

# Integrating music

It is my belief that a musically enriched classroom deepens and forms connections of one's internal and external world. Music grows the developing brain.

Can we teach a mainstream class with music seamlessly integrated into our learning journey? I believe so.

Let's integrate and find joy in music everyday!

**Here are some simple ideas integrating music, dance/movement, literacy and science concepts using the Orff Approach. Students will use speech, singing, instrumental music and movement to explore and understand different types of weather and changes in weather conditions.**

*Note - Tamariki at my school are withdrawn regularly for explicit music teaching from a gifted music specialist. Therefore, this article will give you a small snapshot of how a **junior classroom teacher** (former music specialist) finds opportunities for music education within the structure of daily teaching.*

In this article I will give you a brief outline of three ways I integrate music into my classroom programme.

- \* **Everyday easies** - music everyday
- \* **Integrating music** - topics and themes
- \* **Learning through play** - musical invitations

I will outline **why** I believe music is valuable for learning and **how** I implement music within my classroom.

## Everyday Easies

### Why music everyday?

Feelings of inclusion and wellbeing are strengthened through music - it's fun and sparks joy within. Music provides an opportunity to move our bodies and engage in kinesthetic and auditory learning processes. Through movement tamariki strengthen fine and gross motor skills and develop bilateral coordination.

Language and numeracy is developed, as are memory, attention, speaking and listening skills. Language acquisition is reinforced through music. Vocabulary and comprehension is strengthened and diversified through singing, poems and rhymes. Language patterns and syntax through beat and rhythm.

**Elements of music** create a foundation for musical exploration, creativity, inquiry and collaboration. I will often draw on my class sets of music resources to implement and enhance my teaching of the elements of music.

## How do I integrate music everyday?

The day begins and ends with songs which incorporate fine and gross body movements. Words and lyrics are reinforced through actions which develop meaning and understanding of language and topics. Language acquisition and rhythmic patterns of words are strengthened through chanting, clapping and body percussion

Classroom transitions are cued with music - tidy up or break times. Alphabet and counting chanted to a musical beat or sung and Reo embraced through our daily waiata. Spontaneous musical conversations are integrated throughout the day, we like to sing the roll, engage in call and response singing and rhythmic chants. I model song writing processes, writing for and with children, incorporating their lyrics and ideas into songs.

We find opportunities to listen to music, explore environmental sounds around us and music is often played before school or during learning times. Children are encouraged to experiment with sound through shared stories, rhymes and poems which are often accompanied by soundscapes, vocalizations and noise creation.

Regular musical brain breaks throughout the day - action songs, beat and rhythmic games, body percussion and movement activities.

## Focusing on the elements of music

Beneficial resources to support and facilitate the learning of **elements of music** in my classroom.

- Bucket drums
- Magic rainbow hand wands
- A large Rainbow stretchy band
- Chiffon, floating material (various sizes)
- Found sounds and loose parts
- Untuned and tuned percussion instruments
- Classroom set up always has a large area of space to move, play and create

## Topics and themes

### Why do I integrate music through topics and themes?

Teaching themes and topics is a powerful way to open pathways to facilitate music exploration - it allows music to have meaning in context. Music can be used as a tool to intertwine and implement cross curricular learning and allow scope to diversify and enrich learning in my class.

I can facilitate the four main modes of learning kinesthetic, read/write, auditory and visual - with a focus on **kinesthetic and auditory processes** through music integration.

A sense of meaning and understanding can be developed through music, sparking creativity and inquiry based learning which increases agency and purpose.

### How do I integrate music through topics and themes?

**Music exploration is integrated into the learning process. Not a single entity but intertwined through cross curricular unification. Here are the ways I would integrate music into the overarching theme of - The River and Bucket filling.**

### The River / Te Awa

Listen to the sounds of the river and watch video excerpts of rivers. Use language to identify what we see and hear. Use whole body movement and vocalization to experiment simulating the sounds and movements of the river.

Chiffon and floating materials are an excellent resource for sensory exploration. Children can create movements representing the river. A long piece of floating material can be held at either side to represent the river.

Sing and listen to a variety of songs about the river.

Graphic notation can be used to personify the river path. tamariki can develop a soundscape to accompany symbols whilst unpacking the vocabulary and meaning of the words.

*River flows from the mountain*

*Swishes down a narrow path*

*Rushes through rocks*

*Drop - slap - waterfall*

*Bubbling, babbling*

*Still*

*Open mouth*

*Waves crash*

*Sea*

*River is free*

Follow the leader listening to river sounds, river songs or music. The leader creates the path of the river, moving in different pathways and directions.

Students create a river path using loose parts and found play equipment. Facilitate experimentation with sound making utilizing the loose parts - rocks, sticks, shells, dried seaweed and any other natural resources are easily found and available music resources.

Teacher chants a word pattern - children respond using loose parts - repeating the word pattern. Could be beating sticks together, tapping rocks, body percussion, shells rolled together in a circular rotation or shaking shells in containers. Children can create their own sentences or sayings about the river and then use the loose parts or percussion instruments to accompany their words with sound.

## I am a Bucket Filler

I wrote this song for and with 5 year olds in the Junior classroom, which we then use in the below ways: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMERflisGfk>

<i>I am a bucket filler</i>	<i>I will love you</i>
<i>bucket filler, bucket filler</i>	<i>I will listen</i>
<i>I am a bucket filler</i>	<i>I'll share with you</i>
<i>I am kind</i>	<i>I am a bucket filler</i>
<i>I will help you</i>	<i>bucket filler, bucket filler</i>
<i>I will smile</i>	<i>I am a bucket filler</i>
<i>I'll be kind to you</i>	<i>I am kind</i>

Focus on elements of music using bucket drums as a resource. Explore timbre, dynamics, and tempo on the bucket drums. Use our hands and fingers in different ways to create sound. Play bucket filling song - children beat their drums in time. Turn the bucket upside down and pretend to place affirmations of love, kindness, listening, sharing in their bucket. Call and response - teacher taps a word rhythm on the drum - children repeat.

## Music through play

### Why do I facilitate and invite music through play?

Music is play, play is music. Learning through explorative musical play is student led and provides students autonomy to solidify understanding and knowledge within their own world while having fun! Environments enriched in music give children opportunities to develop capability in areas of the key competencies and facilitate inquiry based learning.

Through play I observe tamariki integrating, developing and extending their knowledge and understandings of music in a non-competitive, non-judgemental way. It's joyful and sparks curiosity and wonderment within learning. I observe students using music as a pathway to strengthen cross curricular links.

Music invites children to be involved in their own learning and decision making, based on individual interests. Creating an environment of inclusiveness and focusing on co-constructivism.

## How do I enrich learning through play with music?

### Musical invitations are set up within my play based classroom environment.

Let's say we are learning about pirates as a topic or theme, I will ensure I have sound making materials within my play environment which spark curiosity, a variety of open ended metallic materials, brass goblets, metal bowls and platters, buttons, containers, treasure chests and shells. I would observe tamariki not only using these materials for role play and vocabulary extension but also for sound making and musical exploration. Beating the goblets together in chant, filling containers with shells and buttons and experimenting with tamariki which accompany pirate shanties and songs. tamariki would invent sounds as auditory cues in their role play. For example, creating a noise to signal danger is imminent - "pirate ship on the horizon!".

Musical invitations, resources and materials are regularly changed or adapted depending on my observations of children's interests, topics and themes we are exploring through the year. As discussed above, in the River theme - I would set out chiffon and materials for movement exploration and river making, a variety of found loose parts - rocks and sticks for tapping and beating and shells for rubbing together encouraging open ended play and sound exploration.

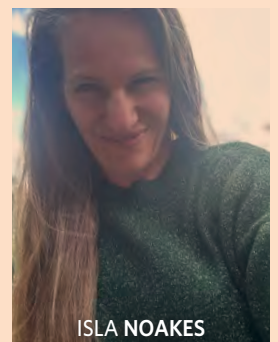
I make untuned and tuned percussion instruments regularly available along with a variety of musical resources such as magic rainbow hand wands and bucket drums for tamariki to engage in music making processes while solidifying elements of music.

### By integrating music into my daily classroom teaching, I feel I am able to diversify learning which maximizes opportunities for growth, extension of ideas and creativity.

### It is my belief that through explorative and enhanced musical teaching, tamariki can connect understanding and knowledge internally and externally with greater agency and authenticity within their world.

**BIO:** Isla is currently working in the Piwakawaka syndicate at Western Heights School teaching an awesome group of year 0 and 1 tamariki. She has been a kaiako across multiple teaching levels and a music specialist in the past, also a private flute tutor. Over the years, she has learnt lots of different instruments but these days her guitar and voice are her main tools of choice. She is passionate about incorporating music into her teaching and if she has some free time she enjoys writing and recording songs for the kids in her class that relate to learning themes. She lives in West Auckland with her husband and is a Mum to her three kids.

You can hear some of her musical creations for kids here: <https://www.youtube.com/@islanoakesinbig272>



ISLA NOAKES