Steps to Holistic Sight-Reading Ability: How to Help Students Enjoy Playing for a Lifetime

Ruth Marie Ballance, SAA Conference, Minneapolis, 2014

Abilities needed:
- Pitch Recognition
- Fingerboard Geography
- Recognizing Patterns
- Rhythm Skills
- Ear-Finger Connection
- Bowing, Fingerings, Articulation, Dynamic, and Expression Symbols

Curriculum topics:
Cast a vision for what you'd like your students to accomplish.
Improve your own reading as a teacher.
Make and sing pitch flash cards. Make and use Twinkle rhythm flash cards.
Scales and arpeggios: say the pitch name, then play the note.
Teach note names by fifths on the instrument.
Build the circle of fifths together on the instrument.
Have students practice writing out pieces they can play.
Step-and-play: useful from book 1 through the artist level
Step-and-play/ -clap/ -sing/ -count/ -scrub in I Can Read Music and Rhythmic Training
Grouping and recognizing patterns by "reading from memory"
First: reading to audiation; then: audiation to playing
Learning by ear versus learning by rote
Make a point of asking students to read music whose component skills they already own.
Break down the reading of pi eces into component parts when necessary.
Read something every day.

Bibliography:
I Can Read Music by Joanne Martin: Volumes 1&2 are available for violin, viola, and cello.

Sixty Studies, Op. 45 by Franz Wohlfahrt: Book 1 contains Nos. 1-30. Book 2 contains Nos. 31-60. Schirmer now puts out an edition containing both. The half- and one-page etudes start simply.

The Doflein Method: The Violinist's Progress by Erich and Erma Doflein: The beauty of this series is that it includes works from the Renaissance through the 20th-century. There are pieces, exercises, duets, and opportunities for the student to do some written transposition and composing.

The School of Violin-Technics, Book 1 by Henry Schradieck: Left-hand exercises in all the positions through seventh and in all keys

The Rhythm Train by Dana DeKalb: Volumes 1&2 have cute illustrations where train cars represent beats.

Fiddle Rhythms by Sally O'Reilly: It starts with the Twinkle rhythms and takes a page to introduce each new rhythm. Fun illustrations of pie- and pizza-flavors.

Studying Rhythm by Anne Carothers Hall: It covers everything from quarters and eighths in 2/4 to the most difficult things you might ever encounter. A number of exercises can be used as duets or, for a challenge, can be tapped by the right and left hands together.

Rhythmic Training by Robert Starer: It begins with unmetered preliminary exercises before moving to organized meters in Chapter 1. Each exercise shows the pulses and their groupings as well as notating important preparatory subdivisions in transition points.