


Kindergarten and Technology: Making Beautiful Music Together

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Is it possible to incorporate technology into a kindergarten music classroom if you only have one computer? The answer at Far Hills Country Day School (FHCDS) in Far Hills, NJ, is yes. The kindergartners at FHCDS have music class for twice a week for 30 minutes. Technology is used during the kindergarten music class as an enhancement tool as opposed to a replacement tool. Technology can be easily inaugurated into the classroom by taking one of your favorite lesson units and finding a way that technology can enhance that unit.

The kindergartners are introduced to the lines and spaces on the music staff in the spring trimester of the school year. This unit begins in a very concrete fashion and is then enhanced with technology. To introduce this unit the kindergartners walk across the lines and spaces on a floor music staff. The students are then given a note head made out of felt and explore how the notes can be placed on a line or in a space. The students are introduced to steps and skips of the staff. They act out a story in which each student is a character and given a note head. The students are asked to take their note head and “step” or “skip” up the stairs of the staff. Once they reach the top of the staircase, their reward is recess. The story plays out so that some students go to recess before others. The kindergartners recognize that if they are allowed to skip up the stairs, they get to recess faster. After we finish the story, the kindergartners have a wonderful understanding of the music staff and the relationship between lines and spaces, steps and skips.



Harmonic Vision's *Music Ace* is then introduced as an assessment tool to the unit. *Music Ace* is run from the iMac in my classroom and routed through a computer/TV interface adapter to a TV monitor. The students watch the lesson on the TV from their seats on the floor. In the first lesson of *Music Ace* the main character, Maestro Max, reviews with the kindergartners the basics of the music staff. He then asks many interactive questions about the staff. Each kindergartner is able to go to the computer and answer the questions by a simple click of the mouse as the rest watch the progress on the TV screen. As the lesson continues, the kindergartners' faces light up with smiles because they can answer all of the questions and are having fun.

Harmonic Vision's *Music Ace* is just one example of many computer-assisted instructional software products that can be used in an elementary music classroom with only one computer. With the addition of a TV monitor and a computer/TV interface adapter, your elementary music classroom can support technology. It is a wonderful method to further assess your students' musical knowledge. In addition, it provides an alternative and fun way to support a musical unit.