

<b>Name of the method</b>	Music in the Air
<b>Origin or ownership of the method</b>	Konstantin Kuchev, based on materials by Pamela Burnard, Rod Patton, Jeffrey Agrell
<b>Goals of the method</b>	The “Music in the air” tool is focusing on Creative Voice Work and exercises/approaches that blend learning, learning outcomes and music. It provides a number of creative games to engage and inspire students on different levels. These games are built in a consistent way so that they can be implemented as creative seeds in the learned material, when the teacher finds this most appropriate. The games start in the form of improvisations and build into more rehearsed performances. The students gradually become more and more confident into playing with the material and express their creativity in the process. Using music background, creativity and active participation from the students, the tool aims at improved retention of the material, more enjoyable learning and improved results, especially with students that remember better through listening.
<b>How the method corresponds to the common guiding principles of GRT</b>	The method can be used by any teacher and school, creating an open environment for implementation of the studied material on a deep level. Musical education is not a requirement for this method. Creative freedom and unlocking every student’s potential for expression is most vital for the suggested exercises.
<b>Preparation needed for implementation of the method</b>	A voice warm-up, as described in the Use of Voice Tool, might be helpful for leading the exercises more confidently. The method will also include demonstration videos in which the exercises and games will be clearly and consistently demonstrated.
<b>Materials needed</b>	Percussion instruments and/ or other musical instruments will always be helpful, also a sound system for playing backing tracks from the Internet, and even a microphone for making the students really feel they’re making a performance. None of these materials is a necessity, though. Every game can be played just with body and voice.
<b>Additional staff support needed or combinations with other scientific topics (optional)</b>	It would always be helpful to invite an instrumentalist to accompany the students when they’re singing. This might be some of their classmates or even the school’s music teacher. Again, this is only an opportunity, not a necessity.
<b>Method description</b>	Expressing through music is something we all carry in ourselves. Each one of us is a magnificent musician. And if you ever sang and somebody stopped you and said: “Stop singing out of tune”, this doesn’t make you less musical than anybody else on the planet. We can all express ourselves through music and it helps us connect with

	<p>experiences, knowledge and emotion. This is what “Music in the air” is about. It gives opportunities for making this happen in your classroom. The students will personally connect with every material they study through common creative work. They will have this material implemented not on the surface, but on a deep emotional level of understanding.</p>
<p><b>Detailed instructions</b></p>	<p>“Music in the air” is a method which uses music and its integration during class for the improvement of retention of new material. It uses multiple approaches that are utilized through games and exercises, all of which include either a performance, lyrics development or a song while using creativity.</p> <p>At first, teachers should practice playing these creative music activities themselves and then suggest them to their students. A lot of new ideas and discoveries will surely emerge in the process.</p> <p>Following are some examples from the development of the method:</p> <p><b>Part One - Awakening creativity in the class.</b></p> <p><b>Sing your name.</b> The whole class plus the teacher stands in a circle and one by one, starting from the teacher, everyone gets to sing their name in the way they feel at this moment. After one sings their name on their own, the whole class repeats it for him, matching his emotion, melody and gestures of the body as best as they can. This goes on until everyone in the circle has sung their names. If someone is shy and doesn’t want to sing, he/she can just speak his/her name rhythmically or in any way he/she prefers - for example tapping it with hands on the body instead of singing. He/she can also choose to stay silent and join in the next round or next game.</p> <p>Creative Warm-up and TV host game info video: <a href="https://youtu.be/tVapdUwBztc">https://youtu.be/tVapdUwBztc</a></p>



**Improvisational Circle Game** - Six or more musical instruments are placed on the floor, spread in a circle. Six students sit behind the instruments so they can choose any instrument they like and make some music together. The rest of the class listens with eyes closed. Later the listeners will be invited to describe the music, its changes and transformations, the feelings it arose in them. There is also one conductor, chosen from the class, who quietly goes around the circle, touching the six instrumentalists on the shoulder when he/she wants them to begin playing and touching them again when he wants them to stop. He/she chooses when they will play, but they are free to choose how to play, aiming to complement what the others are playing. The roles should be switched so everyone can try to be a player, conductor or listener if they like. It's important to make a discussion after the circle with the teachers asking questions about the experience. Here are some examples:

- What kind of things do you learn when you're an improviser, a conductor/composer or a listener?
- What changes did you notice in the music?
- What were some of the things that caused the music to change?
- What did you think about when you were tapped on the shoulder to play?
- What did you think about when you were deciding whom to tap?

**Music shop game** - Two students play in this game. One of them is the seller, the other is a client. The client walks into the shop and asks for a specific song by a specific band - which is directly taken from the material studied. For example: "Ophelia and Hamlet", "The Human Body" "The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire. Then the shop person puts an imaginary CD of the requested recording in the imaginary player and starts improvising this song. He/she might be accompanied by a musician or a backing track from YouTube. After some time of fun with the song, the client interrupts him/her and wants to hear another song. After three or four songs, he/she chooses which one to buy and leaves the shop. Then they can switch roles.

**Radio or TV host game** - One student is a host in a radio or TV studio and he invites guests to be interviewed. They can be scientific, historical, literature figures played by other students. He asks them about their life and work and they answer, keeping to what they know about these figures and at the same time maintaining a good show. There can also be advertisements from other students interrupting the conversation every 5 minutes, which should be related to the time and setting of the person/s interviewed.

**Who is that masked man?** Teacher and students bring different masks and costumes and improvise dialogue and songs in the style suggested by their mask/face. The masks can also be related to the studied material.

**Favorite song with new lyrics.** The students choose songs they know and rewrite their lyrics so they include parts of a particular lesson. They try to keep the feeling, structure and consistency of the song while adding as much of the material as possible. They can start with just a chorus first - so the whole class can rewrite some choruses of favorite songs during class or as homework. You can give them some more time to finish the whole song at home and prepare it to be presented in front of the class. A pianist or guitarist would be useful in the process. Then there is a karaoke performance with the new songs.

**Part two - Emotional connection with the studied material.**

As a preparation, there are several exercises that can be done by the students, in order to help them set the mood, relax and practice.

1. Emotional mirror. The students stand in a circle and each one can share something from the way they feel. The three persons opposite of him give him a mirror with their voices and bodies, so he can see his state from the outside.

2. What I like, what I dislike. Each student can openly share something that they like about their school, class, their textbooks, classmates and teachers. And then, something that they dislike, without the fear of being punished in any way for it. As we know, students hold thousands of emotions that need to be expressed for them to open up for creative work.

Here comes a video about expressing feelings through poems and songs, which is important for emotional preparation for further work with scientific content: [https://youtu.be/a7mHlwHA\\_38](https://youtu.be/a7mHlwHA_38)



### **Sing one word.**

Each student sings one word - just one word from the lesson which stands out and is most important for this lesson to them. The rest of the class repeats after this student, using his exact intonation, mood and gestures of the body.

The teacher should gauge whether these exercises are necessary within their classroom if yes, designate a short period of time for them. Then, a selection of the below exercises can be made and assigned to the students during a longer period of time- they can be mixed, done one after the other or be assigned in relation to specific classes.

### **Favorite character.**

- Each student chooses a favorite character from the lesson and learns about him/her in detail as homework.
- He/she also prepares a presentation in the form of a monologue, in an I-form: "I'm Shakespeare and I like dramatic plots." When the emotion in the monologue starts growing, the character starts singing, just like in a musical, where speech and singing go in turns.
- The student prepares suitable background music from YouTube or with the help of a musician friend to accompany his performance.
- Each student makes a presentation of his/her monologue in front of the class.

Character song info video: [https://youtu.be/G1DpbB\\_2zo0](https://youtu.be/G1DpbB_2zo0)



### **Dialogue between two characters**

- Romeo and Juliet or Don Quixote and Hamlet, for example. The students use speech, movement and singing, they also have background music to support them. The characters or historical figures might come from totally different time and age, impossible to meet in reality, but that could make it even more interesting.

### **Educational song**

- Divide the class into groups.
- Give each group part of the lesson - facts, names, dates, numbers.
- Each group chooses their music style and background instrumental for their song. It might be hip-hop, rock, jazz, classical. They search on YouTube: "free hip-hop backing track /beat" or "free rock backing track / instrumental track" and find something they like.
- Each group works in a separate space or at home, where they listen to the instrumental track and start writing together the lyrics on a whiteboard or in Google Docs, so they can correct them. They insert the provided facts and try to match them with the rhythm, and rhyme them when possible. *Helping tools:* rhyming dictionary in Google. They can also use Flocabulary (a modern learning program that uses educational hiphop to engage students) and the educational TV program Schoolhouse Rock.  
<https://www.rhymezone.com>  
<https://www.flocabulary.com/subjects/>
- You can make an example song together with the whole class, writing the words and choosing the music, as an example before they do it in their groups.
- Upon a next class meeting each group presents the lyrics together with the backing tracks and the teacher together with the class can suggest corrections in the text and rehearse the songs.

- Each group presents the finalized songs in front of the class and has the homework task to record a video performing

the song. The groups sing together and they might also have soloists for more accents and variety.

- All the songs are uploaded on a YouTube channel, created for educational songs.
- Also, the backing tracks can be made by students keen on music programs or played live by students who play an instrument.

Educational song info video: [https://youtu.be/6gM\\_9Co0cCg](https://youtu.be/6gM_9Co0cCg)



### **Hip-hop battle**

Divide the students into two groups facing each other. You should have two opposing positions here: The Roman Empire against Egypt or Montagues vs. Capulets. Play a free hip-hop beat from YouTube. Each group has a leader and backing vocalists. The leader or rapper eagerly defends the group's position, and the group repeats after, just like a hip-hop crew. The leader is changed after some lines, without interrupting the song.

### **The Hero Song**

Based on the material learned, students give ideas for the text, the teacher writes them down on a huge sheet of paper or several sheets, then he/she puts the sheets on the wall so that everyone can see them and starts writing the lines of the song together with the class. They can suggest rhymes, using also a rhyming dictionary. Then the class gives suggestions for the melody and with the help of a musician it's being fixed and recorded by phone or a recording device. In a next meeting, they polish the lyrics and melody and rehearse the song. It can also be recorded with a full arrangement using a program like *Garage Band* and putting a microphone in the classroom so students can take their turns to record - in small groups, they record each section of the song, then they record all together, which is used mainly for the choruses. The best takes from these records are chosen for the final song. The song is performed in front of schoolmates, teachers and parents.

If there are several students playing musical instruments, you can divide the class into groups and give each group a musician that will accompany the singers. It's good to have an accompaniment, as it gives a strong foundation for creating the song. This accompaniment can be done by percussion instruments also, even more simple ones, which the rest of the group can play while one or two of them are presenting the song, or it can be just a free backing track played from YouTube. Each student should be given a role they like in the process - songwriter, performer, percussionist, instrumentalist. It's not obligatory that everyone would sing. What's important is the common creative process, in which the students take much more personally the studied material. An example on this task is provided in the Open Door video, because it's something that can really engage the students to work together and develop their work, achieving a satisfying result both artistically and educationally. They can include more and more details and polish their performance. And mainly, have lots of fun and inspiration in the process.

**What impresses me the most.** One student sings to another of his choice the part from the lesson which most impresses him. Then they switch roles. There can also be a discussion why this was the most important part for them. After they finish, another couple does the same.

**The sad song / happy song.** Each student chooses a particularly emotional event or subject from the lesson and sings it as a very dramatic or a really happy song. He/she tries to be sincere and genuine in the process and not pretend, letting the song's matter pass through the emotions. He/she can start in one of the emotions and gradually or instantly switch to the other end, mixing them according to his feeling.

**Presentation with a soundtrack.** While two students present the lesson to the class, working together as a team, the rest of the class makes a film soundtrack for it with voices, instruments and anything in the classroom, getting deep into the atmosphere. The two students working together can use acting, singing, images, slides, or just tell the lesson as a documentary - they choose how to present it. After they act it out together with the class, it can be presented in front of other classes as well.

#### **USING MUSIC IN CLASS**



	<p>Using suitable background music for different classes can boost understanding and make a better emotional connection between you, the students and the studied material. You can choose this music together with the students.</p> <p>You can also have different signals to separate different activities, like not a sharp, but rather calming signal and music between classes to help students stay relaxed and focused.</p> <p>When someone is telling the lesson for his favorite character, choose a suitable background music. In this way he is not just reciting a lesson, he is performing.</p>
<p><b>Experiments, conducted in the different schools, involved in the project</b></p>	<p>Use of music for an adaptation of material on India – an example with an educational song:</p>  <p><small>Konstantin Kuchev</small></p> <p><a href="https://youtu.be/wSff9cNsonw">https://youtu.be/wSff9cNsonw</a></p> <p><i>The tool has been used in the following adaptations/tests:</i></p> <p>History Portugal and the world - Mário Caeiro – Portugal</p> <p>Literature - Tsenka Kucheva – Bulgaria</p> <p>Palaiologou Evdoxia 4th Primary school Nea moudania Testing report</p> <p>Useful household skills - Mário Caeiro – Portugal</p> <p>MERTSIOTI STERGIANI 4TH primary school of Nea Moudania – Download also the song they created in their Greek language classes on how to be a good bike rider:</p>



[https://youtu.be/n1hw5nf\\_zA](https://youtu.be/n1hw5nf_zA)

Lada Elisavet 6th graders test and report (the song the students created - <https://youtu.be/UzX-UXgh4ec>)



Students' feedback as reported by Mario Caeiro (Portugal): "It was evident a greater availability, commitment, and interest in the performance of the activity and the sound exploration of musical instruments, as well as for viewing music videos. Thus, the learning and internalization of theoretical contents proved to be more rewarding and significant. This experience and the possibility of students presenting their musical work in the form of a public presentation to the educational community."

#### Evaluation tools

*Questions, which a teacher can use in order to monitor his/her progress with this tool and establish its usefulness and feasibility:*

After introducing the exercises, was it easier or harder for the students to understand and engage with the material?

What is the learning motivation after the lesson? Have there been any changes?

Would you personally prefer to have more lessons of this type or to return to traditional lessons?



	<p>How would you evaluate the usefulness of the exercises within the tool?</p> <p>What feedback did you receive from the students, if any?</p> <p>Was the adapted lesson more distracting than the regular lesson?</p> <p>Was there a change in the marks of the students, after using the adapted approach? Was there an increase in information retainment?</p>
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