

My Philosophy of Music Education

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The trouble with music appreciation in general is that people are taught to have too much *respect* for music; they should be taught to *love* it instead. -Igor Stravinsky

Music education is as important as music itself. We, as a society, are surrounded by music, whether it be on your morning commute to work, your Ipod as you sweat to your favorite tunes, or throughout your favorite T.V. show. No matter where we turn to, music will follow. This is why music education is important. Why should we not teach a subject that children submerge themselves in daily? We need to be teaching music in every school, offering as many classes as we can. Children should not be deprived of a subject they are interested in just because a school doesn't have enough money, or not enough interest to support it. Sports can be organized without the help of teachers. There recreational leagues are all around the country, but a guided music education is something that only a trained individual should handle.

Music is a creditable subject. Recently, a push has been made towards formal assessment in music education. With concrete formal assessments, all people can easily measure and understand music as an academic subject (Holster, 2001). In other words, formal assessments can give others something to compare music with. School districts are demanding more about the outcomes of a music classroom, rather than the material being taught. Districts want to see that music is more than "just a break from 'real' school and a time to have fun" (Holster, 2001). As long as there is accurate, unbiased, and consistency, music assessment will show that music does belong in today's school's curriculums.

With music being considered a liberal art only for people of "privileged" status, its hard to consider that everyone, including the lower socioeconomic status children and children with special needs, *are* entitled to a music education. Although many teachers fear for emotional outbreaks, behavioral issues, and simply the fear of "how do I teach students" who have special needs, the fact of the matter is that we are not alone. One way to ease the fear is to realize that people have different learning styles, and that includes children with special needs. Children with special needs are just people with different learning styles. Collaborating with a child's special education teacher and/or paraprofessional can help tremendously in determining the best way to instruct the student. Regardless of the student, according to Jon Gilliland, WMEA (Wisconsin Music Educators Association) President, "If we believe that our program can offer some students a complete education, we must accept that fact that all students...can derive the same benefits...(and) deserve to

experience the very best music educational opportunities available (Gilliland, 2009).

One question still remains. What music should we teach? The answer; every kind. Like the subjects of math, science, and social studies; music encompasses other areas in amongst itself. From jazz and blues born in the United States, to Western Music that originated from Gregorian chants, to Native American music, African Music, Indian music; the list of different areas of music go on and on. As with any subject, it's impossible to teach all these areas, but it is possible to expose students to a little of each main categories of music; African music, Asian music, Pacific Islander music, Latin music, and Native American music, outside the western music realm. "It is also generally accepted that the arts -- music in particular -- can help students to learn, especially in a multicultural setting" (Rauscher, 1998). We need to venture away from the "melting-pot" idea that music revolves around western music, when in fact in other places around the world it certainly does not. School is most likely the only place most of these students will ever get exposure to a non-western music culture, and by no means should any teacher hinder a student from experience.

I love music, and I believe every child should be given a chance to love it as well. Whether that chance be in a general music classroom, band, orchestra, choir, etc; my mission is to provide the best education I can to my students. For most of my life, all I've wanted to do is to show everyone my passion for music in hopes that someone might share the same passion I have for music. I want to help make a difference in people's lives, and music is that channel that makes that difference possible.

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