
Importance of Music Education

Music, especially playing an instrument, has always been highly recommended by Montessori Academy administrators and especially our founder, Mrs. Eileen Bernstorf. Mrs. Bernstorf believed that the study of a music instrument would help students be more focused on academic work and the success and self-esteem found in playing an instrument would translate to success in academic work. Also, Mrs. Bernstorf knew from experience, playing a musical instrument herself and raising four children who play musical instruments, that music was a critical aspect of truly being an educated person. **Research shows she was right!** Listed below are the sources and research projects that support this position:

"Playing an Instrument Can Improve Your Child's Grades & Test Scores"

High school music students score higher on SATs in both verbal and math than their peers. In 2001, SAT takers with coursework/experience in music performance scored 57 points higher on the verbal portion of the test and 41 points higher on the math portion than students with no coursework/experience in the arts.

Source: Profile of SAT and Achievement Test Takers,
The College Board, compiled by Music Educators National Conference, 2001

Also: Middle school and high school students who participated in instrumental music scored significantly higher than their non-band peers in standardized tests.

Source: University of Sarasota Study, Jeffrey Lynn Kluball;
East Texas State University Study. Daryl Erick Trent

Also: Students who were exposed to the music-based lessons scored a full 100% higher on fractions tests than those who learned in the conventional manner.

Source: Neurological Research, March 15, 1999

Also: A ten-year study, tracking more than 25,000 students, shows that music-making improves test scores. Regardless of socioeconomic background, music-making students get higher marks in standardized tests than those who had no music involvement.

The test scores studied were not only standardized tests, such as the SAT, but also in reading proficiency exams.

Source: Dr. James Catterall, UCLA, 1997

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Students at Montessori Academy experience music at every level in every program. Formal teaching begins in Primary. Level 1-3, the Lower Elementary Students, have general music with singing and have the option to study violin using the Suzuki method, with a certified Suzuki teacher. In the Upper Elementary/Middle School, level 4-8, students have general music and a choice of further studies in choral music, strings, and band with highly qualified specialists.

Here are some studies published in January 2007 *Prevention*, by Sari N. Harra.

- A study of 237 second graders by researchers at the Univ. of California, Irvine, found that those who received music instruction scored 27% higher on a fractions test than those who lacked instruction.
- When the Princeton, NJ officials looked at the SAT scores of college-bound high school seniors, they discovered that musicians scored 57 points higher on the test's verbal section and 41 points higher in math.

"SAT scores aside, the best reason to encourage your child to learn an instrument is because it's fun and rewarding", says Mark Churchill, Dean of the Preparatory School at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. "Every kid—and grown-up—is affected by music," he says. "It's part of what makes us human. Playing music makes children happy, and happy children learn and get along with others much better."

Foreign Language Instruction

Studying foreign languages at an early age significantly improves academic thinking skills, achievement and performance outcomes on a host of standardized measures. The **American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages** or ACTFL is a fabulous resource for a comprehensive discussion of the overwhelming statistical data that studying foreign language(s) improves early brain development, cognitive ability and logical reasoning, creativity, memory skills, standardized test scores and attention control. Studying a foreign language is also a valid indicator of better college performance in students.

We know that **preschool and elementary-aged children are at their peak** with respect to learning multiple languages. Learning multiple languages at an early age is proven to stimulate and “hard-wire” multi-lobe brain development. Surprising to some is that these newly-stimulated brain connections trigger the same developmental areas that are most closely associated with increased math and higher reasoning skills. Once these brain development areas are stimulated, the connections become permanent in these young, growing minds.

In an ever-increasing global economy, bilingual and multi-lingual students will have an almost immeasurable edge for career growth. More importantly, these students will emerge with a deep-rooted appreciation for other cultures and people and with a unique vantage from which to foster these qualities in others.

For more background on the many benefits of language learning, please visit the resources listed below:

- [American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages](#) - What the Research Shows
- [Duke’s TIP Program Study on the Cognitive Benefits of Learning Languages](#)
- [NEA Research](#), December 2007 (Research Findings with Citations) The Benefits of Second Language
- [Center for Applied Linguistics](#) – Information on Proficiency in Foreign Languages