

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., 1997; Waters & Underwood, 1998).
 - 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)
 - iii. Sight-reading experience (Kopiez & Lee 2008, 2006; Kopiez et al, 2006)
 - iv. Private lessons (Cox, 2000; Hardy, 1995; Bernhard, 2003)
 - v. Accompanying experience (Leonard & Ericsson, 1993)

- b. Nonmusical factors:
 - i. Handedness (Kopiez, Galley, & Lee, 2006)
 - ii. Psychomotor speed (Eaton, 1997; Kopiez & Lee, 2008, 2006; Kopiez, et al., 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)
 - c. Colored notation (Rogers, 1991, 1996)
 - 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)

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