

2 Assessing Music



Music Is Central to Human Experience, Expression and Engagement.

Music, with its unique form, elements and symbolism, and its diverse compositions, performances, meanings and responses, is central to human expression and engagement. Creating, performing and responding to music are processes in which people of all times, places and cultures participate. We experience it constantly through television, radio, recordings, live concerts and background music. Music's place in the school curriculum recognises the importance of giving students opportunities to learn about, explore, experience, enjoy and understand music in relation to themselves, others and society. Music is a powerful medium for aesthetic enrichment and creative expression. Its potential for personal and social satisfaction is enhanced when learners are helped to develop their musical skills, knowledge and understandings.

Music and the National Curriculum

Music education represents part of a balanced curriculum for all New Zealand school students. A music education gives learners opportunities to develop their aesthetic appreciation, their capacities for original and imaginative expression, and their abilities to use and interpret musical elements for a variety of purposes and with a range of materials. Music education can help students to become aware of the distinctive functions of music in society and to know about the artistic heritage of their own and other cultures.

At the heart of music education are the actions of personal and social participation in making and responding to music for a variety of purposes and occasions.

Skills, Knowledge and Understandings

A music education involves skills of:

- listening (hearing, recognising, comparing, analysing, evaluating);
- singing, playing, moving and directing (exploring, experimenting, improvising, rehearsing and practising);
- reading and recording (sight reading, recording compositions and using notations skills where appropriate).

Creating, performing, responding and knowing and appreciating music are fundamental processes. Creating involves exploring and experimenting, arranging and composing, and using sound in conventional or creative ways. The use of musical elements may be chosen to reflect historical, cultural, social or personal aesthetic understandings as well as showing confidence in technical proficiency. Performing includes music

MUSIC FRAMEWORK 2008

CENTRAL ORGANISING THEME

Knowing, making and responding to music within personal, social and cultural contexts.

CONTENT ASPECT	PROCESSES ASPECT	
KNOWING AND MAKING	SKILLS	KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING
Creating Playing Singing	Activities demonstrating musical skills in appropriate personal, social and cultural contexts:	Demonstrated in appropriate personal, social and cultural contexts:
KNOWING AND RESPONDING	• listening • responding through movement • singing • playing • directing • composing and improvising • reading • notating/representing • using instruments and technologies	• melody and pitch • rhythm • timbre/tone colour • harmony • texture • form • dynamics • mood • style • repertoire • purpose and function
Interpreting Moving Analysing and Appreciating	MOTIVATION AND INVOLVEMENT ASPECT	
	• Interest • Enjoyment • Acceptance of a wide range of music • Involvement and participation	• Inspirations • Aspirations • Confidence • Willingness to try new ideas

making of all kinds, including singing, moving or playing an instrument. Technical skills of interpreting and representing elements of pitch, rhythm, melody, timbre and dynamics are important means to expression and quality of performance. Responding involves interpretation of both the meanings and elements of music from visual and aural information in movement, words and sounds. Forming critical judgements about the technical and expressive qualities of musical performances requires knowledge of how music works along with an ability to understand the nature of emotional reactions. Understanding musical form or structure is fundamental to musical literacy. Understanding involves an appreciation of the relationships of elements within a particular performance as well as the relationships of musical performances in time, place and setting.



Framework for National Monitoring Assessment

National monitoring task frameworks are developed by the Project's curriculum advisory panels. These frameworks have two key purposes. They provide a valuable guideline structure for the development of selection of tasks, and they bring into focus those important dimensions of the learning domain that are arguably the basis for valid analyses of students' skills, knowledge and understandings.

The frameworks are organising tools that interrelate content with strategies, skills and processes. They are intended to be flexible and broad enough to encourage and enable the development of tasks that lead to meaningful descriptions of what students know and can do. They also provide help to ensure a balanced representation of important learning outcomes.

The music framework developed for the 2004 assessments was reviewed by the Music Advisory Panel for the 2008 assessments, and was restructured to better reflect emphases in the Arts Curriculum. The framework has a central organising theme supported by three interrelated aspects.

The *theme*, "knowing, making and responding to music within personal, social and cultural contexts" sets the broad context for tasks.

The *content aspect* highlights two major areas of learning in music: knowing and making music (which includes creating, playing and singing music) and knowing and responding to music (which includes interpreting music, moving in response to music, and analysing and appreciating music).

The *processes aspect* lists the areas of skill, knowledge and understanding that students could be expected to demonstrate while engaged with content. The skills, knowledge and understandings are highly interrelated both within the processes aspect and across the total framework.

The *motivation and involvement aspect* of the framework directs attention to the importance of having information about students' musical interests, attitudes, confidence and involvement, both within and beyond the school setting. Educational research and practice confirm the impact of student motivation and attitudes on achievement and learning outcomes.



The Choice of Music Tasks for National Monitoring

The choice of music tasks for national monitoring is guided by a number of educational and practical considerations. Uppermost in any decisions relating to the choice or administration of a task is the central consideration of validity and the effect that a whole range of decisions can have on this key attribute. Tasks are chosen because they provide a good representation of important dimensions of a music education, but also because they meet a number of requirements to do with their administration and presentation. For example:

- Each task with its associated materials needs to be structured to ensure a high level of consistency in the way it is presented by specially trained teacher administrators to students of wide ranging backgrounds and abilities, and in diverse settings throughout New Zealand.
- Tasks need to span the expected range of capabilities of year 4 and 8 students and to allow the most able students to show the extent of their abilities while also giving the least able the opportunity to show what they can do.
- Materials for music tasks need to be sufficiently portable, economical, safe and within the handling capabilities of students. Viewing and listening components need to be chosen to have meaning for students.
- The time needed for completing an individual task has to be balanced against the total time available for all of the assessment tasks, without denying students sufficient opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities.
- Each task needs to be capable of sustaining the attention and effort of students if they are to produce responses that truly indicate what they know and can do. Since neither the student nor the school receives immediate or specific feedback on performance, the motivational potential of the assessment is critical.
- Tasks need to avoid unnecessary bias on the grounds of gender, culture or social background while accepting that it is appropriate to have tasks that reflect the interests of particular groups within the community.



National Monitoring Music Assessment Tasks and Survey

Thirty-three music tasks were administered. Students also completed an interview questionnaire that investigated their interests, attitudes and involvement in music activity.

Nine tasks were administered in one-to-one interview settings, where students used materials and visual information. Twelve tasks were presented in team or group situations involving small groups of students working together. Twelve tasks were attempted in a stations arrangement, where students worked independently on a series of tasks presented on laptop computers.

All but one of the tasks were the same for both year 4 and 8, with the remaining task having slightly different instructions for year 4 and year 8 students.

Trend Tasks

Fifteen of the tasks in this report were previously used in identical form in the 2004 music assessments. These were called link tasks in the 2004 report, but were not described in detail to avoid any distortions in the 2008 results that might have occurred if the tasks had been widely available for use in schools since 2004. In the current report, these tasks are called trend tasks and are used to examine trends in student performance: whether they have improved, stayed constant or declined over the four year period since the 2004 assessments.

In addition, two of the tasks first used in the 1996 music assessments have been reintroduced to examine trends in student performance over the 12-year period between 1996 and 2008. These are also called trend tasks, with a note included in the report for each task explaining that these tasks examine longer-term trends than the other 15 trend tasks.

Link Tasks

To allow comparisons between the 2008 and possible assessments at a later date, the 16 tasks used for the first time in 2008 have been designated link tasks. Consequently, results of student performance on these tasks are presented in this report, but the tasks are described in general terms only.

Marking Methods

The students' responses were assessed using specially designed marking procedures. The criteria used had been developed in advance by Project staff, but were sometimes modified as a result of issues raised during the marking. Where tasks required marker judgement, the responses from year 4 and year 8 students were intermingled during marking sessions, with the goal of ensuring that the same marking criteria and standards were used for both. If these tasks were trend tasks, substantial representative samples of the responses of year 4 and year 8 students assessed in the earlier years were also intermingled into the marking process, to help ensure that all comparisons were based on the same marking criteria and standards.

Task-by-Task Reporting

National monitoring assessment is reported task by task so that results can be understood in relation to what the students were asked to do.

Access Tasks



Teachers and principals have expressed considerable interest in access to NEMP task materials and marking instructions, so that they can use them within their own schools. Some are interested in comparing the performance of their own students to national results on some aspects of the curriculum, while others want to use tasks as models of good practice. Some would like to modify tasks to suit their own purposes, while others want to follow the original procedures as closely as possible. There is obvious merit in making available carefully developed tasks that are seen to be highly valid and useful for assessing student learning.

Some of the tasks in this report cannot be made available in this way. Link tasks must be saved for use in four years' time, and other tasks use copyright or expensive resources that cannot be duplicated by NEMP and provided economically to schools. There are also limitations on how precisely a school's administration and marking of tasks can mirror the ways that they are administered and marked by the Project. Nevertheless, a substantial number of tasks are suitable to duplicate for teachers and schools. In this report, these access tasks are identified with the symbol above, and can be purchased in a pack from the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (P.O. Box 3237, Wellington 6140, New Zealand, or email bev.webber@nzcer.org.nz).

Teachers are also encouraged to use the NEMP web site (<http://nemp.otago.ac.nz>).