

Relationships Between Visual Imagery and Melodic Dictation Success

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Melodic dictation can be a daunting task for music students in high school and college. Successful dictation involves a simple combination of correct perception of aural information and accurate notation of that information. Therefore, formation of requisite skills for successful dictation begins rather early in a child's musical development. A barrier to success for those taking dictation may lie in the transference of the aural stimuli into visual output. Could transference ability be improved by connecting visual imagery skills to basic music theory concepts in music curricula? For older students who have mastered this connection, what processes do they use when taking melodic dictation? What is the relationship between the melodic dictation achievement of students who use visual imagery constructs during dictation and those who use no such imagery?

Eighty college freshmen enrolled in four sections of Aural Skills I were engaged in an experimental study using a pre-posttest design. One section was given 4-6 minutes per class meeting of guided instruction in the connection of visual imagery skills to music theory concepts, and the application of those skills to melodic dictation. The other three sections served as control groups. This paper reports the results in light of prior research and suggests implications for music education at all levels.