

ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AND SCHOOL SUCCESS IN LOW SES STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Building on previous research that shows a positive relationship between instrumental music enrollment and school success, standardized test scores, grade point averages, and attendance information for one cohort of students in two Missouri school districts over five academic years (N1 = 1365, N2 = 606) were analyzed to examine differences in school success for four groups of students categorized by socioeconomic status (SES, high and low) and instrumental enrollment (enrolled or not). Low SES, low ability instrumental and non-instrumental students were also compared. In both districts instrumental students have higher test scores and better attendance in 8th grade than non-instrumental students. Their test scores improve more between 4th and 8th grade than non-instrumental students and self-selection of higher achievers into instrumental music was only clear for one district. The same trends were apparent in low SES, low ability students, but failed to reach statistical significance because of a small sample.