

5-2018

The Suzuki and O'Connor Methods: A Foundational Comparison of Methodology for the Beginning Violinist

Chelsea Goolcharan

Follow this and additional works at: https://aquila.usm.edu/honors_theses



Part of the [Music Pedagogy Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Goolcharan, Chelsea, "The Suzuki and O'Connor Methods: A Foundational Comparison of Methodology for the Beginning Violinist" (2018). *Honors Theses*. 566.

https://aquila.usm.edu/honors_theses/566

This Honors College Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors College at The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu.

The University of Southern Mississippi

The Suzuki and O'Connor Methods:
A Foundational Comparison of Methodology for the Beginning Violinist

by

Chelsea Goolcharan

A Thesis
Submitted to the Honors College of
The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree of
Bachelor of Music Performance
in the School of Music

May 2018

Approved by:

Stephen Redfield, Ph.D., Thesis Adviser
Associate Professor of Violin

Richard Kravchak, Ph.D., Director
Department of Music

Ellen Weinauer, Ph.D, Dean
Honors College

Abstract

This research examines both the Suzuki and O'Connor violin methods for the beginner. Varying aspects of the methods are studied including theory, printed materials, recordings of the music to be played, observations of the methods in action, and the teacher's approach to the beginner violinist. In both methods, teachers begin lessons with scales and progress to simple compositions. The differences lie in the musical genre taught, the vocabulary used, and notation style. The Suzuki method emphasizes a classical style while the O'Connor method focuses on improvisation. Both methods included both group and individual classes. One major difference in instruction is parental participation in the Suzuki method. The style of instrument used is another difference: the Suzuki method starts with a box violin while the O'Connor method uses a standard violin. This research serves as a tool to better understand the different teaching methods and techniques.

Keywords: Suzuki, O'Connor, beginner, violin, student, violin technique.

Dedication

My research is dedicated to my mother who worked tirelessly to give me the opportunity to pursue all my dreams.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my advisor, Dr. Stephen Redfield, and the University of Southern Mississippi's Honors College for their encouragement and support.

Table of Contents

List of Tables.....	viii
List of Abbreviations.....	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1-2
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	3-10
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	11-12
Chapter 4: Results.....	13-44
Teaching Approaches.....	13-14
Environment.....	15
Theory and Listening.....	16-34
Student Observations.....	35-41
Chapter 5: Discussion.....	42-44
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	45-47
Bibliography.....	48-49
Appendix.....	50
IRB Approval Letter.....	50

List of Tables

Table 1. The World Turned Upside Down techniques.....	20
Table 2. Gavotte techniques.....	25
Table 3. Gavotte demonstrated with O'Connor Techniques.....	31
Table 4. The World Turned Upside Down with Suzuki Techniques.....	32

List of Abbreviations

Twinkles Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

Pizz *Pizzicato*

Rit. *Ritardando*

mf *mezzo forte*

f *forte*

mp *mezzo piano*

p *piano*

Chapter 1

Introduction

Choosing the best methodology is an important step to take for any beginner violinist, as it sets the precedent for one's musical development. In learning a musical instrument, it is important to learn proper technique, terminology, listening skills, ensemble playing, musicality in articulation, phrasing of notes, and performance presence. These important steps are applied to all instruments, but are specialized for each, since instruments of course vary. The violin not only has a unique structure and technique, but also varies in teaching methods.

Certain violin methods display differing concepts. They may differ in musical style, technique, and philosophy, which are important to the violinist's future playing capabilities. Since the foundation of learning is built by methodology, it is important in music to understand bases for teaching methods. Two methods for violin are the Suzuki Method and the O'Connor method, and both have methods for beginner and advanced violinists.

Research on the Suzuki and O'Connor methods was focused on an in-depth analysis for the beginner level of the methods. Their fundamental stages of teaching, theoretical format, and interactive approach to learning the violin were looked at. The Suzuki method has been internationally acclaimed for its 'mother-tongue' approach, which uses strategies common to language learning. The method focuses on listening, similar to that of a child learning their language and integrating the same concept into music. Listening to the music of the Suzuki method is one of the most important things in the beginner violinist's development. This method has existed for decades and has been a success in teaching the violin to students as young as two years of age. The O'Connor method, on the other hand, is relatively new, having been published

first in 2009. Though it has taken a similar outlook as the Suzuki's 'mother-tongue' approach in terms of music listening, it has also added elements not found in the Suzuki Method. The inclusion of improvisation, for example, is one of the things that set the O'Connor method apart from the Suzuki method. O'Connor's method teaches how to create music via improvisation while learning rhythm, scales, musical styles, and how to read music.

How the methods affect a student's ability on their instrument is important for teachers when choosing the method. It is also important to identify different parts of methods that are most helpful to the student when teaching varying technical aspects of an instrument. In my research, I looked at the Suzuki and O'Connor methods' first method book volumes, focusing on their strengths and which parts best suit the development of beginner students. The research also proposes an outline for a 'hybrid' of both methods to help teachers with varying beginner students. Addressing individual student needs is necessary, since students do not necessarily learn in the same way and thus need varying techniques, musical styles, and environments for learning.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

In Mark O'Connor's article, "It is time to reinvent string pedagogy of the 21st century - How Traditional Methods are letting down Students and Shifting Creativity," he shares personal stories of famous classically-trained violinists who he knows. He talks about the classically trained violinist and their struggle to grasp creativity through improvisation on their instrument.¹ O'Connor mentions that violinists who start at a very young age typically learn only by rote and thus possess less creativity in improvisation than those who start learning around age eight.² According to O'Connor, other musicians, such as brass and wind players, who typically start at an older age, are more creative in harmony and accompaniment.³ O'Connor also asserts that the lack of composers, arrangers, and conductors who play the violin is due to a rigid learning structure, one that does not harness creativity in the method of learning.⁴ This is caused by a lack of listening to other harmonies and counterpoint, since most traditional methods teach through listening to one's own playing or the same music played by others. O'Connor believes in the importance of playing what he calls "American music" that can be explored in its harmonies and improvised upon, hence training what could turn into more versatile musicians.⁵ This article shows an important factor that was looked at in O'Connor's method: improvisation and how it can affect the beginner student's development, compared to the Suzuki method, since it does not teach improvisation.

¹ Mark O'Connor, "It is Time to Reinvent String Pedagogy of the 21st Century - How Traditional Methods are Letting Down Student and Shifting Creativity," *Strings: International Index to Music Periodicals*, September 27, 2012, 15 -17, accessed February 19, 2016,

<http://search.proquest.com lynx.lib.usm.edu/docview/1041304593?accountid=13946>.

² O'Connor.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Similarly, in another O'Connor article, "What is the Future for String Players? Infusing String Curriculum with Creativity will Foster Opportunity," he discusses the impact of methodology and its effect on musicians' transition from student to professional.⁶ O'Connor talks about how classically-trained musicians are limited to a narrow job market, one of teaching or playing in an orchestra.⁷ Presently, there are few classical violinists who become arrangers or composers, and other instrumentalists have become popular in other musical genres because of their creative learning. O'Connor mentions that many great composers, such as Mozart and Beethoven, were also great performers and describes how creativity was once a part of basic musical training but has diminished over time.⁸ The method's influence on the future direction of a musician is important to the beginner, since it can affect possible music career choices.

In an *International Musician* article, "America Has All the Right Musical Ingredients and Mark O'Connor Knows How to Put Them Together," speaks about O'Connor's beginning approach to learning the violin.⁹ O'Connor uses American songs because of his desire to disseminate American music through strings.¹⁰ Violin methods typically are rooted in the traditional, European style, but O'Connor's method pulls more in the direction of a new, American style.¹¹ O'Connor also considers students who might gravitate toward classical music, and says his method incorporates this in his style of learning.¹² Therefore, in my research,

⁶ Mark O'Connor, "What is the Future for String Players? Infusing String Curriculum with Creativity Will Foster Opportunity," *School Band & Orchestra*, August 16, 2013, 17 – 18, 20, accessed February 19, 2016, <http://search.proquest.com.lynx.lib.usm.edu/docview/1487686098/fulltextPDF/5CD3E47314E34762PQ/1?accountid=13946>.

⁷ O'Connor.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Sam Folio, ed. "America Has All the Right Musical Ingredients and Mark O'Connor Knows How to Put Them Together," *International Musician*, September 2009, 18 -19, accessed February 19, 2016, <http://search.proquest.com.lynx.lib.usm.edu/docview/1083776?accountid=13946>.

¹⁰ Folio.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

O'Connor's incorporation of both styles and how teaching these different styles make a difference in the playing capabilities of students were considered.

Janet Farrar-Royce, in her article, "Teaching the Violin or Teaching the Fiddle," brings to light several well-known string players that include diversified repertoire in their performances and recordings.¹³ No longer just playing "classical" music, they have broadened to jazz, fiddle, rock, and other forms of musical performance.¹⁴ This can change the expectation of what is to be taught to string students, since repertoire other than classical music has been added to string lessons for students.¹⁵ Farrar-Royce's article shows the importance of a possible new method, which was looked at through the Suzuki and O'Connor method.

Clare Bugeja's "Parental Involvement in the Musical Education in Violin Students: Suzuki and 'Traditional Approaches Compared,'" discusses her study of two college-trained violinists and the impact of parental involvement, starting at the beginning level.¹⁶ One student learned through the Suzuki method and the other through a traditional method, and both emphasized their parents' roles.¹⁷ The study found similarities in musical upbringing of the students.¹⁸

¹³ Janet Farrar – Royce, "Teaching the Violin or Teaching the Fiddle," *American String Teacher*, May 2002, 62 – 64, 66 – 67, accessed February 19, 2016, <http://search.proquest.com lynx.lib.usm.edu/docview/964960?accountid=13946>.

¹⁴ Farrar – Royce.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Clare Bugeja, "Parental Involvement in the Musical Education in Violin Students. Suzuki and 'Traditional' Approaches Compared," *Australian Journal of Music Education* (2009): 19 – 28, accessed February 19, 2016, <http://web.a.ebscohost.com lynx.lib.usm.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=b6b23ca4-20db-4d55-99b5-87b08b6eac81%40sessionmgr4004&vid=1&hid=4207>.

¹⁷ Bugeja.

¹⁸ Ibid.

The first similarity was that both parents had some concept of music and attended classes with their child.¹⁹ Listening was implemented at home for both students but varied in what was listened to, depending on the student.²⁰ The Suzuki student listened to Suzuki songs, while the traditional student listened to the pieces they were learning and other classical music.²¹ Parent-teacher communication was important in both cases for the child's development, although in the traditional case the parent stopped coming to classes with the child earlier than the Suzuki parent; nonetheless, there was still communication between parent and teacher.²²

Bugeja describes how in the traditional method it is the teacher who defines parental involvement, but the Suzuki method itself defines that role.²³ From this, I can gather how the Suzuki method's parental role affects the beginner student's learning, parent-teacher communication, and music listening practices that are important to the method.

Elaine J. Colprit's "Observation and Analysis of Suzuki String Teaching," is an observation of twelve Suzuki string teachers and twenty-four students ranging in ages from 3-17 and were analyzed using "frame observation."²⁴ Frame observation is a teacher's ability to identify when something needs improvement and their approach to fixing the problem.²⁵ In the study, performances of the students were categorized as unsuccessful or successful depending on the teachers' goals and on the basis of left-hand technique, right-hand technique, and musical expression.²⁶ There were 1,748 trials of recorded teaching sessions, each recording consisted of a

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Elaine J. Colprit, "Observation and Analysis of Suzuki String Teaching," *Journal of research in Music Education*, Vol 48, No. 3 (Autumn 2000): 206 – 221, accessed February 19, 2016, http://www.jstor.org.lynx.lib.usm.edu/stable/3345394?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

²⁵ Colprit.

²⁶ Ibid.

lecture and modeling of certain tasks by a teacher, and performance by a student.²⁷ It was noted that none of the successive trials were consecutively successful for any single student and only 15% had success in the final trials.²⁸ This brought to light that if a goal is not successful or a skill is not learned once a task is done, reinforcement is needed.²⁹ Similarly, in my research of the Suzuki and O'Connor methods, it will be important to look at how a skill is learned and reinforced either through differing teaching methods, pieces taught, and/or practice methods.

Chen Wen Su's "A New American School of String Playing: A Comparison of the O'Connor Violin Method and the Suzuki Violin Method," has an in-depth description of Suzuki's and O'Connor's upbringing in music and why they wrote their methods.³⁰ Su also delves into volumes one and two of the both methods and includes conversations she had with O'Connor and some other teachers of his method.³¹ Su describes how O'Connor goes through structural components of hand position, music theory, and aural training that each piece requires.³² The O'Connor method is described as a modern succession of the Suzuki method. Su describes the fundamental aspects of the Suzuki and the O'Connor methods and their similarities in student development.³³ This includes the importance of when students start to play, the environment, the role of the parent, listening, and ensemble playing. The difference in the O'Connor method is that it stresses mentorship of students.³⁴ A comparison of the aesthetic of the books mentioned is that O'Connor's books are relatively colorful, with pictures and big

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Chen Wen Su, "A New American School of String Playing - A Comparison of the O'Connor Violin Method and the Suzuki Violin Method," DMA diss., University of Miami, 2012.

³¹ Su.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

musical notation, compared to Suzuki's black-and-white text.³⁵ Also mentioned is the O'Connor's approach to American music, with history lessons incorporated into his books and lessons on how to improvise.³⁶ Su's research only looks at the theoretical part of the methods' books and not the practical impact of the method on the student. In my research observations of both methods were done for a better understanding of each methods impact.

Richard Coff's "Suzuki Violin vs. Traditional Violin – A Suzuki Teacher's View," describes the foundation of the Suzuki method and the traditional method of teaching the violin. Coff discusses what age students should begin.³⁷ In the Suzuki method, there is the "Talent Education Movement," in which students as young as two years of age start to learn to play the violin.³⁸ In the traditional method, students start between ages six and ten.³⁹ The Suzuki method implores that students observe and listen before starting to play. Coff then compares this to the traditional method, which does not start with listening due to the fear that it may encourage dependence on learning only by rote.⁴⁰

The article further discusses group classes in the Suzuki method, where students benefit from observing and playing with others.⁴¹ Also noted is the importance of parental involvement with Suzuki, versus the traditional method, which usually puts the student alone with the teacher.⁴² This article gives a basic concept of what is seen in the environment of the students

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Richard Coff, "Suzuki Violin VS. Traditional Violin – A Suzuki Teacher's View," *Suzuki Music Academy, MusicStaff.com*, 1998, accessed February 19, 2016, <http://www.suzukiacademy.org/suzuki-violin-vs-traditional-violin/>

³⁸ Coff.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

who learns to play the violin. One aspect of my research was considering the Suzuki method's environment for the beginner students.

There are potentially other benefits to learning the violin according to the Suzuki method. Karin A. Hallbery investigates this in, "Does Music Instructions Using the Suzuki Method Improve Working Memory and Visual-Spatial Processing in Children?"⁴³ Hallbery investigates the mental processing of children who started to take violin classes and those who were not taking classes. She analyzed the student's memory and visual processes over time.⁴⁴ The study starts off with the benefits of musical training on memory, technical skills, visual-spatial, attention span, and changes in functional and structural brain development.⁴⁵

Hallbery also mentions "working memory," which is short-term, long-term, and "visual-spatial memory, which is the ability to retain visual information that is around us."⁴⁶ These aspects of development were at higher levels in children that went through the Suzuki method compared to the children who did not.⁴⁷ This study shows how the Suzuki method can positively affect its students, from this it can be debated the importance of teaching a child music.

Jennifer A. Bugos and Jennifer Muzuc's "Semantic Clustering and Processing Speeds in Suzuki Violinist," also shows benefits that are enhanced in children that learn the Suzuki violin method compared to children that did not learn music at all.⁴⁸ In the research, the authors tested

⁴³ Karin A. Hallbery, "Does Music Instructions Using the Suzuki Method Improve Working Memory and Visual - Spatial Processing in Children?" PhD diss., Northern Arizona University, May 2014.

⁴⁴ Hallbery.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Jennifer A. Bugos and Jennifer Muzuc, "Semantic Clustering and Processing Speeds in Suzuki Violinist," *Council for Research in Music – University of Illinois Press* (Fall 2013): 7 – 22, accessed February 19, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org.lynx.lib.usm.edu/stable/pdf/10.5406/bulcoursmusedu.198.0007.pdf?acceptTC=true>

and compared the enhanced speed and verbal memory of musicians with non-musicians.⁴⁹

Processing speed of musicians compared to non-musicians was higher, based on “the auditory visual decoding of music.”⁵⁰**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Verbal memory and dominant-hand motor skills tested higher in musicians.⁵¹ The sequential learning of patterns in learning music helps musicians recall information. Information is usually remembered in what the authors call “semantic clustering,” which is when things are placed in groups to help recall them easier.⁵² This was also higher for the children that played music compared to the ones that did not play music.⁵³

⁴⁹ Bugos and Muzuc.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The following questions were addressed for a better understanding of the methods function through four stages of research:

1. What constitutes the Suzuki and O'Connor method as a methodology for teaching beginner violin students?
2. What techniques are first learned on the violin?
3. What is the main focus of each lesson as the student progresses?
4. What are the reading and listening tactics used for developing the student?
5. What are some goals at the end of book one, for a beginner violinist?
6. What are the pre-song preparations, if any? (scales, finger exercise, games)
7. What are some things, other than the instrument itself, that are prioritized in the methods?
8. What is each method's approach to holding the instrument?
9. What are some techniques that are stressed during development?
10. How is sound and musical style developed?
11. How do the methods differ in their approach, and what is the impact of improvisation incorporated in the O'Connor method?

My research was gathered through four different aspects of methodology. First, I looked at the teachers' teaching approach for books one of both methods to better understand their perspective. Understanding the progression of teaching shows how the Suzuki and O'Connor method is crucial to the learning process. Teaching is the key component in each method's success, because, without the teacher having the working practical knowledge, there would not be a working violin method. The teacher's concept of violin technique in holding the violin is the

foundation for building on technical skill in the beginner violinist. How much attention is placed on this can convey how the student progresses compared to limited attention on holding technique. The way students are able to understand rhythm and note pitches can take on many forms. Either rhythm or pitch can be taught first, and they can affect the student's understanding of their instrument.

Second, I considered various learning environments and how they affect the student. What is fostered, such as parental involvement, group classes, and performance opportunities, can affect how successful the student becomes at playing the violin. Looking at these aspects in the Suzuki and O'Connor method can show how quickly beginner students are able to develop. These are external factors other than music or an instrument that has an impact on the beginner.

Third, the books and listening examples from each method was analyzed from a theoretical perspective. The progression of the books gives a guide to what the students are expected to learn and comprehend on their instrument; therefore, it was important to look at the musical theory through books one. The Suzuki and O'Connor books show a student's expected progression from one piece to another. It also shows technical advancement expectations. In these books it shows how much emphasis is place on notes, rhythm, phrasing, articulation, and musical terminology. The frequency at which musical vocabulary shows up will demonstrate how the Suzuki and O'Connor method reinforces certain techniques.

Finally, observation of students who have training in each particular method was done. This shows the progression of playing level in each style. Seeing the methods in action gives validity in varying and interesting degrees. Individual instructions were observed to better evaluate the intricacies of each method. The lesson structure, practice time, and musical playing were noted.

Chapter 4 - Results

Teaching Approaches

Suzuki Teacher's Approach

Typically, a beginning music student gets an instrument before starting instruction, but in the Suzuki Method, the beginner uses a box violin at first. Introduction to the real instrument comes after the student learns to hold the bow and play the “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” (Twinkles) variations on the box violin. The parent has a crucial role in the Suzuki method; they are required to attend the student’s lesson and take notes. The teacher demonstrates and the parent learns how to help the student practice at home. The parent and teacher work together towards helping the student learn the instrument. During private lessons and group classes the instructor is the main teacher and at home the parent is the teacher.

The musical pieces learned through the Suzuki method are first taught by the teacher demonstrating and the student listening to the Suzuki recordings. Hence the student first learns by listening. Reading notes does not happen at the beginning of the method, but through supplementary materials. Rhythms and notes are learned separately before the student can put them together and start reading pieces. Rhythm is taught first. Pitch is taught only when the student is able to identify lines and spaces of the musical staff. Rhythm and pitch are then incorporated together for the student to begin reading music. “I Can Read Music” by Joanne Martin is one of the supporting materials used to teach the student pitch and rhythms. Flash cards are also used to help the student learn to read music.

Learning the posture for holding the violin starts with the standing position first, and then holding the box violin follows. When the student can comfortably hold up the box violin naturally, the bow hold is then introduced. The bow hold is learned away from the instrument

then put together with the box violin. Suzuki uses both folk music and his original compositions showcasing different techniques and musical style. Other than just learning the instrument in individual classes, group classes are also important to the Suzuki Method. Group classes are structured with students of the same level placed in a class performing the same repertoire. Performances of solo pieces are also an essential part of the learning environment for the student to become comfortable with performing and practicing stage presence.

O'Connor Teacher's Approach

The instrument is first introduced to the student with no preliminary requirements. The standing position is taught first, then learning to hold the violin up comfortably without using one's hand. The next step is learning to hold the bow and then putting the violin hold and bow hold together. The parental role is not specific in the O'Connor method, leaving room for the teacher's ideas on the parental role to be implemented.

Before learning the first piece, "Boil 'em Cabbage Down," O'Connor gives examples of the rhythm variations of the piece. These rhythms are learned and played on open strings of the violin before playing "Boil 'em Cabbage Down." The pieces are to be listened to and additionally the student starts off learning each piece by reading them. The method incorporates exercises and explanations towards learning to read music. The method is thought to be self-sustained. No other materials are necessary. Varying musical genres and O'Connor's original compositions are present in the method. Ensembles as well as individualized classes are emphasized.

Environment

Suzuki and O'Connor

Both the Suzuki and O'Connor methods encourage violin students to be in a musical environment. They both stress the importance of listening to the material in their method. Listening to music outside of the music lesson creates a musical environment wherever a student goes. Students will be able to identify the melody of pieces before they even learn the music if they are familiar with the sound. Playing in group classes is emphasized in both methods. The Suzuki method uses group classes, placing students with similar playing abilities together. O'Connor uses group classes and ensemble playing, where violinist are encouraged to play with other instrumentalist. In both methods they believe that students learn from example; not only from the teacher's example but from the interaction with other students.

Suzuki focuses on the musical environment at home and requires the parent to have a heavy involvement in the student's learning of the instrument. At Suzuki classes the teacher is the instructor; at home the parent teaches. Performance opportunities are a key reward of learning an instrument. In both the Suzuki and O'Connor methods they recognize the importance of performance and require students play solo pieces and in group performances.

Theory and Listening

O'Connor Violin Method Violin Book I, A New American School of String Playing

The pieces discussed from the O'Connor method are those that best reflect the techniques for the method's final piece, "The World Turned Upside Down." Other pieces discussed reflect key components such as key signature, time signature, rhythm and articulations which reflect necessary skills for the beginner violinist.

The listening part of the method has a recording of the pieces being played with all the articulation, tempos and other musical factors for the student to hear the intended outcome of the pieces. There is also an accompaniment section for the student to play along with. This gives the student the opportunity to practice with an accompaniment as it would be for a performance.

Pre Boil 'em Cabbage Down

Before starting the first piece in the method, "Boil 'em Cabbage Down," three variations of the piece is given using different rhythms. The student is asked to become familiar with holding the instrument and playing three rhythmic variations on the open strings of the violin before learning the first piece. The notes used in the three variations are quarter notes and eighth notes.

Boil 'em Cabbage Down (Variation 1, 2 & 3)

"Boil 'em Cabbage Down" is the first piece O'Connor uses to introduce notes on the violin. It is all written on the A string starting with the second finger and uses notes from the open A string up to the third finger on the A string. Before "Boil 'em Cabbage Down" is introduced, an earlier section teaches the rhythms necessary to play the song.

Structurally, the piece is in A major with a 4/4 time signature. A quarter rest is placed at the end of the piece as well as a repeat sign. Chord symbols are placed over the changing harmony notes throughout the piece. A style indication of Energetically and a tempo marking of 160 per quarter note is used for this piece. The text also contains a brief history lesson about the song's African-American origins, as well as information about other musical components.

A theory lesson accompanying "Boil 'em Cabbage Down" explains the following musical elements:

- Time signature (4/4)
- Key signature (A major)
- Bow direction (down bow and up bow)
- Quarter notes and eighth notes
- Repeat sign

An ear Training/improvisation section on all three variations comes at the end of the pieces. Variation 1 is to be played on different strings; hence converting the piece into different keys from the original. If played on the G string the piece is in G major, if on the D string then D major and E string E major. Throughout this exercise the student starts to develop their ear for listening to melodies in different keys. The student has to know the sound of the piece and its note pattern to be able to perform this exercise.

In Variation 2, the student gets to be creative as they are instructed to create their own rhythm pattern. As with the exercise in Variation 1, the student has to understand the main notes and what it sounds like before making their own rhythm while keeping the main notes.

In Variation 3, three new rhythms are introduced with quarter rests incorporated. The original song with words of “Boil ‘em Cabbage Down” is given after the ear training/improvisation exercise with lyrics.

Beautiful Skies - Mark O’Connor

“Beautiful Skies” is the first piece to change strings, with notes both on the A and E string. It has a simple change in the second and fourth measure requiring the student to change from open A to open E. Starting at the fifth measure, a scale like pattern descends from the third finger on the E string then moves down the A scale until the first finger on the A string (B). New elements introduced in this piece are; a style indication of Smoothly and a tempo marking of 80 per quarter note, time signature 2/4 and dynamic marking of *mezzo forte (mf)*.

Working on the A major scale and learning the finger pattern will prepare the student to play “Beautiful Skies.” O’Connor incorporates the scale by putting it into the theory lesson for the piece. In the text it describes the finger pattern and uses the words half step and whole step to describe the finger spacing. Also in the theory section, half notes are introduced. New techniques implemented in the lesson are *pizzicato (pizz)*, (plucking of the strings) and *arco* (indicates to play with the bow) are introduced under the ear training/ improvisation section. Although this technique is introduced there are no pieces in the method that incorporate *pizz*.

Common elements used from previous pieces are:

1. A major key signature
2. Chord symbols over the melody
3. Quarter notes and eighth notes
4. Quarter rest
5. Repeat sign

6. History lesson

Oh! Susanna - Stephen Foster Arr. Mark O'Connor

In this piece the main rhythm is a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note. This rhythm is placed in the Development section of the lesson to prepare for the new rhythm. The student starts learning bow speed and distribution by slowing down the bow for the dotted quarter notes and speeding up on eighth notes. A new concept introduced in this piece is starting with a pick up measure beginning on the third beat of the first measure. The piece is sectioned into two different repeated sections (A and B) and the use of a 1st and 2nd ending measure is implemented. This is the first time this technique appears in the method and also the first time a style indication of Lively and a tempo marking of 152 per quarter note is used.

Common elements used from previous pieces are:

1. A major
2. 4/4 time signature
3. Repeat sign
4. Chord symbols over the melody
5. Quarter and eighth notes
6. History lesson
7. Song with lyrics

Amazing Grace - Traditional Arr. Mark O'Connor

Amazing Grace introduces 3/4 time signature and it also starts on an up bow. The student has to learn to place their bow at the middle compared to usually starting at the bottom half of the bow. A style indication of Lyrical and a tempo marking of 96 per quarter note is used for this piece. The new technique of slurring notes is done with multiple notes being

played in the same bow direction. Dotted half notes are explained in the theory section of the piece.

The ear training/improvisation section challenges the student to start the piece on the G string with first finger; changing the key to D major. Shifting the piece to the G string teaches the lower two strings. A duet for teacher and students is new, introducing a style of ensemble playing for the student.

Common elements used from previous pieces are:

1. A major
2. Repeat sign with 1st and 2nd endings
3. Chord symbols over the melody
4. Quarter and half notes
5. History lesson
6. Song with lyrics
7. Dynamic - *Mezzo forte (mf)*

Westward Journey - Mark O'Connor

“Westward Journey” is the first piece that is written in key of D major. The D major scale is given in the ear training/improvisation section of the piece. Dynamic markings *forte (f)* (loud), *mezzo forte (mf)* (medium loud) and *piano (p)* (soft) are introduced in the theory section of the piece. Understanding dynamics and how to achieve the different volume levels by using bow distribution, placement and pressure are essential to the piece. A style indication of Flowing and a tempo marking of 90 per quarter note is used for this piece.

Common elements used from previous pieces are:

1. 2/4 time signature

2. Chords symbols over the melody
3. Quarter, eighth and half notes
4. History lesson
5. Dynamic - *mf*

Old Joe Clark - Tradition Arr. Mark Connor

“Old Joe Clark” is written in the key of A major, but all the G sharps are cancelled with a natural accidental throughout the piece. The half step positioning to create G natural is a new technique. In the ear training/improvisation section it introduces the concept of the accidental using a modal scale. The modal scale example uses D major with notes from open A to A on the E string and the student is asked make their own melody with the notes. Whole notes are also introduced in the piece. A style indication of Lively and a tempo marking of 152 per quarter note is used for this piece.

Common elements used from previous pieces are:

1. A major
2. 4/4 time signature
3. Repeat sign
4. Chord symbols over the melody
5. Quarter, eighth and half notes
6. History lesson
7. Song with lyrics
8. Slurs
9. Dynamic - *mf*

Climbing the Mountain -Mark O'Connor

“Climbing the Mountain” is the first piece written in the key of G major. In the theory section the G major scale and a description of the half step notes are used in preparation for this piece. In this piece *martele* bow strokes (longer *staccato* bow stroke) notes are given over most quarter notes; which is a new bow stroke requiring a different sound. A style indication of With Motion and a tempo marking of 100 per quarter note is used for this piece. *Crescendo* (Gradually getting louder) and *decrescendo* (Gradually getting softer) are first introduced to the student in this piece. In the theory section an exercise on the open A string with quarter notes starting to *crescendo* from *piano* moving to *mezzo forte* then reaching *forte*. Then doing the opposite is done to achieve *decrescendo*. In the ear training/improvisation section an exercise to replace quarter notes throughout the piece with eighth notes creates a new variation.

Common elements used from previous pieces are:

1. 4/4 time signature
2. Chord symbols over the melody
3. Quarter and eighth notes
4. History lesson
5. Dynamics - *f* and *p*

Appalachia Waltz - Mark O'Connor

In preparation for Appalachia Waltz, the student has to learn ritardando (*rit.*). The music gradually slows down where *rit.* appears. A style indication of Lyrical and a tempo marking of 90 per quarter note is used for this piece. A brief explanation is given of this technique in the theory section. In the second half of the piece the key changes from D major to G major. To accomplish this key change the student has to change all the C sharps in D major to

C natural in G major. In the ear training/improvisation section the student is introduced to double stops. The student is asked to play the notes in the piece with the open A string when on the D string, and open D when on the A string. To accomplish this technique the bow has to be balanced on the A and D string simultaneously.

Common elements used from previous pieces are:

1. D major and G major
2. 3/4 time signature
3. Chord symbols over the melody
4. Quarter, eighth and dotted half notes
5. History lesson
6. Dynamics *mf*
7. Duet

Boogie Woogie – Mark O’Connor

In preparation for “Boogie Woogie,” the student learns the eighth rest and also F natural and C natural in the theory section. Two brief exercises for both techniques are given on the open D string. In the theory section eighth rests are also explained. A style indication of With Energy and a tempo marking of 140 per quarter note is used for this piece. A new technique introduced in the piece is repeating the piece until the words *To Coda* then jumping to where it says *Coda*. In the ear training/improvisation exercise an example of the D major scale and the Boogie Woogie Scale helps the student with preparing for the piece. The student is asked to be creative by making up their own melody with notes from the Boogie Woogie Scale.

Common elements used from previous pieces are:

1. D major

2. 4/4 time signature
3. Chord symbols over the melody
4. Quarter, eighth and half notes
5. History lesson
6. Double stops
7. Duet

Sweet Betsy from Pike – Traditional Arr. Mark O’Connor

“Sweet Betsy” from Pike is the first piece in the method written in the key of C major, In preparation for the piece the C major scale is given in the theory section which emphasizes a low second finger on both the A string (C natural) and D string (F natural). In the theory section arpeggios are written out as chords for C, F, G then C again. The student is asked to play the notes of the chords separately to form arpeggios. This piece also has a cut time signature, a style indication of Smoothly and a tempo marking of 140 per quarter note.

Common elements used from previous pieces are:

1. slurs
2. Repeat sign with 1st and 2nd time endings
3. Chord symbols over changing the melody
4. Quarter and half notes
5. Dynamics *mp* and *mf*
6. *Ritardando*
7. History lesson
8. Song with lyrics

The World Turned Upside Down – Mark O’Connor

The pieces in the O’Connor method are structured to introduce new and build on old techniques encounter throughout the method. For example, learning the first rhythm notes and fingers in “Boil ‘Em Cabbage Down” will eventually be seen in the last piece, “The World Turned Upside Down.” The following table shows the techniques that are necessary to play the last piece in the O ‘Connor method and pieces that incorporate the same techniques.

The World Turned Upside Down Techniques

Required Techniques	O’Connor Previous Technique Pieces
Pick up measure	Amazing Grace
G major	Climbing the Mountain
Slurs	Oh! Susanna
Quarter and eighth notes	Boil ‘em Cabbage Down (Variation 1)
Dotted quarter and half notes	Oh! Susanna
Repeat	Oh! Susanna
A, B section repeat	Boil ‘em Cabbage Down (Variation 1)
1 st and 2 nd endings	Oh Suzanna
<i>Mezzo forte</i>	Beautiful Skies
4/4	Boil ‘em Cabbage Down (Variation 1)
4 th finger and tempo 110 per quarter note)	The World Turned Upside Down

Table 1. The World Turned Upside Down techniques.

Suzuki Violin School Volume 1 Revised Edition

The pieces discussed from the Suzuki method are those that best reflect the techniques for the method’s final piece “Gavotte.” Other pieces discussed reflect key

componence such as key signature, time signature, rhythm and articulations that are not in the final piece of the method, but reflect necessary skills for the beginner violinist.

The listening part of the method has a recording of the pieces being played with all the articulations, tempos and other musical factors for the student to ear the intended outcome of the pieces. There is also an accompaniment section to the method for the student to play along with. This gives the student the opportunity to practice with an accompaniment as it would be for a performance.

Before any music is learned in the method, a detail description of the standing and holding posture is given. These include pictures and descriptions for the rest position, standing position, bow hold, bow placement (middle, tip and frog placement), placement of bow between the finger board and bridge. Also given are pictures and descriptions of the different arm levels when playing different strings and the left hand finger patterns.

Pre Twinkle Twinkle Little Star – Shinichi Suzuki

Before starting “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” variations, examples A, B, C, D and E each with different rhythms are given. These rhythms are to be clapped and played as a handshake before playing them on the violin. The bow position when placed on the strings is explained followed by rhythm A played on the open E and A string. From the example given with rhythm A the same is done with rhythms B, C, D and E. An explanation is given for each rhythm and how to play it.

Changing the strings from the E to the A string is taught after learning the rhythms. Rests are placed between each string change for the student to carefully move from one string to the other. Preparing the finger for “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” the student is asked to prepare the third finger by playing open A string followed by the first and second finger before

getting to the third finger D. Fourth finger preparation is done also with the instructions to learn before “Perpetual Motion.” Leading up to the Twinkles both rhythms and also the right hand position in the key of A major is explained.

Twinkle Twinkle Little Star – Variations and Theme

Variation A is written out with the notes of the song while rhythms B, C, D and E the first four measures are given. The student is expected to learn the notes from variation A and then play them with the other rhythms. Quarter notes of the Twinkles theme have a *staccato tenuto* mark which is a new bowing technique for the beginner. At the end of the theme students should be able to not only play the notes but also sing them.

The following shows the theory elements in the three variations:

1. A major
2. Time signature – common time
3. Sixteenth, eighth, quarter and half notes
4. Eighth rest
5. Starting down bow

Lightly Row – Folk Song

“Lightly Row” is the first piece the student encounters the time signature of cut time. A tempo indication of *Moderato* is given for the first time in the method. A dynamic marking of *mezzo forte (mf)* is also given for the first time in the method. In preparation for this piece an exercise on note clarity is given. The exercise indicates the student should stop between each note of the given melody, place the next note then play. The exercise is repeated a second time replacing all the open E string notes with 4th finger on the A string. Although 4th finger is suggested it is not require for this piece.

Common elements from previous pieces are:

1. A major
2. Quarter and half notes

Song of the Wind – Folk Song

Learning to retake the bow is crucial in “Song of the Wind.” An exercise to retake the bow is shown with a section of the music. The instruction to make a circle bow, to accomplish the technique, is given in the exercise. In preparing for consecutive third finger notes from the E string to the A string, the section is isolated for the student to practice. The third finger notes have a rest between the notes giving the student time to change from note to note in the exercise. The new tempo learned in “Song of the Wind” is *Allegretto. Staccato* and *tenuto* bow strokes are required in this piece. A repeat sign, quarter rest, *staccato* and 2/4 time signature are new musical elements shown in “Song of the Wind.”

Common elements from previous pieces are:

1. A major
2. Quarter and eighth notes
3. Dynamic - *mf*

O Come, Little Children - Folk song

“O Come Little Children” is the first piece that starts on an up bow. The ending of each phrase also has an up bow followed by an eighth rest, then another up bow follows. Bow distribution is essential. The bow has to stop mid-way at the end of each phrase and then continue up bow on the start of a new phrase. This piece has a familiar time signature of 2/4 and introduces a new tempo indication of *Andante* and varying dynamics. New dynamics such as

piano (p), *forte (f)*, *crescendo* and *diminuendo* (gradually getting softer) are used in the composition.

After “O Come Little Children,” the method has an exercise to play *pizz.* on the A and E strings while listening to the resonance of these notes. This is followed by the same notes being played *arco* (play with bow) while listening to the resonance as with *pizz.* Although the technique of playing *pizz.* is not needed until the last piece in the method (Gavotte), it is still prepared early on. An exercise on the A major scale and arpeggios is given and are to be played with the Twinkles variation A rhythm.

Common elements from previous pieces are:

1. A major
2. 2/4 time signature
3. Quarter and eighth notes
4. Eighth rest
5. Dynamics - *mf*
6. Repeat sign

May Song – Folk Song

A major scale and arpeggio exercise that came after “O Come Little Children,” is used in preparation for “May Song.” This piece starts with an A major arpeggio with a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note. The rhythm pattern is first prepared without the given notes, but with an exercise to play the rhythm with the notes of the Twinkles. The tempo indicated in this piece is *Allegro moderato*; which is a new tempo seen in this method. After learning “May Song,” an exercise on D major is done by playing the Twinkles variations starting

on the D string. The exercise is done in preparation for the D string notes and the D major key encounter later in the method.

Common elements from previous pieces are:

1. A major
2. Common time
3. Quarter, eighth and half notes
4. Dynamics - *f*, *mf*, *p* and *diminuendo*.

Allegro – Shinichi Suzuki

“Allegro” uses different bow strokes *staccato* and *tenuto* which was done in “Song of the Wind.” To accomplish the varying bow strokes the student has to learn bow distribution, pressure and articulation for the both strokes. The third line of the piece is marked *dolce* and its notes are marked with a *tenuto*, conveying connectivity of notes, compared to the previous lines that are marked *staccato*. To enhance the *dolce* section a *rit.* and *fermata* are placed at the last measure in the third line. Following the *dolce* section the music has an *a tempo* marking which returns the music to its original tempo.

Common elements from previous pieces are:

1. A major
2. Common time
3. Quarter, eighth and half notes
4. Bow retake
5. *Staccato* and *tenuto*
6. Dynamics - *f* and *diminuendo*

Perpetual Motion – Shinichi Suzuki

Learning “Perpetual Motion” requires the use of 4th finger E. This is the first time 4th finger is required and two exercises are given to prepare the finger. The first exercise has four notes, B, E, E and B; the E’s are played with the open E string. The exercise is repeated with open E’s being replaced with the 4th finger on the A string. The second exercise the student plays notes on the A string from open A to the 4th finger and back to A.

After learning “Perpetual Motion” the student then learns to play a variation of the piece. This is achieved by the student playing each note twice; subdividing each note. Following this variation section a development finger exercise written in thirds starting off with eighth notes then the same exercise with sixteenth notes.

Common elements from previous pieces are:

1. A major
2. Common time
3. Tempo - *Allegro*
4. Eighth and sixteenth notes
5. Dynamics - *mf*
6. Staccato

Allegretto – Shinichi Suzuki

Preparing for “Allegretto” starts with the tonalization of D major expressed through double stops. Open D string and A string are played separately then together; then the same is done with the open D string and 3rd finger D on the A string. D major scale and arpeggios are written out with the instructions to play them with the Twinkles variation A rhythm. Accented *staccato* notes are seen for the first time in “Allegretto”. The student learns

bow speed by playing the accented *staccato* notes with more bow while keeping the rhythm as written.

Common elements from other pieces are:

1. Cut time
2. Quarter and eighth notes
3. Quarter rest
4. Dynamics - *mf* and *diminuendo*
5. *Rit., fermata and a tempo*
6. *Staccato*

Etude – Shinichi Suzuki

Preparing for “Etude” starts with the tonalization of D major expressed through double stops. Open G string and D string are played separately then together and the same is done with the open G string and 3rd finger G on the D string. G major scale is written in one octave followed by the scale and arpeggios in two octaves. A finger pattern exercise of the lowered second finger on the A and E string is given in preparation for G major pieces.

Common elements from other pieces are:

1. Common time
2. Eighth and half notes
3. Variation with sixteenth notes
4. *Staccato*
5. Dynamic - *mf*

Minuet No. 1, 2 and 3 – J.S. Bach

“Minuet No. 1, 2 and 3” has the same key of G major, time signature of 3/4, composer J.S. Bach and the use of hooked notes. The pieces also incorporate dotted half notes. Preparing for the hooked bowings (slurred *staccato* notes) comes before Minuet 1 with an exercise on the A string. For all three Minuets the 4th finger and accidentals are essential for the pieces to be performed. “Minuet No. 1” has an exercise given for both the 4th finger and accidentals (C sharp versus C natural). “Minuet No. 2” builds on the techniques from “Minuet No.1,” the only new technique learned is triplet notes. Following “Minuet No. 2,” an exercise on string crossing from 3rd finger G on the D string to 2nd finger G on the E string. This technique is essential in Suzuki Method’s last piece “Gavotte.” A finger exercise is also done in the key of G major with added accidentals throughout the exercise. “Minuet No. 3” has grace notes which is a new technique and also has old techniques from “Minuets 1 and 2.”

Common elements from previous pieces are:

1. G major
2. Half, quarter and eighth notes
3. Dynamics *f*, *mf*, *p*, *crescendo* and *diminuendo*
4. *Staccato* and *tenuto*
5. Repeat sign

Gavotte - F. J. Gossec

The pieces in the Suzuki method are structured to introduce new and build on old techniques that are encountered throughout the method. For example, learning the first rhythm notes and fingers in “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” will eventually be seen in the last piece

“Gavotte.” The following list shows the techniques that are necessary to play the last piece in the Suzuki method and the pieces in the method that incorporates the same techniques.

Gavotte Techniques

Required Techniques	Suzuki Previous Technique Pieces
Allegretto	Song of the Wind
G major	Etude
Quarter, eighth and sixteenth notes	Twinkle Twinkle Little Star
Quarter rest	Song of the Wind
Slur	Minuet No. 1
Cut time	Lightly Row
Repeat	Song of the Wind
Accidentals	Minuet No.1
<i>Mezzo forte</i>	Lightly Row
<i>Pizz. and arco</i>	O Come Little Children (exercise)
<i>Ritardando</i>	Allegro
A tempo	Allegro
<i>Staccato and tenuto</i>	Song of the Wind
Grace note	Minuet No. 3
Bow retake for down bow	Song of the Wind

Table 2. Gavotte techniques.

In preparation for “Gavotte” an exercise is given to learn slurred sixteenth notes that are in groups of four. A new concept shown in this piece is the *cantabile* section; which when played sounds like it is being sung. Also new is D.C al Fine, meaning to go back to the beginning of the piece before ending at Fine.

Student Observations

Suzuki Student Observation

Suzuki lesson observations were done with two Suzuki students that studied the method. The observations were done twice and its structure noted. Both students had the same teacher and a lesson period of thirty minutes each. The student referred to as Suzuki Student I was almost half way into the method and the student referred to as Suzuki Student II was a beginner student in a transition stage from box violin to the actual violin. A parent was always present at each student's lesson and sat further off from the teacher and the student while taking notes.

Suzuki Day One Observations

Suzuki Student I

The lesson started with the teacher tuning the student's violin followed by the student taking a bow with the instrument. Suzuki Student I was asked to choose a scale either A, D or G major; they chose D major. Before starting the scale the student chose to play, "Twinkles" variation A, which they called "Mississippi Stop Stop," on the open A string. The teacher checked the student's bow hand, gave the tempo for the scale and then the student played. After the scale the teacher asked for the D arpeggio notes and the student responded. The teacher checked bow hand position and also the right arm level ensuring the bow was on the D string. Both the D major scale and arpeggio were played. G major scale was next and the teacher checked the bow hand and right arm before the student started the scale.

The piece first played was "May Song" by Suzuki from memory while the teacher accompanied the student on piano. Sections that had memory slips were worked on in sections. The student had difficulty changing strings smoothly from the A to the E string. This

was isolated and practiced during the lesson by slowly taking time to stop and change strings before moving from note to note.

Next, “Long Long Ago” was briefly looked at as the new piece that the student was learning. The student listened to the teacher play it and also looked at the music structure. The student was asked to identify sections that were similar and was able to point out three sections; two at the beginning and the same at the end. The teacher also checked the student’s left hand wrist position before playing “Long Long Ago.” After playing the student worked on changing from the D string to the A string. An at home assignment was given to memorize “Long Long Ago” and to look at “Allegro” by singing the notes.

Suzuki Student II

Student II was a beginner learning to hold the violin. Holding the violin to the student’s side was first emphasized followed by taking a bow. Then the student was instructed to move into playing position on their foot chart. The student had a foot chart with the steps to move into playing position. They practiced holding the violin without the bow while the teacher played “Twinkles” variation A. The student complained about the chin rest digging into their neck; the teacher responded by figuring out a way to make the instrument more comfortable. Eventually the chin rest was removed for a trial period to make the violin comfortable for the student.

Next, the teacher moved on to helping the student with their bow hold. They played “Twinkles” variation A’s rhythm, which they referred to as “Mississippi Stop Stop,” on the E string, while the student played the teacher accompanied on piano. The student was asked to play with more bow for more sound. The teacher helped the student use more bow by guiding their arm to open and close more. Then the student was able to do it on their own.

“I can read music,” was used for learning rhythms and pitches after the student played. Rhythm was done first and at the end of each line the student was rewarded with a sticker. Pitch was done next; the teacher played piano while the student sang the notes. At the end of the class the teacher assigned holding the violin and playing on the open E string for home practice. Last the teacher taught the student how to put their violin in the case.

Suzuki Day Two Observations

Suzuki Student I

The teacher tuned the student’s violin followed by student playing an A major scale. The student had to play each note of the scale twice; this was also done with the D major scale. The student was then asked to play “Long Long Ago.” Upon completing the piece the teacher checked the student’s left hand wrist to ensure their hand shape for reaching notes. The piece was repeated with the teacher accompanying the student on piano. “Allegro” was played next. The teacher discussed short and smooth notes in “Allegro” and the repeat of the first phrase. Because of the repeat a bow retake was required to start the first phrase on a down bow again. After playing the first section the teacher went to the middle of the piece. The middle section is described as dolce and the student said it meant the music was to be played sweetly. The teacher asked for longer bow strokes in the dolce section. Discussed was the *rit.* section, which required slowing down of notes, and a *fermata* being a held out note. An *a tempo* marking was placed after the fermata section and the student was instructed to take a deep breath with a bow retake to lead into the section. “Long Long Ago” and “Allegro” were assigned for home practice.

Suzuki Student II

The student started on the foot chart in rest position while the teacher worked on their bow hold. After positioning the bow hold the student was asked to sing “Up like a Rocket.” This song included actions with the bow and sections of the song which asks the student to check their bow hand. Following the song the student moved into playing position. Next the student was assisted with the bow hold. “Twinkles” variation A was played on the student’s shoulder while the teacher checked the bow strokes. The violin was then added and the “Twinkles” theme rhythm was played on the open E string.

Working on putting the violin into rest position after the student played was repeated three times before playing again. After, the student worked on switching from the open E string to the open A string. This was done by first playing one string then stopping and taking time to switch to the next string while keeping the bow hand structure.

“I can read music” rhythms were clapped and stickers were rewarded to the student for every line done right. For the pitch exercise the student sang the notes while the teacher played them on piano. The last exercise was to play “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star Variation C “on the E string. This was also assigned for at home practice.

O’Connor Day One Observations

For the first day of observations, two O’Connor method students were observed. Both students had thirty minute lessons and the same teacher. The student referred to as O’Connor Student I was at the beginning stage of the method. The student referred to as O’Connor Student II was almost at the end of the method. During each lesson only the teacher and student were present.

O’Connor Student I

At the beginning of the lesson the student was asked to move into playing position with their violin. The teacher checked the students left and right hand position before playing. A major scale was played first with a rest between each note; this gave the student time to place their fingers. Tones and semitones in the A major scale was identified and discussed. The student was then asked to play the scale with the first rhythm from “Boil ‘em Cabbage Down.”

“Amazing Grace” was the piece the student was working on. The teacher took some time to discuss the dynamics and bowings in the piece. After the discussion the student was asked to play the piece. Slurs were worked on separate from the piece using the A string and with 1st finger B; while dividing the bow into two equal parts. The history of the piece was briefly discussed between the student and teacher. Time signature of 3/4 was also looked at.

In the piece there were slurred dotted half notes with quarter notes the student had difficulty playing. The teacher demonstrated while counting the note value then student played, The A major scale and “Amazing Grace” was assigned for at home practice.

O’Connor Student II

Before playing “Sweet Betsy from Pike” the student was asked to identify the key signature, time signature, note range (lowest and highest note), tempo and dynamics. When the student finished analyzing the music they played the music. Then the teacher asked the student to play a second time with *staccato* slurred notes and to play the bowings given; which the student played incorrectly at first. The piece was repeated in different sections working on bow direction and the slurred *staccato* bowings.

In “Sweet Betsy from Pike,” the A and B repeated section the teacher discussed with the student. Dynamics and how to play them with accuracy was done with bow placement and bow pressure was reviewed with the student. The teacher then asked about arpeggios in the piece and

the student pointed them out. The C major scale was played and the teacher asked about the half steps and whole steps in the scale. The C major arpeggio was also played followed by the F major and G major arpeggios. “Sweet Betsy from Pike,” the C major scale and the arpeggios were assigned for home practice.

O’Connor Day Two Observations

O’Connor Student I

The lesson started with the teacher tuning the student’s violin. The student then moved into position with their violin to begin playing. The teacher asked the student to play the A major scale with two notes slurred. The student played the scale and then was asked to play “Beautiful Skies.” Before starting to play this piece the teacher checked the student’s left and right hand position. This piece was previously learned but the teacher wanted to review the piece. This was done as it was a piece the student was familiar with before going back to “Amazing Grace;” which was observed on the first day of observation.

“Amazing Grace was then performed, the teacher established a tempo by clapping the tempo. The teacher also asked the student to take a deep breath before playing. After the student played the teacher recognized the student had difficulty with the dotted half notes that were tied to quarter notes. The teacher asked the student to play again and counted the beats of notes for the student. After the student played without the teacher counting the beats and was able to play all the rhythm and ties. Both teacher and student then played the duet.

The student briefly started to learn “Amazing Grace” starting on different string. The piece usually starts on the D string but the teacher wanted the student to start on the G string. This assignment was assigned for at home practice together with the regular notes of “Amazing Grace.”

O'Connor Student II

The lesson started with the teacher helping the student tune their violin. They then reviewed "Sweet Betsy from Pike." The dynamics in the piece were not played by the student and the teacher asked the student to repeat the piece with dynamics. Dynamics in the piece were not as clear so the teacher asked the student to play the C major scale with dynamics. The student was asked to play the first half of the scale in *mezzo piano* then the second moved to *mezzo piano*. The scale was repeated again but with the first half *forte* and the second half *mezzo forte*. "Sweet Betsy from Pike" was then repeated and the dynamics were present.

The D major scale and arpeggio was played before the student started to look at a new piece "Soldier's Joy". The student was asked to identify the key signature, tempo, time signature, and dynamics. The student was able to play the piece slowly. The teacher then asked the student to review the piece at home with dynamics and also the D major scale and arpeggio.

Chapter 6

Discussion

Suzuki and O'Connor Methods Working Together

The following tables show different techniques, notes, articulations, dynamics, bowings and other key elements needed for the final piece in book one for both the Suzuki and O'Connor method. There are some elements from each method that can be applied in both methods.

Looking at each method's last piece, a hybrid of the methods was considered. This entailed using pieces from an opposing method and applying it to the other method's final piece.

Suzuki Method's Final Piece

Gavotte with O'Connor Techniques

Required Technique	O'Connor Piece with Technique
G major	Climbing the mountain
Hooked Bowings	Climbing the mountain
<i>Piano (p)</i>	Climbing the mountain
<i>Diminuendo</i>	Climbing the mountain
Cut time	Boil 'em Cabbage Down (Variation4)
<i>Mezzo forte (mf)</i>	Beautiful Skies
<i>Pizzicato</i>	Beautiful Skies – Development Exercise
<i>Arco</i>	Beautiful Skies
Quarter rest	Beautiful Skies
Slur	Beautiful Skies
Repeat	Boil 'em Cabbage Down (Variation 1)
Accidental	Old Joe Clark

<i>Rit.</i>	Appalachia Waltz
4 th finger	The World Turned Upside Down
<i>Coda</i>	Boogie Woogie

Table 3. Gavotte demonstrated with techniques from the O'Connor method.

The table above shows only some techniques that are present in Gavotte other techniques that are not present in the O'Connor method are as follow:

1. *Staccato*
2. Grace notes
3. *Tenuto*
4. Sixteenth notes
5. *Cantabile*
6. *Allegretto*
7. *A tempo*
8. *Mezzo piano*
9. *D.C. al Fine*

O'Connor Method's Final Piece

The World Turned Upside Down with Suzuki Techniques

Required Technique	Suzuki Piece with Technique
Starting on up beat	O Come Little Children
<i>Mezzo forte (mf)</i>	Lightly Row
4 th finger	Perpetual Motion
Repeat	Song of the Wind
Dotted quarter eighth	May Song

G major	Etude
Slur	Minuet 1
4/4 time signature	Twinkle Twinkle Little Star (common time)

Table 4. The World Turned Upside Down demonstrated with techniques from the Suzuki method.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

There are similarities in the Suzuki and O'Connor methods, showing possible common goals. Similarities include technique, rhythm, notes, the order in which strings are learned, musical expression, reading, and listening. The holding of the instrument is seen in both methods but with the Suzuki method there are more pictures and descriptions that can assist in learning the technique. In the Suzuki method it shows the standing position and the instrument hold position more clearly than the O'Connor method. The musical styles in the Suzuki method are more classically driven than the O'Connor method; there are more musical notations, tempo markings and articulations markings in the classical style. For example, Suzuki uses tempo marking words (Italian words) that are seen in classical music while O'Connor uses his own words (English words) to describe the tempo of pieces. From this observation, the Suzuki method can be used for a teacher or student who is looking to learn more of a classical style of playing. Although O'Connor does not use as much of the classical terms and techniques as Suzuki, he still incorporates the style throughout the method. Both methods use a form of improvisation. O'Connor uses more of the improvisational style from the beginning piece of the method (Boil 'em Cabbage Down). Students learn how to improvise using different rhythms, key signatures and creating their own rhythms and musical melodies. Suzuki also has an improvisational influence. For example in Suzuki's "May Song" the dotted rhythm that is new to the student is asked to be played with the notes to "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." This can be seen as an improvisational style although in the method it is not called improvisation. O'Connor incorporates more opportunities and techniques for the student to learn the improvisational style

on their instruments. Therefore, the O'Connor method can be applied to someone who wants to learn more of an improvisational style or wants to teach this style of music

The environmental aspects of both methods are similar; they both stress the importance of individual and group classes. The only difference is the parental involvement. For the Suzuki method, it is mandatory that the parent attends classes and also helps the student at home. This can be a crucial factor when learning the instrument for younger student, since Suzuki uses the 'mother tongue' approach. The student should have constant reinforcement even after a lesson. The O'Connor method does not define that parental role but if a teacher or parent wants this aspect in the student environment, it can be applied.

From the observations in this research, both methods had a similar structure in teaching. They both taught scales, arpeggios, new and review pieces, they emphasized instrument hold and bow hold, and also bow distribution. There were no major differences observed between the Suzuki and O'Connor methods teachers. More differences could have been observed if observations were done of students who were just starting the method, students who never had a lesson or who were still learning to hold the instrument.

This research gives teachers, parents and students considering the Suzuki and O'Connor methods detailed information of what each method entails. If a teacher, parent or student is interested in seeing the methods work, the observations given can show how the methods are taught. Both methods have classical and improvisational styles of music used in the teaching. Certain aspects of each method can be looked at in this research and can be applied to another method. If one wants to learn the O'Connor method but wants to use the Suzuki's parental involvement ideas, this aspect of the method can be added. Also, if a Suzuki teacher wants to

incorporate more improvisational techniques in a lesson, these features of the O'Connor method can be added.

The proper method depends on the goals of the student and parents. Parents who want their children to be classically trained might prefer the Suzuki method. However, parents who want their children to play other styles of music or who value improvisation might choose the O'Connor method. Both methods have something of value to offer.

Bibliography

- Bugeja, Clare. "Parental Involvement in the Musical Education in Violin Students. Suzuki and 'Traditional' Approaches Compared," *Australian Journal of Music Education* (2009): 19 – 28. Accessed February 19, 2016.
<http://web.a.ebscohost.com.lynx.lib.usm.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=b6b23ca4-20db-4d55-99b5-87b08b6eac81%40sessionmgr4004&vid=1&hid=4207>.
- Bugos, Jennifer A. and Muzuc, Jennifer. "Sematic Clustering and Processing Speeds in Suzuki Violinist," *Council for Research in Music – University of Illinois Press* (Fall 2013): 7 – 22. Accessed February 19, 2016.
<http://www.jstor.org.lynx.lib.usm.edu/stable/pdf/10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.198.0007.pdf?acceptTC=true>.
- Coff, Richard. "Suzuki Violin VS. Traditional Violin – A Suzuki teacher's View," *Suzuki Music Academy, MusicStaff.com*, 1998. Accessed February 19, 2016.
<http://www.suzukiacademy.org/suzuki-violin-vs-traditional-violin/>
- Colprit, Elaine J. "Observation and Analysis of Suzuki String Teaching," *Journal of research in Music Education*, Vol 48, No. 3 (Autumn 2000): 206 – 221. Accessed February 19, 2016.
http://www.jstor.org.lynx.lib.usm.edu/stable/3345394?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.
- Farrar – Royce, Janet. "Teaching the Violin or Teaching the Fiddle," *American String Teacher*, May 2002, 62 – 64, 66 – 67. Accessed February 19, 2016.
<http://search.proquest.com.lynx.lib.usm.edu/docview/964960?accountid=13946>.
- Folio, Sam, ed. "America Has All the Right Musical Ingredients and Mark O'Connor Knows How to Put Them Together," *International Musician*, September 2009: 18 -19. Accessed February 19, 2016.
<http://search.proquest.com.lynx.lib.usm.edu/docview/1083776?accountid=13946>.
- Hallbery, Karin A. "Does Music Instructions Using the Suzuki Method Improve Working Memory and Visual - Spatial Processing in Children?" PhD diss., Northern Arizona University, May 2014.
- O'Connor, Mark. "It is Time to Reinvent String Pedagogy of the 21st Century - How Traditional Methods are Letting Down Student and Shifting Creativity," *Strings: International Index to Music Periodicals*, September 27, 2012, 15 -17. Accessed February 19, 2016.
<http://search.proquest.com.lynx.lib.usm.edu/docview/1041304593?accountid=13946>.
- O'Connor, Mark. "O'Connor Violin Method Violin Book I A New American School of String Playing," *Mark O'Connor Musik International*, 2009.
- _____. "What is the Future for String Players. Infusing String = Curriculum with Creativity Will Foster Opportunity," *School Band & Orchestra*, August 16, 2013, 17 – 18, 20. Accessed February 19, 2016.
<http://search.proquest.com.lynx.lib.usm.edu/docview/1487686098/fulltextPDF/5CD3E47314E34762PQ/1?accountid=13946>.

Su, Chen Wen. "A New American School of String Playing - A Comparison of the O'Connor Violin Method and the Suzuki Violin Method," DMA diss., University of Miami, 2012.

Suzuki, Shinichi. "Suzuki Violin School Volume 1 Violin Part Revised Edition," *Summy-Birchard, Inc.* Revised 2007.

Appendix

IRB Approval Letter



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 17110107

PROJECT TITLE: The Suzuki and O'Conner Methods: A Foundational Comparison on Methodology for the Beginning Violinist

PROJECT TYPE: Honor's Thesis Project

RESEARCHER(S): Chelsea Goolcharan

COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Arts and Letters

DEPARTMENT: Music

FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt Review Approval

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 12/07/2017 to 12/06/2018

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.

Institutional Review Board