

To what extent does music have a positive impact on the emotional and cognitive development in children and teens?



EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION FLO - LOWER SIXTH

To be honest, I wouldn't have done an EPQ if GCSEs hadn't been cancelled, as I didn't want the added stress whilst starting out my A Levels, so it has been a bonus to have had this opportunity.

So much of my life is surrounded by music. When I'm upset, I listen to music and when I'm happy I listen to music. I wouldn't say I am the best pianist or singer, but I have learnt that playing or listening to music is the one thing that will calm me down if I'm anxious or upset. Music is there to comfort you, no matter your mood. I became really interested to whether there is a positive impact on emotional and even cognitive development when listening to music.

I was always expecting to find a positive impact on the emotional development, but I did discover that musical education is also important in brain development. My research showed that a child who participated in music education (eg. music lessons) before the age of seven, had more white matter in the brain and better connections between the left and right sides of the brain. These developments would stay for life, even if music education was not continued after the age of seven. However, if a child were to start their music lessons at 8 years-old or later, the brain would show no changes, showing music education was key when the brain was sensitive to change in early childhood.

For me, it was nice to know all my piano lessons when I was a child has paid off and positively benefited by brain development!