

# Sight-Reading with Technology: Using an iPad to Teach Students Piano Sight-Reading Skills

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## Home Concert Xtreme

by Zenph

- ❖ Plugs directly into the keyboard
- ❖ Uses MIDI technology to only move on if the player has played the correct notes
- ❖ Allows the facilitator to input his or her own music for players to use, no matter how long or short
- ❖ Allows for specific examples to be used (i.e. Chorales)



Home Concert Xtreme Screenshot. N.d. Photograph. iPad Apps. Zenph. Web. 23 Apr. 2013. <[http://www.zenph.com/media/uncorrupted\\_hcx\\_iPad\\_1.png](http://www.zenph.com/media/uncorrupted_hcx_iPad_1.png)>.

## Advantages

- ❖ Students must play the correct notes before moving on, which reinforces accuracy
- ❖ Consistent tempo is encouraged yet flexible, allowing for students to figure out where their next notes are
- ❖ The input of preferred scores allows for sight-reading of chorales, a necessary and crucial element of piano pedagogy
- ❖ Keyboard interface gives immediate feedback on accuracy

## Drawbacks

- ❖ Lack reinforcement of consistent tempo
- ❖ Sight-reading encourages students to keep going even if they make a mistake. This app doesn't let students continue until they correct their error

## Connecting to a “Plugged-in Generation”

- ❖ We wanted to see if using interactive iPad technology improved the sight-reading skills of secondary piano students
- ❖ We used two apps, “Sightread4piano” by Wessar and “Home Concert Xtreme” by Zenph



N.d. Photograph. *Take Piano Courses Online*. CollegeOnline.com, 2 Jan. 2012. Web. 23 Apr. 2013. <<http://www.collegeonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Piano-Course-Online.jpg>>.

## The Process

- ❖ Each student sight-read with each app once a week using one exercise per app.
- ❖ The facilitators made observations about the students' progress and ability with each app
- ❖ After the semester, each student was asked to comment on their comfort level with the apps and if they felt that technology helped improve their sight-reading skills

## Facilitator Observations

- ❖ The students responded well to using the apps. It took time to get used to both apps because of their difference in nature, but on average the class's sight-reading improved quite well by using the apps

## Student Reactions

- ❖ Students enjoyed using the apps.
- ❖ They believed that their sight-reading did improve with using the apps
- ❖ They preferred to use the “Home Concert Xtreme” app because it let them go at their own pace
- ❖ **While students enjoyed the apps, most students seemed to prefer the traditional method of sight-reading out of a book as opposed to using technology**

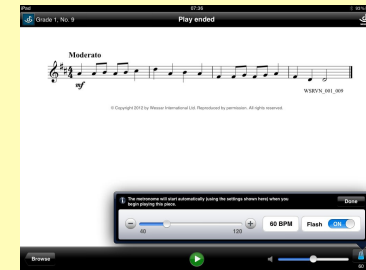
## Sightread4piano

by Wessar

- ❖ All examples are pre-programmed
- ❖ Multiple examples per difficulty level
- ❖ Short examples, only a few measures long
- ❖ Measures disappear once they are played
- ❖ No keyboard interface

## Advantages

- ❖ Consistent tempo teaches students to move on, even if they made a mistake
- ❖ Removal of measures teaches students to always be looking ahead
- ❖ Can be used at a piano without a MIDI connection



SightRead4BowedStrings by Wessar V1.0. N.d. Photograph. *SightRead4BowedStrings by Wessar V1.0*. Apps for IDevices. Web. 23 Apr. 2013. <[http://apps4idevices.com/data/qs/images/SightRead4BowedStrings%20by%20Wessar\\_002-001.jpg](http://apps4idevices.com/data/qs/images/SightRead4BowedStrings%20by%20Wessar_002-001.jpg)>.

## Drawbacks

- ❖ Inability to subdivide the built-in metronome disallows a slower, more comfortable tempo for secondary piano students
- ❖ Removal of measures gave some students trouble if they had a hard time finding where the next downbeat was
- ❖ Preset examples only. Musical examples cannot be added