

1992

# Using Music to Enhance Beginning Reading

Shirley Yvonne Herrud

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MP 410

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Using music to enhance beginning reading  
MP 410 c.2  
51984



Herrud, Shirley Yvonne

USING MUSIC TO ENHANCE  
BEGINNING READING

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A Project-Report  
Presented to  
The Graduate Faculty  
Central Washington University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Education

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by  
Shirley Yvonne Herrud  
August, 1992

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY CENTER  
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

---

Candace E. Schulhauser, COMMITTEE CHAIR

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C. Greatsinger

---

Dale E. Otto

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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COMMITTEE CHAIR

---

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USING MUSIC TO ENHANCE  
BEGINNING READING

by

Shirley Yvonne Herrud

August 1992

Research finding of factors which facilitate beginning reading were investigated. Results were used to form the foundation for developing an approach that integrated music with beginning reading instruction for first grade students. A handbook was produced to enhance the development of reading skills through song-reading techniques. Materials such as song charts, overhead transparencies, sentence strips, student and class song books, language experience songs, mini-books, big books, cassette tapes, records, and videos were used to motivate beginning readers through increased interest and excitement for learning.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Background of the Study

#### Introduction

Reading is a necessary skill for all members of society. The major goal of first grade teachers is to help students become successful readers. A decrease in conversational language and reading activities and an increase in passive television viewing in the home has led to a decline in oral language skills. Since the language development of many children entering school has been hindered, beginning reading has become much more difficult (Huck, 1987). Teachers need to use interesting and motivating techniques to teach reading so this life-long skill can be valued intrinsically from the start. Research has shown that a number of factors can facilitate the development of reading skills in young children, including:

1. developing oral language skills (Loban, 1976)
2. using motivational reading material (Roebuck and Wilson, 1974)
3. providing whole, meaningful content (Martin, 1981)
4. employing patterned, predictable texts (Bridge, 1983)
5. insuring easy, fluent, successful interpretation (Bridge, 1979)

This study sought to use the aforementioned research findings to enhance the development of reading strategies for



first grade students at John Campbell School, Room 2, in Selah, Washington.

#### Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to research, develop, and implement methods and materials that may be used by first grade teachers to motivate and encourage beginning reading through the use of music. Integration of music and other curricula areas was sought to enhance reading through increased interest and excitement for learning.

#### Significance of the Project

Many beginning readers experience difficulty due to poor oral language development and little exposure to reading in the home. Methods and materials to teach reading implicitly in a fun, enjoyable manner were needed to help children develop reading strategies that can be utilized at any level. Implementation of these methods and materials was accomplished by providing supplemental reading instruction with song-reading techniques. The handbook provides motivational methods and meaningful, predictable materials that utilize oral language activities integrating music and reading. It can be used to assist teachers in helping beginning readers become more successful through song-reading activities.

### Limitations of the Project

The review of literature was limited by the unavailability of empirical research on this topic. Although many articles cited numerous methods that were developed and used in the handbook, very few actual research studies have been conducted to document these techniques.

Several research articles were cited in a literature review entitled "Using Music to Teach Reading: State of the Art Review" by Sullivan (1979). She divided these findings into two groups: (1) those investigating the commonalties of music reading and language reading, and, (2) those investigating the effect of particular music instruction programs on reading achievement. She concluded that these findings do not support the use of music concept instruction for purposes of improving language reading attainment. These studies involving music instruction, however, did not attempt to use song materials as the reading content, but attempted to use music reading as a facilitator of language reading improvement.

Since this study focused on using music materials in the regular classroom as a vehicle to enhance reading instruction rather than using music concept instruction to improve reading ability, these studies were not externally valid for this particular project.

Sullivan (1979) cited the need for additional study to investigate the use of song material as reading content and as a motivational tool in the classroom.

#### Definition of Terms

For purposes of this study, related terms are defined as follows:

1. Reading: The process of constructing meaning from written texts. It is a complex skill requiring the coordination of a number of interrelated sources of information (Anderson, 1985, p. 7).
2. Song-reading: The use of song materials as reading content (Sullivan, 1979). Song-reading is reading song lyrics simultaneously as they are sung.
3. Whole Language: Whole language is a philosophy of language arts based upon the belief that the language learning continuum is whole to part. More specifically, this method is based primarily on the premise that language learning is best accomplished by not breaking reading/language down into separate segments to be practiced and then reassembled, but through continuous use. The philosophy is implemented through integration of skills, not the isolation of any one skill in particular. Further, the whole language learning method recognizes that one learns to read by reading. Classroom instruction must be learner-based. Children are

required to manipulate language through encounters  
with information, ideas, and issues (Goodman, 1986).

## CHAPTER 2

### Review of Related Literature

#### Introduction

"Language has many forms: oral form, written form, the form of body language, the language of music. Each must have MEANING or it is not language" (McCracken, 1980, p. 3).

The purpose of this study was to aid teachers in utilizing the language of music to facilitate reading instruction. The following review of literature will address factors that facilitate reading instruction and how these same factors have been implemented in song-reading activities.

#### Reading Defined

Processing print is a simple definition of reading. A complete definition is found in a national research report entitled Becoming a Nation of Readers. "Reading is the process of constructing meaning from written texts. It is a complex skill requiring the coordination of a number of inter-related sources of information" (Anderson et al., 1985, p. 7).

Chomsky (cited in Weaver, 1988, p. 33) emphasizes that meaning does not lie in the language itself, but rather arises during the transaction between reader and text. Weaver (1988) defines this transaction as bringing meaning to a text to get meaning from it. "In order to get meaning from

a text, we must actively create meaning, and to do so we must bring meaning to what we read" (Weaver, 1988, p. 18).

The meaning that is brought to the text refers to the knowledge in one's head and is called schemata—organized chunks of knowledge and experiences, often accompanied by feelings (Weaver, 1988; Anderson et al., 1977; Adams and Collins, 1979; Rumelhart, 1980; Iran-Nejad, 1980; and Iran-Nejad and Ortony, 1984). Schemata enable readers to make sense of language, and aid the reader in realizing the intention of the text. They are part of the pragmatics of language, which is one of the major components of language. The pragmatic system refers to language in use and has two main contributors: (1) past experiences and knowledge (schemata) that relate to the language event, and (2) the context or situation in which language is used (Weaver, 1988).

Also involved in reading is the linguistic component, which is composed of three cueing systems: semantic, syntactic, and graphophonemic. Semantic cues refer to the meaning, the knowledge of what the words refer to, the ideas, and thoughts and the way these are expressed. The syntactic system is the grammatical structure that supports the meaning of sentences. It refers to the acceptable order of words within sentences (Weaver, 1988). The third cueing system, graphophonics, consists of (1) graphemes, which is visual information such as letters, punctuation marks,

capitalization, etc., and (2) phonemes or phonics, which are sounds that help the reader identify the symbols.

Bridge (1979) asserts that in early stages of reading, it is helpful for children to use their semantic (meaning) and syntactic (grammatical) knowledge because they have not acquired as much graphophonemic (letters and sounds) information. By predicting meaning and grammar efficiently, children learn to use the repetitiveness and patterns of language to reduce the need to 'sound out' every letter symbol. Therefore, isolated letters and words are often difficult to identify for beginning readers because they are using only one of three cueing systems (Bridge, 1979). Students can determine and predict individual words and their meanings more easily when they attempt to understand the entire sentence and utilize the whole context. The proficient reader uses all sorts of non-visual information (context) and the fewest, most productive visual clues to get meaning. And getting meaning is what reading is all about (Weaver, 1988).

In summary, even though the cueing systems are equally important and used simultaneously in mature reading, early readers rely heavily on semantic and syntactic systems to reduce their dependency on the graphophonemic information. Often a single letter or syllable is all that is necessary to gain the needed meaning. This meaning is constructed from a text by bringing the reader's experiences to the context as

well as through using one's own interpretation of the words and knowledge of grammar, sounds and symbols to sample, predict, and confirm the printed material. By using reading sources that are easy and meaningful, reading is more predictable and thus more successful (Goodman, cited in Bridge, 1979).

#### Factors Facilitating Beginning Reading

There are many factors which teachers can utilize to facilitate beginning reading. Five major ones are as follows:

1. developing oral language skills
2. using motivational reading material
3. providing whole, meaningful content
4. employing patterned and predictable text
5. insuring easy, fluent, successful interpretation

Research will be cited regarding these five factors in the first half of the review of literature. The second half of the study will explore these five factors as they apply to music.

#### Developing Oral Language Skills in Reading

One of the most influential factors in the success of beginning reading is high language proficiency or good oral language skills. Loban (1976) conducted an extensive longitudinal study on the language development of more than 200 school-age children, ages 5 to 18.



Loban (cited in Norton, 1991), identified dramatic differences between children who ranked high in language proficiency and those who ranked low. The high group reached a level of oral proficiency in first grade that the low group did not attain until tenth grade.

Those who demonstrated high language proficiency excelled in the control of ideas expressed, showing unity and planning in both their speech and writing. These students spoke freely, fluently, and easily, using a rich vocabulary.... They were attentive and creative listeners themselves, far outranking the low group in listening ability. The oral communication of those with low proficiency was characterized by rambling and unpurposeful dialogue that demonstrated a meager vocabulary. Children who were superior in oral language in kindergarten and first grade also excelled in reading and writing in sixth grade. Loban concluded that teachers, librarians, and parents should give greater attention to developing children's oral language (p. 7).

McCracken (1980) noted that reading and writing skills are the result of language acquisition and not a precursor. He further stated that "We develop all the comprehension 'reading skills' from oral language . . . . Recalling facts,

making inferences, drawing conclusions, sequencing events, understanding vocabulary in context, etc., are only labels for the brain's way of thinking. These skills need not be done after children have looked at the words in a book in order to have the brain function" (p. 13, 14).

Thus, oral language is often stated as the bridge to written language (Bridge, 1979; Weaver, 1988; Fitzgerald, 1981; Rietz, 1976; Newsom, 1979; Larrick, 1971; Reeves, 1978; Holdaway, 1979). As a result of one's knowledge of oral languaging patterns, prediction of printed words is possible, which greatly facilitates the process of reading. (Martin and Brogan, 1971).

These oral languaging patterns are a precursor to decoding print. According to Moffet, (1988) first a child needs to think about his experiences, which is a conceptual nonverbal experience. Second, he must put these thoughts into speech, which is an oral verbalization process. Finally, he converts this speech into print, or writing, which is literacy. This last stage involves the basic word attack skills of reading (decoding) and writing (spelling). But oral language is so important, Moffet claimed, that the child's first thought processes (conceptualization) and the speech processes (verbalization) of these experiences are more basic than reading or writing. In summary, he stated that "before speech can be decoded from print, there must be the prior level of the thought-speech relationship, thought

into speech, and, before that, the prerequisite experience into thought" (p. 29).

Van Allen (1969), originator of an experience approach to language, utilized children's experiences to encourage beginning reading and writing. He acknowledged the large listening and speaking vocabularies that children possess when they enter school. He suggested that teachers need to teach the phonetic elements of children's own language by saying, hearing, and then seeing their experiences in print. This phonetic understanding is applied to real language experiences of each individual. His method involved recording the children's oral language to develop the understanding that letters stand for familiar sounds. He also concluded that "children make valid generalizations in acquiring language long before they begin analysis of that language" (p. 8).

Moffet (1988) claimed that if a reader hears the sounds of language repeatedly while at the same time seeing how these sounds are written or spelled, the student will learn to read from these experiences. Therefore "anything that allows the learner to see and hear English at the same time, in some synchronized fashion, will teach reading in the basic sense of literacy. And anything that does not, will not" (p. 32).

Moffet analyzed four reading methods to demonstrate implementation of this philosophy, which are as follows:

1. matching a key single sound with letters (phonics)
2. matching a single spoken word with its written equivalent (sight words or look-say)
3. watching one's oral sentences being written down (language experience approach)
4. watching a text while hearing it read (whole sentences and continuity of whole sentences).

He stated that, unfortunately, this last method has not been "dignified" as a reading method, even though he believed it is one of the most successful methods. Reading research has not included this method and therefore is, in Moffet's opinion, not very valid. This "read-a-long" or "lap" method enables children to follow an enlarged text while it is being read to them. This has been largely ignored in the schools as a reading method. "Big books" are not really new, but a resurgence of methods used in the 1930's-1950's. He contended that this method and the language experience approach may be the only realistic methods that should be used in the schools today. He believed that the teacher's main concern should be the quality of the oral reading and how large the learning unit or words should be (Moffet, 1988). In summary, children need to hear something read aloud while they are watching the text.

### Using Motivational Reading Material

"As every teacher knows, motivation is one of the keys to learning to read" (Anderson et al., 1985, p. 14).

Bettleheim and Zelan (1981) warned that "A child's attitude toward reading is of such importance, that, more often than not, it determines his scholastic fate. Moreover, his experiences in learning to read may decide how he will feel about learning in general, and even about himself as a person" (p 25). Estes and Vaughn (1973) reported that interest is a powerful factor in reading comprehension (cited in Martin, 1981, p. 327).

Gans (1963) stated that "The child comes alive at words which convey ideas charged with interest for him" (p. 285). Paris (1983) stated that motivational materials are crucial to improving reading instruction. If we wish to have children develop into thoughtful and independent readers, we need to pay attention to both "skill and will" (p. 239). Roebuck and Wilson (1974) concluded that if content is important to the reader, motivation increases. Thus, using motivational reading material is a second key factor in facilitating reading ability. Reading must be made enjoyable and motivational from the very beginning if children are going to become lifelong readers who read voluntarily (Weaver, 1988).

Providing Whole, Meaningful Content in Reading

Providing whole, meaningful content, a third facilitating factor, is a large part of motivation. Martin (1981) cited numerous reading authorities who indicate that content is an important variable in reading instruction. McCracken (1980) stated that to the degree language is comprehensible, the more easily it will be learned. If letters or words are used as the beginning experience with written language, reading is often meaningless because there is no context in which to identify them and no motivation for learning them. A full piece of written language such as a song, poem, or an old tale are much richer and more meaningful source from which to learn how letters, syllables, and words work.

Moffet (1981) claimed that the larger the context or the language unit that is being used, the easier it will be for the child to learn. He proposed that teachers may utilize the wholes to teach the parts, i.e., the meaning, grammar, and phonics. Larger contexts have more opportunity for meaning and, therefore, motivation. "How much motivation or meaning is there in the syllable such as 'ap', A-P, or 'tee,' or just a single consonant, the 'k' sound, for example? No meaning and therefore, no motivation" (Moffet, 1981, p. 35).

Whole language advocates propose that children must be exposed to print that is meaningful, which means using materials with which the child can identify that relate to

the reader's experiences. Thus, the student will have more desire and purpose for understanding and communicating and an increased ownership in what is written and read. Word and letter/sound relationships are not as meaningful, relevant, or implicit as songs, rhymes, stories, and signs in the classroom. Language is understood and processed more easily from whole to part (Weaver, 1988).

#### Employing Patterned, Predictable Texts

A fourth contributing factor that facilitates the process of learning to read naturally is employing patterned and predictable texts. Predictable books are those in which a child can easily predict what the author is going to say and how he is going to say it. Books containing material that is patterned and structured make reading more predictable because it is repetitive and the child can anticipate what comes next. This increases confidence and insures more success for beginning readers according to Bridge (1983).

Language experience stories are another example of familiar, predictable texts. One advantage of using language experience stories that the children dictate themselves is that the language matches the child's personal language more closely than material from another author. "This enables the child to predict what the materials are going to say" (Bridge, 1979, p. 505).

Bridge and Burton (1983) found it was much more effective to teach sight vocabulary to beginners through patterned language or structured language materials. Bridge (1983) cited studies by Brennan and Rhodes that found that "selections in preprimers and primers are often plotless strings of disconnected sentences which may actually interfere with beginning reader's comprehension because they fail to match the children's schematic expectations for logical, natural stories" (p. 885). Goodman (cited in Bridge, 1979) stated that predictability may be the most important thing about beginning reading material.

Bridge, Winograd, and Haley (1983) discovered that students using predictable materials learned significantly more target and nontarget words than students using the preprimer. Those who had been reading predictable materials also reported more positive feelings about reading aloud as opposed to the negative feelings reported by the preprimer readers.

Patterned books based on rhyme help children recognize unfamiliar words by analogy to similar known words, a major word recognition strategy (Smith, 1978). Familiarity with repeating patterns and dependable lines aids children in predicting the next line. Bridge (1979) claimed that children are more confident readers than when trying to "sound out" letters. Martin and Brogan (1971) explained that



patterned selections help children learn to "trust print because of its underlying structure" (Bridge, 1979, p. 505).

Bridge (1979) found in her study that dependable, structured contexts also facilitated the acquisition of sight vocabulary through repeated exposure. This was possible because these structure words were much more meaningful in context than in isolation. Readers were able to predict the repetitive structures that contained patterned words or lines or episodes that had been repeatedly heard. Even if they cannot recognize these individual words, they can join in and "read" along. Thus, the high frequency words that can be recognized in a known selection can be soon recognized in other contexts.

In summary, Weaver (1988) stated that "when language is predictable, it supports the writer's intentions as well as the reader's expectations and thus makes the text easier to read" (p. 251). If there are repetitive and/or cumulative lines, rhyming or alliterative words, pictures, familiar characters and/or settings or plots, then reading is more predictable. Language experience stories in which children dictate their own words are predictable since their own language is easier to recall. Anything that is learned orally first--familiar songs, poetry, chants, and fingerplays are predictable because the words are already known, according to Weaver (1988). Thus, when language is familiar, it is supportive because the situational context supports it

and thus reading is made easier because it is predictable. Bridge (1983) found in her study that "teachers who learn to use patterned books as resources for reading and writing activities will help beginning readers acquire sight vocabulary, use context clues, and develop positive feelings about reading aloud" (p. 891).

Insuring Easy, Fluent, Successful Interpretation in Reading

The last, and most all-encompassing factor in facilitating reading is, as Smith stated, "to make the process EASY—not hard" (cited in Weaver, 1988, p. 251). But "the learning of written language is difficult because it is difficult to immerse children in written language that has the intensity of meaning and purpose found in the oral environment" (p. 6). Even though the acquisition of literacy will take several years, it should be as easy as acquiring speech if they have many and varied sources of printed form that have been written to say something or preserve ideas, not print that was devised to teach reading skills (McCracken, 1986).

Moffet (1988) also agreed that learning to read and write should be much easier than learning to speak because it is simply a media shift from ear to eye. But reading appears much more difficult when it is attempted in school because teachers have difficulty finding suitable materials for beginning readers when sight vocabularies are extremely limited.

Summary

Smith (cited in Bridge, Winograd, and Haley, 1983) suggested that children should learn to read by reading. Even though this is difficult because of the lack of appropriate materials, teachers can aid beginning readers in this process by utilizing the children's strengths and prior knowledge. This can be accomplished by introducing print that is already familiar in their oral language. As previously stated, using motivational materials also increases the child's desire to read and thus enables the child to be more successful. Reading content that is chosen because of its relevance to the child is much more likely to be practiced and read fluently than materials that may not be interesting or for which the child may have little meaning. Using patterned, predictable texts make reading much easier also because the content is supportive, it makes sense, and the child knows what comes next and thus can identify the words or lines.

Therefore, when these first four factors--oral language, motivation, meaningful content, and patterned, predictable text are combined, reading is greatly simplified. "To help beginning readers practice reading even as they are just learning to read, reading must be made as easy as possible for them" (Bridge, 1979, p. 504).

### Facilitating Beginning Reading Through Music

Finding suitable resources that are varied is a challenge for first grade teachers. Beginning basal readers often do not capitalize on the wealth of vocabulary children have accumulated through oral language. Preprimers may not be motivating or meaningful according to Sampson and Sampson (cited in Bridge, Winograd, and Haley, 1983) because they use the same words over and over in short sentences. They assert that this repetition and unnatural sentence structure does not match the more complex oral language children are already using. Thus, utilizing other reading sources may be more desirable and useful.

Using music as a way to make reading easier will now be explored. The five factors that enhance reading will be discussed as they apply to music. In review, they are as follows:

1. developing oral language skills
2. using motivational reading material
3. providing whole, meaningful content
4. employing patterned and predictable text
5. insuring, easy, fluent, successful interpretation.

### Developing Oral Language Skills Through Music

Since oral language seems to be a bridge to written language, it makes sense to utilize this vast amount of oral language experience that the child already possesses by the time he enters first grade. Learning to read songs,

fingerplays, and rhymes that are already familiar to the student capitalizes on prior knowledge.

Children seem to have a natural willingness to chant and sing (McCracken, 1986). According to Wright (1979), "music is filled with infinite rhythmic patterns which are quite natural to children and will strengthen their initial speech and sentence structure and spatial awareness" (p. 4). As they hear the same songs many times, they naturally rehearse them by chanting, singing, and reciting them (Smardo, 1984).

This rehearsing imprints the melodies and sounds of written English in their brains. Brains are built to discern patterns and to make sense of what impinges upon them. Each oral reading impinges on the brain, resulting finally in an imprinting of the text. With all or part of the text to look at, children begin to read along and wonder how print works. They learn about printed words by rehearsing whole passages. (McCracken, 1986, p. 7).

McDonald (1975) also reported that expansion of oral skills can be integrated with singing experiences.

Rietz (1976) found that singing folk songs aids in establishing language patterns. She stated that "The employment of the musical framework to teach oral language and to preserve oral traditions is as old as human culture and has certainly been a vehicle for teaching the linguistic

forms of spoken language to children for most of human history" (p. 8). These same oral patterns can be presented through songs providing reading that can be simultaneously seen, read, and sung. This process is a good vehicle for helping the child's transition from spoken to written language control (Rietz, 1976; Renegar, 1986).

Many folk songs have been made into song picture books which children can easily relate to and enjoy because of their familiarity with the matching pictures and words. Bromley and Jalongo (1983) have found that song picture books provide a unique component through which children can understand and interpret print. Song picture books have also been found to develop language competence of children who speak a dialect or are linguistically advanced. It has been found that using this special form of literature can accommodate children's linguistic diversities (Jalongo and Bromley, 1984). For language disabled children who have difficulty recognizing the correspondence between thought and word or written and spoken words, song lyrics can be helpful (Rietz, 1976; Renegar, 1986).

In summary, music can facilitate the development of language competence. According to Wright (1977), music enhances creative and critical thinking, cognitive and affective skills, perception, interpretation, . . . fluency in speech, discrimination and visual literacy (p. 4). Thus,

singing and song-reading can promote success in language reception and expression.

#### Using Motivational Reading Material Through Music

A basic tenet of this study is that people, in particular, young children, find music to be enjoyable, and therefore motivating. Music is highly motivating to young children (Anderson, 1980; Bromley and Jalongo, 1983; Cardarelli, 1979; Carsetti, 1983, cited in Cowen (1983); Frantz, 1983; Kuhmerker, 1969; Lamme, 1990; Larrick, 1971; Lloyd, 1978; Martin, 1981; Murphey, 1987; O'Bruba, 1987; Miccinati, 1983). Smith (1984) recognized that "the tremendous motivational power of music, evident in advertising, aerobics, and other areas, should be better utilized in education" (p. 54). He suggested that teachers should use songs to help teach reading concepts to take advantage of the high degree of motivation, participation, and variation that music offers. Songs can even be used as motivational reading content for older, reluctant readers (Anderson and Midgett, 1980; Berman, 1976; Carsetti, cited in Cowen (1983); Wulffson, 1970). Franks, cited in Cowen (1983), suggested that music/reading activities be provided to motivate and teach through the affective domain. She emphasized that in the "back to basics movement," the arts must not be forgotten. She stated, "The artistic dimension describes more than skills, for its goes straight to the heart of thought and feeling and, as such, deserves a central

place in educational priorities, including reading." This is "artistic literacy" (p. 40).

One of the reasons this is possible is because child-initiated language increases when creativity and imagination are stimulated. The affective domain serves as a bridge into the cognitive domain (O'Bruba, 1987). Recent research in human consciousness indicates that the brain is divided into two hemispheres. The right hemisphere controls intuitive thinking while the left controls sequential thinking. Music, art, and dance are emphasized in the right hemisphere and language and cognition in the left. It is believed that both hemispheres must interact and complement each other.

Furthermore, according to Wright (1977), content must be stressed which emphasizes both areas. It seems natural then that music should become an integral part of the language arts program to cause a complementary relationship between both types of thinking found in the brain.

In summary, song lyrics in conjunction with satisfying tunes can have special motivational appeal and provide additional opportunities for direct teaching of specific reading skills. Letter recognition, phonics, vowel sounds, etc., can all be taught implicitly within the context of songs. By using music to assist in the teaching of reading, teachers capitalize on the interest of youngsters and make learning a pleasant undertaking (Cardarelli, 1979).



Providing Whole, Meaningful Content Through Music

McCracken and McCracken (1986, p. 8) stated in their book Stories, Songs, and Poetry to Teach Reading and Writing "that the natural way to learn written language is to begin with whole books, poems, and songs and to move to understanding and working with the parts of print." This insures that the content is meaningful because it is a piece of work in its entirety. A song is a complete piece of text. It makes sense by itself.

Thus, integration of music and reading provides whole, meaningful content to read. Songs are read and sung for a purpose, not simply as an exercise in learning to read. This is part of a whole language approach in which language arts are taught from the whole to the parts, not vice versa. This approach emphasizes that children are seeking meaning when attempting to read, not merely sounding out words. Phonics is taught implicitly as the need arises for understanding real, whole, meaningful content, such as found in songs (McCracken, 1980). Meaningful content in popular songs has made a difference in remedial readers' success at Glenn Junior High School in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools. Coach Royal Lancaster recalled that many stutterers didn't have any trouble when singing, so he used his planning periods to teach these students comprehension skills, self-esteem, and confidence, rhythm, fluency, and vocabulary by playing popular songs on his guitar (Gibbs, 1970). Thus,

music is a natural ally of the reading teacher both as a motivational tool and a vehicle for instruction (Renegar, 1986).

Songs can also be integrated into other parts of the language arts program because speech and song have similarities that make music a valuable tool--phrasing, rhythm, rhyme, and repetition. Songs, like prose and poetry have a beginning and an end, a sequence of events, and cause and effect. Attitudes may be inferred from facts and thus comprehension activities may be utilized (Kuhmerker, 1969).

Smith (1984) encouraged increased curriculum integration and advocated that music teachers help classroom teachers strengthen their reading instruction through music-related activities. He suggested several activities he has used successfully to aid children in word identification and fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Martin (1981) used folk songs extensively as a language experience. She found that there was a definite relationship between music and language arts. As a result of singing, hearing, and reading folk songs, she has found that receptive and expressive vocabularies increased.

Nicholson used an integrated music and reading curriculum with slow learners and found that there was a significant increase in test scores in the Metropolitan Readiness Test and the Botel Test of Reading Achievement (McDonald, 1975).

Wright (1977) proposed that music should be an integral part of any language arts program. She suggested that listening, literature, non-verbal and oral communication, reading, creative writing, handwriting, spelling, and grammar usage can all be coordinated with or taught through music.

Lamme (1990) demonstrated how to integrate music into all curricular areas with song picture books, thus making music a very meaningful part of reading instruction. Many children's books are illustrated songs. According to Wright (1977), almost any subject or concept can be taught through songs.

In summary, most academic curriculum areas can be enriched through the incorporation of music. It is a natural and meaningful vehicle to use in math, science, and social studies (Kuhmerker, 1969). Thematic teaching can utilize songs in all areas of curriculum effectively. Thus, songs allow for integration of content areas (Wright, 1979).

#### Employing Patterned, Predictable Text Through Music

Employing patterned and predictable texts in reading is easily accomplished through utilization of song-reading techniques. "It is the poet's careful choice of words demanded by the cadence and form that makes a poem so exactly predictable that it is memorized perfectly much more easily than prose," stated McCracken (1986, p. 102).

Songs repeat grammatical patterns and sentences. The lyrics are often repetitive, particularly in the chorus or

refrain. Rhyme and rhythm provide patterns which children can successfully predict (Bridge, 1979). Exposing a child to a song over and over forces the natural flow of language to aid prediction (McCracken, 1988).

Wright (1979), argued that rhythm is an important element of basic music and is important in organizing a child's life. According to Way (cited in Wright, 1979), "The essence of music is rhythm," and further "the essence of all aspects of the earth, including human life, is rhythm. The use of one develops an intuitive appreciation of the other, an awareness of the rhythm of life, partly conscious, partly unconscious" (p. 112).

Predictable books, as stated previously, are those in which a child can easily predict what the author is going to say and how he is going to say it. Rhodes (1981) identified several characteristics of predictable books. REPETITIVE PATTERN is one characteristic of predictable books that make reading easier. Such patterns are found in numerous songs, such as John Langstaff's (1974) Oh, A-Hunting We Will Go. In all twelve verses, only the last word in lines three and four of each verse is varied. Thus, the two words are predictable because of the rhythm of the language, especially if the verses are sung.

Oh, a-hunting we will go,  
A-hunting we will go;  
We'll catch a fox  
And put him in a box,  
And then we'll let him go!

Oh, a-hunting we will go,  
A hunting we will go;  
We'll catch a lamb  
And put him in a pram,  
And then we'll let him go!

Another characteristic employed in predictable books is CUMULATIVE PATTERNS such as in The Green Grass Grows All Around (Hoffman, 1968). Cumulative songs and stories repeat certain phrases and sentences as the action progresses. The children add to previous verses by renaming in reverse order what has already happened. This style of singing or storytelling provides children with opportunities for sequencing events and characters. These FAMILIAR SEQUENCES also make books predictable such as in Frog Went a 'Courtin' (Langstaff, 1955).

In addition, all texts that are FAMILIAR to the child orally are predictable. Songs such as I Know an Old Lady (Bonne and Mills, 1961) and This Old Man (Adams, 1974) are easily read if the child already knows the songs.

In summary, when using predictable songs, language flows naturally and children can utilize what they know about their world and language to predict vocabulary and content. Word recognition strategies can therefore be developed WHILE children are reading rather than before reading (Rhodes, 1981). Bridge (1979) summarized the effectiveness of predictable materials in this way: "Children are able to use their knowledge gained through their ears to guide their eyes in reading" (p. 505).

Insuring Easy, Fluent, Successful Reading Through Music

In determining the most successful and easiest method of teaching reading through music, it is helpful to review Moffet's (1988) four reading methods as they apply to song-related activities on reading ability:

1. matching a key single sound with letters (phonics)
2. matching a single spoken word with its written equivalent (sight words or look-say)
3. watching one's oral sentences being written down (language experience approach)
4. watching a text while hearing it read (whole sentences and continuity of whole sentences).

An example of the first method of matching single sounds with letters, or the phonics approach is found in the widely publicized Hooked on Phonics program that uses a few repeated notes and patterned rhythm to match letters and sounds. As the previous research implies, since there is no implicit learning, this small "part" of context may not be meaningful or motivational to the students.

An example of methods one and two is found in a curriculum guide entitled, Reinforcing the Reading Program through Music with Emphasis on Phonic Skills (Chicago, 1971). Music activities were developed to reinforce reading skills of comprehension and phonics. It stated that discerning separate sounds in words is an important factor in determining the success of reading. It was found that

heightening auditory perception skills by teaching vocal sounds through singing was an effective method to develop this essential reading skill. This method goes one step further to enable the child to learn the word within the context of the song, which, according to Moffet (1988), would make learning more implicit, meaningful, and easier. However, even a relatively simple song may have many words that cannot be deciphered with the phonics skills that an average first grader has at his/her command. Thus, many words are too complicated for analysis and must be learned by sight (Kuhmerker, 1969).

Cardarelli (1979) suggested "Twenty-one Ways to Use Music in Teaching the Language Arts", which is an additional example of the second (sight word) method. He also utilized this sight-word approach in an activity called "vocabulary building" where song words are written onto notecards and arranged into a sentence. He suggested that these words, taken from child-selected songs, are more meaningful, interesting, and thus more easily learned than words taught from sight word lists (at least 50% of which are taught in songs).

Many examples of Moffet's third method, the language experience approach, have been used by teachers integrating music and reading (Bromley and Jalango, 1983; Cardarelli, 1979; Kuhmerker, 1969; McCracken, 1986; Reeves, 1978; Rhodes, 1981; Rietz, 1976; Smith, 1984). Here the learner dictates

his words, lines, or story to someone who writes it down, and the child makes the paired association between his speech and the written text (Moffet, 1988).

When using the language experience approach with patterned text in music, the child can discover, analyze, improvise, and create new songs. "The pattern serves as a skeleton upon which to hang their own ideas and gives them confidence in their abilities to express themselves in writing" (Bridge, 1983, p. 298).

An example of this method was brainstormed as a class activity by a group of learning disabled second and third grade students. They even suggested using the tune of Jingle Bells.

#### Service Stations

When you go to the service station  
 You get some candy bars  
 Sometimes the soda splashes on you  
 While they help you with your car.  
 They often fix your motor  
 And fill your tires with air  
 Wash your windows, check the oil  
 And try to sell you a spare.....Oh  
 Service stations, service stations  
 You go there everyday  
 The price of gas goes up and down  
 But you always have to pay (Smith, 1984,  
 p. 54).

Methods three and four involve whole sentences and stories, or real reading, which may result in a more meaningful activity for beginning readers. When the amount of meaning is increased, progressing from one through four, the problem of motivation is decreased.



Moffet's last method of watching a text while hearing it read characterizes the song-reading approach to reading music in the classroom. Fitzgerald (1981) devised a program in which she claimed children teach themselves to read through music. She employed five basic steps in her song-reading approach:

1. learning favorite songs
2. meeting the lyrics in print
3. reading song charts and booklets
4. comprehension extension activities
5. writing activities.

Her activities encompass all of Moffet's reading methods.

Fitzgerald contrasted traditional reading program components with those emphasized in a song-reading approach to reading instruction as follows:

Traditional reading program:

1. start with components unknown to child-beginning phonemes, phonograms
2. start with visual/auditory emphasis
3. involve some children passively during reading groups
4. emphasize word attack skills
5. teach reading apart from other language skills
6. fixate the child's attentions on words and word parts
7. focus on child's deficiencies as the basis for instruction
8. present reading as an awesome, difficult task
9. use same text for a long period of time
10. value reading skills measured by tests
11. identify ability levels to the children
12. move through stories with no repetition of favorites or attention to extending comprehension
13. may be joyless
14. are teacher "taught"

Song-reading program:

1. start with language the child knows and enjoys
2. start with aural/oral emphasis
3. involved most children actively
4. emphasize meaning of words sung
5. develop listening, speaking, writing integrated with reading
6. encourage fluency even at this initial stage
7. insure success
8. ease the child toward reading
9. child receives new "book" with each new song
10. stress teacher observation and evaluation
11. deliberately avoid labeling of children
12. reinforce habits of reading, through the resinging and rereading of song favorites
13. stress the joys of singing
14. aim is child self-learning

Sullivan (1979) cited the need for additional study to investigate the use of song material as reading content and as a motivational tool in the classroom. She also predicted that this interdisciplinary approach may benefit children who depend heavily on the auditory modality for learning.

Three research studies have been completed by graduate students at Central Washington University using the song-reading technique. One study was conducted by Scholen (1984) on a group of forty first grade children in two classes in Kent, Washington. Fifteen songs containing repetitive and cumulative patterns were taught during music classes twice a week for a total of thirty minutes weekly. Follow-up lessons were given in the regular classroom during language arts and reading times. She found that there was no significant difference between the class that was taught using the supplementary reading and music material and the control group. Scholen commented on the positive attitudes and enthusiasm of those using the supplementary materials.

Another study conducted by Frantz (1983) measured reading gain scores as well as attitudinal changes. Fifteen minutes daily were devoted to song-reading activities, including a sequential song-reading approach similar to Fitzgerald's. The results over a seven month period showed a significant increase in reading growth and positive attitudes toward reading after experiencing the song-reading program.

The third study (Jones, 1991) was conducted for six weeks. Reading/music instruction was given in a music class for thirty minutes weekly. There was no significant difference in reading basic sight word lists measured between two groups over this time.

In summary, Sullivan (1979) conducted an extensive literature review on using music to teach reading. She concluded that because of the many positive testimonials and observational studies that have been done on the positive effects resulting from using this approach, if a teacher enjoyed using this method that it could be successfully utilized as part of the instructional program for reading (p. 285).

#### Conclusion

Using music to enhance reading instruction has been successful because it is motivating, meaningful, predictable, and builds on the language development the student has mastered orally. The lack of other resources that are suitable to teach beginning reading in an enjoyable, intrinsic manner makes the use of song-reading material even more desirable.

Anderson and Midgett (1980) stated that "music is a natural, non-threatening medium. It provides opportunities for learning, relaxation, participation, and creative expression. It adds continuity, interaction, and lustre to the curriculum" (p. 16).

One of the reasons music has been acclaimed as an easy way to develop fluency is because it is a multi-sensory experience (Kuhmerker, 1969). Children learn about language through direct participation. Music allows a natural outlet for physical, mental, and emotional involvement, according to Wright (1977). She found that music can be a positive aid in the development of language and the many skills and facets that it encompasses. Martin (1981) found that folksongs provide a way for meeting cognitive, affective, and psychomotor objectives.

Cognitive objectives that are met through music are listening, literature, non-verbal and oral communication, reading, creative writing, handwriting, spelling, and grammar usage. All of these can be taught or coordinated with music (Wright, 1977).

In the affective domain, Wright (1977) claimed that "music is a positive conception about life and reality. They can learn to better express their feelings and shape their own self-identity. Music enhances . . . subjective expression and understanding" (p. 4).

In the psychomotor domain, Cohen (1974) cited studies by North and Frostig that supported the notion that movement leads directly to reading skills. Thus, physical and rhythmic activities are used in their reading programs. Cohen reported that sight words increased as children expressed ideas through movement. The Rhode Island

Department of Education Project Prime, which coordinates reading, music, and physical education, also reported similar improvements in reading ability (Newsom, 1979).

In summary, Wright (1977) testified children must experience life and be motivated. Language must be received and produced in many activities. Music encompasses recall, recognition, rhythm, oral and written expression, word games, movement, coordination, motor control, speech and language, dramatic play and drama. It links the five senses and gives any child a better feeling for language (p. 13).

## CHAPTER 3

## Procedures of the Project

The purpose of this project was to research, develop, and implement methods and materials that may be used by first grade teachers to motivate and encourage beginning reading through the use of music.

To identify these methods and materials, an ERIC Search was conducted to identify current literature and research within the past 15 years. Major descriptors were Teaching Reading Through Music, Oral Language, Music, Beginning Reading, Whole Language, Music Activities, and Elementary Education. The ERIC Search revealed many activities supporting the use of music to enhance reading instruction.

Songs from many sources were used. Selections from classes in Music in Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, workshops with Heidi Spencer, Nellie Edge, and other whole language classes have been made into song-reading materials. Many song sheets and fold-a-books of traditional songs were from Nellie Edge. Children's records by Raffi, Fred Penner, and Anne Murray were made into song-reading materials. Music/reading activities were developed based on methods and materials cited in the study. Materials developed included song charts, overhead transparencies, sentence strips, student and class songbooks, language experience and original songs, fold-a-books, records, tapes, and videos. An extensive handbook has been compiled

containing all of these songs, methods, and materials to be used with each selection.



## CHAPTER 4

### The Project

The resource handbook produced as a result of this project has been utilized to enhance beginning reading instruction in Room 2, a first grade classroom at John Campbell Elementary School in the Selah School District, Selah, Washington.

Chapter 4 contains many songs collected and developed to implement an integrated music and reading curriculum for first grade students. This is an ongoing project as new songs are found to supplement curricula areas. An additional goal is to integrate songs taught in music class in these thematic areas. As Fitzgerald (1981) proposed, song-reading could comprise the entire reading program. Even though all children have thoroughly enjoyed these song-reading techniques, this should be accompanied by implicit phonics instruction, children's literature books and discussion groups, and patterned, predictable books as well language experience stories. The reading levels of the songs are so varied that the oral language could be taught in kindergarten and the actual song-reading could carry on into second grade effectively. Most of all, the children have happy memories of learning to read and sing about all aspects of life.

## CHAPTER 5

### Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

#### Summary

The purpose of this project was to research, develop, and implement methods and materials that may be used by first grade teachers to motivate and encourage beginning reading through the use of music.

To accomplish this purpose, song-reading activities for first grade students were gathered and developed for inclusion in a teacher handbook and student songbooks. Materials developed included song charts, overhead transparencies, sentence strips, student and class songbooks, language experience and original songs, fold-a-books, records, tapes, and videos. An extensive handbook was compiled containing all of these songs, methods, and materials to be used with each selection.

A review of literature and research was conducted to validate the use of song-reading techniques as an effective teaching strategy to enhance beginning reading instruction.

#### Conclusion

Conclusions reached as a result of this project are as follows:

1. Appropriately used, song-reading activities may enhance reading at varying ages and abilities and lead to increased teacher effectiveness.

2. Many factors that research has proven to facilitate reading apply to music.
  - a. Oral language development is facilitated by song-reading techniques, which increases reading ability.
  - b. Motivational reading material includes enjoyable songs which encourage beginning readers.
  - c. Whole, meaningful content is provided through music because it is interesting and comprehensible.
  - d. Patterned, predictable texts that facilitate beginning reading are found in many songs.
  - e. Easy fluent, successful interpretation of reading materials is almost assured if the child knows the song orally first.
3. Integrating music class instruction and classroom reading programs may facilitate oral language and reading ability.

#### Recommendations

As a result of this project, the following recommendations have been suggested:

1. This handbook could be shared with kindergarten and first grade teachers, music, and library staff. An inservice class on using these materials would encourage their use.

2. Integrating the music class curriculum with classroom reading instruction may be accomplished through the use of songcharts and/or overhead transparencies, sentence strips, and songbooks.
3. Collaboration between music and education departments of using song-reading methods and materials to enhance beginning reading could facilitate and expand teacher training.
4. More investigation needs to be done on the use of song-reading materials as reading content.

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