

Music education research

with Dr Ardelle Ries

Talking points

Knowledge

1. What did the From the Voices of Children (FVC) project set out to explore?
2. What is the purpose of the FVC documentary?

Comprehension

3. How did the COVID-19 pandemic influence children's opportunities for singing?
4. What did the FVC project reveal about children's general attitudes to singing?

Application

5. Think about your own experiences of the pandemic (or, if more relevant, the experiences of a sibling) and how it affected your relationship with music and music education. To what extent do your experiences correspond with the conclusions of the FVC project?
6. How do you think the team's approach to Phase Three was influenced by the unexpectedly high response to Phase One and unexpectedly low response to Phase Two?

Analysis

7. Why do you think Ardelle and the team chose to focus on the collection of qualitative, rather than quantitative, data?
8. "A broad and complex array of socioeconomic and sociocultural factors can either encourage or prevent access to quality music education experiences," says Ardelle. What types of factors do you think Ardelle might be referring to, and why?

Evaluation

9. The rise of social media and other online content is leading to an increase in passive, rather than active, engagement across the education spectrum. What do you think this means for current and future generations of educators? And how could any potential negative effects be best addressed?
10. In what way do you think that people's engagement with music will change in future decades, and why?

Activity

Divide your class into an even number of groups of four to six people. Each group will participate in two activities:

- Researchers: designing and running interviews or surveys
- Participants: responding to interviews or surveys

In your group, discuss and decide upon a question related to music education that you would like to investigate, such as:

- Singing identity theory – how singing shapes confidence and self-esteem
- Perspectives on creating music as a hobby, self-development tool or career option
- Similarities and differences in attitudes to creating or enjoying music between age groups
- Where people practise music: at home, in school, in extracurricular groups, etc.
- Effects of the pandemic on attitudes to music

In your group, design a survey or interview to collect data to address your chosen question. Think about whether your questions are qualitative and quantitative, and what this means for the participants, data analysis, and your interpretation and communication of results.

Team up with another group. One group will start as the researchers (running the survey or interview), and the other as the participants (responding). Then swap.

Once you have completed both roles, analyse the results you collected as researchers, and discuss in groups and as a whole class:

- Can you make any definitive conclusions, or are the results more complex?
- What unexpected results did you find, if any?
- Do you feel that your conclusions are robust? Why or why not?
- If you were to run a 'Phase Two', how would you modify your approach, and why?
- Were there any common themes across the conclusions made by all groups?

More resources

- Learn more about the FVC project and watch the documentary: fromthevoicesofchildren.com
- This article from the Music Teacher Magazine explores the enduring effects of the pandemic on music education in the UK: musicteachermagazine.co.uk/content/features/covid-s-long-tail-in-music-education
- This TEDx talk from Anita Collins asks: "What if every child had access to music education from birth?": [youtube.com/watch?v=ueqgenARzIE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueqgenARzIE)