

Use Literature to Help Children Express Themselves in Music

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Knuffle Bunny by Mo Willems (Why do we express ourselves?)

- What is this story about?
- Talk about how we express our feelings
 - Trixie couldn't talk, but how did she express herself?
 - What are some feelings you have? Make a list of different types of feelings.
 - **How do you express yourself?**
 - We can use our words instead of hitting, kicking, etc....
- **In music, composers express their thoughts and feelings through music**
- Look at music that expresses sadness, happiness, fear, etc...
 - Requiems, Beethoven's 9th, Night on Bald Mountain (Mussorgsky), etc.
- Process ~
 - what emotion do you want to express? (Silliness)
 - What event made you feel that way? (Friend said something funny)
 - Narrate the event:
 - [SILLY SOUND COMPOSITION](#)
 - Angry composition, stomping in quarter notes, etc.

The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats (What do we have available?)

- What are the different ways Peter played in the snow? / Is there only one way to do something?
 - The story offers ways to explore the **snow**.
 - We can offer ways to explore sounds and the instruments in our room
- What sounds can we make with our voices? (Build on Silly Sound compositions)
- Let's look at the instruments in our music room. What is the "correct" way to play our rhythm sticks? Drums? Etc..... What is another way you can play them? (safely)
- Process ~
 - Get kids into small groups with 3 different instruments
 - How many ways can you create sound with them?
 - Send kids back into groups and have them compose a 2-4 mm piece highlighting 1-2 ways they can play their instrument
 - Put mm together to create a larger piece and add in a 4 bar TALA for kids to improvise other ways to play their instruments.
- We can also make long and short sounds, just like Peter made short marks in the snow with his feet and long marks in the snow with a stick.
 - Discuss as a class and how playing an instrument in a certain way relates to rhythm (esp. drums)
 - Get kids back into small groups and have them choose one instrument to make either short or long sounds.
 - How can you write down your choice so that we know what you chose?

Frederick by Leo Leoni (What do we want to express?)

- Is about a mouse that spends the warmer months gathering colors and stories in his head so that when winter comes, he will have something to share with the group to make them feel better: highlights the importance of the Arts
- Talk about being different/ that's ok
- Build on the theme of one's imagination and talk about if it is winter, what feeling would you want to have
 - What would that sound like?
- How does music make you feel? (Using listening examples)
 - Building on this, give the children paper and crayons while they listen to different types of music. Then have kids talk about their pictures and the music they heard
- Create a classroom piece that illustrates what they would want to hear in the middle of winter

OR

Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak

- What is this story about?
- What did Max's world look like?
- How do you think Max felt after he got in trouble? What would he want to express?
- How do you feel when you get in trouble?
- What might that sound like? What instruments did we explore that could express your feelings the best?
- Would you want to use short sounds or long ones?
- How could we write these sounds down?
- [The Wild Rumpus - Note Knacks](#)

Comparing **The Three Little Pigs** to **The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs as told to Jon Scieszka** (told from the wolf's point of view) (point of view)

- Compare and contrast stories
- Process ~
 - [GMEA Part 2: The Pig's Rondo - Note Knacks](#)
- Orchestration ~ why this matters/ what are you trying to say and how can instrumentation help you say it?
 - Take 5 (Brubeck vs. Puente)
 - Night and Day (Cole Porter vs. U2)

Final Project: What do we want to express and how do we express it in music?

Things to keep in mind:

- Note Exploration
 - Length relationships
 - Putting different lengths of sounds together
 - Adding pitch
 - Adding expressive elements
 - Silences

- Writing It Down
 - Why? How?
 - Choosing how to put sounds together
 - Revising works
- Features of Print
 - What do you notice?
 - Conventional notation basics
 - Morning Message