

Unique

Teaching is about a student-centered environment where constant learning is taking place for all in the environment. Creating this positive atmosphere takes a delicate balance of teaching styles, rapport, and curriculum. Music education functions ideally in this and provides students an aspect to their education they cannot receive through any other subject. In terms of students that will experience music classes, I believe the ambiguous term of 'students' should consist of all who are involved in music and should not discriminate against social class, disabilities, etc. as all students have potential inside of them that is waiting to shine. One way to help them shine is by meeting all students where they are in their schooling and creating a plan for all students to find personal success within music in addition to their schooling.

As an educationally-based society, the schooling process strives to prepare students for 'life after school.' Having a music class to participate in is essential in ensuring students are prepared for this time in their life. One of the overarching essential ideals for teaching music is the concept of the spiral curriculum which also instills the life skill of becoming a lifelong learner in students. From elementary through high school, similar concepts are used repeatedly, but at the high school level, the depth of understanding needed to apply the concepts in an advanced way creates an atmosphere for the importance of exploring and always discovering new concepts.

Also, music education has the potential to be a hands-on aspect of students' schooling process. I believe students gain understanding the best through "doing" and "actively participating" in their own learning. Jean Piaget's ideals, referenced from <http://www.simplypsychology.org/piaget.html>, have much merit in the classroom and should be referenced frequently when planning lessons as they support the idea of students playing an active

role in what they learn. General music and performing ensembles create opportunities for students to learn through experiencing the concept, learn through interacting with peers, and learn through self-growth with music as the tool. For example, beginning and pursuing a new instrument provides insight into many learning methods. There is the need for kinesthetic movement, aural skills, visual skills, combining all of those at once, utilizing the knowledge of those around you, and becoming the best version of yourself possible with the aid of that instrument. By differentiating the processes used in the learning environment, more students are likely to grasp the concepts as all students learn in different ways. Naturally, each individual of the class will be at different skill levels and growing musically at different rates. Regardless, the goal is for everyone to succeed all the time, and the class must help each other along to ensure that is happening. Performing ensembles and music classrooms show how important this goal is; all individuals are vital to the success of the larger group. Helping students work together and see that they are part of something bigger than themselves introduces a perception of life that may stretch current thought processes.

Also, the creative outlet is unique in relation to other core classes because while other classes can be creative in coursework, music is the only subject that uses a set of guidelines (musical knowledge) to create an aural image that contains the inner voice of the creator. This is an aspect of music that is unique to humans and to our relations with one another. Another unique characteristic of music is its ability to utilize other core subjects without trying to be cross-curricular. From learning the history of the piece to the reading fluency of sight reading and the fractions needed to figure out a note value to the science of how a sound is produced, these connections help strengthen all aspects of students' learning experiences while allowing music classrooms to maintain their core values. Many brain researchers have started to look into how and

why this is possible through music as well as the impact music education has on the brain. For example, that is the main goal of International Laboratory for Brain, Music, and Sound Research, <http://www.brams.org/en/>. Through music, we are stimulating and connecting neurons throughout the brain constantly. This leads to more brain activity, which causes students to be able to make more connections within music as well as to other subjects while developing critical thinking skills. Howard Gardener, according to <http://infed.org/mobi/howard-gardner-multiple-intelligences-and-education/>, researched multiple intelligences and discovered that music is among the first to develop meaning it is therefore ingrained in everyone. Students deserve the opportunity to develop this intelligence and hone in on their musical skills. Specific skills in addition to life skills gained through music can be in the tool kit as students go beyond their schooling years.

In conclusion, a complete music education should be part of every school curriculum. This aspect of education needs to be provided to students in a positive environment that is always student centered in order to allow students to fully express themselves and learn about music and through music. Students of all levels can and should be involved in a myriad of music classes, which will continue to stretch their brain as well as their thinking processes. By working to meet the needs of each student, students will be able to progress at a rate that is correct for them and thrive in the music classroom.