

My Philosophy

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What is the purpose of K-12 education?

K12 education guides students through the most developmental stages of their life while helping them access new tools and interests that can be used outside of that guidance. I believe that there are many requirements to K12 education, involving the safety and wellbeing of the students. An educator must be empathetic and willing to involve themselves in the systematic culture of education, leaving no room for discrimination or personal biases. With that, K12 education must also be powered by the combined effort of adaptable and dependable individuals. As students grow, so do their minds, it is important that we don't halt our own growth in the process.

Students often look up to their teachers and see them as something more than the average adult. This is because we are a lifeline of information and opportunities for them. When it comes to the lives of the students, we are a main factor in their safety and wellbeing. We teach them the subjects we are meant to but we are also there to keep them safe. We are able to discipline them and encourage them on activities that could be influential in their growing process. When it comes to discipline, we correct behaviors while offering a pathway into learning from the situation. To quote Tim Lautzenheiser, "All too often, young leaders tend to chastise those who fall short on a given assignment. This can be more detrimental to the trusting relationship necessary for future success in any leader/follower relationship. The solution is simple: Forgive - Correct - Proceed Forward," (Lautzenheiser 20). With this mentality, "proceed forward" should be our greatest priority. Actions do not always stop after being corrected but it is our job to make sure the correction does not halt future lessons.

When we are the main distributors of knowledge in our students' lives, it is important that they feel as though they have room to grow. K12 education comes from the need for a productive learning environment. If learning is the product of growth, we must make sure that there are environmental factors that aid that growth. There must be space for every type of student, with no exceptions, or we can not call ourselves K12 educators. We can't have "K12 (except for certain students) education." A quote that sums it up is, "For example, research suggests students learn best in a pleasant, friendly climate where they - Feel accepted by their teachers and peers. - Feel a sense of safety and order because academic expectations, instructions, and purpose for assignments are clear. - Feel confident in their ability to complete tasks successfully," (Urquhart and Frazee 51).

Overall, my philosophy of K12 education's purpose is a necessity for guided growth and development. This guidance is meant to correct behavior while also preparing them for life outside of school. As educators, it is our job to be a tool for success while also holding space for emotional and educational prosperity.

What is the purpose of music in society?

The three biggest impacts that music has on our society is its ability to be enjoyed unconsciously and consciously, bring people together, and outlive its creator. Music is to be used as a catalyst for creative expression and experimentation, though we find ourselves enjoying it without knowing it at times. We hear music while we are standing in an elevator, watching a sitcom, or browsing at the mall. In the back of our minds, there is always a small tune that we may hum while cleaning or curse for keeping

us awake at night. Without music, we would find ourselves preserved in a stale, motionless society. To quote Alexander Refsum Jensenius' *Sound Actions: Conceptualizing Musical Instruments*, Jensenius states, "consumer technologies and particularly new mobile devices have given people access to consume music everywhere. It is paradoxical, then, that we simultaneously see such a high level of musical 'passivisation.'" In this book, Jensenius describes the current majority of music enjoyers as "passive" and likely unwilling to commit to learning an instrument. Though this is true, I do believe that even the passive enjoyment of music can have an impact on our society because it brings people together. Just as most musicians find companionship in their fellow peers, many casual music enjoyers could find comradery in those who are like-minded.

Music can also create everlasting stories and personal narratives that withstand the test of time. Today, musicians are putting on their "historian caps" in order to find out more about pieces that were written over a hundred years ago. Though most composers don't know it at the time, there is a chance that their pieces will be discussed by scholars for years after their lifeline has ended. Thus, music can create a sense of immortality to those who gain recognition. This feeling burns in the hearts of many young musicians, just as it does for artists and authors. In Ivo Supicic's *Music In Society: A Guide to the Sociology of Music*, he states, "The sociology of music throws into relief the capacity of that art to *outlive*, through its own artistic and human values, the socio-historical conditionings and circumstances that influence its creation."

How can Music Ed. serve all students?

Over the course of a student's life, many moments will stand out to them more than others. They may have a bad day/week/month/year and then finally have a moment of clarity when they need it the most. Or, they may prepare immensely for an important event and achieve a personal goal that they've set for themselves. At almost every moment, a student's mind revolves around the "wins" and "losses" that they might experience, regardless of who they may be. A student's battles can be silent and overbearing, which makes their growth vulnerable. It is of utmost importance that we foster their growth at all costs. Unfortunately, our society tends to file individuals into sets of data that can determine how difficult those "wins" might be to achieve. Because of this, it is up to us to create an environment that protects students who might be discriminated against and show them they are not alone. With this, we should teach every student the joy of collaboration and inclusivity within music.

Music is non-discriminatory, or at least it should be. There are many ways that we can support this idea while helping our students develop. Students with severe disabilities are often overlooked while establishing classroom procedures and it can lead to many issues down the line. When a student, who spends most of their time with a paraprofessional or in a specialized class for their needs, enters a music room, they should be able to experience the social aspect of education. A music class might be their only moment of the day where they can collaborate towards a common goal. As Ellary A. Draper says, "Inclusive music classrooms offer opportunities for peer interactions between students with and without disabilities but only when purposefully planned by the teacher." We should offer a welcoming environment while also focussing on their safety and wellbeing.

Students who may face discrimination for who they are, often find that they have no voice to guide them. In music, we see that many of the public voices are those of the majority in this world. Though that is the case, that does not mean that there are no other voices that deserve to be heard. For students that are part of a minority group, it can be impactful for them to hear about

composers/performers/teachers that are similar to them. Seeing someone like them achieving a goal can be the main factor in their engagement towards music. Even one person sharing their story can be the “if they can do it, so can I” that many students need to grow. Also, teaching about the perspectives of all kinds of people can open the eyes of many students who might be less knowledgeable. To support this, Suzanne Hall expands the thought with, “this form of attention leads to a deeper moral dimension, allowing individuals to gain insight into the complexities of human lives.”

Whether it's in the classroom or our community, music educators are messengers of knowledge and not to discourage anyone from learning. Music is an emotional, social, and philosophical tool that can be wielded by anyone. Those who are willing to learn will, and those who enjoy music should be able to.

What is the role of music in K-12 education?

Education can be collaborative, inquiry-based, contextual, or cultural. With music, it can be all of that and more so. As it relates to other subjects, music checks all of the boxes for a well rounded educational experience while offering a unique perspective of self-expression and inclusivity. Within the article *Promises of Music in Education?* from *Frontiers in Education*, it is stated that, “These arts offer a variety of possibilities to children for learning during interaction. The arts offer challenges for motor skills and audiovisual integration and, in parallel, promote esthetic as well as intellectual processes.” As you can see, in a music class, students are able to think critically, connect with others emotionally, elaborate on hypotheses and conclusions, and experiment with their environment.

If we are to discuss music as it connects to subjects within education, there are many points to be brought up. Music combines a lot of factors from other subjects, such as math, science, social studies, etc. Just as science invites inquiry and experiment based learning, music influences students to use devices that offer different results based on their variety of attempts. A student can come to conclusions, make adjustments, and try again. This experimentation expands their knowledge of the physical attributes of certain objects based on their molecular compositions, spatial presence, and resonance within a chamber. Music is science.

Within math class, students are taught to identify patterns, tackle complex concepts, and think critically. In music class, students are constantly thinking about the combination of certain patterns and numbers in order to correctly read a line. This use of critical thinking leads them to create a database of knowledge that can be beneficial to their studies. When reading a line of music or breaking down sections of a piece, they are identifying the numerical attributes of the patterns within it. Music is math.

With every piece of music is a story. The context of a piece could be a narrative, historical event, or personal experience. In order to fully understand a piece, students must find the details of the composer's life, the setting in which it was composed, what time period it's from, and how it was originally performed. All of these devices are also used in social studies and ELA classes. A student might spend hours reading about a composer in order to understand why a piece exists. They might also get inspired by a particular story and decide to write their own music. Writing music takes research, understanding of structure, and acknowledgment of vocabulary. Music is reading and writing. Music is history.

In a foreign language class, students learn about communicative tools and cultural concepts in order to form an understanding of a new language. The majority of time that students spend in music classes is learning how to read the music they are trying to play. Music has its own vocabulary, its own

tone-indicators, and its own grammar. Just as a student can't speak Spanish until they learn how, students can't possibly play written music unless they know how to read it. Music is a language.

Music does relate to every subject in education but also provides its own unique source of knowledge. Music involves a multitude of tasks that can have a lasting impact on a student's life, even after their school career. A great summary is the video "The Benefits of Music Education for Children Extends beyond Childhood," by the NAMM Foundation. The video explains how coordination, multitasking, and motor skills are improved by music classes. To add to this, these skills can help them gain confidence in themselves. Music is an emotional and philosophical experience that can grow with a student. While they learn, they connect with their classmates and their community. Performing music can teach students about collaboration while also teaching them independence. Playing in a band or singing in a choir can teach them how useful they are as a person and how they can express themselves. It's a unique experience that you enjoy with a group but witness as an individual. Music can be sophisticated, silly, personal, representational, scary, or beautiful. Music is whatever you want it to be.

Citations

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