



Puzzling

How Children Can Read Music Musically

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What if there were a way to teach music literacy that preserves expression, fluency, and musicality from the very beginning? There is! With SongWorks principles and practices, plus videos to show the results, you will learn three ways to transition from sound to symbol, without losing musicality.

Questions to Ponder

1. What makes something a puzzle instead of a test?
2. What can ruin the playfulness of puzzling?
3. What makes something musical rather than mechanical?
4. Are some of our pedagogical practices making music unmusical, in order to teach children music?

Looking in the Mirror

1. Being musical **orally**: do we speak and sing with musicality (flow, expression, and nuance)?
2. Being musical **physically**: do we move (in games, gestures, tapping, and hand signs) with musicality?
3. Being musical **literally**: do we choose patterns to study and read that are musical rather than mathematical?

Favorite Quotes on This Topic

"Music need not sound the way conventional notation makes it look. Performances that reflect only what is on the page – the way notes are beamed and the placement of the bar lines – are often evaluated as subpar or unmusical. Musical performances take what is given on the page and do something more with it. Part of what constitutes this "more" reflects figural groupings and categorizations." (Bennett & Bartholomew, 1999, p. 35, *SongWorks 2*)

"Movement to a song should *accompany*, not *govern*, the musical flow. Be cautious about movement that is heavy or mechanical, causing the song to sound the same way." (Bennett & Bartholomew, 1997, p. 65, *SongWorks 1*)

"... the smallest meaningful musical unit is the phrase or gesture, not an interval, beat, or measure" and "if we get fixated by the interval notation we may find ourselves 'barking at print' ... [reading] in a stilted way with little idea of ... meaning." (Swanwick, 1999, p. 45, *Teaching music musically*)

"[Song chunks] accurately capture a thought and a cohesive unit of sound and language . . . Song chunks, like phrases, result from the interaction of melodic, rhythmic, and language relationships. Like phrases, chunks preserve context and musical flow even when separated from the whole and, for that reason, can maintain their musical shape, making their performance musical, even when we are paying close attention to a single element. Phrases and chunks are organizers within songs that are determined by our perceptions and not by our notation system." (Bennett & Bartholomew, 1997, p. 122, *SongWorks 1*)

"You will always be wise to let the song itself do as much of the teaching as possible. Do not pick it to pieces beforehand. Do not stick in your thumb and pull out a couple of tonal patterns for preliminary study . . . Teach the whole song. Do not teach the materials little bit by little bit, or even phrase by phrase. Remember always that *the song itself is the thing*." (Mursell, 1951, p. 192, *Music and the classroom teacher*)

Principles of Teaching & Learning

(Bennett & Bartholomew 1997)

SongWorks 1

1. Students have the right to be treated with respect and dignity for their ideas, skills, and stages of development.
2. Students deserve an engaging learning environment in which they feel safe enough to demonstrate freely their understandings and skills through various types of participation.
3. Student learning is the responsibility of both teachers and students.
4. Learning is holistic and constructive.
5. A teacher's attitudes, behaviors, and methodologies should be compatible.
6. Accurate and constructive feedback helps students become independent learners.
7. Quality of life is enriched through music and singing.

Principles for Teaching & Learning Music

(Bennett & Bartholomew 1999)

SongWorks 2

1. The major goal of music study is the development of responsiveness to music.
2. The musicality that is critical to music performance is just as important in music study.
3. The fundamental skill in music behavior is listening.
4. The way music sounds rather than how it looks guides the selection and presentation of patterns for study.
5. A distinction exists between skills and concepts that are musically easy and those that are musically simple.
6. Song provides direct involvement for making music and studying sound relationships.

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