

Csíkó, Csaba; Dohány, Gabriella

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Kontakt / Contact:

peDOCS
Deutsches Institut für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung (DIPF)
Mitglied der Leibniz-Gemeinschaft
Informationszentrum (IZ) Bildung
Schloßstr. 29, D-60486 Frankfurt am Main
E-Mail: pedocs@dipf.de
Internet: www.pedocs.de

PARENTAL BELIEFS ABOUT MATHEMATICS AND MUSIC LEARNING

Csaba Csíkos, Gabriella Dohány
Institute of Education, University of Szeged

Theoretical background The role of parental beliefs has been investigated in different domains such as Physics (e.g., Yeung, Kuppan, Foong et al., 2010), Music (e.g., Koh, 2011) and Mathematics. In Mathematics, students' parents' beliefs about causal attributions for success in mathematics (Eccles & Davis-Kean, 2005), and the accuracy of parents' information (Pezdek, Berry & Renno, 2002) have been studied.

Research questions The current research aims at studying parental beliefs in mathematics and music in parallel. (1) How do secondary school students' parents see the connections between math and music learning? (2) What is the most sensitive age for talent recognition and development? (3) How do they perceive the role of music and mathematics in a life-span perspective?

Methodology A self-administered questionnaire was sent out to parents in four classes (specialized in music, environmental studies, humanities, and one without subject-specialization; N=117) of an upper secondary school of a county seat town. The questionnaire covered statements in five-point Likert-type scale about (1) scientifically approved phenomena (e.g., Mozart-effect) and naïve beliefs about mathematics and music learning, (2) talent development and its sensitive age, and about (3) "the role of music and mathematics in getting along in life".

Results (1) Parents see the importance of mathematics in music learning in solfège and in keyboard playing. (2) The optimal age for talent recognition (7.38 years for mathematics and 5.85 for music) and for talent development (6.94 and 5.94, respectively) seem to be controversial. The role of music and mathematics from different aspects of getting along in life proved to in part stereotypical, but in many cases surprising and alerting (e.g., relative unimportance of mathematics in private life and in creativity, as compared to music.)

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