

Philosophy of Music Education
Paul Hogan, November 2006

Ever since I first joined band in 6th grade, I knew that I wanted to do this as a part of my life. There was always something about music that drew me towards learning more, and I have never stopped learning. Now that I am in college, I am still doing music, something that I always knew I would be doing. Now that I am older and more mature, I have had time to reflect on my choice to pursue music education and time to think about what music education is all about.

Music itself has always been important in my life, because ever since I was a child I like listening to all kinds of music, and it has definitely affected me for the rest of my life. While listening to all kinds of music as a child, I was exposed to many different kinds of music, and I think that being exposed is very important. Listening to music of other cultures as well as our own, I believe, teaches the importance of acceptance. I think that this lets the listener be more open to cultures or ideas that they might not be used to, and I think that it is important that even though we are all different, there are certain ways that we can communicate universally, and music is one of those ways. I also think that music is very important because in scientific studies, music students have been proven to do better on tests and exams,

and most often get higher grades than students who are not actively involved in music.

I believe that music should be taught in all schools across the nation. However, I do not believe that music should be a required course, unless the circumstances are right. I notice that in many cases in inner city schools, some families cannot afford to enroll their students in music courses, and I believe that they should not be forced to enroll their students in the classes. I do believe that if music was to be a required course, that schools should put aside some funds for underprivileged students so that they can enjoy music, without causing financial stress on their families. I think that instead of jumping to the idea of universal music classes, we need to think about those who are less fortunate than ourselves. I also believe that no matter how hard you try you will always have that group of students that do not try as hard, so I think that if music was to be a required course that the school should offer a basic music course for those group of students, and then a variety of bands at a variety of difficulties and expectations, and I think that this might increase the moral of bands, because everyone who is there wants to be there, so no one drags down the group.

As for music that should be taught in schools, I believe the answer is simple: everything. I think that if we expose are children to every kind of

music we can, like I said before, we can teach them to be open to all sorts of ideas that might not be familiar to them. Music is about a direct expression of ones feelings, but it also can be an expression of the culture, or musical movement at the time. Beethoven's 5th Symphony is a good example of this. At this time, the romantic movement of music history was beginning to unfold, and he wanted to be part of this. While his music reflected that movement, it also told a lot about his feelings. Beethoven was beginning to get more and more deaf, so I would imagine that he had a lot of inner pain and struggle going on in his brain, and while listening to the symphony, I got a sense of great interior tension, so he definitely reflected his inner feelings into his music.

I think that all students should know at least the basics about music, its history, and its techniques. I think that Music theory should be a required course so that all students can understand music that they listen to. I think that even teachers should be required to go and take classes concerning music, as part of a well-balanced education. If our students are in music classes early on in life, it could put the interest of music in children's minds at an early age, and further increase the possibility that they will participate in music programs when they reach a later age.

I believe that there should be several music teachers and not just 1, because in order to get a full music education, you need to have a variety of music courses available, and by having these courses you will need 2 or more teachers, because one will not be able to handle the work load produced. It would also be wise to hire a choral teacher as well to provide an alternative to instrumental music. I think that a music teacher should have at least a bachelors degree in music, but if only that, then they can work but most go back and continue education. I think that music teachers must have a wide background of music, and must have participated in multiple musical experiences. They must be open to use all kinds of music such as, modern, classical, jazz, and foreign musical genres as well.

Music education has long been considered an inferior teaching position, but I believe it is just as important as any core classes. Music is a gigantic part of our history. Our national anthem is a musical composition, and so are all others around the world. Music is a huge part of our culture and I believe that modern society does not recognize that as much as they should. Without music, we would lose a major part of our entertainment industry, and I think we can prevent the loss of music by educating our society and teaching our youth about the importance of music, so that our

most important expression of our feelings will remain with us for the rest of
humanity.