The effects of learning songs by ear in multiple keys on pitch accuracy and attitudes of band students (aural transposition)

The main purpose of the study was to examine the effects of learning songs by ear in multiple keys on skills in playing by ear and sight-reading. Secondary purposes of the study were to explore the effects of instruction on student attitudes, and to consider differential effects due to music aptitude. Students were brass and woodwind musicians (N = 28) in grades 7–8, placed in one of two instructional groups according to music aptitude, instrument, and music background. Time for instruction was three 20-minute lessons per week for four weeks. Students in the experimental group learned songs by ear in the keys of Bb, Db, and G concert, while students in the contact-control group practiced technical exercises in those same keys. Before and after instruction, students performed a well-known melody by ear in the keys of Bb, Db, and G concert, as well as a short etude in each of the three keys. Two adjudicators listened to recorded performances and evaluated pitch accuracy.

To assess the effects of instruction on performance, repeated-measures ANOVAs considered the variables of group, time, and key. The experimental group improved significantly in playing by ear in the keys of Db and G concert, p < .001, but not in Bb. The contact-control group did not improve significantly in playing by ear in any of the keys. Both groups improved significantly in sight-reading in all three keys, p < .001. Analyses of qualitative and quantitative data from a researcher-authored attitude survey indicated that students in the experimental group perceived significant improvement in the new keys of Db and G, while students in the contact-control group did not perceive improvement. There were no statistically significant effects of music aptitude on performance achievement or attitude. Whether this was because the sample sizes were too small for the detection of effects, or whether there were no significant effects, is not known. The results of the study suggest that learning songs by ear may benefit student musicians.
The effects of an extensive reading programme. The effects of using correction codes and redrafting on intermediate students’ writing. Using synthetic phonics to improve listening awareness and accuracy in pre-intermediate learners. Can learners make realistic peer assessments of oral presentations? Next, Tatiane Depieri investigates the effect of feedback and re-writing on improving grammatical accuracy in written texts. Her starting premise was that students should take more responsibility for their learning and increase awareness of what they need to improve, which led her to change her own and students’ approach to written assignments. Afterwards students answered a multiple-choice question so that I could check that they had understood the text.