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>
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<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>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>Comprehension</td>
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<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>
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</tbody>
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Utah English Language Arts Standards

**Reading Literature/Reading Informational Text**
- key ideas and details
- craft and structure
- integration of knowledge and ideas
- range of reading

**Foundational Skills**
- print concepts (K, 1)
- phonological awareness (K, 1)
- phonics and word recognition
- fluency

**Writing**

**Speaking and Listening**
- comprehension and collaboration
- presentation

**Language**
- conventions
- knowledge of language
- vocabulary
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 -- determine key ideas and details, draw inferences, identify character/narrator, determine setting, indicate mood/emotion, sequence or retell events, define vocabulary words, use context clues and illustrations, identify rhyming words, contrast points of view, use different voices for each character, experience print concepts, use the rhythm of syllables, establish context, create new ideas, listen to others, take turns speaking, present text in a new way, speak audibly.

Come Little Leaves

“Come, little leaves,” said the wind one day, "Come over the meadows with me, and play; Put on your dresses of red and gold; Summer is gone, and the days grow cold."

Soon as the leaves heard the wind’s loud call, Down they came fluttering, one and all; Over the brown fields they danced and flew, Singing the soft little songs they knew.

by George Cooper

Music Objectives: experience vocal play, play steady beat, play rhythm of words, determine mood, choose timbre to fit mood, sing in tune

Language Arts Objectives: read with expression, recognize rhyming words, identify key ideas and details, participate in group reading, improve fluency and word recognition, make inferences, explain figurative language examples in poetry, demonstrate comprehension through dramatization

Lesson Ideas:
1. T reads the poem as S follow along.
2. Read with vocal inflections (high/low, soft/loud, fast/slow).
3. Pat steady beat.
4. Clap the rhythm of the words.
5. One group plays the steady beat and one group plays the rhythm of the words.
6. Find and play on rhyming words. Match instruments to mood of poem (skins, shakers, woods, metals).
7. Divide into three groups – beat, rhythm, rhyming words. Students audiate the words while playing or say the words while playing.
9. Sing to tune of “Hush Little Baby” from USBE Elem. Songbook
10. Help students create a soundscape using vocalizations, body percussion, found sounds, instruments, or a combination of all of these on selected words and phrases of the poem.
11. Combine movement, instruments, and song.
## English Language Arts Standards:

**Key Ideas and Details:** ask and answer questions (RL.K.1, RL.1.1, RL.2.1)

**Craft and Structure:** ask questions about unknown words (RL.K.4), recognize types of texts (RL.K.5), identify words and phrases that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses (RL.1.4), describe how words and phrases supply rhythm and meaning (RL.2.4)

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:** compare and contrast characters (RL.K.3), describe setting (RL.K.3, RL.1.3, RL.2.7)

**Range of Reading and Text Complexity:** group reading (RL.K.10), read prose and poetry with support (RL.1.10, RL.2.10)

**Print Concepts** (RF.K.1, RF.1.1)

**Phonological Awareness:** recognize rhyming words (RF.K.2), syllables (RF.K.2, RF.1.2)

**Phonics and Word Recognition** (RF.K.3, RF.1.3, RF.2.3)

**Fluency** (RF.K.4, RF.1.4, RF.2.4)

**Speaking and Listening:** collaborative conversations (SL.K.1, SL.1.1, SL.2.1)

## Music Standards:

**K.M.CR.1; 1.M.CR.1:** Generate musical ideas

**2.M.CR.1:** Improvise musical ideas for a specific purpose

**K.M.CR.3; 1.M.CR.3; 2.M.CR.2:** Organize musical ideas

**K.M.P.2; 1.M.P.2; 2.M.P.3:** Explore effects of various timbres, dynamic levels and tempos using voice, movement, and simple instruments

**K.M.P.3, 1.M.P.3:** Explore range and various qualities of the voice

**K.M.P.3, 1.M.P.3, R.M.P.4:** Sing a variety of simple songs in tune;

**K.M.P.3, 1.M.P.3:** Perform a rhyme or song with teacher accompaniment

**K.M.P.3, 1.M.P.3:** Perform steady beat with body percussion or unpitched percussion;


**K.M.R.3; 1.M.R.1, 2.M.R.1:** Listen to and interact with a variety of contrasting music while recognizing steady beat, repeating patterns, and expressive elements.

**K.M.CO.4; 1.M.CO.1, 2.M.CO.1:** Explore and demonstrate learning in another content area through music.

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### The Fox

an old song illustrated by Peter Spier

**Music Objectives:** sing a folk song in tune with good vocal tone; sing and accompany with chords C, G7, F; play non-pitched percussion instruments or add vocalizations; speaking voice vs. singing voice; tempo and dynamics

**Language Arts Objectives:** increase fluency, ask and answer questions about key details, identify characters and character motivation and traits, collect meaning from illustrations, consider points of view, recognize dialogue, compare and contrast two versions, make connections with writing and animal science, listen for repetition, collaboration with others, identify rhyming words, dramatization

1. T sings the song as S follow along with the book. While listening, S think of two things about the words, story, or illustrations that they notice or wonder about.

2. T leads class discussion based on students’ observations and questions.

One interesting discussion could center around point of view. How did old mother Giggle-Gaggle and John view the fox? What did the little ones think about the fox?

Consider a writing extension that includes research about foxes or an opinion piece about whether the fox was a good character or a bad character.
3. Compare and contrast the words in the Peter Spier book with the version sung by the band Nickel Creek.

4. Sing and accompany with chords C, G7, F.

5. Choose a non-pitched percussion instrument to play on the repeated words "town-o," "down-o," "tail-o," "bones-o."

6. Add instruments or vocalizations for running, quacking, John's horn, and other sound effects.

7. Determine tempo and dynamics for each verse.

8. Identify the characters in each story. Assign a person or group to sing the quotes by the fox, old mother Giggle-Gaggle, and the little ones. Choose speaking voice or singing voice.

9. Create a pantomime or tableau for each verse. Perform as the song is sung.

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Peter Spier version:

The Fox went out on a chilly night,
And he prayed for the moon to give him light,
For he'd many miles to go that night
Before he reached the town-o, town-o, town-o,
For he'd many miles to go that night before he reached the town-o.

He ran till he came to the farmer's bin,
Where the ducks and the geese were kept penned in.
"A couple of you will grease my chin,
Before I leave this town-o, town-o, town-o.
A couple of you will grease my chin, before I leave this town-o."

First he caught the grey goose by the neck
Then he swung a duck across his back.
And he didn't mind the quack, quack, quack,
Or their legs all dangling down-o, down-o, down-o.
And he didn't mind the quack, quack, quack, or their legs all dangling down-o.

Then old mother Giggle-Gaggle jumped out of bed.
Out of the window she popped her head,
Crying, "John! John! Our grey goose is gone,
And the fox is in the town-o, town-o, town-o."
Crying, "John! John! Our grey goose is gone and the fox is in the town-o."

He ran till he came to his nice warm den.
There were the little ones, eight, nine, ten.
They said, "Daddy, better go back again,
Because it must be a wonderful town-o, town-o, town-o."
They said, "Daddy, better go back again because it must be a wonderful town-o."

Then the fox and his wife, without any strife
Cut up the goose with a fork and a knife.
They never ate such a dinner in their life
And the little ones chewed on the bones-o, bones-o, bones-o.
They never ate such a dinner in their life and the little ones chewed on the bones-o.

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The Fox Went Out

traditional American folk song

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Symbols of America

**Music Objectives**: read and play rhythms using traditional notation, match words to rhythms, sing in tune, experience form, create rhythm patterns, use good vocal tone, connect to another subject area, audiate words

**Language Arts Objectives**: read sight words, apply understanding of syllables, connect to another subject area

**Lesson Ideas**:

1. Sing the song in tune, using good vocal tone.

2. Play the rhythms on the rhythm cards. Say the names of the symbols on the picture cards. Match the rhythms to the picture cards. Choose four and practice saying them to a steady beat.

3. With the “Hey, Hey, Look at Me” instrumental track, alternate singing the song then repeating the words on a picture card for 8 beats. Do this with four different picture cards. You may choose to say the picture cards, play the rhythm of the picture cards, or say and play the rhythm of the words on the picture cards.

Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary

**Music Objectives**: follow melodic contour, participate in vocal play, read notation, create new lyrics

**Language Objectives**: read melodic contour, create new versions of a nursery rhyme, learn new vocabulary words, discuss character, use prosody, generate describing words and objects (adjectives and nouns), speak with expression, apply understanding of syllables

**Lesson Ideas**:

1. Read the poem as the children pat a steady beat. Ask students to listen for what Mary grows in her garden. Discuss and define vocabulary words. I define “contrary” as “different” or “unusual”. Mary certainly has a different kind of garden!

2. Show a melodic contour card and have students vocalize the shape using a vowel sound. Now try saying each line of the poem using the same melodic contour.

3. Create a new version of the poem by thinking of some other unusual things that might grow in Mary’s garden. Help students make a list of things that might grow in Mary’s garden using the rhythm of words as “silver bells,” “cockle shells,” “pretty maids.” You may want to encourage them to use a two-syllable describing word (adjective) then a one-syllable object (noun). (Examples: stinky shoes, silly shirts, tiny bikes, purple trees, happy dogs, etc.). Substitute the new items into the poem. Sometimes we make a list of two-syllable adjectives and other list of one-syllable nouns, then mix and match them to insert into the poem. Read the new poem to a steady beat.