Commonalities between music and language learning


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>MUSIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Left to right progression</td>
<td>Left to right progression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound components (phonological distinction/phonemic awareness)</td>
<td>Sound distinction (tonal distinction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic Process</td>
<td>Symbolic Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coding/Decoding Process</td>
<td>Coding/Decoding Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency (rate + accuracy + expression)</td>
<td>Fluency (rate + accuracy + expression)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of vocabulary</td>
<td>Use of vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>Comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intent of author is for reader to read the entire literary work</td>
<td>Intent of composer is for listener to listen to the entire composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of analysis to understand and organize text</td>
<td>Use of analysis to understand and organize music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of elaboration (i.e. creative writing)</td>
<td>Use of elaboration (i.e. ornamentation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May contain inferences by use of illustrations or text</td>
<td>May contain inferences by use of pitch, timbre, chordal structure, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contains a variety of genres (fiction, non-fiction, fantasy, etc.)</td>
<td>Contains a variety of genres (jazz, rock, hip hop, country, classical, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of imagery</td>
<td>Use of imagery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Composing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Utah English Language Arts Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Literature/Reading Informational Text</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>key ideas and details</td>
<td>Speaking and Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>craft and structure</td>
<td>comprehension and collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>integration of knowledge and ideas</td>
<td>presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>range of reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foundational Skills</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>print concepts (K, 1)</td>
<td>conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phonological awareness (K, 1)</td>
<td>knowledge of language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phonics and word recognition</td>
<td>vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fluency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Educators may share this information for classroom use only, but please give credit to Jennifer Purdy  p. 1
Learning Literacy through Music
by Kelsey Tarbert, onetoreadingjournal.com/2012/learning-literacy-through-music/

Literacy is larger than just reading and writing. It also includes listening, speaking, and social skills. One area that a literacy program should emphasize is the development of auditory processes. Auditory elements of literacy include phoneme awareness, discrimination between similar and auditory elements, speech signals, auditory memory, and more. With phoneme awareness, children will learn how sounds come together to form words, enabling them to make sense of the sounds they hear. In music, this would translate to an awareness of pitches and how they form a musical line. Knowledge of speech signals, like vocal inflection, volume, and stress, is also important to gain meaning. Auditory signals are also significant in music. Children learn to distinguish between their singing and speaking voices, sing in high and low registers, and make music loudly and softly.

Visual decoding processes are also a large part of literacy learning. Other language knowledge includes expanding vocabulary and knowledge of rhymes.

Beat and Language Skills
BBC News: Science and Environment article by Melissa Hogenboom, 17 September 2013

Authors of a study published in the Journal of Neuroscience argue that rhythm is an integral part of language.

“We know that moving to a steady beat is a fundamental skill not only for music performance but one that has been linked to language skills,” said Nina Kraus, of the Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory at Northwestern University in Illinois. “Kids who are poor readers have a lot of difficulty following the beat. In both speech and music, rhythm provides a temporal map with signposts to the most likely locations of meaningful input.”

This study adds another piece to the puzzle of the emerging story suggesting that music-rhythmic abilities are correlated with improved performance in non-music areas, particularly language.

Let’s Bring Back the Magic of Song for Teaching Reading

Reading rhythmical language in the primary grades is not new. However, the recent emphasis on narrative and informational reading has led to a decline in this type of reading. Singing (while at the same time having a visual display of the words in the songs) can be a very useful instructional tool to teach reading to beginning readers. In this study, the repeated readings of song lyrics allowed even the less proficient readers to develop a mastery of the songs that was equal to the more advanced students.
Rap to a Beat

Find beat tracks on freebeats.io or search YouTube for “beats”

If you would rather not have the hip-hop sound you can download instrumental tracks to folk songs from the USBE Elementary Songbook. The tracks for Alabama Gal, Cindy, and Miss Mary Mack are a good place to start.

(Download the “Play 2” tracks from https://schools.utah.gov/curr/finearts/elementarysongbook

Use metered text and rap the words to a steady beat or beat track.

Consider prosody – the way stressed syllables naturally fall on the beat. Some words or groups of words have an anacrusis – an unstressed syllable at the beginning of a verse or musical passage. Sometimes there is no one correct way to say the text. Be consistent and say it the same way every time and your students will do it the way you model it.

Use activities and questions that reinforce the English Language Arts standards.

Iron Horses (excerpt) / The Age of Progress (excerpt)

**Music Objectives:** demonstrate musical ideas, evaluate and refine work, present final version, explore effects of dynamic levels and articulations, read and follow dynamics notation, explore beat vs. rhythm, describe imagery, relate to another content area, make historical connections, follow conducting cues

**Language Arts Objectives:** identify key ideas and details, draw inferences, summarize, identify character/setting/events/narrator, compare and contrast, define words, outline sequence, experience various genres, differentiate points of view, gather information from illustrations, discover cause and effect, make connections, discover author’s purpose, recognize syllables, use context, increase fluency, engage in collaborative conversations, speak audibly, interpret figurative language, create new ideas, read with expression, refer to structural elements (verse, rhythm, meter)

1. Teacher says poem to a steady beat or beat track. Students listen for key details and decide what the poem is about.

2. Teacher reads again. Students look for two things they notice or wonder about. Students may read along aloud if they want to. Each student shares something they noticed or wondered about the text. Identify and define any new words.

3. Read through two more times with students. The first time, teacher and students take turns reading on the teacher’s signal (antiphonning), continue with a second reading where students follow teacher’s cues for dynamics (piano, forte, crescendo, decrescendo).

4. As the teacher reads the poem *The Age of Progress*, students decide if or how it relates to the *Iron Horses* poem. You may want to display images of *American Progress* by John Gast and a study for mural *Westward Ho!* by Emanuel Leutze. Students “read” the images and decide which one best fits the poem *The Age of Progress*, with details to defend their opinion.

   Next, the teacher reads the poem again as students show the steady beat on their palm, then their arm in an arc. The beat on the palm is the strong beat. Students notice how the strong beat falls where the words are naturally accented. Finally, the students read along with the teacher while continuing to show the steady beat.

Fluency Development Lesson

This strategy works well when integrating music. Using these lesson steps will help increase fluency and also meet many of the English Language Arts core standards.

1. choose a short text
2. teacher reads the whole as students follow
3. discuss content
4. chorally read the whole several times
5. provide variations while reading
6. additional word study activities
7. practice with partners or groups
8. perform reading

Source: *The Fluent Reader* by Timothy V. Rasinski, (Scholastic, 2003).
5. Students tap the rhythm of the words to *Iron Horses* while audiating the words instead of saying them aloud. Teacher asks, "What did you notice?" (the rhythm is the same for every line, it sounds like a train rhythm). Students audiate the text as they tap the rhythm of the words to *The Age of Progress*. The teacher asks, "What did you notice?" (the rhythm is the same on every line except the last, each line does NOT begin on a strong beat)

6. Divide students into groups of 4 or 5 people. Each group decides how they want to perform the poem *The Age of Progress*. They may choose to do it with a beat track or without. The group creates a movement or action for each line of the poem, adding dynamics or other expressive effects if they want. Each member of the group will suggest at least one idea, and at least one idea or suggestion from every person will be used in the performance. They might change their ideas as they work as a group and that’s fine. Just be sure each group uses at least one suggestion or idea from each person. Give a time limit then have groups take turns performing for the class.

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**Iron Horses**  
(excerpt)  
by Verla Kay

Piercing whistles, shrieking wheels.  
Hot steam hissing, high-pitched squeals.

Huffing, puffing, smoking stacks.  
Screeching, stopping, End of tracks.

Railroad barons, visions, dreams.  
Thinking, planning, plotting schemes.

Politicians, Congress, vote.  
"Build your railroad," Lincoln wrote.

Survey parties, canvas tents.  
Levels, transits—measurements.

Work train, flatcars, blacksmith shop.  
Kitchen, bunkhouse—sleep on top.

Thumping, bumping, ties and rails.  
Clanging, banging, spikes and nails.

Rugged mountains, giant rifts.  
Ragged, jagged, rocky cliffs.

Burly Irish, setting tracks.  
Building trestles, bridging gaps.

Massive outcrop, blocking way.  
Chinese, long ropes, baskets sway.

Blasting powder, rocks in air.  
Shattered shale — everywhere.

East gang, West gang, Racing fast.  
Stubborn railroads, went right past!

Joined in Utah, end of race.  
Ceremony, spikes in place.

Iron horses, burning oak.  
Belching cinders, spewing smoke.

No more clippers, seasick folks,  
Covered wagons, broken yokes.

Train tracks finished, East to West.  
People smiling, “This is best.”

**The Age of Progress**  
(excerpt)  
by H. De Marsan

The age of giant progress,  
Americans all hail!  
The land all interwoven  
With telegraph and rail.  
No sluggish chains shall bind us,  
No tardiness delay;  
The morning light is breaking  
O’er our destiny.
America the Beautiful

Music Objectives: determine mood and tone of a piece of music, compare and contrast two pieces of music, determine intent of the performer, evaluate recordings of the same song and choose which one is your favorite and give reasons why, sing a traditional song in tune with good vocal tone,

Language Arts Objectives: determine meaning of figurative language, describe the author’s point of view, refer to structural elements (verse, line, etc.), connect/analyze illustrations and text, compare and contrast different versions, read unfamiliar multisyllabic words, read grade-level poetry with accuracy and rate and expression, use context to determine meaning, write an opinion piece with supporting details

The words to this song were written as a poem in 1893. The poem gained popularity after it was published two years later and people began singing the words to tunes they already knew, such as “Auld Lang Syne.” It wasn’t until 1910, after Samuel A. Ward had died, that the words were put to one of his hymn tunes and published together. Sing Katharine Lee Bates’s words to the tune of “Auld Lang Syne” and compare the feeling and imagery with the traditional Ward tune.

1. There are many illustrated versions of the words to “America the Beautiful.” I use the one illustrated by Neil Waldman. Students read along as they listen to the song. * As they listen, they think of two things – a question they can ask about the words or illustrations, or something they notice about the words or illustrations.

*Go to YouTube to find many styles and versions of this song – U.S. Navy Band, Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Ray Charles, Keb Mo, and Mariah Carey are just a few.

2. What is the author’s view of America?

3. Sing Katharine Lee Bates’s words to the tune of “Auld Lang Syne” and compare the feeling and mood with the traditional Ward tune.

4. Listen to a variety of recordings of “America the Beautiful.” * Listen for style, feeling, and intent of the performer. Evaluate the recordings. Students conclude which is their favorite and give reasons to support their opinion.

5. Read and discuss all four verses of “America the Beautiful.” Ask students to share their ideas about the words to the song. Here are a few starters:

- determine and your favorite phrase or verse and tell why
- explain the phrase “from sea to shining sea”
- relate what kind of heroes are “proved in liberating strife”
- give an example of what it means to “more than self their country” love
- tell what they imagine when they read “pilgrim feet … a thoroughfare for freedom beat across the wilderness.”
- give a broader definition of “pilgrim”
- think of situations when human tears have been shed, yet “cities gleam undimmed”
- describe some “patriot dream(s)”

6. Compare the book illustrated by Neil Waldman to the pop-up book by Robert Sabuda. At the back of his book, illustrator Neil Waldman describes the places he chose to illustrate. Discover which places both authors chose to portray and which are different. On the back page of his book, Sabuda includes the other three verses as we sing them now, and the original four verses as written by Katherine Lee Bates before they were amended in 1904 and 1911. Compare and contrast the original verses with the current versions.

7. Some people think that this song should be our national anthem instead of “The Star-Spangled Banner.” Students evaluate both songs and choose which one they believe should be the national anthem and give reasons for their choice.
AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

Katharine Lee Bates (1859 - 1929)

1.
O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!

America! America!
God shed his grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

2.
O beautiful for pilgrim feet,
Whose stern, impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness!

America! America!
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law!

3.
O beautiful for heroes proved,
In liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved,
And mercy more than life!

America! America!
May God thy Gold refine;
Till all success be nobleness,
And every gain divine!

4.
Oh beautiful for patriot dream,
That sees beyond the years;
Thine alabaster cities gleam,
Undimmed by human tears!

America! America!
God shed his grace on thee;
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!