BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM THROUGH MUSIC: Social and Emotional Development in the Arts

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• Overview
• What is Social Emotional Learning?
• Building Self Esteem through Music
• Culturally Responsive Teaching that supports positive self expression and identity awareness
• SEL Core Competencies examples through everyday music school experiences:
  • Self Awareness
  • Social Awareness
  • Responsible Decision Making
  • Self-Management
  • Relationship Skills
• Funds of Knowledge
• Student Reflections
Music education is a field of study associated with the teaching and learning of music. It touches on all learning domains, including the psychomotor domain, the cognitive domain, and, in particular and significant ways, the affective domain, including music appreciation and sensitivity. Music training from preschool through post-secondary education is common in most nations because involvement with music is considered a fundamental component of human culture and behavior. Music, like language, is an accomplishment that distinguishes humans as a species. This workshop will highlight the power of music in helping students define and construct their identity using creativity, culture, and collaboration.
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING:

SEL can be defined as follows: The process of acquiring the skills to recognize and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationships, and handle challenging situations effectively. Social and emotional education is a unifying concept for organizing and coordinating school-based programming that focuses on positive youth development, health promotion, prevention of problem behaviors, and student engagement in learning. (CASEL, 2006)
Self-esteem can be achieved through the contemporary culture of students. Studies have demonstrated that emotions can be channeled through the discipline of music. When students engage in music activities, they reap the benefits of positive responses from their teachers, peers, and parents. Musical experiences build self-esteem and a sense of accomplishment. Music is one of the proven methodologies that develops discipline in a way that encourages a healthy environment. Students from diverse backgrounds bring with them music that is deeply rooted in their culture known as Funds of Knowledge, (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).
“Much intellectual ability and many other kinds of intelligences are lying untapped in ethnically diverse students. If these are recognized and used in the instructional process, school achievement will improve radically. Culturally Responsive Teaching is a means for unleashing the higher learning potentials of ethnically diverse students while cultivating their academic and psychosocial abilities (Gay, 2010).
MUSIC + SEL = compatible companions

• Music education and SEL are naturally complimentary. There are five ways in which the two are compatible:

• (a) music can be used as an emotional stimulus; (b) music can be used as an aesthetic experience; (c) music can be used for relaxation and imagery; (d) music making can be a form of self-expression; and (e) music making can be a form of group experience (Pellitteri, 2006).
Musical activities for addressing social and emotional learning are already being implemented in the classrooms of music educators. Understanding the connections for students between the two subjects is the goal of this workshop.

• Improvisation

• Ensemble playing/singing

• Identifying emotions in music through recognizing, identifying, and empathizing with the emotions of characters in songs and stories, recognizing and identifying moods in pieces of music – these activities help students to learn and manage their own impulses as they engage in the class as part of a group (Dumbleton & Bennett, 2010).

These musical activities can be used in general music, band, choir, orchestra, music appreciation, music theory, musical theatre and many other music course offerings.
‘DON’T WORRY, BE HAPPY’
SEL ACTIVITY – PLAY MUSIC AS KIDS ARE ENTERING THE SCHOOL BUILDING

https://twitter.com/ITcreswellmnps/status/865780915582230528
Social and Emotional skills are learned everyday by students as new scenarios present themselves. Try teaching skills through songs. This familiar song can address calming down from a stressful situation, adapted from Margie la Bella’s Music Therapy & Education (Alegria, 2017). The “Take-a-Breath song” focuses on self-regulation for children ages 0 – 5 using conscious discipline techniques. (Tune: Hokey, Pokey).

• You take a big breath in,
• You take a big breath out,
• You take a big breath in,
• And again you let it out,
• You can focus on your breath.
• You can learn to calm down.
• That’s what it’s all about.
KEY COMPONENTS OF SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING – THERE ARE FIVE COMPONENTS OF SEL . . .

- Self-Awareness
- Social Awareness
- Responsible Decision Making
- Self Management
- Relationship Skills (CASEL, 2003)
SEL CORE COMPETENCY
MUSIC EDUCATION EXAMPLE #1

- SELF AWARENESS -

Self-Awareness. This component focuses primarily on the emotional domain of SEL and includes “identifying and recognizing strengths, needs, and values; self-efficacy; and spirituality” (Zins et al., 2004). An example in music education would be the following: A student is practicing independently and is struggling to correctly perform a passage. The student feels frustrated and believes she or he will never get it. Self-awareness is achieved if the student is aware of this feeling, articulates it, and realizes this feeling is leading to negative, unrealistic thoughts (Zins et al., 2004).
Social Awareness. This component is a key element of the social domain of SEL. It includes “perspective talking; empathy; appreciating diversity; and respect for others:” (Zins et al., 2004) and “relating effectively to other people” (Merrell & Gueldner, 2010). An example in music education would be when a section leader in a musical ensemble realizes a struggling freshman performs better and is a more productive member of the ensemble when she or he receives positive constructive criticism, instead of negative. This results in SEL for the section leader.
SEL CORE COMPETENCY
MUSIC EDUCATION EXAMPLE #3
- RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING -

Responsible Decision Making. This component includes “problem identification; situation analysis; problem solving; evaluation and reflection; and personal, moral, and ethical responsibility” (Zins et al., 2004). An example in music education might occur when the student is planning to audition to be a music major in college. Realizing the audition is still several months away, the student plans a rigorous practice schedule to prepare for the audition.
SEL CORE COMPETENCY
MUSIC EDUCATION EXAMPLE #4
- SELF MANAGEMENT -

Self-management. “Impulse control and stress management; self-motivation and discipline; and goal setting and organizational skills” (Zins et al., 2004) are the key skills included in the self-management component of SEL. In music education, perhaps a student is incredibly nervous before performing his or her first solo. If he or she is able to realize the fear and potential negative consequences of the performance, the student learns to take deep breaths, calm his/her heart rate and attempt to relax and perform well.
Relationship Management. This component addresses “communication, social engagement, and building relationships; working cooperatively; negotiating, refusal, and conflict management; and help seeking and providing” (Zins et al., 2004). An example in music would be a senior student resenting not being chosen as a drum major. Instead of holding a grudge, he or she approaches the director, explains her disappointment, and asks what other leadership position she could fill.
SEL THROUGH FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE AND FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Because of the growing numbers of ethnically diverse students entering public schools, new teaching strategies like SEL that are culturally relevant will most likely ensure success in meeting the academic, social and emotional needs of this population. Schools in the United States are more diverse today than they have been since the early 1900s when a multitude of immigrants entered the U.S. from Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe (Banks, 2010). The term Funds of Knowledge is the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills that are essential for household or individual functioning and well-being (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992).
CLASSROOM STRATEGIES …

• Create a CD or playlist of songs to use for motor skills, academic, or relaxation time
• Make instruments out of recycled materials
• Body percussion activities are always fun: clapping, snapping, tapping, whistling, humming, stomping
• Post anchor charts to refer to for specific dancing songs or yoga positions.
The personal narratives and cultural stories of African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and Asian Americans, are often found in the music that is expressed in each unique heritage. There is opportunity for music-based instruction within the context of each of these identities for teachers to incorporate *culturally relevant pedagogy* into the learning environment (Ellison et al., 2000).
In recent years, building on what students bring to school and their strengths has been shown to be an incredibly effective teaching strategy (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Making meaning and connecting school to students’ lives and their family customs creates opportunities for instruction, collaboration, and cooperative learning.
“The power of the arts can help students define and construct their identity.”

– Linda Nathan, Founding Headmaster and Executive Director of the Boston Arts Academy

“I work at my music it makes people feel things—sorrow and joy and lots of other emotions, too. It’s much better this way than fighting. I know that. I can make people see things and go places with my singing.”

--- Ronald, (student) at Boston Arts Academy
Interactive journals and reflections of performances are excellent ways for students to capture their thoughts which often include feelings of joy and empathy for others. These emotions can arise out of arts experiences in and beyond the four walls of the classroom.
Melissa A. Smith’s Music Experiences in High School

Q: How important were your classmates to your musical learning? (Emotional)
A: Wow, my classmates played an integral part of me understanding and applying musical techniques like hearing and blending with other voice parts and matching tone and dynamics to create one voice or style. In addition, an organic bond was formed, seeing that we all wanted to achieve the same goal. It created a space for leadership, initiating maturation of skills throughout the choir as a whole.

Q: How important was it for you and your classmates to work well together? (Social)
A: The special thing about my high school show choir was that we formed an amazing bond, extending to this day, spanning a history of 20 years. We are a huge family. This was because of our choral teacher Mrs. Smith. She provided an atmosphere for the love of music, the significance of it in every facet of life, the passion behind learning the craft of singing, reading music, musicality, performance, and showmanship, and it proved to be a vital component in our success as a choir and success as human beings and young adults.

Favorite Event in Choir that added to my social and emotional being:
A: Because Mrs. Smith is my (real) mother and was a mother to her students, we truly were a family and spent a lot of time together. Every day in class was the best of times, but we would also have so much fun when we would go to perform for a nursing home or an elementary school, at choral festivals and sing, mentor, and volunteer with Choral Arts Link’s honor choir The MET Singers. But my two most favorite memories are: The cookouts and sleepovers at our house where we’d sing and laugh and dance all night long. My mom would crack jokes on us and play the piano for us. We’d have pretend church and just reflect on past experiences through the years. Because my mom was such a superb example of excellence, she brought in a professional dance instructor to teach us outstanding choreography for our Fall Showcase my senior year, fall 2003. We performed Michael Jackson’s famous video “Thriller,” complete with set design, detailed costumes, strobe lights and smoke machine. We sang and danced through the aisles of the audience, irrecoverably putting them right into the gravesite scene, frightening many of them to their liking and truly sending them on a thrilling journey. We received a standing ovation, many, many praises that lasted to the end of the year, requests for encore performances, and many of my friends were surprised to see a new side of me, normally being known for being quiet, calm and mystique!
References


**References Continued**
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