Story Magic!

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Many thanks to...
1. Is the book well-written?
2. Does the book have depth?
3. Does the book have an element of surprise?
4. Will the children be able to relate to the subject matter or the characters in the book?
5. What role will the book play in the musical training of my students?
6. Is this book one that I want my students to remember for the rest of their lives?
Strategies for Engaging Children with Literature
Using Music, Drama, and Movement

**Song picture books**
- These are books in which the text is the lyrics of a song. The entire book can be sung.
- Song picture books help children to easily make the link from oral to printed language.
- Have the children create new lyrics!

*Skip to My Lou* (Wescott)
*Mary Wore Her Red Dress* (Peek)
*Over the River and Through the Wood* (Gurney)
*Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush* (Fatus & Penner)
*Give the Dog a Bone* (Kellogg)
*Riding in My Car* (Guthrie)
*You’re a Grand Old Flag* (Cohan & Kimble)
*One More River: a Noah’s Ark Counting Song* (Paley)
*Fiddle-I-Fee: A Farmyard Song for the Very Young* (Sweet)
*The Ants Go Marching* (Scherer)
*He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands* (Nelson)

**Books with repeating word phrases**
- In these books, you will find a short phrase of text that appears several times throughout the book.
- Teach the children the repetitive phrase, then have them chant it (when you indicate) as you read the story. Consider composing a simple melody for the repeating phrase to be sung or played with an instrument.

*Possum Come a-Knockin’* (Van Lann)
*Horton Hatches the Egg* (Seuss)
*Caps for Sale* (Slobodkina)
*Tikki Tikki Tembo* (Mosel & Lent)
*Hand, Hand, Fingers Thumb* (Perkins)
*The Pout-Pout Fish* (Diesen & Hanna)
*Mortimer* (Munsch)
*Green Eggs and Ham* (Seuss)
*Pete the Cat* (Litwin & Dean)
*Love You Forever* (Munsch)
*Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* (Martin & Archambault)
*The Very Busy Spider* (Carle)

**Books with repetitive story patterns or plots**
- In these books, an EVENT will occur several times.
- Consider adding movements or inserting a short melody.
*Brown Bear, Brown Bear* (Martin & Carle)  
*The Little Red Hen* (McQueen)  
*The Vanishing Pumpkin* (Johnston & DePaola)  
*We’re Going on a Bear Hunt* (Rosen & Oxenbury)  
*The Grouchy Ladybug* (Carle)  
*Is Your Mama a Llama?* (Guarino & Kellogg)  
*Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed* (Christelow)  
*The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle)

**Books with a cumulative structure**  
- These are poems or songs with several verses, in which something is added with each repetition.  
- It is fun to accompany these with body percussion or unpitched percussion instruments.

*There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly* (Adams)  
*The Little Old Lady Who Wasn’t Afraid of Anything* (Williams & Lloyd)  
*The House that Jack Built* (Adams)  
*Today Is Monday* (Carle)

**Sound stories**  
- This is a story in which vocal or instrumental sound effects are assigned for specific characters and events in the story. Each time the narrator reads a specific word, a child produces an appropriate sound effect. These are excellent for training the students to pay attention and listen!  
- Either choose appropriate instruments for each character beforehand, or have them on hand for the students to pick themselves.

*Jack and the Beanstalk* (Kellogg)  
*A Napping House* (Wood & Wood)  
*Millions of Cats* (Ga’g)  
*The Wide-Mouthed Frog* (Faulkner)  
*Drummer Hoff* (Emberly)  
*Old MacDonald Had a Farm* (Cabrera)

**Books for dramatization**  
- To prepare, consider showing a video of a mime. Lead them to discover that no sound is made while moving, and no props are used.  
- Guide the students to practice pantomiming, following your instructions. At first, give them simple, everyday actions to pantomime, such as *wash the floor, paint the house, juggler, brush your teeth.*  
- Pick a group of students to demonstrate as you tell the story.  
- Divide the all students into groups and the classroom into sections. (Use chalk on the carpet, or painter’s tape on the tile.)
Tell the story again, guiding all groups to dramatize the story as you tell it. Repeat several times so that the students can switch roles.

*Where the Wild Things Are* (Sendak)
*The Pied Piper of Hamelin* (Browning)
*Horton Hatches the Egg* (Seuss)
*The Great Kapok Tree* (Cherry)
*Tikki Tikki Tembo* (Mosel & Lent)
*Roll Over! A Counting Song* (Peek)

**Books enhanced by background music or sounds**
- Simply playing appropriate music in the background while you read a story will capture the children’s attention.
- A sound machine (one plays ocean sounds or forest sounds, for example) is also very effective.

*The Whale’s Song* (Sheldon) ~ Play “Whale Songs” by Hovhaness.
*Barn Dance!* (Martin & Archambault) ~ Play traditional American country folk music, such as “Cotton-Eyed Joe.”
*Rainbow Fish* (Pfister) ~ Play “Aquarium” from *Carnival of the Animals*.
*Boom Chicka Rock* (Archambault) ~ Play a rhythmic “beat” (repeating pattern) as accompaniment.
*Possum Come a-Knockin’* (Van Lann) ~ Accompany with body percussion...or spoons and a washtub!
*Listen to the Rain* (Martin & Archambault) ~ Add rain sounds with body percussion.
*Charlie Parker Played Be Bop* (Raschka) ~ Play “A Night in Tunisia” and read the text in rhythm!
*Snowflakes Fall* (MacLachlan & Kellogg) ~ Play a recording of handbells or harp as background music.

**Books enhanced by adding a song**
- Insert a song from your repertoire at intervals throughout the story.
- Another idea is to add a poem and create a melody for it.

*The Elves and the Shoemaker (LaMarche)* with “Cobbler, Cobbler”
*Paul Bunyan* (various) with “Rocky Mountain”
*Cuckoo* (Ehlert) with “Que Llueva”
*The Singing Man* (Medearis) with “Eh Soom Boo Kawaya”
*The Little Red Caboose* (Potter) with “Little Red Caboose”
*Snow* (Schulevitz) with “Snowflake, Snowflake”
*The Story About Ping* (Flack & Weise) with “Yangtze River Chantey”
*Listen to the Rain* (Martin & Archambault) with “Rain Is Raining All Around”
*The Bremen Town Musicians* (Gross) with “I Am a Fine Musician”
*The Whale’s Song* (Sheldon) with “Song of the World’s Last Whale” (alter the text)
*Traveling to Tondo* (Aardema) with “Sansa Kroma”
**Millions of Cats**

Book by Wanda Ga’g
Lesson Plan by Darla Meek

**CONCEPTS:** introduction to barred instruments, sol-mi interval

**MATERIALS:** text visual, barred instruments, cat sound cue cards or power point

1. **Introduce the story.**
   “Once upon a time there was a very old man and a very old woman. They were very lonely and wished they had a cat. So one day the very old man went looking for one. He went up the high hilltops (pretend to play a barred instrument moving upwards) and down through the low valleys (pretend to play moving downwards). Can you do that with me?” (Repeat.)

2. **Teach the song.**
   • “He did finally reach a place that had lots and lots of cats.” Display text visual and sing melody for “Cats here, cats there...”
   •
   ![Melody notation]
   Cats here, cats there, Cats and kittens every where.

   ![Melody notation]
   Hundreds of cats, thousands of cats, Millions and billions and trillions of cats!
   • Have students sing the melody, patting the steady beat on their laps.

3. **Introduce the barred instruments.**
   • “We have the perfect instruments to play sounds for the old man walking up and down the hills, AND to accompany our singing! These instruments are called barred instruments. They are in the percussion family. We play them with mallets. Let’s learn how to use our mallets first.”
   • Distribute mallets. *(Rhythm sticks, popsicle sticks, or chopsticks could also be used.)*
   Have students place them on the floor in front of them. Instruct them to mirror you. Lead them through a pantomime showing how to grasp the mallets (and how NOT to!), where to place the fingers, the position of the arms, and how to bounce them lightly. Also include “ready position” and “mallets at rest.”
   • Hold one glockenspiel vertically, low side down. “Do you see how this instrument looks kind of like a mountain or a hill? The large end is where the ground is, and the small end..."
is where the sun is.” Ask one child to “walk up the hill” with his/her fingers. Encourage the child to play in the center of the bars, and to bounce fingers lightly on each bar.

- Place the instrument on the floor in front of the child and have him/her play again. Reinforce which direction is UP and which is DOWN.
- Display a large visual of a barred instrument and have all children “air play” (pretend to play) the instrument, moving upward and downward.
- Now, have children move to the barred instruments to practice.
- Have children play the steady beat on C1 and G1 as they sing the song.

4. Display iconic notation for each of the featured cats:

- The students will create short motifs for the featured cats that depict the notation. The students will play each motif as the cats are introduced in the story.
- On “chosen them all,” everyone picks one motif to play, so that all motifs are being played at the same time. This also will happen when the cats get into a fight.

4. Assign vocal sound effects.

- On “Mew, mew!” everyone meows.
- On “each cat took a sip of water,” everyone slurps.
- On “each cat ate a mouthful of grass,” everyone nibbles.

5. Perform.
YANGTZE RIVER CHANTEY

Chinese Working Song
Lesson from Journey Around the Globe with Recorder! by Darla Meek

RECORDE R TONE SET: E G A B

OTHER LEARNINGS: la pentatonic

MATERIALS: melodic contour symbols, recorders, barred instruments, ocean drum, wood block; long strips of blue cloth (as described in Step 5); The Story About Ping (children’s book) by Marjorie Flack and Kurt Weise

ABOUT THE SONG:
A junk is a boat used in China. Junks usually have two or three sails, with masts made of bamboo. The first junks were used during the Song dynasty around 950 A.D. Throughout Chinese history, junks have been used on trading routes and as war ships. Today many families live on junks, where they fish as a means of making money.

LESSON STEPS:

DAY ONE

1. Guide students to learn the melody.
   • Sing vocal slides for the children on an “oo” vowel. Instruct the students to mirror your movements: start in a squatted position, and move up and down to match your vocalizations.
   • Have the students perform the movement to your vocalizations alone. (Do not demonstrate the movement for them.)
   • Refine: hum the melody of the song, and instruct the students to show the melody with their bodies.
   • Display the following melodic contour symbols:

   ![Melodic Contour Symbols]

   • Have the students put the two symbols in a pattern to represent the melody:
• Display the following rhythm:

![Rhythm Example](image)

- Have the students play the rhythm on E, then G, then A.
- Ask the students to figure out how to play the melody they heard. Give them time to work independently until they are able to play E-G-A-G.
• Display the following rhythm:

![Rhythm Example](image)

- Have the students chant the rhythm with note names, while fingering, then play the passage.
- Play entire melody.
- Teach the text.

2. Teach the drone.
• Have the students mirror your arm movements as you demonstrate the crossover pattern. Sing “low mid high---, low mid high mid…”
• Divide the group into two sections, one to sing the melody and the other to sing the drone. Switch.
• When the students are confident, transfer to barred instruments.

3. Teach the melodic ostinato through body percussion and text.
• Perform this pattern: snap snap clap pat clap snap clap. Have the students practice.
• Modify to the rhythm of the alto xylophone part. Sing the text provided.
• Divide the students into two groups to perform the melody and the AX part simultaneously. Switch. Transfer to instruments.

4. Teach unpitched percussion ostinato through notation, using the process described above.
• Use the text “Stay the course, from the source.”

5. Choreograph movement.
• Use long strips of blue cloth to resemble water. (approximately 15’ x 4’) Purchase two dowels that are the same length as the short end of the cloth, and affix the short ends of the cloth to the dowels. Place two students on either end of each strip, holding onto the dowels.
• Have the students create movements with the cloth that replicate waves. (Lifting up/pulling down, shaking, changing places, etc.)
• Choose five students to replicate a boat by placing their hands on the shoulders in a front-to-back facing. The “boat” moves on the “water” as in Step 1.
6. Perform.

- Recorders play melody, *a cappella*.
- Accompaniment begins.
- Students sing melody, then play with recorders as dancers move.
- Accompaniment fades, then ends.
- Add “sea sounds,” as desired (ocean drum, cawing).
- It is nice to pair this piece with *The Story About Ping* by Marjorie Flack and Kurt Weise. Choose four places in the story to insert the piece, but perform the piece differently each time: singing with drone only, recorder with drone, full orchestration, orchestration with movement.

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Listen to the Rain

Book by Bill Martin, Jr and John Archambault
Poem by Robert Louis Stevenson, adapted by Darla Meek
Lesson Plan by Darla Meek

CONCEPTS: crescendo/decrescendo, form, composition

MATERIALS: barred instruments, wind chime, rain stick, scarves, text of the poem displayed

Rainy days are lovely days, each drop is soft and light.
The rain perfumes the city air, and glistens in the night.
1. **Introduce the concept.**
   - “Don’t you just love rainy days? Bill Martin, Jr. wrote a book about the sounds of rain called *Listen to the Rain*. Today we get to create a thunderstorm together.
   - “When there’s a thunderstorm, does it usually start suddenly, or gradually? Usually it starts with a little pitter-patter (fingertips on lap), and then a little more water (pat lap), and then the rain comes in torrents and lightning flashes (claps for lightning). Then it starts to die down….and finally the storm is gone.” Practice this with the students.
   - “So musically, the sound starts softly and gradually gets louder, then gradually gets softer again. Here are the symbols that represent that: crescendo and decrescendo.”
   - Read the book to the students, inserting the song (or poem only) at intervals.

2. **OPTION: Guide students to create a melody for the poem.**
   - Pat the rhythm of the poem, first with words, then without.
   - Have the students improvise with the rhythm of the poem in F pentatonic (take off their “bacon” and “eggs”).
   - Tell the students that they are going to create an *abac* melody in do pentatonic on F. Have them come up with a melody for *a*.
   - Have several students share their ideas. Pick three and have those students play their melodies again. Label them 1, 2, and 3.
   - Have the rest of the students close their eyes and hold up their fingers showing the number of the melody they prefer. Teach the most favored melody to the class.
   - Continue with *b* and *c*. Play the entire melody. Tweak as desired.

3. **Teach the bass part.**
   - “Let’s start with some drip drops.” (Alternate pats on your lap.)
   - Students pat the pattern and sing.
   - Transfer to instruments

4. **Teach the metallophone part.**
   - “I love to splash in puddles! What happens to the water when you stick your foot in it? The water ripples like this: Splaaash…”
   - “Can you count how many beats my splash lasts?” (4)
   - Sing the song, adding a clap on the word “rain.”
   - Have students perform the clap with you as they sing, then without help.
   - Transfer to instruments—remove B’s and E’s. Play any two notes that are next-door neighbors.
   - Play and sing.

5. **Teach the glockenspiel part.**
   - Instruct students to snap five times. Demonstrate snapping five times (the SG part) as you sing the song.
   - “When you watch raindrops landing on the window, it might look like this: ‘Rain is falling down.’” (Ismrm)
   - Students sing and practice with hands snapping while moving downward.
• Transfer to instruments. Start with la and walk downward. Then change the last note to mi.
• Add mi-sol-mi, then play and sing together.

6. Add movement.
• Explain: “A scientific word for rainstorm is precipitation. Precipitation is one of the four parts of what scientists call the WATER CYCLE. Have you ever wondered where the water comes from? Let’s explore the water cycle with our bodies. You are now a drop of water in the ocean.”
• Students lie on the floor as if a body of water. The instructor leads them through the stages of the water cycle:
  • Evaporation occurs when the sun heats up water in rivers or lakes or the ocean and turns it into vapor or steam. The water vapor or steam rises into the atmosphere. (Students rise slowly, lifting lightly as high as they can reach.)
  • Condensation occurs when water vapor in the air gets cold and changes back into liquid, forming clouds. (Students gather together into a group.)
  • Precipitation occurs when so much water has condensed that the air cannot hold it anymore. The clouds get heavy and water falls back to the earth in the form of rain, hail, sleet, or snow. (Students fall gracefully back to the ground.)
  • Collection: When water falls back to earth as precipitation, it may fall back in the oceans, lakes or rivers or it may end up on land. When it ends up on land, it will either soak into the earth and become part of the “ground water” that plants and animals use to drink, or it may run over the soil and collect in the oceans, lakes, or rivers where the cycle starts all over again.
• Distribute scarves. “I need several people to create a visual rainstorm. Think about the form of our rain piece: poem-song-poem-song-poem-song-poem. You will create a short dance to go with the song. Create movement for the poem that reflects the four stages of the water cycle. Pretend that you are a single drop of water. How will you show the four stages?”
• Guide students to create a visual rainstorm, following the form of the piece.

7. Add sound effects.
• Add rainstick or wadded up newspaper throughout.
• Add thunder with timpani, shaking a piece of poster board.
• It is also fun to turn the lights off and on quickly for lightning!
• Add windchime for a rainbow at the end.

8. Read the book, adding the orchestration and movement throughout as desired.

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