

Week One: Music (Days 1-5)

Quick! What's your favorite song? What artist or genre gets you up off your feet (or at least tapping your toes)? Music is such a powerful tool to help us quickly change our moods. Research shows it "can reduce anxiety, depression, blood pressure, and pain as well as improve sleep quality, mood, memory, increase some cognitive functions, enhance learning and concentration, and ward off the effects of brain aging" (Hampton, 2016).

I finally decided that it was totally and completely worth it to pay the subscription cost to the streaming music website Spotify (www.spotify.com/us) because I use it every single day. I create playlists for everything I need: to get me going in the morning, to calm me down, to focus when I'm working, to use during my workshops with educators, to get me pumped up while I'm working out, and to remind me of special times or events (such as my wedding song and those I associate with vacations or milestones). I love turning up the music loud in the morning and I love putting my earbuds in at the airport, creating a soothing soundtrack for the hustle and bustle going on around me. I am so incredibly grateful for the power of music.



This week's invitation: Put the power of music to work for you.

- **Monday:** Create a go-to good-mood playlist. Use iTunes (<https://apple.com/itunes>), Google Play (https://play.google.com/store/music?hl=en_US), Spotify (<https://spotify.com>), Pandora (<https://pandora.com>), Amazon Music (www.amazon.com), or whatever other tool you have to create a five- or ten-song playlist that's guaranteed to put you in a good mood.
- **Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday:** Now crank it up. Tap Play at different times of the day on your fabulous compilation and check in mentally to see if it impacts your mood. Does listening in the morning feel different than listening in the afternoon? Do you crave different music in the evening? Pay attention to all of these details. You might consider engaging in mindful listening, which is similar to mindful eating (page 129). To do this, close your eyes and give your full attention to the song you're

listening to. Imagine what a person with *synesthesia* (sensations accompanying others, such as seeing colors when listening to music) might see or feel when listening to your songs. Write your observations about your experiences in the margins here.

- **Friday:** Share your playlist with a colleague, friend, or family member (kind of like when we used to give someone a mixed tape if you're of a certain age). Or, if you're a teacher, play at least one or two songs during class with your students. Try incorporating music into your curriculum, regardless of grade or subject. You might even consider starting lunchroom karaoke! What about a student or staff (or both) dance party in the morning or to end the day? Additionally, you could invite your students to share one of their favorite (school-appropriate) songs with you or the class as a way to get to know one another at the start of the school year. Staff could do this together as a way to build school culture and community.

If you're an administrator, play songs during passing period or before or after school through the speaker system. See how playing music at the start of class or during passing period alters the climate. If students have an assessment, perhaps you can play some music to pump them up and get them ready before they begin. Or you could play music as a way to celebrate students' accomplishments—either the whole class' or individual students'.

Now that you've experimented with your playlists the last few days, spread the joy today!

Reflect on the Week

When and how did you incorporate music into your schedule this week? Which options did you choose and why?

How did the power of music impact your week?

How did sharing your playlist impact your day (and those around you)?

Do you plan to continue making music part of your routine? Why and how?
