The Benefits Of Engagement In Performing Arts

Ariel Johnson

Liberal Studies Program, California State University, Chico

EDTE 490 W: Liberal Studies Capstone

Dr. Maris Thompson

May 18, 2023
Abstract

My problem of practice focuses on the academic and social impact of performing arts on students. It investigates how students are affected by participation in performing arts activities and the implications of these activities for their academic and social development. Through this research, there is proof that performing arts can impact students immensely and shows the implications this has for their academic and social development. Through qualitative and quantitative research methods, this research will explore the various benefits of performing arts participation, such as increased academic performance, enhanced social skills, and increased self-confidence. My research will also investigate the implications of promoting performing arts participation in schools and for children's social development

Keywords: Music, Academics, Social Development
Introduction

Performing arts can have a positive impact on students both academically and socially. Through performing arts, students are able to develop a range of skills, such as problem-solving, communication, creativity, and teamwork. These skills can be applied to their academic studies, improve their academic performance. Additionally, performing arts can improve students’ social skills as they must collaborate and communicate with their peers in order to produce a successful performance (Hallam, et al., 2014). Furthermore, performing arts can provide a safe and supportive environment in which students can gain self-confidence and self-expression, as well as build meaningful relationships with their peers and their teachers. There are also implications that students who participate in performing arts may have better academic and social outcomes than those who do not. Therefore, it is important for schools to provide opportunities for students to engage in performing arts, as this can help to improve their academic performance and social skills.

Statement of Problem

Performing arts are essential for students and teachers in school; they can lead to lifelong learning and bring more creativity into the classroom. Even research shows that music education can affect child development through social and cognitive development (Hogenes et al., 2016, p. 33). Children can create and understand musical concepts at a very young age, and elementary teachers using music education in their lesson planning can help young students become more interested in performing arts. Although most children can learn this quickly, it can be challenging for teachers to incorporate it into their lesson plans. Most early childhood education teachers must prepare to teach music in their daily curricula (p. 39). With performing arts, for teachers and students to learn skills more in-depth, every teacher should begin applying performing arts
skills in their class. Because of this, schools should start making music programs more available to everyone. We must keep performing arts in schools for students to have a better chance at success. This brings me to the question; how do performing arts impact students academically and socially, and what are the implications?

**Justification of the Study**

The study of the benefits of performing arts with young students academically and socially is essential because it can help to inform educators, parents, and policymakers about the positive effects of exposing children to the performing arts. Research has shown that students participating in performing arts activities are more likely to demonstrate higher academic achievement, better problem-solving skills, improved social skills, and increased creativity (Marzano et al., 2001, p. 149). Additionally, performing arts can also be used to foster positive relationships between teachers and students, as well as promote collaboration and cooperation among peers (Marzano et al., 2001, p. 149). Therefore, the study of the benefits of performing arts with young students academically and socially is an important area of research that can help to inform educational practices and policies.

**REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

The performing arts are integral to the educational experience, providing students with opportunities to express themselves, build self-confidence, develop interpersonal skills, and engagingly acquire knowledge. This literature review will explore how performing arts impact students socially and academically, as well as the implications of these impacts. The review will examine research from various sources to conclude the effects of performing arts on student development. Music and performing arts can significantly impact students academically and socially. They provide an outlet for self-expression, cultivate creativity, and enhance
interpersonal skills, all of which have important implications for learning and social development (Hogenes et al., 2016, p. 33).

**Academic Impact of the Performing Arts**

The review begins with a discussion of the impact of performing arts on academic outcomes, including research showing that students who participate in performing arts are more likely to have higher grades, higher standardized test scores, and better attendance (Holochwost et al., 2012). The performing arts have been shown to impact academic achievement positively (p. 150). Studies have found that students participating in the performing arts will likely have higher test scores, develop better problem-solving skills, and be more creative (p. 148). Studies have shown that the impact arts programs might have on students can contribute to their lives and society (Gamboa et al., 2012, p. 10).

Additionally, research has demonstrated that students participating in the performing arts are more likely to succeed in school and have better attendance records. The academic impact of participating in performing arts has been well documented in the literature. Studies have found that students who participate in performing arts are more likely to have better attendance when compared to students who do not participate in performing arts (p. 15). These students are more likely to stay in school and finish successfully. This is because music and performing arts education can be a great way to engage students and motivate them to stay in school. By engaging in activities such as singing, playing an instrument, or other performing art, students can gain a sense of accomplishment and improved self-confidence, which can help to motivate them to stay in school and achieve their academic goals (Hogenes et al., 2016).
Social Impacts of the Performing Arts

In addition to educational benefits, music and performing arts programs provide significant social benefits in addition to educational benefits. These programs offer students a safe and supportive environment to express themselves and develop their creativity. A study by Hallam et al., (2014) has shown that music and performing arts programs improved students’ emotional well-being and self-esteem. Music and performing arts can provide an outlet for expression, allowing students to express themselves authentically andcreatively. According to Mcpherson & Zimmerman (2003), music and performing arts provide a space for students to express themselves through improvisation, composition, and performance. This can help students to cultivate a sense of identity and self-esteem and develop social and emotional skills. Music and performing arts can help students better understand their emotions and those of others and learn to communicate their thoughts and feelings constructively (Mcpherson & Zimmerman, 2003, p . 16). Music and performing arts programs also promote social interaction and enhance interpersonal skills. A study by Kirschner and Tomasello found that students involved in music programs were better at understanding and interpreting nonverbal cues, a critical skill for social interaction (Kirschner et al., 2010). Similarly, Hetland et al., (2007) found that students involved in performing arts programs showed improved empathy and perspective-taking skills. Students displayed more interest in creative activities and were much more engaged in their classroom activities.

Implications Of Academic And Social Development Of The Performing Arts

Teachers should have resources to foster student engagement, such as lesson plans and materials to support project-based learning (Bautista et al., 2022). Schools should also provide access to the necessary equipment, such as musical instruments, lighting, and sound systems, to
The Benefits Of Engagement In Performing Arts

give students real-world experiences in the performing arts. School leaders and policymakers should develop policies to ensure equitable access to the performing arts, including providing resources for students from all backgrounds to participate. (Hutton et al., 2022). Additionally, policymakers should provide funding for music education, so teachers can adequately prepare students for college and career pathways in the performing arts.

The implications for teachers, school leaders, and policymakers are clear. Participating in performing arts can positively impact academic and social development and can be used to support student learning and development (Smalls, 1996). Teachers can use performing arts programs to engage students and promote academic success. School leaders can use performing arts programs to create a positive school climate, foster student engagement, and develop social and emotional skills. Finally, policymakers can use performing art programs to support students’ academic and social development and increase student engagement in learning. Performing arts teachers, school leaders, and policymakers should collaborate to create supportive learning environments that encourage creativity, self-expression, and critical thinking.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the literature review has demonstrated that performing arts can positively impact students' academic and social development. The research discussed has shown that the performing arts can positively impact student development, providing students with opportunities to express themselves, build self-confidence, develop interpersonal skills, and engagingly acquire knowledge. Additionally, the research suggests that educators, administrators, and policy-makers should create an environment conducive to collaboration, communication, and cooperation to foster student growth and development (Bautista et al. 2022, p. 8).
METHODOLOGY

This section will provide my positionality, theoretical framework, and community partner interview. This will give an overall of my background in music and how I became interested in this topic. This section will also show more evidence of why music is an important subject for impacting students.

Positionality

As a musician and teacher, I have personally seen music and performing arts providing students with many significant academic and social benefits. On the academic side, studies have shown that music and performing arts classes help students develop critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and collaboration skills. These skills are transferable to many areas of life, both inside and outside the classroom. I experienced this through playing music as a hobby and teaching lessons to students. As someone with a learning disability, I noticed a significant change in my learning skills once I began playing music more frequently. I had brain surgery when I was eighteen, and this caused me to have difficulty remembering new information thoroughly.

I have a great amount of difficulty processing and remembering new information, but with music, it is an entirely different experience. With music, I am able to use not only cognitive and creative skills, but for me personally, this is great for muscle memory as well. I can use my hand-eye coordination to remember how to play songs and where each note is on an instrument. I can remember songs throughout and teach young students how to play in various ways with this skill. Teaching this to the younger generation will get them skilled artistically and get them much more engaged in their learning experience.
On the social side, music and performing arts classes provide students with a unique opportunity to work and communicate with others in a creative and collaborative environment. Students can develop social skills such as communication, cooperation, and teamwork through music and performing arts classes. I experienced this myself when taking college music courses. I got to meet other musicians and share my lived experience with music with them. In this way, I knew that music and performing arts education could positively shape how I interact and relate to one another. Music and performing arts education profoundly impact students, and as a musician, I believe that teaching and learning music should be incorporated into the curriculum in all schools.

**Theoretical Framework**

I saw through activity theory a sociocultural theory of learning and development (Welch, 2007). The sociocultural theory examines the interplay between individual, group, and environment to explain how people learn and interact with the world around them. Activity theory emphasizes the social and cultural context of learning and development and the individual’s active role in the process. This suggests that learning, development, and social change occur through meaningful activities involving individual and collective efforts. Activity theory (Welch, 2007, p.27) also highlights the importance of context, reflecting the changing nature of our social and cultural environments. In this theoretical framework, performing arts is seen as an activity that engages individuals, groups, and the environment meaningfully, leading to academic and social outcomes. The performing arts activity is seen as a process of creative exploration that can lead to critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. Through performing arts, students are encouraged to be open to new ideas and critically assess their work and the result of others. The social and cultural environments surrounding performing arts also
play an essential role in learning and development. It provides a platform for individuals to share their experiences, explore different perspectives, and develop meaningful relationships. Activity theory can have an overall positive effect on students academically.

**Community Partner Interview**

For my problem of practice, I am looking at the impact of music on students academically and socially. Several studies have shown that music can help students with their social and cognitive skills (Hogenes, 2016, p. 35). I got to interview someone who could give me their personal experience. I chose a long-time friend, who I will refer to as Luke. He will be a perfect candidate for me to interview to get the information that I need for this topic.

Luke has seen the significant changes that music education has faced. He grew up playing music and became a professional musician early. He is now a professor of music technology at Vanderbilt University in New York. Luke spent his whole childhood performing music and went on to be accepted at Princeton University as an adult to study jazz musicianship. He has taught all age groups, from toddlers to older adults. Luke has a high interest in music and is very passionate about teaching it. Luke told me that he has seen that one big part of music that can genuinely help the learner with cognitive skills is repetition. With music, you are learning to practice getting good at a skill that takes a lot of mental use. Music is like many other subjects in this; it helps regulate your thought process and improve memory. He uses music education to practice learning new concepts with various topics. He gives his students a solid foundation of theory before giving them more complex ideas. The best way to start is to choose something simple and have the student progress over time. Music concepts such as chords can help you learn many other music theory concepts and are an easy way to change how the song is played to make it work for the student.
Luke talked a lot about using music to get students to learn something they are passionate about. When he teaches, he wants to build upon the individual's interest. He also mentioned that he wants people to be motivated to learn. To make this possible, he gives them a lesson on something they care about or are interested in. He mentioned that focusing on what the student wants to learn or is interested in is how to keep a student drawn to continuing the learning process.

He said that music education could help socially by the student engaging others who have similar interests. Music socially can help to meet other musicians and build a strong relationship with them and the teachers. New technology is a big help for this with more recent generations. He mentioned that there could be barriers because of classical music theory, which damages some with learning music. Make sure to make your lesson about the person and what they are interested in. He mentioned that there is much less funding for programs with this type of music theory practice and more funding for schools with technology programs. This interview helped me get some information about funding in music and the issue still affecting performing arts overall.

With music, you can also practice control and choose what parts of music work best for you. Teachers began taking advantage of new programs and flipped classroom ideas (Davy, 2022, p. 59). You can’t choose what to listen to, write, and what the learner is the most interested in overall. There are now various ways to use technology for teaching music, and many of these programs he is using get students far more interested in the topic. There are many types of tools for technology, and this can be a way to save a tremendous amount of money. Luke told me that over the years of teaching music technology, he has learned that technology offers ways to teach with less funding through online classroom settings and programs that are now available for free.
This will be available to all and increase students' chances of improving their cognitive and social skills with music.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In this section, I will discuss what I found throughout my study of music and its impact on education. Implementing music in the classroom for a variety of topics, both academically and socially, can bring a tremendous amount of benefit to students and teachers.

**Finding One - Misperceptions Of Music Education**

After meeting with my partner again and asking for some feedback on the topic, I came to understand some of the misperceptions I had about the topic. This helped me have someone to correct a few mistakes I made when critiquing the literature review. He gave me some advise on good ways to adress the problem about music not being seen as an important subject to teach. Music education is often seen as a luxury rather than a necessity in education, but this could not be firther from the truth. Music eduction is an essential part of a childs development, as it helps them develop skills in areas such as critical thinking creatiity, collaboration, and communication. Additionally, music education helps to imporve academic performance and can even increase test scores. Unfortunately, these benefits are often overlooked due to the misconception that music education is a frivolous pursuit. Furthermore, music education is often undervalued as a valid xcareer choice, and eben when it is offered ina school, it is often gien les attention than other subject. Ultimately, the importance of music education should be recognizedx in order for students to have access to ita numerous benefits.

**Finding Two -Music Improves Development**
This research has helped me see that researchers have found that music can positively affect cognitive skills. Studies have shown that students who listen to music while studying are more successful in their academic pursuits. Music has been linked to better memory, improved concentration, and increased creativity. Studies have also found that music can also have a positive effect on motor development. Listening to music can help students to understand and practice motor skills more effectively. This can help students to develop hand-eye coordination and be able to move their bodies with rhythm. During my interview, my partner explained to me how often students improve their cognition through learning music theory concepts. He also mentioned that he notices a great amount of improvement in their memory over time. The literature review gives evidence that students often see great improvement in their academic and social skills in schools after getting familiar with the performing arts.

**Finding Three- Music Can Help Both Students And Teachers**

Music can help students and teachers in a variety of ways. Music can help students to focus, reduce stress and anxiety, and increase motivation. It can also break up long study sessions and help students stay engaged. For teachers, music can create a more relaxed atmosphere in the classroom and provide a creative outlet for student expression. Music can also be used to reinforce concepts and ideas, which can help students better understand and remember what they have learned. With music academically and socially, music can be of great use. My partner explained to me that music for him was a way to connect with his students and get to know them much more. After a few lessons with a student, he begins to notice exactly what the students needs to do in order to better understand the concepts he teaches. Musically based activities can help students learn and retain information, develop academic skills, and promote critical thinking. Music can also provide a way for teachers to engage students and create a positive
learning environment. On a social level, music can help students and teachers connect and build relationships. Music can also help promote positive behavior and reduce stress. Finally, music can be a self-expression tool and help build self-confidence.

CONCLUSION

The research discussed in this literature review suggests that the performing arts can impact student development. This has several implications for educators, administrators, and policymakers. First, it indicates that the performing arts should be integrated into school curricula to allow students to express themselves, build self-confidence, develop interpersonal skills, and engage in knowledge. Second, educators, administrators, and policymakers should provide students with access to performing arts classes and programs to ensure that all students can benefit from the positive impacts of the performing arts. Finally, educators, administrators, and policymakers should create an environment conducive to collaboration, communication, and cooperation to foster student growth and development.

The findings of this study indicate that participation in performing arts offers considerable academic and social benefits to students. It has been shown that students who participate in performing arts demonstrate improved academic performance, increased self-confidence, and improved social skills. Furthermore, extracurricular activities, such as performing arts, can provide students with opportunities to develop essential skills, such as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving, necessary for school success of this study are far-reaching. The findings suggest that performing arts should be a part of every student's education as it provides multiple benefits that can be beneficial for academic, social, and emotional development. Therefore, educators, administrators, and policymakers must create environments where students are provided meaningful opportunities to engage in performing arts. Furthermore,
more resources should be allocated to ensure all students can access quality performing arts programs. This research indicates that the benefits of performing arts to students are substantial and should be noticed.

**Implications and Recommendations**

From here, we must begin incorporating music into the classroom curriculum. Music can help students explore and understand different topics in various subjects, such as history, math, science, and language, so we should begin to use this more in the classroom (Holochwast, 2017, p. 153). We also incorporate musical activities into classroom activities and exercises. Music can promote collaboration and communication among students, which can help them learn how to work together.

Teachers can use music to teach critical thinking skills. Music can help students practice problem-solving and decision-making skills essential for academic success. Music can improve concentration, memory, processing, information processing, and learning more effectively. Music can also help enhance students' motivation and social skills. This will help encourage them to work harder and reach their educational goals. Music can have a positive impact on both students academically and socially. Therefore, teachers should see the positive changes they may get when applying music to their classrooms. Teachers can use music to bring students closer together by helping them create a sense of community and foster social connections among other students. This can lead to collaboration, improved communication, and increased engagement in learning. Music can also provide a positive distraction from stress and anxiety, which can help students stay focused and motivated

**References**


APPENDICES

Interview Questions Asked:

1. How can performing arts help students academically in various subjects? Such as English and mathematics?
2. How can performing arts help students socially in various subjects?
3. How is funding in art education?
4. Are schools not putting enough financial emphasis on this topic?
5. How can music relieve stress?
6. Is music technology something that schools will use?