



Early Childhood Music Newsletter

Early Childhood Music Special Research Interest Group

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Early Childhood Music
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NOTES FROM THE CHAIR:

Carlos Xavier Rodriguez

Greetings to all from Iowa City! I hope all of you are engaged in significant teaching and learning this fall. My elementary general music methods class continues to challenge and inspire me. We have had many recent opportunities to interact with kindergarten and preschool classes in the area, and many of my students are experiencing success at designing and leading their own activities. While the majority of young children that we encounter here come from stable social and economic environments, we remain acutely aware of the many children nationwide that do not fit this profile, so we explore the instructional contingencies that may be required to meet their varied needs. One outcome of this exercise has been an increased sensitivity to the importance of being "indiscriminately compassionate" as music educators. Even in our little hollow of Iowa City, we are constantly aware that these young minds need individualized nurturing in order to develop as artists.

My students have further noticed that the unencumbered and unconscious musical behavior of young children challenges their own roles in the music teaching and learning process. So many of the presentational skills that we develop in methods class—the eye contact, hand gestures, manipulatives, attention-getters, etc. prove to be, in fact, distracting to preschoolers. I have watched as my students have carefully set up an ostensibly age-appropriate "condition for response" only to discover that it does not particularly suit the children as much as one of their own choosing. Such are the challenges of teaching early childhood music that make it seem "harder" than elementary school general music.

But I am greatly pleased to find all my students eager to learn more about the minds and spirits of early childhood music-makers. Fortunately for them and me, the new editors of this Newsletter have dedicated this issue to reports of the ISME Early Childhood Commission 2002 Conference: "Children's Musical Connections," 5-9 August 2002, at the Danish University Of Education, Copenhagen, Denmark. I am sure you will find them replete with useful knowledge and ideas.

Finally, please take note of the announcement for the SRIG web site. We can serve you better, and build our membership, if we make use of this technology to communicate with each other.

Here's hoping that the Newsletter finds you happily engaging with all our young musical friends!

**INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR
MUSIC EDUCATION (ISME)
EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMISSION
CONFERENCE**

**"CHILDRENS MUSICAL
CONNECTIONS"**

Copenhagen, Demark
August 5-9, 2002

**Exploring the Song-Learning Process of
South African Young Children**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the song-learning process of South African young children through detailed observation and documentation of their singing. Four Setswana traditional children's songs were taught to three children, aged between three and four, from Mogwase, South Africa. All the attempts of each child on each selected song were recorded both as audio and visual data. Content analysis was conducted on a total of 197 attempts.

Four phases of song-learning process of the South African young children have been proposed. It was evident that these children learned songs in a similar progression — they started to acquire melodic contour, rhythm, and words simultaneously, but accuracy of rhythm was achieved first, followed by words, and then, melodic contour. Comparison between the learning of melody and text showed that the children used qualitative and quantitative approaches respectively in developing these aspects in songs. Moreover, these children did not put priority on pitch-matching and tonality. Furthermore, cultural differences were found — the results contradicted with the American findings in which words was achieved before rhythm; these African young children were more advanced in song development and used their singing voice more than their American counterparts.



**Connecting with the Musical Moment: Observations
of Flow Experience in Preschool-Aged Children**

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Abstract

Using the paradigm of flow, the quality of experience of 11 preschool-aged children was analyzed in both a music instructional setting and a free play setting in order to examine the generalizability of an observational protocol and to reveal the complexity of social contexts. Because it is defined by the dynamic interaction between challenge and skill, flow experience is assumed to be especially relevant to learning. Fourteen sessions of 35-45 minutes each were reviewed and coded for the presence of flow indicators utilizing a protocol drawn from previous

studies. The challenge-related indicators were Self-assignment, Self-correction, and Deliberate gesture. Transformational indicators included Anticipations, Expansions, and Extensions. Social behaviors involved Adult and Peer Awareness as well as Imitation. High Skill was also recorded.

Results showed all indicators were observable in both music making contexts, and were varied in the quality and quantity of expression. The free play setting revealed new strategies involving peers' contributions to flow experience through collaborative engagement. Analyses of extensions revealed a) attempts to mutually integrate the play and instructional contexts, and b) distinctly social and solitary categories. Implications for practice include the importance of observing children, and allowing time and space for co-construction of learning.

Dr. Custodero also presented this paper at the ISME Early Childhood Session at the 2002 World Conference in Bergen, Norway, 11-16 August 2002



The Primacy of Relationships: Children and Teachers Connect in the Kindergarten Music Classroom

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the interactions and activities that occur in kindergarten music classrooms through the lens of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP). Ethnographic techniques were used to collect data in three kindergarten general music classrooms over the course of an academic school year. Two primary groups of participants informed this study: kindergarten children (5-6 years old) in three self-contained classrooms and their general music and classroom teachers. Data were gathered through observation of the kindergarten music classes, formal and informal interviews with the teachers, and

artifacts collected at the sites. Categories from both DAP, as published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and the National Standards for Prekindergarten Music as published by the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) were used to code the data. In all three sites teachers demonstrated awareness of individuals, congruent with DAP. Conversely, teachers exhibited varied styles of communication, often creating an environment incongruent with DAP. This paper explores the impact of relationship and communication in the kindergarten music classroom as adults facilitate a classroom climate in which music teaching and learning is either maximized or hindered.



The Lived Body – Object and Subject in Research of Music Activities with Preschool Children

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Abstract

In the positivistic paradigm, knowledge is considered as “factual”. The collected data correspond to reality. In a hermeneutic paradigm, knowledge is the result of interpretations of actions and events in given situations. This knowledge is meaning (German: Sinn) and depends on unity, consistence and internal logic of a statement. The aim of this paper is to discuss knowledge as a result of focus on the “lived body” which is grounded on the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty (1962). In a wider perspective the aim is to contribute to the development of a method, which can make visible certain phenomena in children’s participation in musical activities. Method in this kind of study embraces considerations of how to develop questions and concepts in a hermeneutic movement between theory and data. In this paper the method is applied to a video take of preschool children’s participation in music

activities. The result is the development of concepts created in the meeting between empirical material and theory. "Strategies of participation" and "musical attunement" are examples of such concepts, developed from analysis of the "lived bodies" in music activities. From the music teacher's point of view these concepts can be eye-openers to understand what kind of meaning music activities may offer to children in different situations.

This knowledge may change and qualify the teacher's didactic reflections.



Making Connections in the Music Corner The Derrbakeh: One Instrument – Different Meanings

Claudia Gluschankof

(M.A.; Head of Music Education Studies, Early Childhood Department, Levinsky College of Education)

Abstract

This study aims to understand the spontaneous encounters observed in the music area with the derrbakeh (doubbek) — the most popular drum in the Middle East — of two girls, one in an Arab kindergarten, the other in a Jewish kindergarten. This interpretation is made within the local context (i.e. the kindergarten), as well as the larger context: the culture in which these girls are growing up. This is especially significant as these two kindergartens – while in the same country (Israel) – represent different cultures (language, nationality, religion, region). The spontaneous musical behaviors of children in Arab culture have not been previously researched.

Findings show that markedly different styles of musical play are displayed by the subjects of this study. The quality of the encounters seems to reflect both overt and hidden curriculum factors, this latter being an agent of each society's educational and cultural values.



Children's Vocal Connections: A Cross-Cultural Study of the Relationship Between First Graders' Use of Singing Voice and Their Speaking Ranges

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With special acknowledgement to the following teachers:

Martha Snell Miller (Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, USA)

Sandy Chan (Hong Kong)

Noga Paska (Gan-Ner, Israel)

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate cross-cultural differences in first graders' use of singing voice and their speaking voice ranges. Children from Hong Kong, Israel, and the United States participated.

Examples of their singing and speaking voices were tape recorded and evaluated. Significant differences were found for use of singing voice between the Hong Kong and Israeli children and between the American and Israeli children with the Israeli children scoring lower. All singing behaviors on the Singing Voice Development Measure, except for "pre-singer", were exhibited by children in each of the three countries. No significant differences were found among the mean speaking pitches of the children, but the Israeli children used a significantly smaller range than the others when speaking. Significant, but weak, relationships were found between mean speaking pitch and use of singing voice. No gender differences were found in any of the analysis.



An Assessment of Effects of Vocal Modeling on Pitch Accuracy of Kindergarten Children

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of teaching models on vocal pitch accuracy in young children. One hundred ninety-seven kindergarten children in nine intact music classrooms taught by three music teachers were assigned to one of three treatment groups: A: the teacher sang only for and never with the children, B: the teacher sang only with and never for the children, and C: the teacher sang both for and with the

children as she deems appropriate. Children were pre- and post-tested using the Vocal Accuracy Assessment Instrument (VAAI). Results indicated that singing with was not more effective than singing for and neither differed significantly from the control group. Three months of treatment with the children attending music class 25 minutes twice each week may not be enough time to have a significant effect on vocal accuracy. We are continuing our study and will reassess after nine months treatment. The effect of the time and quality of the classroom teachers singing with the children was also considered. In addition, it is possible that young children may be able to adapt successfully to a new teaching style, albeit awkward, when presented convincingly by an effective teacher. Perhaps the final analysis of our investigation and of other studies will reveal whether or not one technique works the best when teaching young children songs.



Letter or Spirit?

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Abstract

Reflections on National Curriculum Statements for Early Childhood Music Education in UK" This paper looks at a model of music that attempts to include all facets of the musical experience not just cognitive elements. Drawing on her previous research the author identifies the interlocking of Materials, Expression, Construction, Values, and Spirituality. It looks at the fragments of knowledge caused by dissemination through the written word rather than lived experience. It looks at the effect of Government-led guidelines on the nature of music teaching in schools, drawing on the UK experience. It makes suggestions about setting up a more nurturing and holistic environment for both teachers and pupils in early childhood music education.

A Longitudinal Study: Why Do Young Children Sing Spontaneously? Through the Analysis of the Relationship between Speech and Singing

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Abstract

This paper will focus on the relation between speech and singing in the earliest steps children take toward speech by the use of longitudinal data gathered from a female child. The author recorded the child's spontaneous singing behavior in VTR from 16 to 29 months of age and extracted 60 episodes in which spoken words were immediately vocalized in the singing style. The episodes were analyzed in respect of the situations in which the words were spoken and the characteristics of the spoken words. The results are the following:

- 1) The first episode emerged at 19 months of age until when she had learned to express her thoughts and feelings by "two-word-speech".
- 2) The less she realized the communicative meanings of spoken words, the more the words possibly had being vocalized in the singing style.
- 3) The repetition of spoken words and the emphasis of the prosodic aspect of speech, which are characteristic of young children's speech behavior, were the background for generating spontaneous singing.

In addition, researchers from the USA presented the following:

Workshop Presentation:

Wendy Sims, "Connecting research to practice: Connecting children with music of many styles and genres."

Poster session presentations:

Nada Martinovic-Trejgut, "Parents in the classroom: Music programs for children ages two through four."

Terry Fonda Smith, "Connecting with Chamber Music: Creating a developmentally appropriate model."

Kathleen Jacobi-Karna, "Preschool children's conversations during free-play with musical instruments."

Roy M. Legette, "Effects of aural and visual stimuli from children's educational television on the attention and preference responses of young children."

Linda Neelly, "Forging new musical territory: An interactive model of musical play for preschool children."

Valerie L. Trollinger, "Acoustical parameters of the preschool child's speech voice in relationship to pitch-matching accuracy, age, and gender."

Liza Ling-Yu Lee, "Using music to connect young children with Chinese culture."

Several researchers from the United States also presented at the ISME World Conference in Bergen, Norway, August 2002. Presenters were: John Flohr, Rachel Nardo, Joyce Gromko, Akosua Addo, Linda Neelly, Janet Montgomery, Maude Hickey, Peter Webster, Betty Anne Younker, Jackie Wiggins, Bryan Burton, Tim Brophy, Carolynn Lindeman, Marvelene Moore, Frank Heuser, Mary Goetze, Carol Scott Kassner, Catherine Mallett, Jody Kerchner, Wendy Sims, Glenda Cosenza.

We are pleased to announce that a website for the EC SRIG will be reactivated beginning in February 2003. The website will contain current contact information for the SRIG leadership, as well as access to current and back issues of the newsletter. The address will be

<http://www.auburn.edu/ecsrig>.

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