

September 2009

Plato said, “Education in music is most sovereign, because more than anything else rhythm and harmony find their way to the innermost soul...if one is rightly trained” (Plato, as cited in Mark, 2002).

History of American Music Education

Early American music education occurred informally in churches or at privately-owned “singing schools.” Music as a formative part of education first appeared in the Boston public school system around 1838. Influenced by Lowell Mason, the Boston School committee stated that the current educational system developed “the intellectual part of man’s nature solely, when for all the true purposes of life, it is of more importance, a hundred fold, to feel rightly, than to think profoundly” (as cited in Mark, 2002). For the next century, music educators primarily taught singing and sequences involved in reading and writing music.

World War I brought nationalism and a push for “aesthetic education,” expanding the scope of music education to include music appreciation courses, patriotic music, and instrumental music. The post-World War II scientific environment resulted in a systematic approach to music education, with music educators demonstrating how music related to other academic subjects. The implementation of technical methods to teach singing, such as the Orff and Kodaly methods, also commenced during this time.

The 1967 Tanglewood Symposium represented a pivotal event, where music educators were told to teach music from all time periods, cultures, and genres. In addition, multiple formats, such as singing, playing instruments, creating, composing, and listening, should be a standard part of music education.

In 1994, the push for standardized, universal education led to the adoption of nine music education standards developed by the Music

Educators National Conference (MENC). These standards are currently used in K-12 American public school music programs.

National Music Standards

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
 2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
 3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments
 4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines
 5. Reading and notating music
 6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
 7. Evaluating music and music performances
 8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts
 9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture
- (MENC, 2008)

In 2008, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) investigated the progress of American students towards meeting the nine national music standards. Their music assessment, which is administered approximately every decade, was given to 3,950 public and private school students in the 8th grade throughout the country. During the assessment, students were asked to evaluate and describe characteristics of music they heard, critique a variety of musical performances, and demonstrate their knowledge of musical notation and music history. The NAEP created a scale of 0 to 300 for the music assessment, and the actual results ranged from 105, representing the lowest-performing students, to 194, representing the highest-performing students. Specific demographic results from the 2008 survey are outlined below (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009).

- ♦ Of those surveyed, 57% attended schools with music instruction offered at least 3 to 4 times a week
- ♦ Average music response scores of White/Asian students were 28-32 points higher than Black/Hispanic students
- ♦ Female students scored 10 points higher on average than their male peers
- ♦ Students who were not eligible for the free lunch program scored 28 points higher on average than students who were eligible for the free lunch program (the free lunch program is often used as a statistical way to measure poverty in students)
- ♦ Private school students scored an average of 14 points higher than their public school counterparts
- ♦ Students who attended suburban, town, and rural schools scored higher on average than students who attended city schools

(National Center for Education Statistics, 2009)

Currently, there are four typical sources of music education: early-childhood programs, in-school curriculum based programs, private performing arts organizations, and non-arts community organization programs (Branscome, 2005; Tietelbaum & Gillis, 2004).

Benefits of Music Education

“A growing body of studies . . . present compelling evidence connecting student learning in the arts to a wide spectrum of academic and social benefits. These studies document the habits of mind, social competencies and personal dispositions inherent to arts learning” (Ruppert, 2006, p.9). The many advantages of the arts can be categorized into the “ABC’s”, or academic, basic, and comprehensive benefits (Ruppert, 2006). Selected studies that support the various “ABC” benefits specific to music education are summarized below.

Academic

Mathematics

- A review of 41 studies (Vaughn, 2000) found that connections, though small, existed between achievement in mathematics and people voluntarily studying music as well as students exposed to music education at school (as cited in Bresler, 2002).
- Another study discovered that students involved in orchestra or band throughout middle and high school performed better in math during grade 12. The results were even stronger when students from low-income families were compared. Students involved in orchestra or band were more

than twice as likely to perform at the highest levels in math as their cohorts who were not involved in music at all (Ruppert, 2006).

Reading

- An analysis of 34 studies (Butzlaff, 2000) found a “strong and reliable association between the study of music and performance on standardized reading/verbal skills” (as cited in Bresler, 2002).
- Eastlund Gromko (2005) found greater phonemic awareness (the ability to recognize individual sounds within words) in kindergartners who received 4 months of music instruction as compared to children without music instruction. This was an important finding because phonemic awareness is one of the most reliable predictors for how well children will eventually read.

Standardized tests

- Shellenberg (2006) discovered that the duration of music lessons in childhood was positively connected with higher IQ scores. Children with 6 years of music lessons averaged a 7.5 point increase in their full-scale IQ score. This effect also extended into adulthood, but the correlation was smaller.
- Multiple studies reported that high school students who participated in music classes were more likely to score higher on standardized mathematics tests such as the SAT. Researchers predicted that musical training in rhythm was correlated with the proportion, patterns and ratios expressed in mathematics (Ruppert, 2006).
- Texas students who participate in the All-State music programs have scored consistently higher than the state and national averages for the mean SAT score throughout the past decade (Texas Music Educators Association, 2008).

Basic

The relationship between music education and human development remains controversial, though there are copious amounts of scientific and non-scientific research. General results from some of those studies, focused on four developmental areas, are reviewed below.

Perception and cognition

- Infants’ ability to recognize, memorize, and respond to music commences during the last three months in the womb and develops throughout the first year. Future research must clarify critical periods of influence during this time (Teachout, 2005).

- EEG function differed in children receiving music education compared to children not receiving music education (Flohr, Miller, and Debeus, 2000), lending “support to the idea that music instruction for children at an early age will promote more profuse and efficient (brain) connections.”
- Recent research by Schon, Anton, Roth, and Besson in 2002 (as cited by Teachout, 2005) found that the process of reading musical notation produced activity in unique regions of the brain.
- Studying music affects arousal and mood (the “Mozart Effect”), which in turn improves I.Q., creativity, and other cognitive functions (Teachout, 2005).

Motor development

- Most research examines how music education impacts motor development in musicians rather than the general population. However, one study conducted on the general population of preschool age children who attended schools with music programs found that females outperformed their male peers on measures of motor pattern coordination and hand-eye coordination (Teachout, 2005).
- Based on evidence from multiple studies, there is “clear evidence that the motor cortex of musicians’ (brains) is enhanced structurally and functionally (Peretz & Zatorre, 2005).”

Emotion

“Those with less music experience seem to have similar emotional responses to musical stimuli as do those with more music experience (Teachout, 2005).” However, various studies show that amount of music education affects the level of sophistication with which people experience emotional responses.

Socialization

Primarily non-scientific studies find that music education is positively associated with “increased initiation of social contact, lowered rates of absenteeism, and an emerging propensity for self-directed and group-directed learning” (Teachout, 2005).

Comprehensive

“An arts-rich learning environment can have *far-reaching* effects that extend to the entire school and surrounding community” (Ruppert, 2006, p.15). In a research review, Teachout (2005) found that at-risk

students involved in music education, particularly those participating in extra-curricular musical activities, experienced increased self-esteem, reduced absenteeism, and lower school drop-out rates.

Music Education throughout the Lifespan

People who receive arts education during their youth are likely to participate in the arts throughout their lifetimes. A 1996 national study, the most recently published of its kind, reported demographic information about adult arts participation.

- Higher socio-economic status increased the amount of arts education people received, particularly in community-based arts programs.
- African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and whites experienced similar levels of arts education in schools. However, white students reported much higher levels of community arts education than did Asian, African American, or Hispanic students.
- The more students received both school- and community-based arts education, the more they attended and participated in the arts as an adult.

(National Endowment for the Arts, 1996)

A more recent national survey of public arts participation in 2002 provides detailed information specific to the music education and participation of adults in the United States.

- 40% of U.S. adults reported taking a music class at some point in their lives
- Nearly 52% of those surveyed participated in some form of music at least once during the previous year. 19% attended musical events, 50% watched or listened to music, while approximately 10% performed or took music classes.
- Residents of the West South Central Region, including Texas, attended the fewest classical music performances (fewer than 10% of those surveyed) and musical plays (approximately 12% of those surveyed) in the nation.

(National Endowment for the Arts, 2004)

Music Education in Texas

In Texas, nearly half of all middle school students participate in music classes. The music enrollment rate drops to almost 20% by high school. Detailed statistics appear in the chart below.

Texas Public Schools Secondary Music Participation		
	2002-2003	2003-2004
6th-8th Graders		
Enrolled in Music Course	426,810	411,260
Total Enrollment	964,951	980,969
% Music Participation	44%	42%
9th-12th Graders		
Completed Music Course	209,434	210,034
Total Enrollment	1,176,195	1,195,530
% Music Participation	18%	18%

(Texas Music Educators Association, 2005; Texas Education Agency, 2005)

Music education is considered to be a justifiable academic area; in fact, the *No Child Left Behind Act* identifies the arts as a core academic subject. Further, Texas Senate Bill 815 requires Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) “of all Texas school districts when providing instruction in art, dance, music, and theatre” (Center for Educator Development in Fine Arts, 2009).

In addition to public school music programs, there are many other organizations designed to support music educators in Texas, Bexar County, and the surrounding region. Below is a partial listing:

Government Agencies

- The San Antonio Office of Cultural Affairs helps with funding, support, and advertising of local music programs.
- The Texas Music Project is a state-wide nonprofit organization whose focus is to raise awareness of the need to strengthen and restore rigorous music education to Texas schools.
- The Texas Music Office provides information about educational opportunities in post-secondary music education.

Professional Associations

- Texas Music Educators Association
- Texas Music Teachers Association
- Texas Private School Music Educators Association
- Texas Bandmasters Association

- Texas American String Teachers Association

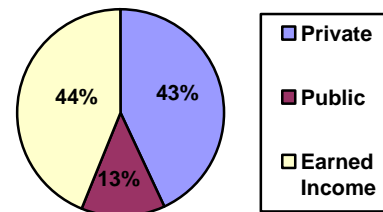
Universities

- The Institute for Music Research (housed at the University of Texas at San Antonio) conducts studies in music psychology, learning, and technology.
- The Center for Music Learning (housed at The University of Texas at Austin) researches and documents the accessibility of Texas music education programs.

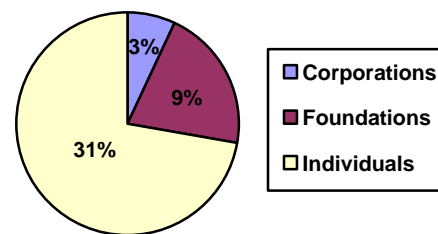
Funding for Music Programs

Despite all the research supporting the benefits of music education, there continues to be a decrease in public funding for various types of arts programs.

2004 Financing of United States Non-Profit Arts Organizations



2004 Sources of Private Funding for Non-Profit Arts Organizations



(National Endowment for the Arts, 2007)

As can be seen in the above charts, community music programs rely heavily on earned profits and private dollars, with national and state funding representing only about a tenth of total arts funding. Of the private sources of funding, the majority of arts programs receive those funds from individual donors.

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