



Articles: Music Education: Introduction to Music Education

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In Australia, the UK and the USA, music is an integral part of general education. In fact, in the UK, music is compulsory up to the age of 14 and the findings of formal studies indicate that music education has a positive effect on a child's general learning abilities, skills and development. There is a close link between mathematics and music. A study from the university of Irvine in California, demonstrated that students' test scores soar with the help of musical and computer keyboards. Children included in a study, scored an average of 27 percent higher than other children in proportional math and fractions, after just four months in a University of California program. A group of children used a newly developed computer game that poses visual math problems. They were also taught the basics of playing the piano. The two elements were then combined into the curriculum of their second-grade math class. The result was a decided improvement in understanding concepts such as fractions and proportional math, which involves visual problem solving. Computer programs allow children to visualise problems and think many steps ahead like a chess player would.

Music is not only a favourite pastime of children, but also one they think adults don't understand! Kids like to learn new things - they like asking questions and trying out new concepts. The main reason why school doesn't appeal to most children is because the presentation is not to their liking. They get bored, because they feel that they're not included in the lesson and merely listening to a teacher rambling on and on. Education must be interactive, in order to keep the attention and ensure enjoyment. In most cases, this will also accelerate understanding and improvement.

Curriculum 2005 is a plan to shift traditional education to Outcomes-Based Education. All this means, is that the emphasis is on what the student learns, and how, or why they get to the answers. This way, students/learners are able to learn independence and decision making from a very early age. Knowledge shouldn't be acquired through just one method of instruction - pupils should find their own answers through independent thought and creative, analytical, and critical thinking processes. Arts and Culture is one of the eight learning categories, which indicates the importance of stimulating creativity. Group participation and interaction is important, and through the use of technology, learning and writing music can be a very stimulating group effort. Computers are the vehicles of the modern age, and by familiarizing students with these tools, and stressing their importance, Curriculum 2005 indicates investment in the future of students. Curriculum 2005 stresses that education should also include non-academic, career-directed courses, teaching the student the necessary life skills to ensure admission into the workforce. In order for education to become more hands-on, the attitude of the teacher will be of utmost importance. Keep in mind that in order to know your students, a good teacher is always a learner, and a learner is in fact a teacher.

Introducing technology into music education is the key to developing music in SA. There are many brand new educational tools and technological advances available, making the job of teaching simple! We, at Paul Bothner Music, now offer a whole range of educational products, previously not available in South Africa. We've researched and tested programs using music technology, so that you can teach your pupils exactly what they want to learn. We offer free demonstrations and workshops, as well as consultations so that you can get the most out of your teaching. The packages instantly grab your attention, and are presented in a fun and entertaining manner. The emphasis is on "Music is FUN!" Who said learning has to be boring?

With technology, the user does not have to be especially talented in order to play, read and write music. Some software packages are piano/guitar teaching tools, enabling the music teacher to have a room full of students learning to play the

instrument, but still being able to grant individual attention. For the teacher with ensembles, bands, orchestras, and choirs, notation software is like having your own personal assistant! You can play notes on your MIDI keyboard, and the computer will print it out for you. It allows you to edit music, write and transpose parts, arrange a score - knowing what it'll sound like, and print it all out! Some programs simulate recording studios. Students can compose their own songs, individually or as a group, even if they cannot read or write music. By using accompaniment software, the computer can simulate an entire orchestra, to compliment soloists, and for use in plays and concerts. There are many other different programs, teaching different aspects of music. The possibilities are endless!