

Why take lessons? Why do exams?

Are you aware of the many benefits of studying music or speech and drama?

'Hardwiring' a young brain for learning success

Experiencing music and learning to play an instrument early in life can have a profound effect on our ongoing capacity to learn – stimulating the brain in preparation for greater efficiency in all future learning. This is due to the way in which music involves and integrates cognitive (reasoning, spatial, mathematical and creative skills), language, physical and social learning skills.

Creative arts as an emotional outlet

Childhood and teenage experiences bring a myriad of strong emotions. These may often be difficult to articulate or share with family members. Music and drama offer healthy and socially acceptable outlets for expressing our grief, enthusiasm, anger, anxiety, or unrequited love. Teachers should encourage students to explore pieces that convey a variety of emotions so that a student can always explore a piece from their repertoire that assists their self-expression or lifts them out of a negative emotion.

Thinking outside the square

Exploring the many valid ways to interpret a piece of music or present a poem or monologue teaches children the power of creative thought. Understanding that there is not always one right answer is empowering and gives children the confidence to explore creative problem solving in other areas of learning.

Becoming a 'details' person

The often exacting nature of speech and music and correct technique help us learn to value the benefits of diligence and detail. Success achieved through sustained effort and challenging your inner resources can heighten self-esteem as we reap the rewards associated with producing good rather than mediocre work.

Embracing challenge

Preparing for exams demonstrates that a person is able to take risks and conquer fears. A little bit of anxiety is something that people will confront at various times in their lives, and dealing with this early and often enables you to cope with greater challenges, such as HSC exams, far better for having had earlier exam experiences.

Overcoming performance anxiety

One of the greatest joys comes at the end of a successful performance. A valuable saying, '*the only way around fear is through it*' has helped many a performer conquer their nerves in order to share their talents with either an examiner or an audience. Every performance experience, be it as a candidate in an exam, or a musician in a concert, takes you closer to the time when you have your nerves under control and allow the adrenalin to showcase your abilities to their full potential. Every performer should be brave enough to keep embracing each 'performance' opportunity until you reach this magical place!

Making yourself marketable in any future career

Listing speech and drama studies in your Curriculum Vitae would demonstrate to a prospective employer that you are an articulate person who values communication skills. Someone who had successfully completed music or speech and drama exams before he or she entered the workforce would possess self-confidence, creative intelligence and a strong sense of perseverance and self-motivation – all qualities that would be highly valued in any profession!

