CultureCase

Music education promotes lifelong engagement with the arts

This research was conducted by **Kenneth Elpus** at the **University of Maryland, USA**

Summary

This paper sought to ‘understand the effects of school-based music education on later adult engagement with the arts using nationally representative data from the United States’. It found that ‘both music performance and music appreciation courses are strongly associated with later arts participation as patron/consumer and performer/creator, even after controlling for socioeconomic status, sex, and race/ethnicity’. Ultimately, ‘lifelong engagement with music and the arts is one measurable outcome of school-based music education in the United States’ (which could be thought of ‘as the largest audience development enterprise in the nation’).

The study used the 2012 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts to measure a mixture of specific attendance and participation activities

These included ‘attendance at live classical music or opera, live jazz, live theatre, live ballet, or live dance performances other than ballet’ and ‘creation or performance of music (singing or playing an instrument), performing in musical or non-musical theatrical productions, taking photographs as an artistic outlet, or creating other non-photographic visual art’.

Learning to play an instrument was not the only form of music education that had an impact

‘As one might expect, school music performance classes do significantly predict adult attendance at classical music or opera, yet school music *appreciation* classes are considerably more predictive of adult attendance at classical music or opera’.

Keywords

USA **music** **survey** **education**

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