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### **Children's Ways of Learning Inside and Outside the Classroom**

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### **Abstract and Keywords**

This article focuses on children's musical play, including that involving interactions with popular music and popular culture. It outlines features of musical play, especially as found in communities of practice in the playground, and the disjunction that may often occur between children's challenging, social, and participatory enactment of play and the pedagogical characteristics of classroom music. The article suggests a child-centered approach to music learning and teaching that endeavors to bridge the gap between children's external, informal music-making and musical experiences in the school.

Keywords: musical play, popular music, popular culture, classroom music, music learning, music teaching, music-making

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In recent years researchers have looked beyond classroom walls for insights into how children learn music outside of school. The purpose is at least twofold. First is to identify what children already know and can do musically. It is a long-standing pedagogical maxim to teach from the known to the unknown; thus familiarity with the rich world of children's musical experience outside school is requisite teacher knowledge when planning formal instruction. A second purpose is to understand how children learn music informally with each other, and from popular music and other mediated performance models. The goal here is to understand the learning processes children use when left to their own devices. Individual or group listening and singing along to commercial recordings, a noncommunal or communal form of musical play is important in the lives of children today, as is the communion with distant or virtual teachers via YouTube, iPod, DVD, karaoke, video games and other digital technologies. As school becomes only one of many sources for musical learning, *how* we teach needs rethinking as much as *what* repertoire we choose, and what musical experiences we choose to offer our students.

The intent of a formal school curriculum is to complement rather than duplicate out-of-school experiences, both in terms of content and learning processes. But when we ask children to learn repertoire that is unfamiliar to them (including classical musics, vernacular musics, traditional and contemporary repertoire (p. 323) from varied cultures) and at the same time ask them to learn it in a way that is unfamiliar and unpracticed, we place our learners and ourselves at a double disadvantage.

## Conceptualizing Out-of-School Learning

This chapter relies on two principal areas of research conducted outside of schoolrooms: transmission of children's playground repertoire, and learning practices associated with popular and vernacular music-making. Both have implications for designing school curricula and rethinking teaching practice.

The musical play of children aged 5–12 encompasses a range of activities and settings. Some musical experiences occur during solitary or small group improvisatory play at home (see for examples Lum, 2007, 2008; Young, 2007). Other musical play evolves in communities of practice such as playgrounds where a traditional repertoire is learned. In her detailed exposition of music in the everyday lives of children in a North American city, Campbell (2010) has outlined a broad range of musical activities, from the briefest improvisatory utterances (whistling, tapping on a table top), through listening or singing along to popular music, alone or with friends, to experiencing and/or participating in music performed or enjoyed by parents within the family home or as part of a larger community, maintaining particular familial preferences or cultural traditions.

We focus in this chapter primarily on research on playground games, those found in the interstices between formalized school activities, in playgrounds and waiting spaces, in the margins of adult-endorsed pursuits. All have in common rhythmically delivered text (pitched or unpitched), accompanying movement, and a high level of sociality. In describing these games, Factor (in Bishop & Curtis, 2001) states that they are “at once conservative and innovative, inherited and improvised, rule-bound and adaptive, collaborative and competitive, ritualistic and creative, universal and minutely local, secure and challenging, self-regulatory and group orientated, stylized in form and boundless in content” (p. 25). Bishop and Curtis (2001) have categorized playground games according to the levels of verbal, musical, imaginative and physical content entailed in them, as shown in table 3.2.1.

However, as they state, there is often an overlap between the characteristics of these games as they are played out by different groups of children and in different cultures. For example, many forms of role enactment occur within singing games, whether these are in pair, circle, or line formation (for example the many international variants of *When Susie Was a Baby*). Highly physical games with or without playthings may involve rhythmic chanting, for example the Korean tug-of-war game *Uri Jip-ae Whae Wann* (Marsh, 2008)

## Children's Ways of Learning Inside and Outside the Classroom

or the stone-passing games (p. 324) traditionally found in Ghana. Some games, such as the South American Lobo,<sup>1</sup> may combine, at various stages of the game, singing in a circle, rhythmic chanting to a child who is “in” who controls the pace and outcome of the game, and energetic chasing (Marsh, 2008).

Table 3.2.1 Classification of play traditions involving musical play.

High verbal content	Singing games	General verbal play eg jeers Entertainment rhymes Counting out Song and dance (circle, line, popular) Clapping rhymes & songs Skipping/jumprope rhymes & songs Ball-bouncing rhymes & songs	
High imaginative content	Role enactment	Set plot, characters &/or dialogue	
High physical content	Games without playthings	Individual Group Team	
	Games with playthings	Individual Group Team	Balls Ropes Stones Miscellaneous

Adapted with permission from Bishop & Curtis (2001, p.14)

The way children learn and teach in their own environments exemplifies one kind of informal learning. Informal learning practices and traditions in music have been cataloged by Patricia Campbell (2001, p. 217) as “enculturative (natural and without formal instruction), partly guided (guided by informal and nonconsecutive directives),” as opposed to “highly structured (transmission as it happens in schools).” For our purposes, the discussion is limited to kinds of music-making that children engage in for their own pleasure, away from direct instruction by an adult teacher. Thus formal music learning is equated with highly structured in-school learning, where there are defined teachers and learners and established “methods” of instructing children. So what does informal music learning look like?

## Children's Ways of Learning Inside and Outside the Classroom

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Characteristics of informal music learning have been articulated by ethnomusicologists, folklorists, and music educators, among others.<sup>2</sup> There are different ways of conceptualizing what is meant by informal or out-of-school learning. The following categorizations have proved useful in describing different ways of learning and their attendant musical values, repertoire selection, and meaning to the participants.

- Participatory versus presentational fields of music-making
- Playground learning traditions
- (p. 325) • Popular musicians' practice
- Emerging forms of music acquisition from mediated, virtual sources

## Participatory and Presentational Music-Making

In *Music as Social Life*, Turino (2008) proposes the labels *participatory* and *presentational* music as a means of clarifying the musical and social values embedded in these fields of music-making.<sup>3</sup> In brief, “participatory music is *not for listening apart from doing*; presentational music is prepared by musicians for others to listen to, and the simple distinction has many ramifications” (p. 52). By this definition, children's playground music is a subset in the participatory category. While there may be listener/learners present, the players are singing and moving for their own purposes and “the quality of the performance is ultimately judged on the level of participation achieved” (p. 29).

In some parts of the world a significant part of the formal training of many music teachers working in schools is devoted to presentational music,<sup>4</sup> that is, in learning repertoire for presentation to a listening audience. In North America, preparing the next generation to perform capably in this way has been and remains one of the central goals for music education programs. For many teachers even in the primary or elementary classroom, the preparation of public concerts is an important expectation of the school and parent community. Often the perceived quality of such musical performance is the basis for judging the quality of instruction, even though music teachers have many curricular goals that cannot be measured through presentational music performance.

A central value in participatory music is that all participants' contributions are considered to be of equal importance. More experienced musicians take responsibility for supporting and inspiring those around them to join in, at whatever level of competence they possess, even though it may limit their own opportunities for extensive improvisation. In presentational music, a central value is the quality of the sound produced. More experienced musicians are expected to demonstrate virtuosity through distinguished contribution to a polished musical product.

## Children's Ways of Learning Inside and Outside the Classroom

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Music teachers are familiar with the tension between defining success by the number and level of engagement of student participants and defining success by the sound quality and individual virtuosity of student performers. It has often come to a choice between providing musical experiences to as many students as possible and limiting participation to the most adept performers. Baldly stated, it has been conceptualized as a choice between inclusion and quality.

Turino's (2008) argument is more complex and nuanced than can be conveyed here. However, his description of style features associated with participatory music (p. 326) bears remarkable similarity to much playground music-making. An obvious point is that playground musicians are performing for their own pleasure, at whatever level of skill they possess. A revealing comment is "We don't practice, we just play," from a girl asked by a researcher when she and her friends practiced complicated handclap patterns (Harwood, 1998a).

Playground music exemplifies many of the characteristics of participatory music. Keeping a large group of children of various skill levels together requires internal repetition, short musical forms, predictability, and a level of rhythmic stability. The repertoire includes repetitive forms, predictable strophic song types (though often containing forms of surprise at points of culmination), and internally repetitive texts and movements. Players employ idiomatic conventions in improvisation and performance practices and, above all, create a strong sense of rhythmic groove. Indeed, in some forms such as African-American routines,<sup>5</sup> and particular clapping games of skill found in the United States, Korea, and Australia,<sup>6</sup> body percussion and established group movements suffice to provide a rhythmic groove in the absence of melody or lyrics.

Whereas individual virtuosity is a value embedded in presentational music, social synchrony, a sense of belonging to the group, is a deeply embedded value of playground music.

Repetition of the rhythmic groove and predictable musical forms are essential to getting and staying in sync with others. Social synchrony is a crucial underpinning of feelings of social comfort, belonging, and identity. In participatory performance, these aspects of being human come to the fore.

(Turino, 2008, p. 44)

The lesson from Turino's (2008) work is that one of these kinds of music-making is not better or even more "natural" than the other. There is room for musical growth and skill development in both. Rather, these are two different fields of musical endeavor, with their own teaching and learning practices, social and musical values. The ways children learn and teach this music differ markedly from those used by teachers of presentational music, because the goals and values of these two forms are different. Children's musicianship develops in different ways in each musical field. However, some movement toward common ground may benefit music learning in the classroom.

### Learning in the Playground

Children's songs and games have been the subject of scholarly study from the nineteenth century. More recently the focus for such studies has shifted from repertoire collection to include analysis of learning, social bonding, ethnic and gender identity, interactions with the media, and the musical and social values embedded in various playground traditions (Addo, 1997; Bishop & Curtis, 2001; Blacking, 1967/1995; Campbell, 1991, 2010; Emberly, 2009; Gaunt, 2006; Harwood, 1998a, 1998b; Lum, 2007; Marsh, 1995, 1999, 2006, 2008; Marsh & Young, 2006; McIntosh, 2006; Merrill-Mirsky, 1988; Minks, 2006, 2008; Riddell, 1990). In terms of learning principles, several emerge as common observations across these studies.

### Shared Responsibility for Learning within a Learning Community

Responsibility for learning is shared between the individual and the peer community. The community provides both necessary social support for individual attempts and verbal critique of group performances. Children choose which chants, cheers, games they will learn, and have several years to acquire the complete repertoire. Learners also choose the repertoire they acquire, and such choices express and define their identity. Gaunt (2006) maintains that "black girls' play is not only indicative of, but central to, understanding African-American expressive culture and black popular musical aesthetics" (p. 9).

Playground repertoire is also tied to gender identity. Boys often know the songs played by girls and may also play them with female siblings at home or with playmates during waiting times at school but may publicly identify such performances as "what girls do" (Minks, 2008). This alters significantly with context. For example, in Korean schools where there are short breaks in the school day rather than more extended recess times, boys, confined indoors for recreation between lessons, often play various forms of elimination games and games of skill involving rhythmic movement and chanting, as these require no equipment or space (Marsh, 2008). McIntosh (2006) notes that, in Bali, song games containing a competitive element are played by both boys and girls aged 3-12 and that boys also participate with girls in the singing of communal songs of enjoyment and nonsense songs. Boys and girls in many cultures also have an extended repertoire of antischool parody songs that they take pride in performing.

### Legitimate Peripheral Participation

The distinction between performer and listener is blurred, with opportunity to participate at many levels. A child might keep the beat or clap on the sidelines, join in on some parts of a song, or act as a song leader in a circle or line game for instance. Harwood (1998a) characterizes the African-American girls' playground as an example of Lave's situated cognition: legitimate peripheral participation in a community of practice. Very adept players may be simultaneously singing the complete melody and lyrics, following the prescribed set of movements and monitoring the performance of other players. Novices to a particular game may be simply beat keeping or performing only the handclap and movement pattern, relying on more practiced players to maintain the complete song and game pattern for them. All contributions are seen within the group as legitimate forms of participation, although the differences between novice and more adept players are generally acknowledged.

### (p. 328) Repertoire Defines Organization of Curriculum

Because learning is organized by repertoire chosen by the learners, there is no perceived progression of skills from simple to complex, no set of preparatory exercises required before applying them to a whole musical playground performance. A number of scholars have noted that informal learning in the playground progresses quite differently from the ways teachers organize material. For example, Blacking (1967/1995) indicated that Venda children frequently sang more complex songs earlier than easier ones, and Marsh (2008) has identified children's capacity to engage in complex rhythmic activities<sup>7</sup> in the musical play of children as young as six in school playgrounds in Australia, the United Kingdom, United States, Korea, and Norway (see also Marsh & Young, 2006).

### Aural/Oral Transmission

The primary means of acquiring repertoire is close observation and imitation of aural/oral models performed by more experienced peers (Harwood, 1998a, 1998b; Marsh, 2008).

### Learning from Musical Wholes

Holistic learning rather than analytical or learning segments is preferred. Campbell observes that "the natural flow of the transmission and learning process appears to be more holistic than atomistic in style" (2001, p. 218). One of her informants summarized an observation by many playground researchers that even when a game breaks down, play resumes from the beginning: "we have to sing it because it's not a talking song. And we start from the beginning, not in the middle, so listen for what you need to get" (p.

## Children's Ways of Learning Inside and Outside the Classroom

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219). This has been found to occur with children in Australian, Bengali, English, Eritrean, Korean, North American, Norwegian, and Punjabi play traditions (Marsh, 2008).

Left to themselves, children choose to repeat whole songs and games even though to adult observers it seems less efficient. In contrast, teachers instruct students in how to segment and analyze musical wholes. Isolating technically difficult sections, beginning a performance in the middle and acquiring a song from line-by-line repetitions of the teacher, appear to be learned through formal instruction.

### Communal Ownership of Repertoire

On the playground everyone owns the music, and local communally accepted standards maintain integrity of the repertoire. However, Riddell (1990) notes that in notated traditions, the score acts as the retrieval system. She surmises that in schools the teacher may well be thought to own the music, whereas in aural traditions, the community of performers takes that role.

#### (p. 329) Embedded Opportunity for Composition and Improvisation

As the children play together, there is a focus on creative reworking of musical material rather than a fixed product. While there are many precedents for classroom improvisation and composition, for pedagogical reasons these have often been conducted within preconceived frameworks devised by teachers. Although formal frameworks and expectations also operate within children's musical play, the aesthetic decisions are ongoing and their own, allowing more fluid, steadily developing, and satisfying performative outcomes. Novelty is part of playground game practice, enabling children to respond to the new and different in their sonic and kinesthetic environment, in turn transforming it into something that meets with individual and communal approval (Marsh, 1995, 2008).

### Learning through Movement

Body movement is an integral part of music performance and onlooker participation in the playground. Learning "by feel" is preferred over intellectual analysis. One 10-year-old interviewee in Harwood's (1987) study when trying to recall a certain song had to get up and start stepping and swaying. "I can't get my beat" was her comment (p. 89). Once the body groove was established with her friend, they were both able to sing the piece. Harwood (1998a) has described her own unsuccessful attempts to learn a cascading 13-beat handclap pattern through transcription and analysis. Only when she stopped counting and simply gave way to the hand patterns performed with another player did they fall easily into place.



# Informal Learning: Popular Musicians' Practice

There are a number of corollaries between playground learning and the learning of adolescent or adult musicians in other informal contexts. Several music educators have drawn attention to the dichotomy between in- and out-of-school learning experiences, with in-school or “formal” music teaching being extensively based on presentational music's values and needs (Green, 2008). Even within presentational music the formal curriculum has often been narrow in terms of pedagogy, including teacher stipulation and interpretation of repertoire, and emphasis on pattern drill or acquisition of notational literacy. Many musicians in the popular music realm have acquired high levels of performance proficiency through other means, and Green (2001, 2008) has explored the ways in which they learn.

In the Musical Futures project carried out in the United Kingdom, over 1,500 young adolescents (beginning at age 11)<sup>8</sup> were asked to learn popular music in school, based on Green's (2001) prior research on how popular musicians learn, (p. 330) and their resultant learning processes were analyzed. Green proposed five principles of informal learning that became the core of instructional design for the Musical Futures curriculum (2008):

- Learning always starts with pieces the learners have chosen for themselves.
- Skills develop through copying recordings by ear.
- Learning takes place alone and in friendship groups, through self-directed, peer-directed, and group learning.
- Skills and knowledge may develop in haphazard, idiosyncratic, and holistic ways in relation to “real-world” music.
- Learning integrates listening, performing, improvisation, and composing throughout the process, with emphasis on individual creativity.

It can be seen that there are many commonalities between these learning characteristics and those found in children's musical play. Green (2008) attributes the lack of engagement with school music in part to the kinds of learning available in school programs. At one time, standard curricular goals in many countries emphasized musical literacy, singing as the main performance medium, and repertoire drawn from classical and folk sources. In recent years curricula have expanded to include musical cultures from many parts of the world, and to incorporate technology. Green contends that while new content entered the curriculum, the methods of teaching remained the same:

We can surmise that many children and young people who fail and drop out of formal music education, far from being either uninterested or unmusical, simply do not respond to the kind of instruction it offers. But until very recently, music

educators have not recognized or rewarded the approaches involved in informal music learning, nor have they been particularly aware of, or interested in, the high levels of enthusiasm and commitment to music displayed by young popular or other vernacular musicians. (2008, p. 3)

It should be noted that Green is not the first to call for changes to a curriculum centered on folk song, literacy, and singing as the performance medium.<sup>9</sup> Since the 1960s composition and small group work have been embedded in classroom practice in British and Australian primary schools, with established use of popular music in Scandinavian and Australian music education.

## The Media, Technology, and Children's Informal Music Learning

In the United States, Campbell (2010) has described the wide range of experiences in which children aged 4–11 engage with vernacular music delivered by mediated sources, in both solitary and communal forms of acquisition and performance. (p. 331) For many children worldwide, the media delivers a constant but changing source of repertoire to learn, as in the playground, by repeated listening, watching, and emulation of sources produced distantly but brought into close contact by television, radio, DVD, karaoke, and CD (Campbell, 2010; Harwood, 1987; Lum, 2007, 2008; Marsh, 1999, 2008; McIntosh, 2006; Young, 2007). More recently, the internet has provided an even more accessible source of widely divergent musical performances for children to observe and learn alone or with friends, and to share with a widening circle of peers in each others' homes, in the playground at school, or in other informal settings.

Campbell (2010), Marsh (1999, 2008), and Lum (2008) have described ways that children carefully listen, watch, and reproduce music from mediated sources designed especially for children. In addition, video game spinoffs such as *High School Musical* and karaoke machines for the child market have provided children with opportunities to autonomously recreate and develop their musical selves within imagined scenarios (Young, 2007). Young notes that such activities are multimodal, employing aural and visual stimuli and inviting sonic and kinesthetic responses.

However, children also appropriate mediated material that may be intended for a wider or adult market, often developing or reinforcing musical preferences and performance skills as a result. In doing so, they are learning from what may constitute "expert peers" or virtual teachers, and therefore are able to reach a level of performative achievement that is well beyond what conventional teachers might expect. For example in Seattle, Marsh (2008) observed a lengthy performance, incorporating the complex idiomatic dance moves of Michael Jackson, by a nine-year-old boy who described how his continued

## Children's Ways of Learning Inside and Outside the Classroom

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exposure to and practice of Jackson's screen model enabled this kinesthetic prowess. Similarly, Bengali and Punjabi girls in a British school reproduced Bollywood movie song-and-dance sequences learnt from videos at home with stylistic accuracy in both kinesthetic and musical domains (Marsh, 2008).

As with traditional playground game practice, children's appropriation of material derived from the media goes beyond passive reception and reproduction to creative manipulation. Thus, a Bollywood song transported to the British playground became the basis of a clapping game incorporating movements from the movie dance sequence, a similar strategy being used with a Korean dance-techno song by girls in Busan. In another English playground, eight year old girls created dance sequences to accompany songs learnt from video hits television programs, in order to produce a performance for assembly; and nine-year-old girls in Seattle generated humorous song-and-dance acts by reworking song parodies downloaded from the internet (Marsh, 2006, 2008). In co-constructing "disco" dances from global popular music and the fusion styles of Indonesian pop and Dangdut (disseminated by television), Balinese children combined dance movements derived from traditional Balinese dance and popular dance styles (both global and local) (McIntosh, 2006). McIntosh notes that, because of joint responsibility for choreography, members of a group of children who have created a disco dance "realize a level of interdependence and flexibility that they rarely, if ever, achieve in traditional dance" (p. 229).

(p. 332) Global media assist children to explore new practices and even new musical languages, but they also allow children to maintain certain traditions in new and flexible ways. In her study of refugee children in an Australian primary school, Marsh (in press) reports that two girls, one Iranian, the other Iraqi, learned popular songs from both Western singers and singers from their homelands and surrounding countries from YouTube clips. Creating *Australian Idol* scenarios, they performed these songs for each other (in languages encompassing English, Arabic, Persian, and Turkish), each providing supportive performance tips. Interesting strategies were employed for making new songs, such as selecting different languages and dance movements from slips of paper put into a hat and creating songs and dances from the assembled characteristics. Other refugee children used satellite TV, the internet, and imported CDs to maintain connection with and learn current popular hits in their first language. Such access enables children to inhabit communities of practice despite geographical distance, micro communities within larger, virtual, global communities, as one form of identity maintenance.

As previously stated, such communities of practice operate in relation to "traditional" playground play repertoire (see Harwood, 1998a) but may also focus on shared knowledge of particular popular music repertoire (Young, 2007). Such knowledge is often acquired by individual children but is then more widely shared with peers (and others) in social situations that include or exclude. For example Young (2007) in the United Kingdom and Lum (2008) in Singapore report that young children's engagement with karaoke in the home frequently involves friends and family members in extended forms of sociality. In a school in Vermont in the United States, Bickford (in press) describes how

## Children's Ways of Learning Inside and Outside the Classroom

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children shared popular repertoire by means of single mp3 players with shared earbuds, “as tangible technologies for interaction and intimacy that traced out bonds and tethered friends together in joint activity”; and children's membership of a community of fifth-grade children in another American school was established on the basis of their knowledge of current popular hits disseminated through a particular local mainstream radio station (Minks, 1999).

In an indictment of classroom music practices, Minks (1999) outlined the enthusiastic responses of the fifth-grade children who were allowed to bring in their own recordings of popular music to which they listened, sang, and danced at the end of music lessons as a reward for good behavior in the planned lesson. With such a wealth of clearly enjoyable music to draw on, it is surprising that this repertoire remained external to the lesson. Like Green (2008), Campbell (1998) has made a plea for the inclusion of music that is meaningful to children, including mass-mediated popular music, in the school music curriculum, in consultation with the children themselves:

Children's musical preferences deserve to be acknowledged...as this is the repertoire in which they are already steeped; it is a part of their selfhood, their own identity. Their music may warrant our inclusion in a class session, lesson or program. As we plan for our lessons and learning experiences with them, we must understand something of children's musical selves. We need to know them (p. 333) in order to teach them and to acknowledge and validate them through a recognition of who they musically are. (p. 213)

## Bringing Out-of-School Learning Into the School

The discussion of playground learning traditions, popular music learning practices, and the impact of technological media on children's musical learning choices shows the breadth and variety of contemporary children's interactions with music. Several commonalities emerge from such studies. A brief summary of informal music learning based on Green's work (2008), and observations of children when left to learn apart from adult supervision or direct instruction, appears in table 3.2.2.

Five issues prompt a call for reconsideration of traditions associated with in-school music learning:

- Recognition of social and musical values
- Notions of difficulty
- Students as agents of their own learning

## Children's Ways of Learning Inside and Outside the Classroom

- Kinesthetic ways of learning
- Aural-oral, holistic, and multimodal learning as a legitimate form of musicianship

### Social and Musical Values

Professional music teachers must of necessity become expert in the traditions and values represented by presentational music. The result of such disciplinary expertise has been the relative devaluing of participatory music experience as educative. “As compared with other musical fields, participatory music-making/dancing is the most democratic, the least formally competitive, and the least hierarchical” (Turino, 2008, p. 35). As such it might be expected to hold a central place in the curriculum for children aged 5–12, typically seen as the province of musical learning for all children, regardless of musical ability. Adopting a “participatory frame” of reference to school music would value engagement and participation of the most learners. Such a frame also has appeal for students, as the goal is the pleasure of making music together in the moment, rather than a “rehearsing frame” where the goal is a distant presentation for others or a “knowledge frame,” where children acquire knowledge without enjoyment and engagement. For teachers it means finding repertoire within your school's and cultures’ context that is participatory by nature and including such experiences as part of the curriculum. Examples could include drum circles, children's playground songs and games from their own and other cultures, line and other dancing and associated singing, rapping, and popular (p. 334) (p. 335) and vernacular adult musics as appropriate. This may mean opening up pathways to teachers’ own learning as well that of their students, a sometimes unsettling but rewarding experience.

Table 3.2.2 Principles of Informal Music Learning and School-based Instruction: A Comparative Summary.

<b>Green (2008) Informal Learning 5 principles</b>	<b>Playground &amp; Out-of- school Practice</b>	<b>In-school Music Historical Practice</b>
Learners initially choose own repertoire to meet personal goals.	Learners choose repertoire to acquire for social and personal goals.	Teacher chooses repertoire for curricular goals.
Copying recordings by ear is primary means of learning; unlimited repetitions available within time assigned to	Close imitation of aural/oral/visual models by more adept peers or multi-media sources; multi-modal learning; multiple repetitions available	Teacher led, large group response. May include notation and aural/oral learning. Time frame

## Children's Ways of Learning Inside and Outside the Classroom

popular music learning unit.	over multiple iterations and multi-year time frame.	determined by allotted class time.
	Movement is central to all music experience and learning; eye, ear and gestural coordination essential for some forms of play.	Historically visual representation of sound has had more attention than kinesthetic or embodied response.
Learning integrates theory, aural skills, performance and composition.	Includes communal improvisation and composition on occasion using accepted conventions: 'composition in performance'.	Ear training, composition and performance often seen as separate areas of instruction.
Learning is holistic, idiosyncratic and haphazard. Individual and communal learning integrated.	Skills develop as required by repertoire chosen. Holistic repetition preferred to analysis or segmentation.	Learning sequence simple to complex is the model. Skills developed sequentially through isolated patterns and/or drill.
All learners required to perform within small group.	Repertoire allows for many levels of participation from onlooker to acknowledged song leader. Children participate or withdraw at will and learn at their own pace.	Goal is to have all learners become active independent performer/ participants.
Learning takes place in friendship groups. Self and peer directed learning	Learning takes place in friendship or familial groups. Self and peer directed learning	Grouping by assigned grade and school classroom. Teacher directed learning.

## Notions of Difficulty

Although children sometimes create and perform things that are more difficult before they perform "easier" things in their musical play, it is not because they have no notion of relative difficulty. In fact they have quite well-developed ideas of levels of difficulty, and use these to assist younger or less able players. However, these do not necessarily

## Children's Ways of Learning Inside and Outside the Classroom

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correspond to adult notions of what is difficult, especially in the rhythmic domain. The level of musical and kinaesthetic complexity of what children achieve in their play is often very high, and much more difficult than adults assume it to be. Children should therefore be given some say in how things are structured for learning, as well as acknowledging their holistic approach to learning and the need for peer teaching in the classroom. Children also need to be given opportunities to work with much more complex material in the classroom, not just watered-down “music for children.”

### Students as Agents of Their Own Learning

Successful learning on the playground and in other areas of children's informal learning depends on learners choosing the repertoire and with whom they work closely. Some suggestions to foster student agency include the following.

- Provide learners with control over some repertoire to be learned (by inviting children to bring favorite musical material into the classroom, whole class vote, small group or individual choice projects). Children could contribute regularly to a shared source of musical examples, sung or recorded onto mp3 players and stored in a digital repository on the class or music computer or karaoke player. This could be complemented by a book (or computer repository) of favorite song or game lyrics (with some documentation of movements if appropriate) as a prompt for peer or student-led teaching.
- Raise the level of expectation for individual creation and performance and provide regular opportunities for small groups and individuals to work independently from the teacher.
- Include popular music and a wide range of musical repertoire, including that requested by students. Ensure that both repertoire and associated activities are musically and cognitively challenging.
- Allow for children's creative manipulation of repertoire over time—multiple versions promote ownership and development of compositional and performative skill.
- (p. 336) • Allow students to choose friendship groups for group projects.
- Provide opportunity for peers to coach other students.

### Importance of the Kinesthetic

In virtually all forms of self-directed play, movement is inseparable from music. If movement is the instinctive response to music for children outside the classroom, it can be a powerful tool for music learning in the classroom, when channeled or guided by the teacher. Movement is already integral to a number of pedagogical approaches that have

## Children's Ways of Learning Inside and Outside the Classroom

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widespread use in classroom music education. A kinesthetic learning dimension within the classroom might:

- Encourage children to invent movements to accompany songs, listening repertoire, and their own compositions.
- Provide teacher models of expressive movements to recorded music for children to imitate (Ferguson, 2004).

### Aural-Oral, Holistic, and Multimodal Learning

While being a *literate* musician was once defined as the ability to “see what one hears and hear what one sees,”<sup>10</sup> this is a narrow view, particularly in a global context. Reading the style, the vocal nuances, of a live or recorded performance and reproducing them are as important as reproducing pitch and rhythm in terms of conveying a performance faithful to the original. The ability to improvise or extend the model is another form of musicianship that goes well beyond ability to decode or encode music in traditional notation. For children, learning by ear through many repetitions of a complete song is a familiar and effective means of acquiring new repertoire, including stylistic and expressive elements. Use of multimedia technologies also draws on multimodal (aural-visual-kinesthetic) forms of music acquisition. For teachers such learning can be achieved through a number of classroom strategies:

- Allow for many levels of initial participation. Repeat repertoire over months or years and vary the different ways it is presented and that children can participate, for example through listening, movement, and improvisatory experiences.
- Provide expert music models yourself.
- Invite children to act as models for others.
- Use audio and video recordings as models, again allowing children ongoing modes of access (computer, karaoke, or mp3 players) for individual, small group, or whole group learning.

We take it as a given that there is no value-free pedagogy, following Jerome Bruner's (1996, p. 63) admonition: “a choice of pedagogy inevitably communicates (p. 337) a conception of the learning process and the learner. Pedagogy is never innocent. It is a medium that carries its own message.” The attempt here is neither to vilify school music practices as unnaturally repressive nor to dismiss out-of-school learning experiences as simple enculturation but to note that different fields of music-making will have a pedagogy that is suited to their social and musical goals and values. We do invite teachers to reconsider the place of informal music learning experiences in a complete school curriculum.



## Children's Ways of Learning Inside and Outside the Classroom

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We are fortunate as music teachers that children seek to learn our subject out of school; indeed they seek it out with a devotion and conviction we would love to see within our classroom walls. The learning they do informally is serious, committed, and important to them as individuals and communities. If we wish to create learning communities within our schools, then adopting some of the social and pedagogical values found in informal music-making will serve our goals and those of our students.

## Reflective Questions

1. What are the major characteristics of children's informal music-making? Discuss your own or family members' childhood experiences of musical play and engagement with informal or participatory music learning, alone and with others. What values attach to this kind of musical endeavour?
2. What do you think is the appropriate balance between informal and formal music instruction in a school curriculum for children ages 5-12?
3. What reservations do you have regarding the inclusion of informal learning practices in music classrooms?

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### Notes:

- (1.) This game, occurring in several South American countries, is equivalent to What's the Time Mr Wolf, found in England and Australia.
- (2.) For a discussion of a framework for the interpretation of musical play based on other disciplines, including cultural studies, gender studies, sociology, and anthropology, see Young (2007).
- (3.) Turino also defines two other fields of music-making: high fidelity music and studio art music. Each of the four embodies social and musical values, means of transmission, and attractions for participants and listeners.
- (4.) Students typically enter a school of music by audition on a performing instrument or voice. Thus even those who seek a career in teaching must have first mastered presentational music at some level. However, this is not the case for generalist classroom teachers, who are often responsible for teaching music as part of the primary school curriculum, for example in the United Kingdom, many European countries and much of Australia. See chapter 3.6.
- (5.) Routines may also be known as stepping or cheers, described by Gaunt (2006) as “performances of percussive choreography—based on a more polyrhythmic and multi-limbed sequence of handclapping gestures, thigh-slapping, and foot-stomping” (p. 76).
- (6.) These games have varying names, for example Slide (U.S.), Ujeong Test (Korea), and Salamyukyuk (Australia), and consist of a number of clapped beats using varied hand positions, forming an initial pattern that is gradually extended during the course of the game as a test of memory and clapping skill (Marsh, 2008).
- (7.) Such complexities include concurrent metrically contrasting cycles of text and movements, syncopation, asymmetrical meters, and additive meters.
- (8.) Although Green's research has been conducted in the secondary school context, the age group on which this research has focused to some extent falls under the jurisdiction of what is variously termed primary or elementary school and is therefore pertinent to this discussion. For example, in Australia children attend primary school until age 12 and in Norway until age 13.
- (9.) See, for examples beginning in the 1970s, the work of Murray Schafer in Canada, John Paynter in the United Kingdom, the Manhattanville Music Curriculum Project and the Contemporary Music Project for Creativity in Music Education (CMP) in the United States.
- (10.) The quotation is attributed to Robert Schuman by Zoltan Kodály in his talks to college students.

## Children's Ways of Learning Inside and Outside the Classroom

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