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*Music for Everyone*

Before receiving formal education in music and in music education, I firmly believed that music should only be studied by those who want to learn about music and have an interest in furthering their musical development. However, among many other interesting conclusions, I have discovered that music education can be beneficial for everyone involved when students of multiple ability levels and varying backgrounds are working together with the teacher. Students are encouraged to study music independently; usually these interested students are the most musically successful, but the first appropriate step in music education takes place in the classroom. The goal in an educational setting is academic achievement, and this is most successful through teamwork. One important part of a secondary arts education is music. Students with exceptional needs and from various cultural backgrounds, among other diversities, have an opportunity to be successful in the music classroom in ways that may not be possible elsewhere. By including all students in music education, music teachers have the unique ability to create a window of success for all students.

In any educational setting, it is vital to address the needs of students with special needs, students with low ability and students with high ability in the subject. Through technology, the inclusion of every student and meeting their individual needs can be more easily and thoroughly met than without the assistance of technology. Technology can assist students with learning disabilities, and students who are advanced and need to work ahead of the class. In a program called “Music for Children with Reading Learning Disabilities” with the goal of teaching

necessary language and reading skills through music, rhythm, singing and notation were the foci. The author, Colwell (2006), “felt that children with reading learning disabilities desperately need many of the basic skills which music instruction is uniquely able to give them.” What is even more fascinating is that he found that “a child’s initial learning begins with motor responses...music teachers have a wonderful opportunity to assist students with perceptual-motor development through rhythm and motor activities” (Colwell, 2006). Students with disabilities can acquire low self-esteem “due to the rift between grade level expectations and personal achievement” (Colwell, 2006). Thankfully, music education offers the freedom of expression and provides opportunities for the success of all students through a creative and diverse learning environment.

It may be easier to teach multicultural elements in music than it would be in math, science, or other academia; in music education, there are unique methods of implementing and utilizing multicultural studies to expand students’ horizons- perhaps beyond the subject of music. Rauscher claims that “teaching about music of many cultures can lead students to value cultural pluralism (Rauscher, 1998). Patricia Campbell (2002), a fourth-grade music educator, proudly states that she “consider[s] it [her] responsibility to expose children to the world of musical possibilities...music [itself] is a way of knowing culture.” If multiculturalism could be firmly implemented in schools everywhere, particularly regarding the subject of music, “music making...would serve as bonding agent for the diverse interests and backgrounds of the students” (Rauscher, 1998).

Assessment is an important topic in every academic subject, but it is crucial in music education for an underlying reason. In public schools most music educators can choose their method of presentation, teaching and assessment. Assessment must be unbiased in all categories

of personal identity, and adaptable when necessary. Assessment should include both formal and informal documentation. Informal assessment must be documented constantly to note students' progress. Formal assessment is even more critical because it serves as a basis for the existence of music education in schools. In education today, almost the value of almost everything is measured through tests and test scores. Therefore, if assessment is not properly organized and delivered, administrators will not have an incentive to maintain the music program and save it from budget cuts. How can music education be considered a legitimate subject if the classroom assessment is unclear, unorganized, or non-existent?

In conclusion, secondary arts education is one of the fundamental elements to a formal, thorough education. Music, like other art subjects, allows for individual achievement and progression. Music, unlike most other academic subjects, holds the power to creatively collaborate all students of varying abilities and origins. Music can be manipulated to create successful experiences for all students- both academic and social experiences. Music is for every student, and music is for everyone.

## Works Cited

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