

What's On

High note

Cezary's Picks

Music for young and strong

Singing best therapy

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The transfer effects are a subject of study for many scientists but it doesn't apply to communication (movement from and to the airport) or bankers (transferring money here or there). This was a subject for scientists to make a research on psychologists for more than a century.

The scientists analyze the influence of studying Spanish on those learning Italian, or the ability to prepare spaghetti with tomatoes or cooking macaroni with meat, the similarities of biking on different type of bikes and it is the matter of near-transfer effect.

However the scientists who are researching the far-transfer are concerned mostly about playing chess, learning math and music. (Anyway, the influence of playing football on swimming or biking is also considered.) The far-transfer has a much more interesting effect and far (no-men-omen) from the strongly based solution.

The first description of such researches (and speculations) came from Edward Thorndike and Robert Woodworth in 1901. They were sure that transfer appears if we have contact with two activities having common features, somehow similar to them.



Owerkowicz

The same they supposed that far-transfer is much more a rare phenomenon. However in many next researches with the participation of chess masters and professional musicians, including members of the orchestra has proved that those people are gifted with exceptional cognitive abilities, special intelligence, abilities of fast processing of information and excellent working memory.

Such abilities result in educational and professional success. Is it possible that these brain illuminations they owe to music or chess? Isn't it only a correlation?

Researches

Giovanni Sala and Fernand Gobet, psychologists from the Liverpool University decided to definitely clear that problem. They provided the 'meta-analyses' available scientific researches testing the existing far-transfer and they really found many researches confirming such correlation.

Psychologist Glenn Schellenberg from the University of Toronto confirmed that there is a strong relation between studying music during childhood and the growth of general level of intelligence, which transmits later to development of the other mind abilities and achievements in many kinds of knowledge.

The researches of William Bart from the University of Minnesota suggest that children developing their skills to play chess or instrument, which demands a very good working memory and intelligence, have much improved those abilities.

The correlation, shown from those researches doesn't tell us yet anything regarding far-transfer. It would be also possible that the people with higher than average intellectual abilities more frequent would engage in demanding training of instrumentals of chess playing and would be able to persist in it, said Fernand Gobet, in the article he published in 'Current Directions in Psychological Science'.

What message do the researches send for parents? If you are interested only to improve your child's math skills, reading or writing and concerned about developing those abilities, what about chess and music? Is it worth considering or not? For sure it is worthwhile, first because of the pleasure of playing and developing passion, not only for better marks at school. Gobet says, "The most effective method of getting certain skills is an ability of well (and — much) practicing it. And we often forget about it. However because the Far Transfer Effect occurs, it would be helpful for your child anyway."

The strokes (cerebral vascular accidents) or head trauma quite often have become more frequent — but not only — among people 'since a very long time'. As a result we will sometimes suffer from aphasia, damage to the specific brain regions. Those people too often are left to their fate without essential help and rehabilitation. It is possible to help them and 'a miraculous medicine is — music, to be exact the singing music'.

Traumas

'Between words' — The Foundation Supporting People with Communication Problems was established by two women, Neurologopedic specialists who earlier worked at a hospital. They noticed that the people after strokes, injuries, traumas of the brain stopped speaking. They are in hopeless situation without efficient

therapy.

'If somebody has inefficient hands or legs he has offered motion rehabilitation if he/she doesn't speak? That's a pity. They live the hospital and have to deal with it themselves,' explained one of those women — co-founders, Mrs Isabelle.

'Such people after leaving the hospital are brought home and made to sit in front of a TV screen and say, 'Have a look. He/she never would be better watching it, but quite the opposite, they will suffer from epilepsy.

Sometimes there are few meetings with the logopedic doctor. He will show a few pictures of beetroot or green salad and ask: What is this? This is childish. A person with aphasia knows how a beetroot looks because the person has not lost his mind.

It is only that he just doesn't know how to say what he thinks. He suffers and there is strain on his tongue and lips. A doctor asks him to say after him: la, la, la, clicks, smacks, snorts, blows. Everything for nothing, the words are not coming,' said the other co-founder, Mrs Katherine.

The foundation belongs to the people who could not speak for two, five or ten years. Aphasia deprived them from speaking, reading, understanding what one is talking to them. The women pull them out of their homes and organize group therapy.

The most difficult was to convince the men, especially those well educated. They would go out and show to the others that they are lonely, heavy wounded wolves. With women it was easier: they were more open and more determined in what they did.

'Here no one shall handle them delicately.' They will get on his nerves but he shouts and says they do not attach much importance to practice. 'Louder! Louder! Where are your voices,' shouts the composer and conductor.

Mr Taddeo conducts the only such choir in the country consisting of people who cannot speak. 'I came for the first rehearsal totally frightened. I couldn't imagine how it would be, all of them were affected by aphasia and some of them arrived in wheelchairs. There was no chance of placing them as 'an average choir'. This is a sitting choir but as everyone - grouped within kind of voices.

'When I was conscious, the doctor bent over me and said, do you hear my voice? Of course, I heard but I was unable to answer, even react with the blink of an eye, says Mme Irene (eight years after the stroke, until now in wheelchair).

Before she joined the foundation she couldn't speak. To remember the letters she passed the ABC book three times. Every day she practiced her vocabulary, once the choir. She tries to be close to the conductor. It is a competition between the participants. He is an excellent musician with perfect hearing, handsome and with such a beautiful voice: when he raises his voice the walls are waving... I admire these activities. My goodness, we try our best. As it would be a choir with healthy people only,' she added.

Silent

'I don't know how it works, but when we start to sing, everybody, even the one who earlier preferred to remain silent, opens his mouth and produces some sound, in the beginning only the vowels, then the syllables, and in the end short words. A majority never sang before, some are not musical,' says the conductor.

Since he leads the choir, it means more than one-and-half-year only one person failed to sing anything and gave up. The others attend every meeting. Sometimes the weather is bad, windy, rainy, and I thought we would cancel the rehearsal because nobody would like to come, but they like and are coming.'

In December they were singing carols. In the repertoire they have popular and folk songs, rather well-known and popular. Men sing to women and vice-versa. It is a bit like talking, a bit bantering. When rehearsal is completed, some of them cannot pronounce what they were singing.

The right sphere of the brain is responsible for singing, left sphere for talking. It means that they deal well with choir, even using difficult words but with talking not. The therapy, accept the choir, contains also activities with psychologist, logopedist, reading aloud, logic riddles, dance, mindfulness and yoga.

There is no two the same brains (and the same strokes). However, singing looks the best therapy. Why... maybe because it is 'a language' primarily than speaking. And known to us from the first lullaby?

