

## MY PHILOSOPHY OF MUSIC EDUCATION

Music is an integral part of a student's education, as it provides a rare, enriching experience for social, cultural, and personal engagement. What I believe to be most notable about music is that music educators are not only teaching their students to be active music makers, but also to be contributing members of their community. Music provides opportunities for inquiry-based learning in a stimulating environment garnering challenge, reward, and self-defined success that are all vital parts of the curriculum.

First of all, music provides opportunities for social engagement. According to Elliott (1995), music is a human tendency. That is to say that music is something that we, as humans, inherently do. Seeing as music is a diverse human activity (Elliott, 1995), I believe that each and every student should be afforded the opportunity to engage in music making. Furthermore, humans are social beings. Through a sociological lens, we can view music programs as having the ability to build social relationships and community. Music education is unique and essential in this respect, as it provides students with social opportunities that they may not otherwise have. This can include, but is not limited to, singing in a choir, playing in a band, or discovering new ways to engage in musicing.

Secondly, a music education is also an education of praxis. Elliott (1995) stated that music education should involve students in a variety of musical practices in order to understand the intentions and social, historical and cultural conditions of particular groups of people. I strive to provide authentic, cultural learning opportunities for students, thus allowing them to deepen their understanding of the social and political contexts of our world.

Thirdly, music gives students challenging and rewarding experiences. As humans, we want to engage in challenging activities that align with our goals (Elliott, 1995). Music education is a systematic development of musicianship balanced with progressive musical challenges. I

## MY PHILOSOPHY OF MUSIC EDUCATION

believe that, through music, students will come to view their development as a process that they are capable of pursuing, learning and enjoying. In this process, students will learn first hand why and how music is a valued global process that can increase their self-growth, self knowledge, and self esteem (Elliott, 1995). I value music education, because it helps cultivate students' emotions. Music is central to everyday life, and I believe we need to teach students how to feel through music. This idea of "feeling" is an aesthetic experience, and is what gives humans fulfillment and pleasure (Leonhard & House, 1972). Music educates students on their feelings and emotions, which is a fundamental part of their growth and development.

Lastly, music allows students to not only shape themselves, but also the community of which they are part of. Mason (1834) viewed schools as preparation and training that produce students who are able to build healthy communities. Additionally, functionalism states that students need to develop socially, physically, morally, and intellectually in a community or society (McCarthy & Goble, 2001). I want to use music as a means to prepare students to be democratic, justice-oriented citizens of society, thus preparing them to build and contribute to positive communities. Ultimately, my philosophy of music education is that music ought to be a quest not only for musical excellence, but also democratic learning and engagement. What is so vitally important about music is that it creates a space for democratic development by giving students to question themselves and the world around them through the music they are making.

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## References

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