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
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MUSI: 464 Curriculum Studies

by

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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, 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.