



The 12 Benefits of Music Education

The benefits of music education can be broken down into three categories of development. **First is intelligence:** the promotion of creative thinking, reasoning skills, and retention of knowledge. **Second is emotion:** experiencing empathy towards other cultures, higher self esteem and coping with anxiety. **Third is socialization:** the development of concepts of teamwork, commitment and leadership. Music education builds lifelong skills and carries many rewards for the future development of students.

1. Early musical training develops language and reasoning. Recent studies clearly indicate that musical training develops the left brain: the part involved with processing language. Linking familiar songs to new information helps imprint information on young minds.

2. Music promotes spatial intelligence. Visualizing elements that should go together is critical to everything from solving advanced mathematics problems to being able to pack a book-bag with everything that will be needed for the day.

3. Music students learn to think creatively. They learn to solve problems by imagining various solutions. Questions about the arts have no one right answer; students are challenged to find answers that work.

4. Music study exposes children to other cultures and creates empathy for others. Compassion and empathy directly counter the development of greed and a "me first" attitude, and leads to a respect for a broad spectrum of other cultures.

5. Music teaches craftsmanship as the student studies how details are carefully put together and what constitutes good (as opposed to mediocre) work. When applied to a student's own work, these standards demand new levels of excellence.

6. Music promotes standards. A mistake is a mistake; an instrument is in tune or not, notes are well played or not, entrance is made or not. Dedicated hard work produces a successful performance. Music teaches the value of sustained effort to achieve excellence and the concrete rewards of hard work.

7. Music study enhances teamwork skills and discipline. An orchestra sounds good when all players work harmoniously together towards a single goal, the performance. Players must commit to learning music, attending rehearsals, and practicing.

8. Music students are more successful on standardized tests. They achieve higher grades in high school.

9. Music is a means of self-expression. Everyone strives to make life meaningful and to reach for higher stages of development. Individuals need to be in touch with their core values; self-expression promotes self-understanding, and ultimately leads to self-esteem.

10. Music study develops workplace skills. It focuses on doing, as opposed to just observing. Employers value multi-dimensional workers with flexible intellects that music education helps to create. Music teaches communication and cooperation.

11. Music performance teaches students to take risks and conquer fear. Students learn to accept and overcome anxiety; dealing with it early and often makes it less of a problem later. Risk-taking is essential if children are to fully develop their potential.

12. Music exposes students to truly new experiences: rhythm, melody, harmony, and emotional content all challenges the student to understand and harness new experiences to his own expression.

Adapted from Carolyn Phillips' article at www.childrensmusicworkshop.com; Ms Phillips is the former Executive Director of the Norwalk Youth Symphony, CT.