



The Benefits of Music Education

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INTRODUCTION

The goal of this project is to explore why music education is so necessary for the development of elementary school level children in public schools. Music education is a course that involves teaching pupils about all kinds of music, as well as teaching students instruments and culture surrounding music. Proposition 13 is a property tax law that was passed in 1978, which caused music education to be defunded (Penner, .3). What are the benefits that an elementary school student that has been given a music education receives versus an elementary school student who has not had a music education?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

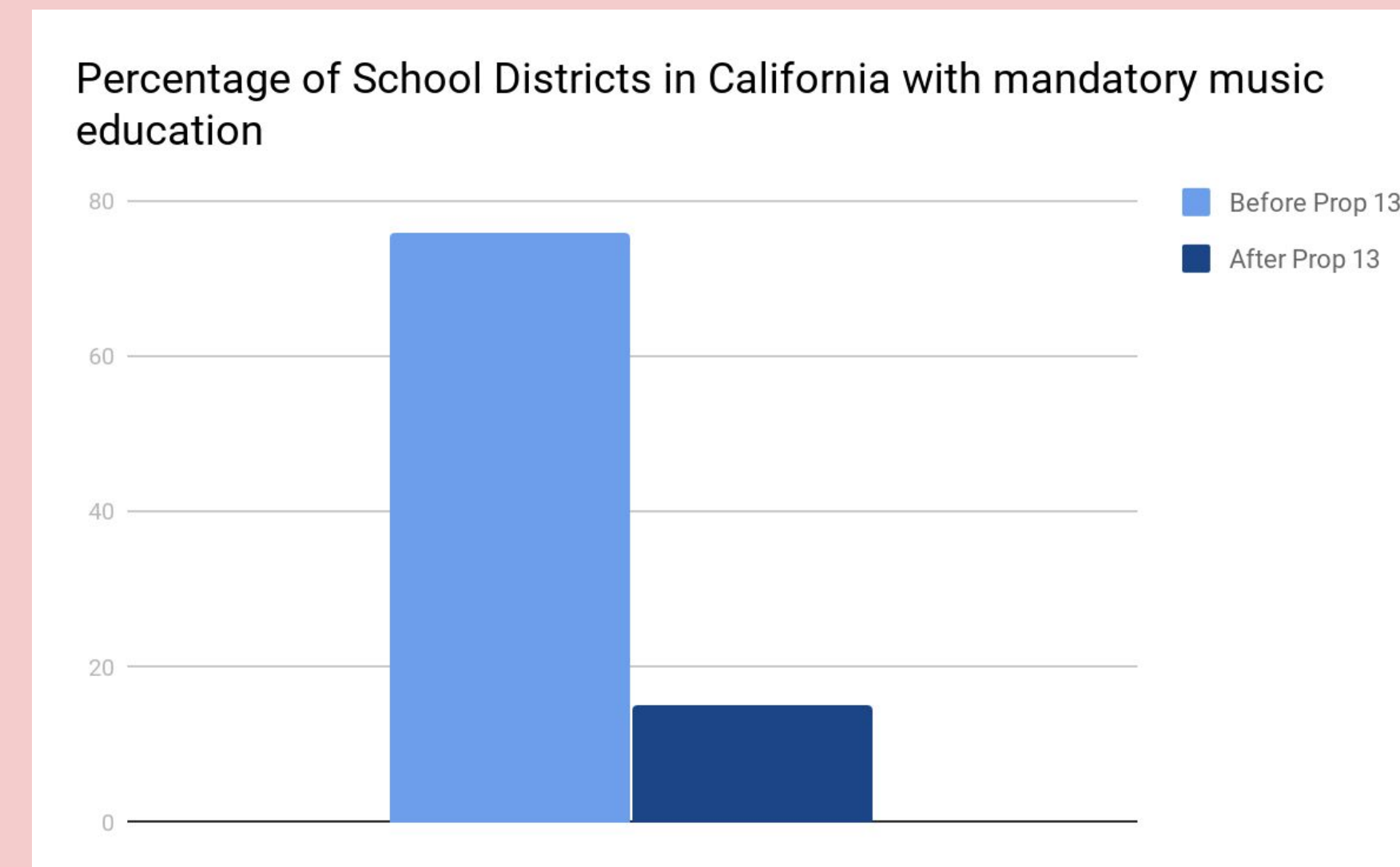
I used action research, as well as interviews and field notes to conduct my research. Action research was used because the problem identified is a problem that can be solved once everyone understands the importance of it. I took two participants, both elementary grade level, and tested certain character traits on them such as patience and cooperation before and after giving them a guitar lesson. I then synthesized all of the information I acquired into an argument for the benefits of music education, which brings in the actionable aspect. Hopefully, building a strong case for music education and then spreading the word of it will influence people when they think of different possible budget cuts when the topic is brought up. While this might not be a large-scale effect, even changing one person's mind about the importance of music education will snowball into a changed outlook on the curriculum.

The purpose of these field notes is to suss out any behavior in students that would denote benefits given by the music class, first by choosing a skill to focus on, such as students' motor coordination, then testing it before and after their music lesson. Other examples of these benefits would include encouraging teamwork, patience, or muscle memory.

DATA AND FINDINGS

The results of the first experiment seem to be a good example of the benefits that music education can provide. The first participant, who was the younger one of the two, was not able to complete a task that required motor coordination. After a short guitar lesson, where he was taught some basic chords, he was able to move his fingers correctly to pass the test. This shows an improvement in his motor coordination. The older participant was very restless at first while waiting to be taught guitar. He was not sitting peacefully, and he kept on asking when his turn would be. After his lesson, when it wasn't his turn again, he was much more tame and patient. This might not have anything to do with his musical learning, but the results were there.

DISCUSSION, ANALYSIS, AND EVALUATION



A visual representation of California's music education crisis

Field Notes

Participant (Age)	Trait	Before Music Education	After Music Education
7	Motor coordination	Before his music lesson, Beckx was asked to perform a simple hand task that required some hand - eye coordination. Beckx was able to grasp the trick after a few tries.	After his guitar lesson, beckx returned to the hand trick and completed it flawlessly first try.
	Collaboration	Beckx plays well with his older brother, but sometimes argues with him such as which guitar they got to use and who get to sit in which seat.	After the music lesson, Beckx and liam still bicker over some things, but overall have maintained peace. Beckx even gave Liam his guitar after so they both got to use the one they were initially scared of using.
10	Patience	Beckx is very patient and is not at all uncomfortable with waiting	Beckx is very patient and is not at all uncomfortable with waitin.
	Motor Coordination	Liam is not able to complete the hand trick at all, possibly because not everyone can do the hand trick. As a substitute, Liam is given a pencil and asked to spin it between his fingers. After a few tries, he is able to do so.	After his guitar lesson, liam is at first unable to complete the pencil trick. After his first try, however, Liam picks up the trick. Liam is then asked to try the hand trick from earlier. He is still unable to perform it.
	Collaboration	Since Liam is older than his younger brother, he falls into a more responsible disposition. However, when his brother takes the black guitar, Liam becomes visibly angry and goes to grab it out of his brothers hands. COnsidering its someone elses musical equipment, Liam decides to let his brother have the guitar for now.	Liam is content since his brother gave him the guitar he wants for his lesson. He also seems to no longer have any harsh feelings for his brother.
	Patience	Liam begins waiting for his brothers lesson and starts to get noticably irritable when it is taking a long time. He gets antsier and antsier with every minute that passes.	N/A

Evaluation

The field notes I took on the two participants was not subject to any bias. It was a little difficult to find two willing participants, but once they were found they both did a great job with the various tasks I threw at them. The data is completely representative of the things we all discussed and all the various character differences I noticed in the two participants before and after their music lesson.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND NEXT STEPS

Conclusion

There are many reasons for music classes to stay in public school curriculum. It emphasizes collaboration in a live setting, creativity, and motor functioning skills (Droscher). It teaches students the value of creativity, and adds another aspect to a child's learning (Music Educators Journal). The creative arts are a necessity for public schools to teach, and it is completely unacceptable to deny students the opportunity to engage in them.

Implications and Next Steps

After this project, I feel as though there is still a long way for music education to go in California. There are clear benefits to its implementation in public schools, just like there are with the art classes that are also being washed away by the thousands. From here on, I will be spreading the message of the benefits of music education, and I suggest that anyone who has read this project do the same.



Photo property of Berklee School of Music

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS / REFERENCES

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