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The Power of Music: The Science and Some Suggestions for Classroom Use

Incorporating music into the learning environment not only elevates the educational experience but also supports various cognitive, emotional, and social aspects of student development. Music can create a dynamic atmosphere that encourages engagement, creativity, and effective learning.

1. Improved Memory and Recall

- **Research:** Studies have shown that music can aid memory retention. A study published in *Nature* found that background music can help students recall information more effectively, as melodies can serve as memory cues.

2. Enhanced Focus and Concentration

- **Research:** Music, especially instrumental or classical music, can create a calming atmosphere that promotes concentration. A study in the *Journal of Educational Psychology* suggested that students performed better on tasks requiring attention when listening to music compared to a silent environment.

3. Increased Motivation

- **Research:** Music can boost motivation and engagement in learning. According to research from *The Psychology of Music*, incorporating music into lessons can create a more enjoyable learning experience, encouraging students to participate actively.

4. Emotional Connection

- **Research:** Music has the ability to evoke emotions, which can deepen the learning experience. The *Journal of Research in Music Education* indicates that when students connect emotionally with music, it can enhance their enthusiasm and commitment to learning.

5. Facilitated Language Acquisition

- **Research:** Music can enhance language skills and literacy. A study published in *Child Development* found that children exposed to musical activities showed greater improvement in language development and phonemic awareness.

6. Cognitive Development

- **Research:** Learning music can improve cognitive skills such as spatial-temporal skills and problem-solving abilities. Research in *Psychological Science* has shown that music training can lead to improved academic performance, particularly in math and science.

7. Social Skills Development

- **Research:** Collaborative musical activities foster teamwork and social interaction. A study in *Music Education Research* found that group music-making enhances students' social skills and communication, contributing to a positive classroom environment.

Here are specific song examples for each of the suggestions on incorporating music into your classroom:

While the following song suggestions aim to enhance the learning environment and foster engagement, it is important for educators to vet each selection to ensure that the content is age-appropriate and aligns with the values and guidelines of the school community. Educators are encouraged to listen to the songs in full, consider their themes and lyrics, and select music that is suitable for their specific classroom setting and student demographics.

Thank you for creating a thoughtful and respectful learning atmosphere through your music choices!

1. Background Music for Transitions

- Song Examples:
 - "Weightless" by Marconi Union (calming ambient music)
 - "Clair de Lune" by Claude Debussy (soft classical piano)

2. Themed Music for Lessons SUBJECT MATTER

- Song Examples:
 - History: "We Will Rock You" by Queen (to energize a history lesson)
 - Science: "Here Comes the Sun" by The Beatles (for lessons on nature or seasons)

3. Music as a Learning Tool

- Song Examples:
 - "School Days" by Chuck Berry (for nostalgia and teaching about school life)

- "Five Little Ducks" (for younger students learning about counting)

4. Movement Activities with Music

- Song Examples:
 - "Happy" by Pharrell Williams (upbeat and fun for movement)
 - "Can't Stop the Feeling!" by Justin Timberlake (to energize students)

5. Music for Reflection and Relaxation

- Song Examples:
 - "River Flows in You" by Yiruma (calm piano music)
 - "Weightless" by Marconi Union (known for its relaxing effects)

6. Incorporate Student Choice

- Song Examples:
 - Allow students to pick songs from popular playlists like Billboard's Top 100 or Spotify's "Today's Top Hits" that they feel relate to their learning experiences.

7. Use Music for Classroom Management

- Song Examples:
 - "The Final Countdown" by Europe (to signal the end of an activity)
 - "We Are the Champions" by Queen (to signify success or achievement)

8. Collaborative Music Projects

- Song Examples:
 - "Lean on Me" by Bill Withers (encourages teamwork and support)
 - "Count on Me" by Bruno Mars (focuses on friendship and collaboration)

9. Explore Different Genres and Cultures

- Song Examples:
 - "Bailando" by Enrique Iglesias (Spanish pop)
 - "Sakura" by Kitaro (Japanese instrumental)

10. Music for Storytelling

- Song Examples:
 - "The Tale of the Three Brothers" by Alexandre Desplat (from Harry Potter, for dramatic storytelling)
 - "Once Upon a December" from Anastasia (to create a fairy tale ambiance)

11. Use Music to Enhance Focus

- Song Examples:
 - "Lo-Fi Chill Beats" (any Lo-Fi playlist for a calming focus)
 - "Gymnopédies No. 1" by Erik Satie (soft piano music for concentration)

12. Encourage Instrumental Expression

- Song Examples:
 - "Canon in D" by Johann Pachelbel (for classical expression)
 - "In the Hall of the Mountain King" by Edvard Grieg (to inspire creativity and movement)

13. Incorporate Music Technology

- Song Examples:
 - "Happy" by Pharrell Williams (to remix and create new versions)
 - Use software sounds from apps like GarageBand for students to explore music creation.

14. End-of-Day Music Ritual

- Song Examples:
 - "Good Riddance (Time of Your Life)" by Green Day (to wrap up the day)
 - "Count on Me" by Bruno Mars (to end on a positive note)

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