

TEXAS BANDMASTERS ASSOCIATION  
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The Inner Game of Sightreading

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## Part I: The Inner Game

There are two games being played at all times:

1. the outer game: where we overcome obstacles to reach our goals
  - is played against outside opponents
2. the inner game: where we overcome internal obstacles such as doubt and fear
  - played at the same time, more subtle.

Inner Game skills to master:

1. Awareness: know your information and learn students' needs
  2. Will: what is your motivation? Success, achievement,
  3. Trust: trust your students' ability—give them credit and trust.
- These internal obstacles are the ones that interfere the most with our performance.
  - When we focus on eliminating mental interference, our outer game performance comes closer to our potential.
  - Learning from your own experiences is the essence of the inner game.
  - The problem exists when we play both games but think only of the outer game.
  - Success in the inner game often determines success in the outer game.
  - The inner game can be applied to all other aspects of life.
  - Inner Game teaches that awareness of attitudes that inhibit expression of our full potential.
  - You should be interested in how you feel while you're performing because when you pay close attention to your experience, you receive more feedback from your actions.

Inner Game Basics: The P.E.L. Triangle- All of these aspects compliment each other.

- Performance (achievement)
- Experience (including enjoyment)
- Learning

It is important to be aware of three things:

- The quality of our experience while we're performing
- What we are learning while we do it
- How close are we coming to achieving our goals

Permission to Fail Leads to Success

- Giving ourselves permission to fail sidesteps any concern we otherwise might feel about performance.

Relaxed Concentration

- Notice the difference from when muscles or "effort" gets in the way.

Recognize and Use Visual Cues

- Printed page represents only a small percentage of the music
- The purpose of the score is to give you the bare bones, the skeleton, or the structure of the piece.
- Few people make full use of this structure—most attempt a "sink or swim" event

Recognizing and Using Physical Cues

- Feeling the "moves" in your body allows you to rehearse the music before you perform.
- "Recent findings suggest that this type of kinesthetic rehearsal actually programs and makes use of those parts of the nervous system that will be involved in the physical execution."
- Using your body's kinesthetic memory prepares the body for actual performance.

Repetitive Programming: The body, like a computer, remembers its instructions when it is properly programmed, but it needs to be programmed "a bit at a time." Think of your college days. Did you

retain information for tests better if you were exposed to it repeatedly over a period of time or when you “crammed” at the last minute?

Except the Stress: Tim Gallewey’s “Doctrine of the Easy”

- “In many ways, the opposite of boredom is feeling there’s too much challenge. But there’s often only a fine line between feeling a little scared by the challenge you’re facing and feeling exhilarated by it.” “...you can usually turn a scary moment into a time of discovery by stepping back and taking one thing at a time.”

Heighten Your Experience While Practicing

- “Our most effective learning make take place when we are having a great time—and almost completely unaware that we are “learning” anything.
- If you have fun during practice, you may also learn more and perform better.
- You don’t have to be serious and tense in order to learn.

Change from “Do this,” Instructions to Awareness Instructions

- Change from:
  - Do such and such...
  - This is difficult, but...
  - Play it this way...
  - Make it better...
  - Please try harder...
  - Now relax...
  - Let’s get it right this time...
- Change to:
  - Be aware of...
  - Listen for...
  - How does it feel when you...
  - Tell me the difference you notice between...
  - What do you hear when you...
  - Pay attention to the...
  - Let’s see if...
  - Notice the feeling you get when you...

“... a sense of dependency arises in the relationship between teacher and student, and when these students need to “go it alone” in the world outside, they may find it a difficult adjustment to make. They haven’t been taught to solve problems for themselves, to listen to the music they are making, or to draw on other sources for additional understanding. An important learning shift takes place when these students learn how to pay attention to their own Inner Game teacher within them.” --Barry Green

“It is in this whole process of meeting and solving problems that life has its meaning... Problems call forth our courage and our wisdom; indeed they create our courage and our wisdom. It is only because of problems that we grow...It is for this reason that wise people learn not to dread but actually welcome problems.” --M.Scott Peck

## Part II: Examples: The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly

### LEVEL I

|                     |        |          |                       |            |         |
|---------------------|--------|----------|-----------------------|------------|---------|
| 1C MIDDLE SCHOOL    | (2005) | UIL10105 | THE LAST CRUSADE      | Steward    | \$40.00 |
| 1C MS- NON VARSITY  | (2004) | UIL10104 | PROCESSION            | Weeks      | \$40.00 |
| 2C MS - NON VARSITY | (2003) | UIL10103 | ARUNDEL CASTLE        | Jones      | \$40.00 |
| 3C MS - NON VARSITY | (2002) | UIL10102 | MAJESTIC PROMENADE    | Pack       | \$40.00 |
| 1B JH - NON VARSITY | (2001) | UIL10101 | GIVE ME LIBERTY MARCH | Lanier     | \$40.00 |
| 2B JH - NON VARSITY | (2000) | UIL10100 | OLYMPIA HILLS         | Williamson | \$40.00 |
| 1A HS - NON VARSITY | (1999) | UIL10199 | HAMPTON COURT         | Jones      | \$38.00 |
| 2A HS - NON VARSITY | (1998) | UIL10198 | LEXINGTON PARADE      | Jones      | \$35.00 |

### LEVEL II

|  |        |          |                     |        |         |
|--|--------|----------|---------------------|--------|---------|
| 2C MIDDLE SCHOOL<br>1B JR HIGH<br>1A HIGH SCHOOL<br>3B JH - NON VARSITY<br>3A HS - NON VARSITY | (2005) | UIL20105 | FOLK SONG AND DANCE | Weeks  | \$40.00 |
|  | (2004) | UIL20104 | CHANT & VARIANT     | Weeks  | \$40.00 |
|  | (2003) | UIL20103 | CEDAR CREEK JOURNEY | Jones  | \$40.00 |
|  | (2002) | UIL20102 | THE ROYAL COACHMAN  | Lanier | \$40.00 |
|  | (2001) | UIL20101 | BUTTONWOOD LANE     | Jones  | \$40.00 |
|  | (2000) | UIL20100 | CENTURY FANFARE     | Lanier | \$40.00 |
|  | (1999) | UIL20199 | FANFARE & CHORALE   | Owens  | \$38.00 |
|  | (1998) | UIL20198 | BLUE RIDGE POINT    | Kirsch | \$40.00 |

### LEVEL III

|   |        |          |                             |          |         |
|---|--------|----------|-----------------------------|----------|---------|
| 3C MIDDLE SCHOOL<br>2B JR HIGH<br>2A HIGH SCHOOL<br>4A HS - NON VARSITY | (2005) | UIL30105 | ARAGON                      | Steward  | \$45.00 |
|   | (2004) | UIL30104 | ST. JAMES' PARK             | Jones    | \$45.00 |
|   | (2003) | UIL30103 | CHORALE AND MARCH           | Weeks    | \$45.00 |
|   | (2002) | UIL30102 | RICHMOND HILL               | Jones    | \$50.00 |
|   | (2001) | UIL30101 | ON THE GRAND MESA           | Owens    | \$45.00 |
|   | (2000) | UIL30100 | TELFORD MEADOWS CELEBRATION | Colquitt | \$48.00 |
|   | (1999) | UIL30199 | PEACH STREET INN            | Kirsch   | \$45.00 |
|   | (1998) | UIL30198 | DOVER RIDGE                 | Kirsch   | \$42.00 |

### LEVEL IV

|   |        |          |                            |            |         |
|---|--------|----------|----------------------------|------------|---------|
| 3B JR HIGH<br>3A HIGH SCHOOL<br>5A HS - NON VARSITY | (2005) | UIL50105 | MYSTIC FORTRESS            | Matthews   | \$60.00 |
|   | (2004) | UIL40104 | HYMN AND HALLELUJAH        | Owens      | \$60.00 |
|   | (2003) | UIL40103 | TEXOMA!                    | Knight     | \$55.00 |
|   | (2002) | UIL40102 | LAKE GEORGE OVERTURE       | Owens      | \$55.00 |
|   | (2001) | UIL40101 | OLYMPIA HEIGHTS            | Williamson | \$55.00 |
|   | (2000) | UIL40100 | CHORALE & MARCH            | Andrews    | \$55.00 |
|   | (1999) | UIL40199 | DANCE                      | Daniels    | \$50.00 |
|   | (1998) | UIL40198 | FANFARE, CHORALE & ALLEGRO | Fisher     | \$55.00 |

## LEVEL V

|                |        |          |                        |          |         |
|----------------|--------|----------|------------------------|----------|---------|
| 4A HIGH SCHOOL | (2005) | UIL50105 | PRELUDE AND DANCE      | Tucker   | \$60.00 |
|                | (2004) | UIL50104 | OLD GERMAN MELODY 1815 | Rhea     | \$60.00 |
|                | (2003) | UIL50103 | QUAIL HOLLOW OVERTURE  | Eveland  | \$60.00 |
|                | (2002) | UIL50102 | DUSK AND DAWN          | Benjamin | \$60.00 |
|                | (2001) | UIL50101 | LAMENT & HOSANNA       | Andrews  | \$58.00 |
|                | (2000) | UIL50100 | CEDAR HILLS            | Daniels  | \$58.00 |
|                | (1999) | UIL50199 | CELTIC LEGEND          | Andrews  | \$55.00 |
|                | (1998) | UIL50198 | FESTIVE ECHOES         | Daniels  | \$55.00 |

## LEVEL VI

|                |        |          |                               |            |         |
|----------------|--------|----------|-------------------------------|------------|---------|
| 5A HIGH SCHOOL | (2005) | UIL60105 | INVENTION ON A GERMAN CHORALE | Jones      | \$65.00 |
|                | (2004) | UIL60104 | WINDFIELD CELEBRATION         | Eveland    | \$65.00 |
|                | (2003) | UIL60103 | OLD MOUNTAIN, NEW MOON        | Andrews    | \$65.00 |
|                | (2002) | UIL30102 | HYMN VARIANTS                 | Rhea       | \$62.00 |
|                | (2001) | UIL60101 | TRIBAL PRAYER & DANCE         | Rhea       | \$60.00 |
|                | (2000) | UIL60100 | CANTO & FANFARE               | Touchstone | \$58.00 |
|                | (1999) | UIL60199 | NORTHBROOK OVERTURE           | Fisher     | \$60.00 |
|                | (1998) | UIL60198 | THE HIGH PLAINS               | Andrews    | \$60.00 |

### Part III: Application

#### **I. Basic Concepts To Consider**

To devise a successful strategy to teach sightreading skills, consider the traits most competent readers share:

- An understanding of and the ability to count and perform rhythms and pitches.
- A system, or language of counting -- this is crucial for communication.
- An understanding of key relationships, key signatures and accidentals.
- A routine or a system that the director and students use to learn and drill all aspects of the sightreading material, This routine will vary from person to person,

#### **II. How Do I Start Preparing and What Do I Use?**

You may wish to consider using the following ideas as departure points, If you slowly and methodically develop a system to implement these steps into your weekly drills, you can cover a great deal of material over a period of months.

- Scales-students should know and be fluent with at least those scales that could be found in their sightreading tunes. Recommended key signatures that may be used in sightreading music are listed in the UIL publication, *Recommended Criteria for Sightreading Music*, Stock f 304. Every person who takes a band to sightreading contest should acquire this material. It lists recommended key signatures according to group classification.
- Unison rhythms from various texts, slides or other sources.
- Two, then three and four-part rhythmic lines.
- Recommended rhythms-a list of recommended rhythms according to group classification is also included in the same UIL publication mentioned above. However, it may be a good idea to not limit yourself or your students to *only* these rhythms.
- Selected pieces that reflect your group's specific needs.
- Make it a point to periodically visit your music dealer to look for sightreading materials. Only by taking the time to thoroughly browse through and study all of the music, texts and materials that are available will you be able to develop a library of materials,

### **III. Don't Stray From Your Plan-Be Persistent and Consistent!**

The key to any successful plan is to stay on track. Most consistently successful organizations do not wait until April to start sightreading preparation, Sightreading practice should be part of your curriculum from the beginning of school in August.

1. Make yourself devote time *weekly* to some kind of sightreading drill,
2. Go slow, especially in the beginning. Don't try to teach too much, too soon.
3. Be methodical and systematic in your planning, Try to devote ample time to one rhythmic concept and allow for plenty of repetition before you move on.
4. Stay with your system--avoid "throwing out a tune to read down." Try to develop a plan that allows you to read at least one appropriately selected piece each week. In other words, avoid passing out music that is two grade levels above what they are prepared to attempt. Confidence and success will encourage achievement!
5. Step away from the podium from time to time. Set the metronome on a suitable tempo and have your students read without a conductor. This will help to eliminate the possibility of you inadvertently "cueing" rhythms. Have your students read lines by sections or devote time to sightreading in sectionals. This should help make them more comfortable reading in smaller groups (You can also get a better idea if someone is faking.)
6. From the beginning, work to develop a general focus or classroom atmosphere that is conducive to achieving goals. Set specific goals and aim for consistency in your rehearsals.' If you wait until March to "really get serious" about sightreading, your students may not develop a serious attitude.

### **IV. Preparation Materials**

It is not necessary (and it can sometimes even be confusing) to bombard your students with a library of different methods and materials. Pick one or two methods with which you feel more comfortable working. Make sure that they deal directly with the concepts and rhythms that you need to strengthen. Below is a listing of several methods and materials that could be beneficial in developing your strategy.

#### **Materials**

##### **Workbooks and Rhythm Theory Author**

| <b>Title</b>      | <b>Author</b>    | <b>Publisher</b> |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Rhythm Workshop   | Clark A. Chaffee | J. Weston Walch  |
| Teaching Rhythm   | Joel Rothman     | JR Publications  |
| Rhythmic Training | Robert Starer    | MCA Music        |

##### **Unison Studies and Drills**

| <b>Title</b>                                       | <b>Author</b>   | <b>Publisher</b>     |
|--|-----------------|----------------------|
| 20 Rhythmical Studies in Unison for Band           | Grover C. Yaus  | CPP/Bel              |
| 40 Rhythmical Studies in Unison for Band           | Grover C. Yaus  | CPP/Bel              |
| 101 Rhythmic Rest Patterns In Unison for Band      | Grover C. Yaus  | CPP/Bel              |
| 127 Original Exercises for Band or Orchestra       | Grover C. Yaus  | CPP/Bel              |
| 150 Original Exercises in Unison for Band or Orch  | Grover C. Yaus  | CPP/Bel              |
| 14 Weeks To A Better Band, Books 1, 2              | Roger Maxwell   | C.L. Barnhouse       |
| The Logical Approach to Rhythmic Notation, VI 1, 2 | Phiiil Perkins  | Logical Publications |
| Winning Rhythms                                    | Edward Ayola    | KJOS                 |
| Division of Beat Rhythm Slides                     | Haines/McEntyre | Southern Music Co.   |

## **Unison/Harmonized Lines and Etudes**

| <b>Title</b>                         | <b>Author</b>   | <b>Publisher</b>         |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Sightreader for Young Bands, Bk 1, 2 | Hudadoff/Ward   | Shawnee Press, Inc       |
| Rhythm Spectrum                      | Ed Sueta        | Macie Publishing         |
| Rhythm Vocabulary Charts, Bk 1 and 2 | Ed Sueta        | Macie Publishing         |
| Rhythms and Rests                    | Frank Erickson  | Alfred                   |
| Harmonized Rhythms for Concert Band  | Forque/Thornton | KJOS                     |
| Symphonic Rhythms and Scales         | Claude T. Smith | Jenson                   |
| Rhythm Etudes                        | McLeod/Staska   | Schmitt, Hall & McCreary |

### **Applying the “Inner Game” to The SR First Rehearsal**

- Don't jump into UIL SR music too soon. Practice first with books, etc. Make reading a UIL SR piece a big deal.
- When you read your first composed music, attempt it first with NO explanation. Give them permission to “crash.”
- Once you've read through the piece (or staggered through it!), go back and drill these concepts and thought processes:
  - Let them critique: what did we do well? What were our mistakes?
  - What did you hear? How did you feel? Nervous? Calm?
- Pick a place in the music and allow them to read it again, this time with more encouragement on confidence. Give them input that will help them make better sounds.
- Play the section again, stop and discuss the difference in their sound. Was it better the second time? Why? Were you better players the second time? Was the opportunity to play the music ONCE that significant? Could you, maybe, perform with this type of confidence THE FIRST TIME you read something?
- Discuss the mental or “Inner Game” aspects of sightreading with them and ask for their input.

## **Part IV: Preparing for Contest - Preparing Your Presentation**

### **I. Explain the Format/Procedure**

Prior to contest, you should inform your students of specifics pertaining to the sightreading format itself. It is important that they be aware of the rules and procedures for the two instructional segments. Try to cover all of the basic policies and rules regarding the sightreading format. Having a better idea of what to expect may make them more comfortable and less apprehensive,

### ***Other Aspects to Discuss With Your Students***

1. Discuss what you consider to be appropriate behavior while entering/leaving the sightreading room as well as during the instruction period.
2. After they are seated, their eyes should be focused on their director, their music or the judge delivering instructions. Encourage them to remain focused the entire time that they are in the sightreading room.
3. Inform your students of how you wish for them to hold their instruments during the instruction period.
4. Discuss the appropriate times for student's questions (if any),
5. Discuss YOUR response to the "prior knowledge" question and your, options in the event that someone in your band has actually read the selection before.
6. Inform your students of everything that you feel may be relevant to them. (You may even inform them that judges can stand up and walk around the sightreading room during the instruction period to observe how well students are paying attention). Students should be made aware that their attentiveness and conduct in the sightreading room may send a visual message about their attitude.

## II. What to Point Out to Students--Your Presentation "Checklist"

During the General Explanation Period, attempt to pick out the most complicated aspects of the piece. Look at the music from the viewpoint of, "where will it be easy for them to make mistakes." '

**First:** Have EVERY wind player place their instrument on their knee or in some position so that you - and the judges - can easily tell if they are actively fingering through the music. Then, try to point out things such as:

1. Key signature-THIS MUST BE HIGH ON YOUR PRIORITY LIST.
2. Key/Tempo changes, Drill these several times.
3. Accidentals-understand that some music may utilize "courtesy" accidentals. They are there simply as an aid for young readers to remind them of the key signature. These can be tricky because they imply a change from the current key signature. Let's say, for instance\* you are reading a tune in the key of Ab and the publisher/composer places a flat sign before the A in measure 33. His/ her purpose for the flat sign was to remind young players of the Ab which exists in the key signature. This could create confusion for young readers who have been taught that an accidental is **only** used when **changing** a key signature note. What will happen if an A is placed in the next measure *without* a flat sign?
4. Tempo and tempo changes. Repeats - 1st and 2nd endings.
5. Awkward rhythms, rests and entrances on beats other than 1 and 4.
6. Multiple rests, repeated rhythmic patterns and rests that follow longer note values. Try to also point out any other types of re-occurring patterns (repeated ties, slurs, melodies, etc.) Notice if the piece fits A-B-A structure.
7. Dynamics-use vocal dynamics during instruction.
8. Simple percussion parts: the average middle school percussion parts on sightreading music (especially snare parts) are very simple. Since, in many cases, their sightreading music may be much simpler than their concert music, it may be a temptation for them to play twice as fast as written.
9. Consider auxiliary percussion parts as SOLOS. Prepare your triangle, tambourine and bell players for this.
10. Briefly discuss how the piece is scored and how the scoring changes throughout the tune. Which sections seemed to be grouped? Which sections alternate • passages? It may be helpful to know that some composers whose music is commonly used for sightreading purposes routinely use similar instrumental groupings in much of their music. Use this type of approach in describing the framework of the piece,
11. Try to go in the same order each time you sightread. Develop a standard checklist order and make your students aware that you will be following the same order **every time**. Perhaps even print out a list of checkpoints for each student to keep in their folder.

## III. What to Have Students Do During the General Explanation Period

One of the foundations of the new sightreading format is to put more of the responsibility of reading on the students. Bringing them more into the process can also make for a more positive and rewarding experience for them. Giving them more responsibility may also make it easier for them to maintain their mental focus during the explanation period and through the performance. What can you do to physically bring your students more into the sightreading procedure?

Here are some options to consider:

1. Touch the key signature, any key changes, "Touching<sup>1</sup> places such as accidentals, repeats, tricky rhythms, rests, etc. is an excellent way to make certain everyone is thinking the same thing at the same time.
2. Have students finger through the corresponding scales.
3. Have students touch and finger EVERY accidental with their stand partner. This takes very little time with middle school sightreading and will help reinforce the accidental in their mind. It will probably not be sufficient to simply warn them. Point out awkward accidentals like low F# on clarinet. Under pressure, even the best young readers will make mistakes.
4. Have students count rests on their fingers as a section. This helps everyone communicate and count together.



5. Perhaps describe these tactics to your students as "interactive sightreading,"

#### **IV. What to Avoid During The Instruction Period**

1. Especially in easier tunes, try not to spend too much time being descriptive. Try to use *explanations* rather than *descriptions*. You do not have to describe every detail of the piece, -After drilling the key(s), accidentals, tempo, style, etc., try to include 3 or 4 general conclusions concerning the framework of the piece in your instructions. Point out the possible problem areas and then finger through the music. Work towards a balance between explanation, teaching and drill.
2. Avoid general, non-instructional statements such as, "its a little bit louder here,," or "clarinets have a very nice melody at letter D."
3. Avoid wasting time pointing out the obvious, Half notes and whole notes *should* not require much explanation - unless there is something uniquely challenging involved (*Perhaps a rest follows, Students may end the longer note too soon and enter early on the next note*). Try to center more attention on the "meat and potatoes" of the piece.