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Sound Connections
Chapter 7: Developing Rhythm Literacy
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Summary

- I. Reading Rhythm Patterns
 - A. The most important visual resource for the initial rhythm-reading exercises is the flash card
 - B. Fundamental Teaching Sequence
 1. Integrate the focus pattern into opening vocal technique exercises and echoing activities
 2. Show the matching rhythm card as students echo the focus pattern
 3. Have the students read the new rhythm card, alternating with either a second new card or a previously learned card
 4. Have the students read a series of rhythm cards, integrating the new card with known cards
 - C. Establish a presentational pace that is relatively slow, allowing the students think time to facilitate success and avoid chanting the patterns with them
 - D. Use transition patterns
 - E. Introduce simple and compound meter together
 - F. Rhythm syllables go with rhythmic functions not with specific symbols
 - G. Progressing Through the Rhythm Content Sequence
 1. The ultimate goal is for students to internalize the rhythm syllables, audiating them while they read the patterns on a neutral syllable
 2. Introducing Duration Note Names when students are reading the note in a variety of patterns and have a firm concept that the syllable is linked to the aural function rather than the specific note symbol; quarter, eighth, and dotted-quarter
 3. Introducing Bar Lines and Explaining Meter Signatures
 - a. Bar lines organize the music into measures each of which includes the same number of beats and a double bar is used at the end
 - b. Help them discover how many beats are in a measure
 - c. Then move to compound meter
 4. Introducing New Meter Signatures
 - a. All other meters evolve from 2/4 and 6/8
 - b. Simple triple meter; simple quadruple meter
 5. Introducing Rests
 - a. Rests cannot be introduced in the usual way via the sound-first approach
 - b. Have students connect rest symbols with the corresponding sound symbols and then audiate the appropriate rhythm syllable
 6. Introducing the Tie

- a. Only introduced via notation
- b. Students must be competent with Level 1 patterns
- c. Encourage students to audiate the rhythm syllable they would perform for the tied note while sustaining the syllable of the first note of the tie through the duration of the second note
- 7. Introducing Triplets and Duplets: Metric Borrowing
 - a. Easily introduced because of the students' familiarity with both simple and compound divisions
 - b. Students will learn to audiate the compound divisions while performing the super-triplet and eventually internalize the pattern as all other patterns
- 8. Introducing Changing Meter
 - a. Students become comfortable changing between simple and compound meters from the earliest stages of music reading with flash cards
 - b. Changes between simple and compound meter that are variable-beat in nature are introduced after students are comfortable with the basic concept of changing meter
- 9. Introducing Variable-Beat Meters
 - a. Students will have little difficulty learning to read variable-beat patterns as long as they encounter the notation with a solid aural vocabulary
 - b. Sound-based syllables directly assist with the internalization of the musical function of the rhythms, eventually allowing for generalization and application to new and unfamiliar patterns
- 10. Introducing Multi-Part Reading
 - a. No unique strategies are required; simply need the opportunity to being reading two-part exercises that are limited to known patterns
- 11. Applying Rhythm Reading Skills To Performance Literature
 - a. Students will be able to successfully translate the notation of selected excerpts from their scores into sound with little or no guidance
- II. Notating Rhythm Patterns
 - A. Engage students in notating exercises on a regular basis so their skills may develop
 - B. Direct Presentation Stage- Teacher presents the patterns via rhythm syllables, allowing students to immediately write what they hear without the need to echo-translate
 - C. Audible Echo-Translation Stage- teacher presents on neutral syllable "pa" and students write what they hear
 - D. Audiated Echo-Translation- teacher present Curwen hand signs to students and students write what they see and hear
- III. Composing Rhythm Patterns

- A. Students can improvise rhythmic ideas either internally or aloud, notate these as compositional drafts and then proceed to modify and refine these ideas

Discussion

This chapter, just like chapter 6, developing tonal literacy, was full of information and processes to take to develop rhythm literacy. This chapter gave detailed instruction using the *Sound Connections* approach on progressing through the rhythm content sequence. The main forms of visual media that are used in this chapter are rhythm flash cards. Using these flash cards in my college-level courses has given me the opportunity to experience how well they work. This chapter stressed the importance of sound before sight. It made it clear that students progress through the rhythm content sequence in a similar way to the tonal content sequence. I found this chapter incredibly informative just like chapter 5: developing a sound vocabulary and chapter 6: developing tonal literacy. This chapter contained sample lesson plans that will be helpful in the future to base lessons off of. Having a model lesson plan allows for teachers to have a reference they can follow to make the best out of their instruction. Like developing tonal literacy, the ultimate goal of rhythm literacy is to have the students become independent musicians. My students will grow to not need rhythm cards and will begin to internalize the syllables and beats. Accomplishing this aspect of students' development will be rewarding for not only the students but for me, the teacher, as well because I have successfully helped them move one step closer to being musically literate individuals. I know that this chapter will help me immensely in the future, to specifically develop students' rhythm literacy skills.