

Philosophy of Music Education  
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“Without music life would be a mistake.” - Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

Music, one of the original liberal arts, is an important aspect of the human experience and always will be. It “is the union of the rational and irrational, of order and feeling” (Kalkavage, 2006). It has the ability to express emotion and convey meaning while also teaching valuable skills and traits. Perseverance, critical thinking, and self-motivation are all learned through music. In educating students today, music and the arts are vital components of the school curriculum. School may not be the only place to learn music; however it is the one place that all children have access to. Denying them this aspect of their education would be detrimental, not only to the students but to mankind as a whole.

Students must be given the opportunity to learn music from qualified professionals. With the right learning environment and the development of intrinsic motivation, any student can understand many aspects of music. Students can also apply the knowledge and skills they gain to many areas, making the processes of learning and improvement more important than the overall product. The acquisition of skills and knowledge along with developing a lifelong appreciation for music are also important goals.

Today, it is assessment that has become necessary in order to prove what is being accomplished in the classroom. It is no different for music. In assessing students today, curriculum and instruction must not be overlooked. They are connected and play a vital role in effective and useful assessment. Too often, the grade becomes the focus and students are not able to concentrate on learning skills and overall improvement. As long as the balance among curriculum, instruction, and assessment is maintained, students will benefit (Wells, 1998). They will eventually be able to assess and evaluate themselves. This allows them to set their own goals and monitor their progress long after leaving any specific music classroom.

The recent focus on globalization has reached the music classroom as well. Multiculturalism has been a focus ever since National Standard Nine and its importance is evident in the various cultures that are now present in society. Developing an understanding of these cultures is vital and connects with the music classroom. Multicultural music is not only a useful teaching tool, but it provides students with multiple cultural perspectives and experiences that they may not learn about until much later in life. As Carlos R. Abril observes, “[f]or many students, school might be the only place they come to know cultures different from their own” (2006).

Music educators must be willing and able to undertake many of the new and exciting challenges that are present in today’s system of education. Recently, the inclusion of exceptional learners and students with disabilities into the music classroom has become a hot topic. It is most important for music educators to understand the educational and social implications that are

involved when including these students. A flexible curriculum is a must. Adaptations and accommodations must be made to effectively educate all students, not only those with a disability. Also, continuous collaboration among all those involved in the student's education is extremely important. In addition, non-disabled peers can provide an amazing source of support and encouragement for a student with special needs. This cooperation provides all students with positive social and musical experiences and successes in the classroom, both of which contribute to the likelihood of continuing their music education.

The presence of music in cultures throughout history signifies its importance and versatility. It teaches students skills such as critical thinking, self-motivation, and determination while also teaching them more about themselves as human beings. There is no other subject that teaches students like music can and all students must be given the opportunity to learn and grow through an education in music.

References

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