

The Five Essential Components of Reading Instruction

PHONEMIC AWARENESS: Recognizing and using individual sounds to create words

Children need to be taught to hear sounds in words and those words are made up of the smallest parts of sound, or phonemes.

- 🎵 Being sensitive to sound (high/low loud/soft etc.) as well as rhyme and patterns
- 🎵 Phonemic awareness is breaking it down into the smallest units of sound
- 🎵 Music teachers start large to small while reading teachers start small to large--good readers need both
- 🎵 Sound and Language share these qualities: Pitch Time Intensity Timber/Quality

PHONICS: Understanding the relationships between written letters and spoken sounds

Children need to be taught the sounds individual printed letters and groups of letters make. Knowing the relationships between letters and sounds helps children to recognize familiar words accurately and automatically, and "decode" new words.

- 🎵 Good articulation
- 🎵 Syllables of words lined up with single notes or one syllable sung over multiple notes
- 🎵 Singing on the vowels
- 🎵 Enunciating the consonants
- 🎵 Correct diction
- 🎵 Expressive musical emphasis

FLUENCY: Developing the ability to read a text accurately and quickly

Children must learn to read words rapidly and accurately in order to understand what is read. When fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically. When fluent readers read aloud, they read effortlessly and with expression. Indicators of fluency include phrasing, rate, accuracy, smoothness and expression—also indicators of a good musician!

- 🎵 Steady beat
- 🎵 Reading left to right while singing or playing an instrument
- 🎵 Performing (clapping, playing, singing) while reading lyrics and notation
- 🎵 Multiple “sightings” of repeated words in refrains and cumulative songs (20X rule)
- 🎵 Reinforcing sight vocabulary words in song lyrics

VOCABULARY: Learning the meaning and pronunciation of words

Children need to actively build and expand their knowledge of written and spoken words, what they mean and how they are used.

- 🎵 Folk songs are full of rich vocabulary
- 🎵 Songs introduce new vocabulary
- 🎵 Songs support varied vocabulary
- 🎵 Lyrics build background vocabulary
- 🎵 Music uses common vocabulary with different meanings

COMPREHENSION: Acquiring strategies to understand, remember and communicate what is read

Children need to be taught comprehension strategies, or the steps good readers use to make sure they understand text. Students who are in control of their own reading comprehension become purposeful, active readers.

- 🎵 Performing music from the written page
- 🎵 Predicting what the music will sound like based on the message it is supposed to convey
- 🎵 Sight reading
- 🎵 Composing

*Special thanks to **Tess Densmore**, for helping me to “translate” reading jargon into music connections and to **June Hinckley**, who generously shared with me her notes from a 2004 MENC session she presented that lit my fire!*

COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Making Connections

- ♪ SELF--the emotional communication that is innate in music
When in your life have you heard this music before?
- ♪ TEXT--song lyrics connecting to books, poems etc.
Have you seen these words presented in another format?
- ♪ WORLD--song lyrics/tunes/concepts that are also found in the media (video, radio, newspaper etc)
In what other media have you heard or seen this music/these words?

Questioning

- ♪ What do you think this song will sound like now that you know its title?
- ♪ What do you think the main idea of this piece of music is?
- ♪ What is the composer trying to tell us?
- ♪ Why do you think the performers did it that way?

Making Inferences

- ♪ What was the composer trying to “say”?
- ♪ How does this message connect to my own experiences or emotions?
- ♪ Why did the composer make the musical choices he did?
- ♪ What musical decisions would I make if I wanted to “say” the same thing?

Determining Importance

- ♪ What’s the main theme?
- ♪ What’s the tonal center?
- ♪ Which demands more of your attention--the rhythm, the melody, the tone color etc.?
- ♪ Which section of the piece is most important? (verse-refrain/ rondo form)

Synthesizing Information

- ♪ Can you compose your own song using the concepts we’ve just studied?
- ♪ How was the experience of a live performance different than just learning about the music, performers or instruments?
- ♪ What did I do best and what could I have improved upon in my performance?

BEFORE	DURING	AFTER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Establish purpose for reading (<i>performing</i>) ■ Survey text (<i>music score</i>) ■ Review prior knowledge (<i>style, notational patterns</i>) ■ Relate new information to old (<i>new song to those previously performed</i>) ■ Relate new material to personal experiences ■ Discuss key vocabulary (<i>define words rather than just singing them</i>) and concepts ■ Review organizational pattern (<i>melodic and rhythmic pattern or form</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Activate prior knowledge ■ Monitor comprehension during reading (<i>performing</i>) ■ Use sensory imagery ■ Question the content of a selection based on the title, author’s (<i>composer’s, performer’s</i>) name, style of writing (<i>music</i>) ■ Decide what is important in the text (<i>determine musical or lyrical emphasis</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide time for reflection on what has been read (<i>performed, created, experienced</i>) ■ Encourage journal writing (<i>listening logs, performance reflections</i>) ■ Encourage “think alouds” (<i>analyze the rehearsal process</i>) ■ Ask questions ■ Engage in peer coaching (<i>students model correct technique for each other</i>)