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The Importance of Music in Schools

Does one in-school music concert make a difference?



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Fostering Creativity through Music and Education



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Article by Dr. Carly York for Classical Music for Kids

There are so many tasks that teachers need to accomplish with their students in any given school day. The very regimented class-time schedules that many elementary schools follow add important structure for the students' day, but it can also restrict interdisciplinary learning and spontaneous creativity. When students move from one 45-minute math lesson, to a 45-minute language arts lesson, and then to a 45-minute P.E. class, followed by a 45-minute science class, it is easy to see how children learn and experience the curriculum in silos.

Strict class-time schedules also make it hard for teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of special, one-time events such as field trips and in-school Assembly programs. Trips to a museum or a one-hour in-school enrichment program break-up the strict class timetable, which means regular lessons and required assessments don't get done on these special event days. Many teachers and school administrators wonder if field trips and in-school enrichment programs actually make a difference in their students' academic lives, or are they simply fun distractions?

Research shows that, yes, exposure to special events like in-school music programs actually do have a positive impact on the educational lives of elementary students. For example, a 2013 Finnish study showed that "extended music education enhances the Quality of School Life (QSL), particularly in areas related to general satisfaction about the school and a sense of achievement and opportunity for students" (Eerola & Eerola, 2013).

Furthermore, [Professor Susan Hallam](#) of the University College London published a 2017 article synthesizing pertinent research literature that addressed the connection between music education and language learning in students. She concluded her literature review by stating:

"There is evidence, from a range of research, of the complex overlap of neural systems for the processing of language and music...Overall, the evidence is overwhelming that actively making music plays a major role in developing aural perceptual processing systems. These facilitate the encoding and identification of speech sounds and patterns, which, in turn, enhance language skills. The earlier the exposure to active participation in music-making, and the greater the length of that participation, the greater the impact."

Finally, a 2021 systematic review of music education research for the [Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health](#) found that:

"Results suggest several beneficial effects of music on children's development, such as greater emotional intelligence, academic performance, and pro-social skills. It can therefore be concluded that music should be used in school settings, not only as an important subject in itself, but also as an educational tool within other subjects."

With all of this empirical research, teachers and administrators can feel confident that interrupting strict daily schedules for special music and arts related activities will benefit their students. Teachers may not see immediate test-score increases in language arts and mathematics. However, with increased classical music exposure and experience, students could develop improved vocabulary and language skills. Administrators may also notice an improvement in their school's culture and climate, which often accompanies an increase in students' music and arts participation.

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