

Daily strategies to improve music literacy in the band classroom

by

Jeffrey David Poort

B.M.E., Emporia State University, 2014

A REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MUSIC

School of Music, Theatre, and Dance
College of Arts and Sciences

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2022

Approved by:

Major Professor
Dr. Frank Tracz

Copyright

© Jeffrey Poort 2022.

Abstract

In my videos you will see three different activities featuring a high school band ensemble. Through these activities I have attempted to better equip my students with music literacy strategies to address what I have perceived as a deficiency in my pedagogy and to set up the students to have more efficacy and independence in their own musical learning. In the first lesson and video, I aim to equip the students with a structured sight-reading system to enable them to decode musical passages and composer intent in hopes of a stronger initial performance. Highlighted in the second video, I have the students put this sight-reading system to practice in small ensembles, while under a time limit and before a classroom performance and review. Lastly, in the third lesson and video, I introduce the first iteration of a daily “literacy ritual,” inspired by Robert Sheldon. I endeavor to strengthen the music literacy of the entire ensemble through new approaches via the above activities.

My time working on my Master’s degree at Kansas State University has inspired me to critically consider my instructional methods and the needs of the students entrusted to me. Am I teaching the way I do because it worked for me as a student, that is how I have seen others do it, or am I truly considering the needs of the students in front of me and adjusting my practice to meet them where they are? As a result of deep self-reflection throughout my studies, I uncovered a habit of not reviewing key concepts, instead teaching by rote to the detriment of a number of students. Similarly, I was inspired to consider my daily activities, such as warmups. Are the warmups I assign connecting to the content I deliver or are they just another stale and time-consuming routine while I complete the attendance roll for the main office? By thoughtfully crafting and customizing daily warmup activities, I discovered how I can still check the box of basic skill development while also setting students up for greater success with the ensemble

literature to follow. In these ways and more, I have become better equipped as an educator to serve my students.

Table of Contents

Daily strategies to improve music literacy in the band classroom.....	i
List of Figures	vi
List of Tables	vii
Acknowledgements.....	viii
Chapter 1	1
How My Philosophy Informs My Teaching	6
Chapter 2 - Lesson Plans.....	8
Lesson Plan for Video 1 – Sight Reading Method	8
Lesson Plan for Video 2 – Small Group Sight Reading, Performance, and Reflection	16
Lesson Plan for Video 3 – Music Literacy Ritual Number One.....	23
Chapter 3 - Reflections	31
Bibliography	35
Chapter 4 - Appendix.....	36

List of Figures

Figure 1 STARS Decoding	10
Figure 2 Progressive Success Steps	11
Figure 3 No. 18, Mary Had A Little Lamb!.....	12
Figure 4 No. 45, Trois Un.....	13
Figure 5 No. 45, Coming Home.....	18
Figure 6 No. 58, Twinkle3 Little Star.....	18
Figure 7 No. 87, America The Beautiful	19
Figure 8 No. 102, Grand Procession.....	19
Figure 9 Two-Octave Chromatic Scale.....	27

List of Tables

Table 1: Rehearsal Plan 1	14
Table 2 Rehearsal Plan 2.....	19
Table 3: Rehearsal Plan 3	27

Acknowledgements

This report is dedicated first to my students, past and present. You have taught me more than I expected, and it is for you I do what I do as an educator. If I have provided you with something like the great experience I had as a band kid, then I can consider myself a good teacher. It is because of what band did for me at your age that I strive to create just as good of an experience for you.

Secondly, to my fiancé and soon to be wife, Elizabeth Britton. Your unwavering love support is indescribable. Every day you inspire me to be a better version of myself because of how good you are to me and all others around you. I look forward to a lifetime of memories and growth alongside you.

Chapter 1 - Teaching Philosophy

I am soon to complete my eighth year as a music educator. Naturally, the previous years have changed much about how I view education, music education, and the world at large. What was once my philosophy and viewpoint may no longer hold true, some ideals have grown deeper roots, and new modes of thinking have become a consideration. Exposure to new ideas combined with experience in ongoing events has and will continue to mold my thinking. In consideration of all this, I can affirm where my philosophy stands in its current evolution.

I believe structured education is necessary to prepare children for entry into and success in the society in which they live, and education needs to be structured to meet the needs of students and of the society in which both exist. Within this educational structure, music education holds a place of importance in its own right. First, music is an inseparable part of human nature and culture. Second, but equal to this first condition, is that music is integral to the human condition and serves as a window to understanding the condition of self and others. I use condition loosely here, it could mean sense of self, state of being, emotional awareness, cultural awareness, sense of purpose, aesthetic enjoyment or awareness, and more. As an educator, I owe it to my students to be a life-long learner so that the educational experience, environment, and outcomes I strive to foster meet the needs of all my students emotionally, culturally, and pedagogically. As society's needs change, I need to be ever aware so that I am providing a relevant and meaningful education that prepares students for success in the society in which we exist.

Schooling, on some level, has been a part of many societies going back thousands of years. While purpose, access, subjects, and means have certainly changed, providing an opportunity for education has undoubtedly become a staple of human society. Investigating this

past is certainly worthy of time and study, but I am mostly concerned about the present and future. What then, are the present needs of society? Modern culture in the United States is so diverse that there likely is no one-size-fits-all answer. However, it is possible to look at broad needs. Here, it is useful to inform the present thought process by how educational policy was handled in the past. In the young post-revolution America, Latin grammar schools were still the educational norm, but were perceived as only serving to prepare individuals for the narrow scope of ministry, law, or as Latin teachers. These schools were unpopular because they were not perceived to meet the needs of young America, and the development of new academies that focused on more practical needs along with mathematics, English, and classical school (Mark & Gary, 2007). While access was still limited, this would ignite a movement that would over time lead to schools focusing on the needs of the student and of society. Over time, this movement led to the creation of public schools as we know them. It was this gradual societal change that determined the need for education, and that this education should prepare individuals in the basics needed to be productive citizens. This does not mean that a student is well trained for immediate entry to a specific vocation, however. Now more than ever, this is particularly true. Current policy often hangs its hat on preparing students for 21st century jobs, yet a convincing argument exists stating we don't know exactly what all those new vocations will be as technological development is rapidly changing our society. Ultimately, the job market will greatly influence what education is called for in primary and secondary schools.

How then, does music education hold a place in the structure of modern education? First, I agree with the music philosopher Christopher Small that all humans are inherently musical from birth (Small, 1998). One of the ways many small children begin to explore their world is by hitting things and exploring sounds. Parents often begin teaching their children not by bland

recitation, but with simple songs. While perhaps there exists cultures that are an exception to this trend, I am not aware of such. Most teenagers can tell you what music is cool, and perhaps their parents will roll their eyes thinking of what was their cool. Though not everyone will be a Jimmi Hendrix or Yo-Yo Ma, why should music making not be available to all? There begins where I see the value and importance of music education. Music is entrenched in humanity and therefore we may as well study how to make it, how to feel it, and to participate in it, not just consume it. To be clear, I do not think there is anything wrong with simply enjoying the aesthetic of music heard, though I do not believe that is a full experience. Nor does simply being a consumer of music lead to greater personal growth. A guided musical experience through participating in music making, which fosters increased musical understanding and personal growth, is where I believe the true value of music education lies.

Of course, this begs the question, what is this experience and growth, and how are they achieved? In truth, this likely depends on what one is trying to measure, assuming the measurement is one that can be made. As a teacher, I can and do measure certain areas of growth through various means of assessment, but to measure depth of intrinsic meaning of an experience or personal growth is a different monster. Certainly, a curriculum of musical skills and knowledge should be taught. Roughly a century has been spent by countless music educators developing a set of standards to help guide teachers in their curriculum and assessment. If we are going to make music, technical competency is absolutely measurable. Knowledge of musical concepts certainly is as well, and other skills can be demonstrated by students. Yet music is more than just technical competency, otherwise we wouldn't need humans to make music. I say this because I am typing this paper on a computer capable of creating a technically perfect rendition of whatever sequence of notes programmed into it. Yet that generated rendition will not feel so

satisfying as a live or recorded ensemble performing the same sequence of notes, and especially if we are talking about a school ensemble, the potential errors that come with the performance. This, I believe, is because of the human meaning and experience of music and the nuance that can only be created by human performers. Learning about, making, and enjoying music can be done in private study, but communal music making and experience also contributes to strong societal and personal bonding. It occurs to me that several music philosophers have stated something to similar effect, including Christopher Small and Bennett Reimer among others.

While quality musical experience contributes to cultural identity, it also contributes to individual identity. In this sense, I gravitate towards Reimer's stated balance between praxis and formalism, in that a large part of human growth and learning takes place through what we do in the making of music, but all the same we still often strive to produce finished and polished works for performance. Both praxis and form have their purposes, but they work best to develop students when each feeds the other (Reimer, 2003). The praxial approach keeps students, their needs, and their growth as the point of emphasis, while maintaining some element of formalism allows this student learning to culminate in meaningful performance. A music program thrives best when not only the students hold it as valuable, but the community it exists within as well, and offering pleasing performance is often how this good will is achieved (Reimer, 2003). Naturally, the majority of children want to feel a sense of pride, belonging, and accomplishment and the music learning process that culminates in a successful performance is a fantastic route to this end. It is for these reasons I advocate music education as a pillar of a well-rounded education.

It is my belief that education needs to serve the needs of student and society that guides my belief that music education must do the same, and this is critically important for music education to remain relevant in modern society. We can look back to ancient Greece for an

example of music education falling out of importance in society. Greece had a highly developed educational system and, until around the fifth century BC, music was a major component (Mark & Gary, 2007). However, the technical demands of music began to outpace the skill of amateurs, relegating music instead to the realm of professionals (Mark & Gary, 2007). In some ways, I see a similar process happening today, in that professional music, whether classical or popular, seems to be the domain of a relative few. I counter that notion however, as there is a wealth of quality literature designed with the school or community music program in mind. Again, not everyone needs to be a Jimmy Hendrix or Yo-Yo Ma for their music making to be valid and of good quality, an assumption I believe Christopher Small would support. The proliferation of technology also allows new and innovative ways to encourage music making among the masses, and some professional artists are even using their platform to encourage this (Tobias, 2013). If I can remain aware of how society (locally and broadly) uses and consumes music, I can guide my curriculum to support my students and these larger societal needs, and therefore insure continued value and relevance of music education. Maintaining a student-centered focus of instruction will also be another critical support in this ambition.

In some ways, how I view these several aspects of education and music education seems to follow that of Bennett Reimer. He weighed several aspects of music on a sort of sliding scale rather than the black and white terms of some other philosophers. For example, Elliott took a highly praxial approach, focusing so much on the doing of music that the product is almost incidental. Reimer counters this with a balance of praxis and product, an experience focused balance that I endorse. I have also written the word society twelve times thus far, not including that last. I do so because music holds many functions in human culture, from individual to national levels and meanings, and rarely does music happen in a cultural vacuum. Thus, I take a

page out of the Christopher Small school of thought and deny strict formalism where the meaning of music is entirely separate from non-musical influence. While the intrinsic meaning and value of music can be unique to any number of individuals, music is virtually always attached to some other idea or purpose that extends beyond the individual. These ideas and purposes could be a bulleted list many pages long, but let it suffice to say these can be idealistic, emotional, practical, political, aesthetic, or borne out of nationalism, to name but a small few. In any case, music is often shared or made beyond just the individual, so again it makes sense to me that participation within and understanding of this musical experience, which ultimately has the human at center, is part of the education system that should serve individual and societal needs.

My few years of experience as a music educator and exposure to new ideas has challenged my thinking to develop my philosophy as it now stands. Previously, I viewed music education to be important as an activity in its own right, perhaps somewhat independent of societal influence at large. My thinking has certainly been challenged by new horizons over the last two years, plus my time spent as an educator. Suffice it to say, I now firmly believe that education and music education must serve the evolving interests and needs of both students and society, or risk dying a slow death, much like Latin grammar schools of decades past.

How My Philosophy Informs My Teaching

My philosophy of education should be present in that I am working to help students grow in their fundamental ability to musik on their instruments with comfort and confidence. To confidently understand and perform music, one must be musically knowledgeable and literate enough to make sense of the ink on paper. I had found that I was not adequately addressing music literacy in certain ensembles, so I began searching for methods to remedy this gap in my instructional practice. By integrating structured sight reading and quick in-class performances, I

am challenging my upper students while those at the same time can guide and assist the lower students. With structured sight-reading practice and literacy skill practice, I am equipping my lower students with literacy tools and practice implementing them. For all, I am better preparing them for any repertoire I might give them or that they might seek out. By guiding students through reflection on their own learning, I figure out how to adjust instruction to best suit their needs with what I know is important for them to learn. Ultimately, for students to value their musical experience, they need to feel successful, welcome, and as a meaningful contributor. The following lessons are designed to help develop their literacy skills as student musicians, and if they believe they are growing and finding success, then their musical experience will have greater intrinsic value and purpose than before.

Chapter 2 - Lesson Plans

Lesson Plan for Video 1 – Sight Reading Method

Music National Standards (2014):

MU:Pr4.3.E8a: Demonstrate understanding and application of expressive qualities in a varied repertoire of music through prepared and improvised performances. (National Association for Music Education, n.d)

MU:Pr6.1.E.5a: Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music. (National Association for Music Education, n.d)

Teacher Name: Jeffrey Poort

Prior Knowledge/Skills: General pitch/rhythm knowledge from previous experience. We play “level 3” music for concert and contest, with some more of the same and “level 2” music mixed in.

Rehearsal Objective: Students will learn and apply the S.T.A.R.S. decoding process when reading new musical passages. Students will be able to apply successive steps to decode unfamiliar musical passages before performing them.

Assessment of the Rehearsal: Students will be able to perform a musical passage with relatively good accuracy in regards to indicated pitch, rhythm, and expression upon first performance.

Relevant Contextual Factors: Some students who are already strong musical readers and performers may see the process as frivolous and disengage. Sight reading has not been a routine focus and the sight-reading format I have been using up to this point lacked rigor.

Modifications/Accommodations Needed: None

Instructional Materials, Resources, and Technology: “Sound Sight Reading” Book

One for their assigned instrument, assigned musical instrument in good working condition

Personal Improvement Objective: Clear communication, adaptation, and application of the steps involved in the sight-reading process as outlined in the method book. Remove myself from the habit of decoding for the students, but rather give them strategies for decoding to use for themselves and with peers.

Welcome to *Sound Sight-Reading!*

You have been learning a truly special skill in band: decoding notes, rhythms, and more as you encounter them in written music, then performing them on your instrument. *You've been learning to read music!* The purpose of *Sound Sight-Reading* is to provide you with strategies for doing this accurately, efficiently, and independently so you can play better, both alone and in ensemble music.

What Is Sight-Reading?

Sight-reading is the ability to read and perform music at sight, without the benefit of prior practice or of another person (such as your band director) demonstrating it for you. *Sound Sight-Reading* provides valuable strategies for learning to do this well, including:

★ Aim for the S.T.A.R.S.!

The letters of the acronym, S.T.A.R.S., stand for important musical elements you should observe prior to performing any music*:

1. **Signatures (time and key)**—How many beats per measure? What kind of note receives one beat? What notes in this line are affected by the key signature?
2. **Tempo (and other expressive markings)**—How fast and with what character should the music be played?
3. **Accidentals**—Where do they occur and for how long before returning to the "normal" (diatonic) note(s)?
4. **Rhythms**—Are there any complex rhythms I need to figure out? How will I count rhythmic subdivisions?
5. **Signs (repeats, endings, segno, coda, etc.)**—What is the "roadmap" for this piece?

Note the five S.T.A.R.S. elements in the example below:

Song Without Words Robert Beckson

* Note: Not all music includes each of these five items.

Figure 1 STARS Decoding

Break It Down (Progressive Success)

When first encountering any music, especially if it seems challenging, try focusing on one or more separate musical elements before performing the whole. Achieve success in steps!



Any/all of the following five steps may be employed to "break down" the passage above:

1. **SPEAK**—Say the note names aloud in the order they occur in the music.



2. **COUNT/CLAP**—Say the counts for the music. Use the counting system presented in this book, or one shared with you by your instructor. We recommend speaking normally the counts for the notes but whispering the counts for the rests. When rhythmically confident, clap rhythms (counting aloud or internally), clapping hands to show longer, held durations.



3. **SING**—Sing or "chant" the note names while following the general contour of the music. We use note names throughout the book, but scale degree numbers or solfege syllables may be used as well.

Note Names:	C	D	E	F	G	C	F	E	D	E	C	D	E	F	G	E	C
Numbers:	1	2	3	4	5	1	4	3	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	3	1
Solfege:	do	re	mi	fa	sol	do	fa	mi	re	mi	do	re	mi	fa	sol	mi	do

4. **ARTICULATE/FINGER**—Execute with the tongue the onset of notes in the passage, either blowing air (with or without one's instrument) or even singing. After reviewing notes and rhythm, a logical next step is to review the fingering without playing. (This also applies to other ways a player changes between notes, including trombonists moving their slides and percussionists playing silently in the air above their instruments.)

5. **PERFORM**—Put it all together! Play the music on your instrument normally. Use a slower tempo if necessary. If you do make any mistakes, consider which of the above techniques might help you correct the error.

Figure 2 Progressive Success Steps

Andante (♩ = 76-108)

Figure 3 No. 18, Mary Had A Little Lamb!

35

This musical score is for Figure 4 No. 45, 'Trois Un'. It is a full orchestral score with a vocal line. The instruments listed on the left are: Mel (Soprano), Fl. 1, Fl. 2, Ob., Bsn., Cl. 1, Cl. 2, B. Cl., A. Sax 1, A. Sax 2, T. Sax, E. Sax, Trp. 1, Trp. 2, F. Hr. 1, F. Hr. 2, Trb. 1, Trb. 2, Bar. Bc., Tuba, Mlt. 1, Mlt. 2, Perc. 1, Perc. 2, and Timp. The score is written in 2/4 time and features a key signature of one flat. The vocal line (Mel) is marked with a '156-176' and includes lyrics. The orchestral parts are marked with dynamics such as *f*, *fp*, and *p*. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 1 through 9 indicated at the bottom.

Figure 4 No. 45, Trois Un

Table 1: Rehearsal Plan 1

Time	Activity	Purpose of Activity	Sequence	Assessment
5 Min	Explore the question of why is sight-reading an important skill?	To engage students in discussion on why growing our skills in sight reading will improve us overall as musicians.	Start group discussion with questions such as: Why is sight reading an important skill? How will this benefit us?	Students respond with guesses to areas of growth and benefits with increased sight-reading skill.
10 Min	Introduce SR. STARS and Progressive Success steps	To learn the steps and components of the STARS and Progressive Success system	Open books to page 2. Refer back to conversation on why good sight-reading skills are essential to becoming stronger musicians. Have students read aloud the “What Is” and “Break it Down” sections.	Student engagement through reading aloud
10 Min	First Selection 18	Put STARS and Progressive Success steps to action on excerpts in the book.	Divide the band into groups for A and B parts. Identify the STARS components in the selection with the students. Guide through progressive success steps and perform.	Observed student engagement, informal assessment, questioning, and reflection of musical product.
10 Min	2nd Selection 35	Continued practice of STARS and Progressive Success model.	Identify the STARS components in the selection with the students. Guide through	Observed student engagement, informal assessment and questioning of musical product.

			progressive success steps and perform.	
10 Min	3rd Selection	Continued practice of STARS and Progressive Success model.	Identify the STARS components in the selection with the students. Guide through progressive success steps and perform.	Observed student engagement, informal assessment and questioning of musical product.
1 Min	Closing	Wrap up the activity and preview future sessions	Preview how future sessions will look and be structured, thank and wish a good weekend.	none

In this lesson, I had to work against my habit of decoding for students. Often, I lead and demonstrate for students how rhythms should be counted, clapped, or otherwise translated off the page. My goal is for students to use the techniques presented in the Sound Sight Reading book (see figures 1 and 2) to decode the music, the composer’s intent, and to reproduce that as best they can without me first demonstrating the music. While it seemed to me that the steps presented and practiced made sense to many of the students, I am less sure that all bought in to the new system. I believe this to be the case because the excerpts I selected (see figures 3 and 4) for this trial run were on the easier side for a majority of the ensemble members. In successive practice sessions, I should choose excerpts that will provide greater challenge, particularly when I do not give away the answers. Student growth in terms of reading fluency, confidence, and actualized skill is a goal, and such growth comes through careful practice of strategies to grow these traits. Pacing was also an issue, I took longer than intended on several segments, often due to my line of questioning being too vague, leading to students disengaging, perhaps also with a reluctance to answer incorrectly. A third excerpt was planned, but time ran out before we could

get to it. In a future session, the STARS and Progressive Success process will be quickly reviewed before putting it to practice with more urgency on new excerpts. Increased consideration of excerpt selections should also be a focus in future sessions, so that I can challenge both my lower and higher ability students appropriately. I believe this system has merit, though I should also consider modifications to adapt it specifically for the ensemble needs and interest. I will also need to work on my delivery. While the method shows great promise against my previous way of teaching sight reading, my delivery in this lesson was slow, clunky, and lacked efficiency.

Lesson Plan for Video 2 – Small Group Sight Reading, Performance, and Reflection

2014 Music National Standards:

MU:Pr5.3.E.IIa Develop and apply appropriate rehearsal strategies to address individual and ensemble challenges in a varied repertoire of music, and evaluate their success. (National Association for Music Education, n.d)

MU:Pr6:1.E.5a Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music. (National Association for Music Education, n.d)

Teacher Name: Jeffrey Poort

Prior Knowledge/Skills: Over the previous 4 weeks students have had guided practice using the Sight-Reading STARS and Progressive Success methods at least twice per week.

Rehearsal Objective: Students will apply the STARS and Progressive Success method as needed in their individual and group situations to quickly read, learn, and perform a short excerpt in a small ensemble setting. Students will reflect on their own learning to determine

which specific components of the STARS and Progressive Success method are most and least useful to them. I can use this information to determine which components to focus on in future instruction, which to modify, or perhaps any that could be consolidated or eliminated.

Assessment of the Rehearsal: Students will apply the STARS and Progressive Success steps on their own for a selected excerpt in a small group setting. Students, as part of a small ensemble, will perform their assigned excerpt for the class following a short reading and rehearsal period. Students will identify what components or steps they could revisit to improve performance. Students will complete a survey (see appendix) asking them to identify and explain what components of the STARS/Progressive Success method were used, which components are critical for their learning process, and which components feel less necessary, and why.

Relevant Contextual Factors: Using a previous assessment, I grouped students according to rough skill level. To keep certain individuals out of groups with others, a small number of individuals were put in the next higher or lower scored group. Groups may need further balancing based on actual class attendance, the previous two days were snow days and some of the roads are still poor, attendance could be incomplete the morning that this activity will be taught.

Modifications/Accommodations Needed: None

Instructional Materials, Resources, and Technology: “Sound Sight Reading” for their assigned instrument, computer or phone capable of using Canvas and Google Forms and assigned musical instrument in proper working condition.

Personal Improvement Objective: Reinforce the concept that growth and improvement is possible for all students through these methods. Instant perfection is not the goal, rather adopting learning strategies to increase confidence, ability to decode, and to find greater

individual confidence is the target. In particular, the goal of this lesson is to help students realize what strategies work best or least for them through self-reflection. With this activity, I aim to hand more control of the learning process to the students to consider, adopt, and use what strategies they see fit while under a time constraint before classroom performance.

20

COMING HOME—Where are the most challenging parts of this music? What strategies can help you play them correctly on your first try?

45A

Andante

mp mf p

mf mp mf p

45B

Andante

mp mf p

mf mp mf p

Figure 5 No. 45, Coming Home

TWINKLE³ LITTLE STAR—Here is a lovely, triple meter arrangement of “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star”!

58A

Adagio

mp mf p f

Fine

Adapted by W. A. Mozart

D.C. al Fine

58B

Adagio

mp mf p f

Fine

Adapted by W. A. Mozart

D.C. al Fine

Figure 6 No. 58, Twinkle3 Little Star

AMERICA, THE BEAUTIFUL—This beautiful song has been arranged in **four parts**: **part A** is the **melody**, **part B** is one of the **harmony** parts. Find some friends to perform it with all four parts, taking turns playing the melody.

87A **Andante** Soprano Samuel A. Ward
mp cantabile
f *mf*

87B **Andante** Alto Samuel A. Ward
mp cantabile
f *mf*

Figure 7 No. 87, America The Beautiful

GRAND PROCESSION—Bring out the **moving notes** in your part. When playing with others, **listen** for their moving notes.

102A **Andante**
mp *mf* *p* *cresc. poco a poco* *f*

102B **Andante**
mp *mf* *p* *cresc. poco a poco* *f*

Figure 8 No. 102, Grand Procession

Table 2 Rehearsal Plan 2

Time	Activity	Purpose of Activity	Sequence	Assessment
3 Min	Welcomes and Announcements	To welcome everyone back to class, review upcoming dates, and publicize announcements.	N/A	none
5 Min	Small-Group Sight Reading Session Preview	Instruct how the small group reading session will function and what will happen afterwards.	Explain that students will be divided into groups for a sight reading and performance	none

			session. Students will have limited time to apply the STARS/Progressive Success system, rehearse with their group, and then perform for the class. Students should think critically about which strategies will best help them read/perform with greatest success.	
10 Min	Assign groups, split to rehearsal spaces and begin	Group students based on previous assessment data, assign excerpt, apply strategies in small groups	Assign students to their groups and to locations. Have them gather, then assign their excerpt. Remind the process will be on a time limit and send them their spaces to begin. At the end of time, all groups will come back to perform their selection. Patrol and observe, but do not interfere unless off task.	Students engage in applying self-selected sight-reading strategies and rehearse with their peers in a cooperative manner.
15 Min	Perform	To informally check application of reading and performance quality	Gather the groups back to the rehearsal hall. Each group will perform for the class. Following each group's performance, ask what are one or two strategies they chose to focus on in their group session and why. If they revisited their	Students actively engage in performing with their group. Students identify reading strategies used and why Students identify strategies they would revisit to

			strategies to do better, which would they use and why?	do better and why.
10 Min	Self-Reflection	Students will reflect on their group session and their own learning style and needs.	Direct students to the reflection survey on Canvas. Explain that consideration of our own learning styles can help us as individual learners in our own practice and performance, plus can help me as an instructor to apply what works best for our large ensemble.	Google Form: Sight Reading Activity Reflection

This lesson was lots of fun to teach. I frequently feel apprehensive when handing over control, wanting to take care of things myself rather than delegating is an ingrained part of my personality. As a teacher, this becomes a weakness because it causes me to teach through rote learning rather than teaching students to read and decode for themselves. In this lesson, I gave up some of that control, though students were still instructed to use the system we have been practicing as they saw fit. The Sight-Reading STARS/Progressive Success method (figures 1 and 2) is designed to give students tools to decode music for themselves, and after four weeks of practice in the system, I felt the students should be put in a situation where they would need to use the system without my direct oversight. I tried to set up the students to consider for

themselves what components of the Sound Sight Reading system are most applicable to their success. While not strictly applied in each group, I believe most of the students did use some of the components and steps they felt were relevant. What took me by surprise once the lesson was done was a few individuals telling me they enjoyed the activity and would like to do it again in the future. Two of these students are individuals that often seem apathetic towards small group activities, just somewhat along for the ride, yet these individuals were actively participating in their groups when I made rounds for observations. Examples of the assigned literature for each of the four groups is illustrated in figures 5 through 8.

When going through the survey (located in appendix) data and feedback, I found information that can guide future instruction. Most students appear to see value in the STARS acronym and application, even if individually certain parts feel less necessary. Many respondents put emphasis on “counting and clapping”, “articulate/finger/airplay”, and “asking for help” as steps critical for their learning process. In contrast, I discovered near universal disdain for chanting note names and singing parts of the Progressive Success steps. The written answers explaining the dislike of chanting illustrates that many students get confused when trying to chant their note names in time, either because it is a tongue-twister or they remember fingerings better than pitch names. If note identification is lacking while fingering recall is not, there still likely exists a literacy issue I need to address. Indeed, chanting note names could be problematic with conflicting auditory signals coming from various sections due to transpositions as well. Singing parts was also explained by several students to feel unnecessary as they already do that when they count and clap a passage. Despite the open dislike of the singing step, this is a step I will attempt to modify to better suit the students. Instructing students to sing excerpts on a neutral syllable while putting increased emphasis on pitch contour and articulation could

possibly increase the value of this step. It has long been no secret to many band directors that singing appropriate articulation style and contour, especially if intervals are accurate, will help better prepare students to accurately perform a passage on their instrument.

Overall, I feel that my goals were achieved with this lesson. It appears that many students did consider their learning process and gave me honest feedback explaining what they believe works or does not work for them. I also succeeded in giving up a measure of control and many students were successful without me being directly involved. Were each of the performances clean and polished? Certainly not, and one of them was outright terrible in quality. That group was also the lowest collection by aggregate assessment score and lacked good student leadership in their sight reading and rehearsal process. Given that students enjoyed the change of pace that the activity brought, I will plan on a similar day in the future, but with groups arranged with a balanced mix of levels, rather than similarly scored groups. I expect this can help the less advanced students better apply the sight-reading system we have practiced while still providing the higher achieving students some challenge and leadership opportunity.

Lesson Plan for Video 3 – Music Literacy Ritual Number One

2014 Music National Standards:

MU:Pr4.E.5a: Demonstrate, using music reading skills where appropriate, how knowledge of formal aspects in musical works inform prepared or improvised performances.

(National Association for Music Education, n.d)

Instructor Name: Jeffrey Poort

Date: 3/21/2022

Prior Knowledge/Skills: Sight reading method from Sound Sight Reading, previous exposure to clef and note theory.

Rehearsal Objective: To begin a new daily series of musical literacy and concept review as inspired by Robert Sheldon at a conference session.

Assessment of the Rehearsal: Students identify the function of treble and bass clef, identify the notes of the lines/spaces out to one ledger line above and below, and state the functions of flats, sharps, and naturals. Students identify and play the pitches of a two-octave chromatic scale.

Relevant Contextual Factors: With music literacy being an identified weakness of my instruction in this ensemble, this set of activities is designed to address this deficiency as part of a new start-of-class set of routines.

Modifications/Accommodations: Needed: none

Instructional Materials, Resources, and Technology: Whiteboard, instruments, chromatic scale print-out.

Personal Improvement Objective: Aim for high energy engagement with students on these simple, but necessary, literacy reinforcement tools. Since these and other variations will be a daily activity, I must do my best to not let this become just another repetitive, low engagement exercise. While repetition has no substitute, it will likely become stale if done without energy and some variation.

Score 2 Octave Chromatic Scale on Concert F
For daily review and practice

Poort

The score is for a 2 Octave Chromatic Scale on Concert F. It is written in common time (C) and consists of five measures. The instruments included are Flute, Clarinet in B \flat , Bass Clarinet, Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Horn in F, Trumpet in B \flat , Trombone, Tuba, and Xylophone. The Flute part starts on F4 and ascends chromatically to F6. The other instruments follow in parallel motion. The Tuba and Xylophone parts include triplets and quartets in the final measure.

2 Octave Chromatic Scale on Concert F

The image displays a musical score for a 2 Octave Chromatic Scale on Concert F. The score is arranged in a grand staff format with ten staves, each representing a different instrument. The instruments listed on the left are: Fl. (Flute), B^b Cl. (B-flat Clarinet), B. Cl. (B Clarinet), A. Sx. (Alto Saxophone), T. Sx. (Tenor Saxophone), Hn. (Horn), B^b Tpt. (B-flat Trumpet), Tbn. (Trombone), Tuba, and Xyl. (Xylophone). The music is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or F minor) and a 2/4 time signature. The scale is performed in two octaves, starting on Concert F. The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes) and rests. The T. Sx. staff includes a δ^{tra} marking above the first measure. The bottom of the page features measure numbers 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

Figure 9 Two-Octave Chromatic Scale

Table 3: Rehearsal Plan 3

Time	Activity	Purpose	Sequence	Assessment
1 min	Clef identification	To determine what each clef sign identifies	Draw attention to the clef signs, 1 at a time. We know <i>what</i> they are. <i>Why</i> do they function as they do? What cues in their shape can we lean on?	Students identify bass and treble clefs. Students identify the bass as determining F, treble as identifying G.

2 min	Note naming in clefs	To identify note names on the bass and treble staff, out to one ledger line above and below for each.	Start with the clef identification lines, as a class name the lines and spaces going above and below each.	Students correctly identify the names of the lines and spaces for each respective staff.
2 min	Identify the functions of sharps, flats, and naturals	To review and reinforce the purpose of sharps, flats, and naturals	Have one student, for each, identify the purpose of sharps, flats, or naturals. Help with corrections if needed. Have all students as a class recite each.	Students correctly identify the function of sharps, flats, and naturals.
4 min	Chromatic Scale	To review and reinforce the note names, fingerings, and tone production of a two octave chromatic scale	Direct students to their chromatic scale printout. For each note, we will name it, finger it, play it, and repeat for each, using sharp names ascending and flat names descending. Following this structured review, play it continuously on quarter notes at about 100bbm.	Students, generally as a whole, correctly identify note names along with their section, prepare the correct fingerings, and play the correct pitch with characteristic tone.

This shorter lesson preceded work on literature we would be performing in an upcoming pre-contest concert as well as a piece with the 6th through 8th grade band students. That rehearsal portion was not included here given it was nothing new in particular and in general was just concert preparation. The short lesson above seemed to serve well as a gentle shake-up coming out of Spring Break and served as a good opportunity to try a form of review I have not done with a high school group. This was inspired by a session with Robert Sheldon at the 2022 KMEA workshop (Sheldon, 2022). Of significant emphasis in his presentation was music literacy and his strategies to address it in an ensemble setting. This was through daily “literacy

rituals,” as he called them (Sheldon, 2022). Each day would be a different focus, but always short and concise.

Here, I aimed to do something with my high school group that I have certainly neglected: review simple note naming, sharp/flat/natural theory and clef purpose. While I include focus on the chromatic scale from 6th grade onwards, what I have frequently allowed is for the students to read it via a fingering chart in the methods book. In preparation for this lesson, I instead printed a two-octave scale for each student on concert F (See Figure 9). While this does not cover the full range of each instrument, it does include a practical range of each in my opinion. I directed students to rely more on this rather than the fingering chart in their methods book, though I did not ban the chart outright. In time, I will. After some time of doing this exercise along with others, I will eventually assess their knowledge of this chromatic scale by having them fill out a fingering chart of the scale along with note identification.

This lesson was successful in that it had all students, on some level, participating in the chromatic scale exercise of naming each note, preparing the fingering, and then playing. I believe I could get more and louder participation in the naming step. In the future, I could also add emphasis to tone development across this two-octave range. Additionally, I could push the range higher or lower as different instruments are capable. Another variation I plan to try is doing the steps separately: by having the students audibly name the entirety of the scale as they finger the notes followed by playing it at a modest then quick tempo. When reviewing the clefs, note names, and accidental functions, next time I will call upon specific students by going around the seating chart at random. This way, I can check on the students who are often more unengaged. If I make this a habit, perhaps it will help them be more attentive because they will learn at some point they will be called upon to answer. Other inclusions in my versions of daily

literacy rituals will be rhythmic review along with meter. Between activities like these, and continued practice in sight reading, I hope in time to improve the music literacy of this group and take the lessons I learn to improve my instruction with younger ensembles as well.

Chapter 3 - Reflections

Two years ago, I took a leap. A leap that I knew would bring challenges, but one that would also lead to more personal, pedagogical, and intellectual growth than I could have predicted or hoped for. I knew that there would be challenges ahead, ample reading, and frustrating hours turning thoughts into cohesive written words, but I could not have predicted the ways I would be inspired to change processes in my classroom. This leap was applying for and enrolling in the Summer Master of Music program at Kansas State University. In my time as a KSU student, I have been pushed harder than I expected. If I am to improve as an educator, I must grow in thought and practice, and growth often comes through new challenges. My time spent studying under instructors such as Dr. Payne, Dr. Tracz, and Dr. Wimmer has challenged my previous convictions and methods. This coursework has inspired me to try new things, consider different ideas, and ultimately grow in my practice as a music educator. Perhaps before taking the leap with KSU, I had been playing things safe, not pushing the limits of myself or my students to the fullest potential. More dangerously, I perhaps fell into a trap, effectively thinking and acting as “what has worked for me in the past worked just fine and will always work.” Luckily, my coursework with KSU has forced me to try and utilize new techniques and, as is often the case, with new trials comes new discoveries.

I have begun to implement better designed warmups that connect more meaningfully to the literature I teach. This is a concept both Dr. Tracz and Dr. Wimmer emphasized in their courses, whether relevant to the content of the week or not. In particular, Literature Analysis with Dr. Tracz provided insight as to how careful examination and analysis of literature can better inform warmup and rehearsal design. Well-designed warmups will better prepare students for the concepts to be worked on in ensemble literature. Making daily or weekly adjustments to a

warmup routine to match the literature focus will also guard against repeated warmup routines becoming stale and a rite of habit instead of what they should be, skill building and concept reinforcement. For example, if I will be working a piece primarily in 7/8 time, it would be beneficial to work appropriate rhythmic and articulation patterns into the warmup process. This can be achieved by adjusting familiar scale and articulation exercises to use relevant 7/8 patterns and applying the sound before sight method. This way scales and articulation can still be reinforced, but while applying the new 7/8 concepts. When the same or similar 7/8 rhythms later appear in the repertoire, the students will have already worked out how they feel without necessarily realizing it, and more time can be spent on musical and ensemble concepts rather than simply figuring out a bulk of the rhythms. I applied techniques like this to warmups in preparation for working on “Balkan Seven” by Scott Watson with my high school ensemble, and I feel we were able to read and work more effectively as an ensemble. Going forward, similar adjustments can be applied to warmups preceding any other programmed literature and, through these carefully crafted warmups, I can better guide my students' musical development and preparation for ensemble literature.

My time with KSU has also challenged me to deeply consider why I do many of the things I do as a teacher. In particular, the classes Theories of Music Teaching and History/Philosophy of Music Education have made me reevaluate my educational philosophy and methodology. Through those courses, reflection on my experiences, and evaluation of students, I have come to realize that I often have not truly been teaching my students to read and understand music. I have produced students who work well within a system, but what were students gaining from that system? Not consistently have I fostered independent and confident student musicians. They have not been gaining the musical independence and confidence I would

tell myself I wanted for them. This truly dawned on me when my high school students returned a survey giving me feedback about what was working and what was not working for them in a sight-reading method we have been using. To my discomfort, I found a number of students admitting that they were effectively illiterate and have instead become good at playing by ear or by watching and listening to others. Perhaps I always suspected as much in the back of my mind, but those students who are naturally strong readers or needed less reinforcement have likely carried the rest along while I neglected this reality and the learning needs of those left behind. If I am to serve the needs of all my students, I realized I immediately needed to seek out remedies to this literacy deficiency in my teaching. Luckily, KSU has equipped me with better tools of self-reflection, pedagogical development, and inspiration to improve my practice. This dawning occurred at approximately the same time as the 2022 Kansas Music Educators Association in-service, which happened to have an informative and practical music literacy session by Robert Sheldon. I immediately have combined these different resources to begin implementing strategies to address my deficiency in teaching music literacy. In particular, Robert Sheldon (2022) discussed using what he called “music literacy rituals,” taking no more than 5 minutes of daily class time, to practice and reinforce literacy concepts. I took careful note of these so that I may adapt them to the needs of my students.

Perhaps then, my greatest take-away from my coursework with Kansas State has been reevaluating my philosophy on music education and how my actions support or undermine that stance. By neglecting the needs of students who were struggling with music literacy, I was actively working against my beliefs. While I likely will not achieve my new goals and expectations in a semester, let alone overnight, the challenges presented to me through KSU have opened my eyes and reinvigorated me as a music educator. Had I not taken this leap, perhaps I

would still be some level of successful as a music educator until retirement, but that road would always be limited in what I could do for my students. I could not have foreseen exactly how this was going to unfold, but the new challenges brought on through this program have made me grow in belief and practice. This wealth of new exposure, learning, and self-reflection will continue to equip me to be a better music educator for all my students. Of course, I am human, and not all things will work as planned, but I feel more confident than ever to take considered leaps for the sake of my students. No more will I take the road paved by safe mediocrity.

Bibliography

- Christopher Small. (1998). *Musicking The Meanings of Performing and Listening*. University Press of New England.
- <http://er.lib.ksu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&AN=45873>
- Mark, Michael L., G., Charles L. (2007). *A History of American Music Education* (3rd ed.). Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- National Association for Music Education. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://nafme.org/my-classroom/standards/core-music-standards/>
- Reimer, B. (2003). *A philosophy of music education: advancing the vision*. Third Edition. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
- Sheldon, R. (2022). *Reading is Fundamental: Easy Strategies for Improving Music Literacy in Ensemble Rehearsal*. Kansas Music Educators Association 2022 Inservice Workshop, Century II, Wichita, KS, United States.
- Tobias, E. S. (2013). Toward Convergence: Adapting Music Education to Contemporary Society and Participatory Culture. *Music Educators Journal*, 99(4), 29–36.
- <https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432113483318>

Appendix

3/17/22, 3:19 PM

Sight Reading Activity Reflection

Sight Reading Activity Reflection

This follow-up is meant to help you determine which steps in the Sight-Reading STARS and Progressive Steps to Success work well for you, and which ones do not. As musicians, it is important for us to consider how we learn so that we may set ourselves up for success.

*** Required**

1. Name *

2. Which group were you in? *

Mark only one oval.

- Group 1, #45, Coming Home
- Group 2, #58, Twinkle3 Little Star
- Group 3, #87, America The Beautiful
- Group 4, #102, Grand Procession

3. Which part did you play? *

Mark only one oval.

- Part A
- Part B

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1N1K-05eRzsgS5IRWA067WqSQ5xyki0GHGi3a1BJmQPw/edit>

1/7

4. How difficult, on a scale of 1-5, did you find your part? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Easy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Hard

5. As a group, which components of STARS were used? *

Check all that apply.

- (S)tars - Signatures - time and key
- s(T)ars - Tempo (and other expressive markings) - tempo, dynamics, articulations, style
- st(A)rs - Accidentals - where are they and for which notes?
- sta(R)s - Rhythms - those I need to figure out, patterns, etc
- star(S) - Signs - repeats, endings, coda, etc.
- None of the above

Other: _____

6. As a group, which components of the Progressive Success steps were used? *

Check all that apply.

- Progressive Success - Chant note names
- Progressive Success - Count/Clap
- Progressive Success - Sing through
- Progressive Success - Articulate/Finger/Airplay
- Progressive Success - Perform
- Review, check, ask for help
- Review, check, and help others
- None of the above

Other: _____

What parts of the process, to you, is essential?

Carefully consider, what most contributes to your success and why.

7. Which STARS steps do you feel are essential to YOUR success when reading/playing new material? *

Check all that apply.

- (S)tars - Signatures - time and key
- s(T)ars - Tempo (and other expressive markings) - tempo, dynamics, articulations, style
- st(A)rs - Accidentals - where are they and for which notes?
- sta(R)s - Rhythms - those I need to figure out, patterns, etc
- star(S) - Signs - repeats, endings, coda, etc.
- None of the above

Other: _____

8. Why? (explain your answer to the question above) *

9. Which Progressive Success steps do you feel are essential to YOUR success when reading/playing new material? *

Check all that apply.

- Progressive Success - Chant note names
- Progressive Success - Count/Clap
- Progressive Success - Sing through
- Progressive Success - Articulate/Finger/Airplay
- Progressive Success - Perform
- Review, check, ask for help
- Review, check, and help others
- None of the above

Other: _____

10. Why? (explain your answer to the question above) *

What parts of the process, to you, feels unnecessary?

Carefully consider, what least contributes to your success and why.

11. Which STARS components do you feel are less necessary or frivolous to your success when reading/playing new material? *

Check all that apply.

- (S)tars - Signatures - time and key
- s(T)ars - Tempo (and other expressive markings) - tempo, dynamics, articulations, style
- st(A)rs - Accidentals - where are they and for which notes?
- sta(R)s - Rhythms - those I need to figure out, patterns, etc
- star(S) - Signs - repeats, endings, coda, etc.
- None of the above

Other: _____

12. Why? (explain your answer to the question above) *

13. Which Progressive Success steps do you feel are less necessary or frivolous to your success when reading/playing new material? *

Check all that apply.

- Progressive Success - Chant note names
- Progressive Success - Count/Clap
- Progressive Success - Sing through
- Progressive Success - Articulate/Finger/Airplay
- Progressive Success - Perform
- Review, check, ask for help
- Review, check, and help others
- None of the above

Other: _____

14. Why? (explain your answer to the question above) *

Any other considerations?

- 15. What other steps or modifications would you make within the sight reading process your group used or that we have practiced as a class? This could be for the large group, small groups, or your own use. Please be as detailed as possible. *

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

