

# The “how to” of History teaching with and through music in the GET Phase

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## 1. Introduction

Music is a fundamental aspect of every human culture. To understand a past or present society one has to know something about that culture’s music, song and dance. Music fulfils the basic human need for self-expression. Music and dance can also act as a vehicle for communication, for example, like drumming on gumboots do (Rosie Turner-Bisset, 2005:123).

Theories of cognitive psychologists such as Bruner, Goodnow and Austin support the idea that knowledge and skills are synergistic and are established through integration, interrelationships and interconnections, which increases learning. Integration makes lessons more applicable and learners are more motivated to learn and participate (Amdur, 1993:12). Gardner’s multiple intelligence theory also suggests a curricular design that is less fragmented. I believe that integration promotes deeper understanding and develops skills such as analyses, synthesis and evaluation, but I am also in favour of integration with integrity. Music and the arts as a discipline must still have its own and equal place in the curriculum.

### 1.1 Learning through the Arts

Artists-in-the-schools program called *Learning Through the Arts* (LTTA) was established in 1995 by The Royal Conservatory of Music (Toronto, Canada). The initiative grew out of a response to the need to expand learning opportunities for young people in schools (Elster, 2001:11) At the end of the third year teachers have made a concerted effort to use the arts daily in all areas of curriculum and had an overwhelming positive response to the effects of LTTA. Their testimonials indicated that, amongst other things, the arts:

- teach creative thinking, problem solving, risk taking, team work and communication;
- reach a greater number of students than other curricular areas;
- have the power to give every child an opportunity to be successful;

- motivate;
- meet the needs of every learning style; and
- help those who have a low attention span and who struggle at school to excel (Elster, 2001:12).

According to Goldberg (2001:22) learning through the arts is a method that encourages learners to express their understanding of history through an art form. For instance, learners can become characters, each with different perspectives, who could have been living in a certain time. Learners have to create a mini-musical depicting the meeting of the characters and create call and response songs reflecting their debates. Learning with and through the arts might lead to a desire to learn about the arts, which is an added bonus.

## **1.2 Learning with the arts**

Learning with the arts occurs when the Arts are introduced as a way to study history. Learning with the arts might be an effective method to teach about civil rights when learners are introduced to songs of the Civil Rights Movement, for example, the book *Sing for Freedom: The Story of the Civil Rights Movement through its Songs* (Carawan & Carawan, 1990). The learners examine the lyrics of the songs, which provide another perspective on the Civil Rights Movement (Goldberg, 2001:22).

## **1.3 Discipline-Based Arts Education**

Disciplined-based arts education (DBAE), funded by the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, is a conceptual framework, which insures that all students are involved in study of the arts as a part of their general education. It also serves as an innovative approach to integrate the arts into the curriculum within the structure of a typical school day. DBAE means that students study musical, theatrical, dance and visual works of art from the following four discipline perspectives: production, history, aesthetics and criticism and establishes these disciplines as valuable in themselves (AIEA, 2006) (Amdur, 1993:12).

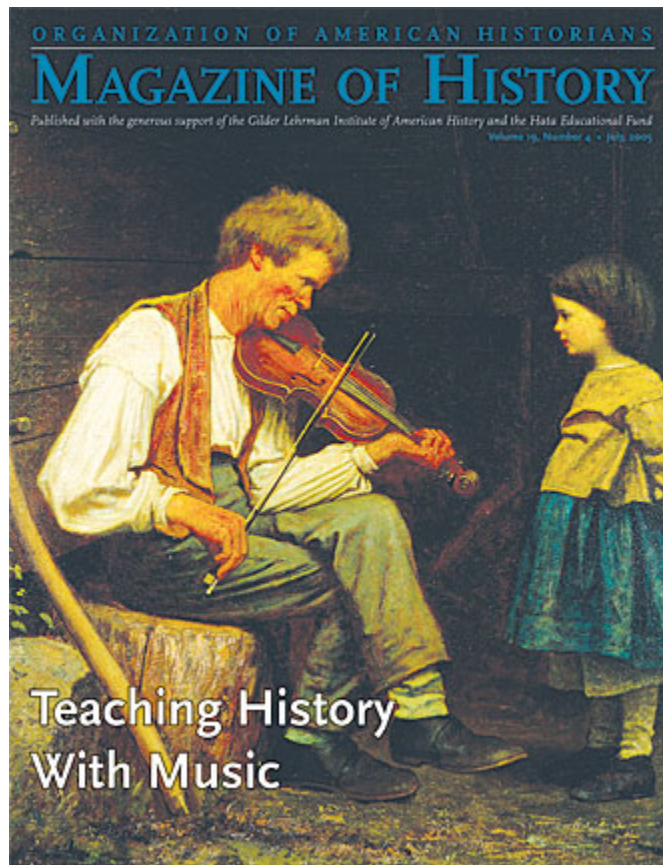
DBAE curriculum enhances learners' expressive creativity and appreciation of art through instruction in these related disciplines. Some Art educators feel that DBAE undermines and detracts from the importance of studio art, although others feel it is a good way to integrate arts into the general classroom and it can be effective for the content classroom such as social studies, because the framework includes understanding ways that art effects and is effected by culture, as part of the overall arts education (Logan, 2005:20).



## 1.4 Other developments in arts integration

Since 1920 correlation of art with other studies in the elementary curriculum was being explored. Two subject areas often used for correlation with art were history and geography (Freyberger, 1985:7). With the release of *A Nation At Risk* in 1983 in America much more focus was placed on the basics, which did not necessarily include the arts. With the implementation of *No Child Left Behind* the United States entered an era marked by standardised tests and emphasis on core knowledge with reduced time allocation to the arts. Integrating the arts into the core curriculum is one physically conceivable way to incorporate the arts into the school day (Logan, 2005:13). In 1993 Leon Winslow wrote a book directed to the new trend of integrating the arts on all levels of education (Freyberger, 1985:7).

The editor of the organisation of American Historians' magazine of history, Kevin Byrne (2005:1), realised the need to bring history alive in classrooms and he suggests music, in his July 2005 volume: "Teaching History with Music", as a tool to do so (Byrne, 2005). There is even a website *Voices Across Time: American History Through Music* <http://www.voicesacrosstime.org/> dedicated to teach history with music in America. It is clear that music has been used to teach history in America, but what about South Africa?



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**Why should one teach history with and through music in South Africa? And how could one use music in teaching history in South Africa?**

## **2. Why should one teach history with music?**

### **2.1 Emotional experience of history**

Firstly, music can give the learner a multidimensional, perceptual, and interactive *experience* of history. Music reflects the emotional experiences people had during and following historical events (**Listening 1**). Learners feel more connected to the time, the people and their struggles (Goldberg, 2001:98). This “emotional experience” of history through music sustains and passes on the memory of events. Through the melodies, harmonies and phrasing, songs give insight into the feelings and nuances of people and cultures that cannot be found in a more journalistic report (Goldberg, 2001: 96). “Songs contain the world’s repertoire of personal accounts of life experiences, including

children's songs, songs about love, courtship, marriage, customs, beliefs, events, religion, struggles, survival and so on." (Goldberg, 2001:96).

## **2.2 Musical artefacts as historic documents**

Secondly, music plays a central part in all cultures and therefore musical artefacts could be studied as historical *sources* and *evidence* that provide insight into different cultures of the past and the present. Songs could be analysed, interpreted and compared with other sources related to the same topic to find out what life was like in another time and place. The texts of songs could be treated as historical documents especially if they represent historical events (Listening 2). Art examples drawn from music provide the history learner with primary sources to examine (Goldberg, 2001:95). Songs reflect human complexities in their most personal and authentic form. Songs remind us of the multiple perspectives on history.

## **2.3 Recreating or enacting events through song and dance**

Thirdly, music and dance are ideal vehicles to use in *recreating* or enacting actual events. Learners could also compose new songs and create dances to comment on historic events. Through music learners are engaged in constructing a product that demonstrates their knowledge and understanding of history.

Through the re-enactment of the song tune or dance, learners can gain access to the minds and emotions of people from the past (Rosie Turner-Bisset, 2001:124). When the learners become the characters they study, through song and dance, they become more in touch with the subject material. It also motivates the learners to work with for instance biographies, which might have been dull otherwise. The song and dance also makes the learners' presentations much more interesting for the other learners in the class and they are more likely to remember details of the subject material and be interested in following up on the subject (Goldberg, 2001:100).

## **2.4 Inclusive history teaching**

The way in which each learner learns is individual and idiosyncratic, related to personality and cognitive development (Rosie Turner-Bisset, 2001:124). Two of the most important theories in this context are Bruner's theory of mental representation and Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Bruner (Rosie Turner-Bisset, 2001:124) states that there are three ways of representing the world

mentally: enactive, iconic and symbolic. Music is a powerful form of enactive and symbolic representation. Gardner (Rosie Turner-Bisset, 2001:124) introduced the notion that there are eight kinds of intelligence: linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalist (Rosie Turner-Bisset, 2001:125). Learning in an integrated manner is multifaceted, because it draws upon learner's innate intelligence by awakening linguistic, mathematical, spatial, kinaesthetic and musical modes. This permits learners to conceptualise and understand by using their strength areas to compensate or overcome weaknesses in other areas. It also motivates children, sustains their interest and improves their self-esteem (Bloomfield, 2000:108).

This integrated method of teaching history ensures *inclusive* history education, because more learners' learning strategies are taken into account - especially the students who have a predisposition towards musical intelligence would benefit from this. Gifted students get the opportunity to demonstrate skills through more challenging tasks like presenting history through music and dance.

## **2.5 Teaching history with music in the NCS**

The final reason is in some ways the least important, though its statutory force would seem to render it the most important reason for inclusion of music. The NCS of Social Sciences requires it. Music can be studied as social experiences over time (Grade 3 knowledge focus). Other knowledge focuses such as world religions, early civilization, provincial history, and national symbols would not be facilitated in depth without studying the music as well (**Listening 3: National anthem**).

Learning outcome 1 from grade 4-6 also requires the learners to convey the answer through, among others, music and dance. Music of the past and the present could also be compared with each other (Grade 4 LO 2: AS 3 & Grade 5 LO 2: AS 3 & Grade 6 LO 3: AS 3). A songwriter gives his or her perspective on history and this could be compared with other sources so that learners may realize that there can be more than one version of the same event (Grade 4, 5 & 6, LO 3: AS 1).

## **3. How could one teach history with music?**

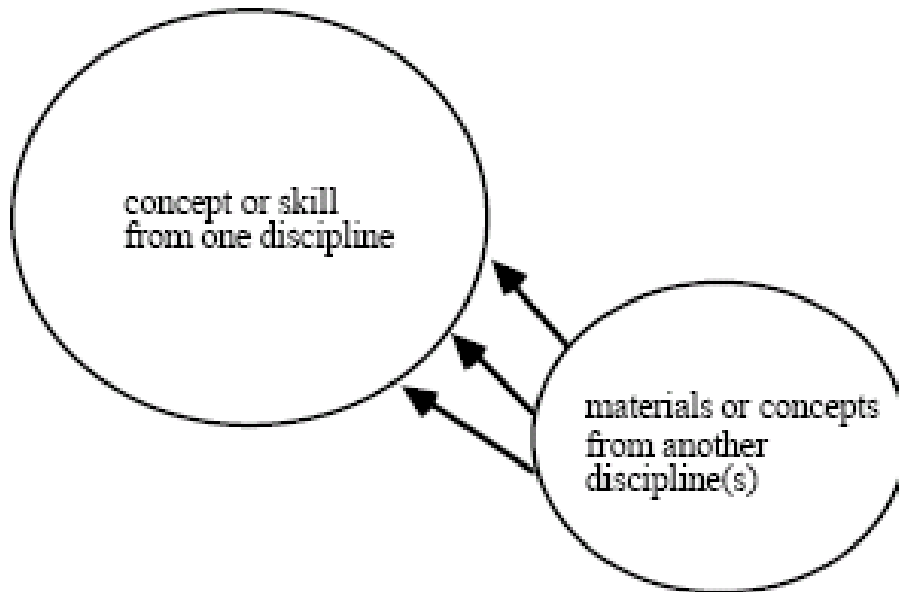
*Three different ways* of linking disciplines or intelligences will be discussed and evaluated: connection, correlation and integration.

### 3.1 Connection (Parallel discipline designs)

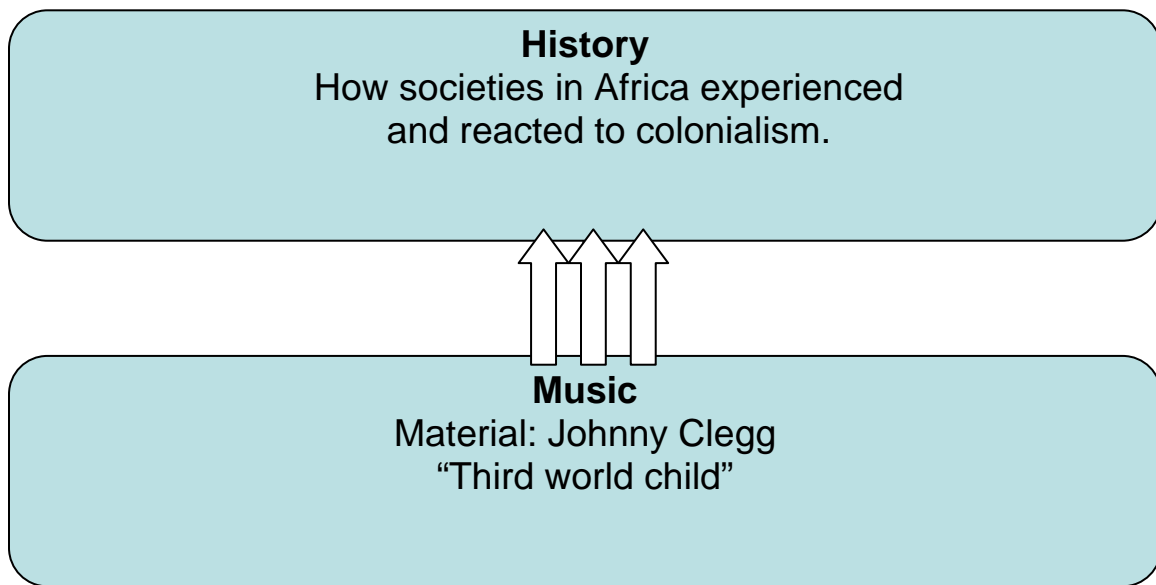
“Connection is the most popular, most used and least meaningful way of linking disciplines.” (Snyder, 1996:18). Through connection, learning about history takes place through music, but there is no musical goal. With a connection, music is the servant of another discipline. It is a very powerful teaching tool but not a substitute for music education or integrated curriculum. Connection is a causal or logical relationship or association interdependence, a contextual relation. With connection, materials from music, like songs, are used to help teach a concept in history. Connection is the way most classroom teachers use music, because it requires no musical understanding and very little skill (Snyder, 1996:19).

**According to Snyder (1996:18)**

Connection looks like:







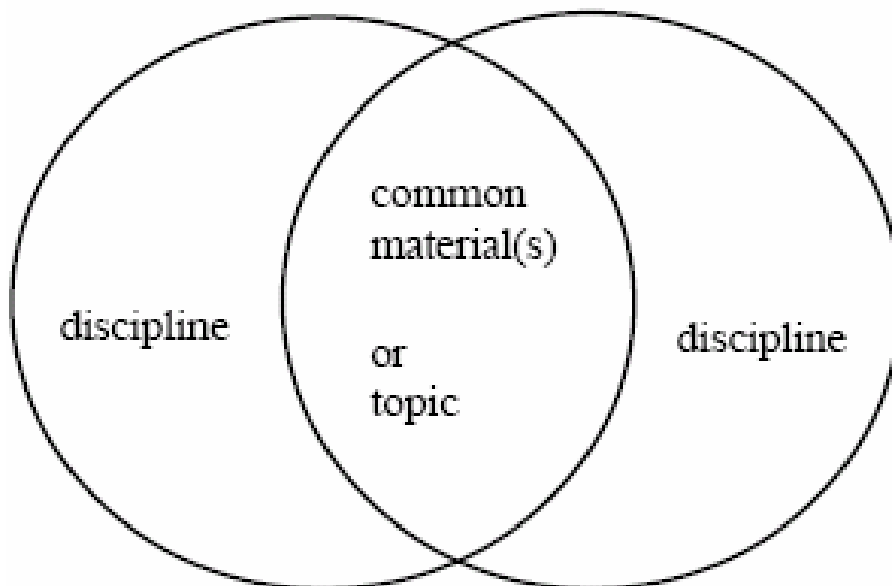
### 3.2 Correlation (Complementary discipline units)

Correlations can be made between two or more disciplines through shared materials or topics. Two different subject teachers use the **same material and different concepts** are emphasized. However, **no plan is made to develop important ideas across disciplines**. A correlation could be when the music teacher uses the song "Third world child" to analyse the rhythms and composing techniques used in this song and the history teacher uses the song to teach about colonialism. Teachers working on correlations work with materials rather than themes (Snyder, 1996:19). Through correlation the skills and concepts of each discipline can be addressed. Correlation, although more defensible than connection, are still not part of an integrated curriculum.

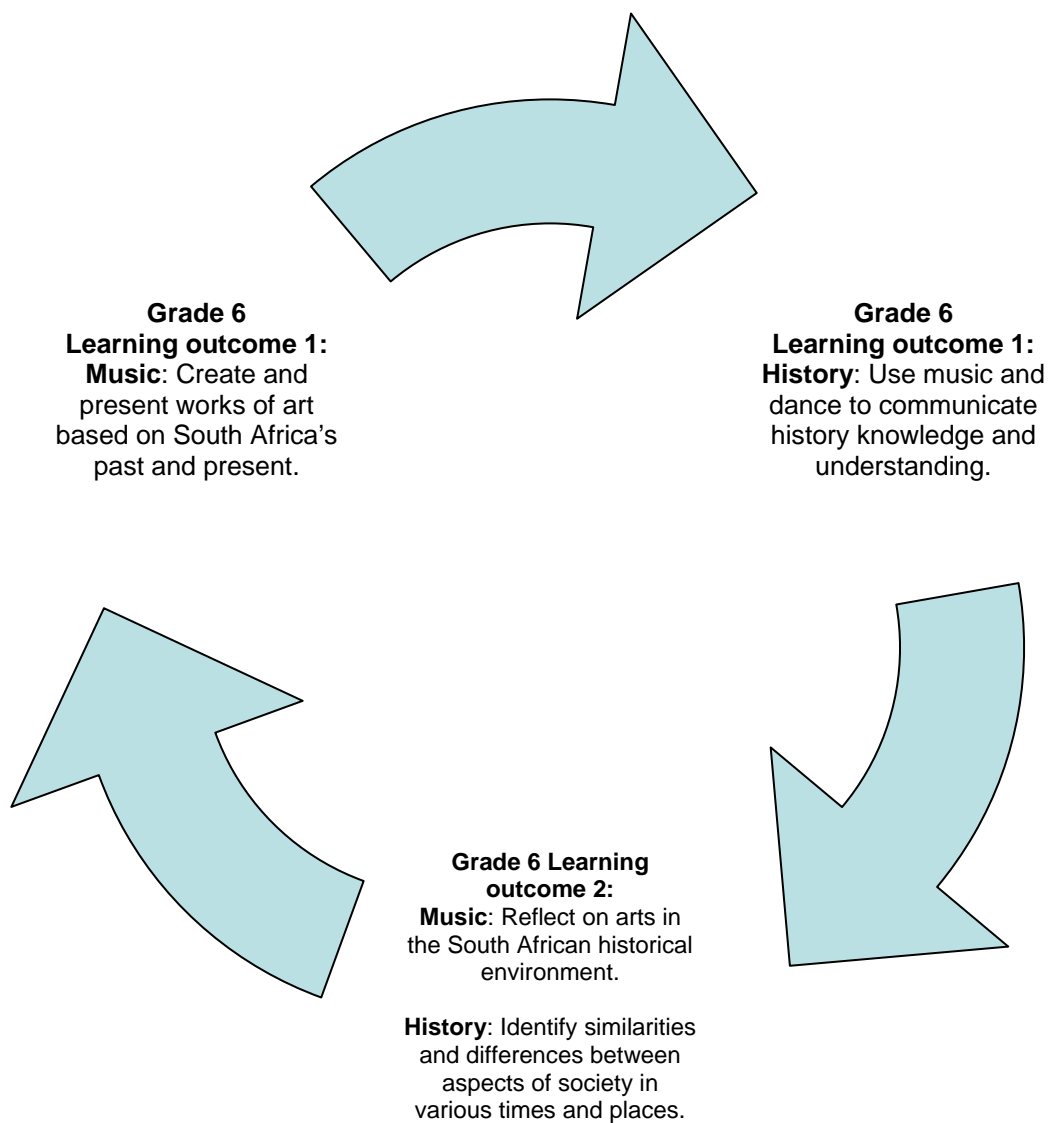
In correlation a relationship is established between two fields or areas (Freyberger, 1985:8). Correlation is usually between **subject matter** from the fields represented by school subjects rather than directly with the subjects themselves (Winslow, 1939:32). Correlation involves a relation that each implies the other, an interdependence of variable quantities.

According to Snyder (1996:19)

Correlation looks like:



Between some of the organising principles of the learning area Arts and Culture and the History outcomes of the learning area Social Sciences there are inherent correlations in the National curriculum statement:

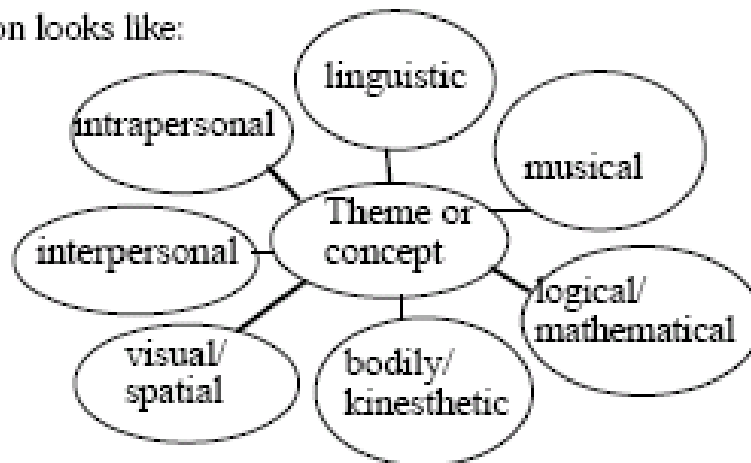


### 3.3 Integration (Interdisciplinary units)

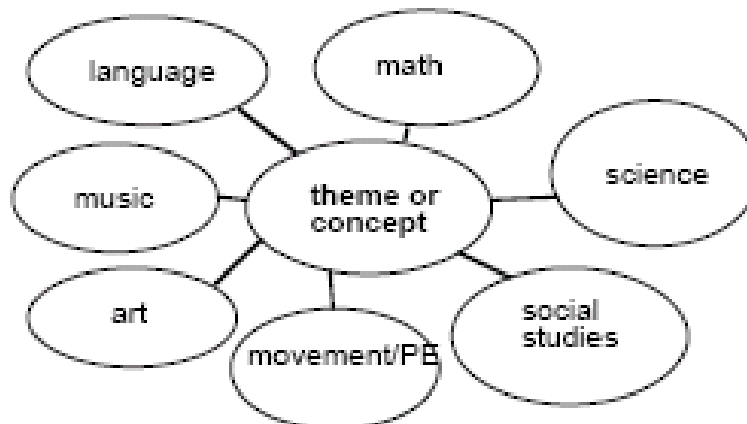
True integration works with a **broad theme or concept** that cuts across disciplines, so each content area or intelligence can explore the theme in a meaningful way (Snyder, 1996:19). The integrity of each discipline is maintained. Application and synthesis of ideas between disciplines are encouraged. Integration provides more meaningful experiences (Freyberger, 1985:6). Integration is the composition of a whole by adding together or combining separate parts into a whole.

According to Snyder (1996:19)

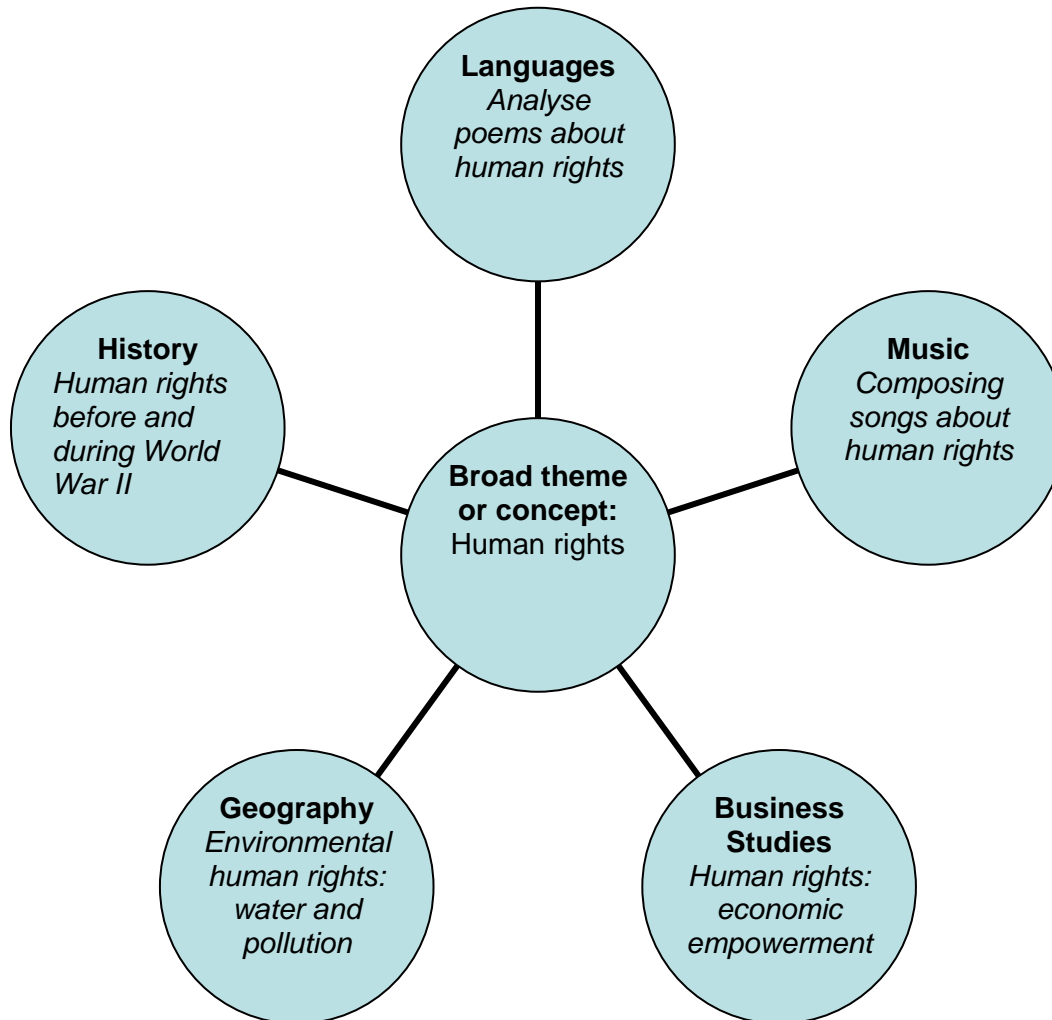
Integration looks like:



OR



## Concept connections



Christine Gutierrez (2000:357) confirms that interdisciplinary integration is necessary because of the complexity of history knowledge. This interdisciplinary approach is possible through thematic, interdisciplinary and team teaching. At Jefferson High School in South Central Los Angeles they call this the Humanitas approach, where the humanities are integrated with the social sciences, natural sciences, fine arts, and, at times, mathematics. The teachers here work together for critical inquiry and interdisciplinary exchange. They meet three times a week and discuss teaching issues, student work, and larger intellectual issues. They constantly search for the most recent materials in all fields and they explore best practices. For example, when they do weapons of war: technology, art and history merge to teach the technology of weapons and the effects of weapons of war which are often heard of in poetry, prose or song (Listening 4). They agree that each discipline should still be distinct, discreet and taught by a teacher with excellent subject knowledge of a specific discipline and that not all the curriculum can or should be interdisciplinary.

Music educators Wiggins and Wiggins (1997:38-41) believe that integration should take place on the bases of conceptual connections rather than content connections. Learning processes and affective responses could be connected through theme-based units that address cognitive and affective connections (Grauer et al, 2001:4).

## 4. Practical classroom examples

There are numerous songs written in response to historical events or relating to periods and characters in history (Goldberg, 2001:98). For the Intermediate Phase folk songs are an important source of appropriate songs. Folk songs were composed by ordinary people for ordinary people. Traditional folk songs encompass a wide range of songs. There are strong links between storytelling and folk songs. Ballads tell a story and the drama in the song can be mimed, spoken or executed through expressive movement. A song or ballad may be divided into different scenes and all learners, including those with literacy difficulties can access the meaning of the song and its historical content. To experience historical content through one genre and express it in another, requires learners to be actively engaged (Rosie Turner-Bisset, 2001:125).

### 4.1 Suggestions when using songs in the history classroom

Rosie Turner-Bisset (2001: 137) gives the following suggestions when using songs in the history class:

1. Choose songs around a theme to which historical content is related so that the song becomes another source of evidence to use alongside others;
2. Extract information from the songs as texts;
3. Let the learners compare different sources side by side to aid comparison of what the different source types are saying;
4. Sing and play songs purely for enjoyment;
5. Ask questions about the songs such as why was the songs written and who might have written the song;
6. Ask the learners to create and add their own verses; and
7. After performing a dance ask the learners what the dance tells us about the people who lived at that time.

## 4.2 Using songs to obtain the three history outcomes

Songs can also be used to obtain the three history outcomes:

1. Learners could use songs as sources to enquire about the past and the present
2. Learners could create songs and dances to demonstrate their historical understanding and knowledge.
3. Learners could interpret songs and the history the songs are commenting on.

## 4.3 A practical activity

Grade 9 learners could listen to the song “Asimbonanga” by Johnny Clegg and answer Byrne’s music interpretation sheet to obtain learning outcome 3 “Historical interpretation”, assessment standard 2: “Constructs an interpretation based on sources, giving reasons for own interpretation”.

Johnny Clegg (2003): “Thirteen years ago, in 1986, South Africa was in a state of emergency and it was a very intense cultural struggle that was being waged. And we were part of that and this is a song that we wrote for truly one of the greatest South Africans in history: Nelson Mandela. And we would like to open the show tonight with a tribute to him.”

### **Song: Asimbonanga (Mandela)**

Chorus:

Asimbonanga

(We have not seen him)

Asimbonang’ um Mandela thina

(We have not seen Mandela)

Laph’ ekona

(in the place where he is)

Laph’ehleli khona

(in the place where he is kept)

Oh the sea is cold and the sky is grey

Look across the island and into the bay

We are all island till comes the day

We cross the burning water.

Chorus...

A seagull wings across the sea  
Broken silence is what I dream  
Who has the words to close the distance  
between you and me?

Chorus...

Steve Biko/Victoria Mxenge/Neil Aggett

Asimbonanga

(We have not seen him)

Asimbonangi umfowethu thina

(We have not seen our brother)

Laphi ekhona

(in the place where he is)

La wafela khona

(in the place where he died)

Hey wena

(hey you)

Hey wena nawe

(Hey you and you as well)

Sizofik a nina la'

Siyakhona

(When will we arrive at our true destination?)

Nelson Mandela (2003) directly after this song was sung:

"Well, it is music and dancing that makes me at peace with the world and at peace with myself..."

**Byrne's (2005:1) music interpretation sheet:**

1. Identify the tone or mood of the music.
2. List three things that you heard in the song that you think are important.
3. Why do you think those were important parts of the song?
4. What audience do you think the song was made for?



5. What evidence helps you to know this?
6. List two things the music tells you about all, one or two of the following topics:
  - a. South African history
  - b. Society
  - c. Culture
7. Read or listen to the lyrics. Write a paragraph about what you think the artist is trying to say to his/her audience.

#### 4.4 Practical classroom examples

##### Songs, which connects with specific history knowledge focuses

Grade	Knowledge Focus	Examples
Grade R & Grade 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stories about the learners' own life, the way of life of his/her family and other families and aspects, which changed over time.</li> <li>• Social experiences across times (for example games, toys in own and other societies).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thanda – love (Hetta Potgieter); Sibathathu (Afrika Collage); Fiela (Afrika Collage); Wasdag (Rykie Pienaar).</li> <li>• Stone game from Ghana (Afrika Collage); Teddiebeer (Rykie Pienaar); I came to try this game – Brazil (Games children sing around the world).</li> </ul>
Grade 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social experience across time (for example, house, food and clothes in different societies).</li> <li>• Objects and personal belongings which the learners value.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pounding song (Laurie Levine: Music in South Africa); Hungry man (Laurie Levine: Traditional music in South Africa); My kleertjies (Rykie Pienaar).</li> <li>• Ons gaan ry – my perdjie en my fietsie (Rykie Pienaar).</li> </ul>
Grade 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stories about interesting people (women and men, boys and girls, common people, famous people) in different times in the history of South Africa and the world.</li> <li>• Stories from the past and the present in South Africa and the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Krisjan Swart (David Kramer); Jammer Meneer (Louis van Rensburg; Moya (Anton Goosen); Die Lady Roberts (Gerard W. Bakker: FAK); De Wet (Johanna Preller: FAK).</li> <li>• Give it to the children (PJ Powers); Luca (Suzanne Vega); Laat die</li> </ul>

	<p>world about respect for and violation of childrens'rights.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social experiences over time (for example, works of art, music and dance in different communities).</li> </ul>	<p>kindertjies (Coenie de Villiers).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hanoverstraat (Anton Goosen); South African folk songs.</li> </ul>
Grade 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The history of the local area or district: oral history and tradition: find out about place names, names of rivers, mountains and other landmarks and indigenous environmental practices.</li> <li>• <b>Learning about leaders in all areas of life: what makes a leader good or great and stories about South African and world leaders over time.</b></li> <li>• The history of travel and transport over time ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Die Vaalrivier (Jannie Du Toit); Kuyashisa e Mqhobo (it is hot at the river Mqhobo, Laurie Levine: Traditional music in South Africa).</li> <li>• <b>Asimbonanga (Johnny Clegg - praising Nelson Mandela);</b> Mandela Day (Simple Minds); Maboka (Praises: Chief Kgosi Sechele II, Laurie Levine: Traditional music in South Africa).</li> <li>• Taxi (Karin Zoid); Die stem van Suid Afrika – “ossewa” (M.L. de Villiers: FAK); Kufanele nize kuqala – “bus” (Hetta Potgieter); E! Motsoala! – “bicycle” (Dorette Vermeulen en Riekie van Aswegen: Afrika collage).</li> </ul>
Grade 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early civilizations: an early Africa-civilization: Egypt.</li> <li>• Provincial history: provincial government and symbols.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sacred music in antiquity <a href="http://www.rakkav.com/kdhinc/pages/sacred.htm">http://www.rakkav.com/kdhinc/pages/sacred.htm</a> ;The biblical musical instruments <a href="http://www.rakkav.com/kdhinc/pages/instruments.htm">http://www.rakkav.com/kdhinc/pages/instruments.htm</a>; Synaulia: sounds and music of the antiquity <a href="http://www.soundcenter.it/synauliaeng.htm">http://www.soundcenter.it/synauliaeng.htm</a></li> <li>• Die vierkleur van Transvaal (J.S. de Villiers: FAK)</li> </ul>
Grade 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The history of medicine: indigenous</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healing trance song (Laurie Levine:</li> </ul>

	<p>medicine and traditional healing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Democracy in South Africa: What is democracy?</li> <li>• Democracy in South Africa: national symbols like the national flag and national anthem.</li> </ul>	<p>Traditional music in South Africa).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>One man one vote</b> (Johnny Clegg).</li> <li>• National anthem.</li> </ul>
Grade 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dutch settlement, slave trade in the Indian Ocean and slavery at the cape - 17th and 18th century.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mali, die slaaf se lied (C.Louis Leipoldt, S. le Roux Marais) performed by Elzabe Zietsman.</li> </ul>
Grade 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The South African War: who was involved and how were their lives influenced?</li> <li>• Changing ideas and technologies - the First World War: the trench war.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prisoners of War (David Kramer) also performed by Coenie de Villiers.</li> <li>• This Song for You (Chris de Burgh).</li> </ul>
Grade 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Rights during and after the Second World War: Nazi-Germany.</li> <li>• Unites States of America's Civil Rights Movement.</li> <li>• The fight for human rights and against colonialism in Africa.</li> <li>• Apartheid in South Africa: How it influenced people's lives.</li> <li>• Suppression and the increase of mass-democratic movements in the 1970s and 1980s: external and internal pressure.</li> <li>• Constructing a new identity in South Africa in the 1990s: negotiations before 1994, the first democratic elections and the South African constitution.</li> <li>• The nuclear age and the Cold World: Hirosjima and Nagasaki:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laat die kindertjies (Coenie de Villiers).</li> <li>• Mary, don't you cry (traditional American slave song); My Hometown (Bruce Springsteen).</li> <li>• <b>Third World Child</b> (Johnny Clegg).</li> <li>• So long Skipskop (David Kramer); District Six (Hugh Masekela); When the system has fallen (Johny Clegg).</li> <li>• Biko (Peter Gabriel).</li> <li>• There is an answers (PJ Powers); Winde van verandering (Anton Goosen).</li> <li>• De bom valt nooit - Herman van Veen.</li> </ul>

## 5. Conclusion

In the new millennium the need has arisen to produce learners who can adjust to increasingly rapid changes through creative and critical thinking. Music stimulates and develops a learner's creativity. In the current media age communication is visual, aural and kinaesthetic. Music and dance help students to communicate in these "languages". Higher level of thinking, for example, creativity, ability to analyse and synthesise information, ability to plan and organise tasks are all possible when using music to teach history.

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