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The Retention Value of Different Song Acquisition Methods: Rote, Immersion, and Blended

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The Retention Value of Different Song Acquisition Methods: Rote, Immersion, and Blended

by

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Undergraduate honors thesis under the direction of

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Rationale

Childhood song is a prime example of music in its rawest, most unencumbered form. Children are naturally compelled to sing. By including song as a primary component of childhood music education, music educators are able to draw from and build upon these innate musical tendencies. The presence of song in the music curriculum helps children discover and develop their own musical voice. In their youth, it is important for children to accumulate a base of musical repertoire on which they can build and ultimately develop a lifelong investment in music.

The methods for teaching children songs are widely varied and are personalized by the individual teacher and his or her perspectives and goals. Some of the most common methods are the rote approach, the technique of immersion, and often a blend of the two. While children are sometimes taught songs through musical notation, this is less common in early elementary settings when the children are pre- or beginning readers just developing literacy skills. In the rote approach, children are taught a song through chunks. The song is broken down into smaller fragments and taught through oral transmission. The teacher sings a chunk; the children listen and then imitate. Slowly the song is pieced together in this manner and then chunks are combined to create bigger units until ultimately the whole song has been learned. The immersion method, on the other hand, is centered around repeated listenings and retention. The teacher sings the song in its entirety multiple times and the children gradually learn the notes, rhythms, and words. This technique mirrors the way children usually learn songs in their everyday life, where there is not a teacher breaking it down for them.

After doing a great deal of reading on the subject, I have come to realize that the most effective method of song acquisition for children is a recurring question in the field of music education. The intention of the present study was to investigate the effectiveness of a few of these popular song acquisition methods to discover which had the highest retention value over a short period of time. It is important for music educators to be able to teach children a song quickly and effectively so that they can move on to more complex interactions with the music. Multiple studies have been done to compare the retention value of the immersion technique and the rote approach, however, in my experience, most teachers do not simply use one of these methods by the book. This is why I chose to include a blended method in my study that takes aspects from both the immersion and rote approaches. It would seem that teachers with extended experience in the music classroom take what they have found to be the best parts of each method and combine them, creating a method that would be the most effective for them in their classroom. This study attempts to investigate which of these three song-teaching methods (rote, immersion, and blended) is the most effective.

Literature Review

The human brain is designed to extract order from chaos. By working to understand the brain and how it functions, researchers hope to find a way to maximize learning. This field of study is commonly referred to as "brain-based learning" (Pool, 1997). Brain-based learning helps educators to utilize the associations that the brain makes within itself and reinforce this knowledge through related experiences (Kaufman et al, 2008). Before children ever begin their schooling, their brains are organizing and deciphering a world of new information. Their learning relies on their brain recognizing

patterns and being able to adjust their previous knowledge to fit the new information (Kenney, 2009). It is only when children begin school that teachers start breaking down knowledge for them. Because such vast learning takes place outside of the school setting, it would seem beneficial for teachers to recreate this type of environment in their classrooms, immersing their students in complex settings where their brains are given the chance to absorb, process, and organize what they are learning (Pool, 1997). This process of brain-based learning is a point often referred to by supporters of the immersion method. In fact, brain-based teaching is typically identified as "immersion in a complex experience" (Kaufman et al., 2008).

Rote teaching breaks down learning into small pieces, and disallows the brain from being able to complete this task on its own. By fragmenting a song or any type of subject matter, teachers might be preventing significant connections from being made. In her writing, Kenney finds the rote approach to be unnecessary because the human brain "processes parts and wholes simultaneously," therefore, there is no need to break it down for them (Kenney, 2009, pg.25). This is something that music educators, as well as educators in general, could take into account in their teaching and perhaps benefit from. Although brain research cannot provide us with a failsafe way to teach children, it does uncover some of the mysteries of learning and enables educators to adjust their teaching to the natural processes of the brain.

Cognitive research, when applied to student leaning, redirects the "what" questions of education to more thorough "why's" and "how's" (Worden, Hinton, & Fischer, 2011). This approach to teaching also allows for different types of learning among children. Every child's brain might sequence things differently, but the end result

is hopefully the same. The immersion approach displays all parts of a song at once, which is originally perceived as confusion, but the song is repeated continuously until each child feels comfortable enough to participate and sing the song accurately. Every child learns the song in a different sequence, grasping the pitches, text, and rhythm at different times. In their own way, they are able to construct an organized product from the information that began as chaos (Kenney, 2009). This method is also reduces some of the threatening nature that learning a new song can have for children. They are not expected to join in the singing until the material is familiar enough for them to feel comfortable. Repeated listenings have also ingrained difficult passages into the child's immediate memory, so that by this time, they are more likely to be successful, and in turn, enjoy participating and singing with the group (Rappaport, 2011). This supports the long-term mission of many music educators: that their students will learn to enjoy and appreciate music, and that it will continue to be a part of their lives, even after they leave school. This is not to say, however, that children who learn music from other methods will not enjoy it.

A challenge that the immersion method frequently faces is that repeated listenings must be able to keep the children engaged. If their brain checks out, then the whole effort becomes futile (Kenney 2010). Because of this, active listening is critical. There are many ways to get children actively involved in listening, movement being one of the most frequently effective (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2010). Games are a very popular way to get students moving while singing. While playing, the game becomes the focus to the children while the repetition is taking place. Although the teacher might see learning the song as the goal of the activity, the game is a mechanism to help get the song committed into the students' memory. Incorporating any kind of movement while

teaching has proven to be an effective way of keeping students engaged during a lesson. Movement increases circulation and sends more oxygen to the brain, which helps increase student focus and attentiveness (Lock, 2002). This type of implicit learning has recently been the target of much scientific research. Implicit learning is learning that takes place without the student's awareness that they are gathering new information (Frensch, 2003). While the students move and play, they inadvertently learn a new song.

For all of the speculation that seems to support the immersion method, there is also some scientific research to maintain that the rote approach can be effective as well. Imitation can also be a valuable way of learning. Infants are mimics; they copy the actions of others. By repeatedly looking an infant in the face and saying "mama," the baby learns the word and begins to use it. Mirror neurons in the brain are ready-made mechanisms that encourage imitation learning (Hodges, 2010). The observation of others' actions is what causes these neurons fire (Shapiro, 2009). Rote and model teaching may not always be the best way for students to learn, but there are appropriate ways to teach in this manner. Although some experts will argue that immersion gives children a better grasp on the musical experience as a whole, the rote approach is sometimes recommended when a song is being taught in a very short period of time (Harrison, 1983).

There are a lot of valid concerns over the rote method, however. Howard Garner, esteemed professor of cognition and education, has argued that rote teaching used inappropriately can inhibit creativity in a child (Posner, 2004). Many arguments have been made that rote teaching helps students to understand the technical aspects of music, but denies them the chance to discover and explore musicality (Haston, 2007). When rote

teaching is taking place, the students are simply mimicking exactly what they hear, rather than participating in the self-expressive and creative processes involved when one is actually exploring and connecting to the music. They are learning the song bit by bit, breaking up musical phrases and disjointing patterns that might be built into the music. There is a branch of rote teaching that is said to combat these anti-musical complaints against traditional rote teaching. This is known as antiphoning. In this method, the teacher sings parts of a song and invites the students to fill in holes or finish what he or she starts. This approach is said to be more suited for the musical brain because it does not interrupt the natural flow of the song (Kenney, 2010). On the other hand, however, some argue that musical learning naturally occurs in "chunks" that eventually build a whole, so the rote method simply mirrors that and makes the music easier to retain (Klinger et al., 1998). The various research done on rote teaching has made it a highly criticized method, so it is important to know the appropriate ways to use this tactic effectively to improve student learning.

The Klinger et al. study discusses these recurring questions about the effects of teaching through the rote and immersion methods. These questions led them to complete a study to try and test out these two techniques. Their study was done with two second grade classes at an urban elementary school. They met with each class twice, with a week between meetings, for 30 minutes. The first meeting was a pre-screen to make sure all students were capable of participating in the study. At the second meeting, the children were then taught 2 songs, using the two different methods: rote and immersion. Individual testing of the students was done a week after they learned the songs and the data was recorded. When analyzing their data, they found the immersion method to be a

very effective way of teaching short songs to second grade children. The results seemed to indicate that the immersion method was more effective, as children remembered and performed the song learned through immersion more accurately. This could be a result of the fragmented nature of the rote approach. Breaking up phrases and melody into smaller "bites" may have prevented the children from making the appropriate connections between phrases. In turn, this would make the song more difficult to recall accurately. Another argument that they made for the immersion method, is that this is the way children learn songs in their everyday life: on the playground, watching TV, listening to the radio, and so on. This familiarity might have played a part in the successfulness of the immersion method in their study (Klinger et al., 1998).

The study I completed was modeled off of the Klinger study, with an aim to further examine their questions and gather my own set of data. In my research, I used three classes and studied the effectiveness of the rote and immersion approaches, as well blended teaching method. The purpose of this test was to testing three popular song-teaching methods, in order to observe which has the highest retention value: rote teaching, the immersion method, or a blended combination of the two.

Method

Participants

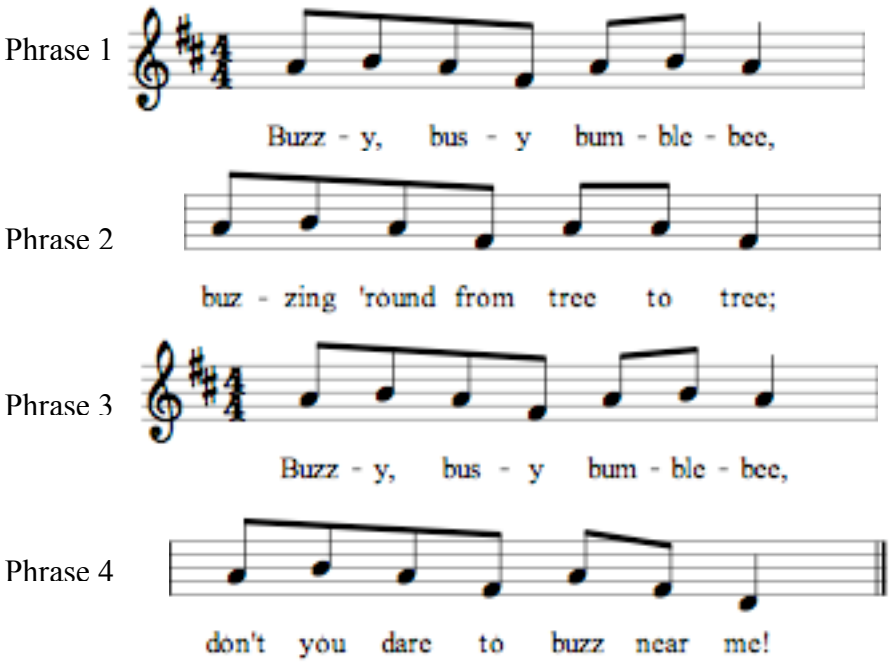
The participants (n = 43) for the study were 2nd grade students at Baton Rouge Center for Visual and Performing Arts. The students were a mixed group of races and gender. The school the students attended, an arts school, must be taken into consideration when considering this study this study. These students have a curriculum where the arts play a critical role throughout their elementary education. The students attend music,

dance, and art classes, starting in Kindergarten. Therefore, these second grade children had a solid musical base. Of the 46 children present on testing day, 43 had been there in the previous lesson to learn the songs and were viable participants for the study. This study was approved by the Louisiana State University Institutional Review Board and parental and child consent was obtained for all participants. A letter and consent form were then sent home to the parents to inform them of the study (see Appendix A for parent information letter and consent form). Children who brought back a signed consent form signed a consent form of their own and these children participated in the study (see Appendix A for student consent form). All of the students at Baton Rouge Center for Visual and Performing Arts attend music class twice a week for 30 minutes. I used this information when formatting the structure of my research study.

Procedure

Once arrangements with the current music teacher at Baton Rouge Center for Visual and Performing Arts had been made and all children were deemed able to participate in the study, I began the processes of gathering data. I went to each of the three classes for a period of 10 minutes and taught them two songs, recording my teaching for further reference. The two songs presented were "Lucy Locket" and "Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee" (see Figure 1). The selection of these two songs was due to their similar levels of musical difficulty. Both songs were sung in the key of D Major, spanning the range of a major 6^{th}. This allowed all of the pitches to fall between the D above middle C and the B a 6^{th} higher. This range falls comfortably within the tessitura of an average 2^{nd} grade singer (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2010). The songs were also the same length (16 beats), and both were composed of the structural form ABAC. The

Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee



Lucy Locket

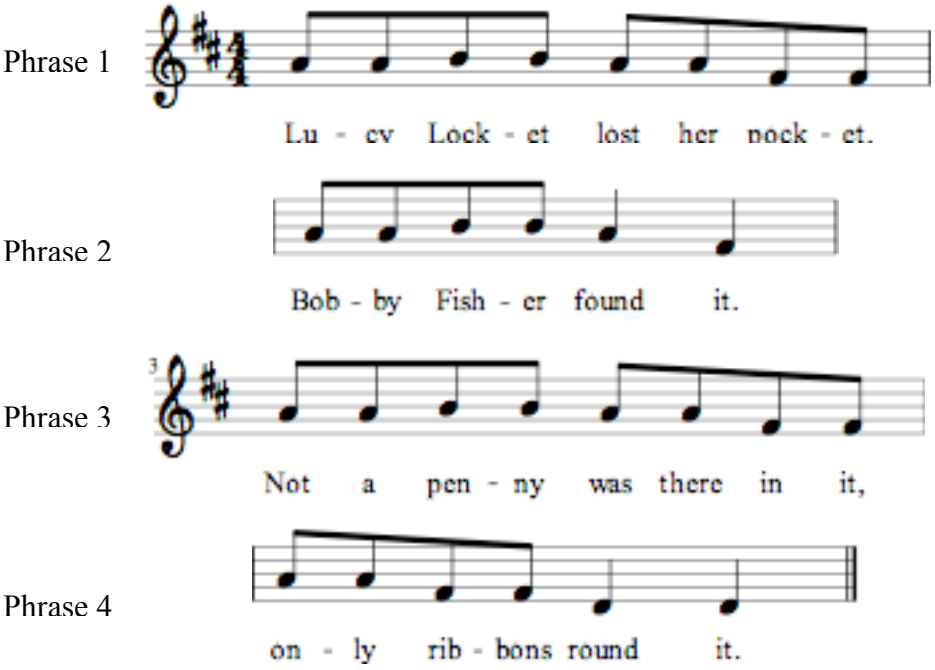


Figure 1. Songs taught by immersion, rote, and a blended method during the research study.

subject of the two songs did differ, however, in hopes that this would help keep the students from mixing up the two.

All three classes learned both songs, each through a different method. Group 1 learned "Lucy Locket" by rote and "Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee" through immersion. Group 2 learned "Lucy Locket" through immersion and "Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee" by rote. Group 3 learned both songs through a blended method. Appendix B goes over the procedures used to teach through each of the three methods.

A week later, I returned to these three classrooms and began to pull the children out individually to listen to them sing. Before the testing began, I had each class sing through both of the songs without my assistance. I simply gave them a pitch and counted them in. After this, I began pulling out students. Testing was done outside of the classroom and each child's singing was recorded. I allowed the students to choose which song they wanted to sing first, gave them a starting pitch, and counted them in.

Following the testing procedure, each child's performance was evaluated on a preplanned scale. Every child was given a score, based on the evaluation form below (see Appendix C for evaluation form). The performances were scored on melodic contour, rhythmic accuracy, pitch, and text, a scoring procedure drawn from the Klinger et al. study (1998). Mistakes in each of these areas were tallied up to gather a final cumulative score. The melodic contour of each 1-measure phrase was looked at, allowing for four possible errors in melodic contour for each of the two songs. Text, pitch, and rhythm were evaluated for each note/word of the song. "Lucy Locket" includes 28 pitch, 28 rhythm, and 20 possible text errors. With melodic contour, this totals to 80 potential errors. "Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee" contains 28 pitch, 28 rhythm, and 21 possible text

errors, totaling to 81 possible errors. As each child was asked to sing both songs, there were 161 possible errors to be made. To increase the reliability of the study, an outside observer evaluated fifty percent of the data collected. Agreement between the two scores was defined as a margin of three error differences or less. The inter-rate reliability was found to be .85.

Results

In order to determine which song teaching method was the most effective, the mean number of errors made was calculated and compared for each treatment method using *t* tests. Raw data are presented in Appendix D. A *t* test comparing the rote and immersion methods was calculated using a paired *t* test. Results indicate that there was no significant difference between the groups [$t(28) = 1.22$, $p > .05$.] The rote method ($M = 22.89$, $SD = 13.52$) resulted in an equivalent number of errors to the immersion method ($M = 29.39$, $SD = 29.79$). A *t* test comparing the rote and blended methods was calculated using an unpaired *t* test. Results indicate that there was no significant difference between the groups [$t(52) = 1.53$, $p > .05$.] The rote method ($M = 22.89$, $SD = 13.52$) resulted in an equivalent number of errors to the blended method ($M = 16.69$, $SD = 16.2$). A *t* test comparing the blended and immersion methods was calculated using an unpaired *t* test. Results indicate that there was a significant difference between the groups [$t(53) = 1.99$, $p < .05$.] The blended method ($M = 16.69$, $SD = 16.2$) resulted in a fewer number of errors than the immersion method ($M = 29.39$, $SD = 29.79$).

I also did a paired *t* test comparing the two songs, “Lucy Locket” and “Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee” to see if one song was more difficult than the other and resulted in more errors. Results indicate that there was a significant difference between the groups

[$t(44) = 6.55$, $p < .05$.] "Lucy Locket" ($M = 16.09$, $SD = 18.94$) resulted in a much lower number of errors than "Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee" ($M = 36.24$, $SD = 23.85$), showing that "Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee" was a more challenging song for the students.

Means were also calculated by method for *each song* to determine how the song selection had an influence on the scores, resulting in different data and conclusions. These data tables are also listed below (see Appendix E for data). I compared the three methods within "Lucy Locket" to see what method was the most effective for teaching this song. A *t* test comparing the rote and immersion methods was calculated using an unpaired *t* test. Results indicate that there was a significant difference between the groups [$t(26) = 3.14$, $p < .05$.] The rote method ($M = 26.38$, $SD = 17.85$) resulted in a greater number of errors than the immersion method ($M = 8.4$, $SD = 12.35$). A *t* test comparing the blended and immersion methods was calculated using an unpaired *t* test. Results indicate that there was a significant difference between the groups [$t(29) = 0.91$, $p < .05$.] The blended method ($M = 5$, $SD = 4.67$) resulted in a fewer number of errors than the immersion method ($M = 8.4$, $SD = 12.35$). A *t* test comparing the blended and rote methods was calculated using an unpaired *t* test. Results indicate that there was a significant difference between the groups [$t(25) = 4.33$, $p < .05$.] The blended method ($M = 5$, $SD = 4.67$) resulted in a fewer number of errors than the rote method ($M = 26.38$, $SD = 17.85$).

I also compared the three methods within "Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee" to see what method was the most effective for teaching this song. A *t* test comparing the rote and immersion methods was calculated using an unpaired *t* test. Results indicate that there was a significant difference between the groups [$t(28) = 4.27$, $p < .05$.] The rote method

(M = 19.87, SD = 7.65) resulted in a fewer number of errors than the immersion method (M = 49.93, SD = 26.23). A t test comparing the blended and immersion methods was calculated using an unpaired t test. Results indicate that there was a significant difference between the groups [$t(26) = 2.61$, $p < .05$.] The blended method (M = 28.38, SD = 15.06) resulted in a fewer number of errors than the immersion method (M = 49.93, SD = 26.23). A t test comparing the blended and rote methods was calculated using an unpaired t test. Results indicate that there was no significant difference between the groups [$t(26) = 1.93$, $p > .05$.] The blended method (M = 28.38, SD = 15.06) resulted in the same number of errors as the rote method (M = 19.87, SD = 7.65).

Discussion

The most effective method of teaching song is a recurring question in the field of music education. The purpose of this study was to look at three different teaching methods and see if one seemed more effective than the others. Although only a small number of students participated in this study, the blended method resulted in fewer errors, therefore, seeming to be the most efficient. The average number of errors made by students taught through the blended method was 16.69 (SD = 16.2), compared to the rote and immersion methods, which resulted in a mean of 22.89 (SD = 13.52) and 29.39 (SD = 29.79) errors, respectively. From a descriptive standpoint, the treatments did result in a difference between the mean scores by treatment method, with the blended method emerging as the most effective. According to the series of t tests, there were methods that proved to work better for each song. “Lucy Locket” was best learned by the blended method, while “Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee” was best learned by the rote or blended methods. There were, however, many influencing factors not considered in this data.

Anecdotally, I found "Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee" (song 2) to be a much more challenging song for the children to remember. This is reflected in the *t* test comparing the two songs, which shows a significant difference in the number of errors made in each song (see Appendix E for data). The students consistently tried to sing "Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee" to the tune of "Lucy Locket." I can only speculate, but this might be because "Lucy Locket" is set to a pattern of pitches that is very common in childhood song: "sol, la, sol, mi." This is something I have seen over and over throughout a year of flipping through children's repertoire books. The notes in this song also come in pairs: two sols, two las, two sols, two mis, and so on. Perhaps this might have involuntarily made the song a bit easier for the children to remember. In "Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee," the children also struggled with all of the alliterated "B" sounds and frequently mixed up the words. This could have played a role as well. Another factor that I did not consider when selecting the songs is that "Lucy Locket" tells a story. There are a series of events occurring in the song that come together to make a comprehensive short story about a girl who loses her "pocket." This gives the song some meaning for the students, perhaps helping them to remember it. "Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee," on the other hand, does not tell a story but is more of an expository description of a bumblebee. This most likely affected the students' success with the two songs. Overall, these factors might account for why I saw differences when I analyzed the songs separately as well as in combined groups.

Because the children had much more difficulty with "Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee", skewing the data with several extremely high error counts (see Appendix E for data), I also calculated the mean number of errors for each individual song within the three methods. These numbers led me to a slightly different conclusion. For "Lucy Locket"

(song 1), the blended method still showed the fewest errors, with an average of 5 (SD = 4.67). With this song, however, the immersion method, with an average of 8.4 (SD = 12.35) errors, seemed much more effective than the rote approach, with an average of 26.38 (SD = 17.85) errors. With "Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee," the conclusions are still different. This song showed the rote and blended approaches to be the most effective, with the *t* tests revealing a significant difference between these methods and immersion, as is shown above. A reason behind this is that there were a handful of students in this particular class that chose not to sing the second song, or else stopped after only a few notes. Their data is highlighted in red on the charts. Because they did not sing any, or most of the song, the error count for these students was exceptionally high, and caused the mean number of errors in their class to go significantly up. This farther fortifies my conclusion that the second song ("Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee") was a lot more challenging to remember than the first ("Lucy Locket"). The fact that "Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee" was also always the second song I taught the children could play a role in this as well. This might have contributed to them getting it confused with "Lucy Locket."

After having spent an entire semester working with these children now, I can say that the classes as a whole are not on the same level of musical ability. The class of children labeled as "Group 2" consistently impresses me with their enthusiasm and success in the music room at school. They have a better grasp overall on singing on pitch, both individually and as a class. Because of this, I was not surprised to see an average of fewer errors on both songs from this class. This is also significant information to consider when analyzing the resulting data. Group 2 learned "Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee" (song 2)

by rote, and this might be why the average number of errors here is lower than expected when comparing it to the other data.

The *t* tests I ran show that the blended method was more effective than the immersion method overall. However, after seeing that one song was a lot more challenging than the other, I ran more *t* tests for each method within the songs. The results here showed slightly different results. With song 1 ("Lucy Locket"), the students learned best with the blended method, followed by rote and then immersion. With song 2 ("Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee"), however, the students learned the song better through the rote and blended approaches than the immersion approach, but there was no noticeable difference between the rote and blended methods here. Perhaps this reveals that more challenging songs need to be broken down to some extent, as in the blended and rote methods.

All in all, I find the data gathered from this study to be slightly inconclusive, and a lot still remains to be analyzed in this field of research. From the results I found, however, I do think that the blended method shows promise at being the most efficient method of teaching song to children, and I would encourage further, more extensive research on this topic. Something else to consider is that perhaps there is not one "best method" for all occasions, but rather different methods are better for different occasions. This could be why "Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee" showed the rote approach to be equally effective as the blended method. Perhaps the rote approach was the best method to use with this particular type of non-story song. This is a topic on which I think further research would be beneficial.

Limitations of the Study

Although every effort was made to insure the reliability and validity of this study, several factors, including the ones mentioned above, may have influenced the outcome. For the purpose of this honors thesis, the data was only grouped and analyzed according to the teaching method used: (rote, immersion, or blended). However, many more variables could have affected the results. One factor not accounted for in the data was the individual differences between the children. Not only does each child have his or her own level of musical ability, which directly influences the data, but confidence played a big role as well. Many of the kids were visibly nervous to sing for me alone, and this most likely had an effect on their results, particularly with the ones who chose not to sing one of the songs for me. This is another thing that could be analyzed to get a more specific set of knowledge from the data. Looking back on my procedure, I also realize that teaching "Lucy Locket" first in every class could have influenced the results as well. Perhaps this contributed to the children' s struggles with "Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee." A counter-balanced design in which the classes were taught the songs in different orders might have given a more accurate set of results. Lastly, the teaching time of 10 minutes is a very brief amount of time to teach two new songs. There was time to teach the songs, but I think that more repetition after they learned them would have been incredibly beneficial. This is another thing that might be considered in future research on this topic.

Directions for Further Research

Although much research has been done on song-teaching methods for children, there is still so much to be explored in this field. Future directions for research include

using other grade levels of children as participants, perhaps children a bit older. Some second grade children can still be developing their musical ear, and this could have affected the study. Many of the children got the two songs mixed up or were unable to match my starting pitch. An older group of kids might have an easier time with this, despite an increase in the difficulty of the song. Increasing the amount of participants to a much bigger number would also broaden the study and increase the reliability of the results. Also, altering the type of school where the study took place to a school where music is not so highly valued and taught so routinely would probably give a different kind of data. I would be interested to see the results from such a study, because a neglected music situation is not at all uncommon in schools today. Therefore, I think that that information could be useful to have. I also think that having a teacher that the students are familiar with conduct the study might produce more accurate results. Although the students at Baton Rouge Center for Visual and Performing Arts are used to singing individually as well as in a group, the students were clearly nervous to sing for someone they did not know and this most likely affected their results in various ways. I think all of these factors would be great points to consider for further research on this topic.

This study was completed to investigate the retention value of teaching children's songs through different methods. In conclusion, the results were quite varied and it was difficult to form a specific conclusion, but it was apparent that the 1st song, "Lucy Locket," was much easier for the children to recall. On this song, the blended method proved to be the most effective. With "Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee," the more challenging selection, the rote and blended approaches were equally effective. This type of research

on song acquisition is vital to the field of music education because teachers have to try and do the most they can with the time they have, and being able to teach students a song in a way that they will be able to remember it is vital to most music lessons.

Appendix A

IRB documents

Hello 2nd Grade Parents!

My name is Erin Baker and I am currently student teaching with Mrs. Delony in the music classroom. I am really enjoying working with your children and we have been able to do so many wonderful things!

I am currently doing a research project on the different ways to teach songs in music class, in hopes to discover which way is the most effective to use when teaching your children. I taught all of the second grade classes 2 songs and then had them try to remember the songs a week later on their own. They were not required to sing the songs for me, but if they chose to do so, I recorded their singing and saved it to my computer. I am now asking for your permission to privately and anonymously evaluate the recordings and combine all of the information I collected. Your child's name will not be used in any way.

The following 2 pages continue to explain the study I am doing. If you feel comfortable doing so, please sign the last page and send it back to school with your child as soon as possible. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Mrs. Delony. Thank you so much! Your children are truly a delight.

Sincerely,

Erin Baker
ebaker2@lsu.edu

1. Study Title: Song Acquisition Among Second Grade Students: Comparing Rote, Immersion, and Blended Approaches

2. Performance Site: Baton Rouge Center for the Visual and Performing Arts

3. Investigators: The following investigator is available for questions about this Study, Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Dr. Sarah J. Bartolome (225) 578-2481

4. Purpose: The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of music teaching method on the singing of second grade students.

5. Subject Inclusion: Children in Second Grade at BRCVPA.

6. Number of Subjects: 75-80

7. Study Procedures: Three classes of third grade students will learn the same two songs drawn from the regular music curriculum. The teacher will present the material using three standard, widely practiced methods of song teaching: rote, immersion, and blended. One week following the teaching of the songs, the students will be assessed individually, performing both pieces as a solo as part of normal assessment procedures. Comparisons will be made between classes to determine which method of song teaching was most effective.

8. Benefits: There are no direct benefits related to participation, however this study may contribute to our understanding of effective music teaching.

9. Risks: There are minimal risks associated with participation in this study, however, sometimes people get nervous when they are asked to sing alone or are audio recorded. Your child will be free to stop the assessment at any time should they feel uncomfortable or anxious. Audio files will be saved on a password-protected laptop to which only the investigator has access.

10. Right to Refuse: Your child may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

11. Privacy: Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Subject identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

12. Signatures:

The study has been explained to me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigator. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Robert C. Mathews, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb. I agree to allow my child to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Signature of Parent _____ Date _____

Study Approved By:
Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman
Institutional Review Board
Louisiana State University
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
225-578-8692 | www.lsu.edu/irb
Approval Expires: 3/21/2013

I,_____, agree to be in a study to find out the best way to teach songs to second graders. I will learn songs as part of my music class and then sing those songs by myself for Miss Baker. I can decide to stop being in the study at any time without getting in trouble.

Child's Signature:_____ Age:_____ Date:_____

Witness* _____ Date:_____
* (N.B. Witness must be present for the assent process, not just the signature by the minor.)

Study Approved By:
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Appendix B

Teaching processes for immersion, rote, and blended methods

The Immersion Method

1. Teacher asks the first guided question to focus the students' attention to the song.
2. Teacher sings the entire song to the class.
3. Teacher asks the second guided question to focus the students' attention to the song.
4. Teacher sings the entire song to the class again.
5. Teacher sings the entire song again, asking children to keep a steady heartbeat on their legs during the song.
6. Teacher sings the entire song again, asking children to "join in" when they can.
7. Children sing the entire song with the teacher.
8. Children sing the entire song without the teacher.
9. Children sing the entire song without the teacher again.

The Rote Method

1. Teacher asks the first guided question to focus the students' attention to the song.
2. Teacher sings the entire song to the class.
3. Teacher sings phrase 1, class echoes.
4. Teacher sings phrase 2, class echoes.
5. Teacher sings phrase 3, class echoes.
6. Teacher sings phrase 4, class echoes.
7. Teacher sings phrases 1 and 2, class echoes.
8. Teacher sings phrases 3 and 4, class echoes.
9. Children sing the entire song with the teacher.
10. Children sing the entire song without the teacher.
11. Children sing the entire song without the teacher again.

The Blended Method

1. Teacher asks the first guided question to focus the students' attention to the song.
2. Teacher sings the entire song to the class.
3. Teacher asks the second guided question to focus the students' attention to the song.
4. Teacher sings the entire song to the class again.
5. Teacher sings phrase 1, class echoes.
6. Teacher sings phrase 2, class echoes.
7. Teacher sings phrase 3, class echoes.
8. Teacher sings phrase 4, class echoes.
9. Children sing the entire song with the teacher.
10. Children sing the entire song without the teacher.
11. Children sing the entire song without the teacher again.

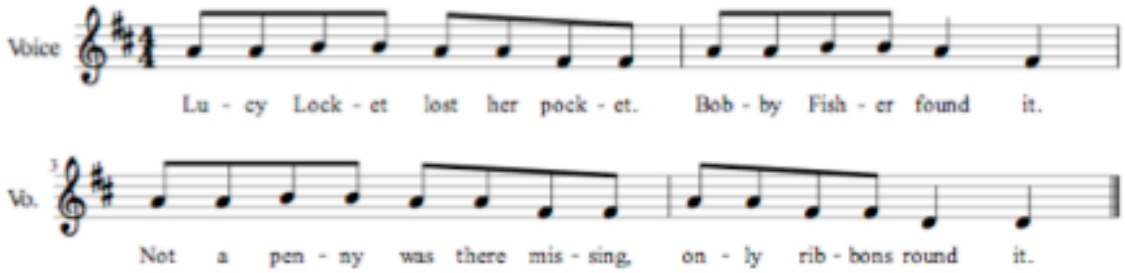
Appendix C

Student song evaluation form

GROUP NUMBER _____

Lucy Locket

METHOD:



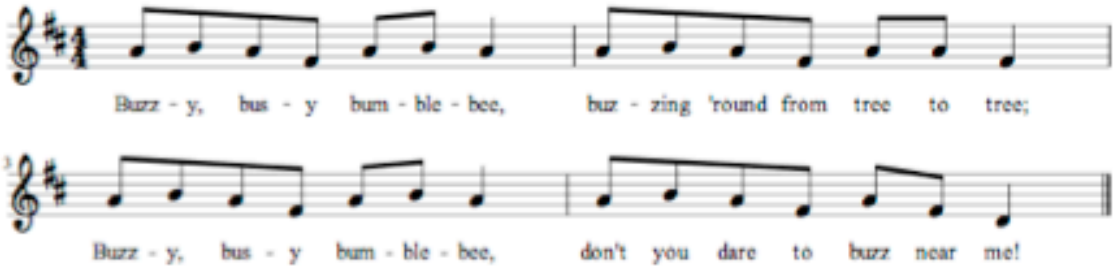
Pitch Errors _____ Rhythm Errors _____ Text Errors _____

Contour Errors _____

TOTAL ERRORS _____

Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee

METHOD:



Pitch Errors _____ Rhythm Errors _____ Text Errors _____

Contour Errors _____

TOTAL ERRORS _____

Appendix D

	Rote	Immersion	Blended
	24	38	1
	18	79	2
	31	81	5
	64	61	4
	32	38	3
	24	60	3
	36	44	3
	55	35	8
	5	81	4
	8	81	14
	25	72	16
	5	21	2
	16	6	0
	17	2	52
	15	6	31
	19	6	30
	18	0	15
	17	1	17
	23	11	19
	11	7	16
	15	0	29
	37	49	23
	17	3	57
	17	5	49
	16	7	16
	21	10	15
	38	19	
	17	0	
Mean	22.89	29.39	16.69
SD	13.52	29.79	16.2

Data table grouped by method

Appendix E

	Rote - 1	Immersion -1	Blended -1
	24	2	1
	18	6	2
	31	6	5
	64	0	4
	32	1	3
	24	11	3
	36	7	3
	55	0	8
	5	49	4
	8	3	14
	25	5	16
	5	7	2
	16	10	0
		19	5
		0	
Mean	26.38	8.4	5
SD	17.85	12.35	4.67

Song 1 ("Lucy Locket") Data

	Rote - 2	Immersion -2	Blended -2
	17	38	52
	15	79	31
	19	81	30
	18	61	15
	17	7	17
	23	38	19
	11	60	16
	15	44	29
	37	35	23
	17	45	57
	17	81	49
	16	81	16
	21	72	15
	38	21	
	17	6	
Mean	19.87	49.93	28.38
SD	7.65	26.23	15.06

Song 2 ("Buzzy, Busy Bumblebee") Data

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