CultureCase

Music lessons enhance IQ while drama increases social skills

This research was conducted by **Glenn Schellenberg** at the **University of Toronto at Mississauga, Canada**

Summary

The researchers randomly assigned 144 six year old Canadian children to one of four groups: one received music tuition for the keyboard, another got voice coaching using the Kodaly method, and (by way of contrast) two control groups: one that got drama lessons and a final group that received no tuition at all. They found that after the music lessons (whether voice or keyboard) children increased their IQ when compared with those in the drama and control groups. They concede that 'the effect was relatively small'. They also found that children in the drama group improved their aptitude for social behavior in a way that was not detectible in the music or control group.

Participants were recruited using an advert in a local Toronto newspaper offering free music lessons to families who had a keyboard at home

Each of the children was assessed before and after the lessons using a set of standardised tests for intelligence and social behavior, including an IQ test. The music and drama lessons took place over 36 weeks at the prestigious Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. The lessons were given to groups of six children at a time. Those in the control group were offered free music lessons the following year.

How might music enhance IQ?

In explaining the results the authors ponder whether music lessons administered in the settings of this experiment promote the sort of general cognitive skills (like reasoning) that may increase IQ in young children. The kinds of activities required during formal music lessons (memorising, concentration, understanding structure, and expression) may be the routes through which an increase in IQ is achieved.

Keywords

theatre **music** **experiment** **behaviour** **control group** **Canada** **IQ** **children**

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