

## Music for Thoughts: Does Music Affect the way Students Study?

By Amanda Dickerson

Does music affect the way students study? What if Hans Zimmer could help you study for your science test? Or that your iPod or MP3 player could be a valuable studying tool? Scientific studies show that listening to music really can affect the way students study and learn. I [The Pseudonymous Penman] agree (because of the numerous times I've listened to music while studying or doing homework), but do others?

I interviewed two seventh graders, Polina G. and Sara Williams. Polina said that she “would listen to music if she could” and that she would listen to classical music because she thinks “it’s the best music to help you study, process questions, and think/read.” Sara, however, thinks that listening to music is distracting, but if she was to listen to music, she said that it would be classical music because it is soothing.

When I asked a parent what she thought about students listening to music while studying, she told me that she thinks “students with ADD or ADHD need to have music or something in the background to help them focus.” Unfortunately, I didn’t have the chance to ask any other questions.

As I said above, scientific studies show that music can improve the way students learn. Apparently, studies also show that kids who play an instrument (such as piano, flute, violin, etc.) *could* perhaps make them smarter. Also, there is a theory called the Mozart effect. In 1993, Rauscher *et al.* made the surprising claim that, after listening to Mozart's sonata for two pianos (K448) for 10 minutes, normal subjects showed

significantly better spatial reasoning skills than after periods of listening to relaxation instructions designed to lower blood pressure or silence. The mean spatial IQ scores were 8 and 9 points higher after listening to the music than in the other two conditions. The enhancing effect did not extend beyond 10-15 minutes (from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1281386/>).

The end result: music helps students (and others) learn and/or study. Or does it? Here are some questions to ponder: Does listening to music only help certain people? If so, which people? This is the Pseudonymous Penman, calling it a day.

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