



## Inner Hearing

**Inner hearing** is the skill of hearing words, melodies, and sounds inside our heads without those sounds being externally present.

### Why promote “Inner Hearing” in Education

Inner hearing is a skill necessary to reading, to matching pitch, and to rehearsing silently. Without inner hearing, we would never be aware of more than one sound at a time. Without inner hearing, reading could never be more than naming letters, and music reading could never be more than naming notes.

Inner hearing helps students recall previously experienced music, recognize music as the same in different performances, and distinguish between different musical pieces.

In short, it may be difficult to learn anything if one’s inner hearing is not working properly.

### Preparing Students for Using Their “Inner Hearing”

“Let’s put the ending of the song, “Mary Had a Little Lamb” inside our heads, in our inner hearing, when we get there. What is the end of the song? (Its fleece was white as snow.) You can move your lips to the words (avoid exaggerating), but don’t let the sound come outside your head. Here we go.”

### Introducing “Inner Hearing”

“As we sing ‘The Farmer in the Dell’, let’s put the song in our inner hearing when we get to the last ‘The farmer in the dell’. We’ll move our lips to the words, but the song will sound only inside our heads.”

For some adults and children, the “lips only” approach is a necessary step to activate inner hearing.<sup>1</sup>

### **Bibliography**

Bennett P. D. & Bartholomew, D.R. (1997). *SongWorks I: singing in the education of children*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, pgs. 87-89.