

## Response to Review of Tas Education System

I am a music teacher in a Tasmanian Catholic school. I am convinced that music education has a vital, specific role in educating our young people to help raise literacy and language skills.

Over the past 30 years **Dr Anita Collins** has gathered research from neuroscientists, psychologists, teachers, speech psychologists and professionals from various countries.

**Her research has shown that simple music intervention activities help lift literacy skills.**

In my music classes each week we spend 5-10 minutes stepping the beat, clapping rhythms, creating body percussion and singing simple nursery rhymes, all at the same time. This is a complex cognitive activity for the brain. The neural pathways in the brain for music and literacy, overlap and therefore, this simple activity 'opens up the brain and connects all pathways' preparing for the morning's work.

If classroom teachers could be encouraged to participate in this activity, the students could do this every day before literacy block.

The comments I have put to each objective has music intervention as one way to ensure learning will occur.

Objectives

**Practices and pedagogy leading to improved student educational outcomes and behaviour.**

Children need to see modelled behaviour and be explicitly taught subject matter as well as how be respectful, responsible, resilient people. Educated young people can make the right choices in life if they have been immersed in a caring learning and home environment. Some students are not fortunate to experience a stable home life so the school environment, and childcare, must be an engaging, safe place in which students can strive to achieve. Students may not necessarily be looking at further education such as university but be looking toward utilising their knowledge and interests to choose a desired work environment.

Literacy and language skills help children express their emotions and explain their behaviour and attitudes. It will help with establishing coping mechanisms for bullying, engagement with peers, teachers and parents, knowing, understanding and explaining how they feel and what they need.

**Literacy learning will be made easier if the brain is connected and the pathways are opened up to receive information every day. Consistent music intervention activities will help achieve this.**

## **High quality teaching meeting needs of students at all levels**

Our teachers are highly qualified but there seems to be more diagnosed students every year which makes it impossible to plan for each student without help from teacher aides. Teachers need more time to plan for all students in their care and to have at least one other adult in the classroom to manage this.

On top of this, there are behavioural issues ranging from one-off 'having a bad day' to complex needs. To allow teachers to actually teach, schools need to provide additional support workers such as counsellors, psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists.

Parents have to take responsibility for their children and not expect teachers to be social workers, therapists, counsellors etc. Parents need to show respect for all school employees and model respectful and resilient behaviour.

We know that this is not going to be the case for every student so as a learning environment, we need to make it a place where students want to come and learn. If they can't read and write, or speak with confidence, behaviour and attention will waver.

**Music intervention activities from Kinder will help lift literacy skills enabling students to learn. Research has shown these activities help students diagnosed with ADHD, autism and learning difficulties as well.**

## **Effectively utilise resources to improve student outcomes, attract and retain high quality workforce.**

Our most important resources are our teachers, learning support officers (TAs) and parents.

Parents need to understand that teachers are there to teach, guide, support, help, model, lead our students. Students are responsible for their learning. No one else can learn for them. Parents are responsible for teaching their children how to behave in society; the attitudes, expectations, behaviour management, resilience needed to be a confident member of society. If the parent cannot model this, students will learn from school staff, but this added responsibility means less time to teach and plan. More counsellors and teacher aides will be necessary to ensure explicit teaching is happening in a safe, respectful environment.

**Every school has a music teacher, and if not, why not? It is an essential part of the curriculum. Every music teacher is a valuable resource and can plan a 10 minute music intervention activity for classroom teachers and teacher aids to do everyday.**

**This will raise the literacy skills of every student. This in turn will limit misbehaviour and inattention.**

**Contributes to the State's productivity by supporting a highly skilled local workforce to assist local businesses and industry to grow and compete.**

A highly skilled workforce consists of people who are confident, articulate speakers, readers, and writers. The workforce needs people who can follow instructions, give instructions, see the big picture, look for detail, observant, capable ...the list goes on. But initially, the person has to be literate and that starts with childcare and kindergarten. If a child of 3 cannot keep the beat, then they will have difficulty reading at the age of 5. **The brain pathway networks are not connected. This is a good diagnostic tool for each child care centre to use.**

**Is accountable for improved student outcomes including in remote and rural areas**

Children regardless of where they attend school, any diagnosed learning difficulties, or socio economic area, have the right to learn in a safe and constructive environment with suitably qualified teachers and a quality curriculum.

This curriculum must include music as research has proven again and again, that music learning and activities are vital for literacy, numeracy, cognitive and social development.

**Information taken from research by Professor Susan Hallam, Professor Usha Goswami and Dr Anita Collins. Website [biggerbetterbrains.com.au](http://biggerbetterbrains.com.au)**

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Thank you

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