



# Bigger Better Brains

## Key points from Dr Anita Collins, "Bigger Better Brains" workshops. March 2020.

Dr Janelle Fletcher, ASME Council Member, Head of Music at Tabor

<http://biggerbetterbrains.com>

Email: [hello@biggerbetterbrains.com](mailto:hello@biggerbetterbrains.com)

Also on FB, Instagram and Twitter



## Your Brain On Music

Neuroscientists have done extensive research on how music affects the brain – from listening, playing and learning. The research consistently provided a strong correlation between a positive brain function develop and music. However, regular music education, particularly undertaken by the age of seven and for a minimum of two years, has proven to have a extensive impact on the brain resulting in improved cognitive development.

Collins suggest three key musical learning aspects that significantly improve cognitive development.

### 1. The practice of an instrument and singing.

The instrument, repertoire and vocal range should be specific to the ability and age of the children. Beginning music lessons as early as possible has the greatest impact.

### 2. Clearly structured music pedagogy.

The educational method behind teaching music must be sequential, scaffolded and focused on 'sound before symbol' (consistent with Kodaly Methodology). Lessons should be regular and include music notation and aural skills. Collins advocated that shorter music lessons more often is better than less lessons per week but for a longer period.

### 3. A safe and supportive environment.

Music education needs to take place where the child feels supported, where they can sing, experiment in music, learn at their pace, enjoy what they do and feel successful.

## Music Makes You Smarter

Dr Anita Collins, neuromusical researcher, visited Adelaide for the ASME/Musica Viva workshop on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2020, and ran the Music Course on 12-13<sup>th</sup> March and Music Leaders course on 16-17<sup>th</sup> March. Collins shared key research findings of how music education benefits children's learning across a range of areas such as the development of language acquisition, executive functioning and emotional development. A highly respected music advocator, Collins challenged the way we think about advocacy linking positive neurological development to music education as a way to better the education of children and the community.

Music sets off "fireworks" in the brain. The auditory, visual and motor cortices are not only stimulated but are connected creating a super sense – Collins 2020.

- Music improves:
- Executive function
  - Social Skills
  - Language acquisition
  - Memory
  - Brain plasticity



See her TED Ed Video on Youtube "How Playing an Instrument Benefits Your Brain"

## Music Ensembles

Music Ensembles are also a great way for students to not only develop social skills but executive function. This is where students learnt to adapt, problem solve, respond and even develop resilience. In music performances, the heightened and often stressful experience helps students to work towards a goal, develop adaptability and flexibility, work through emotions and achieve a product in a team.

