

**THE ROLE OF SINGING
IN THE
NEMP TESTS**

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
Requirements for the
B.A. Honours Degree**

Canterbury University 1998

Sue Braatvedt

THE ROLE OF SINGING
IN THE
NEMP TESTS

MUSI: 464 Curriculum Studies

by

Sue Braatvedt

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
Requirements for the
B.A. Honours Degree

Canterbury University 1998

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of tables	iii
List of charts	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Abstract	vi
<u>Chapter One: Introduction</u>	1
<u>Chapter Two: The Role of Singing in Music Education</u>	3
- Singing as part of culture	3
- Physical benefits of singing	3
- The sound experience	4
- The effects of training and enculturation	5
References	9
<u>Chapter Three: A Discussion of the Singing Process and Means of Evaluation</u>	11
- A discussion of some of the technicalities involved in the singing process	11
1. Singing at the Primary level	11
2. Singing at the Intermediate level	13
- The means of evaluation	14
1. Group testing of musical ability	16
2. Individual tests	16
3. The role of pitch and melodic memory in musical ability tests	17
4. Other types of testing	18
- Conclusion	19
References	21

<u>Chapter Four: Analysis of Singing Tasks in NEMP</u>	23
- External influences on students' responses	27
1. The video camera	27
2. Extraneous noise	27
3. The role of the Teacher/Administrator (T/A)	28
- A study of relatively inaccurate intonation	30
- Ability to pitch the first note	36
- Coping with an uncomfortable pitch	40
- Summary	42
References	43
<u>Chapter five: Conclusion</u>	44
- Recommendations	45
1. The singing tasks	45
2. The role of the Teacher/Administrator (T/A)	46
3. Extraneous noise	47
- Concluding remarks	47
References	48
Bibliography	49
Appendix	i
- Sing Song	ii
- Vocal Sizzle	iv

LIST OF TABLES

1. Table 1: Breakdown of total numbers in this sample 23
2. Table 2: Number of students who pitched the first note accurately and those who subsequently sang the rest of the phrase correctly 37
3. Table 3: Number of students who pitched phrases in a different tessitura and numbers of students who did not attempt to sing the phrases 41

LIST OF CHARTS

1. Chart 1: Students' responses to the task "Sing Song" 24
2. Chart 2: The number of student responses per phrase in both tasks 26
3. Chart 3: Students' responses to each phrase in the task "Sing Song" 31
4. Chart 4: Students' responses to each phrase in the task "Vocal Sizzle" 35

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Roger Buckton, Head of Music at Canterbury University as well as David Sell, Music Educator, for their support and encouragement with this research project.

I would also like to thank my mother Rev. Pamela Warnes for her help and support.

ABSTRACT

This research focuses on an analysis of music video samples of 183 New Zealand primary students in the National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) in 1996. There were students in two class levels: Year 4 (halfway through primary education) and Year 8 (at the end of primary education). Students participated in two singing tasks. Eighty-nine students participated in the task "Vocal Sizzle," and 94 students participated in "Sing Song."

There were three areas of focus in this study namely: A study of relatively inaccurate intonation, coping with an uncomfortable pitch level and pitching the first note. Based on the results of the analysis there is discussion and recommendations.

There are a number of reasons why students should be taught to sing. For some people singing is a means of self-expression and communication, for others it might be central to religious beliefs or certain rites of passage. There are also social and physical benefits of singing which are discussed.

All students have the potential to sing, providing they are not afflicted with physical difficulties such as hearing loss. However many students experience difficulties in developing their singing voices due to a variety of different causes, which are described.

Evaluations offer a means of assessing a student's level of achievement or potential, These and they can help music educators to gauge a student's progress or potential. Different types of tests are discussed. The aim of the NEMP tests was to assess the achievement of New Zealand primary school children.