Effects of Music Style on Workshop Focus
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Introduction

• Studies suggest that exposure to upbeat music can enhance focus and performance on cognitive tests [1].
• Studies also suggest that music facilitates neurogenesis and brain development [2].

Objective

• To evaluate whether upbeat music (swing jazz) or somber music (cool jazz) affects Organic Chemistry students’ ability to focus during workshop.
• Previous works suggest that upbeat swing jazz will most effectively facilitate focus and productivity in workshop.

Methods

• Selected “cool jazz” and “swing” Pandora radio stations to be played during the workshops.
• Did not play music for one workshop as a control.
• Played one style of music throughout each two hour workshop.
• Conducted survey after each workshop using a 1 to 10 scale with 1 as the low and 10 as the high.
• Evaluated three separate workshops for three weeks.
• Survey data analyzed to determine student evaluation of effect of each music style on workshop.

Results

• Student average evaluation of focus:
  • Cool jazz: 7.06
  • Swing: 7.50
  • No music: 6.26

• Student average evaluation of productivity:
  • Cool jazz: 8.28
  • Swing: 8.16
  • No music: 6.84

• Student average evaluation of music helpfulness:
  • Cool jazz: 6.58
  • Swing: 5.75
  • No music: 4.61

Conclusions and Future Works

• Students reported most focus with swing music playing.
• However, students reported that cool jazz was the most helpful and conducive to productivity during workshop.
• Students reported more focus and productivity with music playing than without music.
• Error may have resulted from the limited number of surveys, bias of the students toward music, and the difficulty of the workshop problems during each session.
• Future research with different types of music necessary to further understand effects of music on organic chemistry learning.
• A similar experiment could ascertain the effects of music while studying.

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