RUNNING HEAD: Music in the Classroom

THE USE OF MUSIC IN THE CLASSROOM TO INCREASE STUDENT ATTITUDES AND ACHIEVEMENT WHILE LEARNING SIGHT WORDS IN A PRE-KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the effects of music on students when used to teach sight words in a pre-kindergarten classroom. It explores not only the method at which the words are taught but also how it affects the students’ attitude towards learning new vocabulary. The findings of this study will answer two research questions: “Does the use of music in the pre-kindergarten classroom increase or decrease student achievement while learning sight words?” and “Does the use of music in the classroom increase or decrease students’ attitudes towards learning?” The use of a survey, individual testing, and statistical data were used to determine the outcome of this study. The findings, through the use of a t-test, show that there is no difference in using music while teaching pre-kindergartners sight words. The students are able to master their vocabulary no matter what method was used during the teaching process. Through qualitative analysis it was determined that even though each method of teaching produced good post test results, the majority of the students preferred learning their sight words with the use of music.
Introduction

With budget cuts looming closely over our heads in many of our country’s school districts, there is the overwhelming stress of whether or not you are going to have your job next year. On top of budget cuts, many districts are on a salary freeze and hiring freeze which means many people are getting shuffled around and teachers have larger class sizes. There is also the talk of program cuts. If you really think about it, classroom teachers are a must, so they will be the last thing to be cut. However, whom or what does that leave? Under NCLB (No Child Left Behind) the arts are to be considered a subject to be taught with a set curriculum. However, since there is no formal testing required, many see it as dispensable. (Wikipedia, 2012) Next on the list are many of the after school programs and clubs that the students enjoy. In retrospect, we must think about how these cuts will impact the students. Many of these special areas provide an alternative method to presenting curriculum in hopes to reach out to the variety of learners. This study is to focus on one of the arts: Music and how it impacts the learning and attitudes of pre-kindergartners.

Background, Issues and Concerns

In the past, Music has been taught solely in Music class. You will see more frequently, many classroom teachers are now incorporating music into their daily lessons. Warren Jones believes we need to reevaluate the way that we use music in schools. Most children learn about music according to what is popular during their generation. He feels music directly relates to the development of language and should not be overlooked in our classrooms. When integrating music into lessons, there are three approaches to use. The first method is to teach music so that the end result is for students to be able to express their own music. The second method is using
music in the classroom to help students attain new concepts and ideas. The last method is used more frequently in the primary grades as a method of enjoyment or diversion. (Jones, 2005)

In the classroom, Jones’s three methods of incorporating music are used throughout everyday routines. Frequently a variety of music is played as a diversion during work time. If students need to work quietly, classical music with no lyrics will be played as background noise. This provides the students with something enjoyable to listen to, but yet they are able to continue working. If the activity is more laid back, music that will review important content will be played. Usually, the students are able to sing along with this type of music. This is not only entertaining for the students, but also a good way to review concepts that have already been introduced. During circle time, music is used as a way to learn the days of the week and months of the year, but at the same time allowing the students to get up and get in some movement. Finally, in the classroom, music is used as a way to teach the students new sight words. These songs are silly and provide an amusing way to learn new vocabulary.

One idea to ponder: if music is a good tool to use in general education, think about how beneficial it is to other areas of education. Many researchers believe that music helps with the development of the brain. Special Education teachers use music as a therapy to increase the learning of special needs students. It is a widely used therapy among teachers of students with disabilities, as well as traumatic brain injury patients. Music has shown to be a soothing technique and decreases stress of the students and patients. (DreamCatchers Group, LLC, 2006) Both hemispheres of our brain are activated by different stimuli. Music, however, stimulates both hemispheres of the brain at once. This stimulation helps transfer information back and forth between the two hemispheres. By engaging both hemispheres of the brain, music plays not only a huge role in language development but also memory retention. Researchers believe that using
Music as a teaching device is not only beneficial for students with special needs or those that have experienced some form of trauma, but also for every student because it is soothing, attention getting, and motivational. (Foran, 2009)

Is music really a good teaching tool for pre-kindergarten sight words? Early literacy can be fostered with significant musical activities to give students the skills that they need to be successful in reading. Appropriate early childhood music promotes early vocabulary practice, but also practice with rhyming and repetition which are important in the beginning stages of early reading. Showing students how to read music is also great practice in early reading stages for directionality of reading because we read music the same way we read a book: left to right and top to bottom. (Wiggins, 2007)

**Practice under investigation:**

The practice under investigation is teaching music as a way of introducing pre-kindergarten sight words and how it impacts the attitudes of student learning.

**School policy to be informed by study:**

Currently, Colorado school policy does not require classroom teachers to incorporate music into their daily lessons. The purpose of this study is to show classroom teachers how important incorporating music is into daily lessons and to show how music can be a beneficial teaching method for students.

**Conceptual underpinning:**

Classroom teachers need to use differentiated instruction when using music to teach new concepts in order to appropriately accommodate the variety of learners in the classroom. “At its most basic level, differentiation consists of the efforts of teachers to respond to variance among learners in the classroom in order to create the best learning experience possible” (Tomlinson,
2012, “What is Differentiated Instruction?”, para. 1) When utilizing music in the classroom, it is important to present the music in different ways. This allows students to see the materials being taught from many different perspectives. Through differentiating instruction, the use of music should enhance student achievement because they are able to learn important concepts in a manner that they can understand and enjoy.

Statement of the problem:

Music is incorporated into daily classroom routine as a means to grab the students’ interest while teaching new concepts and ideas. There is a lack of knowledge of whether or not music is a beneficial instrument to use in the classroom while teaching pre-kindergarten sight words.

Purpose of the study:

The purpose of this study is to determine if sight word songs will aid pre-kindergarteners in learning and mastering age-appropriate sight words. This study will also help determine if the use of music when teaching new concepts helps to increase student attitudes towards learning. The independent variable is the way in which the sight words were taught, with and without sight word songs. The dependent variable is the observable outcome of the independent variable that was altered.

Research questions:

In this study there are two research questions:

RQ1-Does the use of sight word songs help increase mastery of pre-kindergarten sight words?

RQ2-Does the use of music to teach new concepts increase students’ attitudes towards learning?
Null hypotheses:

There is no statistical difference in the mastery of pre-kindergarten sight words with the use of sight word songs.

Anticipated benefits of the study:

The benefits of this study will help classroom teachers determine if music is a good teaching tool when introducing new ideas and concepts.

Definition of terms:

NCLB—“No Child Left Behind was an act that passed in 2001 which put focus on public school education. NCLB required states to set high standards and establish measurable goals to help improve student achievement. NCLB required states to develop assessments and give those assessments to all students in specific grade levels in order to receive federal funding.” (Wikipedia, 2012)

Summary:

In conclusion, many researchers believe music to be a beneficial tool in many aspects of education. The purpose of this study is to determine if music helps improve attitudes of students while learning age-appropriate vocabulary. Through the use of statistical analysis of data collected over a period of three months, it will be determined if music really is a beneficial tool to use in the classroom. Anticipated benefits of this study will show classroom teachers how important music can be in learning not only with student achievement, but also student attitudes.
Review of Literature

Several article sources support the study done here. These articles discuss the important role music plays in memory, retention, and best practices when incorporating music into the classroom.

Research has shown to stimulate the right side of the brain while the left side of the brain is processing the new information. Together, the left and the right side of the brain are working in tandem which increases the brain’s ability to retain the information that is being taught. By using music to activate both sides of the brain at the same time, we are better able to process and understand the concepts. (O’Donnell, 1999) This directly correlates with the research of using music to teach pre-kindergarteners new vocabulary. The students are able to enjoy the song, but at the same time learn a new concept because they are highly motivated and stimulated.

Brain based research suggest some best teaching practices to use in order to achieve optimal learning. The first suggestion is having a stimulating and safe environment where students are open and willing to learn. The second suggestion is to be flexible. In a classroom of students, the teacher must recognize a teachable moment and make the most of it. The third suggestion is to change classroom displays regularly. This stimulates the students’ brain and encourages brain development and growth. The final suggestion is to provide students with age appropriate enriching activities that challenges their thinking. (Wilson, 2007)

Brain based research stresses the importance of music and art in the cognitive development of the brain. Music and art stimulate the emotions that are responsible for making connections and remembering information while decreasing stress. (Wilson, 2007) This directly relates to this study because the students are responsible for making a connection with the sight word and remembering it at a later time. There are three ways that music can reduce stress
resulting in increased learning. The first is as a carrier. The carrier method uses a melody to infer content. The second way is as an arousal. The arousal method is used as a means to calm students down or motivate them. The last method is as a primer. (Wilson, 2007) “The primer method provides energy to the brain and prepares pathways for new information.” (Wilson, 2007 p.7)

Studies have shown that visuals and musical cues are beneficial for improving brain functionality, memory, and recall. Music is considered a mnemonic due to the repetitive and rhyming nature. When students are presented with new ideas and concepts through the use of musical mnemonics, it has been shown to be particularly influential on students when retaining and recalling the new information. (Hayes, 2009) This directly relates to this study because by visually showing the students the new vocabulary word and utilizing musical mnemonics as a teaching method, it provides the students with a different and exciting learning method. (Hayes, 2009)

Music has an impact on our everyday life. There is no evidence that shows music is bad for us. On the contrary, evidence shows that music provides a positive and lasting effect on learners. Not only should music be listened to, but also students should be given the chance to play and create their own learning. This increases students’ cognitive abilities such as thinking and problem solving. (Jensen, 2002) Music can help one become motivated, remember a special moment in life, relax, become excited, or make a person happy. In the education field, music is widely used to teach new concepts, provide enjoyable distractions, and allow students to create their own music. This directly relates to this study because music is widely used in the classroom as a means of enjoyment and learning.
There are some best practices to follow when implementing music in the classroom. It is imperative to follow some guidelines to ensure the best learning outcome. Be sure to choose the correct music to fit the activity. For example, if you want the students to be concentrating on their work, you don’t want to be playing fast upbeat music. It is suggested that jazz music be played when the students are working. When teaching students new vocabulary, it is recommended to have the students close their eyes and then play the music, so that they can visualize the vocabulary. Finally, have them open their eyes and show them the word. (Brewer, 1995) This directly correlates with the students because it was researched how music directly relates to the mastery of new vocabulary for pre-kindergartners with the use of sight word songs. This method of teaching new vocabulary with the eyes closed is an idea that would be interesting to see how students responded to this method. When choosing music to use in the classroom, Brewer has given some examples to aid in finding the perfect music to play for a specific activity:

1. “Focus and Concentration Music- This type of music helps students pay attention, aides in memorization, and increases thinking skills;
   - Relax with the Classics
   - Velvet Dreams
   - Music for Relaxation

2. Creativity and Reflection Music- Is used for brainstorming, writing in journals, or creative writing;
   - Oceans
3. Welcoming Music- Is appropriately used when students are coming into the classroom;
   • Dance of the Renaissance
   • Emerald Castles
   • 1988 Summer Olympics

4. Active Learning Music- This type of music encourages movement activities, increases student work output, and boosts students during sleepy periods.
   • Funny 50’s and Silly 60’s#
   • Hooked on Classics#
   • Earth, Sea, and Sky ” (Brewer, 1995)#
Research Methods

Research design:

Pre and post data will be collected for a period of three months to obtain the most accurate data possible. The independent variable is the sight words taught with music and without music. The dependent variable is the post test scores after the sight words have been taught.

Study group description:

Two study groups will be used for my research. Study group A will be the sight words taught with the use of sight word songs. Study group A will consist of the sight words: red, black, white, green, orange, and yellow. Study group B will be the sight words taught without the use of sight word songs. Study group B will consist of the words: brown, blue, purple, pink, and gray.

In this study, there were a total of twenty two students ranging in age from 3 years 9 months to 5 years 3 months. This study took place at Cougar Run Elementary school located in Highlands Ranch, Colorado. Cougar Run is a pre-kindergarten to sixth grade school with an estimated 587 students. Out of the estimated 587 students, only 32 qualify for Free and Reduced lunch. Cougar Run does not qualify for Title 1 and is located in an higher income suburban area. (Find Good School, 2012)

Data collection methods and instruments to be used:

A pretest will be given on Monday each week. This test will consist of a sight word that has not yet been introduced. The same test will be given on Friday after the sight word has been taught and practiced throughout the week. A simple survey will be given at the end of the research period asking the students to circle the correct smiley face to show how they felt when
the sight words were taught with the music and how they felt when the sight words were taught without the music.

Statistical analysis methods to be used:

Comparative analysis will be conducted through the use of the independent t-tests in order to identify any differences, if any, between study group A and study group B. The Alpha level of 0.25 will be used to challenge the Null Hypothesis. A qualitative analysis of students’ attitudes towards the use of sight word songs versus no sight word songs will be taken at the end of the research. The qualitative data was collected through the use of a simple survey where the students had to circle the correct simile face: a happy face if they liked the sight word songs and a sad face if they did not like the sight word songs.
**Findings**

RQ1-Does the use of sight word songs help increase mastery of pre-kindergarten sight words?

Using the data found in Table 1, a significant t-test value of 9.72111E0 was found for the difference between pre and post test scores for the color red which was taught with the use of a sight word song. The mean for students not knowing the word red was higher in the pretest at 1.82. The Mean D was 8.1818E-1 with a degree of freedom of 4.2E1. The p-value of 2.59265 E-12 was lower than the Alpha level of 0.25 which means the Null Hypothesis was rejected because there was a significant difference between pre and post test scores for the color word red.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean D</th>
<th>t-Test</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td>1.82</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td>8.1818E-1</td>
<td>9.72111E0</td>
<td>4.2E1</td>
<td>2.59265E-12</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Reminder: You will reject the Null Hypothesis when p-value is = or < the Alpha level of 0.25.*

Using the data found in Table 2, a significant t-test value of 6.86716E0 was found for the difference between pre and post test scores for the color white which was taught with the use of a sight word song. The mean for students not knowing the word white was higher in the pretest at 1.86. The Mean D was 7.27273E-1 with a degree of freedom of 4.2E1. The p-value of 2.25169E-8 was lower than the Alpha level of 0.25 which means the Null Hypothesis was rejected because there was a significant difference between pre and post test scores for the color word white.
Table 2

\textit{t-Test results comparing the independent and dependent variables, pre and post-test scores for the color word white}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean D</th>
<th>t-Test</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>7.27273E-1</td>
<td>6.86716E0</td>
<td>4.2E1</td>
<td>2.25169E-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
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<td>7.66234E-1</td>
<td>7.67586E0</td>
<td>4.1E1</td>
<td>1.86260E-9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Reminder: You will reject the Null Hypothesis when \( p \)-value is \( \leq \) or < the Alpha level of 0.25.

Using the data found in Table 3, a significant t-test value of 7.67586E0 was found for the difference between pre and post test scores for the color black which was taught with the use of a sight word song. The mean for students not knowing the word black was higher in the pretest at 1.91. The Mean D was 7.66234E-1 with a degree of freedom of 4.1E1. The p-value of 1.86260E-9 was lower than the Alpha level of 0.25 which means the Null Hypothesis was rejected because there was a significant difference between pre and post test scores for the color word black.

Table 3

\textit{t-Test results comparing the independent and dependent variables, pre and post-test scores for the color word black}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean D</th>
<th>t-Test</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>7.66234E-1</td>
<td>7.67586E0</td>
<td>4.1E1</td>
<td>1.86260E-9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Reminder: You will reject the Null Hypothesis when \( p \)-value is \( \leq \) or < the Alpha level of 0.25.

Using the data found in Table 4, a significant t-test value of 6.65821E0 was found for the difference between pre and post test scores for the color orange which was taught with the use of a sight word song. The mean for students not knowing the word orange was higher in the pretest at 1.86. The Mean D was 7.20779E-1 with a degree of freedom of 4.1E1. The p-value of
5.01749E-8 was lower than the Alpha level of 0.25 which means the Null Hypothesis was rejected because there was a significant difference between pre and post test scores for the color word orange.

Table 4

*t-Test results comparing the independent and dependent variables, pre and post-test scores for the color word orange*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean D</th>
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<th>p-value</th>
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<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
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<td>7.20779E-1</td>
<td>6.65821E0</td>
<td>4.1E1</td>
<td>5.01749E-8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Reminder: You will reject the Null Hypothesis when p-value is = or < the Alpha level of 0.25.*

Using the data found in Table 5, a significant t-test value of 6.70748E0 was found for the difference between pre and post test scores for the color green which was taught with the use of a sight word song. The mean for students not knowing the word green was higher in the pretest at 1.91. The Mean D was 7.18615E-1 with a degree of freedom of 4.1E1. The p-value of 4.27210E-8 was lower than the Alpha level of 0.25 which means the Null Hypothesis was rejected because there was a significant difference between pre and post test scores for the color word green.

Table 5

*t-Test results comparing the independent and dependent variables, pre and post-test scores for the color word green*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<td>Pre-Test</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
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<td>7.18615E-1</td>
<td>6.70748E0</td>
<td>4.1E1</td>
<td>4.27210E-8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Reminder: You will reject the Null Hypothesis when p-value is = or < the Alpha level of 0.25.*
Using the data found in Table 6, a significant t-test value of 6.70748E0 was found for the difference between pre and post test scores for the color yellow which was taught with the use of a sight word song. The mean for students not knowing the word yellow was higher in the pretest at 1.91. The Mean D was 7.18615E-1 with a degree of freedom of 4.1E1. The p-value of 4.27210E-8 was lower than the Alpha level of 0.25 which means the Null Hypothesis was rejected because there was a significant difference between pre and post test scores for the color word yellow.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<th>Mean D</th>
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<td>Post-Test</td>
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<td>4.27210E-8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Reminder: You will reject the Null Hypothesis when p-value is = or < the Alpha level of 0.25.

Using the data found in Table 7, a significant t-test value of 5.93653E0 was found for the difference between pre and post test scores for the color brown which was taught without the use of a sight word song. The mean for students not knowing the word brown was higher in the pretest at 1.91. The Mean D was 6.70996E-1 with a degree of freedom of 4.1E1. The p-value of 5.32635E-7 was lower than the Alpha level of 0.25 which means the Null Hypothesis was rejected because there was a significant difference between pre and post test scores for the color word brown.
Table 7

t-Test results comparing the independent and dependent variables, pre and post-test scores for the color word brown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean D</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Reminder: You will reject the Null Hypothesis when \( p \)-value is \( \leq \) or < the Alpha level of 0.25.

Using the data found in Table 8, a significant t-test value of 6.73062E0 was found for the difference between pre and post test scores for the color blue which was taught without the use of a sight word song. The mean for students not knowing the word blue was higher in the pretest at 1.82. The Mean D was 7.22944E-1 with a degree of freedom of 4.1E1. The p-value of 3.96140E-8 was lower than the Alpha level of 0.25 which means the Null Hypothesis was rejected because there was a significant difference between pre and post test scores for the color word blue.

Table 8

t-Test results comparing the independent and dependent variables, pre and post-test scores for the color word blue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Reminder: You will reject the Null Hypothesis when \( p \)-value is \( \leq \) or < the Alpha level of 0.25.

Using the data found in Table 9, a significant t-test value of 7.86806E0 was found for the difference between pre and post test scores for the color purple which was taught without the use of a sight word song. The mean for students not knowing the word purple was higher in the
pretest at 1.82. The Mean D was 7.70563E-1 with a degree of freedom of 4.1E1. The p-value of 1.00877E-9 was lower than the Alpha level of 0.25 which means the Null Hypothesis was rejected because there was a significant difference between pre and post test scores for the color word purple.

Table 9

*t-Test results comparing the independent and dependent variables, pre and post-test scores for the color word purple*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
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<td>3.96140E-8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Reminder: You will reject the Null Hypothesis when p-value is = or < the Alpha level of 0.25.*

Using the data found in Table 10, a significant t-test value of 6.73062E0 was found for the difference between pre and post test scores for the color pink which was taught without the use of a sight word song. The mean for students not knowing the word pink was higher in the pretest at 1.82. The Mean D was 7.22944E-1 with a degree of freedom of 4.1E1. The p-value of 3.96140E-8 was lower than the Alpha level of 0.25 which means the Null Hypothesis was rejected because there was a significant difference between pre and post test scores for the color word pink.

Table 10

*t-Test results comparing the independent and dependent variables, pre and post-test scores for the color word pink*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean D</th>
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<th>p-value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td>1.82</td>
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<td>6.73062E0</td>
<td>4.1E1</td>
<td>3.96140E-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>7.22944E-1</td>
<td>6.73062E0</td>
<td>4.1E1</td>
<td>3.96140E-8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
*Reminder: You will reject the Null Hypothesis when \( p \)-value is = or < the Alpha level of 0.25.

Using the data found in Table 11, a significant t-test value of 9.07253E0 was found for the difference between pre and post test scores for the color gray which was taught without the use of a sight word song. The mean for students not knowing the word gray was higher in the pretest at 1.95. The Mean D was 8.11688E-1 with a degree of freedom of 4.1E1. The p-value of 2.35678E-11 was lower than the Alpha level of 0.25 which means the Null Hypothesis was rejected because there was a significant difference between pre and post test scores for the color word gray.

Table 11

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{lccccc}
\hline
Source & Mean & Mean D & t-Test & df & p-value \\
\hline
Pre-Test & 1.95 & & & & \\
Post-Test & 1.14 & 8.11688E-1 & 9.07253E0 & 4.1E1 & 2.35678E-11 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

*Reminder: You will reject the Null Hypothesis when \( p \)-value is = or < the Alpha level of 0.25.

Although data shows that there is a significant difference between pre and post-test scores, using the data found in Table 12, no significant t-test value, -0.442346, was found for the difference between sight words taught with music and sight words taught without music and post test scores. The mean for post test scores was slightly higher at 1.23 than pretest scores at 1.11. The Mean D was -0.0186961 with a degree of freedom of 239. The p-value of .658639 is higher than the Alpha level of 0.25 which means the Null Hypothesis was not rejected because there was no significant difference between sight words taught with music and sight words taught without music and post test scores.
Table 12

_t-Test results comparing the independent and dependent variables, sight words taught with music and sight words taught without music and post test scores_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean D</th>
<th>t-Test</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>-0.0186961</td>
<td>-0.0442346</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>0.658639</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RQ2-Does the use of music to teach new concepts increase students’ attitudes towards learning?

Table 13

Table 13 shows that out of twenty-two students, only two did not like using the sight word songs. In the case of my class, using music to teach the students their sight words did indeed increase their attitudes toward learning. They were excited to hear each song and learn the words to sing along with it.
Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of this research indicate that the research has not rejected the Null Hypothesis. There is no difference in pre-kindergarten mastery of sight words with or without the use of music. Students appeared to master Study Group A and Study Group B sight words at the same rate regardless of whether music was incorporated into the learning. However, students preferred learning the sight words with the music.

The results of this study answer RQ1, Does the use of sight word songs help increase mastery of pre-kindergarten sight words? The use of individual pre and post testing and statistical data found through the use of t-tests, this study shows that pre-kindergarteners were able to master their sight words with and without the use of music as a teaching method. The findings show that there is no difference in using music while teaching pre-kindergartners sight words. Through the use of differentiated instruction, the students were able to master their vocabulary. However, qualitative analysis determined that even though each method of teaching produced good post test results, the majority of the students preferred learning their sight words with the use of music. By differentiating instruction in the classroom, music was introduced as a teaching method. It enhanced student attitudes because they were able to learn important concepts in a manner that they understood and enjoyed.

However, it would be beneficial to continue this research of this matter to see if the outcomes are consistent to the outcomes of research. It would also be a good idea to still use music as a teaching tool in the classroom. Even though each method produced respectable test results, out of twenty-two students only two students preferred to learn their sight words without the use of music. This helps answer RQ2, “Does the use of music to teach new concepts increase students’ attitudes towards learning?” In the case of this class, the use of music did increase
their attitudes toward learning. They were excited to learn a new song and were motivated when they could sing along with the words. However, this could vary by class and not all will enjoy music as a motivation to learn new concepts.

Based on the findings of this study and current research, there are several recommendations to be made on the use of music in the classroom. The first recommendation is to pay attention to the type of music to be used for an activity. Teachers cannot expect students to get their work done if a song with a fast tempo is being played. Something calming and pleasant on the ears would be a better choice for work time.

The second recommendation made is when teaching new concepts, do not always use music. Although music is a great tool to use in the classroom, students also need to practice other methods when learning new ideas. They could create a game, write a story, or even teach the ideas to one of their peers. When teaching new concepts it is important to incorporate different teaching methods to help meet the needs of all learners.

The third recommendation is to use music not only as a learning tool, but as a means for students to express themselves. Provide instruments so that they can make their own music. Have the students get up and dance to a song that is popular to their generation or write their own song. The important idea to get across to the students is that no matter how the music is being used in the classroom, it can be fun and exciting!
References


