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The Fundamentality of Music

Many people remember the first impression of music that they fall in love with, and many of those experiences come from a music class in school. There is plenty of debate as to the importance or necessity of musical education, and there are more than just two opposing views, with some believing that it isn't being taught correctly, or shouldn't be taught at all. Music and the arts should be taught, despite these beliefs, as the benefits far exceed the negatives.

Even with those saying that music programs are too costly, music teaches universal life lessons, and everyone should experience it. Many critics of the music departments claim that musical educations "pose huge budget concerns for schools" and are therefore not worth implementing and focusing on (McDaniel). Regardless of the budget concerns, musical education is crucial for students to gain important life lessons. One of these lessons is the ability to deal with failure. Failure will be experienced by everyone in every career, so being able to handle and even thrive under failure is important. This lesson is never more apparent than when playing an instrument as knowledge isn't the only thing that affects a performance, and mistakes will always find their way into a concert piece.

Music students learn to “get excited to fail” and “learn what sounds awful but also what goes well together” in a very natural way which allows them to deal with failure in a healthy manner in other aspects of life (Miller). Even without the lessons that a musical education can provide, the issue of budget when it comes to music courses is the same that can be seen with all classes, extracurricular activities, and sports. Every aspect of a school requires funding, so with the addition of the revenue and exposure that come from concerts and performances, as well as these lessons, musical education is one of the best options for a possible course in any curriculum.

As such, even with some saying that music can “promote competition and rivalry among peers” and takes away from other studies, music should be expanded and even implemented into the curriculums of other courses for its team building and assistive nature (McDaniel). Music connects to everyone on a personal level “because the arts are crucial to every culture” and therefore can help connect students to the material being worked on in other courses and increase their understanding of the lessons (Thomason). Music can also assist other curriculums in more general ways with shown benefits from learning music including “increased language and reasoning development, better memorization skills, and increased pattern recognition,” all of which are necessary components of other aspects of learning and school environments (Merlenbach). Additionally, musical programs, while having some inherent competition for positions within an ensemble, “teach teamwork and discipline, since the musicians have to work together in order to perform well” and need to trust and rely on each other to create the best performance possible (Merlenbach). With the addition of music programs, and

especially their implementation into other curriculums bringing these benefits, as well as ensembles promoting teamwork and trust more than any competition, Musical education should be a bigger focus for schools that want to increase the effectiveness of all academic areas.

Music is more than just a subject to learn, and these differences from the standard courses make music more valuable to an educational system. Not all sections of life give you an easy-to-read letter grade. There will be many times throughout school, a career, and general living where self-assessment and being able to see improvements to be made on your own are necessary. Music classes are “not measured in numbers or grades, but in practice and improvement” as there is no perfection to be found in music and changes can always be made for the better (Thomason). Being able to identify these changes and work towards them without the inherent reward of an “A” on a paper makes students who experience musical education more equipped to handle situations where a right and wrong answer isn’t an option. This lack of standard letter grading also allows those students who don’t work well with the pressure of these grades to thrive and continue to enjoy school through creativity rather than rote memorization. “Music is a language” as each method and note has a meaning deeper than what can be initially heard by itself and “we practice the language together, sharing, speaking, stumbling but ultimately finding ways to connect” when words do not fully explain the feeling we have (Miller). These connections bring us together, allowing us to get a more full and complete understanding of each other and the world around us, similarly to how other classes attempt to teach. With these differences helping to gain a separate view of how to handle each of life’s hurdles, musical education

becomes so much more necessary to the learned person that education is meant to create, and therefore, is crucial for any curriculum to accommodate.

Music is as useful and important as any of the courses that the current curriculums require. The connections between subjects, the applications to life's challenges, and the universal understandings that come from a musical education are not to be overlooked and solidify music as a centerpiece to education as a whole.

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