

ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to further investigate previous findings (Chan, Ho & Cheung, 1998) which suggested that music training might improve verbal, but not visual memory. Ninety children aged 6 to 15 (mean = 10.66) were recruited. Half of them had 1 to 5 years of training with a western musical instrument (MT) and half had no such training (NMT). They were matched ($p > .05$) by age, education level, and socioeconomic characteristics. Analysis of their performances on the Hong Kong Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children (Psychological Corporation, 1981) suggested that in general, the two groups were similar in Verbal and Performance IQ. Their verbal and visual learning and retention abilities were assessed with the Hong Kong List Learning Test (Chan & Kwok, 1999) and the Brief Visuospatial Memory Test-Revised (Benedict, 1997), respectively. Consistent with the previous study, the MT group demonstrated better verbal, but not visual, learning and memory ability than the NMT group. The duration of music training significantly predicted the verbal learning ability, even after partialling the variance accounted for by their age and Verbal IQ. There was no relationship between beginning age of music training and verbal learning ability. Whether this behavioral pattern was related to neuroanatomical changes remains to be further explored.