

Pearlisita Dungog

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Stafford

English 124

Learning Music Is Priceless

When I was in the fifth grade, my school, Audubon Elementary, had the opportunity to have a music program for us students to participate in. They offered ensembles such as an uplifting children's choir, an exhilarating concert band, and a string orchestra full of violin virtuosos. I fell in love with music when this moment happened; So, I picked up an instrument and a tuner and played in all of them! The ensembles I've participated in would let us travel all around San Diego. We would perform at the famous Copley Symphony Hall in downtown, ornate churches in Pointe Loma, Sing the national anthem at Petco Park before a baseball game, promote ourselves on television, and even field trips to music festivals at Disneyland in Anaheim. Over the years, unfortunate events begin to unravel. First, the music classes started to cut down times of the rehearsals until there was no time for music. Instead, students ended up focusing more on studying tests and learning main subjects like math and english. Then, my classmates and I had to say farewell to our dedicated music teachers since the school didn't have the reason to now that the music classes were reduced. At that point, I understood my school couldn't fund the music program. As time went by, I witnessed the music rooms become dusty and run-down; The string and band instruments appeared out of tune and dilapidated as well. But that didn't discourage me to refrain from music. As I grew up, I kept motivating myself to practice music despite the financial struggles in my high school and college years. In a social sense, my parents disagreed with my creative passions because they believed the performing arts seems "unimportant" or "in the way of school". I didn't believe in such an idea from them, but

this childhood memory inspired me and decided to become a music education major so I could fight against these financial troubles and teach others the true value of music.

The decline in music education in schools is a definite mistake. All students ranging from elementary school to college needs these windows to express creativity, to grow mentally, to be successful physically, and to learn important life lessons like being a leader. Many people, like my parents, had a fixed mindset sought music as a useless subject for us youth that consequently does not benefit future generations.

One reason to care about music education in schools is that it develops the student's mind, body and soul. Students can learn music in their daily lives just as the same time as learning the alphabet and counting numbers; music does connect the elements of math and english with it. Certain examples you'd learn would be how to solve problems like in sight-reading (it's when you play a piece for the first time reading the sheet music), learn languages like understanding Italian phrases when reading sheet music like *pizzicato* meaning "to pluck" or *moderato* meaning "moderate", and mathematical concepts of chords and scale degrees in music theory. (it's not like you're learning rocket science.)

Susan Hallam, Senior Lecturer in Computing at Nottingham Trent University and a speaker and practicing consultant, states scientific confirmation how music affects a human's brain. She states, "Learning to play an instrument enhances the ability to remember words through enlargement of the left cranial temporal regions. Musically trained participants remembered 17% more verbal information than those without musical training." knowing this, I agree that Hallam elucidates to skeptics of the extent of what's happening inside in our minds.

Could you use a school subject to describe a feeling? Math nor english couldn't convey in equations or words like music can. Music actually allows us profess specific feelings of

passion and attainment when you play. Adding to the idea, “participating in an ensemble enhanced feelings of self-achievement for the study’s participants, assisted individuals in overcoming challenges, built self-confidence, and raised determination to make more effort to meet group expectations regarding standards of playing” (Hallam, 12.) Throughout our whole lives, we have the ability to express interpretation, determination, and the sense of liberty in such ensembles.

Music connects to all life necessities: having any awards and leadership achievements built in your resume gets you a better career lifestyle, a charismatic social life when conversing taste of music with friends, and much more when you start off young. According to Kenneth K. Guilmartin, cofounder of Music Together, a music development program for young children that includes parent or caregiver involvement in classes, says, “Making music involves more than the voice or fingers playing an instrument; a child learning about music has to tap into multiple skill sets, often simultaneously. For instance, people use their ears and eyes, as well as large and small muscles.” Guilmartin has the right idea with the results of a child learning music. Therefore, children can actually have a growth mindset with their skills when learning music is involved.

To further explain the impact music benefits people, Judson Ellen, a marketer for 20 years in both on the client and agency side, did market research and wrote materials for public relations and correlate social and academic manners with music education, provides statistical evidence that music also helps children build character and higher thinking skills that only music can build. she states,

“...Positive results have been noted in standardized tests. Regardless of socioeconomic background, according to a 10-year study that tracked more than 25,000 middle and high school students, music-making students get higher marks on standardized tests than those who have

little or no music involvement. The College Entrance Examination Board found that students in music programs scored 63 points higher on the verbal and 44 points higher on the math sections of the SATs than students with no music participation. Additionally, students performed better on other standardized tests such as reading proficiency exams.”

With this study, music proves that it can exert more ability in testing. It could be as well encouraged to have school districts understand this effect and could soon input the idea to implement more musical methods to aid their efforts in testing. It would be a win-win on both sides if schools wants students to be successful in the main subjects.

To ease the worries of any financial flaws or assumptions when running music programs, According to NAMM music, not-for-profit association that promotes the pleasures and benefits of making music, advocate and donor in music education, and a \$17 billion global music product industry, states information,

“Fermanich’s study focused on a school district, which served over 70,000 students during the 2009-2010 school year. The district includes urban, suburban and rural schools with a total district budget of \$853 million. From that \$13.9 million was allocated to music education representing 1.6% percent of total district expenditures. The sample school district is moderately diverse with 25% minority students and 25% of the student population designated eligible for Title 1 funds available for low-income families.”

As a result, the stigma of thinking that music education is “expensive” or “money-waste-in-funds” is proved to be incredible. Henceforth, this could be an opportunity for education boards to reconsider the financial management in the programs.

As of learning the the facts, music is completely underestimated by school districts that it is a vital impact to students’ education. Being aware that music affects physically, emotionally,

and mentally to us individuals, music resulted in a lifetime benefit of enhanced abilities in multi-task performances and cognitive strategies. The school districts should reconsider and reallocate the funds into music programs and continue with a growth mindset of music as an equal like any other school subject. When this comes to effect, it can our youth's futures more secure. Without the efforts to save music, we would set ourselves back into an imbalance between creativity and intellectual growth thus hindering such human capabilities.

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