REFLECTION: SIGHT-SINGING PROTOCOL

Without judgment, describe what you did. Just the facts:

I had students sight-read a musical excerpt with no assistance as a pre-assessment. I divided students into differentiated sight-reading groups, based on voice part and ability. I introduced a new musical element each week, and students sight-read musical excerpts focused on each musical element. After each sight-reading exercise, students self-assessed their work, and discussed their process in their groups. I introduced a protocol for sight-reading to help students organize their thinking as they decode musical elements. I taught students a mnemonic device to help them remember the protocol. Students practiced using the protocol by sight-reading new musical excerpts each day. Students completed a post-assessment, using the protocol.

What went well?

Students sight-read very accurately by the end of the unit. Students successfully memorized the protocol using the mnemonic device. Students became more independent musicians, and are applying their sight-reading skills instinctively when faced with new choral music in class.

What was so-so?

Some students became bored in the middle of the unit because they wanted to sing repertoire instead of working on sight-reading.

What was the most challenging part of trying this?

It was challenging developing the protocol. I had to consider which musical elements would be most important for beginners to look at, and in what order. It was challenging designing specific sight-reading exercises that would address each musical element.

What was the impact of this strategy on student learning? (specific examples)

Students became more independent musicians as a result of improved music literacy. Students demonstrated the ability to transfer their literacy skills from basic sight-reading exercises to repertoire in choral rehearsals. Students became excited about decoding sheet music, and took greater ownership over the music because they “figured it out” themselves.
What new insights or understandings are forming as a result of this experience? (share with group)

Based on my observations, I would like to create a “Sight-reading Olympics” which should help keep students motivated throughout the unit. I feel that if students can see a visual representation of the “medal” they have achieved in each musical skill, and if students feel there is a competitive element, they will be more driven and motivated.

How do the results of your action plan inform your inquiry question?

I want to find a way to keep students excited in the middle of the unit. Students lost some of their drive and motivation about half-way through the unit.

Documentation to bring (student work, photos, writing, teacher journal, etc.):

Student work, protocol photo, video