IMPROVING SIGHT-READING

THROUGH BEGINNING BAND INSTRUCTION

By

Joshua Earl Kohl

Liberty University

A MASTER'S THESIS PROJECT PRESENTED IN PARTIAL

FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

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Gaudium caeli est musica

(The joy of heaven is music)

ABSTRACT

Aural skills training needs to be included in the beginning band curriculum. Educators strive to help students reach their potential. At the same time, they continue to use method books that emphasize a visual approach to music education. To fully engage with music, students should not just see the music written on a page but should be able to hear it as well. Through aural skills training, such as audiation, students will be able to internalize and hear the music they see without the need for an audial stimulant.

This study defines the current amount of aural training included in current beginning band method books. This is done by analyzing and comparing the current method books and their inclusion of aural training materials. The study also uses historical research experiments and a Likert-type survey to explain why aural skills training needs to be included in beginning band method books.

Included is a sample curriculum based on the works of various music education theorists. These theorists include Edwin Gordon, Carl Orff, Shinichi Suzuki, and others. The included sample curriculum is not meant to be a standard curriculum for beginning band classes. Instead, it provides a basic outline of a recommended curriculum that incorporates aural skills through a sound-before-sight approach to beginning instrumental music education.

Keywords: sight-reading, beginning band, aural skills training, audiation

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NAfME – National Association for Music Education

GIML – The Gordon Institute for Music Learning

WFPS – The Watkins-Farnum Performance Scale

MENC – Music Educators National Conference

ESSA – Every Student Succeeds Act

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Students in the beginning band classroom can improve their sight-reading through music theory and aural skills training. Scholars of both music theory and psychology have acknowledged the concept of sight-reading being improved through tonal understanding.[1] Tonal understanding is an approximate knowledge of what sounds are associated with the value given in written music.

The beginning band teacher's primary focus is to develop students' ability to play their chosen instruments with an end goal of performance proficiency. This proficiency needs to meet the instructor's predetermined markers established at the beginning of the course, state standards, national standards, and the level of "personal satisfaction."[2] When the values of a beginning band classroom are solely performance proficiency, students may only seek objective achievement instead of developing their musical ability.[3]

Students are given the opportunity in various instrumental method books (whether through online, compact disk, or in-person) to hear what they should be playing before performing a piece of music.[4] This use of a pre-performance resource can lead to students'

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[1] H. Christian Bernhard II, "The Effects of Tonal Training on the Melodic Ear Playing and Sight Reading Achievement of Beginning Wind Instrumentalists," *Contributions to Music Education* 31, no. 1 (2004): 91, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24133280.

[2] Thomas A. Regelski, *Teaching General Music in Grades 4-8: A musicianship Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 213.

[3] Randall Everett Allsup, "The Moral Ends of Band," *Education in and Through Music* 51, no. 3 (2012): 181, https://www.jstor.org/stable/23263359.

[4] James N. Anderson, "Effects of Tape-Recorded Aural Models on Sight-Reading and Performance Skills," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 24, https://www.doi.org/10.2307/3344676.

inability to sight-read music. Most students strive to replicate what they hear and may struggle to play a piece of music unless they can listen to their specific part. By only performing based on replicating an audio resource, students cannot develop their musical abilities to successfully sight-read.

Background

This thesis project is based on students' participation in beginning band programs in the United States Public Education System. The study includes published literature regarding different methodologies behind beginning instrumental instruction and the critiques of various method books and their use in the beginning band classroom. The National Association for Music Education has also created standards that teachers must meet to develop an instrumental music curriculum. By incorporating non-traditional instrumental music techniques at the beginning band level, students can better read the music they see. In gaining better music reading skills, the instructor can develop advanced sight-reading skills in their students. More proficient sight-reading skills can lead to a higher level of "personal satisfaction" based on the tier of difficulty students will be playing.

Shinichi Suzuki taught that learning music is similar to how children learn to speak through observation, imitation, and repetition.[5] Carl Orff taught music through his interest in various forms of familiar music.[6] This familiar music included folk songs, popular songs, dance music, theatre music, and music from the Medieval, Baroque, and Renaissance periods of Western Civilization. The focus of this teaching constantly being performing music through

[5] Michael L. Mark and Charles L. Gary, *A History of American Music Education* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2007), 440.

[6] Mark and Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, 437.

replication. The critical term in both of these learning theories is imitation/replication. When students imitate, they are not able to fully engage with the music. This act of replicating can, in turn, cause the goal of personal satisfaction to become increasingly more elusive to the student.

Statement of the Problem

Current band method books and instructional practices for beginning band instruction do not fully address sight-reading in their method of instruction. There are various instrumental method books, including Essential Elements[7] (Hal Leonard Music), Standard of Excellence[8] (KJOS Music), Accent on Achievement[9] (Alfred Music), and Measures of Success[10] (FJH Music). While some include aspects of music history and music theory, teachers would benefit from the inclusion of the skills taught in aural training in addition to these other elements.

The skill of sight-reading music is one of the most valued skills in music education.[11] Sight-reading is defined as the performance of music where the performer has had little preparation and little to no prior knowledge of the selected piece.[12] Sight-reading is a significant part of state-level concert band adjudications, honor band auditions, and the high school band

[7] Tim Lautzenheiser, John Higgins, Charles Menghini, Paul Lavender, Tom C. Rhodes, and Don Bierschenk, *Essential Elements For Band* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2004).

[8] Bruce Pearson, *Standard of Excellence* (San Diego: Neil A. Kjos Music Company, 2004).

[9] John O'Reilly and Mark Williams, *Accent on Achievement* (New York: Alfred Music, 1997).

[10] Deborah A. Sheldon, Brian Balmages, Timothy Loest, Robert Sheldon, and David Collier, *Measures of Success* (Fort Lauderdale, The FJH Music Company, 2010).

[11] Carol M. Hayward and Joyce Eastlund Gromko, "Relationships among Music Sight-Reading and Technical Proficiency, Spatial Visualization, and Aural Discrimination," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 57, no. 1 (April 2009): 26-36, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429409332677.

[12] Timothy A. Paul, "Sight-Reading Requirements at Concert Band Festivals: A National Survey" *Contributions to Music Education* 37, no. 1 (2010): 51, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24127268.

curriculum.[13] Students, however, may continue to struggle with being able to sight-read works without first hearing the music they will be performing.

Statement of the Purpose

This study is a mixed-method approach[14] that uses survey-based research[15] and document analysis.[16] The analysis of current instrument method books analyzes the extent of aural skill training and sight-reading currently utilized in beginning band instruction books. It incorporates various music learning theories that allow students to become better sight-readers. These music learning theories include Carl Orff, Shinichi Suzuki, Edwin Gordon, and Norman Webb.

The inclusion of aspects from Edwin Gordon's Music Learning Theory, such as audiation, the act of a performer hearing and comprehending music without an audial stimulus present,[17] will allow students the opportunity to develop better sight-reading. From Norman Webb's Depth of Knowledge chart, there will be the focus of students attempting to perform at all four levels daily to develop more proficiently. The four levels are recalling, conceptualizing, strategic thinking, and extended thinking.[18] Suzuki's mother-tongue philosophy, where students learn by imitating and replicating what they hear, allows them to learn audiation, similar to how

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[13] Paul, "Sight-Reading Requirements at Concert Band Festivals: A National Survey", 51-64.

[14] John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *RESEARCH DESIGN: Qualitative Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2018), 15.

[15] Creswell and Creswell, *RESEARCH DESIGN*, 12.

[16] Creswell and Creswell, *RESEARCH DESIGN*, 187.

[17] Edwin E. Gordon, "Audiation, Music Learning Theory, Music Aptitude, and Creativity," *Suncoast Music Education Forum on Creativity*, (1989): 75. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED380341.pdf.

[18] Norman L. Webb, *Web Alignment Tool* (Madison, WI: Wisconsin Center of Educational Research, 2005), https://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/M1-Slide_19_DOK_Wheel_Slide.pdf.

Orff expressed music teaching. Orff's method involved having students interact with music by imitating what they see and hear their professor doing in class.[19]

Significance of the Study

The application of these findings may help teachers of beginning instrumental students develop more proficient sight-reading capabilities within their students. Further, the developed sample curriculum provides a research-based model to assist others in design (Appendix A). With an increased focus on the student's musical ability and less on playing the instrument, the educator enables them to develop more fully into comprehensive musicians. By including aural skills training in beginning band instruction, the student becomes more enabled to sight-read what they see on the page rather than see memorized notes to be played in a sequence. For a musician, the ability to "hear" the music without playing it is an invaluable tool that will serve them well.[20]

Developers of instrumental method books may use the results to develop improved method books that focus more on the musician's abilities and understanding. Many instrument method books provide limited opportunities for sight-reading instruction. Instead, it is expected that other materials for the student to become more proficient on their instrument be purchased and used by teachers. In standard classroom textbooks, the information needed to complete the course, such as math, English, history, and science, is self-contained within one textbook. If the same model were taken and incorporated into new method books, it might benefit the teacher and the schools regarding time spent planning for instruction and allocating financial resources.

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[19] Mark and Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, 437-441.

[20] Sol Berkowitz, Gabriel Fontrier, Leo Kraft, Perry Goldstein, and Edward Smaldone, *A New Approach to Sight Singing* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011), 4.

An issue with current method books defined by the Yale Seminar shows that the authorship predominately belongs to musicologists and educators not directly involved with public education.[21] Another issue is that "most students do not have the time, financial means, opportunity or desire to study the various areas of music separately."[22] According to Tracy Heavner (University of Southern Alabama), current method books do not fully include all nine areas of comprehensive musicianship.[23] The main category missing from these method books is the use of ear training. The inclusion of aural skills training in method book development can improve method books and improve comprehensive musicianship.

Research Questions

This thesis focuses on adding aural training techniques to the director's personal preference of instrumental method book. These skills include audiation, interval knowledge and identification, rhythmic comprehension, and solfege training. The questions chosen to drive the research include:

1. What elements of sight-reading and aural skills training exist in the scope and sequence of popular beginning band method texts?
2. What differences exist between elements of sight-reading in popular beginning band method texts?
3. How do directors report sight-reading and aural skills inclusion within their curriculum?

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[21] Mark and Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, 399-400.

[22] Tracy Heavner, "The applied music lesson: Teaching gifted and talented students utilizing principles of comprehensive musicianship," *International Education Journal* 6 no. 2 (2005): 170. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ854967.pdf.

[23] Deborah A. Sheldon, review of "An Analysis of Beginning Band Methods Books for Principles of Comprehensive Musicianship, by Tracy Lee Heavner," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 136 (Spring 1998): 81-85. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40318907.

4. Do instrumental music teachers report a need for aural skills training to be included in the beginning band text?

Hypotheses

The research questions are paired with the following hypotheses:

1. Beginning band method texts do not fully address aural skills training.
2. No differences exist between the beginning band texts concerning aural skills training.
3. Directors will report that aural skills training can improve sight-reading capabilities.
4. Directors will report a need for aural skills training to be included in the scope and sequence of beginning band texts.

If beginning band texts include aural training elements, it will allow the student to sight-read successfully. These elements include solfege training, interval identification, audiation, rhythmic performance, and rhythmic dictation. Indeed, this will only improve their sight-reading ability and make them a more comprehensive musician according to state and national standards.

Definition of Terms

Sight-Reading – Performing or singing a composition at first sight, without previous preparation or rehearsal.[24]

[24] *OnMusic Dictionary,* s.v. "Sight-Reading," accessed April 27, 2021, https://dictionary.onmusic.org/terms/3154-sight-reading

Music Theory – The study of the structure of music. This study includes an analysis of the basic elements of music encompassing melody, harmony, rhythm, form, texture, and the function of each of these elements.[25]

Aural Skills – A music theory study where musicians learn to identify basic elements of music solely by hearing.

Audiation – The act of hearing and comprehending music for which the sound is no longer or may never have been present.[26]

Beginning Band – A class designed primarily for students who are new to playing a band instrument.

Methods Text – A book designed to teach the basics of playing an instrument to students who are new to playing a musical instrument.

Curriculum – The subjects studied in a school or college and what each subject includes.[27]

National Standards – Learning goals for what students should know and do at each grade level as set by a national board for various school subjects. In music, these standards are set by NAfME, the National Association for Music Education.[28]

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[25] *OnMusic Dictionary,* s.v. "Music Theory," accessed April 27, 2021, https://dictionary.onmusic.org/terms/3154-sight-reading

[26] Gordon Institute of Music Learning, "Audiation," accessed April 27, 2021, https://giml.org/mlt/audiation/.

[27] *Cambridge Dictionary Online*, s.v. "Curriculum," accessed April 27, 2021, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/curriculum

[28] National Association for Music Education, "2014 Music Standards," accessed April 27, 2021. https://nafme.org/my-classroom/standards/core-music-standards/

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter examines current literature, including beginning band curriculum and pedagogy, aural skills training materials, aural training's use, the connection between aural training and sight-reading, and aural skills studies research previously conducted. This chapter discusses the significant role that aural training plays in the development of sight-reading skills.

Beginning Band Instruction – Curriculum

In 2015 the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) became law. The creation of ESSA ensures that provisions are in place to help create success for both students and schools. One of these provisions included the requirement that schools have high academic standards to prepare students to succeed in college and careers.[29] The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) has set high standards on a national level for use when creating a curriculum for musical ensemble education. Musical ensemble education is understood to mean groups comprising of vocal, instrumental, or mixed focus students. The standards are set to measure students' current ability and give educators markers to measure student growth. The standards are measured in five levels titled novice, intermediate, proficient, accomplished, and advanced.

Each category has various "Anchor Standards" to help the educator develop the curriculum that they will use in their classroom. These categories and their anchor standards include creating, performing, responding, and connecting. Within each of these categories, there are subcategories created to assist the teacher in curriculum development. The subcategories

[29] U.S. Department of Education, "Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)," *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) | U.S. Department of Education* (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.), accessed June 7, 2021, https://www.ed.gov/essa?src=ft.

under creating include imagine, plan and make, evaluate and refine, and present. The main focus of the creating category is to allow the student to interact with music by generating, developing, refining, and sharing musical ideas to convey intent, demonstrate craftsmanship, and exhibit originality.[30]

In creating, the focus is placed on selecting, analyzing, interpreting, rehearsing, and presenting for the performing category. Students select varied musical works based on interest, knowledge, technical skill, and context. After selecting musical works, they analyze the structure and context of the selected musical work to enhance their performance. Upon completing their analysis, students develop personal interpretations of their selected work incorporating the creator's intent. Students then rehearse, evaluate, and refine their performance until they have achieved their desired performance level. Finally, students present their performance to showcase the work that has been accomplished.[31]

Responding in the musical ensemble classroom requires the student to select, analyze, interpret, and evaluate appropriate music based on the purpose and context of the teacher's lesson plans. Students should seek to reflect on various musical works better to develop their responses to specific musical ideas and concepts when responding. Students should evaluate musical works through the use of analysis, interpretation, and established criteria.[32]

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[30] NAfME, "2014 Music Standards for Ensembles."

[31] NAfME, "2014 Music Standards for Ensembles."

[32] NAfME, "2014 Music Standards for Ensembles"

The final stage a student should be achieving is connecting. When students are connecting, they are relating musical ideas and works to various contexts and personal experiences. By doing this, students deepen their understanding of music.[33]

For many teachers, goals are set for the student to accomplish. These goals become met at various points of their instrumental music training. The guide by which teachers measure these levels is called a curriculum map. An example of a curriculum map would be a list of achievable goals that all students enrolled in the class should accomplish. Teachers divide these goals on a semester-by-semester basis to have increasingly challenging goals to promote student improvement. Good posture, instrument assembly, primary rhythms (whole, half, quarter notes and rests, ties), proper hand positioning, playing the first five notes of their selected instrument (concert B♭, C, D, E♭, and F), basic music symbols, and basic instrument-specific techniques are appropriate goals for students in their first semester of a beginning band course. Students should also be capable of playing selected musical works from their instructor's chosen method book.[34] This first semester is critical to the musician's development as it prepares them to further their instrumental music education. As the student accomplishes goals set in the previous semester, the instructor will present them with new goals and markers to know when they have achieved their goals.

[33] NAfME, "2014 Music Standards for Ensembles"

[34] Arts Education, "Band Music Curriculum." (Arlington Public Schools, 2011) https://www.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/legacy_assets/www/deb02cedbb-110830_-_APS_Band_Curriculum__Supplements_FINAL.pdf

Beginning Band Instruction – Pedagogy

While curriculum focuses on *what* is taught, pedagogy focuses on *how* the subject is taught. More specifically, pedagogy is "the study of the methods and activities of teaching."[35]

In an article written by William T. Whitener (University of Alaska, formerly), the author investigated the effects of a comprehensive musicianship approach compared to a performance-oriented approach to the instruction of beginning band students.[36] For the study conducted by Whitener, two groups were taken and given different method texts that would dictate the teacher's classroom approach. Group one used the Belwin First Division Band Method Book for their selected instruments in the performance-oriented group. Group two used materials created by the researcher for developing comprehensive musicianship.[37] Based on the results gathered from the study, the researcher concluded that for many students, "there is an intense interest in learning about music as well as how to play an instrument."[38]

Michael Worthy (University of Mississippi) conducted a study in 2008 to find what "expert beginning band teachers" were doing in their classrooms to have success.[39] All of the teachers observed used a clear list of ways to engage with the students. This list included teacher mobility during instruction, recuperative periods to manage student fatigue, managed transitions

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[35] *Cambridge Dictionary Online*, s.v. "Pedagogy," accessed April 29, 2021, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/curriculum

[36] William T. Whitener, "Comparison of Two Approaches to Teaching Beginning Band." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 31, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 5-13. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3345106.

[37] Whitener, "Comparison of Two Approaches to Teaching Beginning Band," 6-7.

[38] Whitener, "Comparison of Two Approaches to Teaching Beginning Band," 13.

[39] Michael D Worthy and B. Lane Thomson. "Observation and Analysis of Expert Teaching in Beginning Band" *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 180 (Spring 2009): 29-41. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40319318.

to keep students on track, and various instructional materials, including teacher-constructed materials and published beginning band method books.[40] In all observed classrooms, the teachers focused on adjusting the material to better suit the student's needs and ensure successful performance.

Aural Skills Training

Edwin Gordon describes how students learn through the use of audiation in his Music Learning Theory. According to Gordon, a person audiates when they can hear and comprehend music for which sound is not physically present.[41] There are various stages of audiation, which include listening to music, reading a piece, writing music, performing music from recall, and improvising and performing music creatively.[42] An excellent way to help understand how audiation works is to think about how conversation works in language. As a person sits and takes in what they are reading, seeing, or are hearing, they begin to analyze the material presented and develop a response. In music, it is the same. As musicians read music on a page or listen to a recording, they begin analyzing and understanding to tailor their performance based on the various visual and audial cues.[43]

Aural skills training is training in the power to perceive the tonal elements in music.[44] According to Sadie Jackson (Howard University, formerly), ear training should be discussed

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[40] Worthy and Thomson, "Observation and Analysis of Expert Teaching in Beginning Band," 33-34.

[41] Gordon, "Audiation, Music Learning Theory, Music Aptitude, and Creativity," 75.

[42] Gordon, "Audiation, Music Learning Theory, Music Aptitude, and Creativity," 76.

[43] Gordon, "Audiation, Music Learning Theory, Music Aptitude, and Creativity," 77.

[44] Sadie I. Jackson, "Ear and Rhythmic Training." *Music Educators Journal* 50, no. 1 (September – October 1963): 133-135. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3390002.

from the viewpoint of developing a grasp of phrase or melody, harmony, and tonality.[45] Developing a grasp of phrases or melody means that the learner can respond to the curvature and rhythmic patterns of notes presented on the staff. Harmonic sense is the ability to indicate the chord's quality played based on multiple voices in a harmonic structure. Tonality refers to understanding a note's relationship to another note based on its position on the staff. Jackson says that "no scheme for ear training can be considered adequate which does not make constant provision for developing musical imagery."[46] "Musical imagery refers to the experience of "replaying" music by imagining it inside the head."[47] Musical imagery, as used by musicians, involves sounds and the physical movements required to create sounds, a 'view' of the score or an instrument, and the emotions a musician wishes to express in performance.[48] Using musical imagery, a performer can understand all materials present without a recording of the music to serve as a reference.

For many, such as Zoltán Kodály, John Feierabend, and Edwin Gordon, this concept of "sound before symbol" is crucial in music education.[49] This aural training allows the musician to develop increasingly discriminatory sensitivity to sound. Young children learn to match pitch and move to a given beat pattern as they begin their aural training. In comparison, the advanced

[45] Jackson, "Ear and Rhythmic Training" 133.

[46] Jackson, "Ear and Rhythmic Training" 133.

[47] Andrea Halpern, "Cerebral Substrates of Musical Imagery," *The Biological Foundations of Music* 930, No 1 (January 2006): 1. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-6632.2001.tb05733.x.

[48] Terry Clark, Aaron Williamon, and Aleksander Aksentijevic, "Musical imagery and imagination: the function, measurement and application of imagery skills for performance" *Musical Imaginations: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Creativity, Performance, and Perception* (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2011): 351-365. https://www.doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199568086.003.0022.

[49] Dee Hansen and Sarah A. Milligan, "Aural Skills: At the Juncture of Research in Early Reading and Music Literacy," *Music Educators Journal* 99, no. 2 (December 2012): 77. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23364291.

musician can hear minute discrepancies in attacks, releases, pitch, and rhythm. The inclusion of aural skills training in beginning band education would be beneficial towards gaining better sight-reading ability. It would also aid students in their phonological awareness as they better develop their linguistic and speech abilities.[50]

How Aural Training Works

Three historical studies make a case for the inclusion of aural training in band education. However, all had elements that could not be controlled within their tests. These include the student's previous musical experience, the amount of practice done by the student, and ensuring that each class would be conducted the same way each time. Two controlled elements existed each time: how much the instructor would administer aural skills training and which texts the instructors would use.

Dr. Patricia Shehan (University of Washington) wrote that the sound-before-sight principle is the key to learning music in Gordon's music learning theory. Through audiation, students develop understanding through aural experiences of tonal and rhythmic patterns.[51] She further states that if educators improve music education, there must be a continuing effort to develop techniques incorporating various learning theories. The five approaches to music education of Dalcroze, Orff, Suzuki, Kodaly, and Gordon show there is not one single way

[50] Hansen and Milligan, "Aural Skills: At the Juncture of Research in Early Reading and Music Literacy," 78.

[51] Patricia K. Shehan, "Major Approaches to Music Education: An Account of Method" *Music Educators Journal* 72, no. 6 (February 1986): 30. https://www.doi.org/10.2307/3401273.

students learn to understand music. It is not the method practiced by the teacher that matters, but the most compatible method for the student to have success.[52]

Kate Covington (Professor Emeritus, University of Kentucky) wrote that audiation requires the utilization of mental processes that rely on a mental representation or tonal image of the sound itself.[53] The tonal image heard closely approximates the experience of hearing the actual pitch.[54] Covington refers to this perception of the pitch as schema. Schema is at work when we hear and listen to music. If the piece is familiar, we have specific expectations throughout the listening experience. If the piece is unfamiliar, the schema attempts to create structures and expectations of what is to come.[55] Even when music is not heard but seen, the schema continues to work. It does this by reconstructing and reassembling the music we see using sounds stored in our memory. This act is known as "reconstructive activity."[56] This "reconstructive activity" is the foundation from which audiation builds. When a person can reconstruct sounds in their mind's ear, they begin to audiate and hear the sound without the need for an audial stimulant. Through aural training techniques, a person can identify the connections between notes more easily. In turn, they become able to reconstruct sounds more quickly and efficiently. This increased ability is what develops higher levels of sight-reading.

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[52] Shehan, "Major Approaches to Music Education: An Account of Method," 31.

[53] Kate Covington, "The Mind's Ear: I Hear Music and No One Is Performing" *College Music Symposium* 45 (2005): 33. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40374518

[54] John R. Bergan, "Pitch Perception, Imagery, and Regression in the Service of Ego" *Journal of Research in Music Education* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1965): 15. https://www.doi.org/10.2307/3343567.

[55] Covington, "The Mind's Ear: I Hear Music and No One Is Performing" 34.

[56] Covington, "The Mind's Ear: I Hear Music and No One Is Performing" 34.

In Robert W. Sherman's (Ball State University, formerly) article "Aural and Visual Perception of Melody Presented in Tonal and Atonal Musical Environments," the author states that instruction in the perception of melody is traditionally accomplished through isolated melodic dictation.[57] He further says that the total makeup of tonal and atonal organizations are elements of order that serve as a basis for understanding in developing a student's perception of music. Understanding materials such as intervallic relationships allows the student to have a reference of sound to understand written music without the need for an external audial source.[58] This understanding is capable due to the transfer of learning. Sherman states that "transfer of learning is inherently dependent upon the effectiveness of the original learning."[59] Positive transfer of learning is facilitated through similarities in the modes of presentation, context, meaning, and set in the learning and transfer situation.

Aural Skill Studies

"A natural relationship exists between tonal understanding and abilities to perform melodies of Western culture by ear and sight, a concept which has been acknowledged by scholars of music education and psychology."[60] H. Christian Bernhard II (SUNY Fredonia) conducted a study in 2004 into differentiating instructional methods. The purposes of the study were to investigate tonal training using materials that exist in traditional method books. The

[57] Robert W. Sherman, "Aural and Visual Perception of Melody Presented in Tonal and Atonal Musical Environments," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* no. 4 (Winter 1965): 37. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40375261.

[58] Sherman, "Aural and Visual Perception of Melody Presented in Tonal and Atonal Musical Environments," 38.

[59] Sherman, "Aural and Visual Perception of Melody Presented in Tonal and Atonal Musical Environments," 37.

[60] Bernhard, "The Effects of Tonal Training on the Melodic Ear Playing and Sight Reading Achievement of Beginning Wind Instrumentalists" 91.

secondary purpose of the study was to examine the relationships among beginning wind instrumentalists' tonal aptitude, experience with different instruments, vocal experience, melodic ear playing achievement, and melodic sight-reading achievement. For the study, 42 sixth-grade beginning band students were divided into two groups of 21. All groups received instruction from the researcher during regularly scheduled 45-minute band classes, twice a week for ten weeks. Subjects were recruited via a researcher-constructed student questionnaire. From that point, students were tested for aptitude using the Tonal Imagery test created by Edwin Gordon in his Musical Aptitude Profile. Students were then randomly divided into one of the two experimental groups. The results yielded by the study concluded that the inclusion of tonal training alongside standard method book melodies significantly affects beginning wind instrumentalists' melodic ear playing achievement. It did not, however, substantially impact their melodic sight-reading achievement.[61] The author then explains that the experimental group that had undergone aural training had created a relationally strengthened association between ear playing and sight-reading capabilities.[62]

In another study conducted by Michael J. Kendall (The University at Tulsa, formerly) in 1987, the researcher took 76 fifth-grade students in four beginning band classes and administered a posttest based on the content and instruction given throughout the course.[63] All groups were given the same instruction through the first four weeks of class. From that point forward, each

[61] Bernhard, "The Effects of Tonal Training on the Melodic Ear Playing and Sight Reading Achievement of Beginning Wind Instrumentalists" 102.

[62] Bernhard, "The Effects of Tonal Training on the Melodic Ear Playing and Sight Reading Achievement of Beginning Wind Instrumentalists" 103.

[63] Michael J. Kendall, "Two Instructional Approaches to the Development of Aural and Instrumental Performance Skills" *Journal of Research in Music Education* 36, no. 4 (Winter 1988): 208, https://doi.org/10.2307/3344874.

class was assigned a different instructional strategy. The texts the researcher used to develop these strategies include: (a) *The Comprehensive Music Instructor: Listen, Move, Sing, and Play for Band, Book 1*; (b) *The Comprehensive Music Instructor: Listen, Move, Sing, and Play for Band, Supplementary Book 1, Perform Live,* (c) *Instrumental Ear Training and Intonation Studies* and (d) *Solfege Training and Intonation Studies*.[64] In Kendall's approach, the students were given instruction first. Students received music instruction starting with kinesthetic, solfege, rhythmic and melodic visual association, and eventually solo vocal performance. At this point, instruments were introduced into the students' instruction. The data gathered by Kendall in his research indicated that comprehensive music instruction did not impede but was more effective in developing the student's performance capabilities.[65]

Warren Haston (University of Hartford) conducted a study where two different classes received different methods of instruction. The first class received sound-before-sight or aural emphasis in their music training. The second group received a visual emphasis of music learning in their instruction following the sequence of the method book, line by line, with no supplemental material.[66] One critical difference between both groups was the inclusion of modeling by the teacher. Group one viewed examples of how to perform based on the instructor's performance.

In contrast, group two did not receive this oral skills emphasis in aural skills training. The subject pool, obtained from three elementary schools in Northern Virginia, consists of students

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[64] Kendall, "Two Instructional Approaches to the Development of Aural and Instrumental Performance Skills" 209.

[65] Kendall, "Two Instructional Approaches to the Development of Aural and Instrumental Performance Skills" 216.

[66] Warren Haston "Beginning Wind Instruction: A Comparison of Aural and Visual Approaches" *Contributions to Music Education* 37, no. 2 (2010) 15, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24127224.

entering the fifth grade. The study utilized a posttest-only control group design.[67] The tests used by the researcher include a performance test of line 31 from the *Essential Elements Beginning Band Method Book* and the Watkins-Farnum Performance Scale (WFPS) in session 15.[68] The Watkins-Farnum Performance Scale consists of 14 sight-reading exercises ordered according to increasing difficulty. The person administering the test uses a scoring sheet to record mistakes. The student's score is calculated by subtracting the number of mistakes from the total possible score listed on the sheet.[69] The results of the WFPS indicate that the students from group one (aural training) scored higher on the sight-reading test than those from group two (visual training).[70]

Charles Norris (Grand Valley State University) had conducted a study in 2002 to examine the relationship between performances on one sight-singing assessment and one melodic dictation assessment.[71] The purpose of the study was to determine if the relationship between these two elements changes after aural skills instruction. Norris employed a pretest/posttest design to evaluate the relationships using tasks at the beginning and end of a collegiate semester. For the study, 41 freshman aural perception students served as the test subjects. Data was collected using a 10-measure sight-singing exercise and an 8-measure melodic dictation exercise. The data results suggest that as the students progressed through the

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[67] Haston "Beginning Wind Instruction: A Comparison of Aural and Visual Approaches" 16.

[68] Haston "Beginning Wind Instruction: A Comparison of Aural and Visual Approaches" 17.

[69] Clifford P. Lillya and Allen P. Britton "The Watkins-Farnum Performance Scale for All Band Instruments – Review," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 2, No. 2 (1954) 174, https://www.doi.org/10.2307/3343700

[70] Haston "Beginning Wind Instruction: A Comparison of Aural and Visual Approaches" 21.

[71] Charles E. Norris, "The Relationship Between Sight Singing Achievement and Melodic Dictation Achievement," *Contributions to Music Education* 30, No. 1 (2003): 39-53. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24127026.

course, their performance on the sight-singing example had improved. There was also a significant improvement in their melodic dictation scores. According to Norris, these findings suggest that a well-structured course on aural training can improve sight-singing/sight-reading experiences and higher levels of achievement.

Connecting Aural Training with Sight-Reading

"The skill of music sight-reading – the ability to read and play music at first sight – is highly valued in the field of music education."[72] According to Carol Hayward (Bowling Green State University) and Joyce Gromko (Bowling Green State University, Emeritus), research has shown that sight-reading improves through teaching that uses multiple approaches. These approaches include integrating auditory, visual, and kinesthetic processing. Hayward and Gromko state that sight-reading ability can be predicted by rhythmic sight-reading, performance ability, reading comprehension, aural discrimination of rhythmic patterns, spatial-temporal reasoning, and styles of visual perception.[73] The authors advise that music educators could assist their students by connecting aural-spatial imagery for sound with performance on their instruments.[74] The authors expand upon this idea by suggesting that educators build an image of the sound through various musical activities. These activities include singing, hand signing in tonal solfege, and clapping or talking through the rhythms with a number or system that provides

[72] Carol M. Hayward and Joyce Eastlund Gromko, "Relationships among Music Sight-Reading and Technical Proficiency, Spatial Visualization, and Aural Discrimination," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 57, no. 1 (April 2009): 26. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40204946.

[73] Hayward and Gromko, "Relationships among Music Sight-Reading and Technical Proficiency, Spatial Visualization, and Aural Discrimination," 30.

[74] Hayward and Gromko, "Relationships among Music Sight-Reading and Technical Proficiency, Spatial Visualization, and Aural Discrimination," 34.

a context for the rhythm. Next in the sequence would be to sing the melody expressively while fingering their instrument to play with more expression.[75]

Teaching Aural Skills in the Classroom

James Hiatt (James Madison University, Emeritus) and Sam Cross (JMU, Emeritus) wrote an article experimenting with audiation as part of classroom instruction and applied lessons with advanced students.[76] The authors took the approach of teaching notational audiation[77] for a sight-singing class. This approach would determine the current ability of students in the class. They had found that most students can already audiate stepwise patterns in major keys. Hiatt and Cross required students to use a sight-singing book and combined it with an "aural-oral-visual process."[78] The following is the basic outline of the aural-oral-visual process:

1. The instructor asks students to imagine the sound of a new item to be added to their aural vocabulary (e.g., a new scale or chord). The instructor should check to make sure the students have the correct sound in mind (i.e., students should try to sing what they are hearing while the instructor makes corrections.)
2. After the instructor provides a visual pitch reference on the blackboard (e.g., a tonic or root), students are asked to listen to the new item and imagine the notation.
3. Individual students, then the whole class, sing the new item.
4. Students turn to the appropriate section of the sight-singing book. The instructor chooses a melody, and items 1, 2, and 3 are repeated in the key of that melody.
5. Students audiate (i.e., imagine the sound of) the entire melody.

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[75] Hayward and Gromko, "Relationships among Music Sight-Reading and Technical Proficiency, Spatial Visualization, and Aural Discrimination," 34.

[76] James S. Hiatt and Sam Cross, "Teaching and Using Audiation in Classroom Instruction and Applied Lessons with Advanced Students," *Music Educators Journal* 92, no. 5 (May 2006): 46-49. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3878502.

[77] Gordon, "Audiation, Music Learning Theory, Music Aptitude, and Creativity," 82.

[78] Hiatt and Cross, "Teaching and Using Audiation in Classroom Instruction and Applied Lessons with Advanced Students," 48.

6. Students sing the entire melody.[79]

Students learn to associate the physical motions used to produce sound on an instrument with a mental sense of pitch. In other words, most instrumental students learn to play by learning fingerings. According to Hiatt and Cross, a genuinely musical process – audiation – is much more reliable over time.[80] The authors concluded that "in university music programs, it is all too common to keep aural-skills training and applied instruction separate."[81] As teachers, their experience showed them that musicianship depends on the ability to audiate. Music reading proficiency, meaningful performance, and musical activities result from clear mental images of sound.[82]

Summary

From an early age, students must be allowed to engage with music in a variety of ways. These ways include movement to music as suggested by Dalcroze and learning to associate hand signs and movements with music performance similar to Kodaly's solfege. However, there is more to learning music than simply singing and moving. Researchers have stated that focusing on notational audiation could be the key to better sight-reading ability. This would change the focus of instrumental music education from replication through memorized finger positions to music creation based on previous knowledge and combining of abilities. In a sense, this method

[79] Hiatt and Cross, "Teaching and Using Audiation in Classroom Instruction and Applied Lessons with Advanced Students," 48.

[80] Hiatt and Cross, "Teaching and Using Audiation in Classroom Instruction and Applied Lessons with Advanced Students," 48.

[81] Hiatt and Cross, "Teaching and Using Audiation in Classroom Instruction and Applied Lessons with Advanced Students," 49.

[82] Hiatt and Cross, "Teaching and Using Audiation in Classroom Instruction and Applied Lessons with Advanced Students," 49.

could be described as layering. Layering is teaching that builds on students' varied learning styles and multiple intelligences.[83] Layering is already in use in beginning band method books by introducing elements based on what knowledge had been previously obtained through the sequence of the book. Using layering in instrumental music education to include aural skills training, similar to the way prescribed by various authors on the subject, students could gain better musical understanding, heightened performance ability, and improved sight-reading capabilities.

[83] H. Donovan Colding, "Integrating a Layered Curriculum to Facilitate Differentiated Instruction," (2021). http://www.ascd.org/ascd-express/vol3/324-colding.aspx#:~:text=Layered%20Curriculum%20is%20a%20teaching,relatinFg%20it%20to%20the%20real.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A parallel convergent mixed methods research approach is the framework for this study.[84] The data converge to enhance discussion and understanding of the research data. The data collected includes a document analysis (qualitative data) and an anonymous survey (quantitative data). The documents analyzed are various beginning band method books. These books are commonly used in beginning band classrooms to assist the teacher in the instrumental training of their students. The anonymous survey is given to a population identified by its proximity to the beginning band process.

Procedure: Text Analysis

For this part of the research, the data is collected through text analysis of beginning band method books. The selected method books include *First Division Band Method*,[85] *Standard of Excellence*,[86] *Accent on Achievement*,[87] *Essential Elements for Band*,[88] *The Yamaha Advantage*,[89] and *Tradition of Excellence*.[90] It is important to note that the research only focuses on the first book in each series. The method books present a comprehensive method of progression, starting

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[84] Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 217-221.

[85] Fred Weber, *First Division Band Method* (New York: Belwin Band Publishing Company, 1999).

[86] Bruce Pearson, *Standard of Excellence* (San Diego: Neil A. Kjos Music Company, 1993).

[87] John O'Reilly and Mark Williams, *Accent on Achievement* (New York: Alfred Publishing Company Inc., 1997).

[88] Tim Lautzenheiser, John Higgins, Charles Menghini, Paul Lavender, Tom C. Rhodes, and Don Bierschenk, *Essential Elements for Band* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Coporation, 2004).

[89] Sandy Feldstein and Larry Clark, *The Yamaha Advantage* (New Jersey: Charles Dumont & Sons, 2002).

[90] Bruce Pearson and Ryan Nowlin, *Tradition of Excellence Comprehensive Band Method* (San Diego: Kjos Music Press, 2010).

with instrument basics and building on techniques and skills learned in the previous book in the progression.

The researcher reviewed and analyzed the various method books to determine the amount of aural skills training material included in their instrumental music education approach. While these books are not a curriculum on their own, they are the primary source the teachers use when constructing their curriculum map and course design. The analysis of the various beginning band method books identifies answers to research questions one and two. The document analysis also compares the various method books to show differences in the approaches to beginning band education taken by the various authors of these books. The information was collected and placed in a table, as seen in Appendix C.

Procedure: Survey

This study focuses on the inclusion of aural skills training and its effect on sight-reading ability. The survey portion of the research identifies levels of aural training included in beginning band classrooms. The chosen population for this research was current public middle school beginning band teachers in South Carolina. The survey listed five questions that required teachers to describe their students' current ability levels and the teacher's approach to instruction. Survey questions were ordinally ranked using a Likert-type scale (Appendix B). The survey was distributed via email with an anonymous link. None of the participants have access to other participants' email addresses to ensure anonymity. This is done to ensure that all participants could have anonymity regarding their responses. The results were collected using QualtricsXM Research Services[91] survey tools to create and distribute the survey to all

[91] "Qualtrics XM - Experience Management Software," *Qualtrics*, last modified May 17, 2021, accessed June 8, 2021, https://www.qualtrics.com/.

participants. The survey results were saved to a password-protected computer. Only the researcher had access to the responses, which were later deleted.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from 180 survey responses and the analysis of six different beginning band method books. The first section of chapter four focuses on the content of various beginning band method books. The second focuses on the results of the survey. Discussion of research questions illustrates factors related to aural skills training and sight-reading ability.

Method Book Analysis Results

The term method book describes the textbook used by the teacher for beginning band instruction. This analysis chart compares aural skills training opportunities in each book (Figure 1). The books selected for this analysis include First Division Band Method[92] (Belwin), Standard of Excellence[93] (KJOS Music), Accent on Achievement[94] (Alfred Music), Essential Elements[95] (Hal Leonard Music), The Yamaha Advantage[96] (Charles Dumont & Sons), and Tradition of Excellence[97] (Kjos Music).

[92] Fred Weber, *First Division Band Method* (New York: Belwin Band Publishing Company, 1999).

[93] Bruce Pearson, *Standard of Excellence* (San Diego: Neil A. Kjos Music Company, 2004).

[94] John O'Reilly and Mark Williams, *Accent on Achievement* (New York: Alfred Music, 1997).

[95] Tim Lautzenheiser, John Higgins, Charles Menghini, Paul Lavender, Tom C. Rhodes, and Don Bierschenk, *Essential Elements For Band* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2004).

[96] Sandy Feldstein and Larry Clark, *The Yamaha Advantage* (New Jersey: Charles Dumont & Sons, 2002).

[97] Bruce Pearson and Ryan Nowlin, *Tradition of Excellence* (San Diego: Kjos Music Press, 2010).

FIGURE 1:

METHOD BOOK ANALYSIS						
Name of Text	**First Division Band Method**	**Standard of Excellence**	**Accent on Achievement**	**Essential Elements for Band**	**The Yamaha Advantage**	**Tradition of Excellence**
Author(s)	Fred Weber	Bruce Pearson	John O'Reilly and Mark Williams	Tim Lautzenheiser, John Higgins, Charles Menghini, Paul Lavender, Tom C. Rhodes, and Don Bierschenk	Sandy Feldstein and Larry Clark	Bruce Pearson and Ryan Nowlin
Publisher	Belwin Band Company	Neil A. Kjos Music Company	Alfred Publishing Company Inc.	Hal Leonard Corporation	Charles Dumont & Sons	Kjos Music Press
Aural Skills Training Included	Rhythmic performance and counting; Scales	Rhythmic performance and counting; Scales; Intervals (Thirds)	Listen and match; Rhythmic performance and counting; Scales; Intervals (Thirds)	Rhythmic performance and counting; Scales; Intervals (2^{nd}-Octave)	Rhythmatic performance and counting; Scales; Play by Ear; Intervals (Thirds)	Ear Training; Rhythmic performance and counting; Scales; Intervals (Thirds)
Associated exercise numbers from manual	13, 14, 29, 32, 54, 62, 67, 96, 97, 98, 118, 152, 164	15, 16, 45, 47, 50, 52, 69, 88, 96, 126, Scale Studies	20, 33, 44, 70, 92, 97, 109, 125, Accent on Scales	2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 15, 20, 37, 40, 46, 50, 52, 66, 70, 87, 104, 110, 115, 125, 147, 148, 149, 158, 161, 168, 181, Scale and Arpeggio Studies, Rhythm Studies	18, 23, 31, 45, 48, 53	8, 13, 14, 31, 36, 43, 45, 49, 51, 57, 61, 69, 83, 89, 91, 95, 103, 109, 119, 123, 132, Scale Studies, Rhythm Studies
Sound-before-sight/Sight-before-sound	Sight-before-sound	Sight-before-sound	Sight-before-sound	Sight-before-sound	Sight-before-Sound	Sight-before-sound

Research Question 1

What elements of sight-reading and aural skills training exist in the scope and sequence of popular beginning band method texts?

Elements of sight-reading were present in beginning band method texts. Elements of aural skills training were present but limited. The differences observed amongst the various method books are the values used in the rhythmic exercises and the different scales introduced to the student. All of the method books use the B♭-Major scale. Some of them include other scales such as F-Major, E♭-Major, and A♭-Major. All of the chosen method books use the sight-before-sound method. In the sight-before-sound method, students see the note written on the page without familiarity with the characteristic sound of the notes they are expected to play.

Research Question 2

What differences exist between elements of sight-reading in popular beginning band method texts?

Elements of sight-reading found within each method text are similar in structure. Differences occur based on the sequence in which the various authors teach notes. It is important to note that one of the books includes an exercise labeled “play by ear.” This exercise is not a common occurrence in other beginning band method books. However, there is an inclusion of ear training. There was no significant difference in sight-reading material used in the various books. The term needs to be defined by music with which the student is and is not familiar.

Survey Results

The following tables show the results of the five-question Likert-type survey distributed to the population. (Appendix B)

TABLE 1: Q1 – How would you rate your students' current ability to sight-read?

5	Superior	2.22%	4
4	Excellent	20.00%	36
3	Good	48.89%	88
2	Fair	20.00%	36
1	Poor	8.89%	16

TABLE 2: Q2 – How often do you include music theory in your band instruction?

5	A great deal	8.89%	16
4	A lot	24.44%	44
3	A moderate amount	55.56%	100
2	A little	11.11%	20
1	None at all	0.00%	0

TABLE 3: Q3 – How often do you incorporate Aural Skills Training into your band class?

5	A great deal	2.22%	4
4	A lot	15.56%	28
3	A moderate amount	37.78%	68
2	A little	33.33%	60
1	None at all	11.11%	20

TABLE 4: Q4 – If you were able to improve your student's sight-reading ability by including aural skills training in your classroom, would you do it?

5	Definitely Would	37.78%	68
4	Probably Would	44.44%	80
3	Unsure	17.78%	32
2	Probably Would Not	0.00%	0
1	Definitely Would Not	0.00%	0

TABLE 5: Q5 – Do you believe that current instrument method books contain everything you need to develop your student's musical abilities?

5	Definitely	0.00%	0
4	Probably	13.33%	24
3	Maybe	26.67%	48
2	Not really	48.89%	88
1	Not at all	11.11%	20

Survey Data Analysis

This section details the collected data. These tables show the mean response for each question asked on the survey.

TABLE 6:

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.369	5

The Chronbach's alpha for the five survey items was .369.

FIGURE 2:

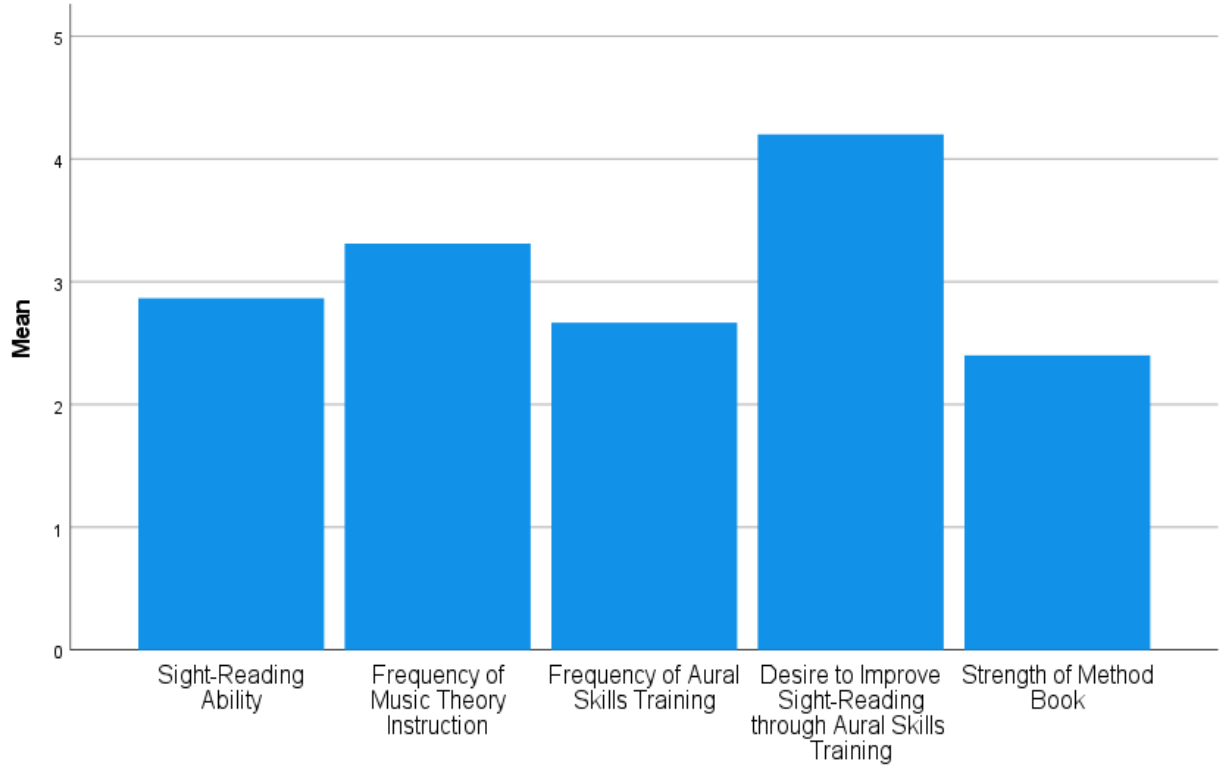


Figure 2 shows the average response for each question on the survey. It is worth noting that the strength of the method book as reported by the directors surveyed is not very high. There is a strong desire of the beginning band directors to improve sight-reading ability through aural

skills training. Music theory instruction is slightly above average, whereas aural skills training frequency and sight-reading ability were rated lower than other elements.

FIGURE 3:

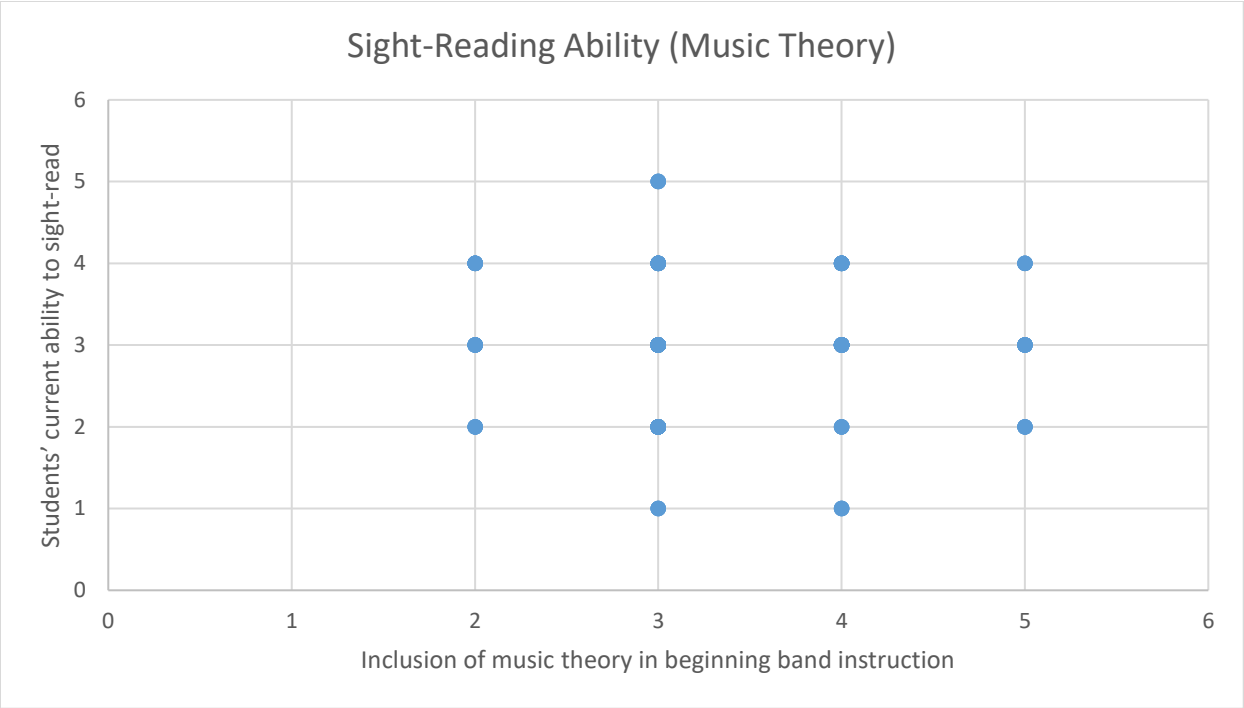


TABLE 7:

Frequency of Music Theory Instruction & Sight-Reading Ability

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27.954	12	.006
Likelihood Ratio	32.706	12	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	.224	1	.636
N of Valid Cases	180		

In Figure 3, the data is as follows, *n=180, x=q2, y=q1*. By comparing the data in this way, we see that all participants in the study include at least a little music theory in their instruction. The relation between these variables was significant, X^2 (12, N = 180) = 27.95, p < .006 (Table 7).

FIGURE 4:

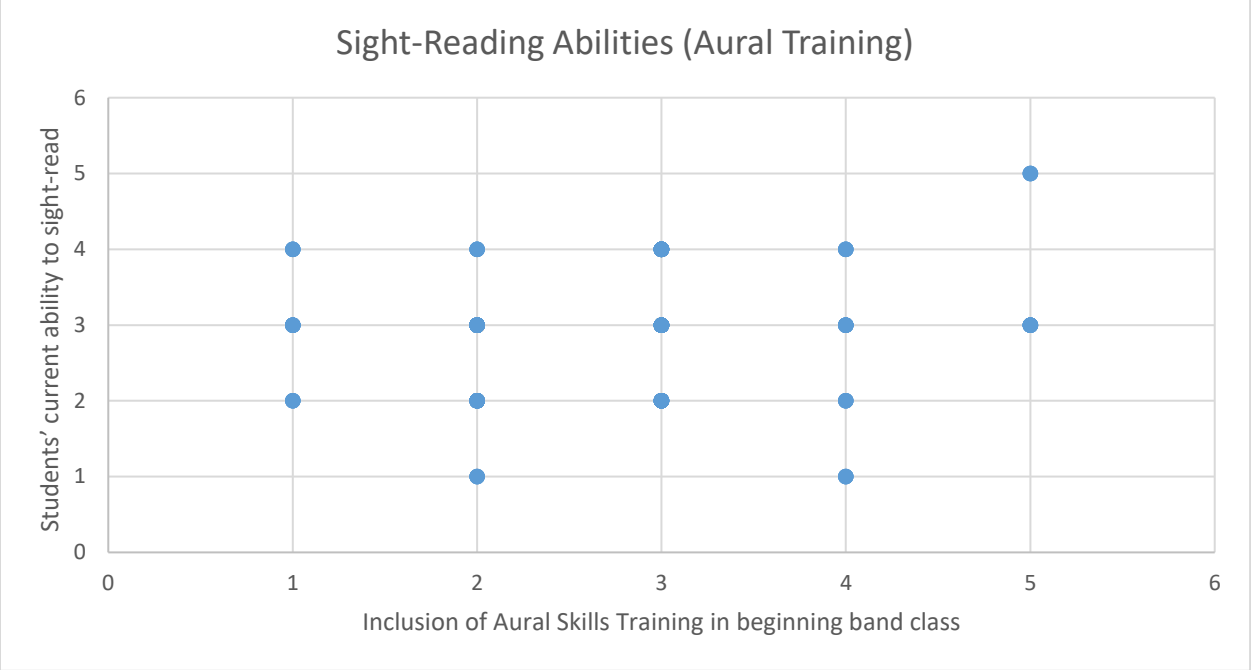


TABLE 8:

Frequency of Aural Skills Training & Sight-Reading Ability

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	113.095	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	55.219	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.858	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	180		

In figure 4, the axes are as follows, *n=180, x=q3, y=q1*. In this chart, we see an interesting detail. The only ranking of "superior" on the sight-reading axis matches up with directors who selected the option of "a great deal" on question three. This data point does not necessarily prove that aural skills training improves sight-reading. However, it is worth noting that this ranking only occurs on that particular section of the graph. Some participants grade their students with a ranking of "excellent" sight-reading abilities who receive no aural skills training

as indicated by the given response. However, based on the data in the chart, there seems to be a strong connection between the inclusion of aural skills training and sight-reading ability. The relation between these variables was highly significant, X^2 (16, N=180) = 113.09, p < .001 (Table 8).

Research Question 3

How do directors report sight-reading and aural skills inclusion within their curriculum?

Directors were asked, "How often do you include music theory in your band instruction?" Of the results gathered, 9% reported "a great deal," 24% reported "a lot," 56% reported "a moderate amount," and 11% reported "a little." There were no reported instances of "none at all" for music theory in beginning band instruction.

Directors were also asked, "How often do you incorporate Aural Skills Training into your band class?" 2% reported "a great deal," 16% reported "a lot," 38% reported "a moderate amount," 33% reported "a little," and 11% reported "none at all."

When asked, "How would you rate your students' current ability to sight-read?" 2% reported "superior," 20% reported "excellent," 49% reported "good," 20% reported "fair," and 9% reported "poor."

It is worth noting that the 2% who selected a rating of "superior" were the same 2% of directors who rated their inclusion of aural skills as "a great deal."

Research Question 4

Do instrumental music teachers report a need for aural skills training to be included in the beginning band text?

Directors surveyed were asked, “If you were able to improve your student’s sight-reading ability by including aural skills training in your classroom, would you do it?” 38% reported “definitely would,” 44% reported “probably would,” 18% reported “unsure,” and none reported “probably would not” or “definitely would not.”

When asked, “Do you believe that current instrument method books contain everything you need to develop your student’s musical abilities?” 0% reported “definitely,” 13% reported “probably,” 27% reported “maybe,” 49% reported “not really,” and 11% reported “not at all.”

According to the collected data, the strength of the method book rates the lowest—the desire to improve sight-reading rates the highest of all categories. The correlation between reported sight-reading ability and aural skills training was highly significant. Should future method texts incorporate aural skills training, there could be a significant rise in sight-reading ability and the strength of the various method books.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study aims to determine if a connection exists between aural skills training and improved sight-reading capabilities in the beginning band classroom. The study uses research done previously by scholars and a survey of middle school beginning band instructors in the state of South Carolina. This study seeks to provide research and data to express the need for aural skills training in the beginning band curriculum. In addition, the sample curriculum provides a resource for beginning band educators to assist in their curriculum planning.

Summary of Findings

The initial hypotheses of this study are that beginning band method books do not fully address aural skills training. That no differences exist between the beginning band books concerning aural skills training, directors will report that aural skills training can improve sight-reading capabilities and report a need for aural skills training to be included in the scope and sequence beginning band method books.

The data collected through the survey shows that directors do not view the strength of current method books highly. The data analysis demonstrates with the inclusion of more aural skills training that sight-reading ability is reportedly higher. The analysis and comparison of various method books show fundamental elements of sight-reading and aural skills training. However, these books focus more on the sight-before-sound method for instrumental music education. Many of the method books contain similar objectives and exercises presented as dictated by the authors.

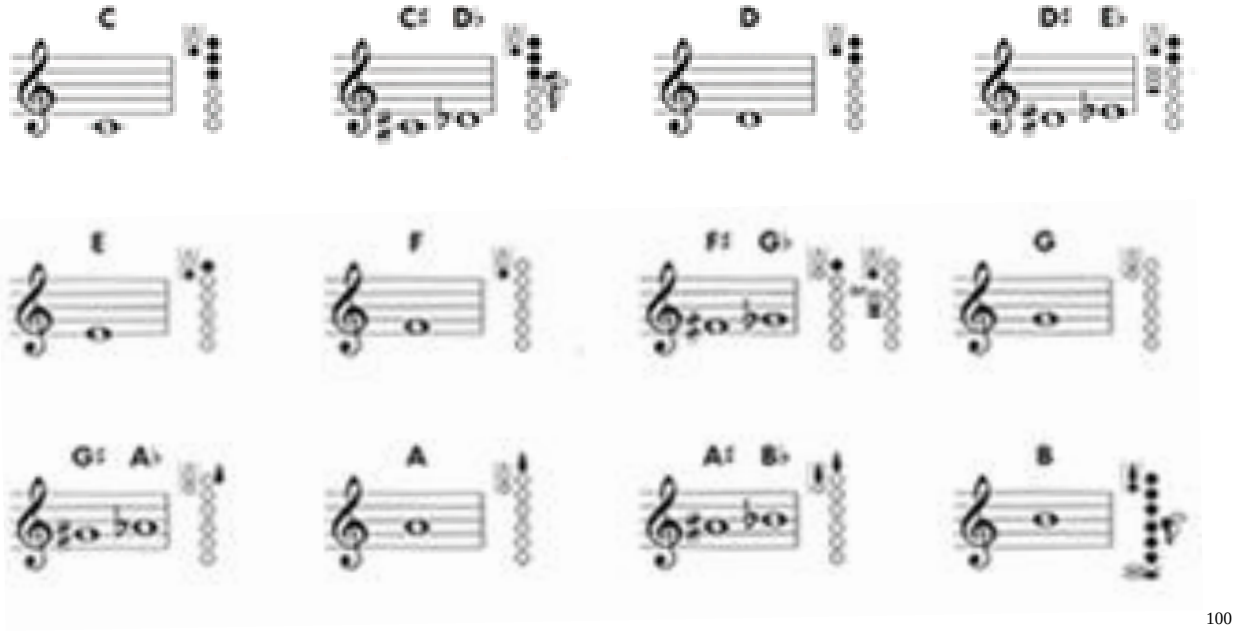
How can Aural Skills Training Improve Sight-Reading?

When looking at the various instrument method books used for this study, each lays out a clear instruction plan. Students learn by seeing the note on the staff, the proper fingering or position for playing the note. They are then expected to play the note correctly. Andrea Halpern mentioned that the flaw of this method is that the learner does not know how the note is supposed to sound without first hearing it.[98] There is a fundamental problem with this method of learning. "Authors of traditional beginning method books often present melodic notation using discrete visual symbols, related exclusively to instrumental fingerings and slide positions. Thus, students are allowed and encouraged to use instruments as tonal crutches by primarily associating notation with correct fingerings–not the correct sound."[99] The following are examples of fingering and slide position charts for clarinet, trombone, and trumpet.

[98] Halpern, "Cerebral Substrates of Musical Imagery." 1.

[99] Bernhard, "The Effects of Tonal Training on the Melodic Ear Playing and Sight-Reading Achievement of Beginning Wind Instrumentalists," 92.

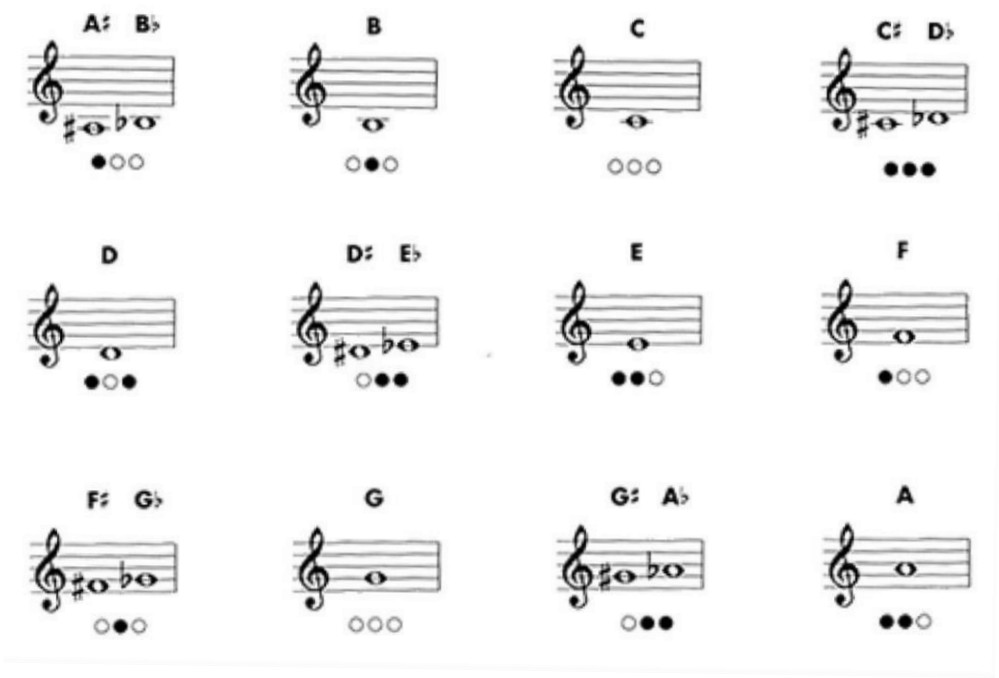
Clarinet fingering chart – Figure 5



[100]

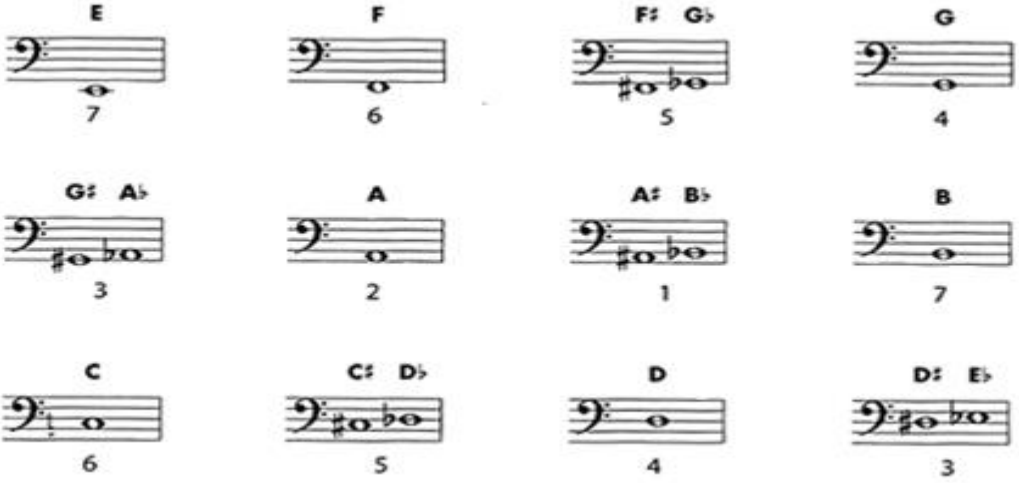
[100] AMRO Music, "Clarinet Fingering Chart," *Clarinet Fingering Chart*, accessed May 24, 2021, https://www.amromusic.com/clarinet-fingering-chart. (Used with permission)

Trumpet fingering chart – Figure 6



[101]

Trombone fingering chart – Figure 7



[102]

[101] AMRO Music, "Trumpet Fingering Chart," *Trumpet Fingering Chart*, accessed May 24, 2021, https://www.amromusic.com/trumpet-fingering-chart. (Used with permission)

[102] AMRO Music, "Trombone Position Chart," *Clarinet Position Chart*, accessed May 24, 2021, https://www.amromusic.com/trombone-position-chart. (Used with permission)

A problem exists in the sight-before-sound learning method. Unless the student has an audio source for comparison, how are they supposed to know that they are playing the note correctly? For specific instruments, such as the clarinet (figure 5), the problem does not exist. Each note has one way of being played. However, when looking at the charts for trumpet (figure 6) and trombone (figure 7), it becomes evident that the musician is limited to a specific number of fingerings and slide positions. The design of these instruments causes notes to share fingering and slide positions and create different partials that are obtainable from a singular position. How is the learner supposed to know that they are on the right partial in this situation?

Here is where audiation plays a crucial role in the learning process of instrumental music. According to Edwin Gordon, "...audiation takes place as we are reading the notation of familiar and unfamiliar patterns in familiar and unfamiliar music."[103] With this type of audiation, we see music being taught similarly to how literacy learning theories teach students how to read. In an article written by Andrew Johnson (Minnesota State University-Mankato), "both (literacy and music learning theories) rely on a system where the reader must secure a correspondence between a symbol and a sound…."[104] How can beginning band students be expected to understand how the written symbol is supposed to sound? Similar to how Suzuki taught that children learn to speak and read through hearing and imitating what they see from their parents[105], the teacher defines the relationship between symbol and sound to the student. The student is then responsible for playing any note dictated to them by what they see on the page.

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[103] Gordon, "Audiation, Music Learning Theory, Music Aptitude, and Creativity," 82.

[104] Andrew Johnson, "Using Literacy Learning Theories to Facilitate Sight-Reading and Music Learning" *The Choral Journal* 39, no. 1 (August 1998): 37, https://www.jstor.org/stable/23552448.

[105] John Kendall, "Suzuki's Mother Tongue Method" *Music Educators Journal* 83, no. 1 (July 1996): 43, https://doi.org/10.2307/3398994.

Based on an article by Kate Covington, as a person develops tonal understanding, they create within their mind a schema.[106] This schema allows them to recall how written notes are supposed to sound.[107] Edwin Gordon referred to this connection between notes written on the page and tonal understand as "notational audiation."[108] When the elements of aural training are included within the scope and sequence of beginning band instruction, the student can develop improved sight-reading capabilities. This tonal understanding is developed through aural skills training and is essential to the musician's development. While the examined texts used for this study included some aural skills training, they did not begin the learning process with aural skill training. When looking at the studies conducted by Hiatt, Cross, and Kendall, it becomes possible to see how one might add aural skill training to a method text. Should activities be included in the beginning sections of a method text, then it is possible that students could become encouraged to interact with music without their instruments. The creators of these texts could use the aural-oral-visual model[109] developed by Hiatt and Cross as a template for creating activities to include in future method texts.

Including elements such as audiation and an aural-oral-visual approach to music education can allow the beginning musician to become more independent when reading music. The learner becomes capable of understanding what they see on the page and knowing how the music is supposed to sound based on their own internalized understanding and memory of what they have previously heard and seen. This musical understanding can eliminate the need for a

[106] Covington, "The Mind's Ear: I Hear Music and No One Is Performing" 34.

[107] Covington, "The Mind's Ear: I Hear Music and No One Is Performing" 34.

[108] Gordon, "Audiation, Music Learning Theory, Music Aptitude, and Creativity," 82.

[109] Hiatt and Cross, "Teaching and Using Audiation in Classroom Instruction and Applied Lessons with Advanced Students," 48.

pre-performance audial reference and allow them to play a piece of music that may be foreign to them.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are many, with the main one being the personal bias of the participants involved in the survey. A system would need to be developed to determine what constitutes the various rankings within the survey. Without this system, a participant may select an option believing it to be the correct one when it may or may not be the option that should have been selected. Another limitation includes the lack of opportunity to have a developed curriculum that includes aural skills training compared to a director's standard curriculum plan. Other limitations include on which students the participants were basing their answers. There is always a chance that the participant teaches multiple grade levels of varying ability. This situation could create an instance where the answer selected for one question does not necessarily reflect the views used on another question. These limitations, while many, do create an opportunity for future research and testing on the subject.

Recommendations

A recommendation for future study would be to develop a measurement tool to assist participants in future surveys to help better identify which ranking should be selected. This tool could be used to aid in the removal of personal bias when completing the survey. Another recommendation would be for future researchers to develop an aural skills curriculum. This curriculum and the previously used curriculum could be compared using each of the curricula in separate groups and testing the students on sight-reading at different points throughout the course.

Conclusion

The thesis project, “Improving Sight-Reading Through Beginning Band Instruction,” discusses the effect aural skills have on sight-reading. It also seeks to show the need to include aural skills training in the beginning band classroom. A sample curriculum has been developed and included in Appendix A of this project. This curriculum is not designed to replace current beginning band curricula. It is created to assist teachers in developing new curriculum plans, should they desire to include aural skills training in the future. This approach to beginning band instruction could be unique in its development as it reaches the target audience.

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APPENDICES AND APPROVALS

Appendix A – Sample Curriculum

Appendix B - Survey

Appendix C – Text Analysis Chart

AMRO Music – Permission for Use

IRB Approval/Waiver Letter

APPENDIX A – SAMPLE CURRICULUM

Course Syllabus

Name Of Course: Beginning Band I

Course Description: This course is offered to students who would like to learn to play an instrument from the woodwind, brass, or percussion Instrument Families.

No previous knowledge or understanding of music is required.

Rationale: Students wanting to learn an instrument should be involved in a course that allows them to explore the music-making process in a way that enables them to play the instrument of their choice proficiently.

I. Prerequisites
- A. None

II. Required Resource Purchase(s)
- A. An Instrument of the student's choosing
- B. A case for the instrument
- C. Personal instrument maintenance equipment
- D. Pencils
- E. Instrument Method Book of Instructor's Choice
  1. Option Include:
     - a. Essential Elements for Band
     - b. Measures of Success
     - c. Accent on Achievement
     - d. Standard of Excellence

III. Additional Materials for Learning
- A. Instrument Care Guide
- B. Staff Paper

IV. Measurable Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

A. Identify notes and note values presented aurally or through a written medium.

B. Express written musical notation using the voice or an instrument.

C. Analyze musical elements both written and heard.

D. Compare a recording of your performance with another recording.

V. Course Requirements and Assignments

A. Daily Participation Grade

This indicator allows the instructor to check for a student's continued preparedness and engagement daily.

B. Weekly Practice Log

This creates accountability between the student and the instructor. Using a weekly practice log, the student can claim the effort and work they have put outside of class.

C. Playing Tests

These tests will allow the instructor to gauge their student's current ability and refocus their efforts on what is best for the student.

D. Sight-Reading Tests

These tests allow the instructor to see how the student progresses in reading music at sight.

E. Aural Skills Tests

These tests allow the instructor to test a student's abilities developed at the beginning of the course.

VI. Course Grading and Policies

A. Points

B. Scale

A = 93–100 A- = 90–93 B+ = 87–90 B = 83–87 B- = 80–83

C+ = 77–80 C = 73–77 C- = 70–73 D+ = 67–70 D = 63–67

D- = 60–63 F = 0–59

V. Analysis Chart

Part I: Curriculum Information

Required Textbook for Class: Instructor's Preferred Instrument Method Book
Identify the problem
The student does not know how to play their selected instrument. It is improper to assume what the student may or may not have previously learned as an educator. It is more appropriate to give a basic knowledge test and to conduct class from that point.
Who are the learners, and what are their characteristics?
The learners are middle school students involved in their first year of beginning band instruction. This group would typically grade 5, 6, or 7, depending on the school.
What is the new desired behavior?
The new desired behavior would be the ability to play their selected instrument proficiently.
What are the delivery options?
The tools for this course would include the teacher's edition of the preferred method book, access to aural skills training materials, and methods for recording data. This record would use two systems, a checklist to determine markers heard initially, and a recording device for the instructor to go back and listen again later for further analysis.
What are the pedagogical considerations?
The pedagogy for the course will follow a pattern of basic aural skills training such as intervals, rhythmic performance, and audial note identification. From there, it will follow along with the sequence prescribed in the selected method text.
What learning theory applies to your curriculum? Why?
The Gordon Music Learning Theory applies to this curriculum because it focuses on having students audiate the pitches first before attempting to play them.

Design Chart

Concept Statement: The purpose of this course is to help create better sight-reading skills in students by having them first receive aural skills training.			
Learning Outcomes *(List in the order you plan to address in 12 weeks)*	Content *(What must be learned to reach this objective?)*	Learning/Training Activity *(How will you teach the content?)*	Assessment *(How will you know that the student has met the objective?)*
1. Identify notes and note values presented aurally or through a written medium.	• Note names • Note values • Notes on the staff • Note sounds	• Flashcards • Teoria.com practice tests • Worksheets • Clapping • Rhythm games	• Performance Test
2. Express written musical notation using the voice or an instrument.	• Performing notes correctly on the chosen instrument	• How to hold • How to play	• Performance Test
3. Analyze musical elements both written and heard.	• Listening for tonal memory • Audiation Type 2	• Hear the note/play the note • See the note/play the note	• Performance Test
4. Compare a recording of your performance with another recording.	• Listening for evaluation • Comparative analysis techniques	• Listening Journal • Discussion	• Discussion of ideas • Graded journal looking for correct usage of musical terminology

APPENDIX B – SURVEY

How would you rate your students' current ability to sight-read?

- Superior
- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

How often do you include music theory in your band instruction?

- A Great Deal
- A Lot
- A Moderate Amount
- A Little
- None At All

How often do you incorporate Aural Skills Training into your band class?

- A Great Deal
- A Lot
- A Moderate Amount
- A Little
- None At All

If you were able to improve your students' sight-reading abilities by including aural skills training in your classroom, would you do it?

- Definitely Would
- Probably Would
- Unsure
- Probably Not
- Definitely Would Not

Do you believe that current instrument method books contain everything you need to develop your students' musical abilities?

- Definitely
- Probably
- Maybe
- Not Really
- Not At All

APPENDIX C – METHOD BOOK ANALYSIS

METHOD BOOK ANALYSIS						
Name of Text	**First Division Band Method**	**Standard of Excellence**	**Accent on Achievement**	**Essential Elements for Band**	**The Yamaha Advantage**	**Tradition of Excellence**
Author(s)	Fred Weber	Bruce Pearson	John O'Reilly and Mark Williams	Tim Lautzenheiser, John Higgins, Charles Menghini, Paul Lavender, Tom C. Rhodes, and Don Bierschenk	Sandy Feldstein and Larry Clark	Bruce Pearson and Ryan Nowlin
Publisher	Belwin Band Company	Neil A. Kjos Music Company	Alfred Publishing Company Inc.	Hal Leonard Corporation	Charles Dumont & Sons	Kjos Music Press
Aural Skills Training Included	Rhythmic performance and counting; Scales	Rhythmic performance and counting; Scales; Intervals (Thirds)	Listen and match; Rhythmic performance and counting; Scales; Intervals (Thirds)	Rhythmic performance and counting; Scales; Intervals (2^{nd}-Octave)	Rhythmatic performance and counting; Scales; Play by Ear; Intervals (Thirds)	Ear Training; Rhythmic performance and counting; Scales; Intervals (Thirds)
Associated exercise numbers from manual	13, 14, 29, 32, 54, 62, 67, 96, 97, 98, 118, 152, 164	15, 16, 45, 47, 50, 52, 69, 88, 96, 126, Scale Studies	20, 33, 44, 70, 92, 97, 109, 125, Accent on Scales	2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 15, 20, 37, 40, 46, 50, 52, 66, 70, 87, 104, 110, 115, 125, 147, 148, 149, 158, 161, 168, 181, Scale and Arpeggio Studies, Rhythm Studies	18, 23, 31, 45, 48, 53	8, 13, 14, 31, 36, 43, 45, 49, 51, 57, 61, 69, 83, 89, 91, 95, 103, 109, 119, 123, 132, Scale Studies, Rhythm Studies
Sound-before-sight/Sight-before-sound	Sight-before-sound	Sight-before-sound	Sight-before-sound	Sight-before-sound	Sight-before-Sound	Sight-before-sound

AMRO MUSIC – PERMISSION FOR USE

Hi Joshua,

Feel free to use the fingering charts, and good luck with your thesis! We are here to help. When you start your career as an educator, we would love to connect with you!

All best,

Alice

Alice Hasen
Band and Orchestra Sales
Amro Music Stores, Inc.
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Phone: 901-323-8888

IRB APPROVAL/WAIVER

April 27, 2021

Joshua Kohl

IRB Exemption - IRB-FY20-21-719 Josh Kohl Band Director Survey

Dear Joshua Kohl,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office
Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971