

'The Elixir of Good Behaviour'

The Bridgman Report

Can the use of alphasound in humanities lessons improve the behaviour and academic performance of adolescent boys with behavioural difficulties?

Synopsis

This paper aims to investigate whether there are practical uses for music in humanities lessons, particularly in reference to boys with behavioural difficulties. It begins by considering the extensive amount of research that has been done on the subject of background music and its uses in schools and the workplace as both an **aid to concentration and a tool in the reduction of stress**. The research brings up a number of questions about the nature of alphasound and whether or not it can **affect behaviour and concentration**.

I observed ten lessons; the first five lessons without any background music, recording the children on camera. the second five with Levine's alphasound playing. This study was undertaken at a normal Comprehensive school using 10 year eight (12-13 yrs old) boys who were identified as having behavioural and emotional difficulties. The **results showed that there was a significant reduction in off-task activity in the lessons where the alphasound was playing**. The boys were also given two grid reference tests, and **performed significantly better on the test where the alphasound was playing**. Finally, the subjects were given a questionnaire to complete about how they completed their homework and whether or not they preferred to work with music in the background.

The results also showed a significant decrease in external types of off task behaviour, from what I termed 'distracting' behaviour. The results show that the pupils **off-task activity decreased in the lessons where Levine's alphasound was playing in the background, falling by an average 664 instances, significant to a value of p=0.05, [61.4%]**. This can be further broken down into further definitions of 'distracting' off-task activity, which showed that instances of impulsiveness, hyperactivity and

talking decreased, significant to $p=0.05$, $p<0.015$ and $p=0.05$ respectively (see Table 5, p16) .

Average Impulsiveness reduced by 71.6%.

Average Hyperactivity reduced by 46%.

Average Talking reduced by 87.2%.

In terms of test results, the number of questions attempted by the participants increased by an average 2.9 questions, significant to a value of $p<0.05$. The number of correct answers also rose in the test with alphamusic. **The average increase in the combined academic performance was 108.1%.**

Conclusion

The results do seem to show some visible trends which would lead us to make various deductions. Firstly, the lessons which were accompanied by Levine's alphamusic had significantly fewer instances of off-task activity. Although a longer study is required to further explore these results, it is highly unlikely that such a change in behaviour would have occurred by chance. This change could be due to a number of factors, all of which are suggested by the literature: a) This music **affects mood**, which leads to **increased productivity**; b) the music **masks extraneous auditory stimuli** and thus allows the participants to concentrate; c) the music adds further **stimulation and is thus an aid to concentration**; d) the music **affects the subjects physiologically, reducing stress levels and increasing concentration.** The results also showed that the pupils *behaviour improved by a significant reduction in being less 'distracting' (hyperactive, talking or impulsive behaviour) to being mostly 'disengaged'*. This would suggest that the alphamusic may have had enough of an **effect on the pupils' concentration to help them to return to their allotted task instead of disrupting each other.** Finally, those pupils who said in their questionnaires that they were more used to listening to music or the television at home but were not identified as 'low ability' made the largest improvement in behaviour, suggesting that ***alphamusic helped them to realise their potential.*** Whatever the reasons, the area of background alphamusic in the classroom is certainly an interesting one which **has the potential to be of assistance to the classroom teacher.**

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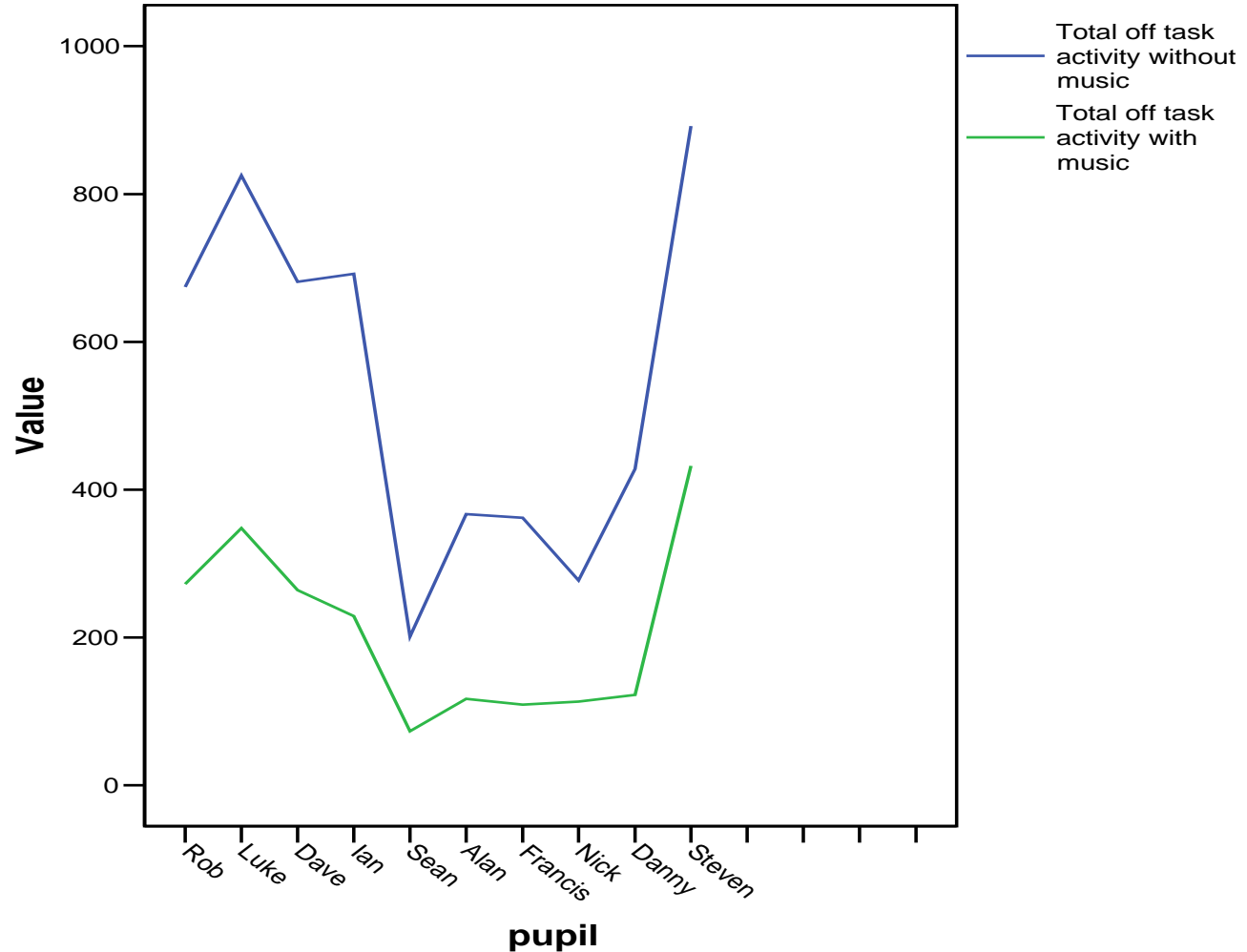
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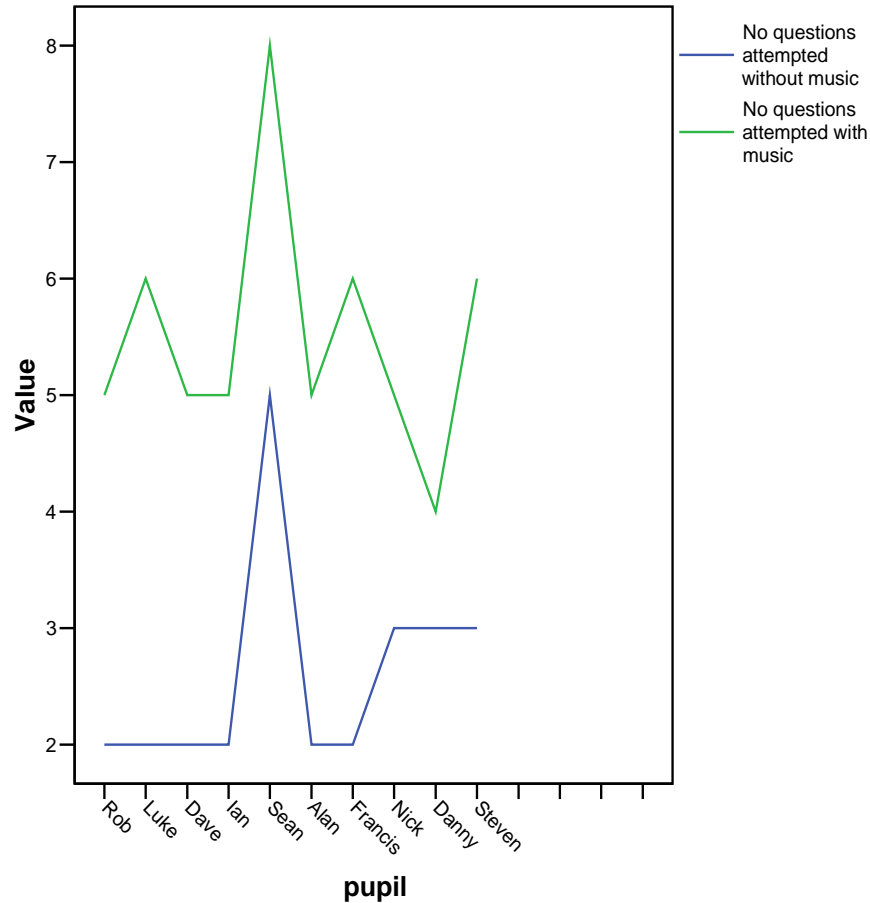
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Graph 1: Instances of off-task activity with and without background



music

Graph 2: Questions attempted with and without music



Graph 3: Correct answers with and without music

