

## Music & Learning

### News & Announcements

#### Ocean Studies Workshop

What do wave anatomy, global warming, marine invertebrates and underwater volcanoes have in common? They're all topics that we will explore at our ocean studies fall weekend workshop (for gr. 10-12 students).

This workshop blends theory and application, including class time and research. Students will get excited about oceanography, learn a ton, and have fun at the same time.

- ▶ Saturday & Sunday, Sep. 26th & 27th
- ▶ 9am-4pm (in the class & on the beach)
- ▶ Cost: \$120 (with materials & light lunch)

#### Interviewee Details

*Bonnie Davison* is a music therapist, learning resource teacher, and founder of Singing English Education. Bonnie trains educators to use song-games to teach children how to read and write. She is offering workshops in Victoria September 26th and 27th, 2009. Visit: [www.singingenglish.com](http://www.singingenglish.com).

The Harmonious Family Choir is a non-audition singing community, welcoming all individuals and family groups. The primary goal is to build harmony both at home and at choir by developing skills in listening, cooperating, connecting, focusing, creating and blending. Founding director *Doug Paterson* enthusiastically invites you to enjoy a trial session. 250-385-SING (7464) [www.harmoniousfamilychoir.com](http://www.harmoniousfamilychoir.com)

#### Online Bookstore Launch

STR is launching an online retail store for educational books and resources to support students, parents and teachers. We'll keep you posted about the launch date (in late fall).

#### STR in the Community

STR continues to offer talks and workshops for peer tutors, learning resource teachers, teachers and students. If you are interested in hosting a talk by Smart Tutor Referrals, please contact us.

*Welcome back! This first newsletter of the school year is an interview with Bonnie Davison of "Singing English Education" and Doug Paterson of "The Harmonious Family Choir". Bonnie and Doug are both former teachers who now incorporate music into the teaching and group work that they do. We had a lively discussion about some benefits of music for students; links between music and learning; and ideas for teaching and connecting with students through music.*

#### Benefits of Music (for Students)

**Doug:** Kids want to express themselves – they have such a wonderful time when they are singing and dancing.

**Bonnie:** We do a disservice to say only music teachers can do music. We don't have to have a good voice to sing from the heart.

**D:** There are few activities where multi-age groups can be together. With music everyone gets to be successful and everyone gets to find their voice.

**B:** People ask me how to get students involved in music. I recommend situations where students can be in groups and working together – having fun. Once we get rid of being afraid to move, we can be ourselves easily. And singing is one of the quickest ways to connect with teens; studies have shown this.

**D:** Everyone wants to be seen and everyone wants to be heard. Touch on the dance floor builds trust and community. Everyone finishes with a smile on their face, because they've made contact with each other.

**B:** We can teach kids through movement. Music games and dancing can help students learn to touch appropriately – children are generally taught to keep their hands to themselves – they don't learn to know their own bodies and their space and explore that. Music games teach kids to learn how to have control over their bodies and to interact.

**B:** It's so important to learn to be comfortable in our own bodies. For teens –

this is crucial. When kids are exploring music and movement they're more in contact with themselves and their confidence. I feel our generation is missing out on dancing together. With music and dance we can all have fun.

**D:** And cooperate. Cooperation isn't strongly emphasized in our culture. Music is the connecting thing that gets us together.

**B:** Music requires cooperation and collaboration – students come together and work together to reach a common goal: to create a school play, a rock band, a choir. Music helps students to connect with their peers.

**D:** We learn to listen when we play together: the more silence there is when a band plays, the better the music sounds.

**B:** Musicians are also more used to putting in work over long periods of time to learn an instrument and can transfer this diligence to other areas of their studies.

**D:** Music helps with relaxation. It makes you feel good.

**D:** And it builds confidence. There is a lot of fear and repression about using voice – when we use it we feel confident. To sing we need to really open our mouths. You wouldn't believe how many adults weren't heard as kids. Now, as adults they won't project.

**B:** In group singing, everyone can have the opportunity to experience being a leader in a safe environment. This helps build confidence.

**D:** It gets you off your back foot and moves you forward.

#### Links between Music and Learning

**B:** Recent research is showing that if a student is competent with oral education, reading and writing will be much stronger. Grades K-3 teachers have recently started integrating more oral exercises in the classroom. There are many song-games that

## About Us

We provide **1-on-1, in-home tutorial support** throughout Victoria, Saanich and Sooke.

STR was established in Victoria, BC in 2002 and has built a solid reputation for creativity and professionalism.

**With over 50 tutors**, we are able to find the best match for each student. Our tutors are certified teachers and professionals. They are carefully screened and chosen specially to match the needs and learning styles of each student.

**Our goal is** to enhance students' skills and to cultivate learning confidence through support that is truly individualized: matched specifically to each student's needs, recognizing each student's unique talents and abilities.

*We support families in education.*

For more information and resources, visit us on-line at:

[www.SmartTutorReferrals.com](http://www.SmartTutorReferrals.com)

## Contact Us

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teachers can use to help students learn to read and write.

D: In singing, we focus on vowels.

B: Every word we speak has at least one vowel sound that is longer than the others.

D: And when we're singing we use our diaphragm, this deepens how we breathe.

D: Singing connects the left and right hemispheres of the brain. This is integral for learning. Also, it's integrative in that it uses all the senses. Music opens people up – heart and body.

B: Students connect with music. Music is poetry. It's good for kids to be able to vocalize why they like a piece of music – in writing or speaking – to describe what they're passionate about.

D: Singing brings out emotional content – this could help with creative writing.

B: Many traditional English folk songs hold the structure of the English language. If you look at the song "The Farmer in the Dell", it represents the same structure as many common English phrases. It has 3 syllables with the stress on the middle syllable; the same as 'eleven', 'how **are** you?', 'tomorrow', 'I **want** some'.

D: Cadence and triplets – da **da** da

B: Or, the Mexican Hat Dance has "da **da** da-da **da** da-da **da** da" "If you **want** I can **give** you a **cookie**."

B: Some ESL students are more comfortable reading and writing English than speaking English because that is what they have been taught first. I believe in order for students to feel comfortable speaking as well as reading and writing in English, they need to internalize the feel or cadence of the English language and what better way to do that then through music!

D: Music definitely can also boost memorization. For example, international real estate rules were put to the national anthems of each country. The learning and memorization was 4-5 times greater, and fun.

B: Students can use music and rhythm or do movements to spark memory.

## Teaching and Connecting with Students through Music

B: Music can boost attention and focus in the class. I use music to control the rhythm of the classroom. We don't know what students' experiences have been before school or at recess. I have happy music playing when they come into the class. It changes the energy of the environment. I enjoy this too. If I need a shift in the class, I'll put on energetic music or slow music. Parents can also do this.

D: One teacher I know uses ukulele to give all classroom instructions

B: A lot of learning can be enhanced by adding movement into the mix. Teachers who challenge themselves with adding music and movement to their lessons often end up enjoying their classes more, as do their students!

B: I notice that behavioral issues tend not to come up in music classes.

D: Maybe it's because when you're doing music you're being seen and heard, so those needs are fulfilled.

B: ipods can be a way to connect with students. Asking what students are listening to, or letting students share ipod music with the class to get the energy up in the class (ex. Fridays students might get to suggest music). If we expect students to listen to our music, we need to be prepared to listen to theirs.

D: I find that music helps me to build a relationship with students. When I teach through relationship, students want to learn whatever I want to teach them. Singing is mostly, for me, about community building.

B: If you're in a happy frame of mind, you'll be able to learn better. Music is a fast and easy way to not only connect with students but to create a fun and energetic learning environment.

*See the sidebar for more details about Bonnie Davison and Doug Paterson.*