

IAB-Colloquium zur Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung

Music and Educational Attainment

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The formation and development of human capital is of central importance to society and has attracted significant interest in recent economic research. The economics literature has mainly evaluated common initiatives to increase the stock of human capital initiatives such as formal education and on-the-job training. Alternative approaches, especially those that do not at first glance appear related to human capital, have yet to be explored. Music is one potential human capital-increasing activity that has received little attention in the economics literature. Its beneficial effects on cognition have long been suspected, dating to antiquity when philosopher Plato praised music for its powerful role in human life and society in shaping sensibility and rationality. The association of music activity with math is commonly attributed to Pythagoras. However, the notion that music strongly relates to cognitive skills has already been expressed on ancient clay tablets in Egypt around 2000 BC.

In this talk, I will provide a brief summary on a project that analyses the relevance of music activity on educational attainment in childhood and adolescence. Next to existing results, I will also provide some outlook on upcoming research within this project.

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