

CONNECTING by Sarah Baker

VERSE- Reading the Poem, Improvising Rhythms

Musical Concepts: Rhythm, song structure (form), metre, steady beat, dynamics

Theme links: Connecting (commissioned piece written specifically for purpose)

- Understanding the lyrics: Read the poem- first read through could either be read by a volunteer, or in the case of the video, read deliberately without the sense of rhythm in each of the lines. Use this time for a brief discussion of the meaning of this poem.
- Rap/Chant: model reading the poem with a strong sense of rhythm. (*What does this make children relate to....* Children may start to make the connection between rap music and reading poems with rhyme and rhythm.)
- First line: Lead the class to clap to a slow but steady beat: Teacher to read the first line with rhythm as children count the claps, of beats, that it takes to read that line. Continue with the other lines. Establish the fact that the metre is in 4 beats per bar. (Note: the final piece will technically have the children chant at a slower tempo, each line split into two sections. This does not need to be explicitly explained at this point.)
- Changing rhythms: model how the rhythmic patterns of the words can be varied to create different rhythmic patterns- including rests. (*Extension: Invite children to improvise, a line at a time.*)
- Clap the rhythms- model using the rhythms of the spoken word into clapping/ body percussion. PAUSE: Children are encouraged to isolate words or phrases of their choice and create a short rhythmic pattern, using body percussion, and changing dynamics (loud and soft, etc).
- Play the clip of the backing track. Using the words introduction, verse and chorus, talk through the sections of the song. Now the children may notice that the 'chant' is set to the music at a much slower tempo.
- PAUSE: Play again, encouraging children to chant the verse: it may be that they do this fairly unified, but it is not expected to be exact at this point.
- Now model using echo: my turn, your turn.

- The chorus will be the focus of the next session, but children can be encouraged to start to hum along; it is a simple repetitive motif that they may easily be able to repeat.
- It could be useful if there are resources for the children to record their individual/ group improvised patterns and kept with the class for future use as the project develops over several weeks: this will be dependent on school's technology, photo permissions, resources, etc.