

Extracurricular Programming: The Need for more Diverse Activities



PRESENTER:

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The main goal of this study was to assess how extracurricular activities (specifically athletic and fine arts programs) impact students who partake in them. Throughout this process, I explore the social aspects of each, as well as the psychosocial development of students who partake in either program.

Social Aspects:

- Students who participate in the arts are often coined as outsiders and are called names such as “Band Kids” and “Theater Kids” in a derogatory sense. While this may lead to social isolation within the larger student body, there is deep connection that can be made between those who share interests in the arts. Non-verbal communication in musical groups is just one of the ways that students are able to connect with those around them.
- Students who participate in athletics receive social stress as well. Often viewed as elites within the school, students who participate in athletics are able to find groups of people with similar interests and goals. While playing for a team, the connection that is made is that similar to a family. However, in higher level education, the pursuit of athletics can wind up hindering a student's social life, often due to the rigorous team schedule that needs to be followed.

The implementation of STEAM based programming offers opportunities for students to engage in a variety of extracurricular activities that benefit their social lives and psychosocial development.

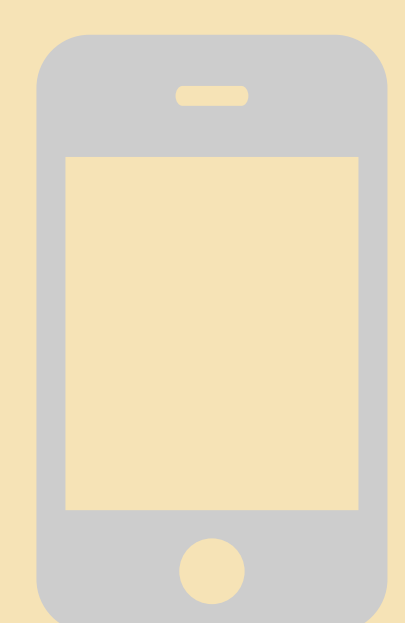


Psychosocial Development:

- Research shows that fine arts programs can greatly shape and benefit the mental health of a growing individual. Those who participated in fine arts programs are associated with high intrinsic motivation, initiative and engagement, as well as lower apathy and substance use. However, individuals who participated in fine arts programs also showed more signs of isolationism and depression.
- Athletes are driven by their competitive nature. This competitive nature benefits them in the field and can help develop important leadership skills that are needed in the future. However, athletes have also showed signs of aggression and risky behaviors that can hurt both themselves and others.

STEAM Programs:

- When looking at the social aspects and the psychosocial development of both athletes and students who participate in fine arts, it is important to take note of the benefits of each in order to find a way to maximize each extracurricular activities potential benefits. STEAM programs do exactly that. Focusing on areas such as emotional development, self-esteem, adaptation in schools, participation in class, motivation towards learning, and satisfactory relationships between students is what drives STEAM programs. By implementing the arts into educational programs, students are able to find new activities through the classroom rather than deciding against something because of the stigma associated with it. STEAM programs help foster creativity for students, benefiting their social awareness and emotional growth later in life.



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