

Predicting Parents Success in Facilitating Children’s Suzuki Music Education

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Abstract

This purpose of this study was to identify specific elements of Suzuki parents’ experience that contribute to their “successful” enactment of their role as Suzuki “home teachers.” Two hundred fifty-eight parents from eight Suzuki schools around the United States participated in this study, for which they completed a survey designed to explore a wide variety of possible influences on their behavior. I used factor analysis to extract the following two measures of “success” from parents’ self-reported data: (1) the frequency and/or consistency with which parent-child dyads, or children alone, engaged in behaviors that are integral to the Suzuki method (e.g., practicing, attending group classes, listening to Suzuki recordings, and reviewing previously learned repertoire), and (2) parents’ reported enjoyment and perceptions of efficacy as home teachers. I then formulated two regression equations that would account for the variance in parents’ outcomes on these measures. Significant predictors of parents’ success included which Suzuki school they attended, how they conceived of their role in their children’s music education, what type of training they received to help them support their children’s music learning, how effectively they felt they practiced with their children, and how realistic their expectations for personal effort were when they began their Suzuki instruction.

Does Music Instruction Using The Suzuki Method Improve Working Memory And Visual-Spatial Processing In Children?

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Abstract

Musicians provide an accessible and unique population to study psychological constructs and behaviors. In researching the development and processes involved in becoming a musician, not only artistic value is gained to a society, but also knowledge in cognitive growth and functions, such as memory and visual-spatial abilities.

Past research on differences between musicians and nonmusicians in cognitive functions has indicated that early music training can affect spatial (Bilhartz et al., 1999; Gaser & Schlaug, 2003) and verbal abilities (Moreno et al., 2011; Franklin et al., 2008), constructs associated with working memory (WM) and academic learning (Marin, 2009; Jakobson, Schellenberg, 2006). These differences in WM measures between musicians and non-musicians concluded better working memory task performances in musicians possibly due to sustained cognitive control, or the ability to maintain attention on a working task, a probable outcome from long-term musical training (George & Coch, 2011; Franklin et al., 2008; Pallesen et al., 2010). Currently, there are limited direct studies demonstrating enhancement of WM by musical training in children.

The purpose of this study is to assess if administering music instruction using the Suzuki Method increases measures of performance in verbal and nonverbal working memory (WM) tasks and visual-spatial processing in kindergarten children. A randomized experimental design using the independent variable of music instruction will be deliberately manipulated and the dependent variables of verbal and nonverbal working memory and visuo-spatial processing measures from the Stanford-Binet 5 will be assessed.

Uncovering a relationship between musical training and WM will supplement the research on elementary aged children and music instruction by presenting measures of verbal, nonverbal working memory and visuo-spatial processing in relation to students receiving music instruction by using the Suzuki Method.