Songs & Songboards: Tips & Tricks (Musselwhite, 2007)

Rules for Generating Learning-Based Songs

Musselwhite (1992) has listed a set of rules for creating songs that support language, literacy, or content learning. Musselwhite also offers rationale and samples for each rule (pp. 16 - 18):

1: Less Than 10 Different Words

This is especially important for songs supporting language learning, through speech, sign, or AAC system

2: Simple, Familiar Vocabulary

Support students in learning signs, symbols, icon codes for words they already know

3: Highly Repetitive Words

Reduce overload, and offer opportunities for practice

4: Simple or Highly Familiar Tune

Reduce emphasis on the musical aspect, for both the student AND the staff!

5: Use Functional Words That Represent Learning Goals

Focus on key words that support language or content learning

6: Include Iconic Signs / Symbols

For beginning AAC users, include easily guessed signs / symbols

7: Include Active Participation Before / During / After Song

Include choicemaking, filling in slots, etc. This increases cognitive engagement and offers a purpose for singing the song multiple times.

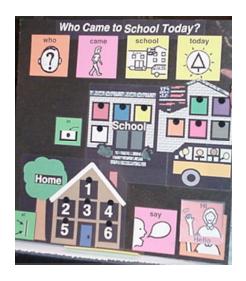
Musselwhite, C. (1992). Signs & Symbols for Children. Litchfield Park, AZ: AAC Intervention. www.aacintervention.com

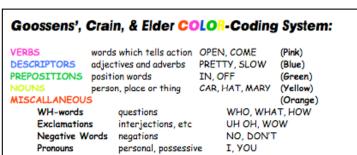
Tips for Creating & Assembling Songboards

Consider Which Words to Symbolize

Is it REALLY necessary to symbolize EVERY word in a song? Depending on the purpose, you may want to symbolize only key words. You also may want to consider NOT symbolizing highly frequent, abstract words such as: the, and

Consider Color-Coding Symbols & Placing on Black Background





Color-coding can be done for parts of speech. For more information on color-coding, see the January, 2005 Tip at: www.aacintervention.com
Note that separating symbols helps each symbol 'pop' against the black background.

Consider Placing Text in a White Box So It Will 'Pop'

Text can be made highly visible if it is relatively large, and placed in a white box, on a colored background, as shown below. This will support students in noticing text, so that it doesn't fade into the background. Also think about text. For beginning readers, Comic Sans is a great, simple text.





