

Journal of Emerging Investigators

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pittsburgh high school student publishes research on music's effect on reading comprehension in scientific journal

Da'Naesha Herring, a student at The Neighborhood Academy in Pittsburgh, PA, recently published a scientific manuscript titled, "The Effect of Lyrical and Instrumental Music on Reading Comprehension Tasks" in the *Journal of Emerging Investigators*.

Herring's research, published on November 1, 2018, focuses on how listening to music effects the ability to read and retain knowledge effectively. This topic has been debated for many years, as some students argue that listening to music helps them focus and avoid distractions, while some prefer silence when reading or performing other tasks that require a great deal of attention. Herring's test group was composed of 37 individuals that ranged in age from twelve to fifteen years old. Herring tested these individuals under four different conditions: silence, instrumental music, English lyrical music and Spanish lyrical music. Herring noted that none of the individuals in the study had previously studied Spanish, and therefore would not be able to understand the lyrics in this style of music. Before conducting her research, Herring studied two primary schools of thought in using music to aid in reading comprehension. The Distraction hypothesis states that a person only has enough energy for one task at a time, and that music would take away their attention from the task at hand. The Mood-Arousal hypothesis states that when a person listens to enjoyable music, they exhibit increased performance because they are in a better mood.

While subjecting individuals to different types of music (or silence), Herring had the individuals read articles of varying difficulty and subject matter and then tested them for comprehension of what they had just read. Herring found that silence allowed individuals to have the highest degree of reading comprehension, followed by instrumental and Spanish lyrical music that had the same level of reading comprehension. The results of Herring's study conclude that English lyrical music had the lowest level of reading comprehension of any condition in the study.

The *Journal of Emerging Investigators (JEI)* is a non-profit scientific journal operated by graduate students at Harvard University. JEI is dedicated to mentoring young scientists in middle and high school and publishing their research through the online journal. Articles submitted to JEI pass through a rigorous editorial and scientific review process by several PhD-level scientists before they are accepted and published.

Link to Herring's full article: <https://emerginginvestigators.org/articles/the-effect-of-lyrical-and-instrumental-music-on-reading-comprehension-tasks>

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