

Readiness for Collective Musicking:

Social and Emotional Learning in Primary School Classroom Music

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The research problem

What we know

A scoping review of 26 peer-reviewed international studies (2015–2025) confirms that music is consistently linked to social and emotional learning (SEL).

What’s missing

Less is known about the conditions that make collective classroom music possible before participation begins.

Research question

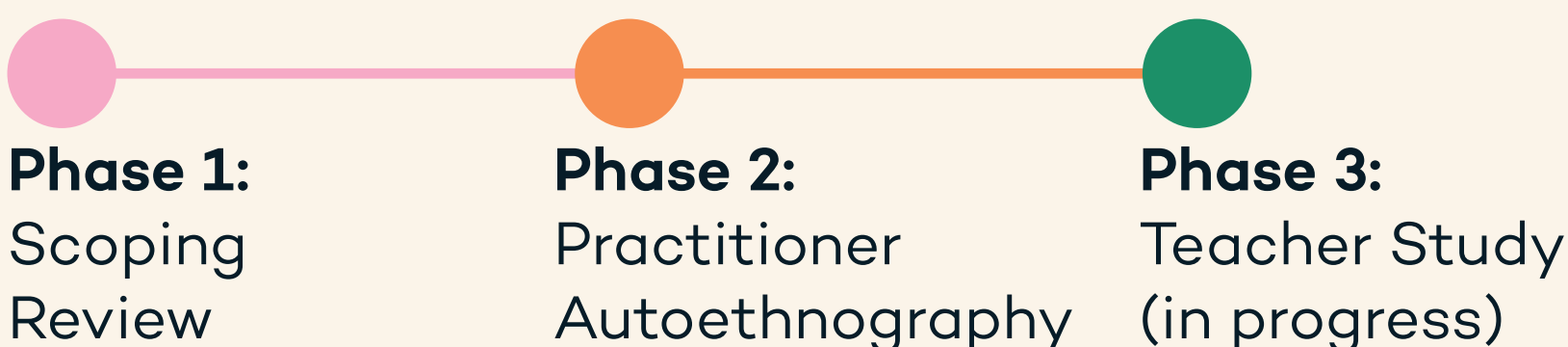
“What makes a class ready to make music together — and what can teachers do when that readiness isn’t there yet?”

This study asks:

- How does readiness for collective musicking get built?
- What do teachers do when readiness isn’t there yet?
- How can teachers name and value the work they are already doing?

Methodology

Three-phase qualitative research design



Two classroom states

Class One:

When it works

→ **Participation**

Class Two:

When it doesn’t, yet

→ **Readiness being built**

Core finding

Readiness can be built through simple SEL music activities.

The shift from “not ready yet” to participation is active teaching work.

Readiness not there yet



SEL music activities



Readiness being built



Participation

Readiness for Collective Musicking:

“The social, emotional, and relational conditions that enable joyful collective musicking.”

SEL not only as an outcome of musicking — but as a necessary precondition for it.



Not ready yet → **Readiness being built** → **Participation**

Readiness is not a fixed state.

It exists on a continuum and can be actively built through musical SEL.

Why this matters for teachers

This framework gives teachers language for the step before the song. It recognises readiness-building as teaching, rather than time lost before “real” music teaching begins.

Method:
Scoping Review
Practitioner Autoethnography
Qualitative Interpretivist
Thematic Analysis

Current phase:
Classroom observations and interviews with teachers across a diverse range of Victorian primary schools.
Conflict of Interest:
I have no current or past relationships with commercial entities.

References:
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CASEL. (2020). CASEL's SEL framework. <https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/>
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