Reassessing the Mozart Effect

William B. Cooper
Illinois Wesleyan University

Johnna Shapiro, Faculty Advisor
Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc

Cooper, William B. and Shapiro, Faculty Advisor, Johnna, "Reassessing the Mozart Effect" (1997). John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference. 3.
https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc/1997/oralpres2/3

This is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.
©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.
Oral Presentation 2.4

REASSESSING THE MOZART EFFECT

William B. Cooper and Johnna Shapiro*, Department of Psychology, IWU

In 1993, Frances Rauscher, Gordon Shaw, and Katherine Ky reported a finding that listening to Mozart’s piano sonata for two pianos in D major, K.448 significantly enhanced a person’s performance on abstract reasoning tests from the Stanford-Binet intelligence exam (Rauscher, Shaw and Ky 1993). In 1995, a follow-up study replicated these findings and suggested that the enhancement affected spatial-temporal reasoning (Rauscher, Shaw, Levine, Ky, and Wright 1995). Interestingly, there are no published reports indicating than this enhancement has been replicated. There are, however, reports indicating that the effect was not reproduced (Stough, Kerkin, Bates, and Mangan 1994; Carstens, Huskins, and Hounshell 1995; Newman, Rosenbach, Burns, Latimer, Matocha, Vogt 1995). Clearly, there is some discrepancy with the earlier findings. Accordingly, it was this researcher’s intention to investigate a spatial enhancement using two subtests from the Wechsler’s Intelligence Exam. The two tests, Block Design and Digit Symbol are designed to measure spatial ability. It is predicted that if no effect is found that the enhancement could be test specific. If an effect is found, there will be more evidence to suggest that it is spatial reasoning specifically which is being enhanced by the Mozart piece. The second part of this study investigates whether the music from a different composer can produce an enhancement in spatial reasoning. Because Haydn is a contemporary of Mozart and it can be argued that their composing styles are similar with respect to time period, a piano sonata in the same key as the famed Mozart piece was selected. If an enhancement is found with the Mozart and the Haydn, new evidence will have been found which offers that the enhancement is not composer-specific. Finally, it was the researcher’s intention to investigate whether amount of musical training played any bearing on the degree of enhancement from the music. Accordingly, through the use of a survey, information was recorded to differentiate the participants into “musician” and “non-musician” sub-groups.