

TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH SONGS AND GAMES

by Patricia P. Realin

During the months of March, April, and May of this school year, I volunteered my services to tutor three Thai students. Although I am a regular classroom teacher, I felt that this new teaching situation would be a challenging one. Learning sessions were held on Wednesday afternoon (during my preparation period) for a half hour and Thursday during morning recess. The children were always eager and excited to learn. They especially enjoyed the songs that we sang and the word games that we played. I had to make most of the materials that I used. Everything was quite ideal for the first two months. I gradually found that it would be impossible for me to spend the time needed to make my own materials so I used the Hawaii English Program Music Component in my lessons and found it to be very helpful.

In addition to the HEP music program, which has a wide variety of songs of exceptionally good recordings, I had the opportunity to view four other programs. They are:

Serafina Drear's and Barry Johnson's *Language Games and Songs for Core English*, Ginn & Co., 1971.

Jack Richards' and Michel Polquin's *English Through Songs*, Newbury House, 1972.

English Around the World, Scott, Foresman and Company, 1972.

Hap Palmer's *Learning Basic Skills Through Music*, Vols. 1 & 2, and *Getting to Know Myself*.

I will mention the contents of the program and include my personal comments.

LANGUAGE GAMES AND SONGS FOR CORE ENGLISH

There are twenty songs in a separate book to supplement the program. These songs are introduced to reinforce specific structures and vocabulary that the children are learning.

Ms. Realin, a California teacher, was a member of the summer 1976 TESL Workshop at BYU-HC.

Two records are available to accompany these songs. Core English Songs contains the first ten songs, and More Core English Songs contains the last ten.

The records are done poorly. Many of the words are garbled and difficult to understand. They are not adaptable to spoken English. The bilingual child would certainly run into problems when listening to the recorded songs and could have even more problems trying to sing them.

Materials for games must be provided by the teacher. For several of the games you will need such props as a blindfold, a jump-rope, a rubber ball or beanbags. Others include picture cards, word cards, letter cards, and the face of a clock with movable hands.

ENGLISH THROUGH SONGS Teacher's Edition

The sixty-four songs in this songbook are either traditional songs that have been adapted to meet the requirements of teaching English as a second language or songs

that have been specially written to incorporate items from introductory courses in English as a second language. The authors have made a special effort to ensure that the sentence patterns and grammar in the songs are those of normal English; that the songs, when sung, are stressed according to the patterns of spoken English, and that they incorporate useful vocabulary items chosen according to their frequency and familiarity. The songs are grouped into four levels representing approximate progress both of difficulty and of content. The songs in Levels One and Two are ideal for very young children; those in Levels Three and Four are of more general appeal.

Level One-

- Vocabulary of as few as twenty-five words is needed.
- Limited to sentences in the simple present continuous tenses, imperatives, and to easily demonstrable vocabulary.

Level Two-

- Vocabulary of fifty words is needed.
- Past tense is introduced.
- Auxiliaries are expanded.
- A variety of question forms are practiced.
- More complex sentences are permitted using if clauses and two-part verbs for example.

Levels Three and Four-

- A vocabulary of fifty to one hundred-fifty words is needed.
- Use of longer and more difficult sentences and more complex structures.
- A review of tenses, question forms, and basic sentence patterns.

Unfortunately, the teacher's manual does not indicate these levels. By reading the lesson plans and looking through the list of vocabulary words, I decided that it would probably be a Level Three book. The lessons presented were very thorough. There is a good vocabulary index but the teacher must examine the indicated teaching parts for the grammar and pronunciation to decide the level of a particular song. There are a lot of

good and original ideas incorporated in these lesson plans and word replacement in many will help the bilingual student relate to and understand the song.

ENGLISH AROUND THE WORLD

Many songs are incorporated in these complete ESL programs for grades from Level One to Level Six. The songs accompany specific lessons and are neither listed nor available as a supplementary text.

LEARNING BASIC SKILLS THROUGH MUSIC

These record albums include a concise lesson plan for each song. All of the songs stress developing listening skills as well as reinforcing concepts that are introduced to the students. Some songs give the students the opportunity for creative movement and Self-awareness. The rhythmic beat of each song would make a child want to participate by dancing or snapping his fingers.

REFERENCES

- Dykstra, Charlotte. *Songs for the Language Skills Program*. Hawaii English Program, 1970.
- Krear, Serafina and Barry Johnson. *Language Games and Songs for Core English*. Ginn and Company, Mass., 1971.
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