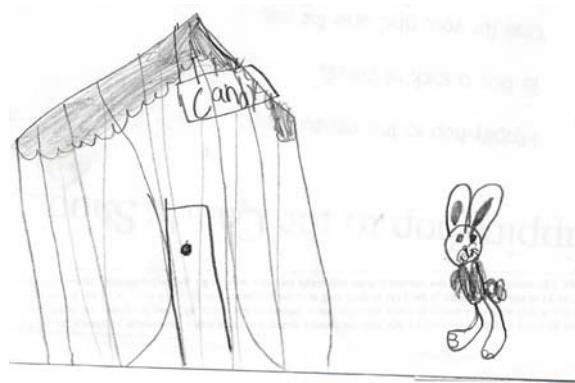


Figure 17. Joan's drawing.

At the end of class, James exclaimed, “We got so much done in such a short time!”

The class would not meet again for eleven days, and I decided to enlist Miss Dunmore’s help in finishing the books. I made titled covers and printed pages on the computer for the six groups that still needed them, printed them, and asked Miss Dunmore if the students could work on these in the classroom in their free time. She agreed, and took all of the children’s unfinished book pages to her classroom. The following week she gave all of the pages back to me, completely colored, and I made them into books with comb bindings.

Session 9: Practice and Perform

By this class session, I was now including only Sarah, Nathaniel and Jennifer as selected case study children for reasons explained in chapter 3. The children seemed excited to see their books. The groups practiced singing their songs while a group member held the book and turned the pages. I suggested that they use the *Rock, Paper, Scissors, Shoot* game or a similar means in order to choose the person to hold the book during the performance for the class to see. As Nathaniel’s group first

practiced their song together, the boys stopped singing, as James turned each page, and commented on the drawings. They especially liked the tree that one of them had drawn. Practice time was over. We lined up by group and filed down the hallway toward the kindergarten wing.

I then sent three groups to one kindergarten class to share, three to another, and two to another class. The kindergarten teachers were very gracious and facilitated the sharing process. I accompanied the three groups that went to Mrs. Herd's class: Nathaniel's group, Sarah's group, and Jennifer's group, the three groups in which the three case study children were situated. Mrs. Herd introduced the children to her class and provided text connections for the children before each song was sung. "We have learned about the four seasons, haven't we?" she reminded her students before Jennifer's group sang *Four Seasons*. "Can you picture a snail right now in your brain?" She asked when Sarah's group announced the title of their song, *The Snail*. She asked James's group to share their song a second time. The second presentation was identical to the first. Mrs. Herd asked the children how they came up with these ideas. "This is so exciting," she exclaimed. "You guys are reading and singing and drawing, and getting everything together that you love to do, right?" The children nodded.

After the sharing we returned to the music classroom and discussed how it all went. Sarah said that she was "kind of scared, but, um, I knew last time, when I was singing *Apples*, and we went into that classroom, and that kind of made me feel a little better." Samantha said that it was really hard to do the B part (her group spoke their B part). I asked her for clarification. She said that two tunes were a lot to do.

James commented that it was just great to perform for the kindergartners. Others agreed, "me, too." Mike said: "We just had the wrong timing." He was right about that. For each of the two performances, he had started the song before the others were ready and had rushed the tempo. Other children said that singing *Apples* in the kindergarten classes helped them to be ready for this experience.

Following this discussion there was a small block of time remaining in which I thought I could record a group singing their song in order to make a more polished recording to go into a pocket in the picture song book. Nathaniel's group volunteered to go first. A power struggle over the microphone ensued in which each boy wanted to dominate the microphone, and I was not able to get a recording that sounded good. At the end of this class period I was left with many questions.

Questions and Solutions

How could I tape record the groups without the microphone struggle? When could I record the groups? I wanted to begin the next composing project during the following class. This project had taken more time than I had anticipated. Perhaps I could use rainy-day recesses to record the songs. If I record the groups one at a time when there are some free moments, would they remember their songs?

I solved the microphone problem by purchasing a boundary microphone. This type of microphone does not look like a conventional microphone. It is almost flat, and sits on the floor, or on a desk or music stand. There is no temptation to touch it or even to get close to it. It picks up the sounds all around it. I attached it to a digital recorder so that songs could be loaded directly into the computer. It was much easier

for me to notate songs that were in digital format on the computer, because I could slow down the soundtrack, pause it easily, and replay with a click of the mouse.

I decided to record the groups gradually over the next few weeks, inviting children in to record when I saw them in the hallway, and inviting groups to my room during rainy-day recesses. I listened to and notated their songs so that I could remind the children how their songs sounded in case they forgot. The children remembered their songs after a little prompting, and I was able to make a CD for each picture song book.

I had other questions to consider about the make-up of groups for the third project. For the second project two groups consisted of children with reading deficiencies. These groups did not progress as quickly as the other groups. Nathaniel's group consisted of three boys with strong personalities. This mix of personalities conflicted. Perhaps I could combine choice with some parameters, recognizing the importance of partner choice and the suggestions that pairs of friends have a higher level of engagement (Miell & MacDonald, 2000; Wiggins, 2003). I decided that, in order to encourage more independence, children would work with only one partner this time.

I decided to divide the class into two groups: one group had children with stronger musical abilities, leadership and reading abilities and one group had children with weaker musical abilities, leadership and reading abilities. Children may not be strong or weak in all three ways, but these categories seemed to be important factors in the relative success of groups in project one. Each person would have a strip of paper with his or her name on it, in one of two colors according to the way I

categorized that person. Children could only choose a partner who had a different colored strip of paper. A child could choose one person with whom to work, or could work alone. Children working “alone” could all work in the vicinity of my 4’ x 6’ rug area, thereby having each other nearby for collaboration.

I also had a decision to make regarding the sharing or performing aspect of the next project. I wanted to make the sharing of the children’s songs more personal, and also make it easier for the listeners to see the picture song books. This time each child would have a book to share. Also, each person would record individually, even though the person might have developed the song with a partner. I decided, in conjunction with a discussion with three of the kindergarten teachers, that two or three kindergartners could sit beside one child in order to see the pictures and hear the song better. The kindergartners could rotate around the room to hear different picture song books.

With these solutions in mind, I was now prepared to launch the next project, composing songs with disappearing numbered objects.

Third Composing Project (Sessions 10-16): Disappearing Number Songs

Session 10: Model the Song Form, Choose Partners, Get Started

Childhood counting songs and chants are common. Some of the children’s favorite songs use subtraction. In order to encourage the children to think about the structure of such songs, I invited them to participate in two familiar action songs and one familiar action chant with subtraction: *Ten Green Bottles, Five Green and*

Speckled Frogs, and *Five Little Sausages*. In addition, I reminded the children of other number chants with which they were familiar, *Five Little Monkeys Hanging in the Tree* and *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed*. I then invited the children to the rug area to discuss the commonality of the structure of these songs and chants, and to share with them a song I had composed entitled, *Five Humongous Hippos*.

I used a think-aloud strategy to share my composition process, following the action steps on the Structural Tension Chart (Appendix G) as I went along. The children became highly engaged in this presentation, volunteering their own ideas when I came to a place where I needed to make a decision. I shared the picture song book I had constructed. By the time I had finished, they seemed excited about making their own songs and books.

I distributed the colored slips of paper, and fourteen of the children quickly chose partners. Nine students decided to work alone, and Nathaniel and Jared decided to work alongside of each other, but create separate songs. Sarah and Georgia worked together to create the lyrics, but then worked separately to finish the song, due to a disagreement over how the melody should sound. Luke wanted a partner, and Mike consented reluctantly to work with him. When Luke said he was interested in a song about five falling tombstones, Mike rolled his eyes and asked to work separately. Twelve out of the twenty-three students worked with a partner during the entire process. I told the children that they each would have their own book, and they each would have their own recording. This freed them from having to agree on everything. It also allowed them to have the same lyrics and melody as their partner if they

wished. I wanted to grant them as much freedom and independence as possible and at the same time allow as much collaboration as they wished.

After children had partners or decided on no partners, I distributed worksheets to help guide them in the creating of their disappearing number songs (Appendix H). The first task was to decide upon a person, creature or object that would disappear. The next task was to think of an adjective to describe that person, creature or object. The subject matter then had to be doing something. Then, something had to happen that made one of the objects disappear. These were the decisions the children were making as they filled in their worksheet. The period soon ended. I collected their worksheets and read them to determine the action step status for each child.

As I scanned their papers, it looked like the children needed more ideas for subject matter. Also, I did not want the difficulty of drawing the subject matter to influence the final outcome of the picture song book. The children might be able to make use of pictures and tracing shapes or stencils. I went to a craft store and bought a large number of small wooden shapes that could be used for tracing. There were shapes of teddy bears, fish, ghosts, dogs, cats, frogs, cars, trucks, trees, stars, hearts, boats, and so on. I placed these in a basket, and made them available for the next class period. I also brought in pictures and books containing pictures: a zoo book, an insect book, and a bird book. I placed these shapes, pictures and books on a counter where I have a display called *Composer Corner*. In addition, I placed on the counter a rhyming dictionary (Young, 1994) that the children could use to help them with their words, and I spread out drawing materials on the counter.

Session 11: Develop Lyrics

The children descended upon the basket of shapes. Soon I heard children talking and singing about teddy bears, ghosts, dolphins and dragonflies. The pictures and shapes seemed to spark the students' imaginations, and now the ideas were flowing. Children were borrowing the rhyming dictionary to find words for their songs. Words, images, and melodies seemed to come all at once. Children were busy filling out their worksheets and drawing practice images on the back sides of their worksheets.

The entire period was devoted to working on the poems, with few interruptions. There was time at the end of the class for a few to share. Sarah and Georgia were already singing about five gray dolphins. It sounded like their lyrics needed more work with rhythm and rhyme. Samantha and Marah also sang their song about five little boats. Again, more work was needed to improve the rhythm and rhyme.

As I looked at their papers that night I realized that a lot of work was needed to change words into workable lyrics with rhythm and rhyme. Many of the texts sounded like narratives, and used too many words. Some of those words could be expressed in the drawings instead of in the lyrics. Often the rhythm was not well established. Some of them had no rhyming words at all. Some needed ideas for adjectives. I wanted to move this project along, and would have to work individually with the children to do so. For the next three days I worked with the children before school, during after-school bus time, right after lunch, and one day during a rainy day recess.

Session 12: Develop Songs from the Lyrics

By Friday, every child had a printed poem with rhythm and rhyme that could become a song (See Table 7). I set up a recording studio in the supply closet, using a digital recorder and a boundary microphone. The children worked busily for the entire period, singing, recording and making sketches for their books.

Table 7
Children, Their Partners, and Their Songs

Names	Song Titles
Allen, Joseph	<i>Five Little Dragons</i>
<u>Brenda</u> , Jasmine	<i>Five Little Teddy Bears</i>
<u>Chris</u>	<i>Five Pretty Dragonflies</i>
Emilia	<i>Five Little Ghosts</i>
Georgia, Sarah (later worked separately)	<i>Five Gray Dolphins</i>
Gracie, Randy	<i>Five Little Puppies</i>
<u>Jared</u> (working alongside Nathaniel)	<i>Five Black Dogs</i>
James, <u>Sean</u>	<i>Five Big Bucks</i>
Jennifer , Michelle	<i>Five Little Teddy Bears</i>
Joan	<i>Five Little Ghosts</i>
<u>Katie</u>	<i>Five Little Robins</i>
<u>Luke</u>	<i>Five Tall Gravestones</i>
Mike	<i>Five Fierce Lions</i>
Marah, Samantha	<i>Five Little Boats</i>
Nathaniel (working alongside Jared)	<i>Five Teeny Turtles</i>
Thomas	<i>Five Tiny Ants</i>

Note. Names in bold print are selected case study children. Underlined names are targeted readers.

Session 13: Find a Tune, Make Recordings, Illustrate Books

For the next class period, I set up two recording areas and recruited two parent volunteers to help with the recording. I had a cassette tape for each child labeled with the child's name. This freed me to help the children individually. The children wanted to hear themselves, and I did not like for them to waste their time waiting in line to record. With two studios, students did not wait as long. Also, by the next class period I printed the pages for their picture song books and assembled them with the comb bindings. They could now begin to draw and color the pictures in their books to illustrate their songs.

It took six class periods to complete the songs and books, record the songs, and practice sharing the books before going back to the kindergarten classes. The fact that the children recorded separately, even if they had worked together on their songs, resulted in an interesting outcome. None of the fourteen students with partners sang their song exactly the same way as their partner. Randy and Gracie's songs differed from each other the most. They had started out speaking their poem, thinking they were singing it. Marah and Samantha began each phrase differently and ended each phrase the same. The other five partnerships had the same melodic shape, but with different ranges and pitches. It is also interesting to note that 12 of the 23 final recordings were pitched in the key of F. Six of them were pitched in the key of C. Mike was the only child without a tune for his song.

Mike's Dilemma: "I Can't Find a Tune!"

Mike had difficulties with this project from the beginning. He could not find a partner, and did not want to work with Luke. He ended up working alone, but was not

happy about that. He wanted to collaborate. I asked the children who were working alone to stay near the rug area so that we could help each other. This worked well for most of the children. I stayed in the rug area as well to help as needed. Mike worked near me.

He could not decide upon a subject for his song. Finally he came up with five fierce lions. This seemed like a workable subject, but he could not decide what the lions were doing. He thought he could not draw lions for his book. I helped him find pictures of lions that he could trace. He did not like these drawings. He had his lions hunting down prey, and each verse was a different animal that would attract the lion. Drawing these animals would also present a difficulty. I found small outline drawings of all sorts of animals on a computer program that the special education teacher was using, and made those available to Mike. This seemed to satisfy him. His poem needed some work, and he was not happy when he had to change something to get the rhythm to work out, or to get a rhyme to work. Finally he had a poem.

The greatest difficulty came when he tried to find a tune for his poem. Mike said he could not find a tune. I tried to get him to sing various gestures that might be familiar to him, but he did not like that. I started one of the class periods with a lesson on finding a tune in order to help him. I asked the class if anyone could share how to find a tune. These are the answers that children gave to the question, “How do you find a tune?”

Emilia: Tunes come from your brain. I tried tunes I already knew, and I tried them, and some of them didn’t work, so I stuck with one, and that’s how I got my tune.

Samantha: Sometimes when you make a tune, the words don't always go with it, so you have to change the words.

James: I pick songs that I know, and I see if I can put that tune inside of my song.

Nathaniel: There are tunes that I hear, and I try them out, and they usually work, and that's the way I find a tune.

Michelle: Sometimes the way I get a tune is I think of something I know, and I try to put that tune into it, and I try to think of a tune that's in my brain.

Joan: I thought of them, and some of them don't work, so I tried another one that I made, and it worked.

Jennifer: I make up like rhymes of words, and then I think of words that rhyme, and that's how I make a tune. The tune comes with the words.

Luke: My tune comes from my head, or I take two tunes I know and put them together to make a whole song.

Sarah: When I make up tunes, I'm thinking of them, and if I think of one, I use the telephone (PVC pipe) to see if it sounds right or not.

This discussion did not seem to help Mike. He later complained to Nathaniel that he still could not find a tune. Nathaniel tried to help him, but in the end, Mike had no tune. He chanted his words very expressively and rhythmically. Some children used a tune they already knew. According to Wiggins (2003), "students' products are heavily reflective of their knowledge of the songs of their musical environment,

particularly when they write songs" (p. 156). Table 8 shows the songs that were similar to the children's songs. The number indicates how many children's songs were similar to a known song.

Table 8

Songs From Which Children Borrowed

Known Songs	Number of times used
<i>Hush Little Baby</i>	10
<i>Five Green and Speckled Frogs</i>	1
<i>Down By the Station</i>	1
<i>Rain, Rain, Go Away</i>	1
<i>Six Little Ducks That I Once Knew</i>	1
<i>Five Humongous Hippos</i> (Hall, 2005)	1

Hush Little Baby: The Most Popular Tune

Hush Little Baby began to creep into the students' thoughts during the ABA song project. One child, Chris, had used the tune with her group's poem, *A Wish*.

A Wish

Group

The musical notation consists of two staves of four measures each. The first staff starts with a G clef and a '4' indicating 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "Like I had a little boat, all would sail and I would float." The second staff continues with "I a sail - or proud and free, a cross the sil - ver sea." There are fermatas over the first and third notes of the first staff, and over the first note of the second staff.

Figure 18. Chris's song borrowed from *Hush Little Baby*.

I did not say anything about it at the time, because the other members of the group did not seem to have any ideas for a melody, and when Chris sang the lyrics with the tune, *Hush Little Baby*, they were satisfied. Suddenly, however, the tune became insidious. I noticed this when I listened to the cassette tapes the children recorded in the two recording studios. At least half of the songs sounded exactly like or very similar to *Hush Little Baby*. I did share three different picture song books of *Hush Little Baby* (Long, 1997; Frazee, 1999) the previous year, including one version entitled *Hush Little Alien* (Kirk, 1999). I decided to try to make unconscious use of this melody into conscious, so that the children could vary the melody.

Session 14: Varying a Known Tune, Make Recordings, Illustrate

I began the class session with an improvisation session. First, I asked the children to sing *Hush Little Baby*. They readily sang it independently, remembering all of the words. Next I had them sing it on a neutral syllable. I then sang the first phrase correctly, and improvised a different tune for the second phrase. I did this several times, and then invited the students to do the same, all together.

At first, children sang the correct tune on the second phrase, but then a number of them figured out how to change it. I invited them to try it alone with me. I sang the first phrase, and they were to improvise a tune for the second phrase. The first few children to try it sang the second phrase as they knew it, but then Sarah successfully improvised a different tune for the second phrase. I then improvised a tune for both phrases, and invited them all to try that at the same time. I then explained why we were doing this: that many of them were using the exact same tune

as *Hush Little Baby*. There was an interesting reaction in the class. Children acted surprised and some nodded. I challenged them to change their tune at least a little bit if they were using *Hush Little Baby*. I was wondering if any of them would be able to do that.

On the final recordings of the number songs, ten children's songs were similar to *Hush Little Baby*. Some were aware of the similarities and differences. Emilia pointed out to me how her song differed: "It is higher at the end." Sarah insisted, in a conversation with Nathaniel, that her song was not *Hush Little Baby*. She sang her song, and then *Hush Little Baby* to demonstrate the difference. Her tune was the same as part of a familiar tune, however, *Six Little Ducks That I Once Knew*. Nathaniel's song was not *Hush Little Baby*, but Joan picked up his picture song book and sang it with the *Hush Little Baby* tune. During the next class, when he shared it with kindergartners, he sang his words using the *Hush Little Baby* tune, even though he never before had done so.

Session 15: Surprising Ability and Notable Songs

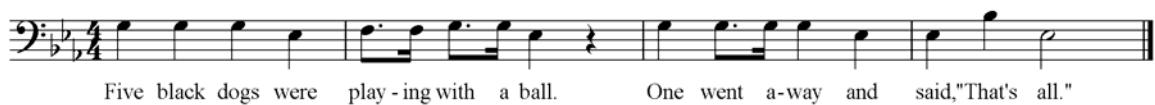
Out of 23 children in the class, 2 were not enrolled in this school in the first grade, 15 had scores of high on the first grade vocal assessment, using *Fishpole Song*, 5 had scores of average, and 1 had a score of low. Jared had the low score. He always seemed shy about singing. When he sang for his assessments, he sang very softly with a fuzzy voice and very low pitches. Jared either would not or could not sing in his head voice. The only accurate pitches Jared sang in the *Fishpole Song*, in first grade, were the lower pitches, D and middle C. When he worked with Joseph and Chris on

the second project, Chris sang the poem, *A Wish*, to the tune of *Hush Little Baby* in the key of C, which was the low part of her register. When all three sang their song together the boys' voices were very soft and lower in pitch than Chris's voice, but followed the melodic contour of the song.

Jared chose to work alongside of Nathaniel for the third project. He developed his subject, *Five Black Dogs*, and worked out a melody for his lyrics. He sang his song using mostly three pitches in the key of E flat (See Figure 19).

Five Black Dogs

Jared



Five black dogs were play - ing with a ball. One went a-way and said,"That's all."

Figure 19. Jared's song.

Jared's ability to maintain tonal syntax in this song, ending on the tonic, surprised me. As it turned out, singing skill development was sufficiently adequate for all of the children in the class to create songs in their own preferred pitch range, including Jared.

Joan was the girl who was so shy at the beginning of the school year that her friend, Gracie, volunteered her suggestions for her when we composed *Apples*. This day, two months later, Joan was sitting in a line of chairs waiting for the recording studio. She sang her song, *Five Little Ghosts*, as she waited. I first heard the song on Sarah's tape, as Sarah was waiting next to Joan and Joan's voice came through on Sarah's tape. When she went into the closet to record, her recorded version was slightly different from the one she had practiced in the waiting chairs. I was glad I

had captured a studio recording of this song, because Joan simplified her song later on, and even sang it to the tune of *Hush Little Baby* once, when she recorded it on cassette tape another day. But this day she sang a song that had melodic interest and was expressive (Figure 20).

Five Little Ghosts Swaying in the Night

Joan

Five lit - tle ghosts sway-ing in the night - One said "Boo!" and float-ed out of sight.

Four lit - tle ghosts sway-ing in the night, one said "Boo!" and float-ed out of sight.

Three lit - tle ghosts sway-ing in the night, one said "Boo!" and float-ed out of sight.

Two lit - tle ghosts sway-ing in the night, one said "Boo!" and float-ed out of sight.

One lit-tle ghost sway-ing in the night, he said- "Boo!" and float-ed out of sight, float ed out of__ sight **rit.**

Figure 20. Joan's first song with variations.

The song started out in minor tonality, with a peppy beat. The second verse changed into major tonality, and the next verse had a slight variation of this melody. The fourth verse repeated the melody of the third verse. The last verse began with a slight variation, and ended with a downward scale, slowing as the last ghost floated out of sight. She then added a coda, using the last words, “floated out of sight,” slowing even more. This song was as expressive as were the ghosts that she cut out of black paper, added faces with white chalk, and pasted into her picture song book.

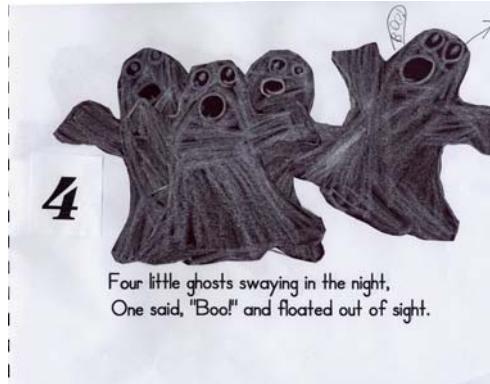


Figure 21. A page from Joan's picture song book.

Her final version of the song, which she shared with the kindergartners and recorded on tape, was very close to this version (Figure 22).

Five Little Ghosts Swaying in the Night (final)

Joan

5

Five lit - tle ghost sway-ing in the night - One said "Boo!" and float-ed out of sight.

Four lit - tle ghosts sway-ing in the night, one said "Boo!" and float-ed out of sight.
 Three lit - tle ghosts sway-ing in the night, one said "Boo!" and float-ed out of sight.
 Two lit - tle ghosts sway-ing in the night, one said "Boo!" and float-ed out of sight.
 One lit - tle ghost sway-ing in the night, he said "Boo!" and float-ed out of sight.

Figure 22. Joan's final version.

Luke was a demonstrative child. He liked to dramatize situations. For example, when we sang *America* in class, he sat tall in his chair, pretending to hold a book and a torch like the statue of liberty. His song, *Five Tall Gravestones*, had drama (Figure 23).

Five Tall Gravestones

Luke

Five tall grave-stones sit - ting on the ground, one fell down with - out a sound.

Four tall grave - stones sit - ting on the ground, one fell down with - out a sound.

Three tall grave - stones sit - ting on the ground, one fell down with - out a sound.

Two tall grave - stones sit - ting on the ground, one fell down with - out a sound.

One tall grave - stone sit - ting on the ground, it fell down with - out a sound.

Figure 23. Luke's expressive song.

Luke's voice sounded fuzzy, possibly from vocal cord damage, yet he began his song on C5, in the key of F, his tune utilizing the basic sol-mi-la-sol-mi, or 5-3-6-5-3, sequence of pitches, as in the song, *Rain, Rain, Go Away*. He sang slowly and dramatically, enunciating the words clearly. The phrases unfolded as sequences of the first phrase in a series of modulations. The second phrase began where the first one ended, so that step 3 now became step 5 of the new key, pitching the song downward in the key of D. The third phrase began up a whole step from the last pitch of the second phrase, changing the key downward again, to the key of E. The fourth phrase began upward a half step from the last pitch of the third verse, placing it in the key of B flat. This phrase ended on B flat. The last verse used only two pitches, D and B flat, ending slowly and softly on B flat at the end. His gravestones had all fallen down,

expressed by the falling pitches of each phrase and the decreasing tempo with which he sang.

Session 16: The Final Sharing

For the final sharing of these songs, I divided the children into three groups and sent each group to one of three kindergarten classes. The kindergarten teachers had discussed a plan with me and helped the sharing to run smoothly. The seven or eight composers spread themselves around the perimeter of the room and sat on the floor. The teacher divided her kindergarten class into groups of three and sent each group to one of the composers. The composers sang their books to the small groups of kindergartners, who were gathered closely to the singers so that they could easily see the picture song books and hear the songs. The composers would stop on each page so that the kindergartners could count the objects on the page. After the composer shared the book, the kindergarten group rotated to the next composer. The rotations continued until all of the composers had shared their books with all of the kindergartners in that class. When this had been accomplished, the children returned to the music room. The composers seemed to enjoy the book sharing as much as the kindergartners. The atmosphere was calm and gentle. The composers were like big brothers and sisters to the younger children, talking to them sweetly, urging them to count the objects. They sang their songs expressively, and did not seem self-consciousness.

A few months later I sent the books home with the children along with a CD for each child containing the class rendition of *Apples*, the small group ABA song that the child's group had composed, and the number song that the child had

composed. I glued into the back cover of the book a notation of the song from each child's final recording. The students were excited to take these books and CDs home.

Discussion

Musical Perception: Speaking or Singing

I had addressed the terminology, "speaking" and "singing" since I had these children as students in first grade in a variety of ways. Yet some children in this class were still not clear about speaking versus singing. James rhythmically spoke his idea for *Apples* and seemed surprised when class members informed him that he had been speaking, not singing. When the small groups were to sing the A section to the class for the first time, Allen, Gracie and Georgia spoke their poem, *Soap Bubbles*. Georgia claimed that they had a tune, but "were just scared." They did finally compose a tune for their A section. Their final version included a spoken B section, however. Sarah, Samantha and Marah also spoke their B section. Sarah commented, "I think we need to change the tune." There was no tune to change! They did not have time, in the end, to develop a melody for the B section and it remained spoken. Randy and Gracie, separately, both spoke their poem, *Five Little Puppies*, in the recording studio. When I pointed this out to them, they were able to develop a tune for their song.

There is a technical definition of the difference between speech and singing in the Western culture (Kim, 2001):

In English, speech consists of approximately 60% voiced sounds and 40% unvoiced sounds, while the vast majority of sounds generated during singing are voiced (>90%). In singing, each note that is sung is fairly constant and quantized in pitch (in Western music), as opposed to speech, in which pitch varies unpredictably and continuously. (p. 2)

Levinowitz (1998) reported a decrease in children's singing skill since the 1970s:

In fact, less than half of kindergarten-age children were able to differentiate between their singing and speaking voices when performing a familiar song. It seems that this may be the result of missing the key time to develop the singing voice during early childhood through playful activities and thoughtful adult guidance. (p. 6)

Van Zee (1984) studied the individual remediation of first grade children with vocal problems, including the confusion of speaking and singing. Van Zee concluded that problems of non-singers need to be addressed before the end of first grade. Teachers need to help children learn to sing in preschool and kindergarten.

These children all knew how to sing text, but did not always seem conscious of whether or not they were speaking or singing. If others told the children that they were speaking, they were then able to change from speaking to singing their text. This discrepancy can affect the outcome of the composition of songs as demonstrated by the individual incidences described above.

Related Skills: Language Arts

These children had experienced some poetry writing in their classroom, but were not prepared for the demands of writing lyrics. I was able to guide them in the revision of their narrative-like texts, but the writing of the lyrics was quite time consuming.

Reading fluency is another demand of song writing. Children who do not read fluently will need much help constructing and reading their own lyrics. Sean worked with James to compose *Five Big Bucks*. These boys were not wearing individual microphones, so I do not know for sure that James wrote the lyrics for the song, but

Sean's inability to speak the lyrics fluently, and consequently sing the song fluently indicate that James wrote the lyrics. I worked with Sean individually before he recorded the song, teaching him to read the words fluently, and then to connect the pitches in the melody. His final melody was slightly different from James', and it was fluent (Figures 24 and 25).

Five Big Bucks

James

Five big bucks eat - ing some corn 'Long came a hunt-er - ear - ly in the morn. Thup!

Figure 24. James' song.

Five Big Bucks

Sean

Five big bucks eat-ing some corn, a - long came a hunt-er in the morn. Thup!

Figure 25. Sean's version.

Summary

In this chapter I described the three composing projects completed by the class, including specific descriptions of class members composing. These descriptions provide a context for the three case studies. I also discussed situations that arose that affected composition outcomes: the awareness of speaking versus singing and

language arts skills. In the next chapters, I will describe and discuss the composition experiences of the three selected case study children: Sarah, Nathaniel, and Jennifer.

Chapter 5: Imaginative Sarah

Sarah's Music World at Home

Sarah was a tall, thin 7-year-old with short blond hair, bright eyes and a usual smile on her face. When she was excited about music, she wiggled and bounced and her arms would fly up and down. She told me that music is fun and makes her feel happy. When I asked her if music was important in her life in any special way, her thoughts turned to instruments and family members who played them: "My Mom played the flute, my brother played the trumpet, and my Dad played the drums. So, I really want to play an instrument too. I'd like to play the flute."

Sarah's stepfather talked about his love of instruments. He plays guitar and autoharp, and talked about his desire to build a hammer dulcimer. Her mother took flute and piccolo lessons and played in the high school band. She also taught herself to read the bass clef, and taught herself the baritone, euphonium, marching baritone, and the piano. She attended a special performing arts program in a magnet high school. Playing instruments has been and still is an important past-time in Sarah's family.

Playing instruments is not the only musical joy in Sarah's home. Singing is also a favorite past-time. One of Sarah's favorite places to sing is in the bathtub. She spoke of the songs in her head. "Every morning when I wake up there's usually a different song in my head, and I can't get it out until I sing it." At bedtime there is usually a song stuck in her head and she thinks of songs while she is falling asleep. Her mother said that she sang to Sarah from the time she was a baby – "not every

day, but often.” She remembered teaching her the *Five Little Ducks* song. According to her mother, Sarah picks up songs easily from the radio and sings along. She said that Sarah really gets into the songs, moving her head about expressively. Sarah’s mother also sings with the radio, often in the car, and encourages Sarah to sing along. What kind of music does the family listen to? “Usually country,” Sarah replied. She has her own CD player and ten CDs of various styles that she listens to when she gets home from school. She likes to listen to them while she does her homework.

Making up her own songs was new to her, however. Now that she thinks about making up her own songs, she does it more often. She described a song she recently made up at home inspired by thoughts of her mom’s birthday and the roses she wanted to get for her. “All of a sudden a song popped into my head,” she explained. She wrote the words in her school notebook. She did not think anybody else in her family made up songs. She said that she sang her *Five Gray Dolphins* song that she made up in class to her brother, her mom, her dad, and her dog. According to Sarah, the dog tipped her head to one side when Sarah sang it for her.

Sarah’s father expressed his amazement at Sarah’s imagination. “That girl has got an imagination that’s out of this world. Her imagination is unbelievable. I mean it’s really huge.” He continued, “She is the kind of person who hears a song on the radio, and she’ll burn you out on it. Sarah started picking up the words to certain songs, then she started going further with the songs and doing her own thing with them.”

He believes that her imagination comes from her mother who writes poems. One of her poems was published, and is posted on the internet. Her mother found the

poem on the internet during our conversation and shared it with me. Sarah's parents and the home environment they establish play an important role in her world of imagination. Studies suggest that informal musical experiences outside of school are most important in the musical enculturation of children up to the age of ten (Campbell, 1998; Carlin, 1998; Sloboda, 1985).

I asked Sarah what her thoughts were when she was thinking about music. "Well, at first I didn't know how music was made, or how people even thought of music. But then I just thought maybe they just thought of it. I was wondering if they got it from like other songs, or you, or anything." I asked her where her *Apples* tune came from that she shared in class. "I don't really know. I just thought of it. One second I'm thinking, and the next second my hand goes up." Sarah's interactions with her parents have helped foster and support her use of imagination and her love of music, thereby enabling her to be imaginative in a musical sense. Some of Sarah's musical imagination and awareness of musical structure unfolded over the course of the three composition projects.

Sarah's Apples

Sarah was a strong participant in the class-composed song, *Apples*. When she volunteered the first musical idea for the song, I gave her an opportunity to remember it by immediately singing it phrase by phrase for the class to echo. She instinctively broke the song into half-phrase chunks, and the class echoed her perfectly. When I asked her for clarification of the third phrase ("sing that part again, please") she sang figure 5, maintaining the melodic contour, but the intervals were slightly different. She used a 5th or a 6th as her range of pitches, singing mostly in the key of C major.

The underlying harmonic structure followed the tonic, subdominant and dominant chord structures. Her meter and rhythm patterns were stable, predetermined by the rhythm of the words, but easily maintained by Sarah. Her use of sequence and attempt to find the tonic at the end of her song demonstrated her implicit knowledge of elemental form. Most outstanding about Sarah's contribution to *Apples* was the joy and excitement she experienced as she helped the song unfold for the class. Her eyes were wide with enthusiasm and alertness. She smiled, bounced, and waved her arms about as she expressed her musical ideas. This enthusiasm for and sustained interest in creating songs remained with Sarah throughout this study.

A Mutually Cooperative Effort: A Snail

Sarah's next song was a cooperative effort with her friends, Marah and Samantha. This account of the three girls' composition experience together demonstrates how children can mutually work together to bring about the evolution of a song from an atonal musical structure that could not be easily remembered to a memorable tonal structure.

As soon as Sarah received her poem, *A Snail* (Pinnell & Fountas, 2004) she spoke the text rhythmically, in 6/8 time:

A snail crept up the lily stalk.

“How nice and smooth,” said he.

“It’s quite a pleasant evening walk,

And just the thing for me.” (p. 232)

Her group then spoke the text together. The three girls all read with a good steady beat, their voices rising and falling expressively. They read the poem in the same manner to the class when all of the groups took turns sharing the reading of the poems with each other. The period ended. For Session 7, Sarah was absent.

The following class Sarah was absent. Marah and Samantha worked on the development of a melody for the poem. For the next class, Marah was absent. While I was giving directions for the day, Sarah was humming. As I showed the class the *Wiggly Woo* picture song book pages, she made up her own tune for the *Wiggly Woo* words, singing very softly. Sarah and Samantha now worked together on the melody that Marah and Samantha supposedly had developed for *The Snail*. I am not certain if Samantha remembered the melody exactly as she and Marah had composed it, since neither girl wore individual microphones. One full week had passed. Samantha sang *A Snail* for Sarah (see Figure 26).

A Snail 2

Samantha

5

A snail crept up the li - ly stalk, "How nice and smooth," said he. _____ "It's
quite a pleas - ant eve - ning walk, and just the thing for me - ."

Figure 26: Samantha's version of A Snail.

The song mostly centered on the key of E flat, except that it ended on A flat, and contained some chromaticism. The first phrase gradually rose to E flat 5, settling on

D5 by a combination of steps and leaps, and the second phrase gradually fell, ending on A flat 4. Both phrases ended with a long sound.

Samantha then explained that she and Marah worked out text for a B section. “We thought we were done with the A,” she stated. She read the text of the B section to Sarah, maintaining a steady beat. The rhythm of the words in the last line added an extra beat, sounding a bit awkward. The underlined words indicate the accented words which landed on the strong beat:

One day a girl found him

And said she wants to play --

But he said, “no,”

I have better things to do than play.

Immediately, Sarah had an idea, which she spoke without a rhythmic pulse:

But he said “no”

And the girl ran away!

Then she quickly gave another alternative, which she spoke with a rhythmic pulse:

I have better things to do today

And the girl ran away.

Sarah was exploring rhyming words for “play.” The B section was left unresolved, and Samantha turned her attention to teaching Sarah the melody for the A section. She sang again for Sarah, a repetition of her previous song, with the same pitches. Sarah sang *A Snail* back to Samantha (Figure 27).

A Snail 3

Sarah

A snail crept up the li - ly stalk, "How nice and smooth," said he. _____ "It's
quite a pleas - ant eve - ning walk, and just the thing for me."

Figure 27. Sarah's first version of *A Snail*.

She kept the general shape of the melody, but lowered the pitches, singing between C4 and C5. She had some sense of an E flat tonal center except for the last two measures. It is difficult to remember pitches that are not tonal, not within a diatonic or pentatonic scale (Jourdain, 1997; Snyder, 2000). Samantha's tune would be difficult for anyone to duplicate exactly. Samantha sang *A Snail* again for Sarah (Figure 28).

A Snail 4

Samantha

A snail crept up the li - ly stalk, "How nice and smooth," said he. _____ "It's
quite a pleas - ant eve - ning walk, and just the thing for me."

Figure 28. Samantha's third version of *A Snail*.

This time she, too, sang lower pitches, B4 – C5. She started out in E flat, but lost the tonal center on “evening walk.” Her last phrase resembled Sarah’s last phrase. In

spite of these difficulties, the girls decided to try the song together, singing as in Figure 29.

A Snail 5

Sarah & Samantha

A snail crept up the li - ly stalk, "How nice and smooth," said he - . "It's
quite a pleas - ant eve - ning walk, and just the thing for me - ."

Figure 29. Sarah's and Samantha's *A Snail*, sung together.

They sang slowly, adjusting pitches to match with each other as they moved along the melodic shape that now sounded like a combination of Samantha's version and Sarah's version. In measures 2 and 3 they sang a fourth apart for two pitches. Their range was a 9th, from B flat to C. The tonal center was still E flat, and they ended on E flat at the end of their song. At this point they decided they would sing their song for Ms. Hall (Figure 30).

A Snail 6

Sarah & Samantha

A snail crept up the li - ly stalk, "How nice and smooth," said he. - . "It's quite a pleas - ant eve - ning walk and just the thing for me - ."

Figure 30. Sarah's and Samantha's *A Snail*, as sung together for Ms. Hall

Their rendition for me was quite similar to the one they sang for themselves. The shape was the same and many of the pitches were the same, although they did not end the song on the tonal center, E flat. They ended on A flat 4. I asked the girls to each sing it alone (Figures 31 and 32).

A Snail 7

Samantha

A snail crept up the li - ly stalk, "How nice and smooth," said he - - "It's
quite a pleas - ant eve - ning walk, and just the thing for me - - ."

Figure 31: Samantha's version for Ms. Hall.

A Snail 8

Sarah

5
A snail crept up the li - ly stalk, "How nice and smooth," said he. - - "It's
quite a pleas - ant eve - ning walk, and just the thing for me - - ."

Figure 32: Sarah's version for Ms. Hall.

The girls sang the song differently from each other, and differently from the way they had sung it together. I advised the two girls to sing it together until they could sing it the same way each time.

They sang it again immediately as I left them (Figure 33).

A Snail 9

Sarah & Sam

The musical notation consists of two lines of music. The first line starts with a quarter note, followed by a half note with a flat, another quarter note, a half note with a flat, a quarter note, a half note with a flat, another quarter note, a half note with a flat, a quarter note, a half note with a flat, another quarter note, a half note with a sharp, another quarter note, and a half note with a sharp. The second line starts with a quarter note, followed by a half note, another quarter note, a half note, a quarter note, a half note, another quarter note, a half note, a quarter note, a half note, another quarter note, a half note, another quarter note, and a half note.

Figure 33. Sarah and Samantha together after leaving Ms. Hall.

This version was again more tonal, centered on E flat, and each phrase ended on the third, G. The leading tone, F sharp, gave it a modal sound. This version was closest in shape and pitch to version 7, which Samantha had sung.

The tessitura of the original song which Samantha had sung for Sarah was higher than the version the girls were now singing. Sarah voiced a concern that Marah would not be able to sing the song that low. The girls now sang the song three times in a row without stopping. Each time the pitches were slightly different, with the general melodic shape the same. The girls turned their attention back to the B section. They shared ideas. Sarah was very enthusiastic about the B section poem, bubbling over with ideas. They took turns saying the words, first Sarah, and then Samantha. Then they carefully wrote the words on their poem paper as follows:

Then a little girl found him and asked, “Do you want to play?”

But he said, “No,” and the little girl ran away.

Sarah and Samantha were satisfied with these words, and the period ended.

Marah Returns: “That’s Totally Different!”

For the next class the three girls were together for the first time since they first received their poem. They had only spoken it together several times. Samantha and Marah had worked for a class period, and Samantha and Sarah had worked together for a class period. Eleven days passed since the last class session. The children had finished their books in their own classroom. I had assembled the books, and now the children were to practice singing while turning the pages of the books, holding them as they would hold them to show the kindergarten class. We were going to a kindergarten class to share that day. Samantha and Sarah would need to teach Marah their version of *The Snail*.

The first thing the girls did was to decide who would hold the book. Samantha won the *Rock, Paper, Scissors, Shoot* contest and became the book holder. She and Sarah now sang the finished song, *A Snail 13*, for Marah as Samantha turned the pages (Figure 34).

A Snail 13

Sarah & Samantha

A snail crept up the li - ly stalk, "How nice and smooth," said
he "It's quite a pleas - ant eve - ning walk, and just the thing for me."

And then the little girl found him.
And asked, "Do you want to play?"
But he said "No.",
And the little girl ran away.

A snail crept up the li - ly stalk, "How nice and smooth," said
he "It's quite a pleas - ant eve - ning walk, and just the thing for me."

Figure 34. Sarah's and Samantha's version as sung for Marah

This version of *A Snail* was completely diatonic and tonal, in the key of C major. The second A section was not an exact replica of the first A section, however. The first phrase began the same in each A section, but after that the pitches differed. The melodic shape was the same in both A sections, and both sections ended on the tonic.

The girls carefully paced the singing with the turning of the pages. As soon as they finished, Sarah tried to discuss a change for the B section: "I think we need to change the tune." The girls had never sung the B section, only spoken it expressively, yet Sarah referred to the tune. Marah didn't want to hear any discussion of change and sabotaged the discussion with loud humming, then silly singing of the song, with lots of vibrato. Sarah gave up. The B text would be spoken.

Sarah was thinking about the kindergarten performance. She came over to me and asked me if they could introduce their own song. When she went back to the group, she introduced the song title and the girls' names as composers. Marah was unhappy again. She wanted to say something too, so Sarah split the introduction between the two. "What do I get to say," complained Samantha. "You get to hold the book," responded Sarah.

The girls practiced their introduction and song with the page turning. As they were singing, Sarah directed Samantha to turn the page. They started over, and the page turning corresponded with the singing. Marah interrupted at the end of the first A section. "That's totally different!" she complained. Sarah, the self-appointed group

facilitator, suggested that each girl sing the A part alone once so that they could hear each other's versions (Figures 35, 36, and 37).

Marah's Snail

A snail crept up the li - ly stalk, "How nice and smooth," said he. _____ "It's
quite a pleas - ant eve - ning walk, and just the thing for me. _____"

Figure 35. Marah's version of *A Snail* for Sarah and Samantha.

Sarah's Snail

A snail crept up the li - ly stalk, "How nice and smooth," said he. _____ "It's quite a pleas - ant eve - ning walk, and just the thing for me. _____"

Figure 36. Sarah's version of *A Snail* for Marah and Samantha.

Samantha's Snail

A snail crept up the li - ly stalk, "How nice and smooth," said he. _____ "It's
quite a pleas - ant eve - ning walk, and just the thing for me. _____"

Figure 37. Samantha's version of *A Snail* for Sarah and Marah.

No version was exactly alike. Each followed the same melodic shape.

Marah's version was quite similar to Sarah and Samantha's versions, although she

had not heard their version of the song very many times. Sarah's version started and ended in the key of E flat, with "It's quite a pleasant evening walk" slipped down into the key of C. All three girls ended on the 3rd of the tonic.

After they each sang, Sarah concluded that they all sounded "pretty much the same," and Marah reluctantly agreed. They had one opportunity now to practice the whole song, complete with introductions, before the class left to go down to the kindergarten rooms. This time they sang it in the key of D major, ending on the tonic (Figure 38).

In the kindergarten room, the presentation went as practiced. The page turning and singing were well coordinated. The girls determined their own beginning pitch as they began singing (Figure 39).

A Snail

Sarah, Sam & Marah

A snail crept up the li - ly stalk, "How nice and smooth," said he. _____ "It's quite a pleas - ant eve - ning walk, and just the thing for me _____".

And then a little girl found him
And asked, "Do you want to play?"
But he said, "No."
And the little girl ran away.

A snail crept up the li - ly stalk, "How nice and smooth," said he _____ "It's quite a pleas - ant eve - ning walk, and just the thing for me _____".

Figure 38. Final practice of *A Snail*.

A Snail (Performance)

Sarah, Samantha, Marah

A snail crept up the li - ly stalk, "How nice and smooth," said
 he. "It's quite a pleas - ant eve - ning walk, and just the thing for me."
 And then a little girl found him
 And asked, "Do you want to play?"
 But he said, "No."
 And the little girl ran away.

A snail crept up the li - ly stalk, "How nice and smooth," said
 he. "It's quite a pleas - ant eve - ning walk, and just the thing for me."

*Figure 39. Kindergarten class performance of *A Snail*.*

For the kindergarten class performance the girls sang their song in the key of C, placing their lowest pitch on A4, which they sang very softly. The B section was spoken expressively, but without a steady beat. The first A section ended on the tonic, the second A section ended on the third, E4. This version was similar to the final practice version in the classroom. The key was one step lower, a few passing tones differed, and the final pitch for the two A sections differed. With more practice time, perhaps the song would have become even more consistent. The song had evolved from a song with many leaps and an unclear tonal center to a melody that was diatonic and stayed in the key in which the song began. The melody first sung by Samantha seemed more expressive of a snail crawling upward on a lily stem. The structure of the melody, however, with its chromaticism and leaps of a 4th, made it a

difficult one for Sarah to learn. As the girls repeated the song, the melody evolved into a more memorable song (Jourdain, 1997; Snyder, 2000).

For having had a contentious practice session, the girls cooperated well in their performance. Sarah reflected later on the experience, saying that she was kind of scared, but remembered performing the *Apples* song, and that made her feel better. Samantha commented that it was hard to do the B part, to come up with another tune. The group did not have a tune at all, and did not have time to make up a tune for the text. This group struggled with absentee partners. Sarah was the driving force behind its successful performance by contributing ideas for the text, the melody, and the way in which the presentation would progress. Her leadership helped to overcome the obstacles that had occurred along the way. It was understandably difficult for Marah to accept the changes that had taken place during the class session from which she was absent. Other than her sabotage of Sarah wanting to change the B tune, she cooperated and learned the new way to sing the song.

When Sarah wanted to change the B tune, I was reminded that she scored four out of five on the speak/sing test, and that the one example she missed was the expressive speaking example. She labeled it “singing.” Based on my experience, many children mistake expressive speaking for singing, just as many children mistake rhythmic chanting, as in rapping, for singing.

Time is always a factor to be dealt with in classroom situations. There does not seem to be enough of it for some children, and for others there is too much of it. However, projects can become bogged down if time limits are not set. According to Fritz (1991), “Deadlines can help you focus your creative process. If you use them to

organize your actions, you will build energy and momentum” (p. 301). The short time frame in which to prepare for the kindergarten performance forced Sarah’s group to come to consensus quickly about any contentious matters and focus on the coming performance. With Sarah’s leadership her group was prepared to share their song and book with the kindergarten class. Sarah seemed to struggle with tonality in her song-making. I wondered how her next composed song would develop.

The Evolution of “Five Gray dolphins”

Sarah and Georgia quickly chose each other as partners for the disappearing-number song. Sarah suggested blue dolphins as their topic, and the dolphins were jumping a wave. Georgia agreed. Sarah had a motif in mind, and began to sing (Figure 40).

Dolphins Motif

Sarah

Figure 40. Sarah’s motif.

She sang this motif three times in a row without a pause, exactly the same way. The period ended.

The following week the children continued to work on their disappearing number songs. As they worked with the text they were creating, Sarah sang, using her motif from the previous week as the basis of her song (Figure 41).

Dolphins 2

Sarah



Figure 41. Sarah's first version, Three Blue Dolphins

Her motif was similar to the one she sang the previous week. This motif became the first phrase, with an underlying harmonic structure of tonic to dominant, the phrase ending on step two of the scale. The second phrase had the same melodic shape, with an underlying harmonic structure of dominant to tonic. It ended on the tonic. Sarah sang the song three times in a row, trying different words on different verses: ocean, sea, bay. Each of the girls now filled in her own worksheet.

“What shall we call it?” Sarah asked. Georgia suggested: “Five Blue Dolphins.” “No,” said Sarah, “Five gray dolphins.” “Well, okay,” responded Georgia. For a moment, Sarah was distracted from her work with Georgia. She heard someone say the word, “porpoise.” She asked someone nearby why they were looking for porpoises (among the wooden shapes in the basket). Then she sang, using her melody, “Five little porpoises jumping in the water.” The text was not yet completed and Sarah was experimenting with other text for her song. Sarah and Georgia continued working on the text, using “grey dolphins” as the subject. Every now and then Sarah sang a line of text they had just written. Georgia reminded Sarah of her grammar: “And then there were four, not was.” The two girls sang the text together and then continued writing. They spoke aloud their words as they wrote them. Georgia made

sure all of the periods were in place. Sarah sang a phrase when she finished writing it.

The girls worked this way until the period ended. They now had a poem:

Five gray dolphins jumping in the bay,

One jumped a wave and then there were four.

Four gray dolphins, etc.

In between this class period and the next one, I worked with the girls on their poem. They needed a rhyming word for “bay.” Finally they decided that each dolphin would swim away. Also, instead of using “jump” twice, they decided the dolphins could be swimming in the bay:

Five gray dolphins swimming in the bay,

One jumped a wave and swam away.

The first thing Sarah did at the beginning of the next class was to sing three different melodies, seen in figures 42, 43, and 44, by herself before going back to her original melody.

Dolphins 3

Sarah

Five gray dol - phins swim-ming in the bay One jumped a wave and swam a - way.

Figure 42. Sarah's first experiment with a different melody for *Five Gray Dolphins*.

Dolphins 4

Sarah

Five gray dol - phins swim-ming in the bay.
One jumped a wave and swam a - way.

Figure 43. Sarah's second experiment with a different melody for *Five Gray Dolphins*.

Dolphins 5

Sarah

One gray dol - phin swim-ming in the bay,
One jumped a wave and swam a - way.

Figure 44. Sarah's third experiment with a different melody for *Five Gray Dolphins*.

In these melodies the pitches outlined the C major chord, the F major chord, and even the C7 chord. The melody in Figure 42 began with an underlying harmonic structure of C7 to F minor. When she returned to her original melody in F major after her three melodic experiments, there were a few changes from the previous class's version. Instead of alternating pitches twice, C-A-C-A, she used this pattern: A-C-C-A. Also, Sarah had added a coda, which ended on the dominant instead of the tonic (See Figure 45).

Dolphins 6

Sarah

One gray dol - phin swim-ming in the bay,
One jumped a wave and swam a - way.

5 Coda

Swam a - way, swam a - way, one jumped a wave and he swam a - way.

Figure 45. Sarah's *Five Gray Dolphins* with a coda.

She sang the coda again, and then asked Georgia, “Do you think that’s good?”

Georgia nodded. The girls got in line for the recording studio.

Georgia had been practicing separately. Sarah sang the following version of her song again for Georgia, shifting to the key of E flat, with the coda in another key and tonality (See Figure 46).

Dolphins 7

Sarah

One gray dolphin swimming in the bay, One jumped a wave and.

Coda

swam a - way. Swam a - way, swam a - way, one jumped a wave and swam a - way.

Figure 46. Sarah’s version for Georgia.

Georgia wanted to know if she was singing “swam away” twice. Sarah sang that part of the coda for her with new pitches. She then repeated what she had just done (Figure 47).

Swam a- way, swam a- way.

Figure 47. Sarah’s clarification of the first part of the coda.

She asked Georgia if they should sing their songs together. Georgia sang her version of the song for Sarah, including the coda. Her tune had the same basic

melodic shape, but different pitches in a narrower range. “I have a different tune than you,” declared Sarah. Sarah sang her song for Georgia. Her phrases shifted in tonality among each other. She skipped a verse, and her last verse had a slightly different tune. “I think we should go it alone,” suggested Sarah. “I think mine’s a bit higher.” Georgia was not sure about going it alone. “Okay, I’ll do it higher if you want,” she pleaded. Sarah still did not think they would be able to sing the song the same way. She decided that they should work separately.

It was not surprising that Georgia and Sarah’s songs were different, because they did not develop the melody together. Sarah developed her melody while she was working alongside of Georgia. Now the girls had two different melodies for the same poem.

While the girls were waiting for the recording studio, Sarah sang her song to several others who were also waiting. She sang it for Joan. She sang it carefully, in the key of F, remaining consistent with pitch throughout. Her coda was also in the key of F, and ended on C. The girls did not get into the recording studio that period.

Recording Studio

The following week, she and Georgia each recorded their songs. Sarah’s song was consistently in the key of F. She began her first verse with the C-A-C-A sequence, but the rest of the verses began with A-C-C-A. Her coda incorporated a leading tone before the last measure, F-C-C, but ended on the dominant rather than the tonic (See Figure 48).



Figure 48. Sarah's coda.

Georgia's song in the recording studio was consistently in the key of A, with a melodic shape similar to Sarah's, and an underlying harmonic structure the same as Sarah's. Her pitches ranged from A3 to E4, except in the coda, where she went down to F#3 on the last pitch. Her coda had the same melodic shape as Sarah's coda. She had little melodic interest, with mostly repeated pitches, C# and B, in her song (Figure 49).

Musical notation for Georgia's version of "Five Gray Dolphins" in A major, 4/4 time. The lyrics are: Five gray dol-phins swim-ming in the bay, one jumped a wave and swam a-way. Coda: Swam a-way, swam a-way, one jumped a wave and swam a-way.

Figure 49. Georgia's version of *Five Gray Dolphins*.

"Mine is Not 'Hush Little Baby'"

After the mini-lesson on how to vary *Hush Little Baby*, the children continued working on their picture song books. Sarah and Georgia worked separately, interacting very little. Sarah sang the first part of her song to Nathaniel, who was working nearby. Nathaniel said, "That sounds very familiar." Sarah responded

quickly, “Well, it’s not *Hush Little Baby!*” Sarah then quickly sang the first phrase of *Hush Little Baby*. Then she sang the first phrase of *Five Gray Dolphins*. “It sounds very familiar!” repeated Nathaniel. “It’s not *Hush Little Baby!*” insisted Sarah. Nathaniel persisted: “I know. It’s very, very familiar.” Sarah was quite confident that her melody varied from *Hush Little Baby*. She was not aware, however, that her melody sounded like *Six Little Ducks That I Once Knew*.

Sarah continued conversing with Nathaniel. She explained how she found her tune: “I don’t know. I just kind of made up the tune. I don’t know what the tune is. I just made it up. I was trying all these little tiny tunes, and I tried that one the most.” “Oh, cool! Yeah. That’s cool,” Nathaniel replied. As Sarah worked on her drawings, she sang fragments of her song, hummed, and chattered about fat or skinny dolphins. Nathaniel asked her about her partner. “We’re not working together any more. We decided not to be partners,” she answered. As she completed each page, she sang it, consistently, except for the first measure variation. Jared then wandered to Sarah’s work area, and the two of them sang their songs for each other.

Finding Home Tone

As Sarah worked on her picture song book, she set her own words to the melody of another familiar tune:



Figure 50. Five Gray Dolphins to Shortnin’ Bread.

During a previous class session Sarah had tried the word “porpoise” in her melody. Here she was trying her words with the melody of *Shortnin’ Bread*. Several times as she worked she sang her song for friends. She sang her coda with different pitches each time she shared her song, none of the pitches organized within the same tonality as her song. I decided that she was not hearing the tonal center when she sang her coda, and she was not remembering any particular coda. I had listened to her studio recording, and decided to try to help her with the coda. I asked her to sing one verse of her song, and then to sing the home tone for me. She was singing in the key of F, and she sang the pitch, F when I asked her to find the home tone. I asked her to sing the coda, and pointed out to her that her last pitch was not home tone. I sang a variation that would bring her coda melody to home tone, and asked her to sing a variation that would end on home tone. She sang a different coda from mine, ending on the tonic. Her leading tone to F was a little flat, but she had demonstrated to me that she understood, so I left her to work on her own.

Sarah’s audio tape revealed that after I left her she tried another variation of the coda, which she recorded in the studio. This variation ended squarely on F, and the leading tone, E, sounded in tune. When Sarah practiced with classmates for the kindergarten sharing, she sang two more variations of the coda, each ending on F. The notation in Figure 51 shows our codas. The pitch, E, in Sarah’s first coda has a parenthesis showing that it was slightly flat the first time that she sang it for me.

Dolphins Codas

Figure 51. Ms. Hall's coda and Sarah's three codas, ending on the tonic.

Kindergarten Sharing

As we walked down the hallway toward the kindergarten classrooms on Tuesday, Sarah bubbled with enthusiasm: “This is going to be so fantastic! I love little kids. I love little kids!” She sweetly greeted her first group of “little kids,” introduced the title of her book, and read her own name as the author/composer. Her song was in the key of F, and did not wander from the F major tonality. Her opening measure of each verse alternated between the sequence of pitches, C-A-C-A and A-C-C-A. Her coda ended with F, E, F. The E was slightly flat. She consistently sang her song, including the coda, the same way every time her group of kindergarten friends changed, except for the first measure (See Figure 52).

Five Gray Dolphins (Performance)

Sarah

Five gray dol - phins swim-ming in the bay, One jumped a wave and swam a - way.
 5 Coda
 Swam a - way, swam a - way, one jumped a wave and swam a - way.

Figure 52. Sarah's kindergarten class performance of *Five Gray Dolphins*.

Near the end of the year, after I sent home with the children their own personal CDs of songs which they had composed, Sarah told me that her dad loved her song, *Five Gray Dolphins*, so much he had put it on his website on the internet.

Interview Song: Sunny Day

In my interview with Sarah, I handed her a two-phrase poem and asked her if she would turn it into a song for me. She experimented with a melody by humming, as she read the words. Retaining the general shape of that melody, she began to sing the words. The third time that she sang it, she had a tonal melody in the key of C, and it ended on the tonic (See Figure 53).

Sunny Day

Sarah

Sun-ny day fades a way, dark-ness falls a-round me, while - a star high and far, with its light, has found me.

Figure 53. Sarah's *Sunny Day*.

I wondered if she could vary it, although she had not practiced it. She sang the same beginning, varying the last two measures. This version did not end on the tonic, but on the 5th. Could she remember the original song, the one she had evolved to before I asked her to vary it? She tried, but ended up with yet another variation of the next to the last measure, and ended again on G.

Discussion

Sarah's Holistic Creative Process

Sarah worked holistically with her text and melodic conceptions. She worked with text and melody almost simultaneously, piecing together the parts of her song. Some professional songwriters such as George David Weiss work in this manner (Nash, 2002). Weiss explained: "Well, most of the time I compose either in my head or at the piano. I guess it's fair to say I think both in words and music almost simultaneously but perhaps a little bit faster on the lyric end" (p. 183). Sarah, too, worked with text, testing it with melody as she created *Five Gray Dolphins*.

Her first melodic fragments of the three songs she helped create, *Apples*, *A Snail*, and *Five Gray Dolphins* became permanent parts of the songs. She quickly arrived at a basic structure for *Five Gray Dolphins*, including a coda, which was her own idea. I had not modeled coda construction or discussed codas with the children. She sang her song to anyone nearby who would listen, sang her words to other songs, and she sang her song to herself while she worked on her picture songbook. Sarah expressed excitement about the performances, worked quite diligently on her picture song books, and felt very proud that her dad published her song on his website.

Sarah's Strong Leadership Affected Composing Outcomes

Sarah's interactions were mostly related to the task of songwriting. She collaborated willingly with the class and with me on *Apples*, cheerfully accepting

changes and additions to the melody she created. When she worked with her friends on *The Snail*, she worked hard to try to learn the song that the other two girls had created. However, it was not an easy song to remember, and as she and Samantha repeated it back and forth, each girl modified it until it became more tonally centered and easier to remember. Sarah exerted her leadership in the group, moving the group toward the performing goal.

Sarah worked with one friend to create *Five Gray Dolphins* and assumed artistic control. When it seemed obvious that the two girls were singing in higher or lower pitches from each other, Sarah decided that they should work separately. The girls used the same text, but their melodies and general tessitura differed. In Sarah's interactions, she tended to take control, showing interest in the ideas of others as she guided the process of the group toward resolution. Largely because of this leadership, her groups were able to meet the timetable for completion.

Sarah's Tonal Songs and Musical Memory

Sarah's melodic contribution for the *Apples* song was consistently tonal in the first two phrases and within the phrases, but from phrase to phrase she sometimes wandered among keys. She never had a tonal grasp of the third phrase. It was Joan who brought the melody to an ending on the tonic. Sarah used sequences, and her song had melodic interest, incorporating skips as well as steps.

Sarah and Samantha created *The Snail* together from Samantha's version of the song in Marah's absence, and refined it even more the following week when Marah returned. The song finally settled into tonality within the key of D and then in

the key of C when the girls sang it for kindergarten. In the performance for the kindergarten class, the first A section ended on the tonic, but the repeat of the A section ended on the third. The melody, rhythm in 6/8 time and slow tempo were expressive of a creeping snail, and the B section, with its spoken narrative, was in contrast to the A section.

Sarah exercised complete artistic control with her friend as they worked to create *Five Gray Dolphins*, so the song itself was completely hers. The song was from its conception a tonal, memorable structure with two harmonically structured phrases that expressed jumping dolphins and had melodic interest. She knew that her melody varied from *Hush Little Baby*, although her melody was quite similar to another familiar song, *Six Little Ducks*. Sarah sang it consistently in the key of F. She intuitively created a coda, something that we had not discussed in class. Her coda varied until she learned to arrive at the tonal center. She then created three codas and chose one, incorporating a leading tone before the tonic. After this discovery, and after some experimentation, her coda melody remained consistent throughout her sharing performances with the kindergarten children. Sarah also had pitch memory, consistently singing *Five Gray Dolphins* in the key of F with no prompting.

Sarah composed *Sunny Day* in a short period of time. The song had melodic interest, stayed in key, and ended on the tonic. Her ability to compose songs seemed to have improved, particularly in regard to finding the tonic for her song ending. It would be interesting to continue tracking Sarah's progress as a songwriter. Developmentally, her songs exhibit characteristics of Swanwick's (1988) theory of musical development in the *vernacular* mode, which is clearly established at age 7 or

8: short pieces with patterns, musically conventional, standard-length melodic phrases, use of sequence, and influenced by other known songs (Runfola & Swanwick, 2002). At the age of seven, she was a participant in the artistic process (Gardner, 1994), able to create tonal, melodic structures by singing in pitch, exhibiting characteristics identified by Glover (2000) as those of children who have crossed a watershed in their ability to think musically.

Chapter 6: Methodical Nathaniel

Nathaniel's Musical World at Home

Nathaniel was a 7-year-old of medium build, with brown hair. He was quiet and polite, but not shy. He volunteered in class readily, and when he spoke, he used mature sentence structure and advanced vocabulary. He especially liked to help others. For the third project he chose to work alongside Jared. Nathaniel supported Jared, who was a targeted reader, when Jared was not sure how to proceed. As he waited in line to make a recording, and as he worked on his picture song book, he interacted with other children, chatting with them about the songs they were working on and listening to the songs of others more often than sharing his own song. He tried to help Mike, who could not find a melody, even making one up for him. At one point, when Nathaniel was finished with his picture song book, he helped Joan cut out ghosts to paste into her book.

He told me that he had always liked music. The earliest music he could remember liking was Mozart. He had a small keyboard with programmed songs, and one of the pieces was by Mozart. He spent a lot of time playing with his keyboard. I wondered how music makes him feel when he hears it. He replied, “It depends on what kind of music it is, really. Mozart makes me feel really happy and joyful. Some of the Beethoven music makes me feel not so good, sad or something. Depends on what music it is.”

As he talked about music, it seemed that music was very important to him. I asked him, “So I take it that music is important to you?” “Very important,” he replied.

I asked why that would be. He answered, “Well, you can sort of learn from music. It teaches you lessons or something. I really don’t know. It’s just important.” I asked him if other people had told him that. “Nope, I’ve just learned it,” was his reply.

I wondered about his song repertoire and asked him what songs he likes to sing on his own. *Five Teeny Turtles*, he said. *Five Teeny Turtles* was the song he had composed in class. When I asked him about other songs, he simply replied, “There are so many songs. There are so many.” He said that he sings after school when he is playing with his keyboard in his room.

We discussed instruments. His family members had talked to him about taking piano lessons, but he really wants to play the clarinet, or maybe trumpet. He was confused about which instrument it was. “My Dad really wants me to play the trumpet. I think a trumpet.” He said that his grandfather plays the harmonica (he called it a “harp”) and the guitar, and has taught his dad, his sister, and his brother how to play the harmonica. “He figures out songs he’s heard and plays them. He’s like a one man band with the harmonica and the guitar.” Nathaniel described an attachment which he uses in order to play both the harmonica and guitar at the same time. There are also other guitars in the family. Nathaniel owns an electric guitar, and his sister, three years older, owns a classical guitar.

I asked him if he had ever made up songs at home. “Yeah. In my bedroom when I get back from here.” He doesn’t sing his made-up songs for anybody. “I just keep them to myself.” He doesn’t write down the words, but keeps them in his head. “I memorize them.” I asked him where the tune for *Snow* came from. He replied, “I

don't know I just thought of one. I don't know how I did it. Ummm, I think of a tune I heard before, and I mix it all up."

Besides his keyboard with its pre-programmed Mozart and Beethoven pieces, he also listens to rock and roll. His favorite rock and roll group that he listens to on CD is Blondie. "It's very good music," he said. What about his parents? His dad listens to rock and roll also. His Mom puts on music when she is working around the house. Nathaniel said it was music of "those plays that are showed on stage, Broadway." He had never been to a concert or a Broadway play, and had not sung in a choir.

When I spoke with Nathaniel's mother, she seemed to be completely surprised that Nathaniel makes up his own songs. His mother said that she sings: "I'm always singing and doing little silly things." When I asked her if she makes up songs she replied:

Oh, when I'm in the kitchen and I'm doing something, I might start singing. I'll make words up. Ever since they were babies I've done that. I like to sing. I enjoy singing, so I just make things up. But I didn't know he did because he really doesn't at home. He doesn't sing. He loves music. I do know that, because he listens in his earphones.

She said that she taught him little songs. "I sang to him. I don't remember words, so I put my own words in. So, I would sing to him in the bathtub. He might sing with me, but I don't remember him having a big interest in that."

I sang Nathaniel's "Snow" song for her and asked her if she had ever heard a song like that at home. She could not think of anything that sounded like that. She continued:

He does at home have a keyboard and it does have songs on it. He plays with that a lot. He does have an ear with that. If he hears a song, he's able to sort of play that on the keyboard. Nathaniel is sort of quiet. He doesn't let me know all this stuff. He just quietly goes about doing these things. I had no idea that he could write something like this, make something like that up.

According to his mother, "His grandfather loves, even writes some music." Once or twice a month Nathaniel spends a whole day with his grandfather and his mother feels that he is a big influence. He has guitars and about ten harps (harmonicas). Nathaniel's mother was in the high school chorus. She fondly recalled the trips to attend competitions. Nathaniel's father could not be present for the interview, but his mother said that his father plays electric bass and electric guitar, and he played trumpet in the band when he was younger.

Nathaniel's family provides a musical environment for Nathaniel in a natural way. His mother sings because she loves to sing. His grandfather shares his love of guitar and harmonica with the family. His father plays electric bass and guitar. His parents gave him a keyboard, which he has time to play with in his own way. They all share their love of certain rock and roll groups, listening to the radio and CDs. This home environment has played an important role in Nathaniel's enjoyment of music, and in his ability to make up his own songs.

It was not in the first composing project, however, that Nathaniel displayed his song-making abilities. Nathaniel was attentive during the class composition of *Apples*, but did not volunteer any musical ideas. He sang, colored the pages, and had

a pleasant expression when we were working, but did not make any individual musical contributions. Nathaniel's abilities as a composer of songs came to the forefront during the second project.

The Perfect Song

Nathaniel, James and Mike chose each other as group members. The group decided to choose the poem entitled, *Snow* (Earhart, 1914; Pinnell & Fountas, 2004). They whispered together about the various poems that I read to the class, and when I offered *Snow* they raised their hands together. This poem was a combination of two short poems that I had put together on the same paper. I suggested that the group could use the second short poem for their contrasting B section. The two poems were as follows:

Snow upon the window sill,

Snow upon the tree.

Snow that covers bush and hedge,

Snow that covers me.

Earhart, 1914, p. 86

Snow, snow, fly away,

Over the hill and far away.

Pinnell & Fountas, 2004, p. 233

Nathaniel's group members practiced their poem and when it was their turn, they spoke their poem rhythmically and confidently for the class.

From Nathaniel's Tune to Rock 'n Roll

On the second class day of work, Nathaniel picked up his PVC pipe telephone and sang the song notated in Figure 54.

Snow 1

Nathaniel

Snow up-on the win-dow sill, snow up-on the tree. Snow that cov-ers bush-es— snow that falls on me.

B Section:

Snow, snow, fly a - way, ov - er the hills and far a - way.

Figure 54. Nathaniel's Snow.

“Perfect,” he stated. His song did not change from then on. He sang it again six times in rapid succession, without any variation.

Nathaniel’s tune was in the style of a folk tune or a classical melody. It was in the key of C natural minor. The two phrases in the A section each began on the tonic and rose stepwise a fifth, then fell back to C. He began the first phrase of the contrasting B section on G, descending to D, and the last phrase had the same shape as the first two phrases. The words fit the melody with no awkwardness as though the words and melody were designed to be together.

After the children worked alone for a few minutes the group met together. Immediately Nathaniel sang his version of the A section for the group. “Let’s sing it like this,” he announced before he sang his melody exactly like he had practiced at his seat. Mike spoke with authority, “But we’re using the B part.” A discussion followed about the two sections, and they decided to use both sections. Then Mike made

another announcement: “We’re substituting ‘bushes’ for ‘bush and hedge.’” Nathaniel agreed with a simple “OK.” Then he offered to sing his song again for them. James said “OK.” Nathaniel started singing, but Mike interrupted by repeatedly saying, “No, no, no, no,” until Nathaniel stopped singing. Nathaniel then said to Mike, “OK, what do you want to sing?” Mike sang the first phrase as notated in Figure 55.

Mike:

Snow up-on the win-dow sill snow up-on the tree.

Figure 55. Mike’s first phrase of his version of *Snow*.

While Mike was singing, James had an idea and interrupted Mike. He suggested that Mike sing the first part, Nathaniel sing the second part, and he would sing the third part. They all agreed, and sang the song as notated in Figure 56.

Snow (Taking Turns)

Mike, James, Nathaniel

Mike:

Snow up-on the win-dow sill snow up-on the tree.

James:

Snow that cov-ers bush- es, snow that cov-ers me.

5 Nathaniel:

Snow, snow, fly a - way ov - er the hills and far a - way.

Figure 56. Each group member sang a different phrase of *Snow*.

The boys stayed in the same key, D minor. James’ first measure was a sequence of Mike’s first measure. The downward scale in James’ second measure brought the

melody down to the tonal center, D. Nathaniel's melody for the B section also moved back to the tonal center. When they finished, Nathaniel suggested they sing it at the same time.

Mike started first, not waiting for the others to join him, singing his tune on the pitches, sol-mi-la-sol-mi. Nathaniel tried to join him, singing a few of the pitches with Mike. This was a major tonality version of his opening measures in minor tonality when each boy took turns in the previous example. James started the song over as though ignoring Mike's beginning. Nathaniel and Mike joined him by the time he sang "window sill." Once they joined James, Mike and Nathaniel sang more softly, matching pitches with James slightly behind his beat.

As soon as they finished, James declared, "Let's sing it rock 'n roll!" He growled his way through the part A text with punctuated rhythms in a low voice, with few pitches sung, and then said, "Let's do it this way for the class!" Nathaniel argued, "I hate it! Don't do it!" He quickly sang his version of part A. James continued to argue for the "rock 'n roll" version. Nathaniel's voice sounded high-pitched and tense as he asked Mike, "Let's see how you sing it." Mike sang Nathaniel's melody in a higher-pitched key, G minor. Nathaniel joined him after the first measure. Now James declared, "It's too girlish!" Nathaniel agreed, "I know. He sings girlish. Mike, don't go, 'snow upon the window sill.'" Nathaniel had imitated Mike's high voice.

James reiterated his stance: "Let's do rock 'n roll." For a moment, Nathaniel gave in saying, "O.K., O.K." They all tried the "rock 'n roll" version of section A, speaking rhythmically together, with James using the loudest voice. Nathaniel changed his mind and pleaded, "Stop doing rock 'n roll and sing like normal, O.K.?"

He sang his song again. Then he led the group: “O.K., at the same time.” They all sang Nathaniel’s tune together in the key of C minor. “Perfect!” declared Nathaniel. Mike said, “Let’s try again.” The three boys repeated this rendition. Nathaniel suggested, “Let’s tell Mrs. Hall that we are ready to sing for the class. Are you ready, guys?” James and Mike: “We’re ready.”

Nathaniel’s group was the fifth to share. Each of the three boys tried to position themselves in front of the microphone, but James took the microphone out of its stand and held it downward slightly to accommodate the other two boys. Nathaniel spoke to the other two boys, “When I say ‘go,’ you start, O.K.?” The boys started together. James’s voice, being louder and closer to the microphone, however, prevailed. Also, his own version of *Snow* prevailed, as follows:

Snow 6

James

Snow up-on the win-dow sill, snow up-on the tree. Snow that cov-ers bush-es, snow that cov-ers me.

Figure 57. James’ version of Snow.

By the second measure, Nathaniel and Mike were singing with James’ melody a split second behind. Nathaniel was staring at James as if in disbelief. They asked me if they could start again. The second version was no different. Nathaniel looked distressed, so I asked him, “Is this the way you thought it would sound?” Nathaniel gave a rather jumbled-sounding reply: “It was a little bit different way, but we didn’t do that way by accident.” I asked the group if they wanted to try it again. Nathaniel said “sure,” but James said that they should go back and work on it some more.

Back in their work area, the discussion was contentious rather than cooperative. Nathaniel scolded James, “James, we were not supposed to do rock ‘n roll, remember?” James ignored Nathaniel. He and Mike were looking at the B section. Suddenly they started singing the text to the B section on sol and mi, Mike singing a third higher than James (Figure 58). “O.K.,” Mike declared. “We’ve already done the B part. Yay!” “No, we’re not,” argued Nathaniel. “Let’s sing the A part.” Mike sang the A part quickly in his high-pitched voice. “Guys, guys,” pleaded Nathaniel. James talked about the performance for the class: “I only remembered the rock ‘n roll part.” Nathaniel reminded James, “O.K., remember? No rock ‘n roll. Sing, but like this.” Before Nathaniel could sing again for James, James quickly sang the A section on his own melody, but with a smoother rhythm, not punctuated. Nathaniel closed the discussion, “Do that next time.” When the boys worked on their picture song book, Nathaniel worked very quietly. He did not sing or chatter. At one point the boys decided to try to sing their song together. They sang it very quickly using Nathaniel’s tune for the most part.



Snow, snow, fly a-way ov-er the hills and far a-way.

Figure 58. James’ and Mike’s B section.

“I’m a good boy!”

By the following class the books were finished, and the groups were to practice for their kindergarten performance. They practiced twice using a tune that

was a blend of James' and Nathaniel's, with Mike singing along on the same melody above the other two boys' pitches, sometimes a fifth apart and sometimes a sixth. Mike started the singing both times. James and Nathaniel began singing from the beginning of the song as though Mike had not sung at all. Mike then joined James and Nathaniel. Nathaniel and Mike quit singing by the B section. Then Mike started the A repetition before the others. James joined in by the second measure on a lower pitch (Figure 59).

Snow 7

Nathaniel, Mike & James

Mike only: Snow up - on the win-dow sill, Snow up - on the tree. **Mike on high note:** Snow up - on the win-dow sill,

James & Nathaniel: Snow up - on snow up - on the tree. Snow that cov - ers bush - es Snow that cov - ers me.

James only: Snow, snow, fly a - way ov - er the hill and far a - way

Mike: Snow up - on the win-dow sill, snow up - on the tree. Snow that cov - ers bush - es, Snow that falls on me.

Figure 59. Practice for kindergarten class performance

Nathaniel stopped the group. "Hold it. Hold it. It's off key," he declared. Mike wanted to know what that meant. "That means you're singing out of tune," answered Nathaniel. James told Nathaniel, "That's because you're not singing. We'll have to do rock and roll. That's the only way we can sing it."

An argument now ensued over the singing of the song in rock and roll.

Nathaniel begged: "You can't do rock and roll. You'll embarrass me." James continued about the need to do rock and roll. "No, No!" begged Nathaniel. "I'm a good boy. No!" James still insisted: "I have to do rock and roll. I will do rock and roll." Nathaniel continued begging: "Not in front of kindergarteners!" "We're getting down for kindergartners," James replied. "No! No!" said Nathaniel.

When it came time for them to sing for Mrs. Herd's kindergarten, Nathaniel stood to the right, James stood to the left with the book, and Mike was between them and a little behind them. The teacher introduced the boys to the class, and suddenly Mike started the song in his high-pitched voice, just as he had done when the group practiced. James hurried to open the book and turn the pages, unable to keep up. Nathaniel and James joined the singing a few beats late. The song sounded the same as in practice, except that all three boys kept singing, Nathaniel singing along softly, matching pitches with James, and Mike singing a third or fourth above both boys. When they got to the end of the B section, Mike stopped singing and stood back. Nathaniel and James stopped as well, and the page turning stopped so that the final A section was omitted. The teacher asked the group if they would like to sing it again. The exact same scenario took place, with Mike singing before James was ready with the book. Later, back in the classroom, Mike reflected on the experience: "We just had the wrong timing," he complained. Nathaniel made no comments.

James and Nathaniel sang a blend of the melodies each had conceived. Mike exerted control in the performance by jumping in early to start the song. He was not able to match the other two boys' lower pitches, so he sang above them in pitch. It is

interesting to note that both Nathaniel and James have a wide pitch range. Both boys can sing readily in their head voices. Despite the contention in the group, the three did persevere to the end of the project. Nobody quit the group or complained to me that they could not get along. The boys had chosen each other, and were friends. They sang together, produced a picture song book, and performed for the kindergarten willingly. Nathaniel remembered his original melody. A few months later he could still sing it for me exactly as he had conceived of it in class.

Five Teeny Turtles

For the next project, Nathaniel and Jared chose to work with each other. They sat side by side, developing completely separate text ideas. When I saw that their texts were different, I asked them if this was the way that they wanted to work. They replied that they did. As they filled out their worksheets, they read each item aloud, and then each filled it in with his own ideas. First they decided to have animals disappearing. Jared wrote “dogs.” Nathaniel wrote “turtles.” They were not sure how to describe their animals, so they skipped to the next item, to tell what the animals were doing. Jared did not understand, so Nathaniel explained, providing some examples. The boys continued to work in this way until the end of the period. Never once during that class period did either boy try to sing any of the text that they were developing.

When I looked at Nathaniel’s and Jared’s worksheets, I saw that they each had constructed a narrative. Nathaniel’s animal was turtles. What were they doing? They were fighting over a girl. In the space where he was to list the things the turtles were

doing that made them disappear, Nathaniel had made an elaborate drawing of a hill with a tree on top, a body of water, and three turtles walking along on the hilltop (See Figure 60).

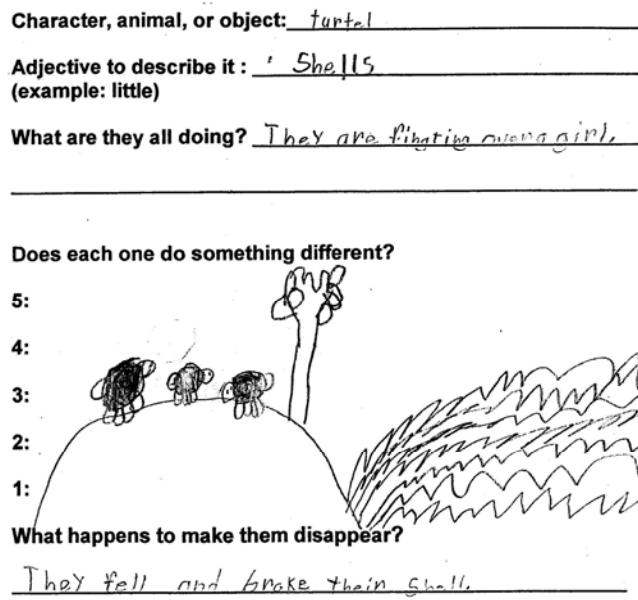


Figure 60: Nathaniel's worksheet drawing.

“Look at this palm tree,” he said to Jared. Underneath the drawing he answered the worksheet question, “What happens to make them disappear?” Nathaniel wrote, “They fell and broke their shell.” In the space where he was to write his ideas as a poem, Nathaniel wrote:

There is 1 girl and 2 boys. They see her and they both want her. 1 falls down and brakes [sic] his shell. The other one is still all write [sic] he was so close but he falls and brakes [sic] his shell. At least the girl was all right.

During class I worked with Nathaniel to transform his narrative into a poem. First, he read to me what he had written. He chanted it with a steady beat, accenting certain words:

One falls down and breaks his shell

The other one is still all right

He was so close, but he falls down and breaks his shell.

At least the girl was all right.

Nathaniel had not understood how to fill in the items on the worksheet. For example, he filled in the word, “shells” as the adjective that described his turtles. He was imagining a story, but it would need a lot of work to become song lyrics. I pointed out to him that his text was more story than poem. He said that he could not think of any rhyming words. We started with the number five. Do we have five turtles? Nathaniel replied, “Yeah.” I asked if they were big, little, green, cute, or something else. He replied that they were very, very little. I suggested “five tiny turtles.” Nathaniel continued with that idea: “Five tiny turtles in the mud.” What are they doing in the mud? “Sticking in the mud,” said Nathaniel. And then what happens? “One falls down and breaks his shell.” We needed to find a rhyming word for “mud.” Nathaniel got the rhyming dictionary and looked up mud. He found several possibilities, but settled on the word, “thud.” The period ended.

I worked with Nathaniel a little more before the next class to make sure that he had a poem that would work as song lyrics. Still, he had not sung. He was concentrating on his poem construction. His final poem did not have the same story as the original narrative, but he could draw details of the story in the book if he

wished. He could draw girl and boy turtles, for example, without saying they were boys and girls.

The Song is Born

When I introduced the goal for the next class, to turn our poems into songs, Nathaniel whispered, “Yeah!” As soon as he received his folder containing the complete, printed poem, he began to sing (See Figure 61).

Five Teeny Turtles

Nathaniel

Five teeny turtles, stick-ing in the mud, One falls down and makes a thud.
 Four teeny tur-tles, stick-ing in the mud, One falls down and makes a thud.
 Three tee - ny tur - tles, stidk-ing in the mud, One falls down and makes a thud.
 Two tee - ny tur - tles, stidk-ing in the mud, One falls down and makes a thud.
 One tee - ny tur - tle, stick-ing in the mud, One falls down and makes a thud.

Figure 61. Nathaniel’s five versions of *Five Teeny Turtles*.

He pronounced his word, “tiny,” as “teeny.” He began with “five teeny turtles,” and worked his way, one verse at a time, to “one teeny turtle.” Each verse was a slightly different tune. By the time he got to the last verse, he was satisfied. This tune, of the last verse, was the one that he sang from this point forward. It never

varied, except when he suddenly started singing his words to *Hush Little Baby* during session 16. He sang the complete song now, at a fast tempo. The following class session, three days later, he recorded in the studio, and the tune sounded exactly the same, in the same key.

Nathaniel's Private World and Mike's World

Nathaniel worked on his illustration ideas and practiced his song as he waited for the recording studio. A guest observed Nathaniel and heard his song. She asked him if he liked making up songs. “Oh yeah, I’m good at it,” he replied. “Do you sing them at home?” she inquired. “Well, I don’t sing them for people. I usually sing them when people are not around. I really just want to work on them alone, because I think better. I sing for my brother and sister.” When she asked him how many songs he had composed, he replied with certainty: “Five.”

While Nathaniel was waiting in line for the recording studio, Mike came by to chat. He asked Mike how he was coming with his song. “Terrible,” answered Mike. Nathaniel then sang his song for Mike. Later on he sang it for Jared. Mike wandered back and Nathaniel tried to help him with his song. He even tried a tune for Mike (See Figure 62). Mike said that he did not like it, however.



Figure 62. Nathaniel’s attempt to help Mike find a tune.

The following week, Nathaniel was again waiting in the recording studio line. He had sung his song several times. Then he changed the words (See Figure 63).



Figure 63. Nathaniel's changed words.

A week later, he continued to try to help Mike. Now the children had their blank picture song books and were working on the illustrations. Nathaniel asked Mike what his song was like. Mike replied, "I have no idea, because I don't have a song." Nathaniel and Sarah had their conversation about the familiarity of Sarah's tune. Then the conversation with Mike continued. Nathaniel tried to calm Mike down. First he told Mike to cool down. Then, he sympathized with him: "Okay, you're having a stressful day. I understand."

"I sound girlish!"

When Nathaniel made a tape recording, he took it to a tape recorder that James was operating. James was finished with his picture song book, and understood how to operate the tape recorder. I had asked him to help children play back their tapes so that they could hear how their songs sounded. This he did enthusiastically. One boy was complaining about the sound of his voice on tape: "It sounds like a girl!" Nathaniel added, "So do I!" I overheard the conversation and tried to explain that all boys have naturally high voices, and that does not mean that they sound like

girls. Again, the gender associations regarding boys' high voices had been raised. In the previous project, James and Nathaniel had accused Mike of sounding "girlish."

The Suggestion

Nathaniel was now finished with his illustrations, and agreed to help Joan cut out ghosts for her book. As he was cutting out ghosts she looked at his book and sang his words to the tune of *Hush Little Baby*. When Nathaniel went to the kindergarten class to a few days later, he sang his words to the tune of *Hush Little Baby*. He sang his tune for me a few weeks later, and it had reverted to his original melody.

Interview Song: Sunny Day

When I interviewed Nathaniel, I asked him to use the words to the poem, *Sunny Day*, to make up a song, he thought for a moment, and then he sang the words to a melody that was similar to the one he had used for *Snow* (See Figure 64).

Sunny Day

Nathaniel

Sun-ny day fades a-way, dark-ness falls a-round me, While a star, high a-bove with its light has found me.

Figure 64. Nathaniel's first version of *Sunny Day*.

I pointed this out to him and asked if he could change it. He sang *Sunny Day* 2, keeping the same melodic shape, but changing the tonality to a whole tone scale (Figure 65).

Sunny Day 2

Nathaniel



Figure 65. Nathaniel's second version of *Sunny Day*.

I asked him if he had heard that melody somewhere before he used it for *Snow*. He thought about it, and indicated that he did not remember hearing it before. I asked him if it could be a melody that is programmed into his keyboard or into a toy he had when he was younger. Again, he did not recall hearing the melody before. After some more thought, he said that perhaps he had heard the melody somewhere, but did not know where. Swanwick (1988) noted that sometimes existing melodies are produced as though they were the child's own creation. According to Wiggins (2003), "Students sometimes borrow musical material from other sources (e.g., musical ideas they have learned in class, parts of pieces they know how to play, music learned from a family member, music from the media), but they do not always identify borrowed material as such" (p. 147).

Discussion

Nathaniel's Creative Process: Out Comes a Tune and Variations

Nathaniel tended to make quick decisions about his melodies, and changed little after he made his initial decision. His melody for "Snow" seemed to be complete from the beginning. I did not hear any experimentation after his initial song in which

he sang both parts of the poem as an A section and a contrasting B section. According to Wiggins (2003), the first musical idea a child sings when making up a song “is invariably a whole musical idea that has musical integrity” (p. 147). It is conceived, and then sung as a melodic whole. Students sing “whole musical ideas, which may then be repeated, revised, refined, or rejected” (p. 148).

For the third project, some children in the class sang aloud as they worked on lyrics, working almost simultaneously with text and melody. Nathaniel worked methodically, step by step. He worked with the text for *Five Teeny Turtles* until it was completely set. Then he sang his lyrics. Some professional songwriters use this method as well. Song writers Mac Davis, Billy Steinberg and Merle Kilgore work from lyrics, whereas Carole King works from lyrical ideas sometimes and musical ideas other times (Nash, 2002). Billy Steinberg explained, “For me, the lyric informs the music” (p. 175). Nathaniel worked step by step, following the steps I had entered on the Structural Tension Chart. The creation of lyrics was first on the chart. Nathaniel did not sing any part of the melody aloud until his lyrics were completely finished.

When Nathaniel made his first attempts to sing his lyrics for *Five Teeny Turtles*, the basic structure of a melody seemed to come to him immediately. He sang all five verses of his song, setting each of the verses to a variation of a basic melody in the key of C. His basic melody was a period consisting of two phrases, an antecedent and a consequent. The consequent fell gradually, and then ended on the tonic. The implied harmonic structure of each verse’s setting varied only slightly, based mostly on tonic and dominant chords. The second verse had the most harmonic

interest with a I-IV-I implied progression in the first phrase and a I-II-V-I implied progression for the second phrase. In the first verse both phrases ended on C. In the other verses the antecedents ended on D, E, or G, in an incomplete cadence and the consequent ended on the tonic, C. The last variation was the one with which he felt the most satisfied. “Perfect,” he declared. This process of choosing took only a few minutes. He had the ability to vary a melody until he was satisfied, and then consistently maintain that melody that he remembered from session to session.

Nathaniel sang this chosen version repeatedly while he worked on his picture song book for the next few weeks. He even became bored with it, changing the words in a humorous way. Again, he was working according to the steps I had delineated for the children on the structural tension chart. The children were to practice often in order to remember their songs. When Nathaniel worked with the poem, *Sunny Day*, during his interview, he reverted to the melody he had used for the first section of *Snow*. When he tried to vary it, he kept the same basic shape of the melodic phrase and lost the tonality.

Interactions and Gender Issues

Nathaniel and James had accused Mike of sounding “girlish” and Nathaniel had imitated Mike’s high-pitched voice, telling him to sing lower. Both James and Nathaniel had the ability to use their head voices in singing, as first grade assessments had revealed. Both boys used their head voices to sing on pitch during the performance of *Apples*. I observed this when the children were performing the song for the kindergarten classes. James was standing near the kindergarten teacher and me

in the first class that we visited. As we filed out of the door, she commented to me, “That James has such a nice voice, doesn’t he?” These boys chose to use lower pitched voices for the song that they were composing. Mike had a small frame and a naturally high pitched tessitura. Already, at the age of seven, boys’ high voices represented a threat to their image of manliness. Nathaniel sounded shocked when he heard his own voice on a tape recording. James was operating the tape recorder, and Nathaniel exclaimed to James, “I sound girlish!”

Some boys conceive of singing itself as a feminine activity. “Many scholars (including Acker, 1994; Gates, 1989; Green, 1997, 1993; Hanley, 1998; Koza, 1994; Mizener, 1993) have reported a perception or portrayal of singing as belonging to girls or being unmasculine” (In Lamb, Dolloff & Howe, 2002). Green (1997) related the success of women singers throughout history to a patriarchal definition of femininity. Castelli (1986, in Phillips, 1992, p. 573) argued that American boys in particular identify singing as a feminine activity. James and Nathaniel had a perception of high-pitched singing as unmasculine. In their studies, Adler (1999) and Koza (1994) identified a stigma of being a male with a high voice (In Lamb, Dolloff & Howe, 2002, p. 665). According to Hanley (1998) “Some girls want to be like boys. Boys, however, don’t want to be like girls” (p. 62).

Vocal pitch was not the only gender characteristic with which James and Nathaniel identified. Nathaniel stated that his favorite group for listening was *Blondie*. James wanted to sing the group song, *Snow*, in “rock ‘n roll” style. He characterized this style by using a low-pitched, half-speaking, loud voice along with punctuated rhythms. All that he needed to complete the overall effect was an electric

guitar. The text, with its gentle theme of snow, seemed incongruent with the rock ‘n roll style. Nathaniel associated the use of this style in class as a bad-boy behavior. “I’m a good boy,” he pleaded. Hargreaves et al.(1995) reported that “heavy metal and rock were the only categories in which there was a significant main effect for gender in favor of boys, and this can be explained in terms of the stereotype of masculinity that has frequently been associated with these styles of music” (p. 247). Although some researchers find hardly any gender differences in musical listening preference prior to adolescence (Maidlow & Bruce, 1999 in Gembbris, 2002), others have found that young boys prefer rock and heavy metal music (Martin, Clarke, & Pearce, 1993 in Gembbris, 2002).

Hanley (1998) reported that although people view singing as feminine and “boys who engage in singing are by implication feminine,” certain types of singing are valued. “For example, male rock singers are highly rewarded in our society. Furthermore, in popular music, gender roles are blurred and twisted (p. 58). May (1985) studied musical style preferences of first graders. He found that boys exhibited higher preference for rock & roll music as well as other styles of music which were “more dynamic, heavily accented, generally louder, and faster in tempo” (p. 18). Green (1997) defined boys’ relationship to music and composition in the classroom: “They present themselves as more positive about their composition, more confident, more carefree, less hard-working, less attentive to paradigms provided by the teacher, less concerned with their feelings”(pp. 228-229). These characteristics describe James’ rock ‘n roll performance of *Snow* in front of the class.

It is interesting to note that perceptions of masculine versus feminine vocal characteristics and musical style have appeared at such a young age. May (1985) suggested that it might be most important to music educators to note the following:

First grade students' music preferences, though not fully developed, already had begun to converge toward a rather narrow, exclusive set of popular styles. Apparently subjects' music preference development, perhaps under the influence of environmental factors, such as the media (Leifer, Gordon, & Graves, 1974) or sociological structures (e.g., the family; Lambert & Lambert, 1964), had started well before the subjects came in contact with a music educator in the classroom. If so, and if music educators are to influence preference development, then the influence likely must come before the first grade (p. 2).

Perfect Musical Sense

Nathaniel exhibited the characteristics of children who have crossed the watershed of cognitive understanding (Glover, 2000). His songs were well-structured in terms of phrasing, melodic sense, implied harmonic basis, and the ability to construct a contrasting section as in *Snow*. His melodies were tonal and easily repeatable, containing established musical conventions (Runfola & Swanwick, 2002). He was able to experiment with melodic variations for *Five Teeny Turtles* until he made a conscious decision to choose one melody. His musical memory was developed well enough to remember his songs weeks after he conceived of them.

Perhaps most importantly, he developed a view of himself as a songwriter. He liked the songs that he methodically created, claiming that he enjoyed singing *Five Teeny Turtles* at home. He tried to convince his group that his melody for *Snow* was a good one. Nathaniel and his partners were not able to come to a consensus due to

James' and Nathaniel's gender bias regarding singing as well as Nathaniel's preference for his own version of *Snow*.

Chapter 7: Expressive Jennifer

Jennifer's Musical World at Home

Jennifer was seven years old, and of average height when compared to her classmates. Her reddish, long hair was usually pulled back in a ponytail. She was rather quiet in class. At times she seemed to be daydreaming. She participated well in

classroom activities such as action songs, games, dances, and expressive movement.

She particularly loved to explore the instrument centers in the music room.

In her interview, I asked Jennifer if she would like to play an instrument. She said that she would like to have a flute, and that she was “dreaming about playing a violin.” After Christmas, Jennifer brought a small violin in to class and played a short piece for us, explaining that she had received it for Christmas, and was taking lessons.

At home, she has her own CD player and CDs. She said that she likes to sing along, and that her music helps her to go to sleep at night. Her mom listens to “soft, boy songs and stuff like that,” she told me. I asked her if she likes to make up songs. “Yeah. My favorite time to make up songs is when I’m sleeping. Like when I sleep I make up songs in my mind. When I’m lying there and stuff I just kind of close my eyes and think of songs.” “Where do the songs come from?” I inquired. Jennifer replied, “Like sometimes I get the words from your songs, and songs from CDs, and stuff.” I asked her if she sometimes puts her own ideas into her songs. She said that she did. “I like to sing about Santa, like December, and I like to sing about hearts, like raining hearts in February. I like to sing some things from the holidays.” I wondered if she ever shares her songs with her family members. “Sometimes,” she replied, “I share them with my mom and my dad, and my grandma and grandpa.”

“Music makes me feel happy,” she exclaimed. She then explained that “music is important to you because if people did not have music, they would have nothing to listen to and they would get bored. When she gets bored she thinks of music in her head. She can close her eyes and hear music in her head. According to Jennifer, she started doing that when she was five years old.

Jennifer lived with her mother. Her father lived in another state. When I spoke with her mother, she described Jennifer as a child who learns songs quickly and likes to change the style of the songs that she knows. She also makes up songs spontaneously. Her mother explained:

She'll just be sitting there playing with something, and she'll start singing about it. She'll sing about her day, she'll just belt it out. She doesn't think anybody is listening. There are songs on the radio that she picks right up, and it's like she knows the stuff before I do. I say, "Where did you learn that song?" and she says, "Well, I learned it on the radio, or in day care."

I asked her mother if she sang to Jennifer when she was a baby. She responded:

Oh yeah. We used to sing all the time. I used to sing her lullabies. And then I'd get the little CDs and we would um sit in her bedroom. It's kind of funny, but we would sit there and sing the songs, and we'd learn the songs together. Like there's this one that taught you how to do your vowels and your consonances, and stuff like that, and there's a song to it, and we would just sing it together. And we'd repeat it, and we'd sing it together. It was funny. It was cute. It was her karaoke machine.

Her mother told me that her father sings and listens to a lot of music like the Dave Matthew singers, more of an alternative style. She thought that Jennifer prefers pop music, such as Gwen Stefanie, and she likes country, in fact she likes any song that she can belt out. She also shared that Jennifer sings songs that she has learned from school: A sailor song, and *The Star Spangled Banner*. "That one, [*The Star Spangled Banner*] she sang that every day. I think that's because she could, like I told you she likes to belt things out. She would sing it at the top of her lungs, in the shower, in the bathroom. She loves that song."

I asked her if she had heard Jennifer's *Four Seasons* song, and I played a tape of Jennifer singing it. She did hear Jennifer singing it and had asked her what she was

singing. Jennifer replied, “I made that up.” Although Jennifer’s mother said that she has never made up her own songs, she has helped to foster Jennifer’s love of singing by singing for her and with her from the time she was a baby. Music is important in her home as shared listening and singing.

Jennifer’s Expressive “Apples”

Jennifer contributed little to the group composition, *Apples*. She quietly observed the proceedings, and sang along with the others, but did not volunteer any ideas to help with the creation of the song. She was absent on the day we sang the song for the kindergarten classes. A month and a half after the *Apples* song project was finished, Jennifer sang an “operatic version” of *Apples* with head voice and vibrato while Michelle was busy writing something (See Figure 66).

Apples Jennifer's Interpretation

Red, yel-low, green, For meals or in-be-tween, Juic-y and sweet, my fav-rite Aut-umn treat, Fosnacks or lunch, I
real-ly like to munch ap-ples crunch! Ap-ples, crunch! Ap-ples crrr-unch
Michelle joins in here: Pick-ing ap-ples from the tree, pick-ing them for you and me, Eat-ing ap-ples from the tree, eat-ing them with you and me.
Michelle drops to lower pitch: Red, yel-low green, for meals or in be tween Juic-y and sweet, my fav-rite Aut-umn treat, for
snacks or lunch, I real-ly like to munch Ap-ples crrr-unch.

Figure 66. Jennifer’s expressive version of *Apples*.

She repeated the words, “apples, crunch” several times, as though experimenting with the sounds of the words she was singing. Because she pitched her version of the song in the key of G, and because she skipped up to a D in measure 2 instead of singing a C there, she ended up on high A for the word, “apples.” Her high-pitched voice rang out on the high A and she held the D on “crunch” as though it was an important point of arrival in an aria. On her third “apples, crunch” she made a dramatic glissando upward from F sharp to D. The pitch, D was the perfect connection to the B section, “Picking apples,” which should have started on that pitch if it was true to the original class version. Michelle joined her in singing at the beginning of the B section, measure 13. During her return to the A section, Michelle dropped to a lower pitch in measure 19. Jennifer’s last “apples” went from G down to middle C, ending the piece in the key of C, as in the original version.

Jennifer’s Variations

For the small group song project, Jennifer teamed up with Thomas and Michelle. When Thomas and Michelle volunteered for the poem, *Four Seasons* (Pinnell & Fountas, 2004), Jennifer pouted and threw her paper aside. She told me later that she had already seen that poem last year, and she really wanted *Wiggly Woo*. After the poems were all distributed she picked up her copy of *Four Seasons*, looked at it for a moment, and then spoke it expressively, in her high-pitched head voice. The poem could be chanted in 2/4 time or in 6/8 time. Jennifer spoke the poem expressively, with little hint of a rhythmic choice:

Four Seasons (Version 1)

Spring is showery, flowery, bowery.

Summer is hoppy, croppy, poppy.

Autumn is wheezy, sneezy, freezy.

Winter is slippy, drippy, nippy. (p. 92)

“Huh,” she exclaimed.

Next she sang the poem to a melody (*Four Seasons 2*) that would be the basis for all of the variations that followed, and then sang three variations of the basic song, all in 2/4 time. Her voice was high-pitched, light and sweet, with stylistic scoops in some places and with some expressively spoken words. Each version began immediately followed the previous one. All variations followed the same basic melodic pattern of ups and downs, which maintained the nature of the melody. Each was tonal, although the key was not always obvious because of a lack of leading tones. None of her variations ended on the tonic of the key, giving them an unfinished quality. See Figure 67 for her first sung version of the song.

Four Seasons 2

Jennifer

Spring is show-er - y, flow-er - y, bow-er - y. Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.
 5
 Au-tumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Win-ter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 67. Jennifer’s first sung version of *Four Seasons*.

Phrases one and two are the same basic melody. The third phrase began with an expressive one octave scoop upward from B flat 4 to B flat 5, and maintained B flat on the strong beats. Phrase four repeated phrase three with one small difference. The leap from C4 touched E on the way upward, outlining a C7 chord, the dominant chord in the key of F major. Jennifer immediately began an expressive variation (Figure 68).

Four Seasons 3

Jennifer

Spring is show-er - y, flow-er - y, bow-er - y. Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.

Au-tumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Win-ter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 68. Jennifer's first variation of the basic version of *Four Seasons*.

Harmonically, the first variation (Figure 68) seems to be a series of sequences that shift downward by whole steps from F major to E flat major to D flat major, and back up to E flat major. Jennifer used two octave leaps, scooping, expressively spoken words, two fermatas, and vibrato on the last pitch as expressive tools.

Her second variation (Figure 69) gradually descended. Each phrase began on a different pitch: Phrase 1, B flat 5; phrase 2, A flat 5; phrase 3, G4; phrase 4, E flat 4. Phrase two was a sequence of phrase one, and phrase four was a sequence of phrase three. The melody can easily be harmonized with E flat major, A flat major and B flat major chords. Phrase one can be harmonized with E flat chords; phrase two can be harmonized with A flat chords; phrase three can be harmonized with E flat chords;

and phrase four can be harmonized with E flat chords. The last pitch, F, gave the song an unfinished sound, which is consistent with all of Jennifer's versions of her song.

Four Seasons 4

Jennifer

Spring is show-er - y, flow-er - y, bow-er - y. Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.
 Au-tumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Win-ter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 69. Jennifer's second variation of *Four Seasons*.

Her expressive element in the second variation consisted of a series of scoops. She scooped up to the A flat pitch on “hoppy,” “croppy,” and “poppy.” She also scooped upward from F to B flat on “sneezy,” and from E flat to G on “drippy.” As Jennifer completed this variation of her song, I was quieting the class in order to transition to group work. However, Jennifer was not finished singing. She quickly began her third variation (See Figure 70).

Four Seasons 5

Jennifer

Spring is show-er - y, flow-er - y, bow-er - y. Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.
 Au-tumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Win-ter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 70. Jennifer's third variation of *Four Seasons*.

Jennifer hurried through this version, ignoring my directives to the class to get quiet at this point. This version seems a little more varied and, perhaps, chaotic. Each phrase is different. She leaped up a 6th four times. This version's melodic shape was similar to that of version two, with pitches going upward on the weak beats of phrases one and two, and pitches going downward on the weak beats of phrases three and four. It ended with a five second hold and added vibrato, a grand, expressive finish.

Now Jennifer was ready to share her song with the group (Figure 71).

Four Seasons 6

Jennifer

Spring is shower - y, flower - y, bower - y. Summer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.
 5 Autumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Winter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 71. Jennifer's first version for the group.

Thomas and Michelle listened to Jennifer's version and did not offer a version of their own. Only Jennifer shared, even though each of the children had been working on their own with their PVC pipes. She began this version beginning with a leap upward of a 6th from D4 to B5. For the most part, this version maintained the same melodic shape as her other versions, most measures going down-up. The pitches of the first phrase outlined the D major chord. The second phrase was pitched down a whole step and implied a C major chord. The third phrase began on G3, the lowest pitch in any of Jennifer's versions, and emphasized G3 and D4, suggesting a G major chord tonality. The fourth phrase was back on C major and outlined the C major chord. Her phrases followed the harmonic progression, D major to C major to G

major, and back to C major. She expressively spoke the words “freezy” and “nippy,” holding the last vowel of “nippy” and adding a little vibrato to the tone. The group wanted to hear it again. Jennifer sang a more simplified version of the song (Figure 72), using mostly two pitches, B flat and C, twice dipping down to E flat. She expressively spoke phrase three, and ended with an excited “nippy,” speaking the last pitch up high and scooping downward on the “ee” sound.

Four Seasons 7

Jennifer

Spring is show-er - y, flow-er - y, bow-er - y. Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.
au-tumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Win-ter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 72. Jennifer’s more simplified version for the group.

Thomas and Michelle were now ready to try singing along with Jennifer (Figure 73).

Four Seasons 8

Jennifer, Thomas, Michelle

Spring is show-er - y, flow-er - y, bow-er - y. Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.
Au-tumn is whee - zy, snee - zy, free - zy. Win-ter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 73. Group version of *Four Seasons*.

This simplified version of Jennifer's song became the group standard.

During subsequent practices, the opening pitch intervals of the melodic pattern varied among 4ths, 5ths and 6ths. The keyality shifted among the keys of B flat major, B major and C major. The pitches centered on sol, and lah. Jennifer was able to shift between her private, fanciful versions and this basic one for the group.

More Variations

A week later children began their class session working alone for a few minutes. Jennifer sang into her PVC pipe a simple variation (Figure 74). She stayed within the confines of the melody sung by the group during the last class session, with the exception of the second phrase. She raised the pitches of this phrase from A flat to the implied harmony of D flat, and then returned to the key of A flat. She used the melodic shape adopted by the group, which alternated between lah and sol. She playfully added a loud squeal after the last pitch of the song.

Four Seasons 9

Jennifer

Spring is shower - y, flower - y, bower - y. Summer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.
 5 Autumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Winter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py (loud squeal)

Figure 74. Jennifer's simple variation.

She immediately began a variation with a rhythmic “uh-huh, uh-huh, and-a one, two, three” (Figure 75). She accented the strong beats as she sang in a continuation of the sassy opening. Her first interval was a leap of a ninth. The keyality of her first two phrases implied F major. Phrases three and four stabilize in the key of C with most pitches being mi, sol and lah.

Four Seasons 10

Jennifer

uh-huh, uh-huh, and-a one, two, three
 Spring is show-er - y, flow-er - y, bow-er - y. Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.
 5 Au-tumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Win-ter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py.

Figure 75. Jennifer’s rhythmic variation.

Jennifer sometimes sang quite high. Figure 76, for example, is a variation in the key of D or A major (no leading tone to determine). She ended on A6, leaping there from A5 for the word “nippy,” holding the “ee” sound of nippy for several seconds. She also used expressive scooping, from A to B and from A to C.

Four Seasons 11

Jennifer

Spring is show-er - y, flow-er - y, bow-er - Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.
 5 Autumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Winter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 76. Variation with expressive scooping and high-pitched ending.

Figure 77 was Jennifer's "opera" variation. She rose to a B6 on "nip," dived downward from a spoken "py," and ended with an operatic arpeggio downward using the syllable, "hah." Her last pitch was an E4, which she held for several seconds, using her dramatic vibrato.

Four Seasons 12

Jennifer

Spring is show-er - y, flow-er - y, bow-er - Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.
 5 Au-tumn is wheez- y, sneez- y, freez- y. Win-ter is slip- py, drip- py, nip- py Hah-hah-hah-hah-hah-hah

Figure 77. "Opera" variation.

Her next variation (Figure 78) began on B flat with a skip upward of a major third. The other pitches in the phrase alternated between C5 and D5. Phrases two and three were exactly the same. Suddenly, in phrase four, Jennifer leaped upward from B flat to D to G, alternated between G and F, and then scooped up to high C6, which was half-spoken, half-sung. She ended on a half-spoken, half-sung pitch of F5:

Four Seasons 13

Jennifer

Spring is show - ry flower - y, bow - ry Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.
 5 Au-tumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Win-ter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 78. Jennifer's high C variation.

Jennifer whispered the poem expressively, and then she sang a simplified variation (Figure 79). It would be difficult to define a keyality or tonality for this version, as she seemed to be unconcerned with her pitches. She used the melodic shape of the group version (Figure 73).

Four Seasons 15

Jennifer

Spring is show - 'ry, flow - 'ry, bow - 'ry. Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.
Au-tumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Win-ter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 79. Jennifer's variation similar to the group version.

The group began to discuss the B section. Thomas thought that they needed to make a B section. Jennifer added, "I think I have a B part." Michelle felt that they needed to practice the A part together. Jennifer sang *Four Seasons 16* (Figure 80) alone for the group, followed by *Four Seasons 17* (Figure 81) and *18* (Figure 82). The B part was never created. When Jennifer sang for the group or with the group, she kept her song simple, adhering to the pattern the group adopted. She sang her pitches for the variation in Figure 80 carefully, beginning each measure, except for measure 6, with a leap upward of a fourth. Her phrases three and four were a sequence of phrases one and two, one whole step lower.

Four Seasons 16

Jennifer

Musical notation for 'The Four Seasons' with lyrics:

Spring is show - 'ry, flow - 'ry, bow - 'ry. Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.

Au-tumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Win-ter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 80. Jennifer's variation with sequence.

She pitched her next variation (Figure 81) higher, using mostly two pitches, D flat 5 and E flat 5. She did not have the usual leap upward at the beginning of each measure except for measures 5 and 7. She sang her pitches carefully, staying in the same key throughout:

Four Seasons 17

Jennifer

A musical score for 'Four Seasons' by Carl Orff. The score consists of two staves of music for soprano and alto voices. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of five flats, and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics for the first section are: "Spring is show - 'ry, flow - 'ry, bow - 'ry. Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py." The second staff begins with a bass clef, a key signature of four flats, and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics for the second section are: "Au-tumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Win-ter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py". The vocal parts are written in a simple, rhythmic style with eighth and sixteenth note patterns.

Figure 81. Jennifer's variation with higher pitches.

Four Seasons 18 (Figure 82) is a fifth lower than *Four Seasons 17* (Figure 81). Every measure is the same except for the last phrase, measures 7 and 8. Jennifer lowered the F sharp and G sharp to E and F sharp. She held the last pitch, adding an expressive vibrato:

Four Seasons 18

Jennifer

Spring is show - 'ry, flow - 'ry, bow - 'ry. Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.

Autumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Winter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 82. Jennifer's variation with lower pitches.

Jennifer spoke the poem expressively, raising and lowering the pitch of her voice. She then sang *Four Seasons 20* (Figure 83) with careful pitches, using one repetitive pattern for every measure. She began each phrase with an upward leap of a fifth this time, giving the piece a modal sound.

Four Seasons 20

Jennifer

Spring is show - 'ry, flow - 'ry, bow - 'ry. Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.

Autumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Winter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 83. Jennifer's variation with mid-range pitches, all measures the same.

It was time for the groups to share their songs with the class. Thomas had a plan for everyone to sing the song together. He suggested that all of them sing the first phrase together, Jennifer sing the second phrase, he would sing the third phrase, and Michelle would sing the last phrase. They all agreed, and quickly practiced (Figure 84). The group began singing on low pitches, A4, E4 and D4, then B4, E4 and D4. Jennifer began her phrase with those same pitches, and then began her

second measure with E4, leaping up to B5 and A5. Michelle and Thomas both continued with these higher pitches. The children seemed to be listening carefully to each other, matching pitches.

Four Seasons 21

Jennifer

All: Jennifer:
Spring is show-er -y, flow er -y bow -er -y. Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.
5 Michelle: Thomas
Autumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Winter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 84. Group practice of *Four Seasons*.

Figure 85 shows the version the group sang for the class practice. They sang the exact pitches that all had sung in measure 2 of *Four Seasons 21* (Figure 84). This low-pitched version of the song with implied harmony in the key of G, stayed within the interval of a fourth, centered on mi, sol and la. Each phrase was identical. It was identical to version 8, the first group attempt to sing the song together, except that the opening pitch of each measure is B rather than D sharp, implied key G rather than B.

Four Seasons 22

Jennifer

All: Jennifer:
Spring is show-er -y, flow er -y, bow -er -y. Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.
5 Michelle: Thomas
Autumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Winter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 85. Group practice version of *Four Seasons* for the class.

Practice and Perform for a Kindergarten Class

The groups practiced several times in the classroom before going down the hallway to two kindergarten classes to share our books. The first thing Jennifer's group did was to decide who would hold the book. Michelle chanted rhythmically, "Eeny, meeny, miney, mo, catch a tiger by the toe. If he hollers, let him go. Eeny, meeny, miney, mo. My mother told me to pick the very best one, and you are not it." She chanted the poem again, choosing Jennifer to be the one to hold the book. Michelle then told Jennifer and Thomas where to stand. "Should we stand up to do it?" Michelle asked. "No, we can sit down," replied Jennifer. Thomas was still standing. "We're going to sit down, Thomas!" ordered Jennifer.

Michelle figured out where each of them should sit. They sat down together and began to sing. Jennifer started the singing by herself. When she reached the end of the first phrase, she turned the page. "You'd better follow my finger," she said. She sang the next phrase, and turned the page again. "Follow my finger, remember!" Michelle thought that they should all try it together. An argument ensued concerning where everyone was positioned. Michelle and Jennifer disagreed about where Jennifer should be positioned. Jennifer accused Michelle of having all of the ideas. "You think you're so smart," Jennifer complained and started singing again. She sang her second phrase in a silly way, in her highest voice. "Quit fooling around!" ordered Michelle. The three children then sang together (Figure 86).

Four Seasons 23

Jennifer

All: Jennifer:

Spring is show-er -y, flow er -y, bow - ery. Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.

5 Michelle: Thomas

Autumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Winter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 86. Practice of *Four Seasons* before performing.

They decided that they could each introduce their own name. They practiced the introductions, and then sang, beginning together again (Figure 87).

Four Seasons 24

Jennifer

All: Jennifer:

Spring is show-er -y, flow er -y, bow - ery. Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.

5 Michelle: Thomas

Autumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Winter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 87. Final group practice of *Four Seasons*.

When they performed for the kindergarten class (Figure 88), they stood where they had finally decided, introduced themselves as planned, and sang exactly the same pitches as the second phrase of the final practice ((Figure 87).

Four Seasons 25 Performance

Jennifer

All: Jennifer:

Spring is show-er -y, flow er -y, bow - ery. Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.

5 Michelle: Thomas

Autumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Winter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 88. Kindergarten class performance of *Four Seasons*.

When I interviewed Jennifer, I asked her to try to remember any of the first ways that she had sung her song. For me, she sang the exact version of the kindergarten performance, one half-step higher in pitch (See figure 89). Her fanciful versions were private musings.

Four Seasons 26

Jennifer

Spring is show -'ry, flow 'ry, bow - 'ry. Summer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.
 5 Autumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Winter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 89. Jennifer's version for Ms. Hall

Altogether, I heard 23 sung versions of *Four Seasons*, as well as one whispered, and two spoken versions. Only six of these were sung by the group: versions 8, and 21-25. The rest were Jennifer's own versions. The experimentation of style, sequence, pitch and expressiveness was Jennifer's private undertaking. Nine of her versions were playful variations: 3-6 and 9-13. When Jennifer sang for and with the group, the song became more simplified and less expressive. The melodic range stayed within a fourth or a fifth. The lowest pitch sung by the group was B4 and the highest pitch was B5.

Five Little Teddy Bears

Jennifer and Michelle chose each other as partners again. They immediately began discussing the topic for their song. At first they talked about disappearing birdhouses. I had mentioned birdhouses just as an example when I was giving directions, and the girls tried to use the idea for their song. As they thought of ways for the birdhouses to disappear, Jennifer sang *Five Little Birdhouses* (Figures 90 and 91).

Five Little Birdhouses

Jennifer

Five lit - tle bird-hous - es sit - tin' in a tree A bird came a-long and blew one a-way?

Figure 90. Jennifer's basic melody and experimental text.

Five Little Birdhouses 2

Jennifer

Five lit - tle bird-hous - es sit - tin' in a tree A - long came a bird and blew one a - way?

Figure 91. Jennifer's second birdhouse text experiment.

The girls struggled to figure out how they would disappear, however. Jennifer suddenly switched the topic to robins, and sang *A Robin 1* and *A Robin 2* (Figures 92 and 93). The girls were not happy with these topics. They could not find rhyming words, and could not figure out sensible ways for the objects to disappear. That class period ended, and the girls had yet to find a satisfactory topic.

A Robin 1

Jennifer

There was a lit - tle tree, plant-ed in the ground. A rob - in came by and stopped on the tree.

Figure 92. Jennifer's text experiment with robins.

A Robin 2

Jennifer

There was a lit - tle tree, it was plant-ed in the ground. A rob - in came by and sat by it on the ground!

Figure 93. Jennifer's second text experiment with robins.

During the following class session Jennifer and Michelle looked through the basket full of wooden tracing shapes and small cookie cutters that I brought to class. They found a teddy bear that they liked. Immediately they knew that this would be their subject. As they filled out their worksheet, they decided the teddy bears would be big. What would the bears be doing? The girls thought it would be the same thing for each verse, but did not yet know how they would disappear. They could run away, skip away, walk away, hop away, and jump away. Jennifer thought that they could be going away from the bed on which they were sitting.

“Oh dear!” exclaimed Michelle. “Now we have to come up with a poem!”

Jennifer had a title: “Five Little Teddy Bears!” she called out, and then she giggled with delight. Michelle repeated the title as she wrote it down. Jennifer began to sing

Five Little Teddy Bears (Figure 94).

Five Little Teddy Bears

Jennifer



Figure 94.

“We have to write a poem!” interrupted Michelle. Michelle did not want singing yet.

She wanted to complete the words first. While she wrote, Jennifer sang again, *Five Little Teddy Bears 2*, a jazzy version (Figure 95).

Five Little Teddy Bears 2

Jennifer



Figure 95. Jennifer’s jazzy version of *Five Little Teddy Bears*.

Michelle read aloud, “Five little teddy bears sitting on the bed.” Now they both sang these words together (See Figure 96).

Five Little Teddy Bears 3

Jennifer & Michelle

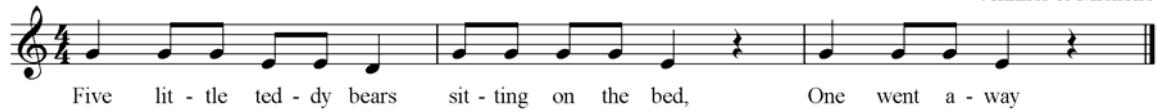


Figure 96. Michelle’s and Jennifer’s first version together.

The tune they were using was the same as the one Jennifer had experimented with when the topic was birdhouses, a tune based on sol, mi and re. They now used this tune to test various ways to complete the text for each verse, and then they each wrote on their papers the text upon which they had agreed. They sang together the end results, *Five Little Teddy Bears 4*, and giggled (See Figure 97).

Five Little Teddy Bears 4

Jennifer & Michelle

Five lit - tle ted - dy bears, sit - ting on the bed, One ran a - way 'til there were three.
 Four lit - tle ted - dy bears sit - ting on the bed. There were three lit - tle ted - dy bears sit - ting on the bed. (giggle)

Figure 97. Michelle's and Jennifer's attempt to sing more verses.

I worked with the girls outside of class one morning to make a few adjustments so that their song had a definite ending for each verse, rather than have all of the verses run together. They decided to add something cute that the teddy bear said as it left the bed: ““See ya later,” he said!” These words were mostly spoken. A few times I heard Jennifer sing them, but mostly she spoke the words quite expressively, her voice rising on the word, “later.”

At the beginning of the next class, Jennifer sang her first version that day.

Five Little Teddy Bears 5 had a quick tempo (Figure 98).

Five Little Teddy Bears 5

Five lit - tle ted - dy bears sit-ting on the bed. One ran a-way, "See you lat- er," he said.
 Four lit - tle ted - dy bears sit-ting on the bed. One skipped a-way, "See you lat- er," he said.
 Three lit - tle ted - dy bears sit-ting on the bed. One walked a-way, "See you lat- er," he said.
 Two lit - tle ted - dy bears sit-ting on the bed. One hopped a-way, "See you lat- er," he said.
 One lit - tle ted - dy bears sit-ting on the bed. He galloped a-way, "See you lat- er," he said.

Figure 98. Jennifer's version with the new lyrics.

At the end of the song she held a long sound on a very high pitch, sang some nonsense words, and then sang the song again more slowly, *Five Little Teddy Bears* 6, beginning on G. The tune was exactly the same.

After singing several verses, she invited Michelle to join her: “Wanna sing it?” Michelle was busy writing. “Wait!” she said. As Jennifer waited, she entertained herself with *Apples* in opera style, as described earlier. With each phrase, her pitches rose. Michelle tried to join in, but could not match her high pitches. They ended up giggling together.

The girls decided to work on sketches for their books. They both traced the wooden bear shape onto the back of their worksheets.

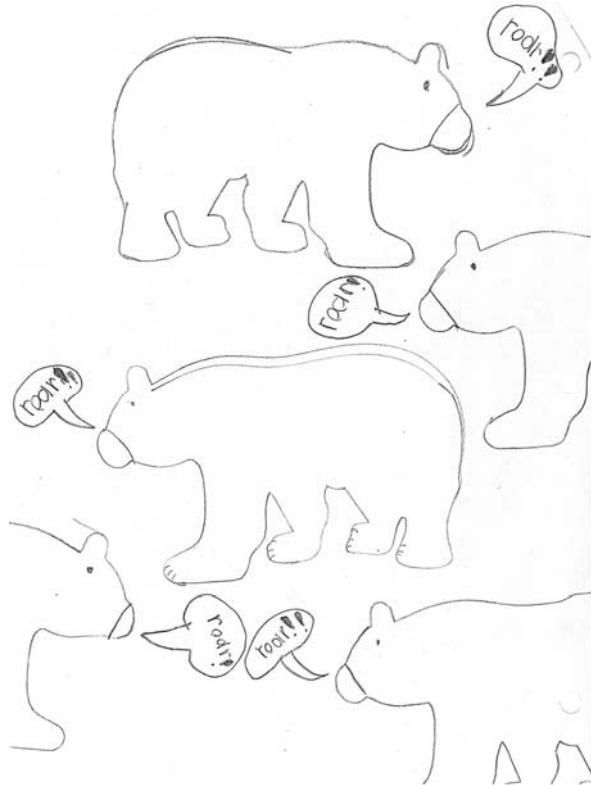


Figure 99. Jennifer's Bears.

As they drew, they chatted and sang excerpts of *Apples*. When a visitor asked them about their song, they gladly sang it for her exactly as before, beginning on the pitch, G. They sang all of the verses consistently in this key.

Jennifer had figured out the tune from the first day. The text took the most work. The girls did not have experience writing poems, and it took them awhile to find the topic that interested them and had good possibilities for developing the scenario. Once the topic was found, the effort was much easier. Despite their lack of poem-writing experience, they had a good start on their poem without my help. Jennifer worked with text and tune simultaneously, whereas Michelle wanted to have

the text figured out before any singing took place. She wanted to work step by step to create the song.

“See How That Feels?”

The next class session was spent working on drawings and waiting for the recording studio. While they waited, Jennifer sang several verses of their song, and then began to chant the remainder of the words, using a strong beat. She asked Michelle, “See how that feels?” Michelle did not respond. Jennifer continued chanting rhythmically.

While she sat waiting, her attention wandered to a poster on the wall. The poster contained words to a Japanese song that the children had learned to sing in first grade. Jennifer sang her own version of the song, one that mostly followed the melodic shape and 6/8 time of the original song that she had learned in first grade. Exact pitches varied from the original. She sang in the key of C major, which is the same key in which I had pitched the song in first grade. She did this again without stopping in between.

Konichiwa

Jennifer's Version

7
12

Ko - ni - chi-wa friends, hel-lo, we wel-come you our fam-lies. Ko - ni - chi-wa, friends, hel-lo. We
greet you on this day. Ko - ni - chi-wa, friends, hel-lo. We wel-come you, our
fam-i-lies. Ko - ni - chi-wa, friends, hel-lo, we greet you on this day.

Figure 100. Jennifer's version of *Konichiwa*

Konichiwa

Traditional

Ko - ni - chi - wa friends, hel - lo We wel - come you our fam ' - lies. Ko -
ni - chi - wa, friends, hel - lo We greet you on this day.

Figure 101. Original version of *Konichiwa*.

As Jennifer and Michelle worked side-by-side on their books, they chatted about their biggest concern. They worried that other groups were making up songs about teddy bears. They overheard Jasmine and Brenda singing about Teddy bears, and this concerned them. They felt ownership of the topic itself. They chattered about girls they liked and didn't like. After some chatter, the girls turned their attention back to their drawing and finished their books.

“Wanna [sic] Count?”

Jennifer seemed quite comfortable sharing her song with the kindergarten. When she started her song with the first child, her pitches were not consistent with the ones practiced previously. She sang *Five Little Teddy Bears 8* (Figure 102).

Five Little Teddy Bears 8

Jennifer

The musical notation consists of five staves of music in G major, common time. The lyrics are repeated for each verse, with measure numbers 5, 9, 13, and 17 indicated above the staves.

5

Five lit - tle ted - dy bears sit-ting on the bed, One ran a-way, "See you lat- er," he said.

9

Four lit - tle ted - dy bears sit-ting on the bed, One skipped a-way, "See you lat - er," he said. —

13

Three lit - tle ted - dy bears sit-ting on the bed, One walked a- way — "See you lat - er, he said."

17

Two lit - tle ted - dy bears sit-ting on the bed, One hopped a- way, — "See you la- ter," he said.

One lit - tle ted - dy bear sit-ting on the bed, He galloped a- way — "See you lat- er," he said.

Figure 102. Jennifer's version as shared with children in the kindergarten class.

On the second verse, she began singing a B as her first pitch. She also added in a passing tone, which made the song sound like it was in the key of E major, and she ended the verse on E instead of speaking the last words. This is where she pitched the song from then on that day, for every verse and every child. She stopped and encouraged the children to count the bears on each page, speaking to the younger children in a sweet, high-pitched voice. Michelle's version of the song, which she sung for me when I recorded her for her CD was different from Jennifer's, and each verse differed slightly until on the last verse she was now singing *Hush Little Baby*.

Five Little Teddy Bears

Michelle

Five lit - tle ted - dy bears sit - ting on the bed One ran a-way, "See ya lat - er," he said.

5

Four lit - tle ted - dy bears sit - ting on the bed One skipped a-way, "See ya lat - er," he said

9

Three lit - tle ted - dy bears sit - ting on the bed One walked a-way, "See ya lat - er," he said.

13

Two lit - tle ted - dy bears sit - ting on the bed One hopped a-way, "See ya lat - er," he said.

17

One lit - tle ted - dy bears sit - ting on the bed He galloped a-way, "See ya lat - er," he said.

Figure 103. Michelle's Five Little Teddy Bears.

Both girls sang confidently and seemed to enjoy the experience of sharing their picture song books with the younger children.

Interview Song: Sunny Day

At the end of Jennifer's interview, I asked her to compose a song for the poem, *Sunny Day*. She thought about the poem silently for about a minute, and then she sang (See Figure 104).

Sunny Day

Jennifer

Sun-ny day fades a-way. Dark-ness falls a-round me, while a star, high a-bove, with its light has found me.

Figure 104. Interview song: Sunny Day.

Her song had an E flat minor tonality, which it retained throughout, although the second phrase ended on B flat 5. She even used the leading tone of D natural before the E flat at the end of the first phrase. The tune was a pleasant sounding combination of steps and skips, with a range of a 6th, a repeatable melody. The melody rose with the meaning of the text, “while a star, high above, with its light has found me.” This was Jennifer’s most complex melody, with its movement of skips and steps.

Jennifer worked holistically. Words seemed to come with tunes. She sang the words she was thinking aloud as she created *Five Little Teddy Bears* with her partner. Her partner scolded her and tried to convince her to work step by step, finishing the lyrics completely before embarking upon a melody. But Jennifer’s head was filled with song. She sang the new words she and her partner wrote, she sang the *Apples* song, and she created a tune for the Japanese lyrics that hung on the door to the recording studio. When she received the words to *The Four Seasons* Jennifer began singing immediately. She quickly formed her simple melody, and after that she experimented with it. She sang her song repeatedly in various styles. When she sang for her partners she simplified her song. She quickly created a simple, but expressive melody for *Sunny Day*.

Jennifer worked quickly on her songs, developing her words and melody almost simultaneously. Some songwriters work with lyrics and melodies almost simultaneously. George David Weiss, composer of *What a Wonderful World*, said: “I

guess it's fair to say I think both in words and music almost simultaneously but perhaps a little bit faster on the lyric end" (Nash, 2002, p. 183).

Discussion

Her Head Filled With Song

Jennifer worked holistically. Words seemed to come with tunes. She sang the words she was thinking aloud as she created *Five Little Teddy Bears* with her partner. Her partner scolded her and tried to convince her to work step by step, finishing the lyrics completely before embarking upon a melody. But Jennifer's head was filled with song. She sang the new words she and her partner wrote, she sang the *Apples* song, and she created a tune for the Japanese lyrics that hung on the door to the recording studio. When she received the words to *The Four Seasons* Jennifer began singing immediately. She quickly formed her simple melody, and after that she experimented with it. She sang her song repeatedly in various styles. When she sang for her partners she simplified her song. She quickly created a simple, but expressive melody for *Sunny Day*. Jennifer's ability to think songs in her head enabled her to quickly generate melodies for text at will. Her head was also filled with stylistic, expressive ideas for songs.

Simple Songs, Expressive Variations

Jennifer constructed her songs in phrases. Her antecedent phrases ended on tones other than the tonic. The last phrase of *Four Seasons* did not bring the melody to the tonic, leaving the effect of an unfinished song. The antecedent of *Five Little*

Teddy Bears ended away from the tonic. She incorporated expressively spoken words into her variations. Several times she sang the last phrase, ending on the tonic, and sometimes spoke it. The first phrase of *Sunny Day* ends on the tonic, E flat. The second phrase ends on the 5th. However, the song's tonality could be interpreted to have shifted to the key of B flat. In that case, the second phrase ends on the tonic. Jennifer could have benefited from the lesson I gave Sarah on finding the tonic for her coda. Jennifer needed to develop an awareness of the tonic in her pieces.

Jennifer used a wide range of pitches in the *Four Seasons* songs which she sang for herself. She used ranges as wide as a thirteenth, although most of her own pieces had a range of a tenth. She often began her variations of *Four Seasons* with large leaps of a sixth or more. When she sang for and with her group she used narrower ranges, fourths and fifths, for example. Her melodies for *Four Seasons* tended to incorporate lah, sol, and mi of whatever key in which she sang. Her *Five Little Teddy Bears* versions used doh along with lah and soh below doh. These are simple melodic fragments that are found in many children's songs. It was her ability to embellish these simple melodies with expressive techniques that set her apart from the other children in her class.

Developmental Characteristics of Jennifer's Songs

Jennifer was functioning in the *speculative* mode, a playful stage described by Swanwick (1988). Her variations emulated pop, opera, and jazz. She developed contrasting melodies for phrases. She played with a variety of expressive techniques such as vocal scooping, vibrato, holding pitches, and the insertion of expressively

spoken text. She used a wide range of pitches as low as G3 and as high as C6. Often she sang her song in an ordinary and expected way, and then in the last phrase she inserted a surprise ending, such as in version 12 of *Four Seasons*, when she climbed her way up to a B flat 6, and then skipped downward to E 4. Jennifer played with expression.

The ability to create surprise is one of the attributes of the *playful variation*, or *speculative* stage, according to Swanwick (1988). “Musical speculation clearly depends on some fluency of manipulative ability and on an awareness of certain shared conventions of expressiveness. There has to be a context of socially recognized musical possibilities in order to create and respond to surprises” (p. 72). Lehmann & Davidson (2002), in a discussion about perception of emotion in musical performance, concluded that “the emotional intention along with the musical structure will create a specific set of constraints on how the music is performed” (p. 552). He provided examples of musical structures such as tempo and articulation: the perception of happy from up-tempo and detached or bouncy music and the perception of sad from slower, more legato music. Gemris (2002) asked the question, “Which musical characteristics contribute to the recognition of expressions of children?” (p. 493). Citing a study by Trehub (1993), he noted musical structures such as tempo and pitch direction: the perception of happy from fast notes and ascending pitch and the perception of sad from slow tempo and low, descending pitch. He concluded that expression is independent from tonality, such as major and minor, and is common to both music and language.

Jennifer seems to have a repertoire of socially recognized musical possibilities along with the knowledge of shared conventions of expressiveness, both in music and language, “See how that feels?” she asked after chanting *Five Little Teddy Bears* with a punctuated rhythm. One of her experimentations of *Four Seasons* was a whispered version. She usually incorporated an expressively spoken ending to *Five Little Teddy Bears*, “See ya later, he said!” Her voice ascended in pitch up to the word, “later,” then slightly descended on “he,” turning upward again on the word, “said.” This made the ending sound happy. “Music makes me feel happy,” she told me in her interview. Jennifer’s experiments of expressiveness were important personal expressions in the act of creating.

Chapter 8: Interpretation and Discussion

This study focused on children composing songs in a second grade music class. The primary research questions were: What processes do children use to compose songs and what is the nature of the songs children compose? How do interactions with others in the classroom and at home influence children's song compositions? In what ways do the children's songs and the processes used to produce them indicate a stage of development in musical thinking? An examination of the processes children used in song composition, the songs they created, and the social interactions that occurred during the process, suggested some factors that affected their motivation and ability to compose songs. In this chapter I will discuss the following factors related to children's composition of songs that arose from this study:

Motivation strengthened by multiple goals

Developmental ability to think musically

Facility with language

Ability and willingness to work with others to achieve goals

Teacher role: Bringing awareness to the forefront

Age 7: The watershed, and song as structure

Suggestions for further research follow the discussion of these factors, followed by a synopsis of what I learned in this study.

Motivation Strengthened by Multiple Outcomes

Children in this study demonstrated enthusiasm and willingness to work toward the achievement of the outcomes of each project, indicating a high level of motivation. I established the five related tangible outcomes for each project that served an important motivational function: the composition of a song, performance, picture song book, notation (by the teacher), and recording. Four of these outcomes provided the children with ways to share and remember their songs.

Composition of a Song

During the first project, children reacted with excitement to the idea that we had just composed our own ABA song:

Child: Cool!

Sarah: Yeah! Yeah! Cool!

Allen: Cool! We created a whole song!

Children began singing almost immediately when they received the poems for the second project. When I described the third project, Nathaniel whispered “yes!” and pulled his arms toward him, fists clenched. Luke announced, “That would be really something.” Children were fully engaged in the teacher modeling of *Five Humongous Hippos*, volunteering ideas for the song. Storr (1992) argued that both children and adults can find the making of patterns, the understanding of structures and the creating of new wholes intensely satisfying. According to Storr:

Anything which lessens our distress at being surrounded by chaos, or promotes our shaky sense of control and mastery, gives us pleasure. Even the most abstract intellectual patterns engage our feelings. (p. 177)

“The urge to create is strong in all children” (Gromko, 2003, p. 71).

Lowe (2002) examined literature that supports the idea that creativity may be a naturally motivating process. He cited the importance of attitude about music class. He argued that students have better attitudes when they are engaged in tasks which “provide a challenge and permit personal, self-guided creative exploration” (p. 93). Lowe concluded that “creativity may well be a process which enhances attitudes by allowing students deeper insights into personal musical meaning” (p. 93).

Public Performance

Performances provided children with an important and meaningful way to share their compositions. Enthusiasm was high for the performance of *Apples* for the kindergarten classes. Sarah and Allen both claimed that it was the most exciting day ever. The pride and pleasure of performing original compositions is likely to influence children’s work on future composition projects (Espeland, 2003). As we began the second and third projects, the children wanted to discuss the audience for these songs. They especially wanted to perform in the classrooms of their former teachers. For the third project, the children gladly shared their books and songs with the small groups of kindergartners that rotated among them, chatting with the children and counting the objects with them like big brothers and sisters. Odam (2000), investigating classroom practice in composition in the UK, found that 56% of the

pupils surveyed felt that their compositions were not listened to. A pupil commented, “Though I like composing, sometimes it seems a bit daunting and also pointless because no one will ever get to play it or hear it” (p. 120). This statement illustrates the strong connection between motivation and performance. Odam (2000) argued that it is important for music teachers to “ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to share their work” (p. 124). The performances held high importance with the children in this study.

Picture Song Books

The drawing of images related to the children’s songs seemed important throughout the creative process. When the children were all working on illustrations for the *Apples* book, I could hear the *Apples* song throughout the room. The children were singing as they drew. When I showed the children the final copies of the *Apples* picture song book, complete with comb binding, many of them said, “cool!” In the second and third projects the imagery helped tell the stories of their songs. The children’s worksheets were filled with experimental drawings that appeared along with the text that the children were constructing. Sarah, Nathaniel and Jennifer all drew images of their disappearing characters on their worksheets. According to Cox (2005), “representation [drawing] is a constructive, self-directed, intentional process of thinking in action, through which children bring shape and order to their experience” (abstract). Many children used the wooden shapes I had provided, tracing around them, incorporating these tracings into their final drawings. Children worked diligently on their picture song books, carefully drawing detailed illustrations.

Nathaniel's group members admired his tree in their *Snow* book. Church (2005) suggested that the creating of handmade books provides an important means of communication, combining art and writing, or in this case art, writing and song. The books enabled the children to communicate their songs and the stories of their songs to the younger children and, later, to family members in a meaningful way.

Notation

Teacher-generated notation of the children's songs gives a certain compositional legitimacy to the songs. The children see their own songs represented by the real musical symbols. The children voiced their excitement over the notation that I had pasted in the back of the *Apples* song book with "ooh" and "aah." They also voiced positive comments about the notation of their own songs that I pasted into the backs of their group and individual books. Odam (2000) suggested that children should see notated compositions. "Good examples of carefully presented notated work should be displayed on the walls as well as graphic scores. Use both handwritten and computer-generated examples" (p. 124). Perhaps the notation would become even more important in the future when the children's abilities to read and write notation develops. For now it served as a model of the real musical symbols representing the songs the children composed.

Recordings

Recordings can be an important source of feedback (Glover, 2000; Odam, 2000). The children enjoyed making recordings of themselves singing. The

microphone and digital recordings were very popular, as was the recording studio. Children willingly sang into the digital recorder and enjoyed listening to the results. Often the children in the room all became quiet and listened to playbacks from the digital recorder. There always seemed to be a line waiting for the studio. Sarah commented that she wanted to record her new ending to hear how it sounded. All of the children made recordings in the recording studio without my having to urge them to do so, and listened to the recordings immediately after making them.

Recordings were important tangible remembrances of each song. When I presented Miss Dunmore with a copy of the book and recording of *Apples* for their classroom, the children smiled and showed their excitement by whispering “yay.” The teacher subsequently reported to me that the children enjoyed listening to the tape of *Apples* and looking at the book in their classroom. Children expressed gratitude and joy when I presented them with their books and CDs after the project ended. The books and recordings made an important connection with their home world. As mentioned in Sarah’s story, her father posted her song, *Five Gray Dolphins*, on his personal website. Recordings provided an important means of feedback, as well as a way of sharing with family and a way of remembering songs.

These outcomes, all part of the final goal of the project, drove the process, providing motivation and excitement. In order to have high motivation for a composing project, it might be important to consider a more complex product goal than simply the composition of a song or an instrumental piece. Music is for sharing, and these children enjoyed composing songs and sharing their songs in meaningful ways. The performances, books, recordings and notation all provided means of

expressing, sharing and remembering the songs. The high motivation of the children drove them to achieve the goals. The musical thinking abilities of the children also contributed to the achievement of the goals.

Developmental Ability to Think Musically

In this section I will discuss Swanwick's (1988) theory of musical development, and two developmental stages, or modes of thinking, where I found the children's abilities reflected: the vernacular and the speculative, or imitative. This is followed by a discussion of children's ability to vary their songs. Finally, I will discuss characteristics of songs by children that relate to the vernacular stage of development in musical thinking.

Swanwick's Theory

An examination of the composition processes and outcomes (songs) of this study revealed developmental abilities that support Swanwick's (1988) theory of musical development based on the study of children composing by Swanwick and Tillman (1986). The model is a spiral which shows children moving from mastery of materials to imitative expression, both personal (such as in spontaneous songs of the children when they were in first grade) and vernacular expression (such as many of the songs produced by children in this study, including Sarah, Jennifer and Nathaniel); to imaginative play emphasizing form, both as self-directed speculative construction (as in Jennifer's variations) as well as idiomatic construction; to value-centered composition on a more advanced level (in which students work meta-

cognitively and then systematically to construct more complex musical works). The developmental sequence is cumulative in nature and the age boundaries are highly flexible. Children may work in several stages of the sequence at the same time. Anyone learning to compose in a new medium may progress through this sequence of development as well (Runfola & Swanwick, 2002).

A more detailed description of two of the modes reveals the developmental paths of Sarah, Jennifer and Nathaniel, as well as the other children in the class. The children had moved beyond the personal, spontaneous form of expression that they had exhibited in the first grade when they enjoyed spinning narrative, invented songs. In these three projects, they were now constructing songs that imitated the child-songs with which the children were familiar.

The Vernacular Mode

The following are the characteristics of pieces composed by children who are composing in the *vernacular* mode (Runfola & Swanwick, 2002):

1. Patterns begin to appear – melodic and rhythmic figures that are able to be repeated.
2. Pieces are often quite short
3. Pieces are contained within established general musical conventions.
4. Melodic phrases in standard 2, 4, or 8-bar units
5. Metrical organization, syncopation, sequences
6. Predictable, showing influences from elsewhere

Each of these characteristics appeared in the songs of the children in this study.

1. Patterns Begin to Appear – Repeatable Melodic and Rhythmic Figures

Sarah, Samantha and Marah gradually, mutually modified a melody that was difficult to remember until it became a repeatable melody. The gradual modification occurred as the children worked together on *The Snail*. Samantha taught Sarah her idea for the song, and Sarah altered the song as she sang it back to Samantha. Samantha sang back to Sarah, modifying the song further. This exchange continued as the song modified into a shared construction that was becoming more memorable. When Marah joined them the following class session, the modification continued among the three girls. By the time the girls performed for the kindergarten class, they were singing the song consistently, and it had transformed into a repeatable song.

This process of modification that occurred here is not surprising when we consider what is known about musical memory. According to Thompson and Schellenberg (2002), “Memory for the absolute pitches of novel melodies tends to be poor, and memory for the exact intervals between notes also tends to be poorer than memory for contour” (p. 469). *The Snail*, as Samantha first sang it for Sarah, did not reflect a sense of tonality or embody an underlying harmony. Sarah could not easily repeat Samantha’s melody, which was novel (without familiar tonal properties). She did, however, mimic most of the melodic contours of the melody, and she repeated tones which were the most frequent in Samantha’s melody, the E flats and B flats. Their song finally incorporated memorable tonal properties such as scale tones, especially doh, mi, and sol (Snyder, 2000). The song, in fact, outlined the tonic chord at the beginning and ended on the tonic.

A Snail 1 & 2

Samantha

A snail crept up the li - ly stalk, "How nice and smooth," said he. _____ "It's
quite a pleas - ant eve - ning walk, and just the thing for me - ."

Figure 105. The first version of *A Snail*.

A Snail (Performance)

Sarah, Samantha, Marah

A snail crept up the li - ly stalk, "How nice and smooth," said
he _____ "It's quite a pleas - ant eve - ning walk, and just the thing for me."

Figure 106. The final version of *A Snail*.

Nathaniel's songs, *Snow* and *Five Teeny Turtles* both exhibited tonal and rhythmic properties that made them memorable, repeatable melodies. Jennifer's *Four Seasons* and *Five Little Teddy Bears* did as well, as did all of the children's final songs.

2. *Pieces Are Often Quite Short*

Most of the pieces were short, consisting of two phrases. Even the disappearing number songs were short, in spite of being five verses long, because most of the children sang each of the verses with an identical melody. Luke's and Joan's songs were exceptions, as they varied verses, and Sarah and Joan added a coda. Children could have expanded their songs in a variety of ways, but chose to keep them short.

3. *Pieces are contained within established fairly general musical conventions.*

The songs had regular rhythms mostly in 2/4 time or 6/8 time (*The Snail*). They were tonal, and used conventional melodies with common melodic patterns of steps and skips.

4. Melodic phrases in standard 2, 4, or 8-bar units

All of the songs used these standard units for phrase length. The text helped to determine the phrase lengths.

5. Metrical organization, syncopation, sequences

Luke expressively varied each of his verses using sequences, pitching each one lower than the previous one, and using fewer pitches, until the melody of his last verse reflected the tombstones finally being on the ground at the end. Sarah's *Five Gray Dolphins* had a sequence of the opening motif in the second phrase. Some of Jennifer's variations of *Four Seasons* contained melodic sequences.

6. Predictable, showing influences from elsewhere.

As mentioned in the story of the class songs, many of the children's songs borrowed from, in whole or in part, songs familiar to the children: *Hush Little Baby*, *Five Green and Speckled Frogs*, *Down by the Station, Rain, Rain, Go Away*, *Six Little Ducks That I Once Knew*, and *Five Humongous Hippos* (Hall, 2005).

All of the children's short, conventional songs used repeatable melodic patterns and standard melodic phrases by the time they performed them. They were predictable, and showed influence from other music.

The Speculative Mode

The *speculative mode* (Runfola & Swanwick, 2002) is a more self-directed mode. These are some of the characteristics of this mode:

1. Imaginative deviation
2. Surprise, such as a novel ending
3. Experimentation: a desire to explore structural possibilities, looking to contrast or vary established musical ideas

James displayed imaginative deviation when he transformed the song, *Snow*, into rock ‘n roll. Jennifer displayed the characteristics of this mode privately with her expressive, stylized variations of *Four Seasons*. The following are specific examples of the three characteristics listed above:

1. Imaginative deviation

She experimented with the expressive use of her speaking voice, with scooping, and with vibrato on longer-held tones. Her melodic structures varied as well, sometimes spanning more than an octave.

2. Surprise, such as a novel ending

Often she ended the song with a surprise high pitch or a long-held tone using vibrato. In one version she ended with a descending arpeggio, each pitch sung on the sound, “hah.”

3. Experimentation: a desire to explore structural possibilities, looking to contrast or vary established musical ideas

Jennifer’s variations represent a conscious effort to vary her song in a myriad of stylistic and expressive ways. Jennifer’s mother confirmed her ability to stylistically experiment with songs she has learned from the radio. “She tries to sing it in her own way, her style. It definitely changes.” Jennifer even thought about feelingful effect, as when she sang *Five Little Teddy Bears* with a punctuated rhythm,

and then asked Michelle, “See how that feels?” According to Kaschub (2005), thinking about feelingful effect while composing is powerful. Jennifer carried out her variations of *Four Seasons* in her own private world, enjoying them as expressive, imaginative play.

For others, she performed the simplified version of the song using pitches that were easily sung by and with her partners. She sang the simplified version for me during our interview. When she returned to her own private world, she again varied the song. Her awareness of a simplified version of her song along with her ability to vary it expressively are indicative of a more advanced developmental level of musical thinking than other children in the class, although other children experimented with variation in a different way. Some children experimented with melodic variation in order to choose the preferred way to sing a melody that they had developed.

Ability to Vary One’s Song

Throughout this study, some children demonstrated their awareness of song structure, exercising their musical memory, with the ability to vary a melody. Jennifer varied her melody in order to be expressive. Joan, Nathaniel and Sarah varied their melody until they found the melody that they liked the best. Emilia varied her melody so that it differed from a borrowed melody.

Some children individually started creating with a musical idea and then repeated the idea, varying the melody in small ways until satisfied. In some cases they went back to an original version. Then they practiced by repeating the song or phrase in an identical or nearly identical manner from that time forward. Both Joan and

Nathaniel varied their songs in this way. Joan's recording studio version of *Five Little Ghosts* contained a slightly different variation on each verse. When she sang for her final recording, she had simplified her song so that verse one was in minor tonality, as in the recording studio version, and the rest of the verses were in major tonality with the same melody that she had used for verse three of the original. She then sang her song this way consistently. Nathaniel varied his original musical idea for *Five Teeny Turtles* by singing his verses from five down to one, varying the melody each time, until he proclaimed, at the end of verse five, "perfect!" He sang that version consistently after that.

Sarah established her tune for *Five Gray Dolphins* during class session 11 (Figure 107).

Dolphins 2

Sarah

The musical notation consists of a single staff in G clef, 4/4 time. It features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. Below the staff, the lyrics are written in F Major: "Three blue dol - phins jump - in' in the o - cean_ One jumped a wave and then there were two." The note heads are black, and stems extend either upwards or downwards. The lyrics are centered under the notes.

Figure 107. Sarah's melody established for *Dolphins* song.

Sarah and Georgia refined their poem between class sessions 11 and 12. At the beginning of class session 12, Sarah tried her new words to several other tunes (Figures 108, 109, 110).

Dolphins 3

Sarah

The musical notation consists of a single staff in G clef, 4/4 time. It features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. Below the staff, the lyrics are written in F Major: "Five gray dol - phins swim-ming in the bay One jumped a wave and swam a - way." The note heads are black, and stems extend either upwards or downwards. The lyrics are centered under the notes.

Figure 108. Sarah's words to a first tune.

Dolphins 4

Sarah

Five gray dol - phins swim-ming in the bay. One jumped a wave and swam a - way.

Figure 109. Sarah's words to a second tune.

Dolphins 5

Sarah

One gray dol - phin swim-ming in the bay, One jumped a wave and swam a - way.

Figure 110. Sarah's words to a third tune.

Then she returned to her original tune and sang it consistently, except for a coda that she had added, and the configuration of the pitches in measures one and three, which she sometimes varied between C-A-C-A and A-C-C-A. In figure 111 she sang the A-C-C-A configuration.

Dolphins 6

Sarah

One gray dol - phin swim-ming in the bay, One jumped a wave and swam a - way.

5 Coda

Swam a - way, swam a - way, one jumped a wave and he swam a - way.

Figure 111.

Sarah was not finding the tonic for her coda, and could not seem to sing her coda consistently. After I worked with her for a few minutes to help her find the tonic for her coda, she practiced several possible endings on her own (See Figure 112).

Dolphins Codas

Figure 112. Sarah's coda experiments.

After she tried these three different endings, she went back to the first one that she sang after she left me to work on her own. Figure 113 shows the one that she preferred and consequently sang.

Five Gray Dolphins (Performance)

Sarah

Five gray dol - phins swim-ming in the bay, One jumped a wave and swam a - way.

5 Coda

Swam a - way, swam a - way, one jumped a wave and swam a - way.

Figure 113. Sarah's final coda.

Sarah was able to compose musical material, vary that material, and go back to the original material. She was also able to compose choices of musical material, choose her favorite, and sing it in a subsequent performance as part of her song.

Other children showed the ability to consciously vary their melodies from a known melody. Emilia, for example, discovered that she had used the tune of *Hush Little Baby* for her song, *Five Little Ghosts*. She changed her second phrase, leaping

up to the dominant, and descending stepwise, ending on the tonic. She consistently sang her song this way after changing it.

Repetition and the development of automaticity, along with the individuals' structural awareness and the capacity for musical memory were the factors contributing to these events. I directed the children to repeat their musical ideas many times "until the tune sounds the same each time, and sounds the way you like it." When the children had settled on a melody they liked, they were to practice it often in order to remember it. Without an awareness of song structure and the ability to remember their motifs and songs, the children would not be able to vary songs. The ability to tell if their own tune sounds the same upon repetition required short term musical memory. Remembering their melody from class session to class session required long term memory, developed with repetition and interest in remembering (Snyder, 2000). Both Nathaniel and Sarah reported to me that they had sung their songs outside of class. Jennifer's mother recognized Jennifer's *Four Seasons*, which I sang for her in our interview, saying that she had heard her singing it at home. Her mother said, "She was singing it the other day, and I was, 'What are you singing?' and she goes, 'I made that up.'"

Sloboda (1985) related development in musical thinking to an increasing reflective awareness of structure. The variations the children created indicate an important awareness of melodic structure in the process of composing.

Songs By Children

It is interesting to note some similarities between Swanwick's characteristics of the vernacular mode and Campbell's (1991) distinguishing features of songs *by* children:

1. Songs *by* children do not exceed an octave, and are contained within an interval of a fifth in three-quarters of the sample. This is a substantially tighter range than found in many traditional songs *for* children.
2. Songs *by* children tend to make an even greater use of repetition as a structural device than songs *for* children.
3. While defined as such by children, some songs are rhythmic chants, or may be a combination of song and speech rhythms. (pp 21 – 22)

The songs by the children in this study have features that are consistent with three of the features that Campbell identified. All of the final songs sung by the children for their CD recording had a range smaller than an octave, and most were contained within a fifth. Most of the songs repeated motifs and even whole phrases. For example, each of the first three phrases of *The Snail* began in the same repetitive manner. *Wiggly Woo* had repetitive first, second, and fourth phrases. *Soap Bubbles* and *The Snail* both incorporated spoken B sections. There was an additional distinguishing feature: the modified song was now in a lower key, with all pitches falling below the voice break.

Songs By Children: Below the Voice Break?

Do songs by children tend to fall in the register of children's voices below the register break (around G4 or A4)? The natural register of the untrained voice ranges from middle C to A, the interval of a sixth (Trowell's study cited in Storr, 1992). Although most of the children in Miss Dunmore's class can sing much higher pitches, in their upper register, this training in music class has only encompassed two days per week for a nine month period each year for two years. It is reasonable to think that the children would easily slip back into the habit of using the lower part of the register to which they are most accustomed. It is also reasonable to think that the children can sing more accurately in this lower range.

Several singing accuracy studies are related to register. Philips (1992) reported findings from various studies (Goetze, 1985; Smale, 1987) suggesting that children prior to third grade sing more accurately when singing individually than when singing in a group. In Cooper's study (1995), however, younger children's accuracy in groups versus individual performances was not significantly different and she attributed that finding to the register of her melodic test pattern. She used the pitches C#4 up to F#4, below the voice break between registers (around G4 or A4), whereas other researchers had used pitches above the voice break. If children are more accustomed to manipulating their voices below the voice break, as they do for speaking, then it seems reasonable to think that they would be able to sing more accurately in the lower range.

Among all eight of the small group ABA songs one, *Soap Bubbles*, went as high as A4 once, and Nathaniel's *Snow*, in D minor, went as high as A three times.

The rest of the songs' pitches were below A4. The final version of *The Snail* went as high as G4. Only seven out of the twenty-two final versions of the disappearing number songs (recorded for the CDs) contained some pitches higher than A4. During music class instruction the children often sing in their head voices, yet a majority of the children showed a preference for singing below the voice break when in control of the pitches of their own songs. *Four Seasons* also modified to a lower register than the original version Jennifer sang for her group.

Jennifer, in her original version of *Four Seasons*, used a range of a tenth and shifted the implied harmony of the tonic in the first two phrases to the dominant in the second two phrases. She also scooped upward an octave at the beginning of the third phrase, and contrasted the beginning of the fourth phrase by scooping from the B flat into middle C, then outlining the dominant chord in that measure. She sang mostly in her head register. In contrast, version 26, which her group sang together, spanned the interval of a fifth which is more typical of songs by children (Campbell, 1991). The motif in measure one repeats throughout the song. The singing register is lower as well, staying below the natural break of the voice.

Four Seasons 2

Jennifer

Spring is show-er - y, flow-er - y, bow-er - y. Sum-mer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.
 5 Au-tumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Win-ter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 114. Jennifer's fanciful version of *Four Seasons*.

Four Seasons 26

Jennifer

Spring is show - ry, flow 'ry, bow - ry. Summer is hop - py, crop - py, pop - py.
 5 Autumn is wheez - y, sneez - y, freez - y. Winter is slip - py, drip - py, nip - py

Figure 115. Jennifer's simpler version of *Four Seasons*.

The children's final songs conform to Campbell's (1991) description of songs by children, and also are in lower keys in which the pitches fall below the voice break.

Facility with Language

In this study, facility with language, especially reading fluency, was a factor affecting individuals and groups in their ability to compose songs, both with reading text and with creating text. Seven children in this class were targeted as below-grade-level readers. When each group received the poem for the second project, the children were to read, then chant their poem together. After a few minutes one group was already singing and four groups chanted their poems well. Three groups, however, were not reading their poems fluently. I gave the children copies of their poems to take with them in order to practice. By the following class session these groups still needed my help. I had the children echo phrases of the poems back to me until they could do so rhythmically and confidently. We also discussed the meaning of the words. These interventions seemed to help, as the children were all able to sing their poems eventually.

Sean also needed intervention for his and James's song, *Five Big Bucks*. When he recorded the song, after we had worked together, Sean fluently sang a tune that was slightly different from James's. Other targeted readers were supported sufficiently by their partners to overcome fluency problems. Brenda was a targeted reader, but her rendition of *Wiggly Woo*, as she read along with her group, flowed rhythmically. Katie, a targeted reader, read *Hippity Hop to the Candy Shop* fluently along with Joan. All targeted readers except Sean sang words fluently for the disappearing number songs, in which they created their own lyrics.

The creating of text for the disappearing number songs was a challenge for most of the children, but especially for the targeted readers. In this school, second grade teachers worked with their students to create poems with rhythm and rhyme during the last nine weeks of the school year. This was the first nine weeks, and although poems with rhythm and rhyme were part of the vernacular, I had to work individually with the children to help them to develop their poems. Chris, for example, did not have a partner to help with the ideas. I spent time with her talking about ideas for her song, and helping her to find words with rhythm and rhyme to express those ideas. Jared also needed extra help. He had many ideas lacking any rhythm or rhyme that were packed into narrative statements. Together we sorted out the most basic details for the text, and left the other details to be illustrated in his picture song book. After working together to construct the lyrics he was able to read them fluently.

Pikulski and Chard (2005) claim that reading fluency entails at least two activities, decoding and comprehension. Since humans can attend to only one thing at

a time, one of these two must be automatic for fluency to take place (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974, in Pikulski & Chard, 2005). According to Pikulski and Chard (2005),

These researchers [LaBerge & Samuels, 1974] argued that human beings can attend to only one thing at a time. We are able to do more than one thing at a time if we alternate our attention between two or more activities, or if one of the activities is so well learned that it can be performed automatically. (p. 511)

For example, decoding needs to be automatic in order for the reader to attend to comprehension. It stands to reason that if comprehension is in place, decoding can take place more easily. Sean did not relate well to the text about hunting and “big bucks.” He had not gone hunting before. James, who had conceived of the idea, had gone hunting with his father. Sean’s comprehension of the text was vague. His language familiarity on the subject of hunting was limited. Therefore, he struggled with both decoding and comprehension at the same time.

Schwanenflugel et al. (2006) identified the characteristics of automaticity and related them to reading. Speed and accuracy, such as that in word recognition, emerge with practice. Another characteristic is autonomy, defined as “the ability to initiate a task without actively attending to it. The automatic reader cannot help but process print, even when he or she may intend to avoid doing so” (p. 499). In addition, an automatic reader has cognitive resources available for other tasks, such as reading comprehension. How does this principle apply to children singing text?

Some parts of the task will need to be automatic in order for children to attend to a part of the task that needs attention. For example, in order for children to attend to construction of a melody, they will need to be automatic with text decoding and the rhythm of the text. They may need to understand the text. This seemed to be Alice

Parker's (1994) method in which she lived with the text for a long period of time before she began to apply melody to it. Music educators who are teaching composition of song need to be aware of cognitive demands concerning the creation, comprehension, and decoding of text, and allow extra time and support for some children to be able to gain the ability to automatically chant the text. The children can then give their attention to creating a melody for their text. After working with Sean to develop automaticity, he was able to sing the text in his own way. With peer and teacher support, children with reading difficulties were able to overcome such difficulties in order to compose songs.

Ability and Willingness to Work Together to Achieve Goals

Goal-seeking and Artistic Control

Small group and partner social interaction during composition activities affected musical outcomes. Gromko (2003) discussed ramifications of social goal-seeking among children who were composing in small groups:

In the small-group sessions, I observed that social goals seemed to predominate during the composing processes, such that musical goals either coexisted with the social goals or were entirely lost to the social goals as children negotiated their way to a group composition and performance. (p. 83)

Gromko identified some social goals based on a category system which Dyson (1995 in Gromko, 2003) used in the analysis of children's social goals while writing. The social goals Gromko identified were the following: affiliation, solicitation, allowance, control, compliance or resistance, and negotiation. She noticed that *affiliation* (i.e.,

emphasizing one's similarity to others) was operative when children were forming their groups. I observed a strong affiliation between Jennifer and Michelle as they worked together as partners on the third project. They joked and giggled together and chatted about mutual friends.

Gromko (2003) observed that once children were situated in groups or with partners, some children became leaders who controlled, solicited and resisted, and some became followers who allowed or complied. These behaviors occurred in this study as well. Sarah, Nathaniel and Jennifer all exerted leadership by controlling, soliciting and resisting. Their chosen group members and partners were a mixture of leaders and followers. Control issues are inevitable in group situations. According to Swanwick (1988):

Even when the learning initiative is handed over to small groups, perhaps engaged in composing, dominant students will tend to influence both classification and framing by the strength of their ideas and force of personality. This is natural and inevitable. As Brian Davies (1986) reminds us, the social *is* control. (p.123)

Jennifer's melody was the one that the group used. She maintained control over the melody, teaching it and simplifying it for Thomas and Michelle. Thomas worked quietly with the two girls, complying with their ideas. When Jennifer worked with Michelle on their teddy bear song, she controlled the song and Michelle tried to control the process. Jennifer began singing as soon as she and Michelle had a topic idea. She sang about birdhouses, then robins, and finally about teddy bears, using the same basic motif. Michelle decided what they should write down and what they needed to do next. She scolded Jennifer for singing before they had completed the poem. "We have to write a poem," she exclaimed. As the work progressed, Michelle

complied with Jennifer's version of the song, and did not offer any competing ideas. The two girls shared leadership, Jennifer taking artistic control and Michelle control of the details and procedures. In this way they moved toward completion of the goals of the project.

Nathaniel, James and Mike all used various means of control and negotiation but were never able to unify their ideas. All three boys had strong personalities and had ideas for the song. Mike used interruption as a means of control. When Nathaniel began to sing his version for the other two boys, Mike interrupted: "But we're using the B part." Nathaniel urged his partners to sing the melody his way. "Let me try mine," he said. He sang the A section, and again Mike interrupted him: "No, no, no." Mike had another way of exerting some control. Every time they sang publicly, he started the song before the other two boys were ready.

James issued directives: "Mike, you sing the first A part, Nathaniel, you sing the B part, and I will sing the last part." He insisted that they should sing their song rock 'n roll style. "Do rock 'n roll" he directed. The more Nathaniel resisted the more James used a louder voice than the others and insisted. Nathaniel did not give up soliciting his ideas. It suddenly seemed as though Nathaniel had prevailed, and all three boys practiced the song the way Nathaniel had conceived it. However, when the practice performance for the class occurred, James controlled the microphone, and used his loud voice to control the song, rock 'n roll style.

Nathaniel tried to control the group in their task, beginning many of his statements with "Let's." He asked Mike, after Mike interrupted with his "no, no, no," "O.K. What do you want to sing?" He restated James's idea of each boy singing one

section: “So we’ll put it all together and see how it is.” After they sang it that way, Nathaniel suggested what they should do next: “Let’s sing it at the same time.” After they practiced, he said, “Let’s tell Mrs. Hall that we are ready to sing for the class. Are you ready, guys?” After the class performance, he scolded James, “James, we were not supposed to do rock ‘n roll, remember?” After James sang the song for Nathaniel with a smoother rhythm, Nathaniel reinforced his performance with a directive, “Do that next time.” This group, with three leaders and no followers did not ever completely unify. Their performance for the kindergarten class reflected their dividedness.

Sarah took control of the creative process with her group after being absent for a week. Her two partners had created a melody and text for the B section, but one partner was absent and the remaining partner tried to teach the melody to Sarah. Sarah not only took control of the melody, she also controlled the B section wording by suggesting ways to improve it. She decided when it was appropriate to sing the song “for Ms. Hall.” Her leadership helped focus the two girls on the task. Marah returned the following class session to find that the melody was completely different. She resisted and sabotaged Sarah’s efforts to create a B melody by loudly singing nonsense over Sarah’s voice. Sarah controlled the process of choosing a book holder and making the introductions. In spite of the contention, this group did sing in a unified manner when they performed for the kindergarten class.

Sarah took control of the song she and Georgia were composing together about dolphins. She made the decision about the words, trying out various combinations, finally soliciting Georgia, “What do you think?” Georgia complied

with Sarah's ideas, carefully writing everything down on the guide sheet. Sometimes Georgia would remind Sarah of a detail. For example, she corrected a grammatical error Sarah had made: "five dolphins *were*, not *was*." Sarah began trying motives for the words as soon as she had decided upon the topic of dolphins. Sarah developed the song herself with no melodic in-put from Georgia. As she worked to develop a coda like Sarah's, Georgia asked her whether she was repeating the words "swam away." Sarah unilaterally decided their partnership should end when she and Georgia tried to sing together and Sarah noticed that Georgia's pitches sounded lower. Georgia tried to negotiate, but Sarah would not be dissuaded. In reality, Sarah and Georgia had not been functioning as a team in the sense that Sarah was controlling all of the decisions. In some cases leadership impeded progress toward composition goals, and in some cases leadership propelled the group toward completion.

Ability to Negotiate Tessitura with Others

Most of the children maintained tonality and keyality in their songs. Many of them even sang in a particular key consistently from practice to performance to recording for the final CD. However, singing the created songs in unison with group members was not easy for some. Ability to do this successfully would require awareness of the problem, ability to sing in various registers, and willingness to cooperate with others. Differing pitch register, range and tessitura can all present problems for group singing in a second grade class. Registration refers to "head" and "chest" voices, or upper and lower registers. Range includes pitches reachable in both registers. Tessitura refers to the comfortable part of a child's range and perhaps the

child's *preferred* part of the child's range. Some young children can sing much lower pitches than music educators might assume. Further probing on singing assessments can reveal these capabilities. According to Phillips (1992), it is important to consider vocal registration when charting a child's vocal range by including chest vocal range as well as head voice.

Although Philips was discussing the adolescent voice, there may be preadolescent children who are discouraged about singing because they do not want to use, or can not use, a head voice for singing and can sing low pitches compared to other children. These children may have the ability to sing in tune in their own tessitura. The following children used very low pitches in their chest register for singing: Seth, A flat below middle C; Jared, E flat below middle C; Georgia and Joseph, F sharp below middle C. These children spoke softly in class, and resisted attempts to sing or make any kind of sounds in their head register. I used a variety of means when the children were in the first grade and in the second grade to help them find their head register and to sing in that register with confidence. Some children though, such as these four, would most often sing in their chest register.

Sarah decided that Georgia's voice was lower pitched and dissolved their partnership. Georgia sang softly in her chest voice, whereas Sarah was singing more lightly, in her head voice, or mixing between these two registers seamlessly. When Georgia sang her version of *Five Gray Dolphins* in the recording studio, she opened with a more narrow range of pitches, three C sharps and an E. She sang in the key of A, singing mostly B and C sharp, in a range from A up to E, and ended on the tonic. She added a coda similar to Sarah's, singing C sharp and B, then ended the coda with

A – F sharp, F sharp 3 (below middle C) on “swam a-way.” Georgia’s song was tonal and she sang in tune. Georgia can probably hear tonal differences in a higher range, as demonstrated on the PMMA and the IMMA. Her composite score placed her in the 86th percentile on the PMMA, and the 80th percentile on the IMMA. Observations in this study concur with Philips’ (1992) argument that the ability to hear pitches in a certain range and the ability to reproduce pitches in that range do not necessarily correlate.

Sarah and Samantha worried about the lower pitches of *The Snail* which the two girls were now singing, knowing that Marah could sing very high pitches. Marah had a well-developed use of her wide vocal range, however, and was able to sing the lower pitches. When she sang her version of *The Snail* for the other two girls, she sang a G# below middle C on the word, “stalk.” These three girls matched pitches with each other in a lower range and sang in unison together.

Jennifer had a high-pitched speaking voice as well as singing voice, and a wide range. She sang a C6, two octaves above middle C, in one of her playful variations, and sang as low as a B flat below middle C in another. Her partner, Michelle, had a fuzzy voice, possibly from vocal cord damage. When the two girls sang together, Jennifer adjusted the pitch of her song to lower pitches, accommodating Michelle’s lower pitched voice. Her desire and ability to adjust to Michelle’s lower pitches enabled the girls to sing in unison together.

Gender bias regarding singing affected Nathaniel’s group’s desire to sing in unison. Nathaniel and James both accused Mike of sounding “girlish.” They said that he sang too high. Nathaniel and James both knew how to sing in their head voices, as

they had done so on numerous occasions in music class. However, instead of choosing to sing in a higher pitched key so that Mike could blend better with them, they urged him to sing low, which he could not do. Mike sang a fifth or sixth above them in the final performance. Nathaniel and James preferred a medium-low tessitura, but Mike only had a high range. When the boys tried to sing together for their CD recording I urged them to sing in a higher range, which they were able to do, matching pitches with each other.

These differences in preferred tessitura were challenging for the children to negotiate. It is interesting to note that children were aware of register differences within their groups. For example, Sarah and Samantha were aware of Marah's high pitched voice, and Nathaniel and James knew Mike's voice was higher than their voices. Some groups solved the differences by adjusting group pitch. Nathaniel's group did not adjust. A wide variance of vocal characteristics and skills can make it difficult for children to compose together and sing their compositions together in groups or with partners. Perhaps pairing children together with similar vocal characteristics would be a more successful grouping arrangement for composing songs. Children could have been divided into three groups: low, middle and high "preferred" tessitura. They could have chosen partners from their tessitura group.

Deciding to Group or Not to Group

In a study of current practice in the teaching of composition in British secondary schools, Odam (2000) found that small group work was the dominant method. Odam argued that this method is proven to be stressful to both teachers and

students. According to Odam, composing is largely an individual activity. Glover (2000), too, stressed the importance of providing children with opportunities to compose alone. Odam (2000) advocated large group composition as a method of learning how to proceed, and pairs of children or individual work once children understand how to proceed. Groups can provide extra support during the beginning stages of mastering a process. Howard & Martin (1997 in Webster, 2003) reported that group work can provide a means for initiating the composition process.

There are natural settings in which composers collaborate. Marsh (1995, in Webster, 2003) reported that children work as groups to make up songs and games on the playground. This finding is not a surprise, considering the cooperative setting of playground games. Studies of garage bands have shown the nature of collaboration that takes place among rock band members in informal settings (Campbell, 1995; Jaffurs, 2004; Davis, 2005). A number of professional songwriters have collaborated, usually with one other person (Nash, 2002). Well-known songwriting teams include Gilbert and Sullivan, the Gershwin brothers, and Rogers and Hammerstein. The setting and purpose of the composition may be the determining factor when considering whether to organize children into small groups or not.

If independence is the goal, both peer support and motivational choice can take place without situating children in formal groups for composing. For example, children can choose to work alongside of other children for peer support and feedback, as Nathaniel and Jared chose to do. Nathaniel and Jared worked on their guide sheets together, discussing the interpretation of the directions. Sarah and Nathaniel conversed about the familiarity of Sarah's song. Sarah and Jared sang their

songs for each other. Sarah sang for several nearby friends, trying one of her versions of her coda. Nathaniel helped Joan cut out ghosts for her book, and Joan sang Nathaniel's words to the tune of *Hush Little Baby*. Even the waiting line for the recording studio became a place for rich sharing of songs with one another. Nathaniel and Mike discussed his dilemma, and Nathaniel tried to help Mike by making up a tune for his words. Jennifer and Michelle sang together. Jennifer chanted her words with a strong beat, and asked Michelle, "See how that *feels*?" These conversations were rich and supportive.

Children can borrow and share ideas, stay on task together, and yet can maintain the artistic control and individualism that they seek. Individual children can choose poems with which to work and song forms with which to work. Children can share a poem, or develop lyrics together, but work on separate melodies and make recordings separately, thereby feeling ownership in their song. They can be free to move about and consult with one another. They can produce not only songs, but picture song books and CDs, and can perform or share their songs with others in meaningful ways. The teacher role is to enable these goals to take place, and to help children to grow in their abilities to compose by bringing aspects of composing into their conscious awareness.

Teacher Role: Bringing Musical Awareness to the Forefront

There are many complex aspects of teacher role in the composing classroom to consider. Here I am considering just one aspect of the teacher role that dominated interactions with the class in this study, that of awareness. Bringing various kinds of

awareness to the children helped them to develop as composers. I began each composing project by bringing awareness of form to the children by means of familiar songs that modeled the form the composed songs would take. We sang the songs and discussed the characteristics of the songs' forms. I also modeled the construction of a song, thinking aloud, using language that helped to communicate song construction (Bandura, 1986; Glover, 2000; Gredler, 1992).

Another way in which I helped children with awareness was in the creative process. By referring to the Structural Tension Chart on a regular basis, children were aware of the action steps they had completed and the steps they still needed to complete in order to reach the goals. I also kept the children aware of the time frame for completing these goals. This awareness helped them to maintain their motivation and drive towards the goal.

In addition, I helped the children become aware of structural needs as they arose naturally. For example, I had noticed that children were not finding the tonic at the end of their songs. After a lesson on finding the tonic, more children were able to do so. When Sarah was not finding the tonic for her coda, I gave her an individual lesson, and she was then able to create three codas that ended on the tonic. If children are to develop further in their musical thinking, bringing them to an awareness of structural considerations is paramount. According to Sloboda (1985), development in musical thinking is directly related to an increasing reflective awareness of structure. The teacher can work with children to increase this reflective awareness of structure.

The lesson on *Hush Little Baby* was another lesson of awareness. Many children were suddenly using that tune for their songs. After a lesson on varying the tune, most children were able to recognize that they had been using *Hush Little Baby* as their melody, and then varied it, while keeping the underlying harmonic structure. I also monitored children that were speaking instead of singing, helping them to become aware of whether they were speaking or singing, and helping them to distinguish the difference.

I decided to bring a particular awareness to the class or to individuals depending upon the abilities of the individual children involved. In all of the cases mentioned above, children were able to move forward in their composing abilities based on their new awareness. This approach to instruction involved scaffolding children in their zone of proximal development, working with them at the edge of their musical understanding (Bruner, 1986, 1996; Glover, 2000; Vygotsky, 1930/1978). The bringing of awareness is an important role of the teacher (Glover, 2000).

Composing Songs in a Second Grade Music Class

When thinking about the developmental appropriateness of the task of composing songs in a second grade class, I recognized that a change in the cognitive ability of children had been taking place during the course of the previous year. Glover used the term, *watershed*, claiming:

Around the age of 6 or 7, children cross a watershed in their musical thinking that brings a new possibility into play in terms of music-making. This is the point at which they become able not just to make, but to think of, musical ‘pieces’ as such. (p. 55)

Some researchers have identified characteristics of this cognitive change.

Crossing the Watershed: Characteristics of Change

The abilities demonstrated by the children in this study are indicative of a level of cognition that develops between the ages of five to seven. Piaget (1945, 1951) identified the age of seven as the approximate age when operational thought begins to take place. The children's ability to modify their melodies while maintaining other structures in place may be examples of operational thought as applied to musical thinking (Gardner, 1994).

Davidson and Scripp (1988) identified the age range of five to seven as "a period of considerable change in most children's learning and perception modes" (p. 227). They conclude that "musical pitch emerges as the primary component of children's musical cognitive development by the age of seven" (p.197). Children in this study were cognizant of pitch. They demonstrated awareness of pitch differences within their groups or with their partners. Some children adjusted their pitches to match those of their group members. Most of the children were able to sing their songs in tune, and even maintain key stability. This is certainly an important factor in the ability of children to compose songs. In addition, children are more able to think musically in their heads (Glover, 2000).

Swanwick (1988) identified the age of around seven as the age in which the vernacular is "more clearly established" (p.78). As discussed earlier, children in this study exhibited this trait in a variety of ways. According to Glover (2000), children around the age of seven gradually develop the ability to compose gestures and phrases that are more easily repeatable melodic and rhythmic patterns and can

consciously conceive of a piece of music as an entity or structure. The children in this study demonstrated these characteristics as well. Children demonstrated a consciousness of structure as they varied and modified their songs.

Children around the age of seven can be participants in the artistic process (Gardner, 1994). The children in this study were fully engaged in the creative process. “Children have entered the first phase of conventional music-making” (Swanwick, 1986, p. 78). They created conventional songs within a social context. They demonstrated musical cognitive abilities that are indicative of the “watershed,” as Glover (2000) called the stage in which children can think of song as a structure that can be modified, performed, and remembered.

A Characteristic of Change: Song as Structure

Children in this study grasped the structure of song at varying levels of skill, evidenced in their ability to develop, remember, modify and vary the songs, and perform them for others. The children’s songs were metrical in nature due to the use of rhythmic text. They were organized in motives and phrases, making use of tonality and diatonic scales. Some of the songs contained contrasting sections. They were structured with two to four lines of poetic text, which resulted in two to four phrases. The tonal structures within their songs were memorable, or became memorable through modification.

Luke’s song was an example of structural modulation. He worked his way from the key of F down to the key of B flat, utilizing common pitches and half or whole step motion to the next key. Nathaniel’s, Sarah’s, Jennifer’s and Joan’s songs

provide particularly strong examples of memorable, structural features. As children repeated their songs in order to remember them, some children modified them to incorporate the tonal structures that made them more memorable.

Jennifer's expressiveness, as she varied *Four Seasons*, emphasized structures in her song. She used the following expressive devices that established boundaries in the grouping structure of the music (Clarke, 1988):

- ended the song by lengthening the last pitch
- added vibrato and octave leaps on the last pitch
- scooped up to pitches that fell on strong beats
- shifted tonality, creating a sequence, at the beginning of the third phrase

According to Clarke (1988) "each expressive act [of performance] operates so as to project a particular functional meaning for a given musical structure" (p. 15).

Jennifer's expressive devices intuitively emphasized strong beats, the beginning of the third phrase, and the penultimate note at the end of the song.

In performing their songs for others these seven-year-old children made public their original structures that were unique and repeatable combinations of text, tune and expression. In doing so they demonstrated a path of cognitive development that was directly related to participation in a sociocultural community. Biological development, such as the cognitive change that takes place at approximately the age of seven, worked together with social and cultural processes. As children experienced guided participation in composition activities with each other and their teacher, they learned to compose (Rogoff, 2003). The songs they composed were preserved in

memory, picture song books and recordings for the enjoyment of other participants in the cultural community: former teachers, younger children, peers and family.

Suggestions for Further Research

The Importance of Singing

Some argue that singing is an important tool in composition (Glover, 2000; Odam, 2000). Do children who have song composition experiences compose more easily with instruments? Are they able to compose more memorable instrumental melodies at a younger age? Perhaps composition of songs can provide an important connection between a young child's world of songs and the world of instrumental music. Children might be led to use singing to generate musical ideas for instrumental compositions.

Song Memory

Musical memory is an interesting aspect of the composition process. The children experienced significant time gaps between class sessions and yet most were able to remember the songs they had created. It would be interesting to learn about musical memory, time factors, and children composing songs in consideration of recent research involving procedural memory consolidation (Duke & Davis, 2006).

Musical Aptitude and Song Composition

One might think that in vocal composition musical aptitude would be a primary factor in success, since the vocal production of the melody, with its rhythm imbedded in the lyrics, is a direct product of musical thought with no mediator such as an instrument to come between the thought and the production of sound.

According to Gordon (1986), the Primary Measure of Musical Aptitude (PMMA) is particularly accurate in the identification of children of low musical aptitude, the 20th percentile or lower. In this class only two children were below the 50th percentile on the composite score of the PMMA in first grade, and they were both in the 38th percentile, which is considered average. The Intermediate Measure of Musical Aptitude (IMMA) is particularly successful in the identification of children with a high musical aptitude, in the 80th percentile or above. In this class six children were in the 80th percentile or higher on the composite score, and three were in the 75th percentile. The distribution of scores across this group of children seems weighted toward higher musical aptitudes. Perhaps this accounts for the fact that all of the children were able to compose and perform songs. It would be interesting to see the results of studies that correlate vocal composition and musical aptitude, considering the following factors: complexity of song structures, melodic interest, song memory, ability to vary songs from a known song and from one's own song (given sufficient time to make one's own song automatic).

Postlude

The Creative Dream

It was the final sharing of the disappearing number songs. Jennifer sat on the floor with crissed-crossed legs and leaned against the wall in the book corner of Mrs. Polasky's kindergarten class. Three kindergarten boys crowded around her to see her picture song book and hear her song. "*Five Little Teddy Bears* by Jennifer Hart," she read as she pointed to the words on the front cover. She opened the book and began to sing, "Five little teddy bears, sitting on the bed. One ran away, 'See ya later,' he said." Then she asked the little boys, "Wanna [sic] count the bears? One, two, three, four, five." She continued on to the next verse and the next, stopping on each page to help the boys count the bears. When they finished the song book there was some time to spare. Jennifer asked the boys if they would like to hear it again. They answered, "yes." Jennifer started over. As she began to sing, the boys sang along. "You learn quickly!" she exclaimed. As they finished the book, Mrs. Polasky called for the groups to rotate to the next composer. A new group of three children came to Jennifer and positioned themselves to see the pictures. In various corners of the room, six other composers were doing the same thing. Strains of songs and voices of children counting objects filled the spaces of the classroom.

I wondered what the children would remember about this day. Would the kindergartners remember the day the second graders came in with the picture song books they themselves had drawn, singing songs they had created? How would the

second grade composers remember this experience? What, if any, long-lasting effect would this total experience have on the composers? According to Odam (2000), many pupils who have progressed through the U.K. music program, in which composing is imbedded throughout the music curriculum, are now composing outside of school. He continued:

The ultimate aim of the composing curriculum must be to fire individual pupils' imaginations and motivate them to produce work of their own. Composition is a powerful form of self-expression in the individual and this should be the center of our work. (p. 126)

Some have called the establishment of composing in the U.K. "the creative dream" (Odam, 2000). Music educators in the U.S. have much to learn about the role and value of composition in the school curriculum if we are to have our own creative dream.

What I Learned

I learned much from this study that can further the creative dream in second grade music classes:

Children around the age of seven can be aware of and sensitive to the musical differences of others (differences including vocal range and abilities of others to sing one's melody), and they can modify the musical material to accommodate those differences (or not – by choice).

Children around the age of seven may have private musical worlds that are far more musically complex than we might imagine.

Children around the age of seven might be able to mutually modify a song until it gradually becomes a memorable, repeatable song.

Some children around the age of seven can vary a melody until they find the one they prefer.

Some children around the age of seven can create musical motives and remember them, can change the words to them, can vary them, and can return to the original motif.

Songs by children may tend to exist below the voice break (more evidence needed).

Pedagogical Decisions and Implications

I designed this study in order to be able to see and hear the creative processes of the children. The following are explanations of procedures that I used and why I used them. In some cases I provide alternative procedures that might be more practical.

Transcriptions of Songs

For research purposes I transcribed all of the children's songs. The transcriptions helped me to analyze the children's processes and to work with children who had forgotten their songs. Music educators who are designing composing activities in their classroom may not necessarily notate the children's

songs. Although the children enjoyed seeing the notation of their songs, the notation was quite time consuming. More important would be the use of recording devices. Young children need repetition in order to remember their songs. A digital recording device could serve as a useful memory aid, as well as a means of instant feedback for children. The more such devices are available for use, the better the access for the children. Parent volunteers can help young children use recording devices. In addition, original song recordings that children bring home can be an important home-school connection. Digital recordings can easily be transformed into CD recordings. Parents and children informed me of their appreciation for the recordings.

Use of Accompaniment

Children worked on the songs unaccompanied for the most part. I accompanied final recording sessions with guitar for some of the songs. However, this is an unnecessary additive. The few children who were unable to sing in a stable key unaccompanied also were unable to maintain a stable key with the accompaniment. These particular children sounded better if I did not try to accompany them. Children established their own key for singing their composed songs, and did not adjust to a guitar accompaniment in a different key, so the use of a capo was necessary for some songs. If a music educator can provide accompaniment on an instrument in a particular style desired by the composer, this could be quite motivational. However, it is not a necessity and should not deter a music educator from engaging in this form of song composition.

Role of Picture Song Books

Picture song books seemed to be an important aid in the sharing of the songs with others. Children seemed less self-conscious when the audience was focusing on the pictures as the children sang. The pictures with lyrics printed underneath also served as a memory aid for the children. Picture song books can be very simple to make. Pieces of paper stapled together can constitute a book. Children can print their own lyrics on the pages. Classroom teachers might allow children to work on the illustrations during spare time in the classroom, thereby making better use of music class time for the actual construction of the lyrics and songs themselves.

Student Mobility and Noise Control

Music educators make decisions regarding student mobility and noise control during composing activities. When children are mobile, they are also noisier. However, the mobility of the children in this study increased the amount of collaboration that took place. Children sang their songs for each other and tried to help each other. For example, Nathaniel made up a melody for Mike's song when Mike complained that he could not find a tune for his lyrics. Sarah demonstrated how her song differed from *Hush Little Baby* for Nathaniel, who thought her song sounded familiar. Jared, who rarely sang for anybody, sang his song for Sarah, and she sang her song for him. The use of a listening device, such as a PVC pipe, can help singers hear themselves better, and also helps to control the noise, as children will sing

quietly into the pipes. Some music educators teach children how to cover one ear in order to hear themselves more effectively.

Increasing Student Independence

A comprehensive program of creative musical opportunities in a classroom can include a wide range of teacher control. For example, a music educator might include more structured song writing activities balanced with exploratory opportunities and less structured activities, such as making up a soundscape to accompany a story. In this study, as in my own classroom practice, I progressed from tight controls as a particular song form was introduced to the whole group, to less tight controls in small groups and more independence as individuals and partners worked together.

In the first project, I offered one poem for the A section. Members of the class volunteered ideas for the A section melody and the B section words as well as melody. I only provided input if the class was “stuck” for ideas, being careful not to give too much input. The purpose of the whole group song composition was to provide a model of process for children to use.

For the small group project, the children chose a short poem from among those that I offered. Some poems do not work well as lyrics, so I chose poems carefully. Children developed melodies using the poems as lyrics. I did not prescribe meter. Children were to chant the poems with a steady beat, developing their own feel for the meter. The poems could have been in 3/4 or 6/8 as well as 4/4 time, and the meter did vary among groups. The groups were to develop their own contrasting B

section, writing their own lyrics and generating a melody for the lyrics. Some B sections were chanted or spoken without a steady beat. Some groups did not develop a B section, having spent most of their time negotiating the melody for the A section. In small groups, children supported each other in the composition process.

For the third project, the children could have followed any of a number of models of disappearing number songs with which they were familiar. All, however, followed a simple two-phrase structure. This might have happened because of the guidance I had to give them to develop lyrics from their own ideas. Ideally, the children would have a little more experience developing lyrics for a song, and would need less guidance. Other than the help children needed developing their lyrics, they worked independently alone or with one other partner. Half of the children chose to work alone, and did so successfully, with only occasional feedback needed from me.

For teachers with limited time, giving children a wide choice of carefully chosen poems to use for lyrics may be a time solution that still allows freedom of meter, melody, and contrasting sections. There are sources of public domain poetry for children available for teacher use (Pinnell & Fountas, 2004). Poems can be freely altered by the children. For example, phrases can be repeated and words can be changed or omitted. The poems simply provide a rhythmic and rhyming structure that the children can use as a basis for their lyrics.

Helping Children with the Process

I provided a structural tension chart for the children to help keep them goal oriented. The chart contained action steps for completing the songs. Some children

followed the steps in the order in which I listed them on the chart. Some children worked on steps seemingly simultaneously. The importance of the chart was not necessarily the order of steps, but the realization, on a daily basis, of what needed to be accomplished to achieve the goal of a composed song, along with its picture song book and a performance, in relation to what had been achieved so far. I considered it valuable for the children to learn to negotiate a creative process by planning action steps to achieve a goal.

Time Constraints

Music educators often have much to accomplish in order to fulfill the requirements of the curriculum for their school district. Time constraints are a necessity, and not necessarily a negative factor. The children in this study worked faster and more efficiently when I kept them aware of time constraints. Some children were not able to achieve the construction of a contrasting B section during the second project, but did construct an A section with which they seemed happy. We celebrated all of the songs regardless of whether all objectives had been met. Sometimes ending a project means that some have accomplished more than others on that project.

Grouping Considerations

Children in this study enjoyed choosing friends with which to work. For the third project, however, I decided to control the selection of partners so that non-fluent readers could only choose fluent readers as partners. This decision did seem to help

most of the children work more independently of me. Children could also work alone, and I was available to help them with lyric development. Interestingly, half of the children in the class chose to work alone on the final project.

Public Performances

Children need to share their songs. It was simple and not very time-consuming to collaborate with the kindergarten teachers for performing opportunities. The kindergarten teachers were very supportive of the performers, making them feel completely comfortable. Other performing opportunities could include a parent gathering in which children share their original compositions. This could be done in concert format, with picture song books projected on a large screen for all to see and children singing their song using a microphone for all to hear. A more informal structure might also be effective, as in the third project sharing in which small groups of kindergarten children rotated among the composers. Small groups of parents could rotate among composer “stations.” Children who are less confident might be more comfortable in this type of performance structure.

Music Teacher Composition Skills

Music teachers who compose songs and can describe their processes can be models for the students. This might be the most important skill for all teachers to develop. The most enthusiastic whole class discussion during the study took place when I explained how I composed *Five Humongous Hippos*. Children were

processing along with me as I described aloud my thinking process. They shared their own ideas of how they would develop the song.

Long-term Relationship with Class

During the previous year, I established the comfort level that children had with me, along with classroom routines that maximized use of time. Most of the children learned to sing accurately unaccompanied, and to use their speaking and singing voices in both upper and lower registers. I also helped children build a large repertoire of songs that they could sing independently along with a repertoire of dances and expressive movement that helped children develop their musicality. I believe that all of this background contributed to the ability of the children in this study to compose simple songs.

Summary

These pedagogical decisions described above contributed to my ability to hear children's compositional processes as they successfully constructed songs. Some of them are useful in a regular music classroom situation, and some are not. Second grade children vary widely in their musical experiences prior to entering school, and they may or may not be able to compose songs in the manner of these children. Children can have hidden potential, however, and we, as music educators, can easily underestimate the musical abilities of our students.

Appendix A

Letter of Explanation to Parents of the Class

September 2, 2005

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am presently working on my dissertation proposal for a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Maryland. I am interested in aspects of children composing songs in their music class. This information is valuable to music teachers who are teaching children how to compose.

I would like permission for your child to participate in a study that will be conducted as a part of his or her regularly scheduled music class. The study is titled *Composing in a second grade music class: Crossing a watershed as children begin to understand song as structure*. Your child's class was chosen to participate in this study because he or she is in a class that will be the focus of the study. The only changes from the normal class will be that each class will be videotaped. Possible risk factors from your child's participation are no greater than his or her normal school activity.

During the course of the study, your child may be videotaped, but at no time will the videotape be available to anyone but me. Students will not be identified by name at any time in any reports that are based on this research study.

When the results of this study are completed, I will provide the principal of our school with a summary, which will be available to you upon request. If you have any questions, please contact me at _____.

Please sign and return the attached form as soon as possible. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Margo Hall,
Music teacher

Please check here if you would like a copy of this form for your records_____

Appendix B

Letter of Explanation to Parents of the Five Targeted Children

September 2, 2005

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am presently working on my dissertation proposal for a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Maryland. I am interested in aspects of children composing songs in their music class. This information is valuable to other music teachers who are teaching children how to compose.

I would like permission for your child to participate in a study that will be conducted as a part of his or her regularly scheduled music class. The study is titled *Composing in a second grade music class: Crossing a watershed as children begin to understand song as structure*. Your child was chosen to participate in this study based on his or her enjoyment of creating songs. The only changes from the normal class will be that each class will be videotaped, and your child will be individually audiotaped. Possible risk factors from your child's participation are no greater than his or her normal school activity.

Your son or daughter will be identified on the tapes, but at no time will the tapes be available to anyone but me. Students will not be identified by name at any time in any reports that are based on this research study. If you decide to allow your child to participate, you or your child are completely free to withdraw consent and discontinue your child's participation at any time.

I would also appreciate the opportunity to conduct an interview with you, the parents or guardians. The purpose of the interview will be to gain further understanding of children as composers of songs.

As the results of this study are completed, I will provide the principal of our school with a summary, which will be available to you upon request. If you have any questions, please contact me at _____.

Please sign and return the attached form as soon as possible. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Margo Hall,
Music teacher

Please check here if you would like a copy of this form for your records _____

Appendix C

Parental Permission Form (Whole Class)

Child Participation

Title of Study	Composing in a second grade class: Crossing a watershed as children begin to understand song as structure
Statement of parental consent	I am the parent or guardian of a minor and he or she wishes, with my permission, to participate in a program of research conducted by Margo Hall, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Maryland, College Park.
Purpose	The purpose of this research is to inform educators about children composing songs in a second grade music class.
Procedures	Normal class procedures will take place, and classes will be videotaped.
Confidentiality	All information collected in this study is confidential to the extent permitted by law. I understand that real names will not be used.
Risks	No known risks.
Benefits, Freedom to withdraw, & Ability to ask questions	The study is designed to help the researcher learn more about children composing. I am free to ask questions or withdraw from participation at any time.
Contact Information of Researcher	Margo Hall
Contact Information of Institutional Review Board	If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: Institutional Review Board Office University of Maryland College Park, MD 20742 301-405-4212 (e-mail) irb@deans.umd.edu
Child's name _____	
Parent's name _____	
Parent's signature _____ Date _____	

Appendix D

Parental Permission For Selected Case Study Children

Title of Study	Composing in a second grade music class: Crossing a watershed as children begin to understand song as structure
Statement of parental consent	I am the parent or guardian of a minor and he or she wishes, with my permission, to participate in a program of research conducted by Margo Hall, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Maryland, College Park.
Purpose	The purpose of this research is to inform educators about children composing songs in a second grade music class.
Procedures	My child will participate in an interview about my child's interest in music and composing. In addition, my child will wear an individual microphone for audiotaping during composition activities in music class for approximately nine weeks during this study.
Confidentiality	All information collected in this study is confidential to the extent permitted by law. I understand that real names will not be used. Margo Hall is the only person who will have access to the audiotapes. Tapes will be stored in a locked file cabinet, and will be destroyed when the dissertation is completed.
Risks	No known risks
Benefits, Freedom to withdraw, & Ability to ask questions	The study is designed to help the researcher learn more about children composing. I am free to ask questions or withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.
Contact Information of Researcher	Margo Hall
Contact Information of Institutional Review Board	If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: Institutional Review Board Office University of Maryland College Park, MD 20742 301-405-4212 (e-mail) irb@deans.umd.edu
Child's name _____	
Parent's name _____	
Parent's signature _____	Date _____

Appendix E

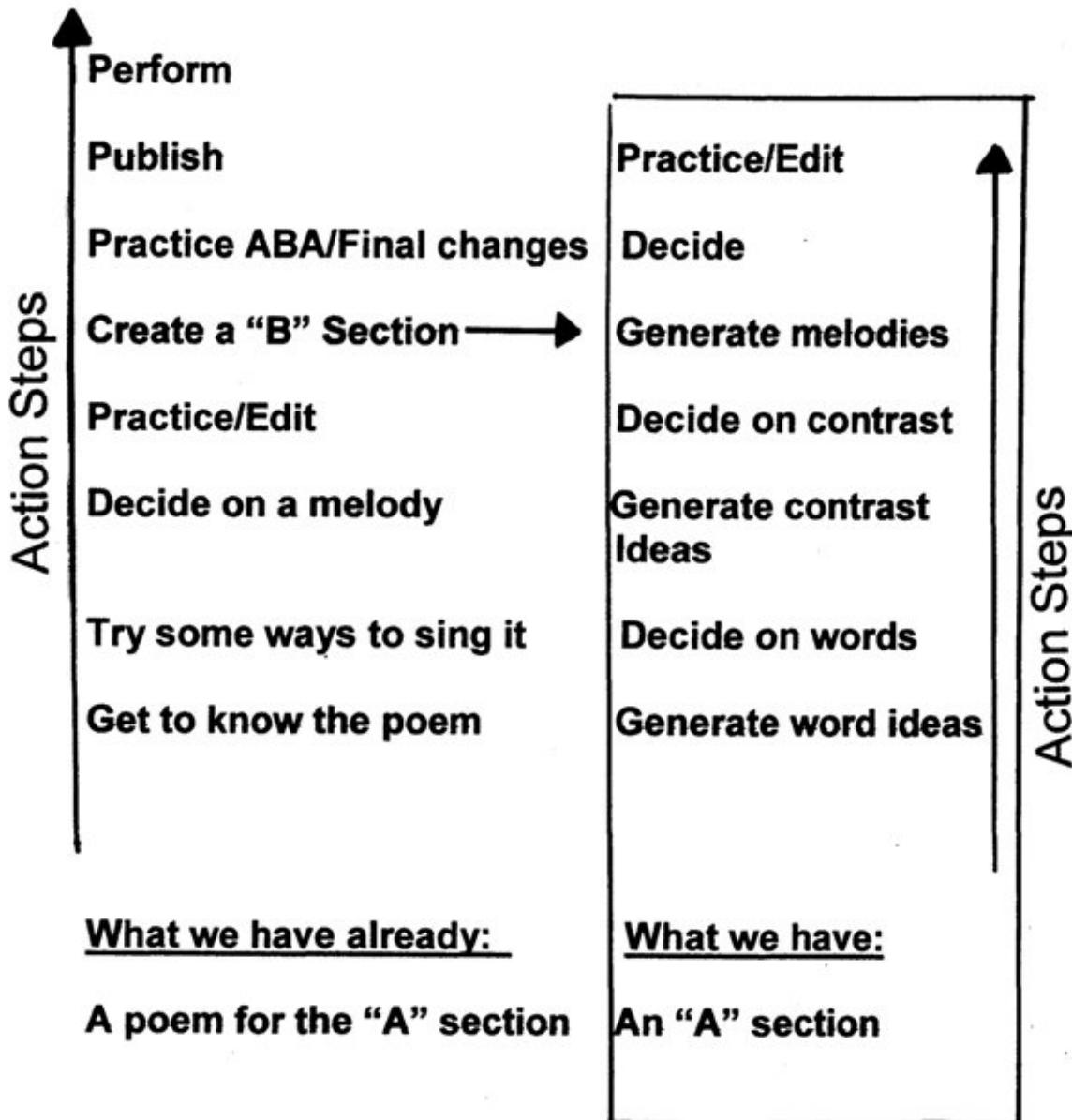
Informed Consent Form (Teacher Interviewing)

Title of Study	Composing in a second grade music class: Crossing a watershed as children begin to understand song as structure
Statement of parental consent	I am over 18 years of age and wish to participate in a program of research conducted by Margo Hall, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Maryland, College Park.
Purpose	The purpose of this research is to inform educators about children composing songs in a second grade music class.
Procedures	I will participate in ongoing interviews about my students' interest in music and composing in the classroom
Confidentiality	All information collected in this study is confidential to the extent permitted by law. I understand that real names will not be used.
Risks	No known risks
Benefits, Freedom to withdraw, & Ability to ask questions	The research is not designed to help me personally, but to help the researcher learn more about children composing. I am free to ask questions or withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.
Contact Information of Researcher	Margo Hall
Contact Information of Institutional Review Board	If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: Institutional Review Board Office University of Maryland College Park, MD 20742 301-405-4212 (e-mail) irb@deans.umd.edu
Teacher's name _____	
Teacher's signature _____ Date _____	

Appendix F

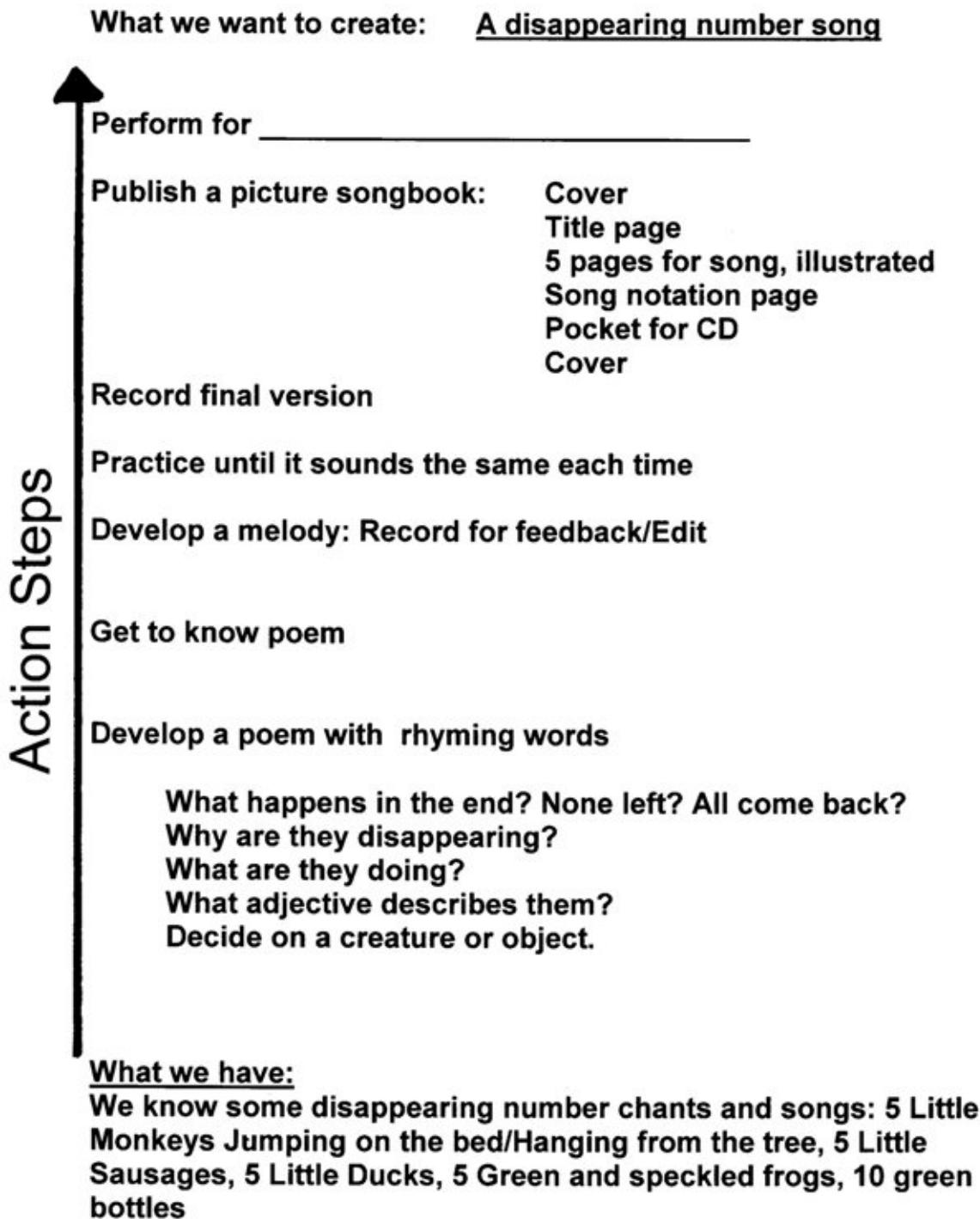
Structural Tension Chart for ABA Song

What we want to create: An A-B-A Song



Appendix G

Structural Tension Chart for Disappearing Number Songs



Appendix H

Guide for Disappearing Number Song

Character, animal, or object: _____

Adjective to describe it : _____
(example: little)

What are they all doing? _____

Or, does each one do something different?

5:

4:

3:

2:

1:

What happens to make them disappear?

Write these ideas as a poem

Appendix I

Sample Questions for Child Interviews

What do you like about music? Why?

How does music make you feel?

Is music important to you? How is it important?

Do you sing? What do you sing?

Do you make up your own songs?

When do you make them up? About what?

Do you share your made-up songs with others? Who? When??

What are your songs about?

Do your songs have made-up words? Real words?

Where do your ideas for your made-up songs come from?

Do others in your family make up songs? Who? When? What are they about?

What kind of music do you like to listen to?

What kind of music do your parents listen to? Your siblings?

Do you ever just think about music? What do you think about?

Appendix J

Sample Questions for Parent Interview

Is anyone in your home a professional musician?

Does anyone in your home play instruments or own an instrument?

Do you sing in your home? Who sings? To whom or when?

What kinds of music do you like to listen to? Other members of the family?

Where do you listen to music?

Do you hear your child sing any made-up songs?

Does your child make up music on instruments at home? Computer?

In what ways is music a part of your lives?

Is there anything else you can tell me about music in your home?

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