

ARTS • BASED SKILLS & STRATEGIES

• elementary •

title

Word Explorations

skill



music

about the strategy

Word Explorations infuses spoken text with, percussion and instruments, encouraging students to make aesthetic choices. The strategy develops silent reading skills, inner pulse, and the ability to keep a steady beat. Developing a child's ability to keep a steady beat has been linked in research with an ability to attend or focus. Varied repetition of the poem builds fluency.

visual

Reading of text and isolation of specific vocabulary

auditory

Listening and speaking

kinesthetic

Keeping a steady beat and playing instruments

instructional steps

objective

Students learn a new poem, identify key words, and then transfer the key words to body percussion and instruments.

materials

Poem written out on chart paper
Colored markers
Assorted rhythm instruments

procedure

1. Listening and Reading

- Teach the poem by rote (see example below).
- Tap a steady beat as you say the poem.
- Show the written text and have a volunteer point out the words as the class reads the poem together.

2. Identifying and Emphasizing

- Ask students to clap on all words starting with "R". Circle all of the words beginning with "R".
- Ask students to find all words beginning with "gr". Underline and ask to pat their thighs on those words.

Word Explorations

instructional steps

procedure

- Ask students for another word they would like to emphasize, and ask them to choose a new body percussion sound to suit the word. Mark the word with a new shape (rectangle, square, triangle, etc.).
- Continue, substituting new sounds on key words.

3. Transferring

- Practice saying the poem with all of the body percussion.
- Gradually, one word type at a time (e.g., all the “R” words), substitute an instrument choice for the body percussion. What type of instrument sound would be best for representing the chosen words?
- Try performing the poem with instruments only, no text. Can you hear all of the words in your head?

Example:


Rain on the green grass,

Rain on the trees,


Rain on the housetops,

But not on me!

Instruments

 = hand drum

 = jingle bells

 = triangle

 = guiro/shaker

 = claves/rhythm sticks

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Word Explorations

strategy for curricular connections

- The activity can be used to reinforce memory of content in any subject area if that content can be expressed in a rhyme featuring repeated words.



language arts

- Use the activity to build literacy skills such as noticing initial sounds, finding rhymes or alliteration, identifying words with one, two, or three syllables etc.
- Use rhythm and body percussion to memorize how to spell difficult words.

multiple intelligences target



verbal • linguistic



musical



bodily • kinesthetic



intrapersonal

adaptations

to simplify

- Learn the poem over several days before adding the challenge of identifying words in the written text. Add the body percussion when speaking is secure and allow several more days of working with the poem and body percussion before transferring to the instruments.
- Use rhythm and body percussion to memorize how to spell difficult words.

to challenge

- Students create their own body percussion patterns to poetry working in groups.
- Turn the body percussion patterns into partner clapping patterns.

special needs

- This activity is accessible to most learners provided that adequate time is given in each learning step (see simplification above). Students whose coordination might inhibit their ability to play precisely on a given word, can provide an instrumental introduction or coda.