Learn at First Sight:
A Review of the Current Research Literature on Sight-Reading
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I. What is Sight-Reading?
   a. Sight-reading is: performing from written notation without prior rehearsal.
   b. Researchers have used the terms sight-playing and sight-reading interchangeably.

II. What is the process of sight-reading?
   a. Examine the score for relevant information:
      i. Score study procedures include: examining musical parameters, looking for
         patterns, noticing characteristics of musical styles, finding common musical
         forms, and searching for areas with which the performer may have difficulties
         (Killian & Henry, 2005; Lehmann & McAurthur, 2002; McPherson, 1994)
      ii. Expert sight-readers tend to look further ahead than do novice sight-readers,
          and experts also look backward while reading (Goolsby, 1994a; Truitt, et al.,
      iii. Additionally, expert sight-readers can take in more information in a single
           glance than do novices and their eye movements are governed by the music’s
           structure (Furneaux & Land, 1999; Goolsby, 1994b; Sloboda, 1977).
   b. Recall previously learned musical material:
      i. Pianists have superior pattern recognition skills (Salis, 1980).
      ii. Pianists learn patterns over time and are able to recall those patterns when
          reading new material (Waters, Townsend, & Findlay, 1997; Wolf, 1976).
      iii. Expert sight-readers are able to predict what may be coming next based on the
           structural cues in the music as well as their experience with a given style or
           composer (Fine, Berry, & Rosner, 2006; Sloboda, 1976; Wolf, 1976)
   c. Program the muscles necessary to perform (Sloboda, 1985):
      i. Preparing the body to perform is usually automatic
      ii. The difference between sight-reading and other skills is that in sight-reading
          time is important and tempo is kept by an “internal time-keeper” (Lehmann, &
          McAurthur, 2002)

III. What factors influence or predict sight-reading success?
   a. Musical factors:
      i. Technique (Kopiez & Lee, 2006)
      ii. Aural Imagery/Audiation (Brodsky, et al; 2003; Kopiez, et al, 2006; Waters,
          et al, 1998)
      iv. Private lessons (Cox, 2000; Hardy, 1995; Bernhard, 2003)
      v. Accompanying experience (Leonard & Ericsson, 1993)
b. Nonmusical factors:
   i. Handedness (Kopiez, Galley, & Lee, 2006)
   iii. Spatial-temporal reasoning (Kornicke, 1995; Salis, 1980)
   iv. Working memory (Meinz & Hambrick, 2010)
   v. Academic achievement (Ciepluch, 1988)

IV. What are some methods used to improve sight-reading?
   a. Shadowing (Kostka, 2000)
   b. Error detection (Killian, 1991; Kostka, 2000)
   d. Chunking procedures (Gaynor, 1996; Pike & Carter, 2010)
   e. Pre-playing score study (Killian & Henry, 2005; Fisher, 2010)
   f. Rhythmic reading drills (Ferrin, 2004; Palmer, 1976)
   g. Tonal pattern training (Henry, 2004)
References


