

Music as an Essential Element in
Grade School Curriculum

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Music has been found to stimulate parts of the brain better than any other activity and actually increase intelligence. Music can also be a wonderful way for someone to express him/herself. Teaching a child about music and giving them lessons in some instrument will give that child the opportunity to develop hidden talents. Music programs in schools are vital to the development of a child's intelligence and personality because when taught at an early age, music is most advantageous ("Research Continues to Show Exposure to Music is Instrumental to the Brain" par. 2). Some children may not have the opportunity to study music except through school; these programs should not be cancelled.

The parts of the brain stimulated by music are crucial to the development of certain math and science skills. Children that were given four months of piano training as well as time playing with newly designed computer software that allowed the children to solve math puzzles that increased their capability to manipulate shapes in their minds, scored 27 percent higher on proportional math and fractions tests than other children ("Piano and Computer Training Boost Student Math Achievement, UC Irvine Study Shows" pars. 4-5). These children's learning capability was enhanced by the knowledge of music. The reason for this was found by Dr. Rauscher and Gordon Shaw in early experiments; they found that training in music produces the neural connections for abstract reasoning as well as those necessary for understanding mathematical concepts ("Piano and Computer Training Boost Student Math Achievement, UC Irvine Study Shows" par. 8). In another experiment conducted by Drs. Frances Rauscher, Gordon Shaw and Katherine Ky, as shown in college students, that after listening to a Mozart sonata the students experienced a significant, although temporary gain in spatial reasoning skills ("Music Brain Research Chronology" pars. 6,8). This is important because a good basis is needed in mathematics for higher-level math courses.

Expression is a very important part of growth, whether or not that expression is through laughter or tears, screams or silence. Using music as a means of expressing feelings of joy, fear, anguish, etc., can be a wonderful release because some feelings cannot be put into words. Heinrich Heine once said, "Where words leave off music begins" (qtd. in Exley 30). Which very well compliments this quote: "Music is the voice

of all humanity, of whatever time or place," said Charlotte Gray, "In its presence we are one" (qtd. in Exley 30). Many choral and band students at Watkins Mill High School have expressed their gratitude for the time that they can participate in music class and release their anxieties caused by previous overwhelming classes.

Children need the opportunity to discover what they can do and exercise those abilities throughout adolescence. By this, I mean that they need to discover their talents. Through music classes in school and outside encouragement of what they are being taught, instrument lessons for example; they acquire a new skill. Throughout the scriptures, we are commanded to gain new understandings of the things around us, to learn new things. In modern day revelation this is especially emphasized. In the Doctrine and Covenants 60:2 it reads, "But with some I am not well pleased, for they will not open their mouths, but they hide the talent which I have given unto them, because of the fear of man. Wo unto such, for mine anger is kindled against them."

In the early 16th century, Martin Luther had said, "I always loved music; whoso has skill in this art is of a good temperament, fitted for all things. We must teach music in schools; a schoolmaster ought to have skill in music, or I would not regard him; neither should we ordain young men as preachers unless they have been well exercised in music" (qtd. in Exley 28). Martin Luther had the same ideals that we should have today; music is divine. Music is so beneficial to us as human beings, more than we realize, and for this reason, it is divine. Those benefits include an increased knowledge of mathematics and the sciences. In addition, music can be a means of expression and a way to increase talents, as men have been encouraged to do throughout the ages. Music is a vital part of life. It must be kept alive in schools so that its enrichments may increase the generations to come.

Works Cited

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