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The effect of parental monitored practice on the musical achievement of sixth grade instrumental music students

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THE EFFECT OF PARENTAL MONITORED PRACTICE ON THE MUSICAL ACHIEVEMENT OF SIXTH GRADE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC STUDENTS

by
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A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

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The Effect of Parental Monitored Practice on the Musical Achievement

of Sixth Grade Instrumental Music Students

1999

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Lili Levinowitz

Master of Arts: Subject Matter Music Teaching

Graduate Division of Rowan University

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of parental involvement on the musical achievement of middle school band students. The problem of this study was to examine the effectiveness of parental monitored practice program on sixth grade instrumental band students' music achievement.

All sixth grade band students were given a letter the first day of school which explained the investigation and asked the parents if they would be part of the study. The parents participation involved attending an informational meeting, monitoring their students' practice, and commenting where appropriate. Students recorded their weekly practice, obtained their parents' initials and showed this to the teacher each week. The instructional period lasted for twelve weeks. At the end of the instructional period, an etude was assigned to all students in both the experimental group (18) and the control

group (19). Each student prepared the etude during his own practice time. The following week, each student performed the etude, which was tape-recorded. These recordings were judged by two independent judges using a continuous rating scale.

The mean difference failed to be statistically significant. That is, although the observed mean of the experimental group was 16.056 and the observed mean of the control group was 13.278, the difference could not be considered different from a chance difference.

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The mean difference was not statistically significant. Although there was an observed mean difference in favor of the experimental group, the difference could not be considered different from a chance difference.

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And to my students and your parents, you are what it's all about. Thank you!

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the many people God has placed in my life, who have helped to mold me and make me into who I am and who I will be.

To my grandparents, Paul and Antoinette Baldasarre and Felice Bucciero, who came to a foreign place not knowing the language or customs and started a new life. Thank you for your bravery and persistence. Grandma, I will always remember that "God is God" and how you knew how much you were going to pay for a Christmas tree before you shopped and paid that price.

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And to Mary Jane Newkirk, who lived to be a hundred years old and had more spunk than I'll ever know.

God bless you all.

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Chapter One

Introduction

It is important for parents to become involved in their children's education. It is also important for schools to seek out ways to include parents and to make them feel comfortable and knowledgeable about their children's education. This is not only good for the educational process, but for the public schools as well.

The key to Talent Education, a method of instruction developed by Shinichi Suzuki and introduced to the United States in the late 1950s, combines the teacher's knowledge with the parent's help and maintains a close cooperation between them.[1] There are thousands of American parents who are concerned enough to become involved with their children's music education if they see the importance of it and are given the kind of guidance and training necessary to accept this responsibility and feel confident in it.[2]

Suzuki states that a child who practices well shows it in his playing. Practicing according to the current method and practicing as much as possible is the way to acquire ability.[3] In a study published in 1990, Ericsson and Crutcher reported that in young adults, level of performance on the violin is positively

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[1]Kendall,John. *The Suzuki Violin Method in American Music Education.*1985. Birch Tree Group Ltd.,New Jersey.p17
[2]*ibid.*, p28
[3] Suzuki, Shinichi. *Nurtured by Love: The Classic Approach to Talent Educaton.*1983.Exposition Press, New York.p97

correlated with amount of time spent practicing.[4] The acquisition of exceptional performing skills seems to require a comparable degree of sustained dedication involving the continuing support of parents and teachers, as well as the young musician.

Sustained musical activity over many years requires a continuing environment supportive of and conducive to musical learning. Sosniak(1985) found a very high level of parental involvement in and commitment to the musical development of exceptionally able young pianists.[5]

Several studies have been conducted which examine the effectiveness of parental involvement and instrumental music. In three studies conducted by Zdzinski, mixed results were obtained. In a first study conducted in 1987, Zdzinski found no significant relationship between parental involvement, as measured by student responses, and performance achievement.[6] A second study (1992) conducted by Zdzinski revealed significant relationships between parental involvement and musical achievement. The findings of this study suggest that parental activities such as listening to practice, assisting with practice, attending school concerts, providing transportation, asking about progress, and talking about music may be related to positive outcomes.[7] In a third study (1996) conducted by

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[4] Ericsson,K.A., and Crutcher,R.J.(1990).The Nature of Exceptional Performance. In P.B. Latles,D.L. Featerman, and R.M. Lerner(Eds.), Life-span Development and Behavior(Vol.10) (pp187-217). Hillsdale N.J.:Erlbaum

[5]Sosniak, Lauren A. (1985). Learning to be a Concert Pianist. in B. S. Bloom(ED.) Developing Talent in Young People(pp19-67).New York: Ballantine

[6] Zdzinski, Stephen F., "Relationships Among Parental Involvement, Music Aptitude, and Musical Achievement of Instrumental Music Students." Journal of Research in Music Education 40,No. 2 (1992):114-25.

[7] Zdzinski, Stephen F., "Relationships Among Parental Involvement and Affective Outcomes in Instrumental Music."Southeastern Journal of Music Education, in press

Zdzinski, parental involvement was found to be significantly related to affective, cognitive, and performance outcomes.[8]

Similarly, in a study conducted by Brokaw (1983), it was found that the amount of time parents spend supervising home practice is more strongly associated with student achievement than the amount of time students spend practicing.[9] Furthermore, Davidson found that family involvement is vital to a child's progress. It is more important for parents to assist their child, than for their child to possess a high level of musical competence.[10]

Sperti investigated selected teaching techniques from the Suzuki approach and the teaching of beginning clarinet. The results from this study show that rote teaching, parent supervision of home practice, and assigned listening, are favored techniques.[11] Blaine adopted the Suzuki-Kendall violin class method for classes of trumpet and trombone students. The Parent Teacher group did not prove to be more productive than the Parent Supervised group, however both groups were more successful than the traditional group. Poor parent class attendance because

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[8] Zdzinski,Stephen F., "Parental Involvement ,Selected Student Attributes,and Learning Outcomes in Instrumental Music." Journal for Research in Music Education,44,No.1(1996):34-48.

[9] Brokaw, John Parkinson. " The Extent to Which Parental Supervision and Other Selected Factors are Related to Achievement of Musical and Technical-Physical Characteristics by Beginning Instrumental Musical Students." (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1983).

[10] Davidson,J.W. "The Role of Parents and Teachers in the Success and Failure of Instrumental Learners." Council for Research in Music Education, No.127. Winter(1996):40-44

[11] Sperti, John. Adaptation of Certain Aspects of the Suzuki Method to the Teaching of the Clarinet: An Experimental Investigation Testing the Effectiveness of Two Different Pedagogical Methodologies. "Council for Research in Music Education.No. 37 Spring 1974 pp46-48

of work, school, and social commitments was a major problem which influenced the lack of success of the Parent Teacher group.[12]

Two recent studies involving parents and instrumental music instruction yielded results in support of parental involvement. In a study conducted by Lombardelli (1995) it was stated that parental involvement may enhance the music achievement of lower middle school instrumentalists with at least one year of playing experience. In turn, the parent master class may serve as an effective vehicle for parental involvement in instrumental music education.[13] In another study conducted by Bushong (1997) it was concluded that homes with an active music environment will produce beginning instrumental students who perform better and have more positive attitudes about music than those home environments which do not actively support music.[14]

Motivating students to develop good practice habits is a very difficult task. Parents can be an excellent source for developing a schedule of practice for their children. However, in this day and age with both parents working outside the home, it is very difficult for both parents to commit to a time consuming regiment with their children. A monitored practice schedule in which the parents are present as supervisors should cause the child to experience a gain in music achievement.

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[12] Blaine, Robert J. Jr., "Adaption of the Suzuki-Kendall Method to the Teaching of a Heterogeneous Brasswind Instrumental Class of Trumpets and Trombones." Council for Research in Music Education. No. 56 Fall 1978 pp 55-60.

[13] Lombardelli,Stephen. "The Effects of Parental Involvement on the Performance Achievement of Middle School Instrumental Students."(Master's thesis. Rowan College of New Jersey,1995). pp48-51

[14] Bushong,Mary Frances. "The Effect of an Active Parental Program on the Musical Achievement and Musical Affectiveness of Elementary Instrumental Musical Students."(Master's thesis. Rowan University,1997). pp38-41

Problem of the Study

The problem of this study is to examine the effectiveness of a parental monitored practice program on sixth grade instrumental band students' music achievement.

Chapter Two

Related Research

As was established in Chapter One, the two major components of this study are practice and parental involvement. As was also seen in chapter one, there are several studies that involve parental involvement and instrumental music. In the chapter to follow, studies were chosen which contained the major components or were similar in grade level.

The Lombardelli Study[1]

In 1995, Lombardelli investigated the effect of parental involvement on the music achievement of experienced middle school instrumental music students. The sample consisted of sixty-seven fifth and sixth grade instrumental music students from a primarily white, upper middle-class school located in southern New Jersey.

Prior to the treatment period, a survey was distributed to the parents of the students in the sample. The survey consisted of forty questions which were designed to ascertain the home musical environment. Furthermore, one question stated, "I would be willing to attend an evening workshop in which strategies for motivating and optimizing my child's instrumental instruction through the development of a successful practice routine along with the cultivation of motivation to play would be discussed" which was

[1]Lombardelli,Stephen. "The Effects of Parental Involvement on the Performance Achievement of Middle School Instrumental Students."(Master's thesis. Rowan College of New Jersey,1995).

designed to aid in the selection of the students to be placed in the experimental group. These students' parents agreed to attend two evening workshops in which these strategies would be demonstrated and discussed. The remaining students, whose parents did not answer affirmatively to the aforementioned question, were designated as subjects for the control group.

The instructional period lasted for twelve weeks. Each student received a forty-minute group lesson on their instrument in which a ten to fifteen minute portion was devoted to instruction on the development of home practice techniques. The first lesson consisted of the students' description of their home practice sessions followed by discussions and suggestions from other group members and the teacher. In the third week of instruction, a practice model suggested by Arthur Woodbury and a take home worksheet were distributed. Each student described their home routine as it applied to each component of the model. During the fourth week, teachers and students went over the assignment and the students suggested possible improvements on their practice procedures. In week five, all subjects began to keep records of their home practice. During weeks six through ten, the researcher reported all of the components of the Woodbury practice model were discussed in greater detail. Elements of a seven-day practice model developed by Kenneth Kronholz were also introduced.

At the conclusion of the tenth lesson, all students received a criterion etude to prepare individually. A review and discussion of the materials covering the instructional period took place during the eleventh week and on the twelfth week, all students performed the etude, which was audio-taped.

During the twelve week instructional period, two evening master classes were held which were attended by at least one parent in the experimental group. The first evening master class was held during the fifth week of instruction and related in content to the lessons that were taught to the children the first five weeks of their instruction. Parents were asked to go over the Woodbury model with their children, establish practice times, and to check over and sign their home practice records.

The second master class was held during the eighth week of instruction and included demonstrations of practice routines and examples of what to listen for during their child's practice session. The group lesson format and weekly band rehearsal procedures were discussed. Information that was covered during weeks six through ten of the instructional period was also presented.

The audio recordings were evaluated by two independent judges using a five-point continuous rating scale in three areas: rhythm, tone, and expression achievement. Each wind student's score ranged between 3 and 15 for each independent judge. Percussionist were rated on rhythm and expression only so that their score ranged from 2 and 10.

An interjudge reliability was calculated using the Pearson product-moment correlation formula. The results demonstrated consistency between the two judges. The researcher failed to find statistically significant differences in achievement for melody and expression between the experimental and control groups. A statistically significant mean difference, however, was found in favor of the experimental group for rhythm achievement.

Comparison between the Lombardelli Study and the present study

In both, the Lombardelli and the present study, parental involvement in the development of a successful practice routine served as a main component of the experiment. In the Lombardelli study, parents were asked to fill out a survey concerning the music home environment. In the present study, this was not found to be necessary. In the Lombardelli study, parents were asked to attend two master classes after the study was well under way. In the present study, parents were asked to attend an informational meeting before the experiment began.

In the Lombardelli study, fifth and sixth grade instrumental music students were used as subjects. In the present study, only sixth grade instrumental students were used. Both studies lasted twelve weeks and both used audio taping of a criterion etude which was evaluated by two independent judges. However, in the present study, the investigator used melody and rhythm as musical criteria, eliminating the expression criteria.

The Blaine Study[2]

In 1976, Blaine investigated the effectiveness of using the Suzuki-Kendall violin method for teaching brass classes consisting of trumpets and trombones and to determine the relationship between musical aptitude and musical achievement of the students when the Suzuki-Kendall method is used.

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[2] Blaine, Robert J. Jr., "Adaptation of the Suzuki-Kendal Method to the Teaching of a Heterogeneous Brasswind Instrumental Class of Trumpets and Trombones." (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America,1976).

A limitation was placed upon parental participation: only one group of parents acted as home teachers and another group acted as home supervisors.

The following hypothesis were tested:

1. Treatment groups whose training included the Suzuki-Kendall method would score significantly higher than the control group on the Watkins-Farnum Performance Scale (WFPS).

2. Treatment groups whose training included the Suzuki-Kendall method would score significantly higher than the control group on the Whybrew Performance Evaluation Scale (WPES).

3. No significant difference in knowledge gain between high ability-based sub-groups and low ability sub-groups of treatment group I (parents as home teachers) and treatment group II (parents as home supervisors) as measured by either the WFPS or the WPES, would be found.

4. No significant difference in knowledge gain between Suzuki group with parents as home teacher and Suzuki group with parents as home supervisors as measures by the WFPS, would be found.

5. No significant difference in knowledge gain between Suzuki group with parents as home teacher and Suzuki group with parents as home supervisors as measures by the WPES, would be found.

The sample consisted of forty-two fourth grade trumpet and trombone students from an elementary school located in Washington, D.C. The first twenty-two applicants who responded to a letter to parents introducing the experimental instrumental music program were chosen for the experimental group. In that same letter, the parents were asked to indicate their preference of two time periods of instruction. The first time period was 6:30 PM at which parents could accompany their children and learn to play the instrument to aid in their child's development. The second time period was during the school day in which they would attend a regularly scheduled music class twice each week. A random selection of fourteen parents who indicated a desire to attend the first time

period constituted experimental Group I. The remaining twenty-eight students were divided equally into the experimental Group II and the Control group.

The control group was assigned to the regular instrumental music teacher, not the investigator. This group used a traditional approach to instruction for the twenty- week instructional period following the organization of the *Belwin Band Builder.*

Experimental Group I students and their parents attended two lessons each week. Experimental Group II students attended two lessons each week. Both experimental groups received twenty weeks of instruction by the investigator, which was an adaptation of the Suzuki-Kendall method. Music for the experimental groups was memorized. Note reading was not introduced until the second half of the study.

A tape of the five melodies to be studied was distributed along with a tape player to each subject in the experimental groups. A daily listening schedule was sent or given to each of the parents. It was the parents' responsibility to administer the listening program at a specified time each day.

Three student recitals were given during the instructional period. Students played, individually and collectively, the melodies covered up to the time of their performance.

As was indicated, instruction for both experimental groups was the same. The difference between the treatments in Group I and Group II was in the parental involvement. The parents of Experimental Group I acted as home teachers. They were instructed along with the child, and reinforced the lesson with the child at home. The parents of Experimental Group II acted as home supervisors. They supervised and monitored the home listening program.

The Seashore Measure of Music Talents was used as an aptitude measure of prerequisite music skills. The aptitude scores were split at the median to give high and low level groups to be compared with the scores of the dependent variables.

The Watkins-Farnum Scale was administered to all subjects at the conclusion of the instructional period. A tape was made of each student's performance of exercises from the Watkins-Farnum Scale. Scoring of the tapes was evaluated by a team of three judges based on pitch and rhythmic accuracy. The Whybrew Scale was used by three judges to evaluate the tone and technique of each performer. Each judge received one evaluation sheet for each student. The scores in each category for each performer were averaged to constitute the raw score for each student.

Results are as follows:

1) A significant difference between the Suzuki groups and the Conventional group was found as measured by the Watkins-Farnum Performance Scale. It was concluded that performance for the Conventional group was greater than the Suzuki experimental groups.

2) A significant difference between the Suzuki groups and the Conventional group was found as measured by the Whybrew Performance Evaluation Scale. It was concluded that performance was greater for the Suzuki experimental groups than for the Conventional group.

3) No significant difference in knowledge gain between high ability-based sub groups and low ability sub-groups of treatment groups was found as measured by either the WFPS or the WPES. It was concluded that performance, as measured by post-test scores, was not significantly greater between high and low ability based sub-groups on either performance scale.

4) No significant difference in knowledge was found between the parent teacher and the parent supervisor groups as measured by the WFPS. It was concluded that performance, as measured by post-test scores, was not significantly different between the home teacher and home supervisor groups.

5) No significant difference in knowledge gain was found between the parent supervisor and the parent teacher groups as measured by the WPES. It was concluded that performance, as measured by post-test scores, was not significantly different between the home supervisor and home teacher groups.

The results of the data analysis demonstrated that the control group performed higher on the Watkins-Farnum Scale which measured sight reading ability. Perhaps this was because the control group spent the entire twenty week instructional period on developing reading skills as compared to only ten weeks by the experimental group.

The instructor for the experimental groups differed from the instructor for the control groups. Perhaps the difference found on the Watkins-Farnum Performance Scale or the Wybrew Performance Evaluation Scale could be attributed to a difference in teacher styles rather than instructional styles.

Comparison between the Blaine Study and the present study

One of the primary objectives of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of using the Suzuki-Kendall violin method for teaching brass classes consisting of trumpets and trombones. The subjects were beginning fourth grade students. The present study will investigate one aspect of the Suzuki-Kendall method, parental involvement. The subjects will be experienced sixth grade wind and percussion students.

The instructor in the Blaine study was different for the control group and the experimental groups. The instructor in the present study will be the same for both groups. In addition, the present study will have only one experimental group as compared to two in the Blaine study.

In addition, the treatment for the Blaine study was different between the control group and the experimental groups. In the present study, the treatment will be the same for both groups.

Lastly, Blaine tried to measure a difference in knowledge gain between the Suzuki group with parents as home teachers' and the Suzuki group with parents as home supervisors. The Parent Teacher group did not prove to be more productive than the Parent Supervised group. Blaine observed that the many obligations of parents gave rise to an increased attendance problem which prevented them from regular attendance. As was established in chapter one of the present study and was a large rationale for the design of this study, it is very difficult for parents to commit to a time consuming regiment with their children. Which is why the present study will use parents as supervisors for the experimental group.

The Zdzinski Study [3]

Zdzinski examined relationships among selected aspects of parental involvement as they relate to the cognitive, affective, and performance outcomes of instrumental music

[3] Zdzinski,Stephen F., "Parental Involvement ,Selected Student Attributes,and Learning Outcomes in Instrumental Music." Journal for Research in Music Education,44,No.1(1996):34-48.

students. Subjects were 397 instrumental music students from five intact band programs located in rural New York and Pennsylvania. Wind and percussion volunteers from Grades 4 through 12 participated. One hundred sixty-five of these subjects were senior high students, one hundred twenty-four were junior high students and one hundred eight were elementary students. Two hundred twenty-six of the subjects were girls and one hundred seventy-two were boys.

Independent variables were music aptitude, parental involvement, grade level, and gender. Dependent variables were cognitive musical outcomes, performance outcomes, and affective outcomes.

Affective outcomes were measured using three instruments. The Zorn Music Attitude Inventory (MAI) was designed to assess attitudes toward music and musical participation among band students. The Asmus Motivational Factors measure (AMF) assessed the following five factors to which students attributed their degree of success in music: effort, background, classroom environment, musical ability, and affect for music. The Asmus Magnitude of Motivation measure (AMM) assessed the magnitude of student motivation in areas of personal commitment, school music, and music compared to other activities.

Cognitive musical achievement was measured by selected subtests of the Musical Achievement Tests (MAT) and the IOWA Tests of Music Literacy (ITML). MAT subtests were selected to measure pitch discrimination, interval discrimination, meter discrimination, instrument recognition, music reading, and chord recognition, while ITML subtests of pitch and rhythm reading recognition were selected and administered.

Performance achievement was measured using the Watkins-Farnum Performance Scale (WFPS). The subject's performances were also evaluated using a subjective scoring measure, the Performance Rating Scale Supplement (PRSS).

Parental involvement was measured by the Parental Involvement Measure (PIM) which examined the frequency with which parents are engaged in selected parental activities and the degree of parental involvement of those who are engaged in those activities.

The Tonal and Rhythmic subtests of the Musical Aptitude Profile (MAP) were used to measure music aptitude. The composite score of the two sections served as the measure of music aptitude. The independent variable of grade level was defined as elementary, junior high, or senior high. Gender also served as an independent variable.

The WFPS was administered to the subjects by their band directors. Performances were tape-recorded and later scored by the researcher. The MAT and ITML subtests were administered by the researcher, followed by administration of the MAP, the attitude measures, and the PIM. This took place during four class periods. One hundred-eight students were not able to participate in the performance measurement portion of the data collection or data analysis.

Grade level differences in parental involvement relationships were found among the various outcome measures. Affective outcome relationships increased in strength as subject age increased, whereas the opposite was the case among cognitive and performance outcomes. Performance and cognitive musical outcomes were significantly related to parental involvement only at the elementary level, while they were not related at either the junior high or senior high levels. Cognitive composite score for elementary was

.38 and performance composite for the same was .37. In contrast, for affective outcomes, the only significant parental involvement relationships were found at the secondary levels and were related most strongly at the senior high level. There was a significant relationship at the junior high level for affective outcomes at the .30 level.

Comparison of the Zdzinski Study and the present study

In the Zdzinski study, subjects were students in grades four through twelve from five intact band programs. In the present study subjects were in grade six and they were from one program.

Both studies are concerned with parental involvement. In the Zdzinski study parental involvement was measured using a survey. In the present study, parental involvement is incorporated into the learning process.

The major difference between both studies is that, Zdzinski's study was an investigation, and the present study is an experiment which controls for the parents involvement.

Chapter Three

Design of the Study

Sample

The subjects of this study consisted of 38 sixth grade band students from the Orchard Valley Middle School in Washington Township Public Schools. The school was located in Gloucester County in southern New Jersey. The student population was primarily white and upper- middle class.

Procedure

Sixth grade band students were grouped into two evenly divided classes that met every other day. One group had band while the other was in an allied art class and those two classes alternated accordingly. That is, only one half of the entire band met on any one day. In addition, every student enrolled in sixth grade band received a weekly group lesson from the researcher with all the students in that grade who play the same instrument. The instrument groups represented flute, clarinet, saxophone, brass, and percussion. Students were given a weekly lesson assignment which consisted of some type of warm-up, scales, and a lesson page from a correlated band method. Furthermore, some maintenance task such as cleaning of the mouthpiece or slides or greasing and oiling of the instrument, or a

writing assignment was included. Percussion students spent part of their lesson time learning to read the Treble Clef and to play concert bells. Students were given a two octave set of melody bells to take home and were expected to use them during their practice time. All students were encouraged by their instructor, in this case the investigator, to spend most of their practice time on their lesson assignment as opposed to their band music.

Prior to the beginning of this study, all students participating in sixth grade band received a letter (appendix B) during band class the first week of school which explained the investigation. In the letter, parent volunteers were asked to act as supervisors to their child's music instruction. Parents who responded in the affirmative, attended an informational meeting and consistently initialed their child's practice chart. The parents and children constituted the experimental group (N=19). The remaining students were considered the control group (N=19).

Parents who volunteered to take part in this study attended an informational meeting to be held before the school's already scheduled back to school night. This was done for two reasons. One reason for this was because this had already been publicized so that the parental attendance factor was very high and the other reason was to lesson the burden of the parents' already hectic schedules. At this meeting, the investigator discussed the research concerning the importance of practicing and the importance of parental involvement in band/music achievement. The investigator also discussed her expectations for the students to practice their lesson assignments at least four times a week. The role of the parent

as supervisor was also discussed. Specifically, parents were informed about a practice guide (appendix C) which aided them in assuring that their child practices correctly. In addition, the guide suggested appropriate words of encouragement that the parents can use during a child's practice which will motivate their child toward success.

Also at that meeting, the investigator discussed how to develop a successful practice routine and instructed the parents to establish a weekly practice schedule with their child. Students recorded their weekly practice on the form already established in the front of their lesson books (appendix D). The parents verified the practice by initialing in the appropriate column. Parents were expected to check their child's practice assignment continually and also referred to the "Practice Guide" to guide and supervise their child's practice.

The instructional period of the investigation lasted for twelve weeks which began in late September and continued to the middle of December. All subjects attended their weekly scheduled forty-five minute group lesson. Students were pulled out of an academic class on a rotating basis to attend these lessons. In the event a student could not attend a lesson, verification was required by the holding teacher and a weekly group make-up was made available to all students after school.

At the end of the instructional period, an etude (appendix E) was assigned to all students in both the experimental group and the control group. Each student prepared the etude during their own practice time without the guidance of the

teacher. The following week, each student performed the etude, which was tape-recorded by the investigator.

These recordings were judged by two independent judges who had at least ten years teaching experience in instrumental music. Those judges used a continuous rating scale, and were in-serviced using that scale on tape recorded performances of seventh and eighth grade students who sight read the etude. The continuous rating scale was adapted from Lombardelli's and Bushong's rating scale. The intent of the scale, however, differed significantly. Under the Melodic Rating Scale, degrees three and four were switched for this study. The reason for this was because it is more technically difficult for students to play arpeggiated patterns correctly than scale patterns.

Percussion students played the melodic etude on concert bells and the rhythmic etude on snare drum. The judges evaluated the students melodic and rhythmic achievement of the etude. The scores for each dimension ranged between two-ten. The combined rating of the two judges served as the criterion for both rhythmic and tonal achievement.

Analysis

The results of those students who had monitored parental practice was compared to those students who did not by organizing the data into a one dimensional design for differences combining all instruments. A t- test was used to

determine the significance of mean differences. The .05 level of confidence was selected as the criterion for those mean differences.

Chapter Four

Results and Interpretations

Interjudge Reliabilities. The interjudge reliabilities for the tonal rating scale and the rhythm rating scale are .912 and .879, respectively.

Means, standard deviations and *t*-test summary data are presented in Table One below. The mean difference (t=1.79,p=.082) that the researcher obtained failed to be statistically significant. That is, although the observed mean of the experimental group was 16.056 and the observed mean for the control group was 13.278, the difference could not be considered different from a chance difference.

Table One
Means, Standard Deviations, and *t*-test Summary Data for Control and Experimental Groups

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviations
Experimental	18	16.056	4.759
Control	18	13.278	4.548

Interpretation

For both cases, high interjudge reliabilities were reported. This could have been for a variety of reasons. Both judges teach in the same school district and have had opportunity to share in curriculum planning. Both judges have had some experience in the same master's program which could have caused them to be more familiar with the concepts being measured and the scale being used. Also, both judges underwent extensive

inservice prior to the evaluation session. Regardless, the interjudge reliabilities reveal that the instrument was appropriate as a tool to measure music achievement.

In both cases, the researcher failed to find a statistically significant difference between the control and experimental groups. This could be due to the fact that the size of the experiment was small. That is, only 18 students participated in the experimental treatment which may not have been enough to detect a difference. Furthermore, as time progressed, subjects in the control group started to take on the treatment of the experimental group. That is, students in the control group started to keep track of their practice time with or without their parent's guidance. Even though a statistically significant difference was not found, a mean difference was observed. The probability level of .08 is close to the chosen .05 level of significance. Therefore, a Type II error could have been committed. That is , the researcher could have failed to find a difference that does exist. As was stated previously, this could have occurred because of the small size or lack of parameters of both groups.

Of course, it could be that no difference in music achievement exists between students who have parental supervision or no supervision. This may be because of issues between students and their parents that often occur during adolescence.

Chapter Five

Summary and Conclusion

Purpose and Problem of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of parental involvement on the musical achievement of middle school band students. The problem of this study was to examine the effectiveness of a parental monitored practice program on sixth grade instrumental band students' music achievement.

Design and Analysis

All sixth grade band students were given a letter the first day of school which they brought home to their parents. The letter explained the investigation and asked the parents if they would be part of the study.

Parents who volunteered were than asked to attend an informational meeting at night. The investigator reviewed her expectations for practice by the students and the extent of the parents' involvement. The parents' participation was minimal, monitoring the students practice and commenting were appropriate. The parents than met with their child and established a mutually convenient practice schedule. Students recorded their weekly practice, obtained their parents' initials and showed this to the teacher each week.

The instructional period of the investigation lasted for twelve weeks which began in late September and continued to the middle of December. All subjects attended their weekly scheduled forty-five minute group lesson. At the end of the instructional period, an etude was assigned to all students in both the experimental group and the control

group. Each student prepared the etude during their own practice time without the guidance of the teacher. The following week, each student performed the etude, which was tape-recorded by the investigator.

These recordings were judged by two independent judges using a continuous rating scale. Percussion students played the melodic etude an concert bells and the rhythmic etude on snare drum. The judges evaluated the students' melodic and rhythmic achievement of the etude. The data were organized into a one dimensional design for differences combining all instruments.

Results

The mean difference that the researcher obtained failed to be statistically significant. That is, although the observed mean of the experimental 16.056 and the observed mean for the control group was 13.278, the difference could not be considered different from a chance difference.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It can not yet be concluded that parental supervision bears on musical achievement, considering the results of this study. Because an observed mean difference in favor of parental involvement was found, the researcher believes that supervision can be beneficial to the music education of the students and support of the instrumental program.

Future designs for studies of this nature may utilize a larger population of students and some type of safe guard to prevent an overlapping of duties of control and

experimental subjects. Also, more frequent contact with parents through various means of communication should be employed for future studies.

Furthermore, the rating scale for melody and rhythm did not include a zero rating. Some students lacked even the minimum standard. Had a zero rating been included, variability would have increased and perhaps that may have increased the mean difference to a size that was statistically significant.

Of course, it could be that no difference in music achievement does exist between students who have parental supervision or no supervision. This may be because of the issues between students and their parents that often occur during adolescence.

APPENDIX A

Debbie Baldasarre
688 Main St.
Sewell, N.J. 08080
(609)464-1532, 582-5353 ext. 5721

April 15, 1998

Mrs.Robertson,

I am presently completing my studies for a Masters Degree in Music Education. I am writing to you to request permission to conduct the research for my Master's Thesis at Orchard Valley Middle School. Specifically, I would like permission to work with the Sixth Grade Band.

In the fall, I would like to conduct an experimental research project that will involve the Sixth Grade Band students and their parents. I will be sending a letter to parents requesting volunteers to participate in this project that will involve their attending a special meeting that I would like to hold at Orchard Valley Middle School in early September. The purpose of this project is to measure the effect of parental monitored practice on the achievement of Sixth Grade Band students.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to call or write. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Debbie Baldasarre

cc Robert Kern

Robert Frampton

APPENDIX B

September 8, 1998

Dear Parents,

I am presently completing my studies at Rowan University for a Master's Degree in Music Education. I will be conducting a research project which will measure the effect of a parental monitored practice program on the achievement of sixth grade band students. The project should run 12 weeks and will involve your attendance at an informational meeting to be held September 16, 1998 at 6:30 PM in room 123 (this is a half hour before the Sixth Grade Back to School Night). I will need parent volunteers to participate in the project. Please detach the bottom and return to me at school as soon as possible.

Thank you,

Debbie Baldasarre

If you would like more information, please call me at 582-5353 ext.5721.

Name_____ Phone #_____

Child's Name_____

Would you be willing to participate in this program?

Yes_____ No_____

APPENDIX C

Practice Guide

I Where

A quiet room free of noise and distractions. The parent should be in listening range to comment or supervise if needed on practice.

II How Often

The minimum practice time (does not include "playing time") is 25 minutes, four different days within the week.

III When

This is where the student and parent work out a weekly schedule and then stick to it.

IV What

Warm-up/ Scales

Lesson book

Things you can look for:

- attentive to special directions (located at top of page)
- tap foot/ steady beat
- don't puff cheeks
- posture -sitting up straight, both feet on floor
- tongue notes clearly
- hand position-fingers close to the keys
- clear sound
- difficult sections played slowly and repetitively
- scales
- breath deep and low
- practice lesson book more than band music

Use words of praise and encouragement to motivate students:

- sounds good
- I hear your progress
- I like that one

V Why

to solve playing problems
to learn new things
to improve things already known
for enjoyment (after the minimum 25 minutes)

(Practice is work and work isn't always fun!)

APPENDIX D

B♭ TRUMPET/CORNET

LEVEL 2

BELWIN Century BAND METHOD

Week	Date	LESSON ASSIGNMENT	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Total	Sign.
1											
2											
3											
4											
5											
6											
7											
8											
9											
10											
11											
12											
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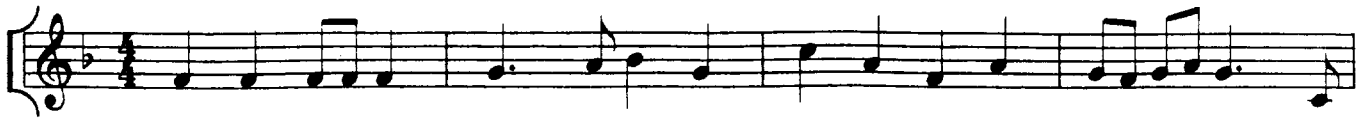
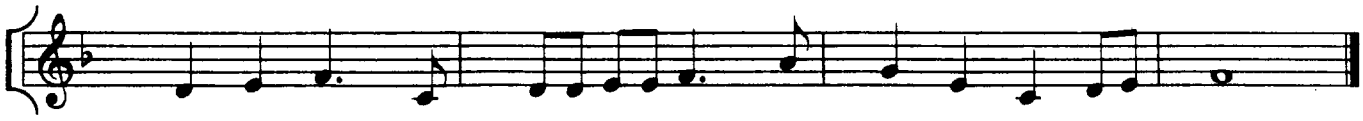
APPENDIX E

ETUDE

Clarinet 1

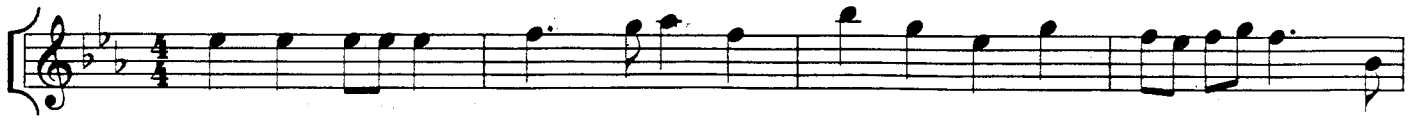


Clarinet 1

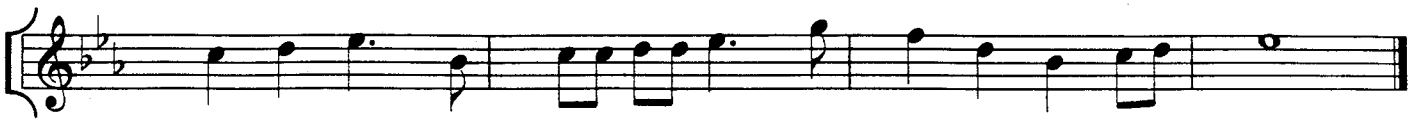


ETUDE

Flute 1

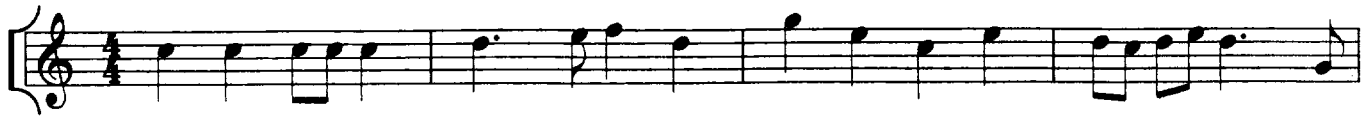


Flute 1

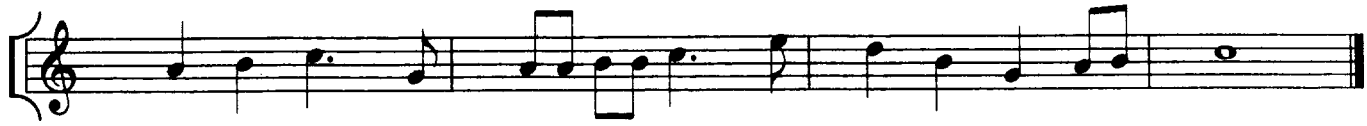


ETUDE

Alto Sax 1

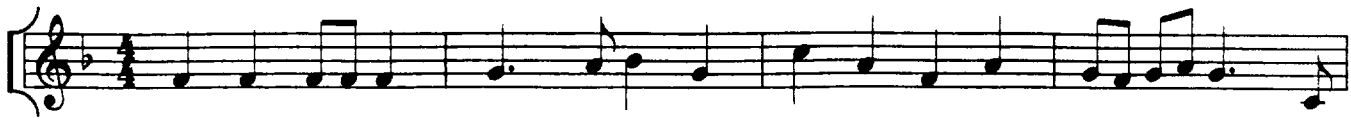


Alto Sax 1

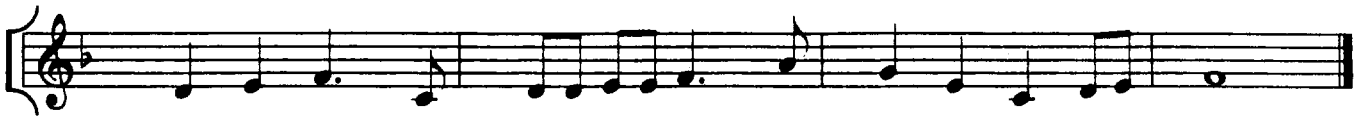


ETUDE

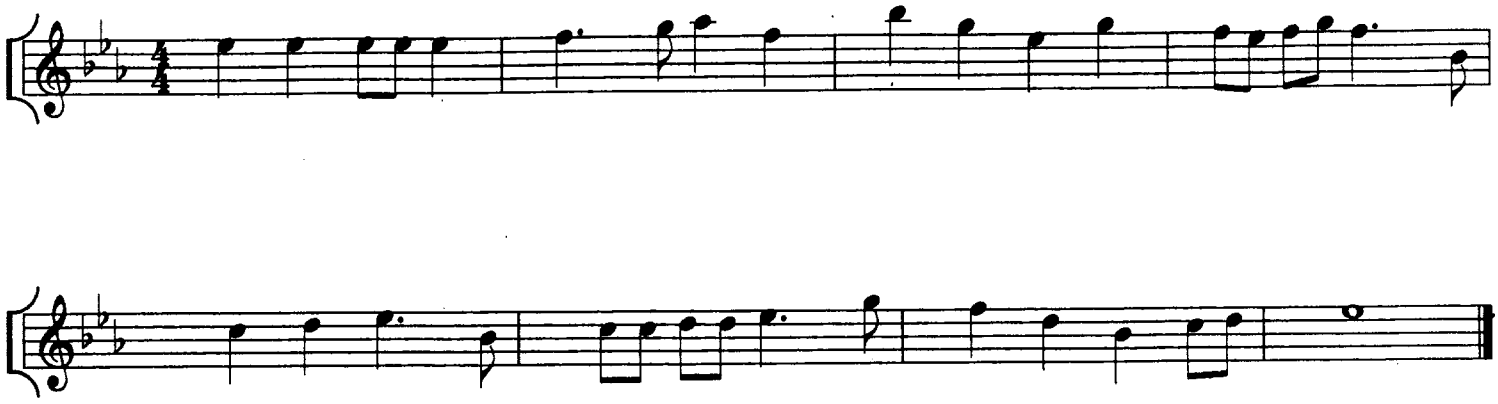
Trumpet 1



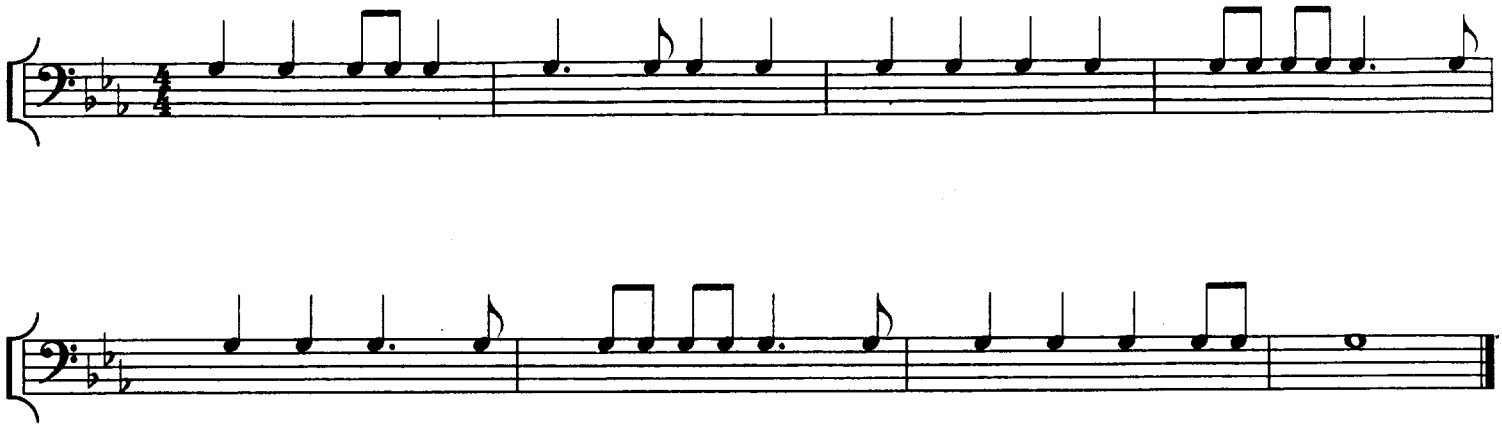
Trumpet 1



Percussion: melodic etude



Percussion: rhythmic etude



APPENDIX F

Rating Scale

Melodic (continuous)

5 All tonal patterns performed correctly
4 Arpeggiated patterns played correctly
3 Scale passages played correctly
2 Sense of tonality
1 Sense of keyality (begins and ends on correct note)

Rhythmic (continuous)

5 maintained a steady tempo and performed division and elongation patterns correctly
4 division or elongation patterns performed correctly
3 macro or micro beat patterns performed correctly
2 sense of meter
1 sense of tempo

STUDENT EVALUATION

JUDGE_____ STUDENT NUMBER_____

Melody _____

Rhythm _____

Combined _____

STUDENT EVALUATION

JUDGE_____ STUDENT NUMBER_____

Melody _____

Rhythm _____

Combined _____

Tabulation Sheet

Case	Group Judges	Melody A	Melody B	Rhythm A	Rhythm B	Combined

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