

Facts about Music in Primary Education



Share the Music for Inclusive Learning in Education - SMILE - 2021-1-EL01-KA220-SCH-000032762 - Viksjöfors team in May 2023

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Facts about Music in Primary Education.

Music education plays a crucial role in primary education as it helps develop various skills and has numerous benefits for children's cognitive, emotional, and social development.

I. Cognitive Benefits

Learning music helps develop skills, such as memory, attention, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Playing a musical instrument stimulates the brain, enhancing spatial-temporal skills, which are essential for understanding concepts like mathematics and engineering.

1. Academic Benefits

Research suggests that music education improves overall academic performance, including in subjects like mathematics, language skills, and reading comprehension. A study published in the *Journal of Educational Psychology* found that children who received music instruction in primary school showed higher IQ scores compared to those who did not receive music education.

2. Brain Development

Learning and practicing music stimulates various areas of the brain, including those responsible for auditory processing, fine motor skills, and coordination. It has been found that early music training can have a lasting impact on brain structure and function, contributing to enhanced neural processing abilities.

3. Improved Motor Skills

Playing musical instruments requires fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and finger dexterity. These skills are developed and refined through regular practice and playing.

II. Social And Emotional Benefits

Music education promotes emotional development by encouraging self-expression, creativity, and emotional awareness. It fosters social skills, teamwork, collaboration, and communication among students, as they often participate in group performances or ensembles.

1. Awareness and Diversity

Music education introduces children to diverse musical styles, genres, and cultural traditions, promoting cultural understanding and appreciation. By exploring music from different cultures, children develop a broader perspective of the world and learn to respect and value diversity.

2. Inclusive Learning

Music education can be adapted to accommodate children with various learning styles and abilities. It provides an inclusive and accessible platform for all students to participate and excel. Group music activities, such as singing in a choir or playing in an ensemble, promote teamwork, cooperation, and communication skills. They also foster a sense of belonging and community.



3. Improved Well-being

Engaging in music can have positive effects on children's well-being, reducing stress, anxiety, and enhancing their overall mood. It provides an outlet for self-expression and emotional release, offering a form of therapy and personal enjoyment.

4. Increased Confidence and Self-esteem

Performing music in front of others, whether in class or in school concerts, helps children build confidence and self-esteem. Music education provides opportunities for students to set goals, work towards them, and experience the satisfaction of achieving success.

5. Long-Term Benefits

Children who receive music and rhythm education in their early years are more likely to continue pursuing music in later stages of education and even throughout their lives. Long-term engagement with music has been associated with higher levels of achievement, improved executive functions, and better overall well-being. It's important to note that the availability and extent of music education may vary across different primary schools and educational systems.

III. What teachers should know about Music for Inclusion

Teachers should be aware of several important aspects of music for inclusion in education. Key points for teachers to consider:

1. Understanding Inclusive Education

Familiarize yourself with the principles of inclusive education, which aim to provide equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or circumstances. Recognize that music can be a powerful tool for fostering inclusivity, as it engages students in diverse ways and allows for multiple forms of expression.

2. Different Learning Styles and Abilities

Recognize that students have different learning styles and abilities. Some may be auditory learners, while others may be visual or kinesthetic learners. Provide a variety of learning experiences that cater to different styles. Adapt music lessons to meet the needs of students with disabilities or special educational needs. This may involve modifying teaching strategies including rhythm exercises and dance.

3. Creating an Inclusive Environment

Foster an inclusive classroom environment where all students feel valued and respected. Encourage positive interactions, empathy, and understanding among students. Promote a culture of acceptance and celebrate diversity by incorporating music from different cultures, genres, and traditions into the curriculum.

4. Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

UDL focuses on creating flexible learning environments that accommodate diverse learners. Apply UDL principles to music education by providing multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression. Offer various learning materials, instructional strategies, and assessment options.



5. Collaborative Learning and Peer Support

Encourage collaborative learning experiences in music, such as group performances or ensemble playing in cooperation with dancers. This promotes teamwork, cooperation, and peer support. Pair students with diverse abilities or backgrounds to work together, fostering mutual learning and understanding.

6. Individualized Instruction

Recognize that students may have different levels of musical proficiency or prior knowledge. Provide individualized instruction, allowing students to progress at their own pace and supporting their unique strengths and challenges.

7. Assessment and Evaluation

Assess students' musical abilities and progress using a variety of methods that accommodate diverse learning styles and abilities. This may include performance assessments, creative projects, rhythm and dance, written reflections, or recordings.

8. Funding and Availability

The availability and quality of music education in primary schools vary across different regions and countries. Funding and support for music programs in primary schools can vary, depending on government policies, educational priorities, and community involvement. Remember that specific statistics on music education in primary schools can vary by country, region, and educational system. These facts and figures provide a general understanding of the benefits and importance of music in primary education.

9. Professional Development and Collaboration

Seek professional development opportunities to enhance your knowledge and skills in inclusive music education. Attend workshops, conferences, or training sessions focused on inclusive teaching practices. Collaborate with special education teachers, music therapists, and other professionals to share knowledge and resources, ensuring a holistic approach to inclusive music education. Remember, fostering inclusion in music education requires an ongoing commitment to adapting and accommodating the diverse needs and abilities of all students. Collaboration, flexibility, and a supportive classroom environment are key to ensuring that music is accessible and beneficial for all learners.

An example from Sweden is Viksjöfors school. In the school garden there is a dance school, Viksjöforsbaletten. In cooperation a public school and a voluntary organization (NGO) have created a win-win situation so the pupils can learn by including cultural expressions in learning curricular subjects.



IV. What students should know about Music in Education

Music is good for your brain in many ways. It can help your attention in school, improve your language skills, and help you connect better with other people.

But do not be fooled— music for the sake of music itself is the greatest benefit of musical experiences. Again, imagine if the world had no music—it would be boring. Music connects us across cultures, is a lot of fun, and can help us to feel the most amazing emotions or cheer us up when we are sad. This is why every kid should have access to music training.

Music benefits you socially and emotionally, too! Drumming and moving with others can help you get along better with them. Singing in choir every day also makes young musicians more generous and likely to share rewards with others.

We know this because researchers have done specific experiments on it. In one, researchers asked kids to decide whether to split a reward or keep it all but risk losing it. Kids who sang in a choir together every day shared the reward more often than kids in art and competitive-game groups. Other studies with elementary school students showed that playing music in a group improves helping skills. In another experiment, children felt more included after being involved in group music. Participating in group music also significantly improved kids' ability to empathize with others. This means that they could more easily tell if someone was sad and needed comfort. All of this is important because the world is built on community and connecting with other people. Playing music with others is not only fun—it also helps us share and connect.

Unfortunately, not all kids are lucky enough to have access to music lessons. School budgets for music education—that is, money planned to pay for music teachers and instruments—are often small. What can you do to help? Keep participating in music! By attending music classes and playing music with your friends and family, you are showing your school and teachers that music classes are important to you. Now that you know all about the benefits of learning and practicing music, share your knowledge with your friends, classmates, and family members, and tell them why you love music.

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