

Integrating Music into Classroom Activities: Strategies for Creating an Enjoyable Learning Environment and Enhancing Academic Achievement in Secondary Schools

"Music is a more potent instrument than any other for education, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul" — Plato

Benefits of Music Integration

1. Social and Cultural Benefits:

- Music promotes **social interaction & cultural understanding** (Cornsett, 2003).
- Integrating global songs enhances **cultural awareness & challenges stereotypes** (Ileri et al., 2013).



2. Cognitive and Academic Benefits:

- Low-arousal background music can enhance **memory & attention** (Waters et al., 2022).
- Exposure to music improves **creativity & critical thinking skills** (Ileri et al., 2013).
- Music education is linked to **better performance in subjects** (eg. math & language) (Pohl, 1989, as cited in Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2010).



3. Emotional and Psychological Benefits:

- Background music **reduces anxiety & increases motivation** (Waters et al., 2022).
- Music fosters a multisensory learning environment that enhances student **confidence** (Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2010).

4. Benefits for SEN students

- For students with **ADHD**:
enhance **autonomous responses** & significantly improved **reading comprehension** (Madjar et al., 2020)

Rock Music

- Reduces skeletal muscle tension
- Enhances brain arousal
- Lowers motor activity & environmental distractions (Pelham et al., 2011; Crisp, 1986; Kise & Linnell, 2023)

Relaxing Music & White Noise

- More effective than silence for focus
- Improves speech recognition, reading, writing speed, and working memory (Aydtli et al., 2018; Picken et al., 2018)

Classical Music

- Captures attention
- Alleviates negative emotions
- Improves cognitive & behavioral performance with slower tempos (Bertovics, Musari) (Madjar et al., 2020)

For students with **ASD & Intellectual Disabilities**:

- enhance **social skills**
- Music in classroom activities improves **social interactions**
- Reduces anxiety** (Martin-Moratinos et al., 2023)

Tailored Instrument Use

- ADHD: Drums, guitars
- Dyslexia: Piano

5. Broader Impacts : Long-term Benefits for Students

- Nurtures **lifelong learning skills** for the digital age & natural learning (Chen-Hafbeck, 2007)
- Cross-Disciplinary Skills**
- Music enhances **cultural understanding and flexible skills** for daily life (Bresler, 2002)
- Focus on **internal motivation**, not just test scores (Hamilton et al., 2018, as cited in Laato et al., 2019)
- Helps students explore **identity and self-expression** (Bresler, 2002)



Challenge of Music Integration

1. Resource & Policy Limitations:

- Absence of curriculum models (Laato et al., 2019).



- Create small **online courses** for music integration
- Build professional **communities & expert consultations**
- Develop **resource-sharing platforms**

2. Teachers' willingness

- Some teachers fear it may affect music skill development (Bresler, 2002).
- Biases persist due to **hierarchical views** of subjects (Lipp, 2016).

- Gain **support from school administrators**
- Update **national policies** to include creative courses in the curriculum (Chen-Hafbeck & Heston, 2015).

Effective Teaching Methods

1. Integrate Music in Education

- "Representational Soundtrack" Assignments (Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2010)

Guidelines

- Introduce key concepts for song selection
- Prohibit explicit content

Explore learning topics with Songs submitted by students:

- Example Theme: **Economics**
- ABBA's "Money, Money, Money"
- Bob Dylan's "Union Sundown"

Curate & Share Playlist:

- Use online tools (eg. Songza / Blip.fm)

2. Express Common Emotions in Literature & Music

- Integrate Chinese Classical Poetry with Contemporary Music

Example Themes: Li Bai's poems X Beyond's songs

- Romanticism
- Freedom
- Rebellion

Modern Adaptation:

Jay Chou's "Chrysanthemum Terrace" X Wu Wenying's poetry



Research Overview

Introduction:

- Context: Aligns with **Chinese educational reforms** (the "double reduction" policy) & **interdisciplinary initiatives** (the compulsory education curriculum scheme) (Huang, n.d.)

Objectives:

- Explore **music's role** in secondary education's engagement & outcomes
- Evaluate stakeholder **perceptions & strategies** for effective music integration

Methods:

- Literature Analysis:** Systematic review of existing studies on music integration.
- Case Studies:** Comparative analysis of successful examples across cultural contexts.

Conclusions:

- Administrative Support:** Successful music integration requires strong institutional backing and commitment.
- Future Focus:** Continued research is necessary to optimize music integration strategies, including exploring diverse music types and addressing individual differences to maximize educational benefits.

This approach is engaging; I find myself drawn to the rhythm and bass of rap.
This novel challenge is exciting, and I hope to see more interdisciplinary courses.
I was surprised by how seamlessly natural sciences merge with music. For those unfamiliar with science, this method addresses knowledge gaps, and for those unacquainted with music, it fosters greater understanding" (Parent, 2017).

Stakeholder Perceptions



Students

Aesthetic experiences significantly impact students' autonomy, creativity, and self-expression.



The principal

Witnessing students' smiles during the final outcomes affirms the rigorous journey, yielding profoundly gratifying experiences that exemplify the beauty of music.

Students demonstrate high levels of initiative.



Teachers