

REPORT TO AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS ON RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY MUSIC IN SCHOOLS TODAY

Mission

Music in Schools Today (MuST)'s mission is to support and promote music education in schools and in the community. MuST especially serves at-risk youth, helping them to explore music, discover their own talents and learn life skills. MuST is dedicated to ensuring that all children receive a comprehensive, sequential music education.

Research goals

We are a research-based organization, meaning that we are actively involved not only in creating instructional programs, but in the collection of data that enables us to evaluate program impacts. In an era when schools are under tremendous pressure to demonstrate results, our research driven model enables us to partner with schools in their efforts to document the positive impact of arts education on student academic performance and social/emotional development.

MuST works with school districts, individual schools and community centers to start new programs to restore music and arts to the core curriculum. MuST runs four major research-based programs: 1) Achieving through Music, a therapeutic music intervention program for at-risk youth; 2) Music Integrated Literacy Enhancement, a professional development program for music and classroom teachers integrating music into literacy and math curricula; 3) Understanding Cultures, an artist residency using world music to teach core curricula; 4) Exploring Music, custom-tailored programming to meet specific District or school needs.

We are pleased to be part of the Music in Education National Consortium (MIENC), which is developing a national research-based network of school districts, institutions of higher education and arts organizations. Our Principal Investigator is Dr. Scripp of the New England Conservatory of Music and head of MIENC. Together with City Span Technologies and the New England Conservatory of Music, we are creating an on-line data-base from our programs and programs like them across the country that will soon be available to other educators seeking to replicate these successful models.

Learning through Music

We are engaged in a study, Learning through Music, conducted across all of our research-based programs to determine their relative effectiveness in providing students with an authentic, sequential, inter-disciplinary music education.

How we do our assessment MuST provides individual and group assessments using existing school data including students' grades and attendance, confidential organizational records and counselor reports of encounters with the judicial system, suspensions, expulsion, etc. We track group progress in the art form and in terms of classroom management. We track numbers served and individual progress.

We use rubrics, protocols and a leadership certificate reward system. We often have students keep double entry journals and sometimes videotape student performance. We use Likert Scales as a tool in interviewing students, teachers, artists, and other observers. We conduct consumer satisfaction surveys. We are moving toward involving students and college interns in intake and exit surveys. We triangulate across quantitative and qualitative assessment data whenever possible.

MuST works with participating Districts and sites to align these programs as much as possible, so that teaching techniques, measurement tools, video documentation, publicity, community involvement and all activities related to the program are relatively consistent and yield the most meaningful results and information possible.

Other studies

We know music and the arts are crucial to educating our children. A 1999 study by the National Department of Education testing 25,000 students over a ten year period concludes what we all know intuitively: children who receive music and arts education excel in other areas of education and are more likely to stay in school. They score higher on SATs and do better in math and science.

The 2003 Music in Education National Conference displayed research from leading colleges, including Georgia State, the Julliard School of Music, and the New England Conservatory of Music. And Northwestern University The research indicated that student academic ability and problem solving skills, as well as intentions for higher education, are directly correlated to the evolving roles of music and musicians in public schools.

Studies conducted by Howard Gardner at Harvard Project Zero indicate that music is a unique intelligence. In applying theories of multiple intelligence, we are able to show that music can be seen as a strategy for enhancing and integrating other subject areas and ways of learning.¹

The most recent study, of high poverty elementary school students at Vista Academy of the Arts Elementary School in Southern California, reveals evidence for a growing understanding of fundamental literacy skills shared between music and language in grades K-2. A team of researchers at New England Conservatory's Research Center for Learning Through Music, directed by Dr. Larry Scripp, has just completed a study investigating patterns of literacy skill development of high poverty students and English Language (EL) Learners. This study, commissioned by the NAMM Foundation

¹ Critical Links, a compendium of recent research available at www.aep.org, supports the view that learning takes place in two or more modalities at once through shared neural networks. Current public schools research is widening to include not just academic, but neurological models of learning and measures of social and emotional development of our children. Research is being partially guided by schools of music and musicians in schools and communities who are seeking to redefine the role of artists in society as artist/teacher/scholars dedicated to bringing innovative applications of music into k-12 education. Artists under this concept would have a much broader range of training, which will eventually result in a new type of music teacher. This will lead to a new kind of professional development for those interested in therapy, community building, leadership skills and putting music at the core of the curriculum.

(formerly the International Foundation for Music Research), indicates that statistically significant, positive links between music and language reading and writing skills exist at the early stages of literacy development and strengthen considerably as teachers are trained to support music and language integrated reading and writing instruction in their classrooms.

Music in Schools Today Achieving through Music Study

“I’ve been moved from high school to high school because of my behavior, and I was never given music. I don’t go to school, and now I’m in here. I would go to school for music.” – anonymous incarcerated youth in our program, March 2004.

Mission The mission of Music in Schools Today (MUST)’s Achieving through Music (AM) program is to support at-risk children and youth through therapeutic music intervention in schools and the community.

Purpose The purpose of AM is to lower incidence of youth violence and other at-risk behaviors and to improve academic performance, school attendance and life skills, leading to educational and employment opportunities. AM is designed to improve school culture by focusing on the most difficult students and by sharing classroom management skills with teachers.

In spring of 2005, Ms. Deborah Bradway, Director of Music in Schools Today’s Achieving through Music (AM) program, completed a longitudinal study of roughly 1,000 students receiving therapeutic music intervention (TMI). One hundred students at James Lick Middle School were studied over four years and 200 for three years. We then added a program at Luther Burbank Middle School, serving 450 students at each school for the last two years of the study.

Assumption:

At-risk students may arrive at school suffering from the “fight or flight” syndrome, a neurological reaction to a high stress environment. In this state, they cannot engage in logical thought. However, they can absorb music used to access and modulate their emotions. The neuro-transmitters in the body allow the music message to over-ride the pain message (Deborah Bradway Masters Thesis, New York University, 1996).

Making music provides successful and inclusive experiences. It allows for purposeful transfer of ideas and creates social unity. Specific academic skill levels can be built through music, accessing math skills such as problem solving, cause and effect, spatial temporal development, relationship, ratio, logic reasoning, symbol systems, multi-tasking and depth complexity comprehension, and language skills such as phonation, long-term memory, phrasing, sequencing, contextual comprehension, aesthetic value and meaning.

Ms. Bradway’s research on students who participated in AM for two years indicates:

- 100% of students who received one-on-one mentoring through AM increased their Grade Point Average (GPA) pre to post.

- ❑ In large class intervention, on average over four years time, 75% of the students who received the AM program improved their attendance, GPA and/or citizenship scores (school behavior records).
- ❑ Pre to Post tests showed increased scores for self-esteem: student perception of ability in academic subjects improved by 78% of students.
- ❑ Approximately four fifths, or 80%, of the students felt AM positively affected their academic school ability and increased their college interest, with 25% of those students rating it the highest on a Likert Scale in comparison to other programs for helping them enhance their abilities.
- ❑ Surveys indicated that 62% of 8th grade middle school students graduating and going on to high school can cite the name of the college they would like to attend in correlation to their career choice.
- ❑ When asked to compare programs students had received, two thirds of the students receiving AM programs rated it as one of the most effective programs they participated in.
- ❑ Parent participation increased by approximately 70% in attendance and communication logs when students performed at their school. Parents of students performing would attend events and communicate via phone to discuss student progress, participate in planning and assisting their child in the process.
- ❑ MuST's school district teacher professional development evaluations showed 97% of teachers wanted to apply the TMI concepts in their classrooms after one training session.

Supporting Statistics

Ms. Bradway's research of at-risk students receiving therapeutic drumming intervention at James Lick Middle School compared to a control group at Luther Burbank over a two year period indicates that weekly TMI can increase school attendance and grade average by more than 50%!

Information collected in 2005 by San Francisco's Department of Children, Youth and Their Families indicates that 1/3 of African American males age 15-17 will be arrested and put in Juvenile Hall in a given year. Our study shows that of 1,078 Gear Up students who received AM services for two years (48% African American, Special Education, and students identified as exhibiting high-risk behaviors), less than 1% of the students have ended up in Juvenile Hall over a four year period.

In urban areas almost all of the children are at risk and the most at-risk of these come from under-served neighborhoods. The drop out rate is a staggering one third to one half of all students. Eighty-four per cent of African American students skip school at least once very two weeks. African American and Latinos are over-represented in Bay Area

juvenile correction facilities, reinforcing studies that show a direct correlation between truancy, juvenile delinquency and adult incarceration. (San Francisco Chronicle, 3/2/04).

Student crime costs the city of San Francisco \$10 million in state revenue annually – (Joan Ryan, SF Chronicle, march 2004).

“I remember that my home was sketchy, and I didn’t always go to school or do what I was supposed to do. I went to school because of the music. It gave me something else to think about besides my problems.” – AM Program Youth Leader John Minor