
MUSIC MENTORING IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Summary of Research Findings

THE NATIONAL MUSIC TEACHER MENTORING PROGRAM (NMTMP)

The NMTMP seeks to improve the quality of music education through the mentoring of generalist classroom teachers by experienced music educators. The Program is the brain-child of Richard Gill OAM, one of Australia's foremost music educators.

The Program is implemented under the auspices of the Australian Youth Orchestra (AYO). Richard Gill generously provides continuing leadership to the Program pro bono. The Commonwealth Government has provided funding for three years to pilot the Program. Further funding is being sought.

The Program has commenced in four of the eight Australian states and territories in partnership with education departments and the Four Winds Festival: New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH

The Creative Collaboratorium at The University of Queensland (UQ) was commissioned to evaluate the effectiveness of the Program. The team comprised Professor Margaret Barrett (project leader), Dr Katie Zhukov, Dr Joanne Brown and Professor Graham Welch.

The evaluation addressed the following questions:

1. What difference has mentoring made to the confidence and competence of generalist classroom teachers in the teaching of music?
2. What difference has mentoring made in the classroom to student engagement and outcomes in music and other areas?



“ *I think being mentored by somebody you're connected to, who you can build a relationship with..... is much more powerful than going to an external PD.* ”
(Principal)

“ *Singing outside where it is quiet and peaceful makes me happy.* ”
(Year K Student)

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Improved confidence and competence in the teaching of music

Unequivocally, mentoring has significantly improved the confidence and competence of classroom teachers in teaching music. Teachers developed the capability to plan music lessons and activities effectively, facilitate learning, manage multiple groupings and teach complex musical content. Teachers felt empowered to teach music in their own classroom and to share these experiences with colleagues.

By the end of their mentoring program teachers were able to teach the complex skills of singing 3-part rounds, compose rhythms/ostinatos/larger musical structures, use technology for a variety of music activities, and combine singing with playing of percussion instruments and actions. Their teaching strategies were linked to musical aims and objectives which produced positive outcomes for children in music and beyond.

2. Improved student engagement, music outcomes and wellbeing

Student engagement

The UQ research found improved student engagement which led to better participation in all classroom activities and more effective classroom management for the teacher. This was noticed by principals who observed that the mentoring program had a positive impact on classroom dynamics and staff morale.

Music outcomes

The research found that the mentoring program significantly improved children's rated singing ability, with children in the control group showing no improvement, whilst those in the teacher-mentoring program demonstrated significant improvement. This finding holds regardless of gender, socio-economic standing, ethnicity or school locality.

Student wellbeing

The research found that the attitude of children towards music improved. Children themselves noted that effective music lessons have a positive impact on their mental health and well-being. Music is fun. It gives them joy and makes them happy.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

“Music makes me feel happy and good.” (Year 1/2 Student)

“Previously I did not feel comfortable singing in front of my students. Now I cannot be stopped!” (Teacher)

“It's really built their confidence in the knowledge and confidence in themselves to be participants in music and in singing.” (Mentor)

“The teachers are now much more confident to incorporate some music into their program. (Principal)

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Research findings

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