Young Children, Music and Diversity

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

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_______________________________
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This thesis is for my late Father.
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SUMMARY

Young children show great enthusiasm for music, especially singing and dancing. They are willing to explore and to perform. This positive energy should be nurtured, especially since interaction with music holds a wide variety of immediate and long lasting benefits for children. Music is exceptionally well suited for children to learn about cultural diversity and fuel their curiosity for other cultures. Musical development offers opportunities for children to appreciate and participate in diverse cultural activities that expand their world view. This project explored the potential benefits of providing children in early childhood programs with high quality experiences of music that reflect cultural diversity. In order to achieve this goal, children’s present musical experiences in their early childhood setting were observed. Building on these observations appropriate musical experiences, representing culturally diverse music features, were introduced as part of the early childhood curriculum. Reflection centred around changes in children’s response to familiar and unfamiliar musical material and the learning that took place within music explorations in a play-based setting. Music was the chosen focus as it is an acknowledged language of childhood (Office of Early Childhood Education & Child Care, 2009). The exploration of diversity had particular significance in the light of the cultural diversity generally prevalent in Australia.
CHAPTER I: AN INTRODUCTION TO THESIS

1.1 Introduction

Music plays a significant role in the lives of children from a very early age (Campbell, 2004; De Vries, 2006; Edwards, Bayless, & Ramsey, 2005; Ellis, 1985; Gruhn, 2005; Nyland, 2007; Welch, 2005). Surrounded by sound and music, children respond with interest and enthusiasm. Educators have a responsibility to help children discover how to listen to the world around them in a conscious way and how to use sound and music as a means of expressing this understanding of the world (Nyland & Ferris, 2005). In this thesis the status of music in the early childhood curriculum is explored with a particular emphasis on the value of music for discovering and experimenting with concepts of diversity. Australia is a multicultural country and is part of a globalised world, so knowledge, understanding and celebration of difference have become increasingly important. As a non-verbal language of childhood, music can be shared across cultures and also be a vehicle to learn about culture. However, music in pre-service teaching courses has been threatened in recent years as government policy has seen an emphasis on literacy and numeracy curriculum offerings for children and therefore time spent on arts and other subjects in teacher education courses has been diminished. Arguing for the importance of music in children’s lives, this thesis examines current music provision in a childcare centre and staff perceptions of their ability to include music in their daily planning. A substantial part of this thesis is devoted to the description of the development of a music program for the children that was designed to observe their response to the inclusion of music in everyday experiences. A focus of the planned music experiences was to heighten awareness of cultural diversity. It is argued music is particularly appropriate vehicle to share different experiences with enjoyment. The music described in this thesis had a dual purpose of encouraging children’s participation in planned and spontaneous musical activity whilst enhancing children’s enthusiasm for playing with concepts of diverse languages and cultures.
1.2 The research

This research is based on the premise that music is an important and profound human activity. Young children as they learn language and culture have a right to be able to communicate and learn about themselves and others through the so called “expressive activities” (Hendricks, 2001) or the “100 languages” (Edwards, Forman & Guandini, 1998).

The design for this project was focused on bringing a music program to an urban child care centre with a sound educational reputation. The researcher designed a program that would encourage children to work with a variety of musical content, to encourage musical awareness and a greater understanding of diversity. Partnership with staff and parents was also a focus. The program has been delivered through planned group sessions and through the play environment simultaneously.

This introductory Chapter provides a background to the research, presents the aims and the questions being addressed. The research literature, theoretical orientation, methodology and method are briefly introduced. The design of the research project is described.

1.3 Background

Traditionally music and movement have come to be perceived as significant elements of early childhood programs (e.g., Bridges, 1994). Music has always been considered to have an important part to play in promoting aesthetic awareness and encouraging creative self-expression (McDowell, 1999, Rinaldi, 2006). In a departure from the past, recent research has strongly supported the notion that music is no longer prominent in the early childhood curriculum. Where it has been retained, it is often present in the form of ‘muzak’: Music to pack up to, music to rest to, music to influence children’s behaviour to comply with other goals. Music as a free-flowing creative activity covering such diverse types of expression as singing, dancing, composing, playing with instruments or, indeed, just listening has taken the backseat in early childhood educational practices (de Vries, 2009). Evidence is mounting that the primary reason for this state of affairs lies with teachers perceived lack of expertise and lack of confidence in this area of practice (e.g., Young, 2003; Suthers, 2004; deVries, 2006). In response to this, researchers have attempted to design programs that assign staff an
active role in designing music programs in the hope that confidence will develop and engagement with music will become more participatory. Thus far the response has been mixed.

An argument sometimes put forward in the context of music education is that exposure to music is an excellent way of exploring one’s own as well as other cultures. Music is practiced differently across many cultures and sub-cultures; within family groups as well as within particular ethnic-, language-, social-, age- and genre/style groups. Unlike foreign languages, symbolic customs, or the presence of physical artefacts, music is a part of culture that can be easily understood and shared by even young children. The enormous diversity of music, how it serves institutions like religious groups, creates communities of practice within social structures like trade unions, protest movements and communities themselves, makes this an art form that is accessible, highly emotive and attractive to large parts of the population.

Given the importance of music and movement in the lives of young children, given the social significance of developing attitudes of tolerance which can be accomplished through music and given the accessibility of this art form for all who enjoy this human endeavour, the need for a presence of music in the early childhood curriculum cannot be overstated. However, the push-down curriculum in early childhood (Nyland & Ferris, 2008) is increasingly gravitating towards school readiness and literacy skills. In line with this, more and more researchers are reporting that music is disappearing (de Vries, 2006; Suthers, 2008) and staff, while lamenting a lack of music in their classrooms, say ‘they cannot do it’. The new national Australian curriculum (DEEWR, 2009) does not inspire great hopes for change. In almost 50 pages the word music appears 10 times and then often in the context of supporting learning and development in another area such as formal literacy (e.g., p. 38). This background suggests, music in early childhood needs to be re-visited: The role, treatment and characteristics of children, families, and staff need to be defined in such terms as to foster high quality purposeful music education. The education and training of staff plays a key part in this review, too. Policy makers need to become aware of the intricacies of current music mismanagement and the tremendous potential wasted by it. This is the context for this present research which aimed to explore ideas of musical competence
and awareness of diversity within an early childhood program.

1.4 Aims of the research

The thesis aimed to investigate children’s musical competence and how such competence interacts with and enhances awareness of others. A crucial facet of awareness for this project was the ability to perceive and engage with diversity. The research was designed to explore music and diversity within a particular context so that the potential of music in the early childhood setting could be explored in-depth and data would provide rich descriptions of children’s competence as well as highlighting present practices and expected limitations within the existing curriculum. The role of families and the early childhood staff in promoting these aims was also part of the research design.

1.5 The questions

The goal of the present thesis is tied to a series of research questions, which, in combination, will throw more light on the development of adequate music education as well as integrating cultural diversity and awareness into the context of the early childhood music program. The questions were:

- How do young children respond to a combination of group music sessions and freely accessible music play spaces?
- How do young children engage with culturally diverse music experiences?
- Do parents/guardians consider knowledge of diversity an important part of the early childhood curriculum and do they think music is an appropriate educational tool for exploring difference?
- Do the early childhood educators see the potential of using their music program as a strategy for exploring and promoting cultural diversity?

These research questions were selected to assess the efficacy of a music program that was developed in an urban child care centre, the appropriateness of highly culture laden material for music sessions, as well the perceptions, roles and contributions by each of key
stakeholder groups (children, families, staff) was examined.

A secondary aspect of this thesis was the exploration of research and documentation tools in naturalistic environments. Early childhood research is consistently on the brink of suffering from reduced validity as children are highly susceptible to alterations of their environment and unnatural study conditions can quickly evolve (MacNaughton, Rolfe & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001). Similarly, Anning, Cullen and Fleer (2004) suggest that most current research methods are centred on the researcher’s perspective, or are snapshots that fail to represent the organic and changing nature of children’s learning. This research used an extension of early childhood traditional methods of observation, planning for the child, assessment and including significant others. A variety of techniques, including narrative inquiry to design and observe a music program were employed. An aim was to ascertain the potential of music in the early childhood curriculum to enhance children’s understanding of music as an expressive form and an appreciation of diversity.

1.6 The literature

To explore these questions a number of areas of the early childhood literature was explored to provide a foundation for the analysis of the data. Although many decry the lack of quality music programs in early childhood settings, music is becoming a focus of a growing number of researchers (e.g., Barrett, 2005; Deans & Brown, 2005; Downie, 2003; de Vries, 2006; Suthers 2004; Temmerman, 2000; Whiteman, 2001). Others have studied young children and cultural diversity (e.g., Anning, Cullen & Fleer, 2004; MacNaughton, 2004; Ebbeck, 2001; Rogoff, 2003) and early childhood practitioners and music education (e.g., Ebbeck, Yim & Lee, 2008; Nyland & Ferris, 2007; Sharpe, Harris & McKeen, 2005; Suthers, 2008). Literature on the following has been reviewed in this thesis: music and the young child, music and diversity, music and play, the early childhood curriculum and music and music and the role of the generalist teacher. The review of the literature supports the premise that young children benefit and take pleasure from early learning experiences; they usually enjoy singing and movement. There is a strong association between music and culture and the learning that takes place in a play setting will provide children with rich opportunities to display present familiarities with the medium and experiment with new
ideas to develop their own levels of competence (Chooi-Theng Lew & Campbell, 2005). The *early childhood curriculum & music* and *music & the role of the generalist teacher* are identified concerns and this proved to be the case in this present research. The data has been interpreted in the light of previous research findings and patterns of convergence have been sought and implications identified.

### 1.7 Theoretical orientation

This research program has been framed using a constructivist paradigm which means the research has viewed reality as a multi-layered shared social experience interpreted by individuals (Mertens, 2005). Learners within the context, in this case the child care centre, actively construct knowledge from their experiences. This constructivist approach also finds a fit with socio/cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1986; Wertsch, 1998; Robbins, 2007) and proponents argue that all learning is initially mediated through the social plane of experience. Socio/cultural theory is used to explain the child as a learner within a specific context. Therefore children’s learning and development reflects the influence of social experience, the actions of more experienced members of the culture, the use of artefacts, like music and literature, as well as the theories of children and childhood the more experienced members of the culture introduce through their actions and use of artefacts (tools). Such a view of social relationships, culture and context have led to scholars like Rogoff (2003) referring to children appropriating the culture. The methodology and methods used in this research are based on these constructs and are further explored in Chapters III and IV.

### 1.8 Methodology

The methodology adopted for this research is based on the theoretical orientation of socio/cultural theory and seeks to be consistent in determining what methods can be used to describe interactions, relationships and shared knowledge within a particular context. In this case the choice of ‘Learning Stories’ (Carr, 2001) as a method to record and interpret many of the experiences encountered can be seen as both methodology and method. ‘Learning Stories’ increasingly are used for naturalistic inquiry that also claims to be
subjective, relationship based and interpretive. ‘Learning Stories’ consider both the physical and social environment. They are based on naturalistic observations and the interpretive tool is one that considers the dispositions of the players and explores the original narrative (the observation) in terms of the disposition of the players. Learning and potential can therefore be described. Although ‘Learning Stories’ are not exclusively used in this research they represent the epistemological directions chosen. Music as a cultural artefact, children and educators as part of a particular cultural context and the interplay between the wider social context of family, curriculum, diversity and the role of music in the wider world of culture and society can be explained using these frames. Data collection and analysis were determined by this framing.

1.9 Method

1.9.1 Site and Participants

The study was conducted at a public child care centre in Melbourne that catered for children between 0-5 years of age. Three to four year old children were the primary child research participants in this study. Additional participants were their parents/guardians, the coordinator and the staff of the group, and the researcher herself. The site and participants were carefully selected to fit the design of the study.

1.9.2 Data collection Strategies

To address the research questions data a variety of data sources was chosen. The research employed the following methods: informal and semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, audio recording, artefact and photographic collections, participant observation in a form of Learning Stories (Carr, 2001) as well as reflex records. All these methods are suitable for a qualitative, interpretive research design.

It should be noted at this point, however, that children are not perceived as ‘research subjects’ but rather competent learners (Vuckovic, 2006). Observations are an important addition to other forms of data collection as they help to capture children’s perceptions of events and processes expressed in their actions, and verbalised feelings, thoughts, and
beliefs (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

1.9.3 Materials

Use of various materials and children as research collaborators will be discussed in the methods Chapter III. The music content and the music learning centre and how this conformed to the musical criteria described in the literature review are also explained in the methods chapter.

1.10 Chapter outline

1.10.1 Chapter I – Introduction to thesis

This introductory chapter concludes with an outline of the contents of the thesis.

Chapter I presents background information relevant for this research. It justifies the purpose and significance of the research program and explores the research questions and aims. It also provides the reader with the structure of this thesis.

1.10.2 Chapter II – Review of the Literature

Chapter II reviews a broad range of literature with direct relevance to the themes explored in this thesis. Such themes include publications in the area of music education and young children in Australia (for example, Barrett, 2005; Deans, Brown & Dilkes, 2005; de Vries, 2006; Downie, 2003; Suthers, 2004; Temmerman, 2000; Whiteman, 2001) young children and cultural diversity (for example, Anning, Cullen & Fleer, 2004; MacNaughton, 2004; Rogoff, 2003), early childhood environments (for example, Isbell & Exelby, 2001; Hornbach, 2007) early childhood practitioners and music education (for example, Ebbeck, Yim, & Lee, 2008; Nyland, & Ferris, 2007; Sharpe, Harris, & McKeen, 2005; Suthers, 2007). Particular attention is paid to the synthesis of research specifically addressing music education themes in the Australian context as Australia’s specific mix of ethnic and cultural backgrounds provides unique challenges to the early childhood educator. A further section of the literature review is devoted to the role of family in young children’s musical development. Literature on parent participation in early childhood programs shows that there are specific environmental and cultural effects that have a noticeable influence on
children, especially in the areas of language development and musical understanding. Chapter II further discusses the significance of the teacher-child dyad and the competencies teachers ought to and currently do bring into a music learning session. The literature suggests that many early childhood practitioners report a lack of confidence in the area of music education and most feel their pre-service training does not adequately prepare them to deliver quality music programs (for example Ebbeck, Yim, & Lee, 2008; Bridges, 2003; De Vries, 2006; Nyland, & Ferris, 2007; Sharpe, Harris, & McKeen, 2005; Suthers, 2007).

1.10.3 Chapter III – Research Methodology

The focus of Chapter III is on the theoretical constructs and research philosophy underlying this research program. The chapter explores the constraints and possibilities associated with adopting a naturalistic paradigm. It further elaborates on the implications of implementing a methodology based on Vygotskian principles. This epistemological direction shapes the research fundamentally: it prescribes what elements are considered data, how to form, develop and evaluate research hypotheses in collaboration with the research participants and how the interpretation of data is shaped by contextual parameters of the investigator. Taken together, it becomes clear that the implications of this research can only be adequately understood with reference to the theoretical foundations and the specific circumstances of the study environment.

1.10.4 Chapter IV – Research Methods

The specification of the research parameters is the theme of Chapter IV. The chapter presents information about the research location, participants and the methods employed. It is shown how a variety of mostly qualitative data collection methods were aligned to obtain a comprehensive and progressive snapshot of the study environment. Following the epistemological considerations of Chapter III, the purpose of this chapter is to ground the reader in the specific situation within which the research was conducted.

1.10.5 Chapter V - The Children in this Research

Chapter V presents data about the children participants of the research program. In particular, it describes the interactions between the investigator and the children, between the staff and the children, and the parents and their children. It also concerns itself with the
delivery of the music sessions in the child care centre and the children’s responses and actions. Furthermore, individual Learning Stories (Carr, 2001) are presented to provide further information on the group of children and their interactions. While the data are presented thematically, interpretation is this chapter is mainly limited to aspects that concern the children.

1.10.6 Chapter VI – Partnerships with parents

Chapter VI shifts the analysis to incorporate information about the children’s parents, their responses to the program and their attitudes towards music education and musicality more broadly. The parent perspective ameliorates the insights gained from the children as often a child interest or relative disinterest in music is related to experiences at home. Parents provided valuable feedback about the research program. They were participants in formal inquiries, but also commented informally and spontaneously. This allowed for the incorporation of unanticipated developments or data.

1.10.7 Chapter VII – Staff in this research

Chapter VII further extends the scope of analysis by integrating insights gained from observation of and discussions with members of staff. Two members of staffs were key collaborators in the development and delivery of the program, while others were less directly involved. The chapter reports on the type of data collected from these participants and provides background information about their involvement in the program and the relevant aspects of their personal history that relates to the research program. Members of staff played a critical role for the research program as they represented the first point of contact for the investigator and as such were not only participants, but also mediators of the program. This became particularly clear with respect to parent interactions, which were dependent on collaboration of the child care staff in disseminating information, and taking an active role in the promotion of the program.

1.10.8 Chapter VIII- Answers to the Research Questions

Chapter VIII revisits the data of all three participant groups with special reference to the key questions asked in this thesis. Starting with an exploration of how the children responded to the music sessions, given their particular circumstances, the chapter then
continues to ask more broadly how children generally react to culturally diverse music given their personal and familial history. Of further interest to the research is the importance early music education has in the minds of the parents and what opinions, if any, they have about how to teach and stimulate children musically. Lastly, the chapter answers the question of how early childhood professionals conceptualise music education – which strategies they are using and to what extent they see, appreciate and promote music education as a way to discover and accept cultural diversity. What was discovered in relation to the research questions is explicitly address in the chapter.

1.10.9 Chapter IX – Discussion, implications and recommendations

The final chapter of the thesis, Chapter IX, takes a step back and looks at the implications of this research. On the one hand, this thesis furthers a methodological approach emphasising the concomitant use of multiple qualitative research tools. Furthermore, referring to the data collected for this thesis, an argument is presented for the proliferation of learning stories as a tool, especially when a study purports to be naturalistic. One the other hand, this thesis argues and makes concrete suggestions about how insights gained from the current research can be translated into early childhood policy or practice guidelines. Lastly, the emergent nature of the research approach used in this thesis has opened the way for further enquiries into the relationship between early music education and cultural diversity, both on a micro- and on a macro level. An aim for a Chapter IX is therefore to (a) integrate the findings of this research into the existing literature and policy texts, (b) discuss design and methodological issues and (c) formulate how future research can complement the current work.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This thesis focuses on music in the early years and on the connection between learning about diversity and music as a medium that lends itself to enjoyable and meaningful explorations of culture and diversity. This review of the literature therefore refers to studies that emphasise the present lack of music in the early childhood curriculum, especially in relation to pre-service preparation and daily practice within early childhood settings. The argument is presented that music is an important language of childhood (Edwards, Forman & Gandini, 1998; Barret, 2005; Hedges, 2004), children have a right to music (Nyland & Ferris, 2005; Gruhn, 2005; Temmerman, 2000) and the significant association between music, language and culture (Rogoff, 2003; Trevarthen & Malloch, 2002; Vygotsky, 1962; 1978;) suggests that the early childhood curriculum should include music, not just as a specialist activity but as part of everyday lived experience. As singing is an easily accessible form of music that young children are very responsive to (Bridges, 1994; Young, 2003; Marsh, 2002; Tafuri, 2008) and plays a crucial role in early language play (Smithrim & Upitis, 2007; Marsh & Young, 2006; Tafuri, 2008) the literature on children and singing has been included. Another aspect of early childhood experience that is linked to music, diversity and children’s learning is that of play. As this research includes the idea of music in a play-based setting and develops a music learning centre as part of the project design then play in the early years and the literature on learning centres, as a means of promoting play, is also discussed. To explore the proposition that music should be part of early childhood experience and to provide an overview of existing research knowledge, for the purposes of this present research, the following aspects of the literature have been reviewed:

2.2 Music as a language of childhood

2.3 The development of musical expression in the infant, toddler and preschool years

2.4 Benefits of music
2.5 Learning to sing as a special case of music education

2.6 Theories of music, language and play

2.7 The play environment and learning centres

2.8 Music, diversity and the young child

2.9 The current state of early childhood music education

2.10 The early childhood teachers’ role in promoting music and a concept of diversity

2.11 Researching children’s experiences

2.12 Conclusions from the literature for this research

2.2 Music as a language of childhood

According to Jerome Bruner language is the “meeting of minds” (1995, p.6). It is also described as a system of communicating and using symbols to express meaning, ideas and thought. At the same time music is described as a human activity which involves organised sound through which emotion, intellect and imagination can be articulated. Engaging with music allows us to reflect and can even serve as a prompt for recollection or catalyst for structuring our thoughts (de Vries, 2005b). The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (1996) document describes music in the following way:

Music is a unique way of organising and making sense of sound. It is a way of knowing that influences how we see the world, express our views of the world, and come to know the world. (p. 52)

Music is not only one of the languages of childhood but is also an expression of the personal culture. Music consists of both social and historical texts as it occurs in social context and is often intergenerational in nature. Such a view of music and language is consistent with the Vygotskian idea that language is central to the development of thought
and consciousness and that, through expressive communication, ideas find reality and form. Feelings and thoughts can be represented and engaged in, both in music selection and the way music is being performed (de Vries, 2005b; Sloboda & Deliege, 1996).

Music is an art form that draws upon all areas of child development: the physical, intellectual, social and emotional aspects of development. Knowledge of the various stages of children’s cognitive development, as well as how young children process musical information, is crucial for the creation of high-quality education programs. Moravcik (2000) noted that music fosters children's enjoyment of learning and thus leads to secondary benefits in a range of fields. The benefits of music exposure accrue as early as prior to birth, with the womb as the child's first concert hall (Weinberger, 2000). According to Sloboda and Deliege (1996), early musical interactions have a direct effect on pre-natal brain development. They also point out that there is a correlation between exposure to music and the development of higher forms of reasoning and spatial intelligence. Malloch (1999/2000) talks about mother-infant communication as a form of musicality where the music is used to converse emotionally. Dissanayake (2001) suggests that early music making is a survival mechanism and that the mutual feelings and response in mother-child interactions helps us to evolve as humans.

Increasing the amount and variety of musical experiences young children receive has been linked to improvements in other general abilities (Temmerman, 2000). For example, the beneficial effects of music on children’s long-term social, cognitive and emotional development have been described in a publication by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2006). Fujioka et al. (2006) found that young children taking music lessons show different brain development and improved memory over the course of a year compared to children who do not receive musical training. Some researchers have argued that spontaneous musical behaviours and musical understandings that children display prior to any formal education are expressions of beginning literacy (McCusker, 2007). Supporting this argument, acquiring musical literacy has been found to demand highly similar cognitive processes and developments as skill acquisition in multi-literacy situations (McCusker, 2007). Other studies found transfer effects between musical and non-musical abilities, such as literacy (Anvari et al., 2002), verbal memory (Ho et al., 2003), visuo-spatial processing (Costa-Giomi, 1999), mathematics (Cheek and Smith, 1999) and IQ (Schellenberg,
2004). Through music, children can learn to listen to and follow instructions, develop concentration, take turns, cooperate with another person, accept limits, develop self confidence and become aware of the relationship between the individual and the group (Young, 2003). Slow music, in particular has been linked to increases in concentration (Stratton & Zalanowski, 1984). Music interaction is also a way for children to learn how to deal with challenges and to derive a deeper understanding of the concepts of time and space (Custadero & St. John, 2007). Some researchers argue that this wealth of benefits from a single medium-related endeavour exceeds comparable benefits from any other single pursuit (Bridges, 1994).

Bridges (1994) further argues that just as children’s all-round development is bound up with their musical development, so their musical development can contribute to other facets of development – their thinking processes, language development, body movement control and coordination, spatial awareness, their ability to relate to others. Music can even affect the level of empathy for others. To prove this point, Kalipuska and Ruokonen (1993) researched the effect of holistic empathy with music exercise programs over a period of three months. They found that 16 six year old children who engaged in this program showed a significant increase in empathy, while the other 16 children of the same age (control group) showed a non-significant increase in the development of empathy.

Children show a natural propensity to express themselves musically. For example, social music play has been found to have an ongoing role in children’s free play, and to be influential in both their social and musical development (Marsh, 2004). Early childhood researchers consider musical games to be the easiest way to initiate child interactivity (McDonald & Simon, 1989).

The emotional satisfaction which comes from aesthetic experiences and with opportunities for self-expression is an additional contribution of music to the child’s development. To summarise, the predominant opinion is that music discovery, and interaction with music benefits children in a variety of ways, starting even prior to birth.
2.3 The development of musical expression

Children’s musical engagement changes over time in line with their cognitive, physical and emotional development. Already at the later prenatal stage children “become the percipients of the sound rich world” (McCusker, 2007; p. 57). In the following years their musical ability develops naturally and through creative expression, often through trial and error or implicitly through musical interactions. Lastly, schooling shapes their musical development through formal instruction. The contextual factors that affect children’s music learning during the formative years have a lasting effect on their ongoing musical engagement. The next sections focus on the early childhood years in more detail.

2.3.1 Musical infants

Not only does music have an effect on children from the first moments of their life, researchers seem to agree that active musical behaviours frequently exhibit themselves at a very early age (Hartel, 2006; Trehub, 2003). The early interaction between infants and their mothers are following patterns much more akin to musical rhythm than to speech (Trevarthen & Malloch, 2002). Early language has strong prosodic elements (Owens, 2007). Newborn babies also show their early awareness by responding differently to different kinds of music. For example, a child quiets herself for a lullaby and becomes more active when lively music is played. In the infant stage, children begin identifying types of music they like best. Many at this age prefer vocal music as opposed to instrumental (Smith, 2003). As they continue to experiment with their voices, babbling becomes a favourite activity, and, as the range of pitch, tone and voice intensity widens, this activity comes to resemble song. Some can even accurately repeat pitches that care-givers sing to them (Tafuri, 2008). Infants are fascinated with the sounds they are able to produce by tapping, kicking, hitting objects. One-to two-year olds may rock or sway hips to a familiar tune and may refrain from singing any of the words to songs like “My hands are clapping” because they are concentrating so intently on doing the actions (Young, 2003; Tafuri, 2008).

2.3.2 The sounds of toddlers
Sounds in their environment continue to captivate toddlers. They bang and shake instruments and other objects (such as household items) and understand that shaking, banging and plucking instruments are the cause of various musical sounds. A frequently observed instance of this is a child’s repeated hitting of piano keys that follows the realisation that hitting the keys is linked to sounds (Tafuri, 2008). Toddlers are gaining control over their voices and will join in singing the refrains of their favourite songs aloud (Bayless & Edwards & Ramsey, 2005). They also enjoy dancing upon request, doing finger plays and acting out chants and songs (Smith, 2003). They readily respond with body movements to changes in music's tempo, loudness, and style (Bridges, 2004). When a tune’s loudness increases and its pace quickens, for instance, a child might start flapping arms and stomping feet.

2.3.3 Musical prowess at three and older

Three-year-olds have growing control over their voices and can recognise, name and sing their favourite songs (Bridges, 2004; Tafuri, 2008). They can play simple rhythm instruments with a developing ability to control beat, tempo and pitch. They may use music to create moods when, for example, they bang on drums to create excitement. Children at this age also play with a variety of musical instruments if given the chance. Often their use of the instrument is atypical and not following the prescribed use of that instrument. For example, a child may shake an instrument that is typically pounded, but still derives satisfaction from the sounds generated by the shaking. Three-year-olds can choose songs and music that reflect personal disposition such as preference for classical music while napping. They are also able to compare and contrast sounds made by different instruments (Smith, 2003).

By the age of four, most children can identify changes in pitch, tempo, loudness and musical duration. They understand basic principles of tone, tempo, genre, pitch. This can be seen in situations in which a child can describe which songs are ‘fast’ and ‘slow’ or ‘high’ and ‘low’. Four-year-old children can sing complex songs of their own creation as well as memorised ones. They love to dance, and are able to move rhythmically and smoothly. They enjoy simple props like puppets and scarves, which they may use to express their own creative ideas. They seek out opportunities to hear different genres of music representing different cultures (Browne, 1995). Four year olds can use music to reflect thoughts and
feelings. In a practical example, this may be reflected in a child starting to roar like a lion while looking through a storybook on the jungle. Most four-year-olds regard music as a part of daily life. They like to dramatise songs and poems as well as stories and parts of stories. They like nonsense words, silly language, rhymes and words that are repeated in poems and songs. They spontaneously make their own songs, often with repetitive words and tunes that resemble familiar ones. They can articulate what a piece of music suggests by using their own-, but also standard music vocabulary. They also manage to describe voices, genres, styles and clearly differentiate between nonsense words, word-play and words from other languages (Edwards, Bayless & Ramsey, 2005). They are able to improvise simple melodies and identify sounds made by different instruments.

Five-year-olds are refining and exploring musical skills previously learnt. Some may be able to read words to songs and can play some instruments accurately. They also show an advanced ability to synchronise their body movements with the rhythm of the music. According to Shuter-Dyson (1981), children at this age also develop the ability to discriminate between louder and softer sounds and use this ability to purposely advance their own expressive repertoire.

Support for these insights comes from studies that looked at a more comprehensive sample of children. Flohr (1985), for example, examined the musical development of 2-6 year old children longitudinally over four years. The ten participating children were observed and audio-recorded once a year while playing improvisations on a xylophone. The recordings were then analysed with respect to their musical properties. Flohr found some notable patterns: At age 2 the children’s use of the xylophone was primarily a means of physical engagement for them and neither melody nor rhythm was detectable. At age 3, however, repetitive patterns were frequently found. At age 5, the mode observation was that of melodic and rhythmic repetitions.

Using a cross-section of observations, rather than a longitudinal study design, Swanwick and Tillman (1986) obtained more than 700 tonal samples of children’s musical products showing a wide range of musical sophistication. One outcome of their research was a stage model of musical development. The changes in young children (B-9 years, stages 1 & 2) encompass the mastery and the imitation stages of development. During the mastery stage
children initially just explore and experiment, before developing techniques that allow them to handle instruments according to conventions and establish basic rhythmic patterns, which occurs later during the mastery stage. Children are seen to move into the imitation stage at the age of 4-5. During this time and the following few years, musical products show signs of individuality: songs are sung with changing dynamics across repetitions and even tempo changes are coming (Marsh, 2002). However, with further development during this stage, children more and more appropriate a preference for standard forms of musical expression – with respect to song, a closely matching imitation of the song text and the phonetic sounds of the verses. Other researchers have suggested children first develop the cognitive capabilities to distinguish between and understand musical dynamics before grasping the concepts of rhythm, melody and form (McDonald & Simons, 1989). Similarly, Zimmerman (1984) suggested that children first become aware of differences in volume before understanding differences in pitch.

In summary, children’s musical development will vary due to developmental variation/s, cultural influences, or family expectations, to list but a few examples. Biological disposition towards music plays an important role: Some children have a great innate affinity for music while others quickly encounter difficulties when participating in musical experiences (Sloboda & Delige, 1996). Generally, however, it is assumed that early childhood provides a window of opportunity for successful music learning (Trehub, 2000).

Nevertheless, the broader cultural context is also important. For instance, not all cultures encourage young children’s musical development (Brice-Heath, 1983; Campbell, 1998). Within the narrower confines of the family, adults’ expectations of young children’s musical competence may be inappropriate (too high or too low). Campbell, for example, found that some children are capable of inventing songs that are musically more literate and complex than those songs adults provide for them.

2.4. Benefits of music learning

Scholars, including Bridges (1994), Gruhn (2005) and Smith (2003), advocate that early childhood is the best time to help children develop positive attitudes towards music experiences which will provide a firm basis for later music learning. Music education can
make a marked difference on a child’s musical development. An example of the effect of successful and effective vocal training is found in Kodaly’s song-based music education in the 1970s. Nine-year-old children were found to have singing and music reading skills superior to many tertiary music graduates, and were capable of sight singing songs in two or three parts with perfect intonation (Vikar, 1985). As with general music proficiency such effects can be preserved into adulthood. Flohr (2004) argues that the manner in which a young child uses the voice will affect how the voice is used throughout life as muscles required for singing are shaped at an early stage. A study conducted by Campbell (1998) demonstrated possible long-term effects of limited childhood musical experiences. This survey study questioned adults regarding their personal beliefs about musicality. Adults who described themselves as ‘non-musical’ expressed that in their early years of life they had little opportunity for musical exploration. More recently Tafuri’s (2008) longitudinal study in Italy of a group of children from the third trimester of pregnancy through to school indicates that music is like language in that exposure itself seems to have a remarkable influence on children’s knowledge and ability to play with the medium. Some of Tafuri’s results, related to children’s ability to pitch as young as eighteen months, were quite remarkable even though the ability was not stable and therefore could not be relied upon.


2.5 Learning to sing as a special case of music education

One of the most popular music forms with children is singing. They enjoy spontaneous singing as well as readily engaging in more structured and instruction based group experiences of singing. Studies indicate that singing is important for language, cognitive, social emotional and language development (Booth, 1981; Chu Wang & Catskill, 1989; Clarke, 1988; Dunbar-Hall, 1984; Griffee, 1992; Kalmar, 1989; Murphey, 1992; Nyland, Ferris & Deans, 2005; Vuckovic, 2006; Wallace & Rubin, 1991). Language development is aided in
so far as sounds and combinations of sounds can be practiced through song. Singing is particularly well suited to this purpose as it exhibits a high degree of alternation and rhyme, both of which are helpful for sound reproduction and learning (Booth; Wallace & Rubin). Songs represent more than material for study and can be used as a “method’ of language study within themselves (Jolly, 1975). If used to teach languages or improve pronunciation, however, the songs’ musical properties need to be appropriately challenging and entertaining for the target group (Vuckovic, 2006).

There appears to be some developmental change in the type of music and lyrics children favour (Edwards, Bayless & Ramsey, 2005). Very young children tend to prefer spontaneous song, unstructured pitch and rhythm play, and free and improvisatory movements to music. For 3-5 year olds, a good song features short phrases, repetition, and easily singable melody. Children are also likely to respond more readily to songs that are familiar to them (Poston-Anderson & de Vries, 2000). The consensus among educators is that awkward or unusual note groupings or note jumps should be avoided and the range of pitch should be limited (Edwards, Bayless, & Ramsey; Kazimierszak, 2004; Smith, 2003; Young, 2003). Poston-Anderson and de Vries, for example, wrote a musical play in which they restricted the pitch range to the pentatonic range. Furthermore, de Vries (2006) suggests that song content should be aligned with children's interest to sustain their attention. Further, songs should be reasonably short and devoid of challenging melodies. Researchers (e.g. Feierabend, 1996; Kazimierszak; Young; Hoermann & Bridges, 1988) have provided criteria that specify requisite features of appropriate music education songs.

When learning songs Davidson, McKernon and Gardner (1981) claimed that children first focused on text in learning a new song before their attention shifted to the music. In de Vries (2005a) personal observations of singing development, he noted that at first fragments of familiar songs were articulated, which, by 28 months of age, had progressed to complete songs. However, while text learning was advanced, other attributes such as pitch control were less developed. Research therefore suggests that among the musical elements, children first learn the rhythm and contour and lastly the intervals (Poston-Anderson & de Vries, 2000).

Children’s expression, musically and specifically, through song has been described in
numerous studies. An example of earlier documented research is the study conducted by Moorhead and Pond in 1941 (Moorhead & Pond, 1978). The researchers worked with a convenience sample of around 17 children. The number fluctuated somewhat as some children entered the school during the course of the study, while others departed. In the study, the children were observed in a naturalistic environment as they went about their regular activities. Moorhead and Pond summarised their findings in seven key points. First, they noted that while children do not naturally follow the same musical conventions that adults do, engaging in song and deliberate variations of vocalisation was commonplace. Next, there were specific patterns in the articulation of chant depending on the social setting: When performed alone, chants were more organised along the phonetic structure of the words, whereas groups of children established a basic rhythm for the chant and morphed the words to fit within this structure. Further, Moorhead and Pond noted that chant was more frequently observed when children were engaged in unstructured play and that this held true whether children played solitarily or with others. Chant was frequently accompanied by physical activity that rhythmically matched the chant. With respect to children’s interaction with instruments, Moorhead and Pond observed that there initially were more superficial examination of instruments and undirected production of sounds over time changes to the discovery and production of melody and rhythm. Lastly, instrumental sound production seemed to follow a similar basic structure for the majority of the children. Overall, the study provided useful general data about child perception of music, particularly since the study encompassed seven years and thus allowed longitudinal analysis on a case-by-case basis.

Thirty-five years after the study of Moorhead and Pond, Moog (1976) observed and tested 500 children in their homes and collected data from parents. The children were, on average, younger than the children examined by Moorhead and Pond, and ranged from 6 months old to an age of 5.5 years. The data that were analysed included interview notes, survey data, observational notes, and sound recordings. Employing such a multi-method approach, Moog was able to demonstrate that already between the ages of 3 and 4 children exhibit a wide variety of song characteristics. The four broad categories he distinguished were imaginative songs, spontaneous songs, narrative songs, or imitative songs. A basis for this wide range of song type might be the prototypical development in young children’s
musical ability of vocal improvisation (de Vries, 2005a). Lokken (2000), while researching children within naturalistic contexts, found improvised vocal interactions already at the ages of 14-27 months. However, Moog also noted that from around age 3-4 the development of child-music interaction is strongly intertwined with the social and physical environment, which makes specific predictions for any given child difficult.

Burton (2002) specifically examined the emergence of spontaneous song. This issue had not previously been a focus of her research but emerged as a by-product of her investigations. In her intensive work with a selected four children and using a variety of methods such as questionnaire data, observations and audio recordings, Burton sought to describe contextual factors conducive to spontaneous chant and to inquire whether children are able to express the reasons for the commencement of their song. Thirdly, she inspected the degree to which young children are able and inclined to morph elements of the musical content they spontaneously engage in. Burton found that children’s idiosyncratic approach to information processing in their particular environment mitigates their use of this information in their musical expression.

Singing is supported in a social environment and changes in response to the interaction of the individuals and to their varying levels of capacity. Custodero, Britto & Brooks-Gunn (2003) conscious of this influence of the social environment, investigated singing practices in 10 families with 3 year old children from New York City. An interesting aspect of this research was that in addition to interviewing and observing participating parents and children, the researchers invited the parents to become researchers. The parents were perceived as important sources of information and knowledge about their children. They took a part in documenting their children’s musical experiences as they wrote descriptive observations in their journals or used handheld voice recorders. The researchers were interested in what kind of children’s actions parents noticed and how they felt about what they observed. Both the researchers and the parents observed much singing in children’s play. The study supported the argument that the way music is used in families varies; however, most of the participating families used singing to “make special routine activities and to create and maintain traditions” (Custodero, 2006; p.37). The children presented certain trends around learnt songs and spontaneous songs. This research reminds the educators to be open to parental contributions about knowledge of young children’s
engagement with music.

In the very same year, Berger and Cooper conducted a study which focussed on a 10 week music education program for preschool children and their parents titled: “Musical Play”. The program was facilitated and created by the authors and consisted of ten 45 minute sessions, divided into four segments: opening free play, guided group activities, middle free play and closing group activity (Berger & Cooper, 2003; p. 153). This study did not require parents to engage in formal observations of their children; instead, the additional observers were selected from a graduate music course. The researchers were interested in children’s behaviour occurring in free and structured musical play environments and the children’s exploration of sounds alone and with others. They termed ‘free music play’ periods when children played in the music learning centre alone or with others. Group sessions featured singing, moving, listening, children’s literature with all activities presented to parent and child. According to Berger and Cooper’s findings, children engaged in three different types of play, when exploring music: ‘unfinished play’, ‘extinguishing play’, and ‘enhancing play’ (p. 155). They concluded that children, in order to develop musical skills and engage in meaningful musical play, needed lengthened, uninterrupted time for play episodes as well as suitable resources in their environment.

The preceding paragraphs describe a broad range of findings related to the development of music skill and, in particular, singing throughout early childhood. Young (2003) who feels strongly about children’s musicality as being as one of the significant strands of play, suggests that children’s singing takes diverse forms of ‘spontaneous voice play’ (p. 87) which includes: free-flow singing, chanting; reworking of known songs, movement vocalising, vocal drama and imitation of sounds. While children engage in various types of singing and are able to make remarkable progress in developing their capabilities, there are some general limits that apply to the majority of children. Poston-Anderson and de Vries (2000), for example, note singing in canon or partner songs are considered to be beyond the ability level of pre-school children in the literature. However, children have a multitude of ways to engage with music and the production of sounds is just the most overt expression of mastery.

Aside from singing and playing instruments, learning music involves such skills as
listening, interpreting or moving. Dance is a form of musical expression, verbal and visual imagery, too, can be used to delve into music and to engage with the sounds. Yim, Abd-El-Fattah and Lee (2007) represented music learning in 10 facets, each of which was assessed by an item in their Teachers Music Confidence Scale. Curricula, too, often explicitly acknowledge the link between music and other forms of creative arts and encourage their simultaneous engagement. Furthermore, teachers do recognise the benefits of integrated sessions teaching multiple skills simultaneously. According to a study by Hargreaves and Moore (2000) teachers see integrated teaching as a way to increase student participation and find it easier to link such classes back to real-world situations. While Irwin and Reynolds (1995) also noted that the co-education of different types of creative expression (such as music, dance and drama) is useful, they at the same time cautioned that the prerequisite knowledge to teach each of these is quite distinctive with little overlap of the knowledge domains.

It would seem that the exploration of music and instruments depends, to a certain degree, on established strategies of how to engage with novel aspects of the world. This general cognitive development, as the next section will discuss, is catalysed through experiences in play. Play, as theorists and practitioners alike have found, is subjectively fun but also a functional way of learning, categorising and practicing. The following section will present leading theories of play and musical play of children.

2.6 Theories of play, music and language

"In play, a child is always above his average age, above his daily behaviour; in play, it is as though he were a head taller than himself."

- Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934)

Play is a creative act and a foundation of development of civilisation and culture (Hendricks, 2001). Most scholars would agree that it is through play that much of children’s early learning is achieved (see Niland, 2009, for a strong argument in favour of this assertion). Through play, children develop “working theories for making sense of the natural, social, physical, and material worlds” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 82). There is a
relationship between play and arts as artists play with forms, colours, materials, ideas, and music notes to create new impressions and interpretations. Play is central to young children’s learning in music as it is in every other curriculum area (study described in Listen to their voices, Suthers & Niland, 2007; p. 30). It is a cultural universal and children in all cultures learn through play (Dau, 1999). Governed by their natural curiosity, a sense of wonder and an ambition to explore their world, children show a substantial creative capacity to live in and through their playing. Play enables them to further explore the known and to discover and investigate the unknown (Fleer, 1996).

A number of influential theorists distinctly contributed to the body of knowledge of children and play. All emphasise that control, freedom and choice are key features of young children’s play (see also study by Suthers & Niland, 2007; p. 30), but distinguish between different forms of play at various stages of development. Piaget (1962) described three stages of play: functional play, which was associated with the sensory-motor stage of development; symbolic play associated with the pre-operational stage; and games and rules associated with the stage of concrete operations. Smylanski (1968) added the category of constructive play which involves the use of materials to create something that exists after the play has finished.

An alternative and earlier approach to describe the changing nature of young children’s play from age two to age five was put forward by Parten (1932) who divided children’s play into six categories. These were based hierarchically occurring stages. The last stage is ‘cooperative play’ which happens when children play in a group, cooperating with each other to work towards a shared goal or to implement a shared plan of action (Docket & Fleer, 1999; Parten, 1932). Many researchers now consider the cooperative play can occur at any age, including infancy (Rinaldi, 2006).

However, other researchers have voiced objections to the generalisability of Parten’s classification scheme, especially with reference to differences in children’s play across cultures (for example on the dimension *individualism vs collectivism*) and socioeconomic status (Roopnarine & Jonston, 1994; Hyun, 1998). Hyun, in particular, presents some forceful examples to underpin his argument. Hyun reasons, according to Parten’s scheme, an older child playing solitary video games would be classified as socially immature. As many modern
games are designed for just one person, Parten’s proposed tendencies of play are not anymore measuring up to the possibilities of play as afforded by technology. Similarly, Hyun suggests, ethic and cultural differences are also a frequent source of misfit between Parten’s hierarchy and the actual observed play patterns. Recent work with infants has also made Parten’s descriptions of play seem less reliable as very young children have been observed and recorded sharing purposeful activity (Rinaldi, 2006). These critique’s support the theoretical notion of children and competence that has been adopted for this thesis which has adopted a socio/cultural view of human development within social context (Vygotsky, 1978; Rogoff, 2003) with music as a language of the culture.

Vygotsky (1962; 1978) is regarded by many early childhood educators as one of the most significant and forward thinking theorists on play. He is often called the “Mozart of psychology” (Bodrova & Leong, 2001; p. 48). Akin to the famous composer, Vygotsky was both prolific and divergent in his work. He believed that play provided foundations for children’s developing skills that are essential to social, personal, and professional activities. In his general description of play activity, Vygotsky (1989) pointed to the child’s ability to create a “pretend play” situation, the source of which he saw in the affective area and linked to the child’s attempts at interpreting interactions encountered in daily experience. He also considered language to be a mediator of these games. Play, for Vygotsky, was essentially social in character. In contrast to Piaget, or Parten, he emphasised that the themes and stories that are involved in children’s play are strongly associated with the society and culture that children belong to. For Vygotsky, play has two main features: (1) an imaginary situation, and (2) rules that are implicit in that situation. The latter can be observed frequently when two children disagree about how they will play a particular role (Weybright, 1976; Vygotsky, 2002). For example, playing the role of a music conductor carries certain implicit rules about what a music conductor does, how he does it and what he says.

Building on Vygotsky’s views on play, Rogoff (2003) notes that play facilitates children’s participation in many of the routines of social and cultural contexts: from the everyday routines, such as shopping, to more formal rituals, such as religious celebrations. Through participation, children learn the structure and social expectations of events. As Arthur et al. (2008) conclude: “children can play with the scripts of real and imagined worlds, and, in doing so, develop a greater understanding of the rules and roles of those around
2.6.1 The play environment

Children need to play in a stimulating and aesthetically appealing environment if they are to develop to their full potential (Isbell & Exelby, 2001). For those children who attend early childhood settings, it is essential to provide a variety of learning experiences that will reflect their home life while further enhancing their learning about the world (DEEWR, 2009; DEECD, 2009). Hornbach (2007) in ‘Listen to their voices’ highlights the importance of providing young children with play-oriented environments which at the same time reflect appreciation of the individual child.

In New Zealand’s Te Whāriki curriculum (MOE, 1996), it is suggested that children should experience an environment where their health is promoted, their emotional well-being is nurtured, and they are kept safe from harm. Children’s environments should make them feel comfortable with routines, customs and regular events. Te Whāriki further calls for giving children opportunities to explore their own and other cultures, which is claimed to enhance their creative expressiveness. The Code of Ethics of Early Childhood Australia (2006) also advocates the maintenance of safe, healthy environments, spaces and places, which enhance children’s learning, development, engagement, initiative, self-worth, dignity and the importance of showing respect for their contributions. Children’s contributions will take many forms and it is often through the use of the expressive activities, languages, in a play-based setting that children’s learning can be observed to be self-directed, in-depth and capable of transforming understandings of the physical and social world they find themselves in. Trevarthen (1998) explains this phenomenon:

*Young children obviously make sense by sharing. They use their emotions and other people’s emotions to fix categories of experience that are important in cooperating. They are adept at expressing communicable ideas by means of signs- gestures, postures, vocalisations that are situated in a negotiated context of intersubjectivity - well before they can say the words of the mother tongue. Their awareness of reality and learning is aesthetic, dramatic*
and moral because it is built through communication with the motives and emotions of other persons. Provided that they can maintain relationships of trust and understanding, there is no reason why this learning cannot be carried out with many persons outside the family, and groups of other children offer a particularly rich context for testing feelings and ideas (p. 97).

It is worth noting that in the New Zealand context the use of *Te Whariki* as a frame has elevated the worth of singing in the curriculum. Song has become a shared bilingual experience and expression of the bicultural curriculum (MOE, 1996).

### 2.6.2 Environment and aesthetics

Though generally somewhat understated in present day curriculum documents, the aesthetic aspect of the educational environment is appreciated by many early childhood scholars. An aesthetically pleasing environment is diverse, functional, and inviting to adults and children alike (Arthur et al., 2008; Greenman & Stonehouse, 1997; Millikan, 2003). However, in the turmoil of trying to provide “quality care” and adhere to various “regulations and accreditation standards”, many Australian early childhood centres overlook aesthetics when developing environments for children, staff and families. The development of aesthetically pleasing space is not only a contributing factor to generate a warm, comfortable and conducive environment for children, but it also helps children’s aesthetic awareness, appreciation of beautiful things and special sensory experiences. This encompasses careful use of light and colour, thoughtful placement of any material, attention to small details, and uncluttered display (Arthur et al., 2008; Millikan, 2003). The sound environment is equally significant when considering aesthetics. It is more ephemeral than the visual arts but the impact on mood and learning opportunities is enormous (Barrett, 1993).

The Reggio Emilia education approach is a wonderful example of the consideration of aesthetics within the learning environment. Reggio Emilia education approach regards the environment as the child’s third teacher (Gandini, 2005). In Reggio early childhood settings, materials and documentation are thoughtfully presented and the atmosphere is warm and
invites children to participate fully in new explorations. Whilst the arts were originally explored through the visual arts, as a childhood language, in the Reggio Emilia approach, music has started to take its rightful place in many centres (O’Hagin, 2007; Vuckovic & Nyland, 2007). Following the artist in residence model some centres now have a music focus and a musician to assist the children in meaningful and aesthetic explorations of sound (Suthers, 2008).

\[2.6.3 \text{ Play materials}\]

Doctoroff (2001) argues that careful attention should be paid to the variety and balance of play materials available to children. The provision of open-ended play materials should encourage all types of play and all aspects of development in young children (Napier, 2004). Materials and toys are supposed to be safe, open-ended, natural, and textured (Curtis & Carter, 2003). This latter point is very important here as the research focus is on children and music in early childhood settings and in this section the provision of aesthetic and quality materials. The provision of sound making materials has often been described as limited to a CD player (de Vries, 2006) or to a few poorly looked after instruments that may not even be an appropriate size for children’s experimentation. Daily indoor/outdoor routines may not consider the sound environment to be part of the aesthetics of the program and the connection between excess noise in the sound environment and music as sound is often not made. This alone means that music and sound are often not seen as belonging to a similar genre and music is therefore not treated with respect except in a very recognisable way such as pre-recorded music (de Vries, 2010).

Be it aesthetically sensitive or not there is a growing understanding that the best early childhood environments consider the needs of three important groups when considering use of space - children, early childhood teachers and parents/families. For example, Gordon and Browne (2008) suggest the following categories: a) the physical environment (space, equipment, facilities and materials); b) the temporal environment (timing of routines and transitions); c) the interpersonal environment (people and the interactions between them). A quality environment refers to four main factors which are space, time, materials or recourses, and interactions or relationships (Arthur, et. al, 2008). How can music be present across the day in a way that will invite self-selected exploration, experimentation and
improvisation?

2.6.4 Learning centres

One of the popular approaches in designing early childhood environments is the establishment of ‘Learning Centres’ (Isbell, 1995). Learning centres are part of many early childhood educational settings in Australia. Children gain knowledge of how to interact with materials and with each other in ways that encourage imagination, creative thinking skills, questioning and discovery. As the name suggests learning centres are thematically designed to encourage certain types of play. The book corner, dramatic play corner, the clay area, the block area are all examples of learning centres. As opposed to activity or task-based presentation a learning centre is a designated part of the environment that is there for the child to select at any time across the day. When looking at the potential learning centre space, there are several factors to consider.

Firstly, the division of the space: the Learning Centre approach suggests the setting to be divided into spaces of diverse sizes with different functions (Kenney, 1989). Secondly, the balance of the space must be taken into account. Ideally, both quiet and active areas should be provided (Arthur et al. 2008; Greenman & Stonehouse, 1997) and soft spaces and furnishings are needed. Thirdly, a clear boundary between spaces should be present, as boundaries are sometimes necessary to define different learning areas. Rug, shelves and boxes are suitable to be employed to define boundaries (Doherty-Derkowski, 1995; Greenman & Stonehouse). An example of boundary use came from Andress (1998) who proposed, for a music learning centre, that a large cardboard box could make a suitable music space for small children. Large enough for two, or three, children with well cared for instruments provided and posters to suggest use of instruments if the children needed a prompt. Fourthly, it is important to know the underlying function of the areas, to stimulate children’s curiosity, potentials, and intellectual engagement (Curtis & Carter, 2003; Rinaldi, 2006). There should be a careful consideration of the use of the audio, enactive and symbolic representation, literacy, and the visual arts (Curtis & Carter, 2003, p.14). The connections among these different learning areas are also important since it contributes to increasing children’s social interaction with peers. Finally, a Learning Centre needs to represent the cultural heritage and diversity of the children present as well as to present
other experiences and lives to be explored vicariously in a play situation (Meggitt & Walker, 2004). Since this thesis is concerned with, specifically, the music education of young children, the following section will discuss main features of the music learning centre.

2.6.4.1 Music Learning Centres

In a music learning centre, children practise skills with specific musical instruments; they learn how to care for delicate equipment and materials and a respect for audio-visual equipment is acquired. There can be time to relax and enjoy exploring and playing with culturally diverse music. Music learning centres acknowledge that play is as essential a component of learning music as it is for the practicing of other skills (Kemple, Batey & Hartle, 2004; Suthers & Niland, 2007). Allowing children a degree of control, and the freedom to choose their activities is essential for a stimulating play environment.

Given the expressive and linguistic characteristics of music this is an excellent way for children to encounter other cultures (Campbell, 2004). Children can play alone or with others in this area. Music learning centres are particularly beneficial for children who may not have musical instruments at home. Through music learning centres children gain the opportunity to experience music in different social contexts on their own or with their friends and peers. Aside from musical development, such group interaction fosters the development of social skills. Social music play has been found to have an ongoing role in children’s free play and it affects their social and musical development (Marsh, 2004; Young, 2006). Music learning centres facilitate solitary or social play and thus, as Turner (2000) put it, music learning centres allow children to discover music on their own terms. Early childhood educators can (the more competent “others”) do much to enhance the children’s progress. Kemple, Batey and Hartle (2004) state:

...from a sociol-constructivist perspective, adults have to do more than set the stage - for music play-by providing space, time and materials. There’s much more to supporting children’s musical development than just pushing the play button on a CD player. When
young children have a rich musical environment, along with appropriate guidance from adults, they can learn, for example, to imitate and, with increasing precision, distinguish among rhythm and tone patterns (p.32)

When exploring a music learning centre, children are encouraged to engage in musical play. Musical play, just as dramatic or any other form of play has a great potential to enhance children’s well-being and learning. Through participation in musical play, children can explore culturally diverse materials and songs and therefore become more familiar with unfamiliar others. There is a scene in the Mia Mia DVD “A new vision for daycare” (Kolbe & Wilson, 1995) where the placement of a pedestal microphone inspires the preschool children to design a concert and the material varies from *Baa Baa Black Sheep* to a quite sophisticated use of rap. Self initiated musical play is essential for children’s understanding of the medium.

The design of the music play area demands attention to detail. The space should be beautiful and inviting, reflecting different aspects of music and culture. The space must be arranged for use by children that includes opportunities for them to feel, touch and interact with things (de Vries, 2006; Kemple, Batey & Hartle, 2004; Rinaldi, 2006).

De Vries (2006) reported on the success of a music play area set up during an 8 week long case study he conducted in an Australian city child-care centre. This area was collaboratively designed and set up by the researcher and staff, providing children with percussion instruments, an electronic keyboard, and a CD player with headphones featuring a sound recording of classical music that children had heard before. This listening station proved to be very popular, despite the fact that the children were very young (2-3 years-old) and had had no experience listening to music during free play in the child-care program.

Smith and Montgomery (2007) provide a detailed theoretical account of the significance of free musical play, suggesting that the early childhood music environment should be designed to maximize the musical and social development of children. Most of their conclusions are derived from a study by Smith (2005) in which she observed 18 four-year old children in a free musical play environment over a period of nine weeks. Smith documented
that these children engaged in various musical activities: singing, playing instruments, listening, moving, reading, writing and composing. She identified that the children: “…a) appreciated and enjoyed freedom of choice, b) joyfully explored the skills of music, c) used free playtime fully and reasonably, d) challenged and encouraged their classmates, e) cooperated, assisted, discussed, and observed, f) concentrated for long periods of time, g) focussed on their chosen activities without being distracted by the surrounding activity and noise, h) participated in a trusting environment, i) respected equipment and other’s work, and j) scaffolded themselves and their classmates.” (pp. 309-310). While there is need to provide children with some guidance on how to best interact with instruments or how to best develop their voices, Smith’s study shows that free play also contributes much to musical development that cannot be obtained through purely guided education. Other early childhood research conducted in diverse countries confirms this argument (for example, Jackson-Gough, 2003 - New Zealand; Gluschankof, 2005 - Israel; Young, 2003 – United Kingdom). Gluschankof (2008) reflects on her cross cultural investigation into musical play of 4-6 year old children, contextualising self-initiated play by looking at the role of adults in creating environments for children’s musical experiences. She argues:

“Culture acquires a broader meaning, where the adults’ culture and the children’s are interdependent and dynamic. Child-initiated musical expressions reflect this interdependence and deserve recognition as important expressive aspects of early childhood cultures.” (p. 325)

In summary, play is an essential part of early childhood life. Besides being fun, play serves a multitude of developmental functions, from cognitive, to physiological, to social. Play comes in different shapes and forms, partially dependent on the developmental stage of the child, but partially due to personal preference, context or the decisions of caregivers. The different types of play enhance different sets of skills, therefore encouraging, or allowing, children to engage in a mixture of forms of play is sensible. Music, just like other areas of learning, is conducive to playful exploration. However, in order to support learning through play, care must be taken to create an inviting and stimulating environment with
versatile materials. Establishing learning centres to focus children’s exploratory drive on one key area of learning has been found to be a successful approach to stimulate interest and to afford multiple forms of play all related to the one topic area. Using learning centres to enhance the play environment has proved to be a strategy for encouraging quality learning experiences. Learning centres are also a way for staff to be able to become an active member of the play and learning environment, not through direct adult-child interaction. Careful planning of the use and type of materials to be presented in the learning centre and the accompanying concept development that engagement with these materials might have can be valuable. For this research an understanding of diversity was an aim and the learning centre provided an excellent vehicle for this. Since the activities were all linked to various aspects of music, the following sections will throw more light on the relationship of music and culture, and why the former is a uniquely placed format to explore the latter.

2.7 Music and Diversity

As the previous sections have shown, learning about and learning how to make music brings with it generalised developmental benefits. A crucial question with respect to these findings is whether they extend to children from diverse social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. There are specific environmental and cultural effects that have a noticeable influence on children (see, for example, Bamberger, 1991; Blacking, 1973; Howe, Davidson & Sloboda, 1998; Gruhn, 2005; Kreutzer, 2001; Merrill-Mirsky, 1988; Peretz, 2005).

In regards to music learning, researchers suggest that a degree of musical skill may be part of the innate intellectual abilities of all individuals, but that the cultural attitudes towards talent development may have a significant impact on musical outcomes. This seems likely as children of any culture cannot escape what Bartel and Cameron (2007) term *sonic immersion*. They argue that sound and music pervade all cultural space and that therefore children engage with music whether they choose to do so or not, but that their learning is strongly dependent on contextual factors.

Children’s exploration of music occurs within the contextual framework of their social environment, which communicates meaning about the standing and type of actions that are related to music and music making (Bresler & Thompson, 2002). Their role models are family
members and friends, movie and TV actors. Already at a very early age children have compiled a sizable collection of culturally tinted music experiences that continue to inform their further development (Vuckovic, 2009). Accepting this proposition, Bamberger (1991) embraces a particularly strong view and argues that musical development is culturally specific. Her model suggests that development results from experience with tunes and rhythms, which she calls “simples”. An understanding of these simples will differ interculturally as the specific tunes and the context for music differs. In contrast, Dowling and Harwood (1986) maintain that there are some “cross-cultural universals”, the most prominent of which are rhythm, timbre, and pitch. There also has been some evidence to support a middle-ground position: Papousek (1996), for example, showed that the musical protolanguage shared by infant children and mothers is strongly influenced by the dyad’s respective cultures. Thus, while the application of protolanguage appears to be a cross-cultural universal, the phenomenology of this language is culture-specific.

Cross-cultural differences of music development may also be linked to varying approaches to teaching music. However, Campbell (1991) argues that in a wide variety of cultures music education follows a highly similar pattern: Teachers introduce music through vocalisation techniques, singing a melody, or chanting the rhythm; their expectation is that students will imitate vocally or join in with the teacher through many repetitions of a phrase. Campbell concludes: “As theories propose ways in which we learn music, and specific principles further explain features of our teaching and learning, we cannot help considering that music and its processes of transmission and performance may indeed consist of features that are cross-cultural in nature” (p. 113). Custodero (2006), on the other hand, acknowledges that attitudes to music education, the music experiences of children and even the language used to denote musical experiences varies cross-culturally. Ebbeck, Yim and Lee (2008) also describe how historic and local idiosyncrasies can affect the cultural propensity to engage in particular forms of music.

Even if considered accurate, Campbell’s statement refers mainly to the technique of making and understanding music. Cultural identity of music is a different aspect and it is one that is more subtle than vocal or tonal building blocks. Even though these basic features might resemble one another, the application of similar teaching techniques nevertheless results in music with distinct cultural identity. The cultural concept of music extends beyond
the tonal structure to also include features such as song content and performance elements. Musical cultural identity changes over time. It changes more rapidly with increased interaction of several cultures and cultural exchange. Therefore, teaching children about music, while acknowledging music’s roots in culture, is not just the product of teaching them about scores and phonemes. Rather, it involves exposing them to cultures by developing their understanding of music as being part of culture.

Singing is quite plausibly the type of music with the strongest cultural associations. Songs carry multiple messages (semantic, emotional, and historical) and are behaviourally complex for the performer as they often entail gesticulating or dance elements (for example Chinese opera). For young children, singing provides an enjoyable way to become acquainted with their background’s cultural heritage or with tales and melodies of other cultures. Due to songs’ reliance on words, they also provide a way of familiarising children with words of other languages (Nichols & Honig, 1997; Acker, Ferris & Nyland, 2010).

An example of a study that used song to raise children’s awareness of their own cultural identity was carried out in Norway in a three year longitudinal study (Kielland, 2005). The hypothesis of the project stated that knowledge of one’s own cultural background would instil curiosity about other cultures. The study involved 18 members of staff and 60 kindergarten children aged between 1 - 6 years. The majority of staff members either had expertise or had an above average interest in music. Children’s culture was explored by means of reading folk tales and singing folk songs. The results on one dependent variable showed that children wanted to sing Norwegian folk songs more than they used to. At the same time, they maintained their interest in popular and commercial song. The children were also more open to other kinds of music that differed from the traditional music presented. Teachers and parents reflected on the project positively, emphasising that the cultural content afforded a great increase in fantasy, creativity and inventiveness. In an Australian study, Vuckovic (2006) conducted research with children from diverse cultural backgrounds and presented songs in different languages over a 12 week period. The children became more curious about their own and other cultures, took pride in their own culture whilst at the same time developing stronger social bonds with their peers.

As these examples show, music education will be more successful if it embraces the
plurality of musical cultures within the wider community. Welch (2005), suggests “as well as addressing developmental issues” (p.119), children will also benefit from having their individual preferences of popular music and home music practices represented in the education setting. This could be the result of meeting individual needs of culturally diverse students (Campbell, 2004). When children identify with classroom content, they are able to achieve greater progress individually, which in turn can boost the progress of the whole class (Vuckovic, 2008b).

Music and especially singing is also a vehicle to bridge inter-cultural gaps (Custodero, 2006). As Custodero and Chen-Hafteck (2008) write: “The role played by singing in socialization is significant and has been used for centuries to transmit cultural values, to teach language, and to establish qualities of rhythmic energy that typify a way of being” (p. 4). Using diverse music and songs can also help to portray other ethnic groups in a positive light in all educational, including preschool, settings (Campbell, 2004). This may help children to develop more positive inter-group attitudes. There is need for this type of development as will be discussed in the next section.

Modern day Australia is multi-cultural in nearly every sense of the term. Focussing on the traditional linkage of culture and ethnicity and nationality, the fact that more than 40 percent of Australians were born overseas is ample testimony to the mixed composition of current Australian society. Furthermore, throughout the country about 200 languages are spoken (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 2007). Just about every community in Australia is diverse and thus embodies the heritage, customs and languages of many ethnic groups.

There is debate to what extent cultural diversity should be preserved in the community and facilitated in the classrooms. From a government point of view, all preschools and schools in Australia are called upon to implement multicultural education policies that have been legislated by state and national governments (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 2007). Even if it was not endorsed by state and federal authorities, if diversity and the preservation of cultural and ethnic identity are considered desirable by society, then educational principles should reflect this diversity (Campbell, 2004).
The worrying finding that children come to school with many negative attitudes towards and misconceptions of different racial and ethnic groups (Banks, & McGee-Banks, 1996; Campbell, 2004; Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke, 2000) suggests that action needs to be taken to address this problem. Moreover, the absence of cultural exchange has been associated with inter-group tensions, mistrust and higher receptivity for tendencies of stereotyping (Aboud, 2003; Glover, 1994; King, 1980; Mundine & Guigni, 2006). Taking action is not only a question of avoiding negative consequences. More pro-active strategies result in benefits if children are taught about diversity and their curiosity is instilled from an early age. Nieto (2004) points out that culturally diverse education appears to be the most effective approach to prepare children for the requirements of a changing world with an increased level of interdependence of nations and cultural groups.

The smallest cultural unit, and the one which has the strongest influence on the child, is arguably the family (Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2003). The family is responsible for the child’s physical needs and transmits values, beliefs and attitudes which are fundamental for both moral and emotional growth. It is the family that forms the child’s ethnic identity and regulates social behaviour. Families are instrumental in a child's development and anchoring of tastes and aspirations. Just as there are cross-cultural differences to music – the type of expression, the way it is used or taught – on a macro scale, so too do families (a micro culture group) display great variability in their treatment and dedication towards music.

That family culture is highly important becomes clear when looking at neurological research (e.g. Gardner, 1983; Shonkoff & Phillip, 2001) findings that children's cognitive development is most pronounced during the first three years of life, the time which they spend predominately with members of their family (Corson, 1998; Jones Diaz & Harvey, 2007; Siray-Blatchford & Clarke, 2003). A family’s valuing of music, the level and degree of exposure to different types of music and the encouragement that children receive for attempting to make music (see de Vries, 2005a, for an interesting documentation of this point) all can have long-term effects.

Some parents may frequently sing to their young children, introduce them to various types of instruments and let them explore these creatively, play different types of music and encourage creative expression such as dancing or drawing the music and create
opportunities to explore music in social contexts. On the other hand, parents may use music to restrict their children, to fill the silence, to manipulate mood or to tune out children’s play noise. Parents may encourage children to see how commonplace toys and objects can be used to explore the sound of music or they can give children commercial toys where closed design and advertisements have already conveyed how the products are meant to be used. De Vries (2006) conducted a survey and a series of focus groups with parents in order to establish whether family music culture in Australia more closely resembles the former or the latter of the two extremes of music integration in the home environment. In general, the surveyed parents were making poor use of music. Instead of exploring music with their child, they outsourced this important role to electronic media. In part this was due to a perceived lack of time, but parents also felt ill equipped to educate their children about music concepts. They relied on what they perceived to be trustworthy sources (commonly teachers) to source music material. In summary, a lot of children, after finishing their preschool day and re-entering their family or ethnic circle, are expected to and live a life of family culture patterns and traditions. This sometimes affects the language they speak, the way they play but also the frequency, duration and type of interaction with music. Having such strong influence on their children, parents have ample scope to shape the music propensity of children, but they strongly rely on guidance from people they perceive to be experts – the teachers.

Having acknowledged the importance of families and family culture in early music experiences another aspect of family participation in early childhood programs is an emphasis on involving parents in the operation of their child’s centre (NCAC, 1993; DEEWR, 2009; DEECD, 2009). Since this thesis was examining the culturally diverse musical education of young children, in a mainstream early childhood context, family involvement was actively sought. However, some researchers have identified (e.g. Dau, 2001; Ebbeck et al, 2003) barriers to developing these partnerships when more is required than asking for help with basic tasks, such as fundraising. Ebbeck, et al., found the barriers included:

- Lack of time for any meaningful parent partnership
- Lack of clarity about the different roles of parents and teachers
- Ineffective communication
Different priorities of parents; often their priority is to survive as they cope with the demands of caring for children, having a job and living in the 21st century

Inadequate resources in centres and schools

Meetings being held at times which are not convenient for parent participation

Professionals taking an 'overly professional' approach

Lack of confidence by either staff or parents so that relationships are not secure

Cultural barriers for some parents who may not have an understanding of what parent partnerships mean

Lack of commitments by either party, parent or teacher to make partnerships work

Lack of clear policy direction on partnerships in the Centre (p. 3)

Implications of these findings and the role of parents in their child’s education and care are discussed in the Chapter on the parent participation (Chapter VI).

In the next section early childhood educators’ work and how it has changed over the past few decades is discussed. Lives have become more complex because of permanent variations in the characteristics of the child population, in particular dramatically increased ethnic and language diversity and the inclusion of children with different abilities (Ashman & Elkins, 2005; Arthur et al., 2008). In addition, early childhood educators are expected to research contemporary theories and practices, make ethical judgements and be creative in finding solutions to a range of challenges. The following section therefore discusses the role of the early childhood professional: what is currently expected of them, how early childhood professionals feel about their own capabilities and how teacher education influences the education and care of focus in many early childhood settings. Also addressed are issues of diversity, educational strategies and educating for diversity through music.

2.8 The current state of early childhood music education

The value of early childhood programs, where children can experience music across the day in the same way that they encounter concepts relating to literacy, literature, mathematics, social awareness, visual aesthetics and spatial and kinaesthetic experiences, has been recognised by numerous scholars. Accordingly, research into and commentaries
about Australian early childhood music education has become more prevalent in recent years (for instance, De Vries, 2004; 2006; Downie, 2003; Nyland, Ferris & Deans, 2005; Suthers, 2004; Temmerman, 2000, 2005). Most of this research has been conducted by those with expertise in music rather than generalist early childhood educators.

However, it is the latter group that engages in daily dialogue with the children. More research keeps being published each year indicating that those who have most contact with children (the early childhood staff), are also those exhibiting a distinct lack of confidence in relation to providing rich and diverse music programs (Dees, 2004; de Vries, 2004; Music Council of Australia, 2009; Scott-Kassner, 1999; Suthers, 2004, 2008). This is problematic as Ebbeck, Yim and Lee (2008) note that the prevalent view among researchers in the field is that teacher confidence with respect to musical education delivery is predictive of the quality of the program. The skills that cause the greatest concerns for teachers in Australia, according to Suthers (2004) are singing and reading music (other elements are of greater concern in other countries, cf. Ebbeck, Yim, & Lee). Not surprisingly, early childhood professionals that find singing challenging are less confident and enthusiastic about singing activities. Barrett (1993) has pointed out that this insecurity associated with music education is in stark contrast to the ease with which many early childhood professionals engage in the visual arts.

Sharpe, Harris and McKeen (2005) found that early childhood educators do value music education highly and consider it a significant part of the early childhood curriculum (but see de Vries, 2006, for a counter example). In a study investigating the relationship between teacher’s beliefs and values, regarding music and movement in the early childhood setting, Sharpe et al. (2005) noted that, even though most of the 119 early childhood teachers in their study regarded music and movement as an important part of the early childhood programs, the use of music was “not always acknowledged or completely understood by early childhood educators” (p 23). An almost identical result was obtained by Hash (2010) surveying 116 pre-service teachers. Participants indicated that they considered music to be a valuable part of the curriculum, but contended that they were neither prepared nor primarily responsible to teach music. These conditions have led to a situation in which Wiggles CDs and similar artefacts of mass music culture are ubiquitously present (de Vries,
encouraging passive absorption instead of active exploration of music.

Young (2003) provides useful, practical guidelines for adults participating in preschool children music:

- continue to provide a rich diet of songs, play songs, music games, vocal-rich rhymes and stories woven into everyday
- provide equipment and settings for self-initiated music play with voice, instruments and dancing
- listen and observe, tuning in to children’s ways of being musical
- respond and play creatively with children in music, allowing them to take initiative
- begin to comment and describe
- support children learning to play instruments by modelling
- Provide opportunities to hear a variety of recorded and live music representing different styles and culture
- Model using music in everyday life (p. 134)

While the above list seems sensible and achievable, the competency levels, motivation and confidence to meet the proposed strategies and effectively participate in young children’s music learning is a troubling one for many early childhood educators. The next section discusses current issues and concerns.

2.8.1 Curriculum issues – are teachers prepared?

The most worrying aspect of teacher’s concerns about their capacity to teach music is that it is in most case well founded – and has been for a long period of time. Years ago, Bourne (1988), expressed what seems to be (still) the situation in the Australian early childhood music education:

*The frequently expressed preference for the general classroom teacher to be the only appropriate person to present music to the children hardly measures up to the current realities of the situation. It*
appears likely that the single biggest waste of time in tertiary teacher education courses may be found in the short units, whether compulsory or elective offered to general primary school teacher trainees, under the name of music. Doreen Bridges (1979) questioned the value of such units for students who come into tertiary education with a hopelessly inadequate musical background, themselves the product of a system that has failed to provide a systematic education for music. Nearly a decade later, her questions are no less pertinent. (p. 64).

Already 30 years ago, music played only a minor role in teacher education, leading to poor music education at schools, leading to poorly prepared university students studying again in brief and inadequate music education units. The vicious cycle described by Bridges in 1979 has not been broken yet as newer estimates, cited by Ebbeck, Yim and Lee (2008), see the proportion of educators with minimal or no music training to be around 60% – 70%. In dealing with these numbers, MacMahon (1988) pointed out that a major part of the problem with “early childhood music education is how, where and when to intervene most effectively and economically” (p. 76).

The solution, at any rate, has not been found yet, since the need for more specific attention to music education in the early childhood curriculum is still regularly highlighted (for instance, De Vries, 2006, 2010; Hocking, 2008; Suthers, 2004, 2008). Nyland and Ferris (2007) discussed the lack of current policy direction with respect to music education:

The National Accreditation Council, a federal government quality assurance body makes a number of references to music in its Quality Practices Guide (2005) but these are general and often subsumed within other areas of practice. The most specific mention in a guide is Principle 4.5 which promotes “each child’s enjoyment of and participation in the expressive arts (p.21).
Current guidelines provide at best weak encouragement for the permanent inclusion of specific music content into the early childhood curriculum. The Early Years Learning Framework Australia (2009) as well the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (2009) marginalise music and favour the areas of ‘literacy’ and ‘numeracy’. The anchoring of music into the curriculum is much more tangible in other countries as in Hong Kong, for example, where 30 minutes should be spent on music education each day (Ebbeck, Yim, & Lee, 2008).

Public guidelines have little in common with early childhood professionals’ opinions about the importance of music (Sharpe, Harris & McKeen, 2005). De Vries (2006) found that early childhood staff were very interested in fostering their ability to teach music as long as the skills they were to learn did not seem too daunting; for example, they were keen to learn how to plan and deliver an effective listening lesson, but rejected a suggestion to practise playing the piano. The next generation of generalist early childhood teachers, as Hash’s (2010) study demonstrates, will probably be ill prepared for the challenges that come with music education. Pre-service teacher training, in particular in the area of fine arts, is still insufficient to allow teachers to feel confident and skilled in their classrooms (Temmerman, 2005). Nyland and Ferris (2006) research findings provided some evidence for this assertion. They found that out of 38 Australian universities, 25 offered early childhood education courses where the ‘Arts’ were generally presented in an integrated fashion, or two or three types of art (such as drawing) were covered as ‘representatives’ of all forms. Two of the most common categories of university courses were examined: four year degree courses (15) and 13 one-year graduate entry courses. The results of this investigation stated that time allocated to music has been reduced from what it was even ten years ago (and remember that Bridges already decried the lack of proper teacher music education in 1979). Hocking’s (2008) recent review of the literature confirmed Nyland and Ferris’ findings. Hocking wrote that time spent on music education in all but one education university courses was less than 16 hours during the entire degree. Not only has music education been relegated to be just one art form of many, but it also has become an elective part of coursework (Hocking). Thus, many future early childhood educators will not have received any form of music education at all during their higher education studies. This deficiency has also been recognised by the Department of Education, Science and Training (2005):
Time for music in pre-service programs has been reduced. In many cases music has been submerged in an Arts learning area construct. As a result, teachers emerging from these programmes indicated that they lack sufficient knowledge, understanding and skills and accompanying confidence to teach music. (p. 78)

Given such assessments, De Vries’ (2004) criticism, that there is not enough encouragement for children’s spontaneous responses to music, hardly surprises. Teachers who feel unqualified and insecure in their attempts to teach music are unlikely to introduce music variety in the early childhood setting (see also Suthers, 2008). Rather, they will rely on their own music collection, which makes their task easier as they are familiar with the material. However, these may not be the most effective materials to use, especially if teachers follow the trend of primarily focussing on skill development (Forrai, 1998) and less on free and creative exploration of music.

For the time being, it seems, music has taken a backseat to other forms of art in the Australian early childhood landscape. As Barrett (1993) has pointed out, early childhood professionals seem to be more at ease providing children visual arts materials rather than music (see also Hash, 2010). Internationally, music is widely anchored in early childhood curricula, but it frequently is embedded as one element in the overarching group of creative arts (Ebbeck, Yim & Lee, 2008). However, even this position may not guarantee the music a place in education as a further erosion of art education in Australia seems likely. Pound and Harrison (2003), for example, concluded that arts in general have increasingly been undermined by literacy and numeracy education.

Concerns about this development should be growing when looking at the results of an inadequate music curriculum policy in other countries. Andang’o and Mugo (2007), for instance, have described Kenya’s loss of traditional musical culture due to curriculum shortcomings. On the other hand, other international examples (Ilari, 2007) show that music education does not necessarily require specialised music teachers to be successful. Ebbeck, Yim and Lee (2008) stated that in Japan just as Hong Kong, singing is a common activity for children, youths and young people, fuelled, in part, by the custom of karaoke. Using song in
the classroom is subsequently more natural when these children become educators.

In summary, early childhood professionals are reluctant to integrate music as a substantive part of their curriculum. A key reason for this development is the lack of self-confidence with respect to their ability to perform and teach about music. In most cases teachers’ own music education in the early childhood setting, school and university has been lacking the depth necessary to make teachers more at ease. As such, the present levels of training and support for early childhood educators are not sufficient and a reform of the early childhood curriculum alone will not do. Early childhood teachers will have to be properly qualified to feel confident about sharing their skills with the children and to experiment with materials outside their comfort zone.

2.9 The early childhood teachers’ role in promoting diversity

Besides music, the second concept of interest put forward in this literature review has been cultural diversity. Designing and implementing inclusive practices that take children’s varying cultures into consideration has become a centrepiece of government policy. If embraced, this requirement challenges teachers' knowledge of the children they work with and questions the methods they commonly employ.

Inclusive practises require an understanding of others' cultures, their specific needs and preferences. It is difficult for teachers to appreciate how to cater for others if they lack awareness how others are different from themselves (Dau, 2001; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Vuckovic, 2006; 2008a). Recognising and appreciating difference and similarity is a core process of social exchange and is linked to valued attributes such as honesty, trust and respect (Mundine & Guigni, 2006). Thus, a first step towards the development of an inclusive curriculum is a reflective process that enables teachers to develop a sense of personal culture (Coelho, 1998). Vuckovic (2008b) argued and demonstrated that such reflections can involve personal habits and values that have been derived from both childhood and adult acculturation in different social groups.

The second step is to further analyse personal culture and to draw conclusions about the implications of one’s cultural proclivities. This second tier of reflections is more concerned
with attitudes, expectations and assumptions (Sheets & Hollins, 1999). Racial prejudice or undue expectations of expertise on the basis of experience with just one cultural group would be examples. These reflections can only be accurately derived from a thorough first step of analysis, but they are more closely linked to pragmatic aspects of the curriculum, such as the selection of tasks or the time spent with individual children.

After this preliminary work on personal culture, early childhood educators should invest time in exploring children’s sense of culture. Frequently – and particularly in Australia – children have multiple ethnic identities. Furthermore, there is a variety of cultural patterns originating from micro differences within the family culture (DEEWR, 2009). For example, a family’s attitude towards music may be quite unrelated to ethnicity yet the child’s identity is influenced by this family climate and can therefore differ from another child with the same ethnic background but with a highly different family culture. Thus, as Oberhuemer (2000) writes, the key is to understand the child’s family culture as well as the broader social factors affecting the family unit.

The third step is an assessment of the social community that engulfs the child. Aside from identifying further sources of influence, becoming aware of the community can help to explore the people and the resources that might contribute positively to early childhood programs.

From these three tiers of cultural awareness, the early childhood educators should review the way they communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds. For example, where the child, the family or members of the community is only rudimentarily sharing the educator’s language (this might also relate to the terminology used), a verbal approach is detrimental to successful partnerships even though verbal communication might be the educator’s preferred methods. Teachers who learn about other cultures and uncover how children’s cultural identity affects them can anticipate misunderstandings when dealing with children and families (Ebbeck & Baohm, 1999).

Lastly, the concept of diversity and the celebration of difference must be brought closer to children and families. For this to happen it is necessary to point out differences publicly and declare this diversity to be desirable. If the teacher has sufficiently explored personal
culture, then this can serve as a counterpoint to explore differences between the children and the teacher. The goal in teaching others about diversity should exceed acceptance and tolerance as the only learning outcomes: rather children and families should be encouraged to celebrate diversity. The most impactful and credible approach may be to role-model positive attitudes (Ashman & Elkins, 2005).

All these individual steps may be expected from high quality teaching staff with a keen interest in inclusive education (DEEWR, 2009; DEECD, 2009; Glover, 1994), but the importance of cultural sensitivity and awareness has risen to such a degree that public policy making bodies now prescribe the acknowledgement of cultural diversity in the classroom (Office of Early Childhood Education & Child Care, 2009). In order to live up to this expectation, staff who are aware of their attitudes and feelings will find it easier to develop an understanding and respect for other, sometimes highly divergent cultures. However, to develop a true inclusive curriculum, staff also require the appropriate knowledge and skills to link people from different cultures together. Such skills may be obtained from programs specifically designed to foster teacher capacity to design inclusive educational settings and these have steadily increased in the past two decades (e.g. Glover, 1994).

All of these programs function on the basis of educational theories and transform the theoretical, ethical and policy issues into meaningful lessons or curriculum items.

The best known theoretical accounts are the Constructionist theory of learning and teaching (for example, Brooks & Brooks, 1999; McInerney & McInerney, 2006; Windschitl, 2002), Global education (for example, Fountain, 1990; Pike & Selby, 1988), the Bi-lingual approach (explored by Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke, 2003; Schwalm, 1998), and Multicultural Education – the inclusive approach (for example, Ebbeck, 2001; Coelho, 1998; Sinclair & Wilson, 1999). Each of these makes specific assumptions about the core determinants of successful diversity integration and how to engage with specific diversity issues in the context of education programs. While all diversity education programs are designed to increase the prevalence of culturally diverse education, the means and strategies to accomplish this differ. However, there are three key areas which all programs are designed to address in some capacity: first, there is the requirement that the outcome of diversity education should be that all children can live comfortably in a culturally diverse society. To
accomplish that, a second key aspect of these programs is to address prejudices and negative attitudes towards outgroups, particularly for children in majority groups. Lastly, the programs deal with the special needs and conflicts that may arise for bi-cultural children.

One other approach to teach children about diversity is to employ music (Vuckovic, 2008c). Introducing various types of music is an active way to promote tolerance and diversity (Slee, 2005). The accessibility of music also renders it a springboard for more exploration. For instance, exploring German music could be tied to exploring German dances, traditional clothing, food, and, of course, language. However, as previously discussed, early childhood educators are frequently reluctant to engage in musical activities and particularly singing. This is highly unfortunate as singing is suitable for addressing the topic of diversity in the classroom. A truly inclusive curriculum ought to rely more on singing than other techniques. If the teachers are reluctant to sing in English how likely is it that they will sing in other languages?

Without doubt providing young children with meaningful musical experiences is hard work: early childhood educators ought to have a sound knowledge of child development and early music development; they should provide children with opportunities to explore sound through singing, listening, moving, and playing instruments, as well as creating introductory experiences with verbalization and visualization of musical ideas. They also need to be aware that spontaneous musical behaviours and musical understandings children already possess are legitimate beginnings of literacy (McCusker, 2007). Further, they need to realize and be mindful of the fact that children's musical culture is distinctively different from adult musical culture (Holgersen, 2007). Early childhood professionals need to have a good judgement when it comes to choosing appropriate teaching and learning strategies, resources and materials. The music resources included in the curriculum should be of high quality and lasting value, including traditional children's songs, folk songs, classical music, and music from a variety of cultures, styles, and time periods (Custodero & Chen-Hafteck, 2008).

When it comes to using the appropriate technique of teaching music to children, current practice predominately utilises aural, oral, and creativity techniques. The most prevalent are the methods of Zoltan Kodaly, Emile Jacques-Dalcroze and Carl Orff (Marsh, 2008; McLaughin, 1991). Each of these men developed teaching techniques that focus on
introducing children to music at an early age. Their approaches emphasise first the aural qualities of music, and then its symbolic form. They also underline the importance of early experiences in music, calling attention to the importance of play and traditional children’s singing games and positive social experience within the music field. These are ideas that are also compatible with the view of theorists of child development like Vygotsky and Piaget and early childhood and music educators (Bridges, 1994; Smith, 2003; Nyland & Ferris, 2005; Young, 2003). Early childhood educators also need to provide help to children to develop their musical abilities. Reinhardt (1990) showed that with guided training children are able to make large improvements in their degree of control of tonal duration and the repetition of rhythmic patterns. Lastly, according to Csikszentmihalyi’s (1993) theoretical framework of flow experience, learning experiences for children should not only have skill development potential but also challenge them. Custodero and St. John (2007) used Csikszentmihalyi’s model to enhance children’s engagement by sequencing experiences and gradually children’s musicality grows through participating in familiar materials of childhood, like chants, games and musical play activities, which become increasingly complex.

However, currently early childhood professionals face the much more practical dilemma of not feeling confident about their skills, regardless of their knowledge of music education theory. To counter this problem DeVries (2004) recommended the use of pre-recorded music for singing, if needed, and also encouraged formal music groups. At the other end of the spectrum, in her doctoral studies, Downie (2003) used narratives to record her experience of the complexities of providing music education in an early childhood setting.

In summary, even though government agencies have recognized that current education policies do not sufficiently prepare future teachers to pass on their knowledge about music to children, in practice there is an inconsistency between what the current policy’s stated objectives are (somewhat encouraging of music education), what early childhood educators believe (music education is important to them), and what actual practice within many educational settings is (no, or only low-quality musical education). There is strong policy support for inclusive practices in early childhood settings (DEEWR, 2009; DEECD, 2009) and there are inspiring and well-conceptualised educational theories (Fountain, 1990; McInerney & McInerney, 2006; Prasad & Ebbeck, 2000; Sinclair & Wilson, 1999; Villegas & Lucas, 2002) to offer practical guidance. Sadly, though, for many early childhood educators education for
cultural diversity is conducted without a sense of ownership and with the limited resources they may have at their disposal (Vuckovic, 2007). A stronger dedication to music education could be an intriguing way for teachers to address diversity while practicing inclusion in the classroom.

2.10 Conclusions

As this review of the literature indicates, children can strongly benefit from the development of their musical skills and from a broadening of their awareness of diversity. The strong cultural association of music and especially song make it an ideal medium. Children enjoy singing and dancing and are highly uninhibited when it comes to trying out new songs (Nyland & Ferris, 2005; Vuckovic, 2006). Moreover, play-based music education programs are likely to work better for young children (Hendricks, 2001). Children have been found to be more receptive to learning and can achieve significant improvements in less time and with much less effort compared to adults (Catholic Education Office, 1988). This finding emphasises the need for a rich music education starting at an early age. The importance of young children’s cultural awareness linked to musical development must be addressed by training, promoting awareness and responsibility of early childhood educators to assist children in listening and discovering the world around them in a conscious way (Suthers, 2008). Australian communities are highly diverse with regard to ethnicity, religion, language and cultural customs. Children growing up in such environments are facing a great variety of and at times contradictory messages about behaviour and thinking when interacting with adults and peers. Without guidance and learned understanding, children may deal with this diversity by developing or adopting stereotypes and prejudices and by forming secluded ingroups. While policies and programs are already in place to actively combat racism and other forms of discrimination, education about cultural diversity, at a very young age, is as yet insufficiently developed. In particular music could be used to explain and address difference, and to make the learning experience both enjoyable and shared. Given the described benefits in general development that come with musical training and the added benefit of preparing children for a society where diversity is the norm and appreciation of diversity a prerequisite, a convincing argument can be made for the need to understand and address diversity of preschool musical experience when children
enter the educational system. If the aim is to develop each child’s basic musicality to its full potential in a playful, yet well thought-out way, and reap all the benefits that come with it, early childhood educators would be well advised to consider the possibilities offered to them by something as natural as singing a song.

The findings reviewed here provide a general justification for the encouragement of an increased engagement in music and diversity education. Looking at the recommendations made by early childhood researchers, it is suggested that children’s musical skills develop at an early age. While children require a degree of freedom to explore music on their own terms, there is also much support for the implementation of group music sessions. Further, music education can be fruitfully combined with education about diversity. The following list highlights important findings from each section of the literature review which have impacted on design decision and strategic directions of this research.

2.11 Summary of findings

- The predominant opinion is that music discovery, and interaction with music benefits children in a variety of ways, starting even prior to birth.
- Developmentally, there are huge differences between children in regards musical competence and this may be reliant on experiences offered within the culture. However, there is a substantial amount of research indicating children’s capabilities develop as they grow and that their use of music can be both sophisticated and highly articulate.
- Exposure to music has an impact on children’s ability to use music as an expressive language.
- Singing and spontaneous singing is an important expressive activity of early childhood that lends itself to self expression and play. This also applies to experimentation with musical activities like movement and sound exploration.
- Free play contributes much to child’s musical development that cannot be obtained through purely guided education.
- There are specific environmental and cultural effects that have a noticeable influence on children.
• The present levels of training and support for early childhood educators are not sufficient to instigate a reform of the early childhood curriculum in relation to the presence of music.

• There is strong policy support for inclusive practices in early childhood settings but music as a strategy for promoting and understanding of diversity is not promoted. Current education policies do not sufficiently prepare future teachers to pass knowledge of music to children.

The following chapter will discuss the theoretical foundations upon which an accessible and successful music program may be based.
CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The ways in which researchers carry out their work convey messages about their beliefs concerning research methodology, their theoretical pre-suppositions and also their views on ‘how the world works’ (Mertens, 2005). The present research programme sought to closely follow the recommendations made by proponents of socio-cultural theory and to embed the research study in a naturalistic early childhood setting. Akin to any research paradigm, the selection of socio-cultural theory and a naturalistic research approach imposes constraints on research design, methodology, and interaction with participants. However, the methodological limitations entail decisive advantages, such as a greater yield of high quality data, less imposition on participants, greater data validity and increased design flexibility.

The present chapter explores both the constraints and the possibilities associated with adopting a naturalistic paradigm. Further, it elaborates on the implications of implementing a methodology based on Vygotskian principles. This epistemological direction shapes the research fundamentally: it prescribes selection and use of data, how to form, develop and evaluate research in collaboration with the participants and how the interpretation of data is shaped by contextual parameters. These are central elements of a naturalistic study design. The implications of this research can only be understood with reference to the theoretical foundations and the specific circumstances of the study environment.

3.1 The constructivist view

The constructivist paradigm, on which the present research programme is based, purports a conception of reality as a multi-layered, interactive, shared social experience interpreted by individuals (Mertens, 2005). In this it is clearly distinguishable from the classic Platonic perspective advocating the existence of one clearly defined reality that a person ought to perceive.

Constructivism is a theory of learning stemming from the work of psychologists such as Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, Gardner and Goodman. The basic premise of constructivism is that learners actively construct knowledge rather than passively receive it. The belief that reality is found not outside us, but rather is created or constructed within us is central to this theory. Constructivists acknowledge the contribution of both cultural and biological
influence in the learning process (Foreman, 1993; Fosnot, 2005).

Adopting a constructivist perspective requires a shift of focus away from the provision of content that can be accessed and consumed by anyone with nearly invariant results, to a closer inspection of the individual and how the individual engages with content. The necessity for such change arises from the assumption that the meaning derived from content may be radically different across individuals. Hence, if pre-fabricated content cannot automatically lead to the desired pedagogic outcomes, it becomes clear that learners must be provided with a wide array of stimuli to construct their own meaning; the learning process is active and neither can, nor should be, highly structured. However, facilitating learning does mean to pay attention to and recognise what is already known by the learner. Constructivists hold that, to some degree, acquiring knowledge presupposes prior knowledge, which functions as a template for further information integration. Thus, while learning is active and individually distinct, the educator can assist by gently aligning the new material with existing knowledge structures the individual possesses. Constructivists also value self-regulated learning during which children can further develop their innate competence to construct meaning from the perception of reality (Foreman, 1993).

Newly learned material, which is integrated with previous knowledge is continuously utilised heuristically. Moreover, learning strategies are similarly retained and more likely to be employed in future learning situations. Thus, encouraging experimentation with different learning strategies has positive long term effects. On the other hand, repeated application of a few selected learning strategies may also lead to an over-reliance on these. Hence, constructivists advocate a diversification of learning strategies from an early age.

Learning strategies can be widely varied – highly abstract and theoretical or physically engaging. However, constructivism postulates that some reflective and exclusively mental processing is necessary to construct meaning. While children can carry out complex actions, it is primarily an understanding of the purpose of these actions that will lead to learning as understanding motivates the learner to deliberately and repeatedly engage in the action. Thus, put simply, it is important that children are given the opportunity to think about their experience so that they can make sense of them, construct and test hypotheses and arrive at
conclusions about the world.

Language has a role to play in knowledge acquisition (Vygotsky, 1962). The verbalisation of insights can be part of the reflective processing activity and also is an essential part of the shared construction of knowledge between multiple members of a group. Constructivists emphasise the importance of social context and argue that the best learning outcomes are achieved if learners are collaborating. In effect, learning is also believed to be a social construction emerging from our interactions with our environment and other people. Interaction between learners is promoted if active learning is encouraged, whereas the perspective of the child as a passive recipient of information also implicitly negates the interaction of the child with anyone but the teacher.

Constructivism further acknowledges that learning is contingent on the motivations of those involved. The term motivation in this context has several meanings. On the one hand it refers to a desire for learning, but it also relates to the understanding of the purpose of the learned content. For example, a young child learning to push the pedals on a tricycle will benefit from an understanding of the relationship between the muscular contractions and the resulting locomotion. Constructivists seek to demarcate rote learning from functional learning by emphasising that while rote learning may still appeal to natural curiosity and desire to acquire new knowledge, functional learning, which provides a link between content and its applicability is more effective.

Lastly, constructivists also emphasise that learning is both iterative and progressive. Knowledge is not typically absorbed instantaneously, instead it derives from reflection, repeated exposure and encounters in a variety of contexts (Fosnot, 2005).

In summary, constructivists see children as learners capable of exploring the world in the way that suits them best. The task of the educator is primarily to provide opportunities for learning that vary, but do not force the children to adopt a particular learning strategy. Instead, children should be allowed to explore in line with their preferences. Development, according to the constructivists, is a consequence of experiential and social construction resulting in active reorganisation of learning and is not simply the result of maturation as educators once believed. A theory formulated about educational suggestions, on the basis of
the constructivist principles, will be discussed in the next section.

### 3.2 Socio-Cultural theory

While constructivism is the overarching conceptual paradigm, more detailed theoretical guidance for this research program was derived from sociocultural theory. Strongly influenced by Vygotsky (1986) and later further developed by Wertsch (1998) and Robbins (2007), sociocultural theory is built on the foundation of constructivism, yet it makes narrower theoretical prescriptions and assumptions. Subscribing to these assumptions influences the epistemological approach reflected in the choice of research methodology and the selection of appropriate educational techniques for the program.

The assumption of mediated reality is a central tenet of sociocultural theory. It is asserted that the way humans perceive reality is through symbolic interpretation of sensory data. In order to understand the symbols, one must acquire the tools, rather than take advantage of innate abilities, that are necessary to make sense of the sensory cues. For instance, knowledge of writing enables the derivation of meaning from the visual cues presented in letters. The mediative means that are made use of can and often do develop into more complex forms. Exploration, for instance, transforms from a purely physical endeavour to a process mostly defined by the integration of information in symbolic form (text or spoken language). Furthermore, a person will seek out new forms of mediations if the current ones are insufficient, the most basic example of which is asking for help to accomplish a complex or unfamiliar task.

Sociocultural theory affirms the distinctiveness of the individual learner, but at the same time emphasises that development arises out of social interaction. When interacting with other people, cognitive development is highly stimulated (Jensen, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978). According to neuroscientists, early childhood brain development is significantly influenced by environmental factors (Gardner, 1983; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000) and social interactions facilitate this development (Caine & Caine, 1991) by exposing the person to pattern in complex, and subjectively potentially confusing situations (Hart, 1983; Sylwester, 1993).

Cultural knowledge is transmitted through formal and informal interactions in a range of
social contexts and varying interaction and partners such as peers, siblings or teachers (Wood, 1988). Knowledge is embodied in work, actions, play, technology, literature, music, visual art and the talk of members of society. Children’s development thus reflects their cultural experiences and their opportunities for access to the more mature who already practice specific areas of knowledge. Adherents of sociocultural theory reject the claim that all tools necessary to make sense of reality are innate and become activated with advancing age. According to Vygotsky (1978) the social character of learning is demonstrated in the fact that cognitive skills first are acquired on the interpersonal plane before becoming internalised and further developed on the intrapersonal plane. In other words, tools are acquired through experience, which at first is strongly externalised and becomes progressively independent with ongoing development and maturation.

As mediative means are first discovered through external guidance, these mediative techniques bear strong cultural marks that are conveyed to the learner. For example, a stone can have a variety of uses and meanings: it can be used as a hunting device or weapon, as a writing device on sandy grounds, as an object to weight other items down or as a hammer-like tool. The type of meaning of the stone conveyed to the learner depends on the ontological characteristics of the person sharing knowledge. Since these, too, have been obtained from other members of the social environment, such mediative tools are an artefact of a person’s culture. Thus, from a sociocultural perspective, it is awareness of the social situation and its actors that allows an accurate understanding of learning. Learning is viewed as occurring within social relationships, communities and cultures (Hedges, 2004). Bronfenbrenner (1979) placed the child at the centre of the ‘wider social environment’ and stipulated that the study of development must be a study of the contextual whole within which the individual operates. He encouraged early childhood educators to observe children in environments that were familiar to them; the home, the childcare setting and schools (Podmore, 2006).

According to Vygotsky, the acquisition of culturally defined mediation tools is to be studied with reference to four domains. The study of the phylogenetic domain investigates how human mediation differs from that of other species as a result of humanity’s specific evolutionary path. The sociocultural domain refers to differences between mediation techniques as a result of major cross-cultural differences. The ontological domain refers to
development of the life cycle and, in Vygotsky's case, specifically how children integrate mediational means. Lastly, the microgenetic domain is devoted to changes occurring during a short span of time. The present research program falls into the ontological and the microgenetic domains in its investigation of children's music skill development in general and micro skills (for instance, learning a song) in particular.

Mediative tools used to derive meaning change with continuous interaction with the world and especially social interaction partners. Education is the foremost driver for mediative reformation, a structured change in the mediative tools frequently employed. As the type, duration and method of education is culturally specific, mediation acquired through education is also inherently cultural. The integration of new mediation tools fosters children's mental development and empowers them to employ further and more advanced mental schemas. The role of the educator in the reformation process is to provide cultural knowledge to the child. The setting in which this exchange takes place is also influenced by the caregiver's culture, so that much of the character of the mediation tool that is presented is implicitly rather than deliberately conveyed. Culture is also embedded in the teacher's conceptualisation of the student; or, as Wood (1988) phrases it: “Our images of children-as learners are reflected, inevitably, in our definition of what it means to teach” (p. 1).

Education is an essential element of maturation according to sociocultural theory as the availability of mediation tools is a prerequisite for the development of higher mental functions. Initially, a child is mainly influenced by the objects in the environment (object-regulation), by their configuration and identity. With the development of communicative means (gestural, then verbal) the interaction with others dominates development (other-regulation). With additional gains of mediative tools, children eventually become empowered to use social and cognitive abilities (self-regulation).

The shift in the location of mediational tools from external to internal has been termed the zone of proximal development. External mediation is at one end of the zone, internalized mediation at the other end. Mediation techniques acquired by means of the zone of proximal development are socially construed and embedded with cultural meaning. Modern definitions point out that the zone of proximal development is, importantly, a shared creation of learning opportunities (Head, 2003). Implied in this definition is the idea that the
zone of proximal development does not exclusively emerge from the interaction of one person with established competence and another striving to attain competence. Instead, the definition leaves space for the emergence of expert knowledge from social interaction in a group of novices. As Vygotsky (1978) makes it clear, however, the more traditional idea that knowledge is shared between an expert and a novice still constitutes the common pathway for the inception of mediation.

The scope of the zone of proximal development (its width) varies across children. This is not necessarily apparent in overt behaviour – children may, in fact, show similar performance despite differences in their zone of proximal development. However, according to Wood (1988), children with wider zones are able to make greater use of instruction, while children with narrower zones come to rely on self-regulation earlier. Importantly, the width of the zone of proximal development can vary across different learning domains.

Where older views of the zone of proximal development have considered this exchange between expert and novice to be a unilateral transfer, the more recent view suggests that, for example, a teaching situation involves imitation by the novice and that this imitation leads to remodelling and interpretation of knowledge as it is appropriated. The imitative expression also has a communicative function and can, in turn, lead to a transformative effect on the expert’s representation of knowledge.

Vygotsky (1978) placed great emphasis on the role of the teacher in extending the child beyond current capabilities and into the zone of proximal development. Using the vocabulary of critical pedagogy, a teacher ideally reaches a transcendental, shared state of consciousness with the students in which the teacher functions as a guide, but students take a very active role in the discovery of knowledge (Prendergast, 2008). To further the description of the relationship between educator and learner, Bruner, who was greatly influenced by Vygotsky, (Bruner, 1987; 1990) coined the term ‘scaffolding’ to describe the way in which a more experienced person can support a less experienced person to enter the zone of proximal development (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976). Scaffolding has become a popular term in relation to early childhood education (Arthur, et al., 2008). However, it has gained some criticism because it puts the teacher in a position of power, since at its core is the idea of unilateral transfer rather than shared opportunity. An alternative concept is ‘co-
construction’ which acknowledges the teacher as a learner. Co-construction places the teacher and the child on an even plane and makes learning an empowering experience for all involved (Rogoff, 2003). ‘In contrast to scaffolding, the language of co-construction of learning generally has no prescribed outcomes [...] the focus is on developing shared meanings/intersubjectivity, and on each participant contributing to the ongoing learning experiences from their own expertise and points of view’ (Anning, Cullen, & Fleer, 2008, p. 51). There is evidence in favour of co-construction as a teaching approach. A study by Suthers and Niland (2007) for example, found that teaching styles that enable children to respond to new content in their own idiosyncratic way, while at the same time supporting and validating the children’s chosen type of response, are most effective in bringing about child engagement. However, the study also argued in favour of some teacher role modelling, specifically in the early stages of the learning process and withdrawing progressively as time passes. Eventually, even though children often find themselves in the non-expert role in the co-constructive process, once they gain some understanding, their role can become that of the expert in further efforts to consolidate the knowledge. For instance, a child, who has learned a particular drawing technique can develop her knowledge of this type of mediation in a co-constructive learning setting with a parent, where the child now takes up the expert role guiding the parent along. In the context of music education, Niland (2009) argues that co-constructive, child-centred approaches need to attain a higher standing in the curriculum. She noted that music education in particular is still teacher led with emphasis on skill acquisition or improvement rather than focused on less structured goals. Niland points out that abundant research exist supporting the notion of child-centred musical play as a powerful medium for young children’s exploration.

Integrating the concept of the zone of proximate development in the educational setting suggests that educators must play an active role in the provision of experiences used for mediation. The selected experiences should be shared between child and educator. Further, it is the educator’s responsibility to match learning experiences with the child’s level of potential development (Wertsch & Rogoff, 1984).

An important aspect of sociocultural theory is the dialectic relationship between thought and speech. The acquisition of many forms of mediation is contingent upon a grasp of language. For instance, Vygotsky claimed that language is necessary for symbolic thought
which is itself required to access higher mental processes such as planning and reflection. Vygotsky (1962) wrote: “A word devoid of thought is a dead thing, and the thought unembodied in words remains a shadow” (p. 153). Thought, as an internal process, and external culturally specific mediation, specifically in the form of language, are integrated during internalisation. The phenomenological manifestation of internalisation is verbal consciousness as reflected in planning or reasoning processes. Since Vygotsky assumes that higher forms of mental processes are dependent on the presence of language, it follows that young children do not possess those higher level processes. Internalisation thus describes the transfer of deliberative mental control from external to internal.

While sociocultural theory rejects the claim that thinking and speaking are the same thing, purveyors of the theory maintain that the processes are not entirely independent of each other. As can be seen in many problem solving situations, thoughts are often given symbolic shape by converting them and thereby structuring them within speech. As thought and speech are inextricably intertwined the analysis of mental processes demands the need to form a common, yet dialectic unit of analysis that takes into consideration thought and speech (and its inherent limitation for the speaker).

Sociocultural theory is also closely related to activity theory (Williams, Davis & Blacka, 2007), which deals with motives of actions and the development of an activity repertoire. Activity theory stipulates that mediation and new learning becomes manifested in overt actions. Actions are related to goal relevant activities, although any given action may be related to different activities. For example, the action of reading a book might have an underlying learning activity or, alternatively, an entertainment activity. Even while the same action is carried out, the underlying activity can change, depending on the activity goal. The goals of activities are denoted as motives.

Motives are critical to predict the outcome of learning experiences. Without a learning motive, task-based instruction is unlikely to yield positive learning outcomes. Education, work, but also activities such as play are culturally motivated in that they conform to established cultural norms of carrying out these activities. A special place is reserved for the play motive as play, according to Vygotsky, this is the plane of activity allowing children to independently access new forms of mediation by creating a zone of proximal development.
Engaging in play can lead to the development of abilities beyond what they currently possess.

The position of the early childhood educator has traditionally been one of power where the teacher is viewed as holding important information that needs to be passed on to the child. Assessment has often focused on developmental domains and a deficit approach where the teacher looks at what the child cannot do (Podmore, 2006). Within the framework of this approach, children's thoughts and mental capacity are frequently described negatively as 'erroneous' or 'untutored', to quote but two examples. Such assessments are often made by means of observation, which, in the past, have been facilitated by checklists, running records or anecdotes. However, it may be argued that since the primary aim of observation is to improve the experience of learning for children (Podmore), noting their deficits does little to foster their enjoyment, particularly if the observations are only reflective of the impressions generated by the educator while neglecting the view of the learner.

However, the deficit approach has been continuously challenged. Robbins (2007), for example, describes children's thoughts as complex, dynamic, often collaborative and contextualised. An alternative to the deficit approach focuses on the child as a competent learner who is actively constructing an understandings of the culture in which he lives (Hedges, 2004). Using this latter approach, the role of the teacher changes from one of dictating the daily activities, to following the lead of children’s interests and supporting their learning by assisting them to achieve tasks that would otherwise remain just out of reach (Nixon & Gould, 1999). Contrary to the deficit approach, this ‘strengths’ approach also acknowledges the importance of the social group. The child is increasingly perceived as an individual within the group rather than an isolated subject.

In summary, sociocultural theory beholds the child as an active learner. In contrast to the wider view of constructivism, sociocultural theory explicitly emphasises the role of culture and language in developing children’s awareness (Nixon & Gould, 1999). Vygotsky (1978), in particular, argued that there are socio-cultural reasons for observing children and believed that in learning, children were attempting to understand their culture. While children can hone their mediation tools within the context of play with their peers, it is chiefly through guided interaction with adults that new forms of mediation are acquired by transitioning
through the zone of proximal development (Podmore, 2006). The basis of successful learning is the cooperative exploration of material (Vygotsky).

3.3 Putting the constructivist view into practise

As discussed in the previous section, adopting a sociocultural perspective has far reaching implications for practitioners and researchers alike. Sociocultural principles are relevant to the interaction of children within the classroom, but likewise inform researchers about adequate research scope and methodology. For example, in order to maintain social and cultural awareness during data collection, the observation technique and analysis employed must be capable of supporting an image of children actively involved in a particular social and physical context. Checklists and surveys can only be of limited use in capturing the multi-faceted roles and identities children develop in their interaction with others.

A more promising method of enquiry is the utilisation of various types of qualitative measures. Qualitative research is much better suited to approximate naturalistic conditions at the research site as they do not necessarily require the same participant compliance that is a pre-requisite for quantitative methodology. Additionally, music research is poised to entail a strong emotive component as music generally resonates with children on an emotional level (Burt, 2007; Young, 2003). Research questions with emotive aspects are difficult to address with numerical data and more meaningful results for professionals in the field can be generated by an appropriate blend of qualitative tools (Goldstein, 2007). By the same token, where the complex interaction of many factors in naturally occurring environments is concerned, information-rich case studies are preferable over broad-scale studies with substantially less analytic depth (Spindler, 1982).

However, each qualitative study will have its own unique design, data collection methods and analysis procedures. Hatch (2007) argues that a careful introspective look at what the researcher believes about the nature of reality (ontological assumptions) and what can be known (epistemological assumptions) will help to identify the different research paradigms and choose accordingly. One of the most important reasons for early examination of paradigmatic assumptions is to ensure that decisions about research approaches are
logically consistent.

The parameters of a socio-cultural paradigm call for a methodology capable of detecting and capturing the inherently collaborative nature of constructing meaning. A wholistic documentation of the experience is crucial; one which does not neglect the role of context in learning and development. Ideally, the data collection process should itself foster collaborative partnerships between early childhood educators, parents, families and children by giving them the opportunity to pool their knowledge of the child. A collaborative tool that sufficiently addresses these demands is the Learning Story approach, which is described in greater detail in Chapter 4. The following section more generally discusses the importance of documentation.

Documentation plays a crucial role in communicating the child’s learning both to the child and to significant others. Documentation incorporates the following three aspects: the recording of information, its storage and its presentation. In the field of early childhood education, traditionally documentation emerged from checklists and running records. Whilst these methods continue to assist teachers in understanding child development, more integrative approaches, such as Learning Stories, have promoted a thorough and holistic way in which to view learning. Hatherly states: “. . . the Learning Stories framework has been a welcome revelation of the power of documentation to support children’s learning and enhance reciprocal, respectful relationships with families” (Hatherly, 2006. p. 3). In this passage Hatherly makes it clear that documentation can be more than remote syphoning of information; it can be part of the educational experience with unique characteristics that allow for a higher degree of participant inclusion across different groups. This type of documentation, as Carr explains, shifts the ‘model of assessment from one in which assessment sits outside learning to one in which assessment is integral to the enhancement of learning’ (Carr, 2001. p. 157).

The Reggio Emilia approach has also acknowledged the power of documentation and it is used as a standard part of classroom practice (Katz & Chard, 1996). In this approach documentation ‘focuses more intensively on children’s experience, memories, thoughts and ideas in the course of their work’ (Katz & Chard, 1996, p. 1). Katz and Chard have noted six ways in which documentation can contribute to the learning experience of children. These
are:

- When children are able to revisit their work their learning is ‘clarified, deepened and strengthened’ (Katz & Chard, 1996, p. 2).
- Documentation highlights to children that their work is valued and taken seriously.
- Planning decisions can be based on the child or groups interests and therefore remain relevant and stimulating.
- Parents can become ‘intimately and deeply aware of their children’s experiences in school’ (Katz & Chard, 1996, p. 2).
- Documentation assists teachers to remain focused on their role in supporting the child’s learning.
- Children’s learning is made visible in a way that cannot be reflected by formal tests or checklists.

With respect to the fifth benefit, de Vries (2006) carried out a study developing teachers’ music education capacity through professional development. The participating teachers stated that documentation was a key aspect of appreciating their own accomplishments and of building up a musical knowledge base that could be used for future teaching. For children, documentation that remains focused on children’s strengths can play an important role in educating families about the way children learn. If appropriately composed, documentation records can show how learning is embedded in everyday experiences (Arthur et al., 2008). Guided by these principles, the present research methodology was designed to facilitate the ongoing sharing of project documentation with all parties involved.

3.4 The importance of context

The meaning of any form of music instruction is inseparable from the context and conditions under which it is generated and experienced (Bresler, 2007). Thus, the documentation of early childhood research also demands an account of the specific culturally and historically situated places and times, as without these it is difficult to retain the meaning of the qualitative data (O’Connell, 2007). Music educators are becoming increasingly interested in the relationship between, particularly, the social context and music
(Aróstegui, 2004); but non-social features remain important, too. Contextual factors affect the learner and the teacher at the same time. On the one hand they impact on the learning content, while they also influence the methods of teaching. The effect of contextual factors is both implicit and explicit (Bresler, 2007). For qualitative researchers, description of context should always include the physical setting in which the social phenomena under examination occurred, a set of participants and their relationships to one another, and the activities in which participants are engaged (Hatch, 1995). Providing such descriptions can be a challenge because contexts are complex and dynamic. They move and change as time passes, participants move in and out, and activities are enacted. Dealing with this kind of complexity is one of the features that make qualitative work “real” in relation to the static settings assumed in most quantitative studies. Custodero and St. John (2007) demonstrated the power of contextualisation in the description of music programs through the inclusion of musical materials such as childhood-short songs, chants, dramatic play, and simple instrumental improvisations.

3.5 Naturalistic observations

Research following the constructivist paradigm flourishes most when combined with a naturalistic approach of enquiry (Rinaldi, 2006; Rogoff, 2003). Since constructivists highlight the importance of the social and natural context in the process of discovering meaning, the research methodology in early childhood education must not significantly alter the context within which learning occurs. A practical example of this can be construed as follows: a group of children explore different geometrical shapes in a group play session. In order to investigate the process, the researcher interrupts the children’s play, separates the group and looks how, exactly, each of the individuals engages with the shapes. In this example, the research approach shatters the naturalistic integrity of the learning situation. The data collection process is intrusive; it does not capture any of the true contextual data and it is counterproductive to the children’s learning.

Naturalistic studies maintain a group’s social relations. This means that neither the researcher’s presence, nor the act of data collection should affect the way that members of the social group engage with each other. Often, however, it is necessary that the researcher
becomes embedded within the social group in order to gain sufficient insight to observe and correctly interpret behaviour in context. The acceptance into a participant group is contingent on one critical element – trust. It is necessary to maintain trust throughout the entire research project as trust is a precondition for observing naturalistic actions. As Erlandson (1993) describes, a number of steps can be taken during different phases of a project to continuously gain trust. Transparency of the research process is an overarching element. Participants are less likely to hold back or act in accordance with suppositions if they are aware of what the research entails. While examples abound that knowledge of research goals can lead to systematic bias, the constructive and evolving nature of naturalistic research provides a safeguard, as the goals only emerge from the collaborative engagement between researcher and research participants.

Specific elements of the trust generation process include the gathering of informed consent prior to the study’s commencement, allowing participants’ input into the study parameters and sharing the results with participants. This last aspect fulfils a double function: Sharing results with participants builds trust on the one hand, but it also is a way of increasing data validity by comparing the researcher’s interpretation of situations to that of the participants.

In the planning stages of the project, a researcher must already anticipate a prolonged engagement within the observation context. While there is no prescriptive time interval, the aim should be to be able to understand daily events from the perspective of a person in the specific cultural context. This procedure will increase the validity of the data and thus be a faithful reflection of the participants’ perceived reality. A longer engagement interval also allows for more extensive observation, which is necessary to develop a sense for which information is a rich source of data and which is not.

Naturalistic studies work on a different missive from laboratory experiments. The latter are designed in a way that maximises the likelihood of transferring the results into other, less generic contexts. In comparison, naturalistic studies do not primarily serve the purpose of providing transferable results. Instead, the onus of demonstrating comparability of findings is on those wishing to transfer the results to their own enquiry. However, the naturalistic researcher has the responsibility of providing rich, even multi-modal sensory
According to Guba (1981) naturalistic enquiry is possible with qualitative as well as quantitative methods, although he strongly recommends a qualitative approach. This is due, in part, to the importance of tacit knowledge in the research process. Contrary to highly controlled laboratory studies, naturalistic research acknowledges the value of intuition and feelings in the research process. As naturalistic research is evolving during the course of a project, undue rigidity with respect to methods, design and even goals of the study is discouraged (Erlandson, 1993).

Early childhood curriculum is based on the idea of child-study and it could be argued that the early childhood teacher has always been a practitioner/researcher. Given the historical importance of observational methods for the design of early childhood programs, this research has utilised observations as a major instrument. In recent years socio-cultural theory has been influential in shaping the direction observations and interpretation have gone as children are viewed as social actors and protagonists in their own development. This has led to a refinement of observational methods and more formal analytical tools, such as Learning Stories.

In summary, socio-cultural theory has influenced the way in which this research perceived and observed children in a specific early childhood education setting. This study featured another significant aspect of socio-cultural approach - pedagogical documentation. Pedagogical documentation highlights the way children learn through everyday experience. It provides children with the opportunity to revisit and further develop their interests and learning. The research aimed at a collaborative progression; therefore, building partnerships was a fundamental element.

The present thesis features classic elements of qualitative research in that it uses participant observation in a naturalistic setting, and is based on a belief that social meanings are appropriated (Rogoff, 2003) by members of a culture within a particular setting. A worldview and a research approach that consistently supports this position is Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theory (Carr 2001; Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978). Having described the theoretical underpinnings of this research the next chapter will expand on the design and
3. 6 Research design

Planning and Design

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<td>Music Sessions</td>
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## Sessions

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### Stage 3

- **Debrief**: Extra informal music sessions 10 weeks after data collection was completed

### Stage 4

- **Writing up thesis**: Update Literature Review 3 weeks
- **Consultation with relevant stakeholders**: 2 weeks
- **Draft**: 16 weeks
- **Manuscript Preparation**: 6 weeks
CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH METHODS

4.1 Introduction

A description of the research parameters is the theme of Chapter IV. The chapter presents information about the research location, participants and the methods employed in practice and evaluation. It is shown how a variety of mostly qualitative data collection methods were aligned to obtain a comprehensive and progressive snapshot of the research site. Following the discussion of methodology and justification of methods in Chapter III, the purpose of this chapter is to describe the specific situation within which the research was conducted. The chapter contains information about the design and timelines of the research program. The research aims were to examine children’s musical competence and how music could be a vehicle for engaging with the concept of diversity.

4.2 Site and participants

The study was conducted at a public child care centre located in Melbourne. ‘Purposeful sampling’ (Mertens, 2005) was employed to select the site and children with the aim of “selecting information rich cases for study in depth” (Patton, 2002, p. 242, on purposeful sampling). The families using the child care centre were characterised by cultural and demographic diversity. The sample of main child participants consisted of 17 individuals between the ages of 3-5. There were 11 girls and 6 boys ranging from 3-4 years in age. Their names have been changed in this thesis. English was the predominant spoken language, although some children were also exposed to Japanese, Polish, Filipino, Greek, Albanian, German, and Cantonese. Additional participants were parents/guardians, the coordinator and the staff working with the group of child participants. For more details on parents –see Chapter VI; for more details on staff –see Chapter VII).

4.2.1 Physical spaces

The centre comprised three rooms and the children’s groups were divided according to age. There was a wide entrance space with the office and the kitchen opening off this space.
The centre had limited storage and an observation (Gesell Room) booth was also used for storage. There were two outdoor areas; one for the infants and one for the toddlers and preschoolers.

The kinder-room had an open design. The staff used wooden dividers to separate one area from another. According to the staff and the observations made during the researcher’s visits, there were generally about 6 different areas set up for the children to play. For example, there were regular tables with puzzles and/or small construction materials as well as a corner for books, block and socio-dramatic play, which were the permanent areas. Table spaces were used for lunch and afternoon tea times, while the carpeted area was used for the children to have a sleep or rest every day from around 11.45 – 2.30 pm.

A centrepiece of the room was a large mirror, which covered one of the walls. This was the wall that visitors could sit behind when they were in the observation booth. However, this area was not used for this purpose and had been turned into a staff work room and a store room. The mirror surface was partly concealed (see Figure 3) by cut-outs and images used in some of the room’s activities.

4.2.2 Transformation of the physical space

An early aim of this research was re-organising the physical space to increase the aesthetic quality of the room. Aesthetics is emphasised in some early childhood approaches like Reggio Emilia (Gandini, 2006), but is neglected in busy Australian programs (Acker, 2010; Walters, 2003). In the case of the present site, for example, a display of relevant information for children and parents showed signs of wear that diminished the displayed messages (Figure 1).
Figure 1. The centre information board before the changes to the physical space.

The large mirror was identified as a useful tool for the support and engagement of children in dancing. However, in its original state (see again Figure 2) the mirror obscured the children’s view of themselves. Staff had used it for an alphabet display which was obscured by unrelated images. The children paid little attention to the mirror so it was decided to make it a focus of the music sessions.

In consultation with the staff and the children, it was decided to remove the current decoration from the mirror and instead make a border with images of the children. The work the staff and the children had put into the mirror decorations was respected as they were collected, compiled and deposited in a dedicated folder placed in the book corner.
The researcher photographed all the staff and children and placed the photos at the bottom of the mirror. The individual frames were connected to acknowledge the children’s individuality within the social collective. A number of children assisted in the re-design of the mirror space (see Appendix I), many made comments about it. When inspecting the new design, the children also had a close look at the pictures themselves, which frequently led to other interesting remarks. Most common were comments about their own physical features. Also numerous statements about their friends and what they looked like in the photos were made. Lastly, more general comments were directed at the diversity of faces and expressions depicted in the photos.
Figure 3. The process of re-arrangement of the mirror. The children will be able to easily see themselves.

4.2.3 Educational Philosophy of the centre

The physical features of a space for children are but one facet of the socio-cultural environment. Just as important are the beliefs, values and attitudes that are conveyed to children by significant individuals (a single staff member) or by institutions (consistent messages reinforced by all members of the education community).

The institutional philosophy has a manifest effect as it guides the selection of staff, the acquisition of resources, the allocation of time and emphasis on particular curriculum content. The source of institutional philosophy is diffuse and constantly in flux; at one level it reflects the views of the wider society in relating to images of young children, educational needs and social relationships. It is also continuously renegotiated between parents, teaching staff, and, where separate, institution management. Children’s influence on institutional philosophy is generally low and, in any event, contingent on adults’ agreement that children should be able to partake in decisions over the institutional philosophy. The negotiation of philosophy is seldom formalised and instead emerges from the informal interactions between and within the interested parties. Hence, changes are rarely drastic. For instance, in a given year parents support the spirit of the centre’s community by organising events which are transient and have little impact. On the other hand, the decision to provide bi-lingual education, for example, is much less common, much further reaching and less transient than parent involvement, which can change across parent cohorts.

According to the centre’s written philosophy, providing a safe, healthy and nurturing
environment for children, families and staff comes first. Each child is respected as a unique individual with his/her own needs experiences, abilities and interests considered. In regards to cultural diversity, the centre had a strong creed:

"We believe in the rights of all children and strive to acknowledge and respect cultural identity, family diversity, religious beliefs, gender equity and additional needs. We acknowledge and respect the importance of each child’s family and encourage and value family involvement in the children’s programs and management of the Centre."

Collaboration and team work between staff and families is seen as desirable. This quote was taken from “Eucalyptus Tree” centre’s policy book prepared for parents: “The parents, staff and Board of Management work as a team to create an environment which maximises opportunities for each child to reach his/her potential.”

4.2.4 The pre-existing music program

According to De Vries (2006), Nyland & Ferris (2007) and Suthers (2008) the underutilization of music in child care is an endemic problem. This was also the case for the centre in which the present research program was based (see Appendix I). The primary use of music was that of background entertainment. For example, during rest time pop songs were played on the CD player to help the children remain still and quiet for a while. Similarly, children’s music was played when children packed up materials and toys. However, there was no clear rationale to this habit other than that “the children could easily follow instructions”. Occasionally, the Preschool teacher employed songs to complement the current learning theme. For example, when exploring the concept of traffic, the Preschool teacher might sing the song ‘Down by the station’, which deals with some traffic concepts.

After the researcher’s initial visit to the centre and for the duration of two weeks the kinder room featured a dedicated music corner, containing some musical instruments. According to the kinder teacher, this area was designed for a particular child to further
enhance his interest in music. The musical instruments included were: tambourine, triangle, sticks, drums, bells. Some of these instruments were damaged (Figure 4). The ‘tables’, upon which the instruments were placed, had been created from large wooden boxes and, overall, the music corner did not look appealing (see Figure 4). During two 45 minute observational visits, prior to the study’s commencement, no children were noted to play in this area (see Appendix I).

Figure 4. The pre-existing ‘music corner’.

4.3 Time-line, procedure and materials

The following sections provide details about the study’s methodology and temporal structure. It commences with an outline of the two major research stages and the actions and evaluations occurring within each of these. Following this, the tools and strategies used to gather and process data are described in detail.

The study consisted of two sequential stages. The first stage involved planning, design, and methodological preparation. The primary aim at this stage was to assess the existing structures, resources, motivations, and capabilities to support children’s musical development and attitude formation regarding diversity. The second stage was defined by the emergent design of a music play area within the centre and the implementation of music group sessions. Data analysis and evaluation were present during both stages and guided the research to adapt to the dynamic interaction between the study’s setting and the study’s
participants.

4.3.1 Stage 1: Planning, design and methodological preparation

As a result of the naturalistic approach adopted for the present study, it was imperative to assess the site and slowly engage in contact with the participants before the implementation of the music program. For example, prior to any data collection, the children were familiarised over a number of sessions with the researcher’s presence in order to reduce response bias and general reactivity during stage 2. This period of familiarisation lasted for three weeks, equalling six sessions of two hours. The focus of the familiarisation period was to be around the children. Observations were made to familiarise the researcher with the centre and no regular sessions were held by the researcher. However, the researcher was introduced to the children as a guest who would come and visit them for some time. Further, the researcher engaged with the children in a free and spontaneous fashion, much like many of the parents who spent some time in the centre before departing in the mornings and afternoons.

Following familiarisation, data were gathered from staff, parents and, predominately, children. Children’s music explorations and interactions with other children were observed and recorded. The collected data covered children’s knowledge, familiarity, understanding and attitudes towards music and cultural diversity.

Moreover, the child participants were asked simple questions in regards to their preferred songs and languages. Informal interviews were conducted with the early childhood educators at this stage and periodically throughout the span of the project. These interviews yielded information on topics such as the interviewee’s personal and professional beliefs about culturally diverse early childhood music education and their influence on the formation of children’s attitudes and awareness of themselves and others.

A further preparatory aspect of this stage was the early acquisition of data from parents to guide the development of the music program in line with the children’s competencies and previous exposure to music and diversity at home. The first set of parent data were related to the family’s attitude towards music, the family’s assessment of the child’s familiarity with and affinity for music, and the family’s idea of the concept ‘culture’. This information was
used to better understand the needs of the children in setting up the ‘music learning centre’ in stage 2.

4.3.2 Stage 2 - Design and program implementation

The second stage of the project involved the implementation and evaluation of a series of 21 music sessions and the creation of a dedicated music space within the centre (termed the ‘music learning centre’, Isbell, 1995). Introducing music into group sessions is a common approach (Andress, 1998; Wright, 2003), but is not often carried out effectively (de Vries, 2004, Hamilton, 2003; Turner, 2000; Wright). However, group music sessions hold great potential. Young (2003), for instance, stated that group sessions allowed children to listen and follow instructions, develop concentration, take turns, cooperate with another person, accept limits, lose initial shyness and join in, develop self-confidence and become aware of the relationship between the individual and the group. Similarly, Barrett (2006) recognises a number of benefits of ‘ensemble performance’ of group music making, such as singing a variety of songs, finger plays and engaging in a structured movement and instrumental play that emphasises music concepts, like rhythm and beat. She argues that shared group experiences can broaden the children’s musical and other knowledge and repertoire of songs; they can develop their vocal, social and physical abilities as well as ensemble performance skills. Both of these scholars, however, emphasise the importance of self-initiated child music play and warn that focus on much music education practice on developing repertoire and skills that aim towards adult models of skilled musical practice “tends to discount the playful and generative qualities” (Barrett, 2006; p. 218) of children’s invented musical forms, such as singing (Young, 2006). As Young puts it: “One serious consequence of the performance version of music is that it distracts from children’s self-initiated musical activity” (p. 270).

Music learning centres, by comparison, give children the creative freedom to individually engage with music the way they want to and when they want to. Children can experiment or practise in the music learning centre and then can engage with their peers more freely.

The researcher and early childhood educators worked together on the design of the music learning centre. The focus of this process was on cooperation and on fostering the
teachers’ competence and confidence in delivering quality music education.

The music content (see Appendix H for a full description of the content of the music program) of the directed group music sessions and the music learning centre conformed to the musical criteria generally believed to be most conducive to teach young children about music (Bridges, 1994; Edwards, Bayless & Ramsey, 2005; Kazimierszak, 2004; Young, 2003). To illustrate, the words that made up the songs were short, as were the individual phrases. The repertoire included number songs, a cumulative song, songs with riff, songs with actions or positions that can be changed, and songs with gestures, movement and dances. Most of the songs had been explicitly recommended in the early childhood literature (Bridges, 1994; Edwards et al., 2005; Tafuri, 2008; Young, 2003). The music learning centre deliberately emphasised cultural associations of songs and music experiences, for example, by introducing instruments as being a traditional part of specific cultures.

The music education literature also informed other aspects of the study design. A study by Suthers and Niland (2007) for example, reported on music specialists’ findings on implementing a music program for young children that placed a strong emphasis on engagement. Their suggestions for the use of props and stories in the selection of learning material were incorporated in consideration of the present research program.

4.3.2.1 The Music Sessions

Initially the research plan was for the researcher and educators to collaboratively develop the music sessions and the educators would implement them. This did not happen. During the consultation it emerged that the early childhood educators felt that they would benefit most if the researcher conducted the music sessions with the children. They asked for practical demonstrations in a real-life setting. There are numerous examples in the literature of the shared teacher/researcher role. Custodero and St. John (2007) for example, used this approach to reflect on their experiences in early childhood music education. Advantages and disadvantages of this approach are discussed in Chapter IX.

A regular weekly 30 minute session was scheduled during which the researcher would
work with the children. Each of the sessions was designed to involve a high degree of musical exploratory exercises and games and also to reference themes of diversity. This was achieved, for instance, through the introduction of songs from various cultural backgrounds. Before the music sessions commenced the researcher briefed the staff on the content, teaching methods and their educational significance/implications.

The materials of the directed group music sessions included a variety of musical instruments, books, and items from different cultures. The words that made up the songs were short: the metre either 2/4 or 4/4, with the exception of one song which was in ¾. Most of the songs had been explicitly recommended in the early childhood literature (Bridges, 1994; Edwards et al., 2005; Young, 2003).

When children recite, and play with words, they are also learning sounds in the process. Moreover, children will also become attuned to the rhythm and sound patterns of the language used within those rhymes (Alcock, 2008; Owens, 2007). Once children discover the concept of rhyming words, they will be excited and encouraged to create their own rhymes (Pramling & Carlsson, 2008). Hence, songs that were chosen displayed a high degree of rhyme in order to facilitate the children’s creative play with words.

The songs that were sung during the music session comprised of a variety of English and non-English language material, thereby providing the children with an opportunity to explore different phonetic and written forms of language. Non-English language songs were selected to reflect a diversity of cultures and languages: African songs ‘Umma Lella’, ‘Che, Che Koolay’, an Eastern European circle singing game ‘Ide maca oko tebe’ and a counting play ‘Eci, peci, pec’, East-Asian songs ‘Okina Kurino’ and ‘Atama kata’, a Maori action song ‘Paki, Paki’, Aboriginal lullaby ‘Mumma Warruno’. The remaining songs and chants were in English, some fairly familiar to most children (e.g., ‘Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star’), others generally unknown (e.g. ‘Monster song’). Children and their parents also contributed songs to the program, particularly those from a non-English speaking background. For example, Aki helped introduce ‘Okina Kurino’ a song from Japan which her parents listed as their family’s favourite. Not all songs were introduced at the same time. Rather, songs were sung a number of times and new ones were presented to the children when they requested them or as a way of showcasing a new instrument. This way many songs were explored, but it also
became clear which of them were most popular, as these were requested repeatedly throughout the duration of the study.

A number of songs were implemented in the form of games. In line with the insights gathered about the importance of play and pursuing games for young children, the group music sessions were highly geared towards a variable and playful engagement with the material. Games were regularly played that challenged the children’s listening skills and allowed them to experiment with their voices which, in previous studies (Smith, 2005; Suthers, 1995), has been related to improvements in the ability to control pitch, rhythm, tempo and timbre. The emphasis on play is important as it generates a high level of engagement and thereby leads to greater musical benefits for young children (Suthers & Niland, 2007). Play is also an activity that can sustain attention of even very young children (Morin, 2001). An example of a game was introduced alongside the Japanese song ‘Atama kata’ (the Japanese equivalent of the children song ‘Knees & Toes’). The game encouraged the children to touch the parts of the body that the song referred to at any given time. These actions helped the children to understand the meaning of the words, but simultaneously combining of the required motoric and vocal component also provided an additional challenge to those that wanted it.

Besides the songs and games, children were also given more tangible objects to handle during the music sessions, starting with the music mats they brought out and placed before them at the beginning at each session. The song “There was an old Lady” featured a range of dolls that were shown around and shared. Previous studies (e.g. Suthers & Niland, 2007) found that props heighten children’s interest and facilitate social interaction between children. Songs like this are also particularly powerful in maintaining children’s attention because they tell a coherent, but easy to follow story (Suthers & Niland).

More frequently than other props, all music sessions made use of one or more instruments. As with the songs, the choice of instrument was first made by the researcher, but once the children appreciated the instrument, exploration became an integral part of the music session; they repeatedly asked for some instruments to be brought in again and enquired about others that had not been brought in yet. Often, instruments were first introduced by accompanying a song, which generally sparked some questions or comments
at the end of the song. The instrument would then be shown in more detail: its components, the size and weight, and the different means of sound production as well as the range of sound that would be produced. Then the children were offered the opportunity to explore the instrument themselves. In the first few sessions the researcher made sure that the children would each get a turn if they wanted to, later the children moderated usage among themselves. Appendix A describes the instrument allocation for each session.

4.3.2.2 The Music Learning Centre

While the music session often occupied a large part of the floor-space within the room, the music learning centre was just large enough to comfortably host 2-4 children (see Figure 5). Even though there was an open access to the rest of the room, the music learning centre still was visually distinct and semi-separated from the other areas through the placement of furniture to form shape and a defined entrance. The music learning centre comprised an exploration space where children could either sit or stand and a number of shelves, containing instruments, books and various other items usually linked to one of the songs or to the concept of ‘cultural diversity’.

Figure 5. Music Learning Centre set up by the researcher – (left) February; (right) April.

In line with the constructivist philosophy of the research, the design of the music learning centre evolved according to the needs and preferences of the children. Initially, the
teachers advised the researcher on the most appropriate space in the room for the ‘music area’. Within the allocated space, the researcher then created the music learning centre and utilised the resources from this area during the course of the music sessions. Prior to organising all the resources, during one of the group sessions, the researcher encouraged the children to look at the quality of the musical instruments already available and to suggest which of these instruments should be in their new music area. The children welcomed this opportunity with interest and selected the instruments they thought (they) were in a good condition and asked for more drums, sticks, bells. One of them suggested a ‘rain stick’. Throughout the sessions, however, the children requested other items to be added or brought new items into the area, which then, too, became part of the centre.

The music learning centre, more than the music sessions, enabled the children to explore music whenever they wanted. It was open to them at all times and was organised in such a way that all the resources could be accessed by them without the help of an adult. Lastly, the centre was divided into different sections. The key concepts featured in the centre were different languages, music and movement.

4.3.3 Stage 2a – Debrief, post-evaluation and stepwise withdrawal

At the end of the scheduled music sessions all participating children received a certificate outlining their achievements during the program and thanking them for their participation. Parents were thanked for their participation where the opportunity arose, and were shown some of the creative output of the children as well as what the children had done during the sessions (displayed in learning stories, described further in the following sections). Staff were debriefed in a group discussion and, where requested, individual discussions to follow up on their experiences so they would subjectively perceive the build up of competencies. The children were surveyed informally; they were asked about their experiences and were further observed during occasional sessions.

As with the familiarisation phase at the beginning of the project, it was important not to withdraw from the kinder suddenly after the last formal session, which would have constituted a clear disruption to the then established routine. Instead, the children were told that the music sessions would now only be held occasionally, since they all had
'graduated' and they were encouraged to maintain the music learning centre. Sessions were held approximately three weeks past the end of the formal sessions, then again four weeks later and again three weeks later (10 weeks past the end of formal sessions). Additionally, the researcher infrequently visited the venue to talk to staff and greet the children. During these visits the researcher would typically sing one or two songs with the children.

4.3.4 Data collection strategies

A multi-method data collection strategy was employed to address the diverse range of research questions. This approach also allowed for cross-validation of findings obtained and hence strengthened the internal validity of the study. Early Childhood teachers are trained to use observations as a basis for planning. Data were obtained through informal interviews (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006) and semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, artefacts and photographic collections and child participant observations. As one of the Australian Early Childhood text books states, “observation and documentation refers to the process that helps illuminate children’s learning” (Arthur et al., 2008, p. 274) and leads us to understand children’s abilities, interests and needs (Podmore, 2006). A variety of techniques are studied including anecdotes, running records, and more recently learning stories. For the present study, a large part of the collected data was recorded in the form of Learning Stories (Carr, 2001) as well as reflex records (Pillow, 2003). These methods were preferred as they give integrity to the research as being part of the Early Childhood paradigm. Learning Stories are particularly valuable for narrative inquiry and contextual analysis of every day events. Reflex records (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006) were used as strategy to “synthesize the main interactions and scenes observed “(p.350) and were useful in generating questions helping to enrich the data and provide preliminary interpretations to be revisited. Reflective methods like this add depth to the overall data analysis (Mertens, 2005).

4.3.4.1 Staff data

Staff data were collected in the form of interviews at multiple points of time during the duration of the project. Early consultations were informal and directed at gathering
information about the centre's policies as well as the expectations for and ideas about the project harboured by the staff. Stage 1 interviews were formal and focused on the staff's current level of music competency, the ways in which they had included music in their current curriculum and their personal beliefs about the value of music and diversity education.

In addition to formal interviews, informal consultations with staff were common. Staff were asked for feedback and things they observed during the sessions. They were also invited to make notes during the week about things that pertained to the music program, or about the children's interaction with the music learning centre. Staff data were also collected through a questionnaire, formal, semi-structured interviews and informal debriefing sessions.

4.3.4.2 Parent data

The researcher consulted the early childhood staff about the most appropriate way to approach and obtain information from parents. The staff suggested that questionnaires would be suitable as most parents were very busy and due to time and work constraints it would be unrealistic to expect them to participate in the sessions and commit to interviews. Given this situation no pilot was carried out. In order to facilitate data collection, the coordinator of the child care centre distributed questionnaires to the parents/guardians of the children. The questions focused on demographic information such as ethnic background, language(s) spoken at home, and what kind of experiences regarding music and diversity the child had had in the context of the family. This 17 item questionnaire assessed the role music played for these families and background information on the child’s familiarity with music. Other questions referred to the family’s attitude towards diversity and how cultural diversity is present and practiced at home. About half of the questions were dichotomous forced choice items, but all allowed the respondents to write additional information if they wished. The questionnaire was handed out in English as all parents indicated that they understood the questions and felt comfortable to respond in English. Other than the questionnaires, information from parents was collected through informal interviews at the end of, or prior to, sessions within the centre. Data were also gathered in
the form of informal interviews. These interviews were mainly conducted when parents approached the researcher about some aspect of the program. The researcher would then take the opportunity to follow up about specific issues. For example, when Petra’s mother asked about a learning story that was displayed in the room, the researcher used the enquiry to ask about the parent’s interpretation and liking of learning stories as a means of conveying information.

4.3.4.3 Child participant data

Data about children were collected through observations, gathering of artefacts (for example, children’s drawings, constructions, home items and dress-ups) and the production of Learning Stories. As intended, in comparison to the other participant groups, data gathered from child participants were more comprehensive, varied and continuous in terms of reflecting changes across time. The children were also interviewed - either informally or in the form of ‘pretend play’.

4.3.4.4 Interviews

Conducting interviews was a method of eliciting information that was employed for all participant groups, but varied between and within groups in terms of the level of formality. The prominent use of interviews in this project prompted careful consideration of the required parameters to increase the validity of the method, as outlined in the following section.

Interviewing is more complex than just talking to someone and there are justifiable concerns over the validity of data gathered in this way (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). As with other observations, it is imperative to gain the trust of the interviewee. Successful interviews are more likely to be conducted when the interviewer manages to adjust to the interviewee’s individual communication style. As the present project dealt with participants from a variety of cultural backgrounds, inter-cultural communication skills were all the more important. The high number of elements that attention needs to be paid to makes
interviewing a multilayered and challenging task. The researcher attempted to proactively tackle these problems. Firstly, the interviews with adults were semi-structured, thereby easing the demands that might influence rapport without sacrificing flexibility. Secondly, the interviews were informal in nature, casual and relaxed to ensure that the interviewees did not feel under pressure and that the researcher was not in a position of power.

Interviews often commenced with an informal introduction by the researcher. When talking to parents, this introduction would give a quick outline of the project and where in the research process the project currently was. This was done in order to provide the appropriate context to parents, who often had heard fragmented information from their children but were not necessarily able to piece together this information for a comprehensive image of the project. For the staff, the introduction also explained the current stage of the project and gave some case examples of the children’s involvement. All interviews concluded with a prompt for interviewee to ask their own questions.

Interviews with children were different from the adult interviews in that they frequently utilised different materials, such as drawing material or a musical instrument. This gave children the opportunity to express themselves in their preferred way (Gallop, 2000). Sometimes interviews were conducted in the form of ‘pretend play’. The children were asked the following questions before the sessions commenced:

- Which song do you like? Why?
- Which musical instrument do you like? Why?
- What language do you speak?
- What language do you like? Why?
- How do you learn music?

At the completion of the music project, the researcher set up a pretend “office” area where the children could come to play “interviewing”. The “office” had a table, chairs, drawing materials. Each child had a ‘waiting number’. The interviewed child would call out the child next in the line, by their number, or their name, in case when the children were not sure of their number. They were asked the following questions:

- Which song do you like?
- Which musical instrument do you like?
- What language do you speak?
- What Language do you like?
- What did you like in the music corner?
- What did you like in the music sessions?
- Is there something you did not like?
- How do you learn music?

Children often brought items with them that they wanted to discuss during the interview. Similarly, the researcher also had on hand items related to the music program that were handed to the children during the talk in order to prompt and facilitate recollection.

4.3.4.5 Use of Photographs for observing in Early Childhood

The use of digital photography enormously facilitated the use of photographs as the large-volume of pictures taken allowed for the selection of the most relevant, evocative shots (Richards, 2007; Walters, 2003). Photographs in this project were not only used as data for later analysis (see Appendix E for example) but also as memory prompts and stimuli for the children (Acker, 2010b; Mendoza, 2003). Some children contributed to data collection, as they took interest in visual imaging and occasionally took photos. Following each of the sessions, some of the photographs were printed and selected shots were displayed that would prompt children about the occurrences of previous sessions. The display of photographs also initiated lively interaction among the children who retold what they had done and, on occasion, they spontaneously decided to re-enact games or actions. The photographs were used as part of the formal observations; anecdotes, running records, learning stories and for the children’s interviews.

Photographs were also highly useful in establishing links to parents, whose curiosity was notably more aroused by the additional pictures than by the changes to the room. In fact, children would often bring their parents to the pictures to showcase what they had
previously done.

The display of the pictures either occurred as a photo collage, which was primarily meant to help the children recall and enjoy their reminiscence, or as a planned sequence of photographs (see Hamer, 2003, for a description of this approach). These were usually employed to emphasise the temporal progression of a scene and were more suitable for analysis than for general recall as, superficially, they seemed fairly similar (see Figure 6).

![Figure 6. Robie finding effective ways of handling the instrument; experimenting; playing.](image)

4.4 Data processing and analysis

As most of the data were qualitative, the data analysis process involved the selection and categorisation of relevant information as well as the alignment of data from different sources. Data were structured in a number of different ways. First, a perspective was adopted that focused on the kinder environment as a whole and the wholistic changes that occurred within. A second approach focussed on the individual developments of each child, the staff and families as units of analysis.

The children’s experience of the program was assessed using their verbatim accounts as well as data in the Learning Stories. Interview responses were recorded and categorised. Categories differentiated between attitudes, emotional responses, actions and knowledge. Staff attitudes towards the music program and their convictions with respect to diversity and the importance of music development were assessed using the same method.

The interview data from child participants were organised in a pre-/ post data table to showcase differences over time (see Figure 7 for an example). These data sheets were also
used to prime parents and staff during interviews by giving specific information about the child’s perceptions and comparing this to the interviewee’s impressions. Figure 7 presents an example of how the children’s answers were set out.
Beginning of the project

Ali

Which song do you like?
“I like Twinkle, twinkle… because it’s lovely.”

Which musical instrument do you like?
“I like drums… ’cause they’re fun and people dance to them.”

What language do you speak?
“English.”

What language do you like?
“English… ’cause it’s lovely.”

How do you learn music?
“I learn it when I do music.”

End of the project

Which song do you like?
“I like the Bumble Bee song” … because it’s funny… hm… I like Umma lella song… because it’s nice and happy… it’s nice and easy to sing.”

Which musical instrument do you like?
“I like the big one (drum) … we get to play (it) together. Aki and I play together. She is the cat and I am a dog… ha-ha!”

What language do you speak?
“English language, Filipino language, African language.”

What language do you like?
“I like every languages… ’cause it’s fun to know lots!”

Music Corner
“Mmm… the little dollies, I love the tiny one with shiny colours (Referring to the Japanese miniature). My mum said she’ll get me one of those.”

Music sessions
“I like when we dance and sing the songs. I like the Bumble bee” … I like when you sing… I like your voice.”

“Is there something you did not like?”
“I didn’t get a turn of the accordion… I was sick.”

How do you learn music?
“When we play music and you bring us instruments to play with. My sister has music books with notes. She learns music. I learn when we sing and I play instruments. I listen.”

Figure 7. Pre-/ post interview data sheet.

Some of the informal interviews with children were better suited to anecdotal transcription, which preserved the sequence of thoughts and ideas as they emerged during the conversation. These transcripts also provided additional insight into the way the children perceived the idea of being research participants, something that the aggregated data tables could not adequately reflect. The conversations usually were short, between 1-10 minutes, but were highly useful in that they contained a sense of immediacy and captured the child’s thoughts when most engaged in the new experience. Table 1 displays an example of a
conversation transcript (the full set is included in Appendix D).

Table 1
Example of a conversation interview with one of the children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>26th September</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context:</strong> Music Learning Centre. This conversation took place after the music session. For a while, Jaspar wanted to explore the accordion and after that, he was happy to have a chat to me. I was writing notes at the same time as well as recording our conversation. He was aware of the method I was using to record, commenting while friendly smiling: “You need to write all I say, don’t ya?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jaspar: J; Aleksandra [the researcher]: A.

A: You have been playing with it for a while (Accordion)?

J: Yeah. This one is nice, ‘cause is got lots of buttons and you can press them. You need to hold it properly and stretch...it doesn’t work if you don’t stretch.

A: So, it makes sounds when you hold it properly and stretch?

J: Yep, it makes short and long sounds. If you keep your finger long, it makes long sound.

A: What happens if you do not keep your finger long?

J: Then it makes a short sound, like this (Demonstrates).

A: OK. Let me write this down.

J: Write: the sound can be loud or quiet. If you stretch really hard it makes a loud sound....and write, accordion is from Germany. Your one’s from your grandma, though.

A: That’s right. People think that it comes from Germany. Yes, that was my birthday present. Can you please show me how you would make a sound?

J: Nods; “yes” (Demonstrates).

A: But if you stretch too much, it is hard to get back, so don’t stretch too much.

J: Tell me about the buttons...

A: These (showing to the left hand side) or these? (Referring to the right hand side).

J: Both.

A: Tell me about the sound?

J: The sound is nice, but I can’t make the song sounds. Ha-ha! You can make the songs. You play the songs. When I grow up I am going to have lots of instruments to make lots of sounds.

A: Yeah?
J: I’ll get lots of instruments. My mum says I can get some but I have to look after them. They cost money, she says. Lots of dollars!

A: Which instruments would you have?

J: Hm...this one and the other accordion, the piano one...the drums, I like the drums, the big one...hm...piano... trumpet, silver one...oh, and that really big one, golden one, I don’t know the name...it’s in the book...

A: OK. That’s a lot to write.

J: Yeah.

A: Would you like to show me?

J: Yep. I’ll get the book! (Brings the book and finds the photo of the horn).

A: Horne. That is the horn. True, it is a silver one. Why do you think it is silver?

J: It has to be golden or it gets too wet. It can’t be wood. Wood can smell. Gold doesn’t smell- it’s just clean and shiny.

A: So, you will have the accordion piano accordion, drums, piano, trumpet, and horn...any other instruments?

J: Yep. Guitar...just one...and the instruments from here (music area)...and yeah, the beautiful, golden one, I’ll show ya! (Turns the pages of the book and finds harp) This one! I like this one. I’ve never seen this one. You didn’t brought it.

A: That’s a beautiful harp...I do not have a harp to bring. Harps are really large...

J: Large? Like?

A: As large this shelf.

J: Oh, you got to be strong to bring that one.

A: Yes, you need special case on wheels for that.

J: Smiles. Have you played it?

A: No, I have not played it. I have seen someone play it. I see it in the orchestra when I have concerts.

J: Oh, you are allowed to touch it?

A: No, I am not. There is a harp-player who plays her instrument. She knows how to play quite nicely.

J: It sounds nice?

A: Yes, very nice.

J: Like?

A: Like, ehem, have a look at it...what do you think?
J: Hm... I think it sounds like a guitar, a big one – it has lots of long of strings...(slows down so that I can write)... I know, maybe like lots of guitars... Only they are soft sounds maybe...?

A: It sounds a bit like the guitar. It reminds me of lots of different rain drops.

J: Rain drops? Really? Can I come to orchestra?

A: You can. You can tell you mum and dad to take to a concert.

J: I'd love to! How do you do that?

A: You need to find the concert you would like to see and then...

J: And then I get my mum to get the tickets?

A: Yes, that's right.

J: Is it lots of dollars?

A: Not too much.

J: How much?

A: Ehem... 50 dollars.

J: Fifty!? I can count to hundred.

A: Is fifty a lot of dollars?

J: I'll ask my mum. How many instruments to see?

A: It could be many, even 100.

J: Wow, 100!!! Wow! How many of these (showing the harp)?

J: One or two.

J: Aaah, 'cause it's big and hard to bring?

A: Yes, it is big and there are many other instruments on the stage. There are many violins on stage...

J: (Interrupts) what's stage?

A: It's a place where all the musicians are sitting or standing and they are playing.

They play for their audience. The audience sits on the chairs and watches and listens to the musicians play.

J: They play together?

A: Yes, they do, sometimes together, sometimes alone. They play together and they also take turns. There is a conductor who shows the musicians when to play.

J: Conductor?

A: Yes. Conductor conducts the concert. He or she uses a stick and points to the musicians.

J: Stick? Ha-ha, that's funny! What kind of stick?

A: This longish, and thin sick. I will bring you a photo of the orchestra and a conductor. OK?

J: Yep. Bring it... Are you a conductor?

A: No, I am not a conductor.

J: But you show us how to play music.

A: That's true. I do. But I am not a conductor. I am a music teacher. I didn’t go to school for conductors.

J: What's the school call?

A: Music Academy.
As practitioner research is more widely acknowledged, tools like learning stories, which present anecdotes within a structured framework, are increasingly used for research (Arthur et. al, 2008; Lockett, 2002; Nyland, & Ferris, 2008). The following section gives two examples of how this narrative approach to data was implemented in the research program. The first anecdote illustrates how powerful observation can be used in showcasing children’s competence and understanding. The second presents a Learning Story, which highlights how information from the observation can be analysed to profile the learning potential of events (Carr, 2001). This example is preceded by a brief description on the use of photographs in Learning Stories. Together, these two examples demonstrate the progressive data refinement process from observational raw data to the integrated narrative analysis embodied by learning stories.
1\textsuperscript{st} February, 2008.

Context: The children were occupied with a variety of table and floor activities set up in the kinder room, such as puzzles, drawing, pasting, building with large wooden blocks and small Lego blocks and reading in the book corner. Even though it was a lovely, sunny day, the children could not go outside as termites had been found on the playground. These three girls found some well lit space near the window...

Aki, Laura and Keili were putting the baby (a doll) to sleep Aki suggested that they put a hat on the baby’s head, so that she does not get too much light. “She won’t be able to breathe!” Said Laura “Oh, yes, the hat is not so big”, replied Aki. “Let’s put it on (her) eyes not on nose, OK?” They agreed.
Laura whispered: “We need to pat her to sleep...let’s sing Twinkle, twinkle!” “She looked at her friends and started to sing in a soft, warm voice, clearly pronouncing the words: “Twinkle, twinkle little star”. Aki joined in and they sang: “Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are. Up above the worlds so high, like a diamond in the sky, twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are”.
Meanwhile, Keili gently and rhythmically patted the doll. The melody that was sung was not in tune; however, the girls sang it in a style of a lullaby, using a soft and warm tone of voice. “Shhhh, she is fast asleep”, said Aki quietly, suggesting they all lie down and have a rest. Laura giggled, proposing it’s better to call the babysitter and go out Aki whispered: “OK, I’ll see if grandma is free tonight.”

Comment:
These girls were engaged in socio-dramatic play. They were negotiating and discussing possibilities, using effective, expressive (English) language singing (lullaby) to fit the social-dramatic context. Kasja was able to keep the beat of the song. They also brought to the play considerable knowledge of sun and light, changing rhythms of activity. The suggestion to get grandma so they could relinquish their responsibilities for a while was delightful.
This kind of observational note is a suitable first step to focus on a particular event. The documentation acknowledges the observer’s own subjectivity, yet the event is described broadly thereby forming the basis for interpretation and analysis. Learning stories provide the next step in the analytic process by rearranging the observational notes according to key themes, which can then be compared across different stories.

The Learning Story approach is closely related to Carr’s (2001) socio-cultural framework. Learning stories can be described as a “cumulative series of qualitative snapshots or written vignettes” (Carr, p. 96) complemented with the photographs. In order to produce the Learning Stories, the observations and impressions of children’s behaviour were written up just after the sessions, directly after the field notes and photographs had been reviewed (as per Figure 9). Learning stories are commonly accompanied with photographs that reflect the story content and provide information-rich data to an external reader.

As Figure 8 shows, learning stories are designed to reflect learning dispositions (Carr, 2001) which are: taking an interest, being involved, persisting with difficulty or uncertainty, expressing an idea or a feeling, and taking responsibility or taking another point of view. In the learning story creating process, the observational notes are categorised according to the dispositions, although any given observation may be polyvalent, a case which, according to Carr frequently occurs through the processes of overlapping and sequencing. Overlapping is the process in which an observation concurrently falls into related areas. For example, it is common to find observational notes indicating interest and involvement at the same time (although one can have an interest without involvement).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>A Learning Story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taking an interest</strong></td>
<td>Finding an interest here—a topic, an activity, a role. Recognising the familiar, enjoying the unfamiliar, coping with change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being involved</strong></td>
<td>Paying attention for a sustained period, feeling safe, trusting others. Being playful with others and/or materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persisting with difficulty</strong></td>
<td>Setting and choosing difficult tasks. Using a range of strategies to solve problems when ‘stuck’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expressing an idea or a feeling</strong></td>
<td>In a range of ways eg. Oral language, gesture, music, art, writing etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taking responsibility</strong></td>
<td>Responding to others, to stories, and imagined events, ensuring that things are fair, self-evaluating, helping others, contributing to program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Short term Review</strong></td>
<td>What learning do I think went on here? (main points of ‘learning story’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What next?</strong></td>
<td>How might we encourage this interest/ability strategy/disposition to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- be more complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- appear in different ways</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast to overlapping, the term sequencing refers to the integration of domains of learning dispositions into a string of actions. For example, a child may generally take an interest in new learning experiences which will lead her to strong involvement in the program. Since the child is both keen and involved there will be signs of persevering in the face of difficulty. Where such chains of notes can be made across dispositional states they illustrate the diffuse effects of learning dispositions or the antecedents of learning outcomes.

Generating and making use of a learning story entails four phases: Describing, Discussing, Documenting and Deciding. Describing means to produce an outline of the learning episode(s). They are then discussed with relevant participants. These may be children or
adults, for example parents or teachers. Afterwards the events are documented in a story form with annotated resources such as pictures. Finally, the story is used to make decisions about the future direction for the child/ren or program.

For the present study two types of learning stories were employed. One group were descriptive accounts of behaviour and group dynamics relating to a particular session, the other type focused more exclusively on an individual child to highlight a particular development during a session. Figure 9 is an example of a Learning Story about the children’s involvement in the program, specifically their interest in the new learning experiences, which led to their perseverance in learning a new song repertoire (see Appendix A for the complete set of learning stories).

19th September, 2008.

“Hello feet, how are you? ... I will do the beat!”

Once I arrived for the session, the children autonomously began clearing away other toys, counting their numbers and placing the appropriate number of mats in a circle. After we warmed our voices, we started the session with ‘Hello hands how are you?’ All the children performed the gestures and some of them chanted the words, together, with me. They were confident with parallel turning of the hands, while rotating the left and right hand in opposite directions caused a bit of confusion for some of them. We slowed the tempo which led some of them to achieve the desired action. Jan and Kasja, in particular, seemed to do this with ease.
Jaspar suggested analogously playing the same for the feet. ‘Hello feet how are you?’ As soon as we finished with the first round, Jaspar grabbed the ukulele and said: “I will do the beat!” He looked at me for approval. “Good idea”, I agreed and we, once again, chanted: ‘Hello feet how are you, Hello feet how are you, hello feet how are you – ta-ta-ta-ta-ta!’ and he kept the beat steady as he gently tapped the bottom wooden part of the instrument, with his right hand, put in a fist.

We put our feet together and I improvised the movement – which the children imitated with laughter. They had a giggle during the section of the game in which we tried to lift the legs and move them in the manner of scissors. This is the point where some children changed to their own, different rhythm as they were struggling with the physical effort and technique required. Following this demanding exercise, it was time to stand up and stretch. I started singing ‘Atama Kata’ and very soon the children recognised the song and engaged in actions.

Atama kata hiza tsumasaki

hiza tsumasaki

hiza tsumasaki

Atama kata hiza tsumasaki

Tanoshina.

Some of them tried to add the words when we repeated it the song. I complemented them on being so clever and singing ‘Heads and Shoulders’ in Japanese and suggested we try and sing an
Italian song ‘Giro giro tondo’ as this song’s actions include elements of light movement. In contrast to earlier times we performed this song, I encouraged the children to do the sideway step with their feet. This was initially a bit challenging for them. Soon, however, I could see and hear them moving their feet to the beat of the song, but none of them was singing.

Giro, giro tondo
Casca il mondo
Casca la terra
Tutti gui per terra.

When I repeated the same melody in English (‘Ring a ring a Rosie’) some of the children sang along.

The children insisted I read to them ‘My fingers’ and ‘My toes’ as a closure of the session. Rea said that we should take our socks off to show our toes. “I can wiggle my toes really fast!” He laughed out loud. The other children joined his laughter. Today, Kasja and Violet collected the mats.
Learning story analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Taking an interest</strong></th>
<th>The children are eager to participate. They are independent, confident and know how to ‘set-up the scene’. They found the new activity of using feet instead of hands; they revisited this activity.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finding an interest here - a topic, an activity, a role. Recognising the familiar, enjoying unfamiliar, coping with change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Being involved</strong></th>
<th>All children were able to engage in vocal warm-up exercises, followed by the hand-game. Once again, their individual learning preferences were apparent. Their approach was playful as they responded to new materials. Jaspar, as he often does, furthered the new learnt concept as he suggested the foot-game.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paying attention for sustained period, feeling safe, trusting others. Being playful with others and/or materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Persisting with difficulty</strong></th>
<th>Exploration and handling of the instrument was difficult for a new child. His exploration, however, provided insights for other children.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting and choosing difficult tasks. Using a range of strategies to solve problems when ‘stuck’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Expressing an idea or feeling</strong></th>
<th>The children persisted and managed to perform the more complex hand movement when we slowed down the tempo. They attempted a foot-variation. The children used differing strategies and humour to tackle the challenges in this session.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In a range of ways. i.e. oral language, gesture, music, art, writing, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Taking responsibility</strong></th>
<th>The children, once again, showed their cooperative and supportive nature as they followed Jaspar’s initiative to play ‘Hello feet, how are you?’ with enthusiasm. When we played the ‘Giro, Giro, Tondo’ singing game, they held hands and engaged in a friendly manner with one another displaying personal connections. They share, support and actively contribute.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responding to others, to stories and imagined events, ensuring that things are fair, self-evaluating, helping others contributing to the program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Short term review

The children

- Were eager to play with their hands/feet – some responded individually and moved their body parts in a distinctive way – for example, observing and performing action, at the same time; only observing and saying the words; observing, saying the words and performing the actions simultaneously.

- Did not sing but performed the movement of ‘Giro, Giro, tondo’, while they did sing when playing ‘Ring a Rosie’ in English

- Recognized that the ‘Giro, giro, tondo’ circle/singing game and ‘Ring a Rosie’ were very similar

- Enjoyed revisiting the books (My fingers, My toes) and were able to relate the information from our music sessions the content of the books

- Jaspar’s respond was creative

- Rea responded with humour

*No permanent teachers were present in the room. The centre’s agency reliever was cleaning up the room and took some photos of the session.*

### What to do next?

- Bring the new instruments – accordions – children size

- Continue exploring diverse languages – i.e. count children in different languages, play counting games in different languages

- Follow children’s interest in repertoire

- Keep documenting and displaying information to teachers and families

Photographs were utilised as running records and decoded after each music session. The below is an example of a group of children focussing on an external point of interest (Music Teacher/The Researcher). The comments in the code boxes indicate children’s differing ways of responding to the same stimuli. The individual running record can detail children’s interest, how they shared their interest in the researcher’s...
positioning (Figure 10) or a child’s hands as an indicator of her present knowledge of the musical instrument (Figure 11).

Figure 10. An example of a photographic running record. ‘Children involved in What do you think my name is?’

Figure 11. Example of a photographic running record for an individual child.
The use of observations, *Learning Stories*, questionnaires, interview data and running records allowed the researcher to plan for all the children in the group as well as for each child’s unique persona and meet his or her distinct learning preferences, interests and needs.

In summary, while the child care centre’s educational philosophy was well suited to a child focused constructivist approach, the pre-existing structures and processes to facilitate music learning were insufficient. Part of the research program included the transformation of the physical space and the introduction of dedicated music sessions to stimulate children’s interest in music appreciation. A dedicated space, termed the ‘music learning centre’ was also generated to allow children further freedom to explore music in their own way. The reception of these changes was measured for children, their parents and staff. A multi-method approach was employed utilising a mixture of observation, field notes, photographs as well as interview and questionnaire data. These data were then processed in different stages, often resulting in highly meaningful learning stories, which either focussed on the development of an individual or the progress attained by a group of children. After the introduction of data collection methods in this chapter, the following chapter will focus on the results pertaining to the data about the children.
CHAPTER V: THE CHILDREN IN THIS RESEARCH

5.1 The Children in this Research

The broad theme of the present thesis is children’s interaction with and exploration of music. Children have varying biological dispositions to learn music; their social enculturation of music differs as does their personal inclination. However, music is “a universal language of childhood” (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 1998; Barret, 2005; Hedges, 2004) and nearly all children are responsive to it. Against this background of children being endowed with such diverse characteristics, the research program employed a cross-section of music presentation methods to give the children the opportunity to engage with music on their terms. The children’s responses to music were differentiated, analytical and overwhelmingly positive.

Chapters III and IV discussed the theoretical and methodological foundations of the program and provide the groundwork for this chapter and the two following chapters. The focus of the present chapter is on the children and their responses to and involvement with the program. While findings related to staff and parents were assigned to chapters VI and VII, respectively, a certain degree of overlap with these chapters is unavoidable in the present context.

This chapter begins with an introduction of the children recruited for this program. As much as the researcher took the time to get to know the children in order to appreciate their understanding of the world, so too will the reader benefit from a better acquaintanceship with the group and their cultural and musical background. Subsequently, an account of the responses, actions and interactions of the children across different contexts is provided. Data are compiled for the music learning centre, the music sessions, and enhanced when possible with data about children’s home environments. The information presented draws on Learning Stories, observations, photographs and interviews, each of which provide a different lens for drawing insight into the children’s participation and learning. Particular attention is given to Learning Stories - a key tool for planning, recording and analysing the music group sessions. This segment reflects on the children’s participation and learning in
the music group sessions, on both an individual and collective level.

5.2 Meet the Children

5.2.1 Observations from the preliminary visits

The following observations were made before the formal music project commenced. These were recorded as anecdotes. No formal interpretation was done because this information was treated as exploratory. Two examples of the children engaging with music and two with diversity are presented. The children in these observations became participants in the project when it commenced. These observations provide background information about the children’s social awareness, approach to learning, and give an implication of existing knowledge in the areas of music and diversity which are the focus of this thesis.

5.2.1.1 Music

The boys were exploring musical instruments.

Ben liked to move like a ballet-dancer. Two boys decided to come to the music area. One picked the triangle, the other the little drum. After a few beats, the boy with the drum placed cymbals on his ears, as the sounds of the triangle ‘accompaniment’ bothered him. Just then, Ben, tip-towing, moving in a ballet-like manner arrived in front of the other two boys, spinning around, waving his arms (like birds would when they fly) smiling. The boy with cymbals did not seem to pay attention to Ben’s dance and he decided to leave. The other boy curiously looked at Ben, briefly smiling and then turned back to the table where he choose to play with mice-castanets, holding them in front of his face, using them as hand puppets. Ben joined him and they both started making high pitched, husky sounds as if they were imitating mice. This lasted for several moments. They then placed the ‘mice’ back in their previous positions and left the area.
Laura singing on the swing

Laura was on the swing. She politely asked me to give her a push (even though she was quite capable of using the swing competently), which I did. She started chanting “up and down, up and down, my feet are going up and down”. I decided to join in the chant. Mimi started giggling: “Can you sing it?” “Up and down, up and down up and down your feet will go. Up and down, up and down, up and down, show me so.” I sang tonically matching the ‘up’ and the ‘down’. Laura smiled and responded accordingly. She seemed to like this little game as she asked me to sing it again, this time trying to sing along, quite close to the tune in a slightly higher key. After the song was done, she suggested: “How about another one…Twinkle, twinkle…” as she started to sing, once again. I joined in, whilst still pushing her on the swing. She then asked me if I knew a “funny Twinkle Little Star”. I replied that I did not really know it. She started laughing and singing loudly: “Twinkle, twinkle, little star, daddy bought a motor car!” Now you do a song that I don’t know! She said excitedly.

I asked her if she knew the song ‘Atama kata”…She said: “Sing it first”. I sang the first phrase: “Atama kata...”Laura looked at me seriously: “I don’t know that one...Where from?” “Have a guess”. I replied. She started thinking: “It’s not English?” she asked. “No”, I nodded. She paused and then said: “Italian?” I said. “It is not English and it is not Italian”. Mimi frowned and said. “It’s hard...Intelligent?!” I laughed and said: “The song might be intelligent, but the language is not.” She did not seem to want to give up guessing, although she frowned and said: “Do it again!” I sang the full part of the song: Atama, kata hiza tsumasaki...tanoshina’. She excitedly remarked” Hey, I know that one. It’s heads and shoulders!” I confirmed: “It is! In another language...the name starts with a letter J...but it sounds like J, Ja...Ja” I gave her a bit of clue. She raised her eyes brows and opened her eyes widely, saying: Ah, it’s Japan!” I confirmed, once again:“Yep, it is.” Laura requested I sing it again while she did the actions of the song.

5.2.1.2 Diversity
Morning tea discussion – Jing, Mimi, Zara [staff member]

While the children were having morning tea, it was interesting to observe the room’s routines, the group dynamics and the children’s topics of conversation. One of the girls, Jing, did not speak any English and the staff were trying to work out whether Jing wanted to have milk or water. After asking several times: “Milk or water?” Zara (Staff member) brought the jars and placed them in front of her, repeating “Milk or water”? Jing did not seem interested in either food or drink.

Mimi, a five year old girl, who was sitting at the same table, thoughtfully suggested that there are some words that we could use. “Her name is Jing, but maybe it’s Jing-Jing. It is a bit around like that”, she said nodding her head while gesturing with her hand in a circular motion, as she was confirming her statement. “Go and see on yellow paper… her language.” Mimi pointed, directing me towards the door with the display. I went there and read out words written up on the paper: drink, eat, toilet… the children from that table, watchfully listened. I then approached Jing asking: “Che”? She discretely smiled and nodded her head: ‘No’.

Jing exploring books. Two girls speaking about dark-skin-people in the book

The children were still having morning tea. Jing insisted on leaving the morning tea table and went to ‘nature corner’ where she picked up two stones; she then curiously started to observe and smell the flowers arranged in the area. I decided to join, taking a book, beginning to read it aloud. She turned towards me seeming tuned into my reading. The book was factual and looking at food and farming (see photo below). While reading, I intentionally simplified the text; pointed to the photos, and after a few pages, Jing started pointing to some items presented on each page, as if she was counting them. Occasionally, she would look at me, friendly smiling.

At one point, there was a photo of children from Africa. This is when two other girls joined us. One of them said: “They are from AFREKA, they are dark people. The other one expressed her opinion in a similar fashion: “They are dark from…from Efika.”

With the advent of the research’s second stage, the music project formally began.

5.2.2 The children in this research

Seventeen children participated in the research program, while another 10 children were present on one or two occasions. Ben, Sandro and Mimi were oldest in the group and they left the centre at the beginning of the music project. The main group comprised 11 girls and
6 boys ranging from 3-4 years in age. Almost all of them regularly attended the music sessions; all of them frequently interacted with the music-learning centre. The three year olds were: Lou, Nely, Aki, Ali, Petra, Keili, Olivia, Jing, Sisi, Leonie and Leo. The four year old boys were Jaspar, Josh, Jan, Robbie, Mitch, Ahmet, Gagi and the following girls: Aki, Rea, Sanja, Kasja, Violet and Inja. The youngest girls in the group were Lou, Aki, Nely and Sisi who had moved from the ‘toddlers’ to the ‘3-5’ room pretty much at the same time as when the music sessions started.

When the researcher met the children they displayed particular interest in different areas of the curriculum. Keili, Lou, Laura, Piri and often engaged in socio-dramatic play. Aki, Sisi and Nely loved dancing. Josh, Jaspar, Robbie and Ahmet were keen to build and construct out of variety of materials. Violet was a book lover and was often observed reading. Rea and Jan liked playing with puzzles. Mitch liked being outdoors and playing chasing games. Gagi, Inja and Sanja were into drawing and writing. Ali regularly painted and decorated craft presents for her family members. Kasja, who was a new child, seemed to have an affinity towards dancing, too.

5.2.3 Songs and musical instrument preference

Even prior to the introduction of the music program children had formed understandings and preference for songs and musical instruments (Appendix D). The favourite songs were a mix of traditional children’s songs (e.g. ‘Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star’) and pop-cultural artefacts (e.g. the ‘Spiderman song’, as children named it). The majority of reported songs, however, were traditional children songs (amongst others, children listed ‘Miss Polly’, ‘Baa, Baa Black Sheep’, ‘Postman Pat’, ‘Five Little Ducks’ and ‘Incey Wincey Spider’). Following the completion of the music project, the children were interviewed again (Appendix D). In contrast to the initial interviews, their responses about music and diverse languages were more detailed and informed. The children’s song preference had changed from English to non-English (the ‘Umma lella’ song was quoted as a preference for 12 out of 17 children). The centre educators confirmed this finding and reported that the children frequently were heard singing and performing this song during spontaneous play. Contrary to the findings of Suthers and Niland (2007), songs with props were not any more popular than songs without, but children certainly had a preference for songs that engaged them physically in some way.
However, just as reported by Suthers and Niland, songs that allowed children to engage in social interactions with one another or to take away some impressions of the songs and transfer it into their play environment, elicited strong positive responses.

The song ‘Uma Lella’ was introduced to the children early in the music program (Figure 12). Not only would the children regularly requested this song during the music sessions, but the centre educators reported that the children were often heard singing, performing and re-creating the lyrics of this song during their spontaneous play. The following observation illustrates how one of the children was playful with the song, while being in the outdoor playground and interacting with the researcher.


Lou readily set on the swing and requested of me: Come on Alex, push (me) high up in the sky!” I started pushing and encouraging Lou to use her legs in order to keep the rhythm. Laura joined on the other swing and asked me to give her a push, too: “I can do it, just give me a little one, please!” I pushed Laura who then continued to swing. Lou said: “Push me again!” as she held tightly onto the swing. She started to swing and begin singing:” Okubina swingolina, okubina pusholina!” Her singing was tuneful. Laura joined in by softly humming the melody. The girls’ intonation and movement on the swing matched. Lou repeated “Okubina swingolina, okubina pusholina!” several times and we all laughed when she lost her breath due to the force produced by the swing and finished with a thunderous, talkative voice: “Okubina Stopilina!” Laura stopped, hopped off the swing, looked at me and concluded, smiling: “Lou is clever…she’s funny!”

This observation shows that Lou and Laura can sing melodically, in tune. Lou is being playful with the words of her favourite song. She constructs new, creative versions she enjoys repeating. Laura appreciates her friend’s experimentation, realising that what Lou is doing is funny, yet unconventional. What Lou does with a song is not surprising as young children enjoy and often play with songs in such manner (Chooi-Theng Lew &Campbell, 2005; Marsh, 2002; Young, 2006). What is more astonishing is how accurately (rhythmically, phonetically and semantically) Lou manages to transform this song. Perhaps this short and catchy song and its repetitive rhythm (4/4 metre) and melody (Pentatonic scale) make it attractive for children to transform.
The children enjoyed the variety of modes in which this song was presented - singing with actions, singing accompanied by drums and singing with a ‘music veil’. They even found its space for the book ‘Handa’s surprise’ as they associated an African child (“Handa”) with singing an African song.

Since this song was popular throughout the music project, it is not unexpected that most children singled it out as their favourite in their pretend interview. The children, in their interview, assigned positive attributes and associations with it. They said they liked it because:

- ...it’s fun to sing and play drums (Robie)
- ...it’s nice and ...it’s different (Aki)
- ...it’s nice and easy to sing (Ahmet)
- ...it’s a beautiful song...I like the rhythm (Laura)
- ...it’s nice to sing and do the actions (Rea)
- ...I like it (Kasja)
- ...it’s a beautiful song. I like the rhythm (Lou)
- ...it has the best music...I don’t like singing it ...I like dancing it. I like when we do it with the musical blanket (Sanja)
- ...we all sing it together (Jan)
- ...I sing it with Aki (Nely)
- ....it’s fun...I like when we all sing it and you play drums (Lou)
- ....It’s nice. I like the language (Keili)
5.2.4 Instrument knowledge

The musical instruments children favoured the most, prior to the program’s commencement, were the drums and the guitar. Other instruments singled out were piano, maracas, tambourine, and bells. One child reported liking “all instruments”; another child listed a CD player as a known instrument, while three of them were impressed with the “rock/electric” guitar as it was “strong”, “cool” and “powerful”. The proper instrument name was often unknown to the children (for instance, ‘djembe’), but they described it successfully in terms of its visual, auditory and sometimes even tactile properties. For example, Jaspar named the piano accordion “a double piano stretcher” (Music Session, 16). Lou commented that the guitar and the ukulele sound similar and called the ukulele a ‘baby guitar’; Ali examined the conga drum (Music Session 7): “It’s a kind of drum. The top bit feels soft and smooth; the round bit is tough...you shouldn’t hit the round bit, it hurts a bit...” By the end of the music program, the children’s knowledge of musical instruments had broadened; the most popular instruments now were the accordion/s and the conga drums. They liked these instruments as objects and some children made critical comments on the use of these objects. For example, Jaspar critically reflected: “I like the piano accordion. It makes a good sound when you play that Serbian music. I don’t like when the children play it – it makes a terrible sound...” Jan., favouring the drums, explained: “I like the big drum (conga drum) because it’s fun for playing Scoo-bee-doo-bee song (referring to the “Scoo-bee-doo bee song”) with someone else...with Robie...he plays one (musical) egg.”

5.2.5 Music learning

In the first stage of the program children were also asked about their interpretation of the expression ‘Music learning’. To the children associated activities were singing, dancing, playing (with friends and family members), listening to CDs, books, watching TV and “learning from the teacher”. One boy categorically articulated: “I am not a music man. I don’t learn music. One day, I will be a music man. I will learn the guitar...” A few children highlighted that music is mainly for “listening” rather than learning: “I don’t learn music, I only listen to music”. At the end of the music program, the children were asked a similar question: “How do you learn music?” In their answers almost all children referenced the music experiences shared with the researcher during the music project. “I learn music when
we have group music with you and then I learn more in the music corner”, said Josh. Rea., like a few others, recognised her friends’ and family’s input and included the dimension of ‘practicing’ music: “I sing and play the music with my friends and at home. I learn what I like to sing and play... and how to play musical instruments. I practice here and at home with my mum and my sister.” Mitch identified some challenges that come with music learning: “I learn when I play the instruments in the music corner...I play a bit, but it doesn’t sound like good music...like when you (the researcher) play...a little bit, though...it’s hard to play nice...I need more learning.”

5.2.6 Language and cultural identity

English was the predominant spoken language and the language children said they “knew” and “liked” (Appendix D). Additionally, some children had had experience with or even knowledge of Japanese, Polish, Filipino, Greek, Albanian, German, or Cantonese. During the course of the music program, the children’s attitude to language shifted. First, a larger number of children (8 instead of 5) acknowledged their knowledge of languages other than English (“African”, Albanian, “Aboriginish”, Filipino, German, Japanese, “Talian”, and Serbian). Second, 9 of the children selected languages other than English in their list of preferred languages, whereas all of them had only named English prior to the program.

As anticipated, most children took more interest in their own and other cultures once they had been introduced to new ideas through their musical play. By means of singing songs in different languages and exploring diverse cultural items they became more interested in cultural similarities and differences. For example, Nely asked Aki to teach her Japanese words as she liked how Japanese sounded (Appendix B). Jaspar noticed that in Australia people speak many different languages, but most people use English, which, he concluded, was good so that “everyone can understand each other better” (Appendix B). These insights only became possible because the children could experience linguistic and cultural diversity among their immediate peers and were primed to think about this diversity through the content of the music sessions and the resources they encountered in the music learning centre.
5.3 Children in the music learning centre

From analysing the children’s responses to interview questions (Appendix D), the staff and parents’ feedback (Appendix F) and the researcher’s observations (Appendix B), it can be concluded that the children enjoyed this new learning space. It appealed to them as the music learning centre provided the opportunity to play with a variety of instruments. Sometimes the children would experiment with the instruments in an unconventional, yet playful manner. Figure 13, for example, presents a child who did not speak much English but who, through this learning space, found a way to express her musical ideas. As can be seen in a photo below, Kasja was adventurous when experimenting with the drums, looking for exciting ways to play them. Obviously she utilized the physical features of ‘djembe’ and decided initially to stand on it while playing. Through her experimentation she discovered that even though an amusing – ‘balancing act’, it was not the best possible way to handle this instrument. Luckily, the drums were of good quality so they resisted Kasja’s weight and did not get damaged before Kasja realized that the drums should be played in a different manner (Figure 13).

Figure 13. (left) Kasja’s mum rocks (see Kasja’s’ t-shirt) so does she in this photo; (right) Kasja using the drum in conventional manner.

The children frequently utilized this space to play music and explore culturally diverse materials (Figure 14), for instance miniature dollies from different countries. Japanese miniature dolls, in particular, were described as “beautiful”, “cute” and “lovely”; and as Lou.
Besides the dolls, the children were fond of the little traditional nursery rhyme books, the book about festivals around the world, ‘Handa’s surprise’, ‘My fingers’, ‘My Toes’ and ‘There was an old lady’. After the music sessions, they would look at them individually and with others, showing good book handling skills. They would ask questions and make comments about the text and/or the illustrations. A small number of older children were beginning to write in English and they additionally showed interest in writing words in different languages. They asked to copy the words of the songs from the cards. The song/story ‘There was an old lady’ proved to be good material for this type of exercise as the children explored English, Italian, Serbian, Japanese terms for the animal characters presented in this humorous story.

The provision of instruments and culturally diverse items in the sessions and the music learning centre also proved a stimulus for the children to further their learning of music as well as to explore cultural diversity. When encouraging children to produce or listen to songs, instruments are important because they are tangible objects related to music. Using multiple modalities, while introducing music, induced a deeper understanding of music concepts (Bridges, 1994; Edwards et al., 2005; Tafuri, 2008). The opportunity to look at and touch instruments complemented the otherwise audio-centric learning experience. Such explorative options allowed the children to ascertain their specific learning preferences. The tangible nature of instruments also added an additional layer of project ownership, as the children made decisions on how music instruments should be cared for and where to store them.

Whenever we included culturally diverse items, the children showed genuine interest.
For example, treasured miniature figures and puppets from different cultures were introduced and the children asked questions, made comments and expressed preferences.

In the photo below (Figure 15), Robie was trying to work out where the motifs on the little mats had come from. “Oh, I see Melbourne here...these are Aboriginal pictures...I saw them at the Vic market,” He commented, making Violet and Ali lean forward (Appendix A, Music Session 19). Robie and Violet were interested in these, particularly noticing their design and colours. Ali recognised some photos of Melbourne. Lou remembered that “Mumma Warruno” was an Aboriginal song. The children were glad that these items were placed in their music corner.

![Figure 15. Robie and Violet and Ali examining motifs.](image)

Outside of the time that the researcher spent at the centre, the children sang and played with the musical instruments and other available resources, but they also utilized the space for other socio-dramatic interaction (Figure 16). During the researcher’s visits, the children were generally highly engaged in activities with novel instruments.
5.3.1 The children’s participation in decision making about the music learning centre

Since this research viewed the children as collaborators, the researcher encouraged them to be actively involved in making decisions about the content of the music learning centre. At the beginning of the program the allocated space was transformed into the basic design of the music learning centre (cf. Chapter III). During this transformational process, the children were invited and eagerly participated, in sorting useful from non functional musical instruments. This custodian attitude towards the centre continued throughout the study as they monitored the proper use of the resources and made sure that the items remained undamaged. Furthermore, the children regularly engaged in re-envisioning and designing the space. At one stage some children decided to ‘protect’ the area of the music learning centre from two peers who were not participating in the music sessions and who ostensibly were not “looking after” the resources. Guided deliberation led to the children’s decision to follow Rea’s suggestion and make pictorial guides on how to care for the instruments and where to place them in the music centre area (see Figure 17).
5.4 Children in the music sessions

The group music sessions were highly appreciated and anticipated by the children. They participated eagerly and, according to the kinder teacher, were “very disappointed and sad when a music session was not on” at a time they expected it. At one stage, the researcher fell ill with a cold; the children created “get well” cards and sent them to her. They expressed their liking for many aspects of the sessions: the content, the song repertoire, the resources and the musical instruments (Appendix D). They liked the researcher’s voice and style of singing and this contributed to their enthusiasm for the sessions – “I love your voice, its lovely” said Aki (Appendix D). Lou added: “When I grow up, I’m going to sing like Aleks.” Jaspar noticed: “I like your voice when you sing (than talk) better.” (Appendix B).

The changes found in the children’s preferences and their increased interest in cultural diversity was strongly related to the group experiences during the music sessions. During the sessions they enjoyed playing different games and exploring different languages (Appendix A). The children, like Aki, Rea, Ali, Nely, whose families actively supported musical development and had an open attitude towards diversity reacted most positively and
actively to the diverse range of music encountered in the music project. In the group sessions the children had an opportunity to share and learn more about each other, create and re-create their ‘peer culture’ (Rogoff, 2003) and our own ‘music group culture’. An important feature of the sessions was the collective dimension of the group. Dancing together with a friend, for example, was one of the children’s favourite activities during the sessions (Appendix A). The culturally diverse themes explored in a group format helped to break down cultural barriers among the members of the group. For instance, Kasja, who initially did not speak much English, made new friendships through music. Music allowed her to actively participate in her new, not so familiar setting. Through singing and dancing she learnt the lyrics of the songs in languages other than English at a similar pace to that of the other children. In addition, these other children became aware of Kasja’s mother tongue and were inquiring about it. Lou suggested, “Let’s learn Kasja’s language! Let’s learn some Poland (Polish) ...Is it hard?” she asked the researcher. Ali reflected thoughtfully: “…then…we could understand why she’s crying.” (Appendix B). Just as this example shows, the children started forming new relationships and friendships during the course of the program and thereby changed otherwise prevailing group dynamics.

Forming new relationships was facilitated by the music sessions as they allowed each child to actively participate in the group. The children’s unique contributions indicated not just varying levels of awareness, but also different responses to new experiences. Through the sessions children were able to scaffold each others’ learning (Bruner, 1975) and to deepen their understanding of music. This was particularly true for the younger children. For them, the group approach befit their learning styles as they were able to easily observe and learn from the researcher and their older peers. With increased group support and familiarity the children’s confidence was elevated. This was reflected in heightened levels of active participation.

As with the design of the music learning centre, the children were encouraged to make decisions and contribute to the structure and the content of the music sessions. For example, the children would set up the ‘musical mats’ in the circle for the sessions and help pack up all the resources after each session; the more outspoken children would suggest which songs to include or what games to play or/and which instruments and items to bring
for the music learning centre; at times they would also request prolonged sessions.

The music sessions were not just about music learning. Often the featured songs and chants incorporated humorous content, which was emphasized as the children embraced and regularly engaged in humorous episodes. Not all material was unanimously welcomed, however. Two songs telling a story about monsters divided opinion. While three boys expressed great enjoyment in singing and performing the songs, three girls expressed distinct dislike for ‘monsters’. During the song performance, these girls became anxious and frightened. As Nely put it: “I did not like boys (“monsters”) chasing us (girls)” (Appendix D).

5.4 Learning Stories: What they tell about the children

The following findings and interpretations are based on the entire set of learning stories recorded for this research (see Appendix A). After all the learning stories had been written up, the information pertaining to the session-specific stories were compiled according to Carr’s (2001) five categories: taking an interest, being involved, persisting with difficulty, expressing an idea or a point of view, taking responsibility. As discussed earlier these categories are indicators of a child’s level of engagement, present knowledge and dispositions to learning. Learning dispositions are central to the view of the child as a learner. Katz (1998) likens the child’s disposition to learning to the visible tip of an iceberg and claims that roughly 90% of learning dispositions are hidden from view.

5.4.1 Taking an interest

The Learning Stories indicated that the children were keen to participate in the music sessions. From the very first to the last music session, the children displayed their enthusiasm in a variety of ways: they readily cooperated, collaborated and followed a range of instructions throughout the sessions, recognised familiar and coped with unfamiliar content, taking on a variety of roles. They actively explored different repertoire, resources and materials the researcher shared in the music sessions. Their interest in the program was instantaneous; curiosity about music and songs from different cultures was noticeable from the very start. Their enthusiasm became manifest in the short span of time they took to learn song lyrics and their frequent adoption of music session content into their free play. It
was also evidenced in their verbal references to the sessions, which they labelled variably as “special things”, “fun singing”, or “cool music”.

The children readily engaged in discussions about different topics. ‘The Bumble bee’ song, for example, in the Music Session 2, stimulated a fascinating discussion about morally righteous and objectionable behaviour; the children also enjoyed the humorous aspect of it. Often the children related their personal experiences to the sessions. For example Ali talked about going to a street festival with her family and her first encounter with the ‘gathering drum’ (Music Session, 7). The topics of interest were numerous. Some children, for instance, presented their own versions of different languages or created words. They were, in general, curious about where people come from, why they wear certain clothes, listen to certain music, eat particular foods or “sleep outside”. They inquired about how the “music lady” (the researcher) learnt all the songs; where the puppets or other items came from; what would be the content of the “next session”.

Very soon into the music project, the children became aware of the ‘Learning Stories’ and the use of photographs. Rea commented on the Learning Stories: “My mum likes reading these...She says they’re nice stories... The coloured photos are better, though.” Arguably, the children were intrigued by the documentation of the music sessions presented in a Learning Story Album and the visual display for the parents. Some children took the initiative and wanted to contribute to the documentation by taking their own photographs. Lou and Gagi for instance, would, on many occasions, take photos of the children, adults or resources. Every now and then Jaspar or Robie, who were quite observant, would ask the researcher to “make sure” that what they thought was important information was written down, or captured in a photograph. Aki frequently insisted that the researcher ought to include all the relevant details about her best friend Nely.

The children’s fondness for musical instruments and sound making became clearly apparent throughout the program. They regularly requested new instruments and were very appreciative when the researcher made these available in the music learning centre. A good illustration was provided by Ahmet and Jaspar: the two experimented with the wooden boxes, trying to create different sound patterns. The sounds they produced varied in pitch, volume, speed and the length of tone. Jaspar, a highly inquisitive boy, was fascinated by the
design of the musical instruments, their sound production, and ways to play them. On a number of occasions he inquired: “What is this button for...Why is there a cable? ... How do you make a soft sound?”

Using instruments, the children were able to engage in new forms of communication. Aki and Sisi, for instance, while playing the drums, created a music conversation. Both of them “became cats”. Aki started this conversation: “Miaou, Miaou” and then hand-tapped the drums twice, while repeating: “Miaou, miaou”. Sisi giggled and responded back quietly: “Miaou, miaou”, while tapping the small drum. Then they repeated this onomatopoeia simultaneously, a number of times. Violet, who was observing them play, decided to join in; tapping the drum that she was holding onto, exclaiming: “Woof, woof!” The girls laughed as they simultaneously tapped the drums and continued to experiment, varying their voices (Figure 18) using pitch, dynamics and timbre to differentiate between the sounds of cats and dogs.

Figure 18. Violet, Aki and Sisi, engaged in a ‘drum conversation’.

The children were interested in and seemed to understand the concept of ‘warming up’ their voices. They valued the vocal warm-up exercises. Lou, for instance remarked: “I cannot sing good when my voice is not warm. I first need to say the mi-me-ma [referring to vocal patterns in a warm up exercise]...” Sanja compared warm up exercises to “tunning in” of musical instruments. Jaspar extended and successfully transferred the warm up concept to a different context when he suggested we should also do “body exercises” before dancing.

During and after formal music sessions a small number of children would spend time curiously observing others. For some children, like Nely and Ahmet this was the case
throughout the program, as can be seen in many of the photos. Nely would continuously observe her friends, while Ahmet would watchfully pay attention to what the researcher ("Teacher") was doing.

5.4.2 Being involved

The children's interest in the music program commonly carried on until long after the end of the session: They continued to engage in whole-group singing as well as dancing with a partner or alone. Their enjoyment and involvement in dancing was represented in the ‘Hey, hey, what’s your name?’ chant, which seemed ideal for music and social interaction. As recorded in the Learning Story (Appendix A, Music Session 2), the children and their kinder teacher moved with joy and giggled as they followed each of the instructions as best as they could. As the song demands, they were turning around (Figure 19), touching the ground, tickling their toes, touching their nose, jumping up high, and "reaching the sky. After repeating the whole chant, the researcher altered the instructions: "...Don’t tickle your toes...touch each other’s nose”. This change increased the children’s concentration as they listened carefully for any new instruction. Once again, humour was important and some of them laughed when they were to touch someone else’s nose.

In a different session, the researcher introduced a melody to this chant to which the children reacted positively. As in other sessions, they were cheerful and playful with one another while, at the same time, focused and successful in following verbal and nonverbal instructions.

As the sessions progressed, the children continued to be involved in the musical journey; they were more and more responsive towards each other and the researcher. It appeared they wanted to keep the music sessions and the music learning centre as a permanent program. They were eager to sing and to listen to the songs; perform the movements; make up their own versions of the songs. It was astonishing that most of them memorised all the words of the ‘Umma Lella’ song after just one session.

Movement was a large part of the music sessions, and the children evidently liked this feature. Most had a good sense of rhythm and imitated the actions of the songs with ease, while appropriating it in their own distinct way. While singing and dancing simultaneously
was favoured by most children, some preferred only singing or just dancing. Some also preferred singing by themselves rather than in the group – when part of the group, these children would mainly perform the actions of the song.

The children liked dancing and moving to the drum beat (Figure 20). They were interested in the discussion about the drums – the sound they produced, their physical features, how we handle them, materials they are made out of, and songs that might be suitable for them. They keenly explored them during and after the sessions.

![Figure 19. (left) Moving like monsters; (right) and to the drum-beat.](image)

The musical circle games, especially engaged the children (Figure 21). As the sessions progressed, their listening skills became more profound. Hence, they enjoyed and were more competent to play this type of a problem solving game.

![Figure 20. Jan guessing instruments in the box.](image)
Overall, the children responded well to the music program and enjoyed the post session times. Some were observed singing the words or phrases and making up their own versions of the ‘Umma lella’ and ‘Che, che koolay’ songs. For example Aki and Nely while dancing sang and laughed: “Umma lella, umma lella, umma lella, falling down…umma lella, umma lella, umma lella getting up!” (Appendix B) Modifying well known and loved songs or singing favourite phrases and words of the songs is an activity that that many children enjoy doing (Chooi-Theng Lew & Campbell, 2005; Marsh, 2002; Young, 2006).

5.4.3 Persisting with difficulty

The Learning Stories suggest that the children enjoyed the challenge of both unstructured and teacher-directed learning experiences and that they used a range of strategies to solve problems when ‘stuck’.

It was apparent at the commencement of the music sessions that the children had not had many group musical experiences, apart from occasionally singing popular children’s songs. For instance, the very first chant that was shared ‘Clap knees’, seemingly simple, challenged them greatly at the beginning. They were given sufficient time to master the action-patterns and it soon became evident that the children were working out their own strategies to successfully follow the instructions: some of them imitated the researcher’s actions nonverbally; a few of them were imitating actions whilst attempting to say the chant, while K. (who barely spoke English) decided to sit back and observe. Very soon into the program, the children began to easily follow demonstrations as well as verbal instructions from the researcher (teacher) and their peers. They became more interested in rhythm, especially when played on the drums. They started to differentiate between the beat of the song and other characteristics of the rhythm. For example, in early sessions when singing ‘Umma Lella’ some of them were occasionally clapping to the words rather than the beat of the song. Later on, their sense of beat for the familiar songs improved markedly as they were able to hear and clap the beat when the rhythm of the song was played on the djembe. It was similar with singing as most children found their singing voices by the end of the music program and were able to vary their singing and even sing melodically. For example, some children produced dynamic and melodic contrasts (quiet and loud/ high and low) with their
voices when playing with the ‘musical veil’.

The nature of some tasks or instructions challenged the children at times. However, they seemed to cope with these challenges quite effectively and productively. If they were uncertain about the ‘required’ movement’ (like when performing ‘Paki, Paki’) they readily engaged in spontaneous dancing. On a few occasions, however, the children shied away from confronting their difficulties. This is illustrated in the case of “If you like to be a monster” which Aki and Rea, Keili and Violet found initially unappealing and unpleasant. These girls refused to be part of the “monster song” as they disliked monsters and were intimidated by how some of the children in the group responded to the song. They took their time to come to terms with the song in their own way. For example, Aki began to see the humorous side of it and started to play along, Rea realised it was just a song and started to enjoy observing her peers ‘rage’ like ‘monsters’, Violet would say: “I don’t like it!” and simply continue to avoid it. Keili had never said anything about this song. However, her withdrawal and reactions can be clearly seen in the session-photographs which illustrate her resistance to this song.

The children displayed both independent and interdependent learning behaviour as they tackled challenges individually or worked collaboratively towards joint solutions. For example, when Rea and Sanja explored the ukulele together, each were finding their own way of playing the instrument (‘independent’) until Rea recommended they try to play together by starting to strike the strings at the same time and Sanja suggested they repeat the pattern 3 times (‘interdependent’). When I shared this observation with PT, she reported that some of the children were more willing to try and experiment since the music sessions started.

Context: After our music session Rea and Sanja had a go at playing the ‘ukulele. For or a minute or so, each were finding her own way of playing the instrument (‘independent’). This did not seem to satisfy them, probably because the overall sound that was created was not very pleasant.

They stopped, looked at each other and smiled. Rea suggested: “Let’s start together and we count, OK?” They started striking the strings across and both counted “One, two, three, four.” Sanja suddenly stopped and said: “Oh, when do we stop?” Rea also stopped playing. She looked at Sanja shrug her shoulders and replied: “I don’t know, you say.” Sanja paused and proposed: “We go up to 10!” Rea smiled and said: “And, and then we stop?” Sanja said: “No. Then we do it again and again.” Rea agreed and the girls played 3 times the proposed pattern. The first time Rea counted to 10, while Sanja kept with the striking; the second time she started, but Sanja joined in and Rea stopped counting; on the third round they both counted gently stroking the strings. After they finished playing, the girls placed the ukuleles back on their spot and went to play in the ‘home corner.’

Similar to the above observation, the children would take the opportunity to make their own decisions when it came to problem solving and their approaches varied on an inter- and intra-personal level. For example, when exploring different musical instruments, they needed to work out the sound production mechanism. In the case of the exploration of drums, some children were initially trying to imitate the hand movement (demonstration) that the researcher performed on the drum, using their hands to clap along, other children tapped on the floor. Others nodded their head to the beat instead of using their hands while a few observed and listened intently. Some of them simply had a go at playing the drum.

Problem solving persistence was greatest when the children related well to the source material and became excited about their own participation. This was well illustrated in the session we did ‘One, two three, mother caught a flea’; while repeating the lyrics of the chant the researcher departed from the original text and referenced them (children) instead. For example, she would say: “Jan came in with his hair sticking out!” Or “Nely came in with her socks falling down!” These variations delighted the children and they persistently tried to follow up with their own verses: “Mitch came in with his shoes falling off”... Ali came in with her pants falling down...Josh came in with his eyes falling out!” Jaspar even extended the structure: “One, two, three four, father made a roar!”
Using humour was a strategy that helped the children to deal with their difficulties and even to accept failure. When we struggled with moving in a circle for the song ‘Giro, Giro, Tondo’ (Figure 22), the children persisted in trying to make the side-way steps and were pleased with the positive result. This did take a while to achieve, but we all had a good laugh.

The following example shows how humour was employed to overcome frustration:

Robie and Mitch explored the accordions; they were dissatisfied with their early attempts. Robie had the piano accordion while Mitch the diatonic accordion. Despite continuous efforts, neither of them managed to produce a melody. Eventually they decided to swap their instruments. After a few minutes, Robie concluded: “I don’t wanna have a go any more, I can’t play a nice song, like in Greek restaurant.” Mitch giggled, saying: “I can’t play a song, but I can play noise!” Both boys laughed and decided to let Aki and Lou have a turn.

Figure 21. Moving sideways to ‘Giro Giro Tondo’.

Obviously, Mitch and Robie found a way to enjoy the exploration process and managed to turn their “failure” into a positive learning experiment. They were able to reflect and give an accurate music comment. Without this positive and humorous approach, this could have
been a negative music learning “incident”.

Some children were able to articulate their ‘struggles’. A good example was Aki, who, whether alone or in a group, was always eager to sing and dance. In many instances she demonstrated that she was a natural performer who enjoyed music. She also initiated and inspired other children to participate more actively. “Let’s sing! Let’s dance!” she would say. Her ability to recall all the words and most melodies was quite remarkable. Interestingly, she was quite critical of herself when talking about this learning: “...some songs are hard...the words are hard to remember...I am not so good at those... I’m good at English and Japanese...and African, though...that’s ‘because I speak Japanese and English and the African is easy to remember.” This is a telling observation –Aki recognised the challenges that come with learning another language. In addition, she was able to articulate why she thought some songs were easier than others. Her response was typical for a young child, who may find songs like ‘Umma lella’ and ‘Che, che, Koolay’ which consist of repetitive, melodic, short phrases accompanied with action, easier to remember (Bridges, 1994; Young, 2003; Tafuri, 2008). In her comment, Aki obviously associated the simplicity of the song with the complexity of its language.

5.4.4 Expressing an idea or a point of view

The children frequently engaged in discussions and negotiations. As in any large group, some children were more talkative than others, many of them used spontaneous and intentional gestures and mimicry when talking, listening or singing; some were very physically expressive and enjoyed every opportunity to move, dance and act.

When talking, the children would relate their personal experiences to the content of the sessions and, in addition, to the experience of the other children. For example, in the first formal music session Laura shared her morning experience with the group. She described her trip to the child care in the car paying attention to an accurate representation of the setting, but also relating to elements of cause and effect. As mentioned earlier, listening to Laura’s account, a few of the older children initiated singing the “Bumble Bee” song and started a discussion about the ethical aspects of the song’s lyrics. With respect to the bee’s unfortunate fate, for example, Jaspar argued: “Squashing isn’t nice. It killed the bee.” This
remark started a short discussion about the meaning of the song. Gagi replied “It’s just a song... It’s funny”. Jaspar agreed: “I know, I ’m just saying”. Aki articulated that she liked the other, friendly version – ‘The Baby Bumble Bee’ song where the bee does not get squashed.

Apart from relating their own experiences and knowledge to the content of our music sessions, often, the children verbally expressed their suggestions for the following musical gatherings. For instance, Gagi said that he would like the researcher to sing more funny songs, while Sanja insisted on her favourite: “I like the bee song. I like to sing it all the time”. Jaspar requested: “Bring the guitar...the electric one”. Aki said she would like to play “the name game” with her friend Nely.

They were verbally articulate and had ways of making a point understood. Verbal language was used for a variety of purposes – for commenting and questioning; offering ideas, reflections, descriptions and comparison. The children developed a vocabulary for identifying certain characteristics of sounds such as loud/louder, long short, quiet (“soft”), fast/faster, slow/slower, high, low, going up, coming down. They characterised the melodies as “sad”, “happy”, beautiful”, “lovely” as well as the content – for example, “funny”, “scary”, “hilarious”. Their verbal capacity also showed in their ability to reproduce most of the lyrics of the songs that we explored as well as invent their own. More than that, the children gathered insights from their verbal exploration of songs. For example, Inja, an attentive listener, came up with some profound comments on a song as she announced that to write a song that rhymes, one needs to think about “many words that match...it’s good to do this together, though...it’s easier.” She concluded that songs can be recognisable to sing regardless of the command of language: “…we can sing the nice words even when we don’t know what they mean.”

The children’s non-verbal communication was very telling, especially their facial expressions. This is quite visible in the photos. Some children, like Rea and Keili, used their nonverbal and ‘silent’ language to communicate to the researcher when they wanted to observe and when they wanted to actively participate in the proceedings of the session or to show their comfort level. Rea would cross her arms, frown and shake her head to express “no”, or raise her eyebrows and smile to state “yes”. Keili would make eye contact and make a ‘sad’ facial expression to express ‘no’ and similarly Rea would shake her head to answer
‘no’ or simply withdraw from the situation. A few children used gesture while talking, to illustrate or express their point. For example, Mitch made a circle motion with his hands to describe the size of the drum. The children used nonverbal language to express their imagination. In Music Session 7, Ali showed what “sleepy fish” looked like (Figure 23). In the very same session, Aki and Violet seemed to have overcome their fear and they joined in dancing and pretending to be monsters (Figure 23).

![Figure 22](image)

Figure 22. (left) Ali’s “sleepy fish”; (right) Violet and Aki are “Monsters”.

Some children seemed to realise that people were similar and different at the same time and were able to express this. Lou candidly talked about her relationship with the other children (Appendix B): “…I like playing with the girls… Girls have good games… We like playing on swings, sing songs, playing school, cooking…Aki brought some chopsticks for cooking…they were nice…Red…her grandma brought them from Japan…Oh, dear, boys can be rough. They wanted to pinch the (chopsticks)...Robie used them for playing the drums...ha-ha...They’re (boys) good for running games, though…”

Some of the children displayed an understanding of one of the main concepts of cultural diversity - that different nations may speak different languages. They were inquiring about the researcher’s mother tongue as they observed that she spoke with a different accent and they talked about their siblings or real life situations where they had observed this difference. Lily understood and was able to articulate that people from different countries speak different languages and would relate their physical features (skin colour) with the language. For instance, she thought that Jing was Chinese as she looked “…like Chinese...her eyes are smiling and her hair is black”. Sanja thought that all people who have a dark skin
might speak Aboriginal – “like the people on TV”. She pointed out that these people (Aboriginals) “did not have to have the same skin colour and that sometimes “they painted their faces and bodies”.

There were a few children whose communication style stood out, which enabled them to develop and display strong leadership skills. Gagi’s, Jaspar’s and Lou’s input into the program and especially their effort and ability to shape the group’s social dynamics was highly valuable. They would initiate play, conversation, discussion and would express their enthusiasm for the program by offering meaningful and constructive ideas. If he heard a new song, Gagi would inquire about it: “Where is it from? “; Jaspar, who appeared to be the most talkative and verbally articulate in the group not only contributed with his comments, questions, descriptions, ideas, but furthermore, he seemed to have taken a role of a peer mentor as he connected to Ali, taking responsibility towards her, often inviting her to play. Quite amazingly, at times she would “translate” or clarify what Kasja was trying to express. The below observation notes one of the occasions when this had occurred:
Context: Before the session, all the children had to pack up the room.

Kasja seemed to be busily packing up but every now and then she would look at me, carefully observing what I was doing. Soon, the floor was free to place the mats. I asked Laura to bring them over. Ali came with the mats and said: “Kasja wants to help, too, she’s saying: “Sit down, sit down”.

At that very moment, Kasja approached us and asked: “Help?” Ali smiled and looked at her, giving Kasja her some mats. Kasja helped with setting up the mats in the circle. When finished, she pointed to one of the mats and said smiling at Ali: “Kasja” and then she pointed to Ali. Ali smiled back and sat next to her.

Later on, during the music session, Kasja and Ali interacted, smiling at each other, making an eye contact.

Is Kasja looking for nonverbal cue from Ali?

5.4.5 Taking a responsibility

As Jaspar’s example (see the previous section) shows, the children often took charge of elements of the program; they were often the ones who were driving the process, and who took care to include everybody who wanted to be involved. As a group, they were always very helpful when setting and packing up before and after the music sessions. They took good care of the resources and were supportive of each other and able to take turns and give each other time and space to participate. For instance, they followed the rules of the “Guess who?” (Figure 24) listening game playing it in a complete silence, when required. This allowed individual children who were the selected “listeners” to participate successfully. What was interesting is that this collective respectful behaviour seemed to have an effect on the children who did not usually participate in the sessions. The photo (Figure 24) shows Jing, who had never participated in the music sessions before, watchfully waiting for Ali to
“solve the problem”.

Throughout the study and particularly during the group music sessions, the children appeared to be developing strong relationships, while constantly refining and redefining their social roles. Some children, like Jaspar and Jan, took additional social responsibility. Jan, who came across as a very kind, giving and tolerant boy, who interacted well with others, became quite involved in facilitating his own and the learning of others. He was cooperative and collaborative; always looking forward to sessions and wanting to prolong them. He was highly respectful of others’ needs displaying genuine interest, patience and compassion. In fact, his kindness seemed to be contagious as the other children followed his example.

Figure 25 is related to a situation when Jan and Violet were exploring a ukulele and the accordion. Violet was enthusiastic, producing a strong, dissonant chord on the accordion. Jan was waiting for his turn as his attempt to “play along” did not seem to please him. Violet played for about two minutes. He patiently waited for the moment to explore this instrument. In doing so, he demonstrated an understanding that learning takes place when people are respectful, involved and interact and teach each other. He saw the music sessions as a shared experience where the learning took place “…when we play games and sit in a circle and we are together…I like when you sing songs with us…we learn music the best when we play together.”
The concept of ‘sharing of knowledge’ became a strong theme for many children. They took their learned repertoire and strategies into the home context where they taught family members their favourites from the music sessions. Rea’s mother told the following story:

C: “[Rea] has been singing the songs ...she loves that ‘Umma Lella’ one. She sings it very often, at home in the car, outside...She was initially very particular and preferred if I did not join in. [laughs] Last week she said I could....She organised her sister Sky and myself and taught us the song. She made us sit on the floor and suggested: You may want to cross your legs; it’s easier to clap and pat your knees. We followed these instructions and she sang the song. I was not allowed to sing along [laughs]. She said I should follow the actions, while to her sister, she said: “You [Sky] sing nicely and sing softly.” I don’t really know [why she didn’t want me to sing]... we sing other songs together [pauses] Perhaps, I should’ve asked her? They sang it several times...I think three times. Rea said we should do it quieter and then louder and faster and slower. She’s a little musician, you know... Oh, and she told us that this is an African song and people in Africa sing with the drums....she reckons I should ask you for a little drum and the eggs...she said the songs sound very nice when you play it...

Welch (2009, p.2) says of children’s singing activities that they relate to the young child’s acquisitive, playful, creative and spontaneous nature as they engage with and make sense of their ‘local child’ as a novice members of the culture. Using song as a vibrant social and cultural artefact, enables a child to become an expert member of the culture. The song, as an artefact or tool, has musical meaning in its own right, but also has attendant emotional...
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and linguistic meanings that children are able to internalise and communicate to others in
different contexts.

The music session happened in a relatively confined space. However, the children coped
very well with this. For example, while dancing, they respected each other’s space. They
were also flexible when we had to conduct sessions in a non-typical setting, such as seated
around the tables. They were excited when, in the last session, the usual set up changed due
to the ‘formal’ distribution of their awards for participating in the music project.

The following section will showcase two examples of how Learning Stories provided
insight to individual children’s participation. The selected children differ in age, gender,
cultural and linguistic background. Both participated in our music sessions actively and with
lots of enthusiasm.

5.4.6 More about Kasja

Kasja was a girl who had recently arrived to the centre. According to her parents, she
had a good command of her mother tongue (Polish) but did not speak English. However, this
English language limitation was not a huge obstacle for Kasja. In a very short period, Kasja
accomplished a lot, displaying strong interest in music, self regulation, an ability to utilise
effective strategies to participate actively and to contribute to our music group sessions.
Perhaps Kasja interpreted our sessions as being designed to learn other languages and
English was her other one.

Very early in the music project it could be noticed that Kasja enjoyed music, especially
movement, as well as socialising through music with the other children and me. Her interest
in others was present even before the formal music sessions commenced. For example, at
times when the CD was played and the children were asked to pack up the room, she was
dancing and giggling with another child.

Kasja was a dynamic learner, capable of switching from being an active observer and a
discrete non-verbal communicator, to more a vocal, expressive and confident child. She was
a sharp-eyed child, able to utilise visual information, looking at others for a non-verbal clue.

The learning stories documented that her ‘receptive’ English was developing well and her verbal expression capability progressed from single and two-word utterances to longer combinations, such as “Okubina song... that’s my favourite song...I like it.” Perhaps her English language was progressing well due to her sociable nature and excellent hearing. On one occasion, the researcher played the rhythm of the “Umma Lella” song on the conga drum. Kasja recognised it, exclaiming: “Oku bina song!”

While Kasja’s English was developing and she also sang songs in other languages, she was never observed to use her mother tongue – Polish. She laughed when the researcher tried to talk to her in Polish. This might have put her at ease. Interestingly, when the researcher sang a song in Polish (Observation), Kasja did not like the idea of including a Polish song in our repertoire; she categorically shook her head and in a crying tone of voice said “No”. From my professional experience, this is not a very atypical reaction, as not all young children are ready and willing to explore their mother tongue in the new setting, especially in early stages when they are settling in. Sometimes, this behaviour is a result of their parents’ expectations, who directly and indirectly encourage their children to immerse themselves into the new language in order to assimilate and be accepted by the social group.

Our first formal music session Kasja spend carefully watching other children joyfully move to the beat, chant, clap their hands, pat their knees. She seemed a little uncertain of what to do as she was nervously sucking her thumb finger. However, throughout the session, she followed the changes in the group formations – sitting or standing with the rest of the children in a circle, occasionally smiled and even joined in laughter.

Already in the second session, Kasja participated more actively showing a systematic approach to learning a new repertoire as she managed to accomplished the required in three stages. She sat near the PT and excitedly joined in actions, making visible advancement during this time. It can be seen in the photos that Kasja was perceptive and good at imitating actions. Initially, during the first round of the chant, she performed all the movements, except she was one step behind (Figure 26 & 27).
Figure 25. Stage 1 - Kasja looking at 'the teacher; she is waiting for a non-verbal cue.

Figure 26. Kasja is one step behind as she is touching her toes while we are touching our noses.

In the following round, the PT assisted Kasja to follow my verbal instructions in time (Figure 28).
Figure 27. Stage 2 – PT assisting Kasja to perform the right movement.

In the last round, Kasja independently recalled the appropriate action at the right time (Figure 28).

Figure 28. Stage 3: Kasja can do it!

The following music session allowed the children to sing and dance either as group, individually, or in pairs. Kasja seemed very enthusiastic and she took this opportunity to connect with the other children. For example (Figure 30), when it was Alis’ and Nely’s turn to dance Kasja jumped up and joined the girls, clapping to their movement throughout the ‘Hey, hey, what’s your name?’ chant. When we did this chant as a whole group Kasja decided to hop in the middle and happily danced (Figure 31).
Figure 29. Kasja joined in Ali and Nely.

Figure 30. Kasja in the center, moving to ‘Hey, he, what’s your name?’.

Figure 31. Kasja - free style dancing          Kasja sitting in circle, following rules.

As much as she enjoyed spontaneous dancing (Figure 32), Kasja also followed the conventions of sitting in a circle, listening to others talking (Figure 33). Even though she
found it difficult to wait for her turn to explore the guitar and had tears in her eyes, Kasja waited on her spot and was cooperative and able to overcome her urge as she waited for Ali to finish with the guitar (Appendix A, Music Session 3). What is more, she handled the instrument with care as she continued to show it around the circle. It was great to hear Kasja speak and use appropriate English, as she said “My turn.”

Initially, Kasja was not very vocal. However, very soon into the music project she started singing and chanting in the sessions, especially when we did the ‘Umma lella’ song. She liked this song and would, according to the staff, often sing parts of it, while playing spontaneously: “Oku bina, bina, bina, oku bina, bina, bina...” She called this song ‘Okubina song’ and sang mostly that phrase, which is rather typical for young children (Chooi-Theng Lew & Campbell, 2005; Marsh, 2002; Young 2006). She liked this song performed in different forms and modes – acapella, accompanied by drums and the guitar. In Music Session 13, we sang the song accompanied with the guitar. “I like okubina song with guitar” said Kasja in her confident, already six-word English sentence.

As seen earlier in this chapter, Kasja enjoyed spending time in the ‘Music Learning Centre’ which she explored in a conventional and not so conventional way. That she was very keen on music is shown in the story where Kasja and her small group of friends participated in the outdoor Music Session (9), while the rest of the children wanted to play elsewhere in the playground.
Sometimes Kasja needed more time to grasp a concept due to English being her second language. For example, in Music Session 10, the children were supposed to shake their musical eggs only at certain times – when we were singing particular parts of the song. This task was not clear to Kasja probably because I only told the children what to do. She and the youngest child in the group (Sisi) needed demonstration and practice of this task in order to accomplish it. Both of them ended up shaking their musical eggs right through the song, while the rest of the children, who easily understood verbal instruction, played their parts at the appropriate times. Similarly, when we played “Guess who?” for the first time, Kasja and a number of younger children in the group, did not immediately figure out this game; nevertheless, in our Music Session 15 not only that she understood the game, but she also further challenged her friend – ‘the listener’ by changing her voice colour when singing someone’s name.

Closer to the end of the music project, she became the more informed, confident learner who could scaffold other children’s learning. For example, when the children had an opportunity to explore a new instrument – a ukulele (Figure 34), Kasja approached it in a similar way as she had handled the guitar, focussing on the sound that was produced when she would pluck the individual string. She demonstrated to Moses how to hold it: “Like this, hold... gentle.”

By Music Session 16, Kasja was able to follow all types of instruction, including verbal English. At times, she showed more competence than other children in the group. In Session 17, for example, she was confident with the parallel turning of the hands and rotating the
left and right hand in opposite directions (‘Hello hands how are you?’) while a number of other children required more practice to achieve this.

The following observation illustrates how Kasja’s interest in music connected her with other children and how playful she was with her favourite song.

24th October, 2008.

Context: Kasja did not attend the last formal session as she was sick. I organised another visit to come and personally give her her ‘certificate’. She was very pleased with that and affectionately said “You are my friend”. I showed her the ‘interviews from the other children and asked her if she wanted to have her interview done. She took my hand and said” Aleksandra, we go to sand pit and do cooking.”

In the sandpit, we “cooked” with Lou. and Laura who instantly joined us. We ‘made lunch’ and were ready for “school”. ‘The school” “was” in the nearby cubby house. Lou suggested: ‘I’ll be the teacher, you’ll be the schoolies.” Kasja, Laura and I obediently sat down in front of the ‘teacher’. Lou said: “Let’s make a nice circle…stand up…hold your hands in circle…there…now, sit down, please.” We all followed Lou’s instructions. “Hm…What shall we sing today?” asked Lou. “Okubina song!” suggested Kasja excitedly. Lou smiled back and started clapping and singing “Okubina, bina, bina” Kasja, Laura and I joined in singing and clapping. After repeating this phrase twice we finished with ‘tun ge’. Kasja said: “One more time!” Lou said: “OK. This time, we sing softly, like little birdies.” She was about to start singing when Laura said: “That’s not how it goes.” Laura and Kasja looked at her, puzzled. “Umma, lella, lella, lella…she started clapping her hands, “That’s how it goes!” Lou and Kasja both had a giggle. “I like Okubina’ concluded Kasja, “Me, too!” added Lou smiling. “We can have two songs! Ha-ha!” she looked at me as she was waiting for approval. “We can, if you like” I agreed. We all had a laugh. “OK. We sing Okubina softly and Umma lella loud(ly).” We sang the ‘Okubina part’ one more time and then Laura. suggested we stand up and do “Umma Lella”. Lou said: “Oh, good idea! Let’s stretch our bodies, too!” Kasja readily stood up and stretched her arms “up high”. We sang and danced “Umma lella’ with strong voices, much energy and enthusiasm. Lou sang in tune, while Kasja and Laura oscillated in intonation.

In her interview (Appendix D) Kasja demonstrated she understood the questions and was able to answer them – her favourite instrument was “drums”, which she also favoured in the music learning centre; she liked singing ‘Umma Lella’ the most, but was not happy she could not always sit next to the researcher. She was unsure about how ‘she learnt music’ as
she asked out loud: “I don’t know...I play?”

Kasja’s enthusiasm and the need to be part of the group as well as her strong interest and disposition to engage with music enabled her to become more competent in music and English and to actively contribute to our music project and this research.

5.4.7 More about Jaspar

Jaspar was a friendly, inquisitive, articulate boy. He came from an English speaking background but was curious about other languages and cultures. His inquiring mind led him to explore physical and mechanical properties of musical instruments. In all of our music sessions, he was talkative, and, when expected, an attentive listener. He was knowledgeable, informative, showed initiative and imagination - ready to make comments, express opinion, suggest ideas, and pose questions.

From the very beginning, Jaspar freely and confidently expressed his opinion. For instance, in our first music session, when reflecting on the lyrics of the song “Bumble Bee, Jaspar initiated a group discussion, making a statement that “killing the bee is not the right thing to do”. He was confident to remark, suggest and pose relevant questions. Being curious about the meaning of the words he would, for example, inquire: “What is version?” and then show his understanding of the word: “Oh? Can we hear version bee?”

Jaspar would often relate his real life experiences to the content of the music sessions. He talked about his first encounter with a musical instrument: “I’ve been to a restaurant with that music...and I saw a movie with a funny guy who played this big instrument...and made lots of noise.” In doing this, Jaspar placed his hands in a tube position, used humorous tone of voice as he tried to portray an image of a trumpeter making the onomatopoeic sound the trumpet and describing its physical features: “It’s this long thing and it’s shiny, like...like a spoon and the guy was spitting ...ha-ha-ha!” The rest of the children joined in with laughter. When I told the children that I would bring a photo of a trumpet, Jaspar requested: “Bring the real thing!” Jaspar often asked for particular musical instruments in our music sessions and the music learning centre. Sometimes, his suggestions came out of spontaneous conversations, as it is recorded in the below observation:
February, 2008.

...I was about to leave, when Inja insisted that I stay for lunch. I joined her table. While we were having lunch, the children were asking if I could stay all day. In response, I told them that I would come again next Friday. Gagi asked me to bring my guitar again. Jaspar said:” We can also do...” (demonstrating drumming on the table’, smiling) looking at others, as if he was waiting for them to 'read his nonverbal cue. “Drumming!” answered Inja Jaspar confirmed: “Yep!”

Jaspar’s curiosity about design and mechanisms of objects was there before we started the music project. When asked what his favourite instrument was, he replied: “Instrument? I like the old CD player...’cause it has lots of bits and pieces but it doesn’t work anymore”.

Once he explored more instruments his interest and knowledge broadened: “I like the accordion. It makes a good sound when you play. I don’t like when the children play it – it makes a terrible sound. I like the belts...I like the big drum...the colours. You can put a little one on top of it. The little one makes different sound.”

Each musical instrument he would examine in detail. When he saw the classical guitar, he compared it to the electric one: “I saw one with the cable...this one hasn’t got a cable...This one is made from wood and it has a hole in middle. Do you put things in there?”

On another occasion (Music Session 11) he was quite perceptive as he noticed that the researcher had brought a slightly different classical guitar. In the same way, when he looked at the diatonic and piano accordion, he recognised similarities and differences: “This one is larger (piano accordion) and it makes a louder sound... I think they are (both) made out of metal..plastic...wood...they have colours... white buttons...they make funny noise when you streach them...I can hear the air...they’re small, they’re for us children.” (Music session 18).

In a conversation he had with the researcher, he explained to her how the diatonic accordion worked: “...This one (accordion) is nice, cause it’s got lots of buttons and you can press them...You need to hold it properly and stretch...it doesn’t work if you don’t stretch...it makes short and long sounds.” Jaspar realised that the tone’s length depended not only on the length of the physical pressure applied on the key but also the mechanical movement of the bellows. He further described and demonstrated the making of the sounds: “... the sound can be loud or quiet. If you stretch (the bellows) really hard it makes a loud
sound…but if you stretch too much, it is hard to get back, so don’t stretch too much. He noticed that it was physically more demanding to play the “stretching” part of the accordion.

If the guitar was not tuned, Jaspar would realise that: “Oh, dear, that does not sound good!” and would explain how to tune the guitar: “You fix the strings, like last time (pointing to the knobs)...you turned this one and this one” (Appendix A, Music Session 4).

This is how Jaspar described one of the drums: “It is made out of wood, it’s a bit heavy...it has metal bits. I like this hole here (showing underneath) and here (showing the top of the drum)...is smooth...You can make a scratchy noise (he demonstrated this by using his nails and wiggling his fingers)...and you can use it as a little table...ha-ha!” (Appendix A, Music Session 5).

Figure 34. (left) Jaspar engaged in a discussion about the drum; (right)Jaspar counting.

Jaspar was an imaginative child, creative with words. For example, he made up his own version of the chant ‘One, two three, mother caught a flea’: “One, two, three four, father made a roar!” He used his voice to produce onomatopoeia of the roaring sound, like the roar of a lion (Appendix A, Music Session 5). Similarly, in Music Session 6, he described the music veil as the “ocean”. In Music Session 10, when we explored musical eggs, he collected all of them and placed them in the new boxes in the music corner, asking everyone to pay attention to where they should place their eggs. The children responded accordingly. Once all the eggs were collected he looked at them, and laughed out loud: “Ha-ha, the golden ones might sing in the box - Che, che, KooLeee (Koolay)!” He changed his voice to a more baby-like sound, when he sang “Che, che Koolleeeee”. 
If Jaspar did not know the word, he was quick to ask, for example, “What’s stage?” (Appendix C), “What’s that language?” (Appendix A, Music Session 3). He could even remember words that were not English as he would recall most of the lyrics of our non-English repertoire. In the last ‘interview’ he was asked what language he spoke; he replied: “I speak English. I know a bit (of) your one (Referring to Serbian): jedan, dva, tri, cetiri, pet, sest, sedam... (He paused and smiled)... hm...I can’t remember the rest.” The first time I counted in Serbian, Jaspar inquired about this language. In one of the following sessions (Music Session 8), he counted in Serbian: “I know how to count in Serbia (n): It’s edan (in Serbian “Jedan”), dva (in Serbian “Dva”), three (In Serbian “Tri”)...he then stopped, looked at me and smiled...“Ahm...” Chetiri (In Serbian” Cetiri”), pet (In Serbian “Pet”, shest (In Serbian ‘Sest’)...We played these games outside, when you get to count. J. (RR) counts in Serbia (n)...she knows your language.” (He referred to RR – Regular Reliever, whose mother tongue was Croatian; in Croatian number terms below 100 are identical to Serbian).
At the completion of the music project, Jaspar favoured Serbian, when asked what his favourite language was: “I like your language…Serbian is funny. I like funny things.”
Like in the previous sessions, Jaspar looked at the guitar’s design, touching (manipulating) the tuning pegs: “Here, you tune the guitar” he explained to Aki and Nely. He impatiently turned towards to Lou, who was standing next to him: “Please... Move away, I can’t do it. I need space to make the sound!” Lou moved aside. Jaspar continued: “Hah, see, like this... no sound”, he pressed the strings firmly with both hands.

In session 11, Jaspar requested more musical instruments: “Yes, please, bring some new musical instruments... when I grow up, I am going to live in a big room with lots of musical instruments.” “Why?” I was intrigued. “Because I like musical instruments and I can fix them up.” “Who else is going to live with you?” I asked. “Nobody. Just me.” PT smiled and asked “Why is that?” He looked at her and laughed:” What girl would like to live with me?!” In the very same session, he made us laugh calling the piano accordion “a double piano stretcher”.

Jaspar was interested in how other children engage with music. In Music session 12, Aki
played the guitar (Figure 41). They both had observed previously children play with the guitar and when it was Aki’s turn, she spent a few seconds gently striking the strings with her left hand. She then started singing “Twinkle, twinkle” and played along. Jaspar joined in singing quietly. When the song finished, they looked and smiled at each other. Jaspar said: That’s a clever way!

When we dramatised “A child went out one day” Jaspar suggested we use a chair for the monster to hide underneath (Figure 42). He placed it outside of the circle and explained:” Here, this is the monster-house.” Laura was unsure of what to do at first. I suggested she should find a playground. Laura decided to stay in the circle. Jaspar’s interpretation and presentation of the monster was well received. The children especially liked it when the “scared” monster ran away from the girl.

![Figure 41. Dramatising ‘I eat kids, yum, yum!’.

Jaspar was interested in musical instruments, but he was also interested in creating sounds using non-musical objects. The following excerpt illustrates this.

“Hey, look!” Jaspar said to Ahmet. “This box can play music!” he then opened and closed the doors of the box several times trying to generate sound Ahmet joined in and listened to play “tap, tap, tap, tap (as in 4/4 bar). They looked at each other, smiling. Ahmet grabbed the two Japanese wooden miniatures and started making clicking sounds, using these wooden people-miniatures. Jaspar repeated the played patterns of ‘tap, tap, tap, tap’, while Ahmet added an extra click to each ‘tap’: tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap, as if she played crochets with Ahmet. Jaspar matched the crochets with the double amount of the quavers.
When Jaspar was unsure of the answer, he would remain positive and look for strategies to resolve the ‘problem’. For example, in the session when we played “Guess who?” he was challenged by Ali who elevated her pitch, singing: “Aliiiiiiiiiiiii” and then changed her seating position. As an audio/visual task, this might have been difficult for Jaspar, but he guessed who the person was as he posed adequate questions, such as: “Is it a girl or a boy?”, “Who is her best friend?” “What colour is her hair?”

Jaspar was quick to associate one concept with another. This is illustrated in session 16, where, after we had played ‘Hello hands, how are you?’ Jaspar suggested analogously playing the same for the feet – ‘Hello feet how are you?’ while he played the beat of the chant on the ukulele. “Hello feet how are you, hello feet how are you, hello feet how are you – ta-ta-ta-ta-ta!” he kept the beat steady as he gently tapped the wooden part (face) of the instrument, with his right hand, put in a fist.

Jaspar’s ability to associate and connect his life experiences and knowledge with new concepts is also shown in the following excerpt from a revealing conversation with the researcher.

Like most other children, Jaspar had certain expectations of me and the music sessions. In our last session, Jaspar and the others positioned themselves, ready for “music thingies’
as Lou called it. Jaspar speculated: “I bet Aleksandra has something special in her basket!”

Figure 44. Waiting for his achievement certificate.

When it was Jaspar’s turn to obtain his ‘award’, he said: “Please come again... we’ll do more music”. “I will,” I promised, shaking his hand. He looked at me smiling, raising his eyebrows: “But, make sure it’s before I start school.” Later on he came to tell me he learnt how to write his name and surname and that the “diploma” had only his name.
Jaspar wanted to know why the researcher was wearing a bracelet with “pictures of people on them” and inquired further about these motifs (Christian Orthodox icons). The following conversation excerpt provides some revealing detail:

J: Aleksandra, I like your bracelet…it’s made out of wood?”
A: Yes, it is. How did you know?
J: It looks like wood. It’s brown.
A: I see.
J: Why are there people on them (Referring to single parts)?
A: They are pictures of Serbian Saints.
J: Saints?
A: Yes, these are called ‘Saints’.
J: Hm…I only know footy Saints, they’re St Kilda Saints, and they don’t look like that.
A: These are different Saints – people in Serbia think that they did good and nice things for other poor people and that’s why they call them Saints and paint their pictures.
J: What nice things?
A: Nice things, like giving to people who have no food to eat or helping them do their work if they’re sick.
J: Do they give them goodies?
A: What do you mean by goodies?
J: Goodies, like toys and stuff.
A: Maybe they gave some goodies, too...to make people feel better.
J: They’re like Santa Clause but they’re different...they look different. Santa gives goodies if you ask him.
A: Did you get any goodies from Santa?
J: No. My mum and dad gave me some goodies – they said Santa left them for me.
A: Oh, what did you get?
J: I got a book about insects and some plastic tubes for experiments.
A: Experiments?
J: Yes, with water and colour. You get to put water and mix with colour...it’s fun...it’s see through.
A: Sounds nice. What would you like to get from Santa next time?
J: Oh, I’d like instruments, lots of instruments.
A: What kind of instruments?
J: Musical instruments – drums, accordion, guitar, everything!
A: Oh, that is quite a few instruments.
J: I know, my mum said I have to pick one only.
A: Which one will you choose?
J: I don’t know...I have to think which one...
It was apparent that due to our music project, Jaspar became more actively involved with music. This is reflected in his initial and post music project thoughts on ‘learning music’. Before we started with Music sessions he said: “I learn music when I listen to the sounds.” While, at the end of the music project, he said: “I learn music when we have music session. I learn songs, I learn musical instruments...I like looking what’s inside...we learn music when we do things, we don’t learn music if we don’t do things.”

The previous two children were described by the use of learning stories, conversations and observations. The following tables are examples of the use of photographs to portrait another child who participated actively in the music project.

**Figure 45. Jaspar and others proud of the achievement.**

5.4.8 More about Ali

The photos illustrate Ali’s participation in the music content. She was active, energetic, enthusiastic and able to follow instructions of the songs, chants and games. It can be noticed that whether part of a circle, performing in a middle of the circle or engaged in spontaneous dance, she was often positioned next to her close friends Nelly
or Aki. While this was frequently the case, the photos also provide evidence of Ali’s ability to relate to other children and interacted with them in a positive manner and with an ease. Ali’s facial expression and body language indicate that she was focused and interested in the music content (songs, chants, resources) as well as social content (interaction with participants) during the music sessions. She appeared to be a perceptive child, who communicated effectively with everyone in the group as she would join in singing, dancing, talking, listening and laughter. Her positive response and feelings towards others and acceptance and tolerance of others are probably rooted in her family’s beliefs and valuing of cultural diversity (Appendix F).

On a rare occasion Ali’s attention seemed to have moved elsewhere (As shown in Music Session 15 where she was playing with her dress while the teacher is showing the folders and in music session 16, when she was looking down while others were looking up and listening to the story-book ‘My fingers’). On both of these brief moments Ali remained silent and discrete, hence not disturbing the flow of the session.
Table 2.
Ali Responding to songs and Chants.

1. Ali doing actions of ‘I’ve got a little bumble bee’ (Music Session 5)
2. Ali responding to ‘That will do!’ (‘Hey, hey what’s your name?’) (Music Session 3)
3. Ali moving hips to the beat (Music Session 2)
4. Ali clapping (standing) (Music Session 3)
5. Ali jumping “up high” (Music Session 3)
6. Ali clapping (sitting) (Music Session 18)
7. Ali responding to ‘Hello feet’ (moving feet to the beat) (Music Session 17)
8. Ali dancing to ‘Scooby- dooby ’ song (“moving down”) (Music Session 19)
10. Ali clapping and singing ‘Umma Lella’ (Music Session 21)
11. Ali moving sideways to ‘Giro Giro Tondo’ (Music Session 19)
Table 3.
Ali relating to others.

1) Ali “reaching the sky” in ‘Hey, hey, what’s your name?’ (Music Session 2)
2) Ali taking an interest and paying attention to JK’s comments on ukulele (Music Session 16)
3) Ali sharing the drum with other children (Music Session 8)
4) Ali wanted to be next to her close friend N on the framed photo collection (Music Session 6)
5) Ali laughing as trying to move sideways in a circle; observing own and others’ feet (Music Session 19)
6) Ali playing with KS (giving voices to Japanese dolls) (Music Session 14)
7) Ali performing ‘Naka yoku’ (‘Okiino Kurino) with her close friend E (Music Session 16)
Table 4.
Ali Listening, observing and talking to others.

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1) Ali observed and chose her puppet (wolf) (Music Session 14)
2) Ali describing the gathering drum she had seen on the street (Music Session 7)
3) Ali holding and showing her new bag (Music Session 3)
4) Ali watching others pop down (Music Session 7)
5) Ali listening to ‘There was an old lady who swallowed a fly’ (Music Session 14)
6) Ali tuned in listening to the piano accordion (Music Session 18)
7) Ali listening to ‘There was an old lady’ (Music Session 20)
8) Ali listening and watching GA who is showing the broken fan (Music Session 19)
9) Ali singing with the teacher ‘I’ve got a little Bumble bee’ (Music Session 5)
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<td>Ali laughing and doing an action “my hands are all dirty” (‘I’ve got a little Bumble bee’) (Music Session 21)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Ali observing and listening to how drum is played (Music Session 5)</td>
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<td>Ali playing ‘Guess, who?’ game; concentrating on listening</td>
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<td>Ali responding to discussion with laughter (Music Session 21)</td>
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Table 6.
Ali focusing.

1) Ali tuned in ‘Handa’s surprise’ book (Music Session 19)
2) Ali exploring the drum (Music Session 5)
3) Ali following E’s demonstration ‘Ookino Kurino’ (last part ‘de’) (Music Session 16)
4) Ali focussing on a string she found amusing (Music Session 19)
5) Ali’s focussing on her dress (Music Session 15)
6) Ali seated while others are standing and lifting their arms (Music Session 19)
7) Ali looking down while others are watching the book ‘My fingers’ (Music Session 16)
8) Ali focussed on a question – playing ‘Guess, who?’ circle game (Music Session 18)
5.5 Summary

In summary, following a number of semi structured group music sessions, the children responded to culturally diverse music with enthusiasm, curiosity and were able to engage actively. Their singing ability and knowledge of music continuously developed. The insights presented in this chapter provide partial answers to the research questions brought forward in this thesis. In terms of the primary question, how young children respond to group music sessions, the data indicate that the children were able to express their musical inclinations while simultaneously becoming familiar with new and different resources and ideas. Their interest and responses showed that music is important to them. In regards to the second research question pertaining to young children’s engagement with culturally diverse music experiences, it appears that they enjoy and show curiosity for their own as well as the music, language and culture of others. Including culturally diverse materials in the program broadened children’s knowledge and developed positive attitudes towards diversity.

It was demonstrated that the Learning Story approach allows for a group and an individual description, interpretation and reflection of children’s learning.
6.1 Introduction

This present chapter presents information about the children’s parents, their responses to the program and their attitudes towards music education and musicality in a broader sense. The parent perspective adds depth to the insights gained from the children as often a child’s interest, or relative disinterest, in music is related to the child’s familiarity and experiences at home. After all, “families are children’s first and most influential teachers” (DEEWR, 2009, p. 12). As early childhood services become increasingly diverse, child care professionals find themselves catering to varied expectations and needs of the families. Parents, as the first and main mediators of culture and society are a crucial lens when considering early childhood experiences. Thus involvement of families in child care activities has the advantage of bringing diversity into the classroom. Unlike children, most adults are distinctly aware (and sometimes biased) of cultural differences and are able to showcase their own culture even if they cannot articulate these practices and values. Witnessing this, children are given the opportunity to learn about different cultures first hand. This authenticity is a promising way to spark children’s interest and tolerance for others (Vuckovic, 2006). This is especially true for music which is a powerful form of cultural expression whilst at the same time a medium that leads itself to shared experience.

Considering the prominence of the parents’ influence, their feedback about the research was highly valued and was collected via formal inquiries, but frequently also informally and spontaneously. The spontaneous conversations frequently produced highly useful insights, thereby emphasizing the importance of a naturalistic approach that allows and welcomes unanticipated developments of data. While formal inquiries can yield substantive and complementary data, difficulties in obtaining more formal input from parents is not unusual in early childhood research. Acknowledging the difficulty of obtaining formal feedback from parents, the obligatory ‘parent survey’ has recently been removed from the Australian
This chapter provides background discussion on the importance of working with parents as part of the conduit of knowing what children bring to the learning situation. Parent participation in the centre used in this research project and the strategies this centre implements to ascertain greater parent involvement are identified. The chapter also briefly recapitulates on the design of the parent questionnaire and the strategies used to get meaningful feedback from parents. The data presented in this chapter comprise (of) questionnaire responses, informal interview data and anecdotes. The chapter concludes with a summary of and comment on parent participation in this project.

6.2 Parents as partners

Early childhood professionals are expected to understand the child within the context of the family (Oberhuemer, 2000) and they have a professional responsibility towards families as defined by the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics (2007). Working with families is about being in a partnership. This is so accepted that Australian major curriculum documents place a strong emphasis on the relationship between families and early childhood centre for the benefit of the child, parent, early childhood service and community at large. For example, The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development (DEECD, 2009) outlines ‘Practice Principles for Learning and Development’ which are:

“...based on the understanding that when professionals establish respectful and caring relationships with children and families they are able to work together to deliver effective learning and development experiences relevant to children in their local contexts” (p. 9).

Similarly, the new National Curriculum document (DEEWR, 2009a) highlights partnerships as principle two out of five core principles. It further states that these partnerships “...are based on the foundation of understanding each others’ expectations and attitudes, and build on the strength of each other’s knowledge” (p. 12). Forerunner to these curriculum documents is the New Zealand Te Whariki (MOE, 1996) which weaves the
concepts of relationships and belonging throughout all the principles, strands and goals of the document. The New Zealand document stipulates that the engagement of families and the wider community is one of the eight principles that should form the basis of all decision making in the educational context (Bull, 2009). Examples also abound in the early childhood literature highlighting the importance of including significant others from the child’s environment (e.g. De Vries, 2006; MacLaughlin, 1991; Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke, 2000). Early childhood teachers are well aware of the important role that families and members of the community play (Custodero & St. John, 2007). It is generally believed that building partnerships with families and the community has two types of benefits. First, partnerships embed the schools within the wider social environment of society. Community (families, other members of the community) involvement exercises the democratic participation of members of the community in matters of public interest. The second main benefit is that partnerships with communities enhance student achievement. In reviewing the relevant literature Bull (2009) did not find evidence for the efficacy of community linkages on student performance. That finding is somewhat curious, given that parent and family involvement has clear benefits in skills training. In Victoria (Australia), for example, parents are often facilitators for schools taking on for bike skills training – without the community partnerships many schools would not be able to teach children the necessary skills (Bicycle Victoria, 2009, personal communication). It might be the case that community and parent involvement has no direct bearing on scholastic performance, but the positive impact of linkages with respect to learning is clearly apparent in most educational institutions.

In line with the literature's broad consensus of parents as important facilitators of learning, the present study was based on the premise that children, families and early childhood educators all benefit from participating in a partnership. As discussed by Arthur et al. (2008), these relationships can be complex. Expectations, understandings and communication will all influence the relationship that exists and parents' conception of their role within the educational environment is indicative of their involvement.

Bull (2009) carried out a series of interviews which investigated parents' and teachers' perception and thoughts of community involvement in the education context. She asked what role families and members of the community should play in education, what children should learn about and who should decide on how learning ought to be organised. The study
found that some parents see themselves as the primary educators of their children, while others consider themselves to have hardly any educational responsibility. This finding has clear implications for work with families as some families can be expected to be apathetic and unresponsive to calls for assistance as they consider education to be solely the teacher’s job, while others may be prepared to help but only if what is happening seems closely aligned with their own views of education. Bull’s study further found that parents want to be well informed what is happening at their child’s educational institution, but the information needs to be transmitted in a clear, convenient and succinct way. Parents are happy to let educators make decisions that relate to educational matters as teachers are perceived to be the experts. That is just as well, as Bull found that parents were found to have very similar educational goals to the one specified by teachers. However, parents nevertheless wish to be consulted in curricular matters. Despite this desire to be informed and consulted, parents comments also reflected a strong degree of contented complacency. The large majority of parents were not involved in educational matters nor in other aspects of the school community and neither did they want to be. Parent involvement was most likely to occur when the matter at hand had direct bearing on their own child.

In this research, knowledge of children’s home experiences with music was sought as a way of gaining more in-depth understanding of their explorations and responses to the music sessions and music learning centre. Children may be exposed to many different music experiences in their home. For example, parents or other family members may chant, sing, play instruments, present them with technology and children’s television shows (Young, 2007; Barrett, 2005). In Western societies most children thus have a lot of experience with music before they enter the formal early childhood setting. Many of these experiences involve the sounds and rhythms of other cultures and languages.

For this reason, early childhood practitioners and researchers have for many years emphasized the relevance of understanding what the child brings to the learning situation (Ebbeck, 2001). An example of a child using home influences to examine music materials in the child care centre can possibly be seen in Jacob’s exploration of the accordion. His study of the accordion and other similar behaviours clearly show that his family has presumably introduced him to a variety of experiences and encouraged a critical approach to exploring and learning. The way he handled the instrument was reminiscent of how his scientist
parents might systematically examine a new tool (Hojholt, 2008).

Given the importance of partnership with parents, early childhood practitioners are advised to be mindful of the ways they communicate and include parents in their children’s learning (Arthur, et al., 2008; Elliot, 2005). MacNaughton (2004) and Stonehouse and Gonzales-Mena (2004) are concerned about power relations and that parents should be acknowledged as experts and educators should encourage them to share their expertise. Using a common early childhood text (Arthur et al. 2008) the following advice is given on how to initiate communicative strategies with families. Among these are listed:

- Ongoing conversations
- Interviews
- Sharing resources
- Questionnaires
- Post Box
- News letters
- Communication Pockets
- Notice Boards
- Communication Book
- Learning stories
- Photographs.

The researcher used all of the above strategies. The results are discussed are discussed under 6.4 as they have implications for current practices in early childhood settings.

6.3 Background Information on Families

According to the centre’s report, most children came from English speaking families, with the exception of two recently arrived families (one family was from Poland, the other from China, and these children spoke predominately Polish and Mandarin, respectively). In most families both parents were employed. The professions included: medical scientists, café tenders, truck drivers, nurses, managers, primary school teachers, pre-service teachers, graphic and instructional designers, electricians, and social workers. Four mothers were
The centre kept enrolment records (‘enrolment forms’) and gave the researcher blank examples. However, these forms were not standardised; in fact, there were three different designs. Even though the form names relate to different years, it appeared that all versions were used concurrently at the time of the project. The 2005 version of the form featured a section inquiring about children’s special interests, habits, fears, and home activities. The form labelled ‘2007’ contained a shorter section on children’s interest and fears; however, it had a section on ‘Parent Input in Children’s programs’:

“Please list any skills, talents and interests which you would be willing to come in and share with the children. E.g. cooking, playing musical instrument, storytelling, handcrafts, woodwork, etc...Are there any aspects of your work that would be of interest to the children? E.g. dentist, fire-fighter, artist, librarian, etc...”

The third version (labelled ‘2008’) was shorter and did not ask specific questions about interests or fears and also did not inquire after potential parent input. Instead, it included a free response section titled “other comments about your child’. All three versions asked: “Are there any significant customs celebrated in your family?”

6.4 Parent involvement in this research

The study's child care centre describes itself as “community-based” and “parent-run”. It was initially established by parents and parents still are the administrative custodians of the centre, with 7 out of 8 board positions governed by parents. However, contrary to these administrative duties, prior to the study's commencement parent involvement in the centre’s activities was generally limited. Occasionally parents would read a story to the children or assist in the provision of meals. At times parents would also donate books or toys. In terms of music education, parents contributed to the music program of the 3-5 room by bringing some of the CDs used at home which the teacher would use for children to
dance and sing to. However, in terms of spending time with the children to share activities, parent involvement was low. This was also reflected in the drop off and pick up behaviour, where, overall, parents would rarely stay longer. This has been an ongoing issue for child-care centres where parents are usually working or studying. What is meaningful parent participation under these circumstances?

The research programme sought to establish genuine collaboration, which involves more than sharing information (Gonzales & Mena, 2004). Parental involvement in such a program would be beneficial to children’s musical development, as well as strengthening the communication and bond between the parent and child (Berger & Cooper, 2003; De Vries, 2005; Reynolds, Long & Valerio, 2006). It was anticipated that active engagement would allow parents/guardians to better understand the value of culturally diverse music, music educational goals, as well as objectives, strategies and methods implemented in the music program. Ideally, these could then be transferred into the home context.

Once the music sessions commenced, the parents were encouraged to attend and participate in them, as their participation would empower parents with confidence, ideas and skills to implement a variety of developmentally appropriate music experiences at home. However, since the centre commonly featured family grouping sessions at those times during which parents would usually come to drop off or pick up their children, many were not able to experience a group music session. This has implications for the daily schedule, plus staffing and rostering practices. In order to establish some form of rapport with some of the parents, the researcher visited the centre at the time children were collected in the evening and used these opportunities to talk to parents about the program.

When parents encountered the music sessions, they generally respected the integrity of the sessions and, when primed specifically, generated ideas on how to enhance them. When parents came to collect their child at the time the music session was held, they often decided to wait or come back later rather than withdraw their child from the session. On one occasion, Mitch’s father waited patiently and observed with interest for 30 minutes while we were setting up the Music Learning Centre; while Gagi’s mother decided to change her schedule when she arrived to pick up G during a music session: “Oh… I better go to the gym and come back. He will be upset if I take him now”. Parents sometimes got inspired by
the feedback they received from the researcher. One day, when the group was setting up
the music corner, Aki’s father arrived. The researcher told him about Aki’s great contribution
to music and her ability to sing in Japanese; he seemed quite proud and pleased. The day
after, Aki came dressed in a Japanese dress and happily performed ‘Okina Kulino’ (a
Japanese song that is favoured by her family) in our music session. O’s mother also offered
to bring some items that relate to different cultures: “... if you would like, I can bring some
table cloths with motifs from different countries and magazines that are exploring different
cultures”. We agreed that her table cloths would be nice ‘musical veils’.

6.4.1 Communicating with parents

The parents/guardians in this research were informed about the music project before
data collection began. They were invited to participate, cooperate as well as collaborate with
the researcher and the children’s early childhood educators. However, establishing
communication channels with parents proved difficult. A first step was to investigate how
the centre staff commonly contacted parents. They used an occasional newsletter, the
notice board, parent evenings, and a book club, where parents could buy books for their
children. Additionally, the children all had a pocket labelled with their name in the corridor
closest to their room, which was used to leave the occasional message for parents. Staff
reported on having to make direct contact with parents on occasions to ensure information
was received as notices were frequently not collected from the child’s pocket.

The researcher initially used the pocket-communication system but found, in accordance
with the information provided by the staff, that many parents did not check the pockets for
messages. In order to contact them, the researcher wrote a letter to all parents/guardians
and displayed relevant information in the centre’s foyer (Figure 49). The letters were placed
in the wooden box, next to the display; they typically contained information on the program,
including examples of the repertoire. The visual displays followed the progress of the
program and featured the children’s participation. These communication letters and visual
displays were utilized throughout the study. In addition to written communication, the
researcher engaged in verbal exchange with parents whenever the opportunity arose.

During the course of the program it became clear that the best communication link to
the parents was through the children. Frequently children would relay their parents’ impressions of the music learning centre to the researcher and, vice versa, they would tell their parents about the content of the music sessions as evidenced in the examples given in Chapter V when Rea actually taught her family songs from the centre.

As discussed earlier, recommended strategies to communicate with parents were employed (below [Figure 47, 48 & 49] are some examples). This has been included because this experience was salutary and the researcher discusses the parent involvement in the findings, conclusion and implications as recommended practice did not prove to be effective. Some examples are featured here followed by the description of the data collected.

Dear parents and families, I would like to invite you to participate in our project: **Young Children, Music and Diversity**

I am an experienced early childhood educator, lecturer at RMIT School of Education, currently doing PhD.

**The project aims are:**
- To highlight the importance of music in culture and development
- To explore the potential benefits of providing children in early childhood programs with high quality experiences of music that reflect cultural diversity
- To create a ‘music learning centre’ in the 3 - 5 room
- To provide the children and staff of the centre with culturally diverse music and resources with an emphasis on songs.

**Description of research**
- I will observe the children’s musical activities
- These experiences will be recorded and analysed
- I would also like to interact with children during the study, trying to get an idea of the child’s understanding of and attitude towards culture and music
- I would also like to discuss aspects of training and practice with staff members during the project in order to identify appropriate material to introduce
- Because what the child brings to the learning context is considered of utmost importance a background survey would also be presented to parents.

![Example 1. Introduction to the Research / Centre Notice Board](image)
Dear Parents,

My name is Aleksandra and you are probably aware that I am doing a music project at the "Eucalyptus Tree" in the 3-5 room. I have been enjoying very much sharing music with the children and their teachers who are very friendly, responsive and are becoming more and more musically competent.

I believe that you, as a parent, are the most important Figure in your child's life. I would really appreciate if you could complete this questionnaire and returned it to PT or PA.

I could also email it to you, if this is more convenient.

Thank you very much!
Aleksandra

Aleksandra.Vuckovic@rmit.edu.au

In this photo, you can see that we are playing a musical game where the children need to focus and concentrate on their listening.

Figure 47. Example 2. A notice handed out to remind parents to fill out the questionnaires.
6.5 Data Collection

6.5.1 Questionnaires

After a discussion with the teachers, it was decided to draft questionnaires and to distribute them to parents to take home, in order to accommodate their busy lives and lack of time to commit to participation in interviews or music sessions. The researcher designed the questionnaires and shared them with the teachers, who approved them and considered the questions appropriate.

The parent questionnaire was pen and paper based and took approximately 20 minutes to complete. It comprised 17 questions directed at the role music played for these families and background information on the child’s familiarity with music. Other questions referred to the family’s attitude towards diversity and how cultural diversity is introduced/perceived at their home. About a half of the questions were dichotomous forced choice items, but all allowed the respondents to write additional information if they wished. The questionnaire was handed out in English as, according to staff, all parents could understand the questions and would be comfortable to respond in English.

The first round of questionnaires was placed in the children’s communication pockets. The teachers agreed to remind the parents to collect them and return them after
completion. Initially only two questionnaires were returned - the teachers suspected that parents did not have a careful look at the content of their children’s communication pockets. Thus, the second round of questionnaires was personally distributed to parents by the teachers. This resulted in another four questionnaires completed. A third attempt was made to invite the parents using a more personalized form of invitation (see Figure 48; Please note that the names of the centre and the staff have been changed). While this effort did not impact on the questionnaire return rate, it did result in more interest and feedback on the music project from parents.

6.5.1.1 Questionnaire response data

All questionnaire respondents identified English to be their main language. Aki’s parents included Japanese. All interpreted the word ‘culture’ to be concerned with their nationality. With the exception of Rea all of the other children were described to have had the opportunity to socialise with members of cultures (in the sense of ‘nationalities’) from their own. They also reportedly had been exposed to a variety of languages. While Rea was reported to be mainly around Anglo-Saxons, her mother indicated that she had had plentiful contact with members of different social groups: “...we are friends with many ‘hippies’ which is kind of a different way of living. Often they park their buses/ vehicles at our house and stay a while.”

The parent-participants felt positive about cultural diversity and strongly believed that the children should explore and learn about different cultures. Olga’s mother’s words illustrate this belief: “It is an absolute must for children to learn about diverse cultures. We are such a diverse country/ world and maybe if we all take the time to learn about each other the world will be a better place. We want our children to accept everyone regardless of differences.”

All parent participants found songs to be beneficial for the children. They noted that singing is related to self-expression and that singing fosters the emotional wellbeing of the child. Rea’s mother ascribed to singing the power “to change a person’s mood”. Two of the parents expressed that singing supports children’s language and cognitive development.
Others found it an inspiring and important part of life. Lastly, parents emphasised the positive emotional effect songs can have on children, including the bonding between a parent and a child while at the same time providing a prospect to expand a child’s learning potential. As one parent put it: “...Singing is a way parents can benefit their children cognitively but also emotionally... I feel closer to my children when they sing to me.” Another parent pointed out multiple benefits of singing: “...Songs are a fun way of keeping children occupied and entertained; relaxes them; good way of determining your child’s inner talent.”

All parents stated that they sang to their children. Most of them explored only English songs, while Aki’s and Olga’s parents mentioned that they also recited Japanese songs. When it came to song repertoire, Rea’s mother wrote: “Rea, Sky and I are 3RRR (a community radio station) subscribers, so we usually are singing along to our favourite new songs (contemporary-alternative) – this changes all the time, though”. Other parents listed nursery rhymes, pop and contemporary music, “kids’ songs”, and “children movie themes”.

Generally parents were oriented towards “age and educationally appropriate music”, which included nursery rhymes with children’s themes, lullabies, songs concerned with nature and “silly songs”. One parent listed a range of styles: classical, rock, funk, soul, folk, jazz, pop and world music as adequate sources of music for children, while another added “culturally important songs and uplifting songs”. In contrast, the songs these parents found inappropriate were described as songs with violent/hateful lyrics, foul/inappropriate/suggestive language, heavy metal and other ‘angry’ styles of music with lewd lyrics or anti-social feeling. These were seen as highly unsuitable for children and to be propagating bad attitudes. One parent suggested: “I would rather fill my children’s head with meaningful language rather than mindless, crass words. Some of the new music today should have ratings on them.”

When asked about their child’s preferred songs, the answers were largely in line with their own position of good children’s music: Rea’s mother singled out James Brown’s 'I feel good” and El Guincho’s “Antillas” (she added: “Spanish artist – we don’t know words well, but Rea loves to dance to it!”) Olga’s mother listed “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star”, “Glumph went the Little Green Frog” and “Baa Baa Black Sheep”. Aki’s parents noted exclusively Japanese songs: “Zo – san” (Mr Elephant), “O-Kina Kuri no Kino shita” (Under the spreading
chestnut tree) and “Ito make” (Roll the thread). Nely’s parents wrote “Heads & shoulders, knees and tows”, “Five little ducks” and “Dorothy’s birthday party”. Ali’s guardian selected “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” (“…with a different tune…”), “You Are So Beautiful”, and “Tomorrow”, Petra’s mum’s choice reflected her keen interest in nature: “In Our Pretty Garden”, “Wonderful life”, “I love the Sun”.

According to the initial children interviews, their self-reported preferences matched the parent-reported ones only in Ali’s case. Aki included “Okino Kurino” song in her final interview (not in the initial one); however, it is unclear whether this was a result of this song’s inclusion in the music project repertoire, whether she became more in-tune with her mother tongue, or both.

The majority of the parents claimed to have taught their child a new song in the past three months. When teaching a new song, one family relied on “repetition from the radio, or downloading on the computer”. If the child was particularly fond of a song heard on the radio the family would buy the CD. Another parent also used ‘repetition’, but mainly through reading books (“…like Playschool Books…”). She further explained that her daughters would usually join in straight away if they liked the song and commonly would improvise movements to the song. Two families taught their children through ‘singing to and with them’. One mother explained she would first demonstrate singing the song while her child would listen and the child would then engage in the song herself either immediately or sometimes with some delay. Another used an integrated arts approach where she would include actions and drawings to share the songs.

Following this discussion, table 7 details the parent responses to the questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1. What is/are the main spoken language/s at your home?</th>
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<tr>
<td>P1*</td>
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<td>P2*</td>
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<td>P3*</td>
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<tr>
<td>P4*</td>
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<td>P5*</td>
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<td>P6*</td>
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</table>
Q2. Do you and your children know and talk with people from different languages and cultures?

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<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Not really - we live in a predominately Anglo Saxon area, although we are friends with many 'hippies' which is kind of a different way of living. Often they park their buses/ gypsy vehicles at our house and stay a while.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Yes, but not so often</td>
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<td>P6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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Q3. How do you feel about this diversity?

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<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>I would love my children to have more exposure to other cultures - this is partly why I chose to send them to child care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>We try to allow our children to experience a broad range of happenings so they learn about other people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>It is perfectly normal. The world (and Australia) has a diverse range of languages and cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Excellent - develops understanding of different cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>I enjoy diversity of people and cultures we have here. I feel positive about diversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>With diversity we learn tolerance. We educate ourselves with other culture and use them to give us confidence in meeting people and travelling abroad.</td>
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Q4. Do you think that children should learn about diverse cultures?

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<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Absolutely!! I believe it is important for everyone to learn about the world they live in, to gain appreciation and respect for difference, to open their minds to other ways of being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Yes. It is an absolute must for children to learn about diverse cultures. We are such a diverse country/ world and maybe if we all take the time to learn about each other the world will be a better place. We want our children to accept everyone regardless of differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Yes, because they are citizens of the world and Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Yes. Broadens the understanding of multi cultural existence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Of course! They are part of a very diverse society. They will be more socially competent when they grow up. They will be interested in others and aware of their culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>Yes. They start to understand their roots and not only learn other cultures' customs, beliefs &amp; traditions, but also tolerate them.</td>
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Q5. What is your culture?

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<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Rahni is roughly 7th or 8th generation Australian, with her ancestors mainly from Ireland and England.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>We have English/ Irish/ Italian background and I like to think of our culture as being a family - loving and caring for each other Apart from getting the family together on special occasions for a BBQ or roast or roast dinner we don't follow any formal traditions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Michael - "Angle- Aussie" with Japanese influence. Ryoko - "Japanese - Aussie" (We are both influenced by Chinese culture - having lived there and by studying Chinese Medicine).

P4 Indian & ???

P5 Australian - nationality.

P6 Filipino culture.

**Q6. What does it mean to you to belong to this culture?**

P1 Although Celtic sounds stir something deep within me, to be honest, I don't feel like I have a strong sense of history/ culture or tradition - I wish I did.

P2 I don't feel like I belong to any one culture. It certainly doesn't bother me, because I have a great family and wonderful friends.

P3 We are happy to belong to these cultures.

P4 Different cultural views on various subjects.

P5 We live in a developed society; I guess we are lucky to be part of this culture.

P6 I am so proud to belong to this rich culture. It has given me great values that I will pass to my children. Most importantly, practice those values, learn from impractical customs, beliefs and traditions and assimilate with other social groups.

**Q7. Do you think that singing is important for your child’s development?**

P1 Yes. It is a form of expressing one's emotions/ feelings. I find that it can also act as a catalyst to change a person's mood.

P2 Yes. They just love to sing and it helps with beginning to recognise rhyme, story, sequencing an essential pre-reading skill.

P3 Yes. Self-expression and music are important parts of life.

P4 Yes. Develops musical rhythm, vocabulary, language skills.

P5 Yes. Singing is beneficial for language, social, emotional development. It teaches children how to use their vocal chords in an appropriate manner. It's also fun to share.

P6 Yes. Through music, children can express themselves and give them inspiration. Music keeps them occupied and entertained. Music gives them a break from normal home and school routines.

**Q8. Do you sing songs TO your children?**

P1 Sort of! Sometimes I just burst into song - made up about what we’re doing or what I want them to do. Lately our favourite is James Brown "I Feel Good" when I want to change the house into a happy, up lifted mood [smiley].

P2 Yes

P3 Yes

P4 Yes

P5 Of course!

P6 Yes

**Q9. Do you sing songs WITH your children?**

P1 Sometimes.

P2 Yes

P3 Yes

P4 Yes

P5 Yes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q10. In what language/s do you sing with your children?</th>
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<td>P1</td>
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<td>P2</td>
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<th>Q11. What type of songs do you sing with your children?</th>
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<td>P6</td>
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<th>Q12. Please give me the names of 3 songs in order of your preference.</th>
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<td>P1</td>
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<td>P6</td>
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<th>Q13. Have you taught any new songs to your children in the last 3 months?</th>
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<td>P1</td>
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<tr>
<th>Q14. How do you teach them new songs?</th>
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<td>P1</td>
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<td>P3</td>
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</table>
**Q15. Do you think that songs are beneficial for children?**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>P1</strong></td>
<td>Yes. I believe it can assist their listening and concentration skills, social skills when singing with friends, form of expression, appreciation for music and movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P2</strong></td>
<td>Yes. Singing is a way parents can benefit their children cognitively but also emotionally. I feel closer to my children when they sing to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P3</strong></td>
<td>Yes. Fun. Learning: - music, self expression, rhythm, etc. Also said to help with math ability in future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P4</strong></td>
<td>Yes. Helps develop rhythm, language and rhyme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P5</strong></td>
<td>Of course. Just like singing, improve language/vocabulary, memory/cognitive skills, they teach about different concepts; make children feel good and allow them to experience different moods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P6</strong></td>
<td>Yes. Songs are a fun way of keeping children occupied and entertained; relaxes them; good way of determining your child's inner talent.</td>
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**Q16. What type/s of song is appropriate for children?**

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<tr>
<td><strong>P1</strong></td>
<td>Almost anything - everyone has their own personal preference and different music will resonate differently with individuals. Classical; Rock; Funk; Soul; Folk; Jazz; Pop; World, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P2</strong></td>
<td>Nursery Rhymes, Body part/ movement jingles. All music age appropriate. Lots of repetition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P3</strong></td>
<td>Children ‘ songs, culturally important songs, uplifting songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P4</strong></td>
<td>Kids themes; teaching something like alphabet or numbers, places things etc. Such songs make children happy and strengthen the parent-child bond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P5</strong></td>
<td>Children songs with interesting topics and appropriate language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P6</strong></td>
<td>Generally children songs, e.g. lullabies and silly songs. A. seems to like pop songs as well.</td>
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**Q17. What type/s of songs is not appropriate for children?**

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<tr>
<td><strong>P1</strong></td>
<td>Songs with violent/ hateful lyrics. I do not think it is appropriate for young children to be singing hateful/ violent/ overly lewd lyrics. However, I certainly am not referring to the Bumble Bee Song – Rea loves this. She sings it at home and has taught her older sister. Another favourite she sings with the actions (also teaching Sky) is the ‘Umma lella’ song – along with numerous others. Truly, it makes me smile big smiles when I watch her – she prefers me not to join in. Ha!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P2</strong></td>
<td>Songs with foul, inappropriate, suggestive language. I would rather fill my children’s head with meaningful language rather than mindless, crass words. Some of the new music today should have ratings on them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P3</strong></td>
<td>Heavy metal and other 'angry' styles of music. These songs are bad for kids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P4</strong></td>
<td>Angry song with lewd lyrics or anti-social feeling. Propagates bad attitudes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P5</strong></td>
<td>Lots of popular songs are rather inappropriate, due to their language, themes, people who perform them, too – their image.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other comments
Rea does have access to a few instruments at home: Guitars, hand drums, harmonicas, piano at Grandma’s, drum kit at Uncle Luke’s. We do have a couple of friends who are active musicians also, and Rea has had the opportunity to see them play. I even took her on a protest march once and she got to see Bambam and John Butler Trio play!

Truth be told, I would love to know more about teaching music, especially since Petra is so responsive to it. But I am just better equipped in the area of visual arts, so I really appreciate that in these music sessions Petra has somebody who knows how to teach music effectively.

* P1 = Rea’s mother, P2 = Olga’s mother, P3 = Aki’s parents, P4 = Nely’s parents, P5 = Petra’s mother, P6 = Ali’s guardian

6.5.2 Other responses from parents

Although only six questionnaires were returned, the parents found other ways of expressing that they were aware and appreciative of the music program, their children’s achievements and the researcher’s input. A number of parents gave positive feedback in an informal manner, through conversations with the early childhood educators and the researcher. For example, one of the staff participants CCW (child care worker) reported the following: “Most parents commented about the Music Corner and how great and interesting it looked. Most parents also knew about the songs and game(s) by children singing them at home. All we had was really great feedback by most parents.” (for this and further examples, see Appendix F). These comments centred on how enthusiastic their child was about the music program and, hence, how pleased they were with their child’s involvement in the program. Parents were even regretful if the child missed any music sessions. Parents also took notice of their children’s maintained interest in the songs Jaspar’s mum related that Jaspar sang the music session songs quite often outside of the child care context, and “teaches his family his favourites at home, in the car, when they go shopping, when they visit the park...” Similarly, Laura’s mother reported that her daughter had approached her to let her know that her favourite song was “from Africa...it is called Umma Lella” and that “Handa [a character from a book] also likes this song”. Keili “kept singing some foreign songs” and she “now even likes the monster one” - initially Keili was scared of this song.

Some parents, like Olga’s mum showed interest in the music project (Appendix F), even though her daughter did not normally attend the music sessions. Olga, in her opinion, really
liked music and especially those songs in different languages. She was surprised when she noticed Olga singing the “Umma Lella” song at home. When Olga explained to her that they needed to get the drums as the song would sound better with drums, she took the initiative and approached the researcher to find out about places for purchasing drums. Olga’s mum lauded the provision of a dedicated music space for children and asked if this was now a permanent change in the room, which she thought would be “great”. Similarly, Petra’s mother approached the researcher and commented on the music learning centre (Appendix F) “…I am very pleased that Petra is taking so much interest in music.” Petra, she further noted, “was talking about the music learning centre frequently while at home. Further, in the mornings Petra would take her mum to have a look “what’s in there”. Petra’s mother also stated: “I like how this area looks. It’s very inviting. She [Petra] has been singing the songs she learnt from her kinder friends. I had a look at them but I don’t know all the melodies. Unfortunately, I don’t read music so the music score would not help. Perhaps I will come one day when you have a session.”

Whenever possible, parents were also asked about the usual music experiences they share with their children. The common response was that dedicated occasions during which parents and children would explore music together were rare (see De Vries, 2006, for similar findings). Generally, parents cited lack of time as the main barrier to engage in regular music experiences with their children – whether at home or in their child care centre. At home, they predominantly explored music through CDs and DVDs. This was reflected in the choice of children’s preferred songs, where “Spiderman” and other tunes rooted in cartoons and commercial characters ranked highly. Interestingly, interviews at the completion of the music project revealed that the children’s preferences had shifted towards other songs that were introduced in the new music program. Parents, in addition to busy lives and time restraints, may also have felt ill equipped to teach music, or might have thought that music education is an expert's job; one which they ascribe to early childhood professionals. For example, Petra’s mum expressed that she “would love to know more about teaching music” to her daughter, but felt she was “better equipped in the area of visual arts” and wished that Petra could attend more music sessions with a music person (referring to the researcher) who “knows how to teach music effectively”.
6.6 Discussion of data

Despite extensive research on the interaction between families and early childhood professionals, the concept of working with families is still only vaguely defined. Does the expression 'working with parents' include aspects of communication, of collaboration, cooperation, collective action, or even all of it? Maintaining good communication seems to form an essential element of working with families and is becoming more important than ever with young children spending increasing amounts of time away from their families (Hughes & MacNaughton, 2000). The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (DEEWR, 2009) for example, explicitly highlights the need to share information with families to foster children's ability to adapt learned experiences from one context into another. However, establishing a good communication routine in the first place is anything but easy. This finding was also echoed in Bull's (2009) study, who found that teachers felt inadequately prepared to work with and communicate with parents.

In this study, contact with parents was less frequent than expected or desired. Yet, there was a continuous provision of information that parents were able to tap into if they chose to do so, thus satisfying parents' need to be conveniently informed about developments in their child's institution (Bull, 2009). According to the centre staff, the two music program displays - one in the common foyer, the other located within the music learning centre - were regularly visited and commented upon. The children themselves played a big role in communicating and promoting the program to their families, as they would bring them to look at the photos and talk about the events and the content these images represented. Some parents positively commented on the letters the researcher wrote throughout the study. Two of them made valuable suggestion to the researcher - to provide an audio recording of the repertoire so their children could share the songs and chants with them, but these mothers were, for example, uncertain if their child’s singing was accurate.

While communicating information about the program worked well, gaining information that would assist in the development of the program and the analysis was difficult, due to lower frequency of parent encounters. Thus, additional information was sourced through centre records and questionnaires. The nature of information varied according to how it was obtained. The answers in the questionnaires were direct replies to the questions the
researcher posed. However, parents who took an interest in the music programme went beyond the questions and added further relevant information. For instance, Rea’s mother provided information about her child’s interaction with instruments: Rea’s mum added an additional comment to the questionnaire: “Rea does have access to a few instruments at home: Guitars, hand drums, harmonicas, piano at Grandma’s, drum kit at Uncle Luke’s. We do have a couple of friends who are active musicians also, and Rea has had the opportunity to see them play. I even took her on a protest march once and she got to see Bambam and John Butler Trio play!” Gaining such extended insights helped to tailor the learning experiences to better suit Rea's needs. In the informal situations, on the other hand, parents or children themselves would ask questions or would spontaneously share comments, ideas and anecdotes about their family.

6.7 Summary

Chapter six examined parent input into the research project. The centre used mainstream strategies to communicate with families about the program, including newsletters and communication pockets. The researcher and staff both found these strategies to be limited in their effectiveness to elicit responses from parents. The general reaction to the music session among parents appeared to be highly positive. The more committed individuals filled in questionnaires and sought interactions with the researcher during which they expressed their enthusiasm for the program. Other parents commented, too, but only when there was an opportune moment for it. In the discussion of the data, an important point that emerges is the role that children played in informing and promoting the project to their families; in fact, the children were the most central conduit in the exchange of knowledge and ideas that took place.

In conclusion, as positive and promising as the potential of effective and wide ranging collaborations of parents and educators sounds, building successful partnerships is regarded as one of the most complex aspects of education provider’s obligations (Artur et al. 2008; Ebbeck, Zaccardo, Hill, Hughes & Prasad, 2003). Although parents/guardians and early childhood educators have different yet mutually supportive roles, there is often not a clear understanding of what is expected from each other. Further, not all families have the same
expectations, needs, and trust in early childhood educational settings (MacNaughton, 2004). Lastly, low parent involvement is fairly typical as parents are happy to be informed but often do not wish, or do not have the time, to be involved (Bull, 2009). Parents frequently harbour attitudes that prioritise a reduction of personal stress over an increased quality of early years education designed to meet children’s needs (Coley, Chase-Lansdale & Li-Grining, 2001). Admittedly, though, parents are often not aware how much of a difference their involvement can make and while sharing children’s activities may enhance their learning, it generally puts additional pressure on parents’ time management.

In this present study, formal collaboration from parents was less than expected by the researcher. While staff were cooperative, they were not proactive in encouraging parents to take a more active part. Non-formal, spontaneous interactions, on the other hand, were plentiful and resulted in significant parent input into the program. When they did, they enriched the experience for all children.
CHAPTER VII: STAFF IN THIS RESEARCH

Chapter VII further extends the scope of analysis for this research by integrating insights gained from observations and discussions with members of staff. Two members of staff were key collaborators in the development and delivery of the program, while others were less directly involved. The chapter reports on the type of data collected from these participants, provides background information about their involvement in the program and the relevant aspects of their personal history that relates to the research program. Some members of staff played an important role for the research program as they represented the first point of contact for the investigator. As such, they were not only participants, but also mediators of the program. This became particularly evident with respect to parent interactions, as these were initially dependent on child care staff disseminating information and taking an active role in the promotion of the program.

7.1 Early Childhood Educators in Australian Early Childhood Settings

In Australia, early childhood educators are all early childhood practitioners who work directly with children in early childhood settings (DEEWR, 2009). This includes unqualified, certificate qualified, diploma qualified and degree qualified teachers or educators working across all forms of early childhood settings. These settings include long-day care, family-day care, occasional care, playgroups outside-school hours care and kindergarten. While all these services in Victoria are required to be licensed and must meet the requirements of the Children’s Services Act 1996 and the Children’s Services Regulations 2009, they all vary in their context.

The Early Years Learning Framework Australia (DEEWR, 2009, p. 14) invites all early childhood educators to promote children’s learning by (1) adopting holistic approaches, (2) being responsive to children, (3) planning and implementing learning through play, (4) creating physical and social learning environments that have a positive impact on children’s learning, (5) valuing the cultural and social contexts of children and their families, providing for continuity in experiences and enabling children to have successful transition, and (6) assessing and monitoring children’s learning to inform provision and to support in achieving learning outcomes.
Similarly, The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) (DEECD, 2009) includes eight practice principles for learning and development. Three categories are emphasized (p 9):

**Collaborative**

- family-centred practice
- partnerships with professionals
- high expectations for every child

**Effective**

- equity and diversity
- respectful relationships and responsive engagement
- integrated teaching and learning approaches
- assessment for learning development

**Reflective**

- reflective practice.

What is also emphasized are the areas of ‘literacy’ and ‘numeracy’ where music and dance is mentioned as a ‘mode’ of literacy (p. 41) and early childhood educators are expected to “sing and chant rhymes, jingles and songs” to enhance language and literacy development.

Both, national and state lists are comprehensive and meaningful; nevertheless, the targets implied in them can be difficult to reach and need to be interpreted by the practitioner. That music is subsumed into a vehicle for enhancing other learning then using the curriculum document to support a music program is a very difficult task. The frameworks present early childhood educators with a significant social responsibility in Australian society. The difficulties may be even more pronounced in the area of music education, since early childhood educators have to deal with additional challenges concerned with lack of resources, insufficient pre-service training and competence and confidence to teach music.
7.2 Early Childhood Educators in this research

The present research program took place in a child-care setting, catering for children from 3 months to 5 years of age. This early childhood setting incorporated three rooms (babies, toddlers and kinder), each with two permanent staff members. The centre also employed a coordinator, a cook and a cleaner. In addition, due to the absence of permanent staff, the centre had a number of regular ‘casual relief professionals’. The centre had no music specialist as such. The initial research design proposed to empower the staff members to engage in musical experiences with the children, while the researcher’s role was to be more of a consultant and a facilitator. However, the staff of the selected room felt they would benefit more if the researcher conducted music sessions and through them demonstrated ‘how music can be shared with young children’.

All members of the staff were aware of the music project, including the relievers from agencies, who did not participate, but usually kindly agreed to take photos of the music sessions. Once a year they would have a ‘Jack and Molly’ - a live, Melbournian, musical theatre, who would come and do a performance in the centre. Jack and Molly, according to their website, are dedicated to an early childhood philosophy and strive to hold “…an educational, interactive show while drawing from their wealth of Early Childhood experiences. The children live the adventure through live music and songs, costumes, plus learn sign and another language along the way” (http://www.jackandmolly.com/about.html)

None of the staff members had ever attended any music ‘In service’ seminars. They did however attend ‘In service’ training in other areas as part of their professional development. When asked why this was the case, they said they had to prioritise and that ‘professional development’ which looked at children’s behaviour, using science or working with children with “special needs” was something they felt it was necessary to do, while being resourced on how to present music in their program would be something they would have liked to do but no time and money was available for that.

Like many child care centres, this centre had gone through changes in everyday
management. During the period of the music project there were two ‘Acting Coordinators’ as the centre coordinator was on long term leave. Both of them were accommodating of the music program. The following segments feature examples of how these early childhood educators engaged in music experiences with the children.

7.2.1 Assistant Coordinator 1 (AC1)

Although the first Acting Coordinator (AC1) was only briefly in the centre (at the very beginning of the music project) due to maternity leave, the researcher (on her very first visit) had an opportunity to observe her engage in a brief musical exchange with the children from the kinder room.

This brief music encounter seemed to be effective in guiding the children through the program routine. They appeared to be in a better mood as if the song lifted their spirits. There is, however, more valuable information to look at. This observation informs us that these children enjoyed the ‘acting’ of the teacher and appeared to like to participate actively, themselves. A little dialogue between the girl and boy tells us that children listen to each other’s singing and can make articulate comments. The boy did not seem to be aware that he had changed the words of the song. Children often sing and repeat phrases they find attractive or assessable, without being too fussy if the wording is correct. It would have been interesting to hear how this conversation would have developed if it was not interrupted.

In this observation we also see that a staff member was sensitive to the children’s and her colleague’s needs. The AC1 did not have to come into the room as the staff ratio was fine (1 staff member to 15 children); nonetheless, she must have felt it was the right thing to do.

The researcher asked the AC1 if this would be a typical way to make the transitions in the programs smoother and more pleasant for all, she replied, smiling: “Yes, a popular song or a good story always captures their (children’s) attention!” When asked what other popular songs she would use, she replied: ‘They like action songs, like ‘Five little monkeys’. The researcher commented on the children’s responses and how the song really captured their interest and how it was fascinating to observe that while all seemed to be familiar with the song, everyone joined in a different manner. The AC1 said: “Yes, they like this song. It’s a
good way to get their attention.” This was a short but nevertheless meaningful musical experience, yet, it felt interrupted by the daily schedule. This type of music experience should also take place when there is sufficient time for the children to engage with music. Was AC1 conscientious of the level and manner of the children’s involvement with this song? Did she realise that not only the fitting choice of song but perhaps her animating way of singing that stimulated the children’s responses? Did this represent just a smooth, fun transition in the daily child care routine? Music is often used for purposes other than music and music learning outcomes are often ignored (Gruhn, 2005).
The children were about to go outside, but their Preschool Teacher (PT) was on her own and before going outdoors, she had to set up the tables for lunch. The children had spent the whole morning inside and appeared restless; they were meant to sit on the carpeted area. Some of the children stood up and started to chase each other around the room, making funny, “scary” facial expressions and sounds. The noise level noticeably increased. I was just about to ask the PT if I could help out when the AC1 entered the room. She looked over towards the PT who nonverbally indicated she needed help. The AC1 walked towards the carpet area and ended up standing in a ‘star’ position. This drew the children’s attention who one by one, came to the carpeted area. THE AC1 slowly popped down and started to sing:

When all the cows were sleeping  
And the sun had gone to bed  
Up jumped the scarecrow  
And this is what he said!  
(Refrain)  
I’m a dingle, dangle scarecrow  
With a flippy floppy hat  
I can shake my hands like this  
And shake my feet like that!

(Shes repeated this first phrase and the refrain).

She sang and talked with a character, changing dynamics, varying the intonation of each line. The children were familiar with the song. They seemed much focussed on the song and the actions. They joined in imitating AC1’s movements. Some of the children stayed in a lying position, a number of them stood up and started to energetically shake their feet and hands; a few were singing, some were chanting along, laughing; one girl sat aside, carefully observing. After the song was done, AC1 told the children to get their hats and to line up at the door. In a few moments, the children were standing in the line ready to go outside. One of the boys was repeating and singing, “I’m a little dingle scarecrow”... The girl who was standing behind him giggled, asking: “How do you know he’s little?” The boy turned around, appeared to be puzzled. He looked at her and said: “I don’t.” The girl continued to explain: “You’re singing I’m a LITTLE dingle scarecrow, silly!” The boy’s eyebrows raised, his eyes opened widely. He was just about to speak when, at that moment, the PT stood in front of the line: “Well done kinders, this is a beautiful line! Let’s go have fun outside!” The children obediently turned towards the teacher and on her invitation readily ran outside. The boy went towards the sandpit; the girl grabbed one of the swings. The PT stayed outside while the Preschool Assistant (PA) came from her tea break and started setting up the beds for rest time, on the carpeted area.
7.2.2 Assistant Coordinator 2 (AC2)

The second Acting Coordinator (AC2) shared the coordinating position with another Assistant Coordinator (AC3) whom the researcher did not meet. The AC2 had a strong interest in dance. She was a qualified child care worker and a keen dancer who did regular music and movement activities in the toddlers’ room, where she was working. This educator expressed and demonstrated confidence in making use of music in the toddler’s program. The repertoire she shared featured exclusively English language, which included popular and traditional children songs, like “I’m a little teapot” or “Baa, baa black ship”, “The wheels on the bus”, “I am a dingle, dangle scarecrow”. She, on several occasions ‘popped in’ while the researcher conducted the music sessions in the ‘kinder’ room; she said she wanted to observe and learn from the demonstration. On every encounter with the researcher she made positive remarks about the music project, such as: “It’s great what you’re doing with the children...I like how it’s all visible on the display...a very good way of promoting music.” AC2 expressed interest in learning a new, culturally diverse, repertoire of songs: “I do a lot of singing and dancing, but need to learn some new songs, especially in other languages (than English)”. She was delighted to find out from the researcher (and in addition, observe this herself) that the children who ‘graduated’ from ‘toddler’ to kinder room (Lou, Nely, Aki, Sisi, Ali) displayed enthusiasm for singing and dancing in spontaneous play and were confident when participating in the music sessions, even though they were new to the room and amongst the youngest. Table 8 presents a Learning Story which documented an example of how AC2 engaged (with) the toddlers she was working with. (Please note, in this story AC2 is referred to as ‘Anna’; other researchers have also used this centre to explore musical experiences for the children in the toddler’s room and luckily they collected ‘data’ on AC2 that can be presented here). In this story, AC2 demonstrated her sound knowledge of young children’s music learning and an ability to employ effective ways of interacting with them. Her ‘music skills’ were contributing to the overall aesthetic experience for all involved.
Table 8. Learning Story taken with permission from Nyland and Ferris (2009).

**“Wheels on the Bus”: a group activity providing a teachable moment**

*Observation*

This example took place during a morning indoors play session.

*Learning story*

The children had arranged the chairs in a single line in their room. Two children were playing near the front of the line of chairs. Anna (teacher) approached the children and asked, “Where are you going? Is it a bus?” They answered, “On a train”. Anna improvised a train song and it gradually turned into a song-story resembling The little red engine. All the children in the room were now interested and joined in, sitting on the chairs to go up and down hills on the train. The children joined in with Anna, singing fragments of the song. Anna has a tuneful voice with a suitable pitch range for the children to match.

The song then became the ‘Wheels on the Train’ and Anna further developed this into “Where are we going?” and “What will we do there?”. Children were helped to decide where they wanted to go, with scaffolding from Anna. They decided to go to town to buy presents. The singing finished when it was time to go outside and Anna suggested they could buy hats at the hat shop. The children collected their sun hats and went outside.

*“Wheels on the Bus” - interpretation using the learning story focus categories*

**Taking an interest**

- The impetus came from the children re-arranging chairs and Anna associating this with ‘The wheels on the bus’. This was recognising the familiar and the children changing that format to a train. Anna says she often spontaneously sings with the children, following their leads and interests. This reaction from Anna might have even been expected. The reaction of the other children indicated strong interest.
- These children already had some awareness of tempo, pitch and duration, and used this knowledge to support the story.
- Children helped improvise on a familiar song to support their chosen narrative.

**Being involved**

- The children showed sustained interest throughout the various iterations of the song.
- One altercation about chairs did not spoil the interest.
- The song and game engaged the whole group spontaneously.
- The adult brought the game to a halt because of the daily schedule for outside time. This was built into the game and at the end one child still sat on the chairs wanting to continue on the train.

**Persisting with difficulty**

- The children arranged the chairs and insisted this should be a train and therefore initiated the task and framework of the game.
- They followed through on Anna’s leads so the game went from the train going up and down hills (tempo), to changing songs and tooting (pitch) and then considering possible destinations and activities at the journey’s end.

**Expressing an idea or a feeling**

- This activity involved many expressions of ideas, feelings, emotions and excitement.
- The children initiated the group activity which contained music, story telling, dramatic gestures and in the instance of the chair altercation some social negotiation.
- The children used body actions to show what happens when you go around corners – mass, gravity, direction and centrifugal force.
Taking responsibility

- This was initiated by two children and the adult assisted in the carriage of the idea so it became a whole group event.
- All children participated voluntarily and followed Anna’s leads in a collaborative way offering lots of ideas about where to go and what to do.
- Their joining in on elements of the music was most enthusiastic and required no prompting.
- The children accepted the ending of the story with good humour, indicating levels of self-regulation.

7.2.3 Child Care Coordinator (CC)

When the permanent Centre Coordinator (CC) returned, the music project was about to end. She also took an interest in the music research and appeared pleased with the music venture that had taken a place in the centre. One afternoon, she approached the researcher: “Aleksandra, the children enjoy doing music with you. I hear them sing the songs and in the morning – they show their parents your music display. Thank you very much for all the instruments and resources you bring...” she, nonetheless, continued: “I am really sorry, but I had to remove a few small, fragile items, as they got damaged and one of them being glass...is not safe for the children.” The items were placed on the shelf above the ‘signing in’ book. They were soon replaced with the wooden miniatures.

In addition to the permanent staff, the room had a regular reliever (RR) who occasionally participated in the music project. She provided some valuable anecdotal information on children and parents’ responses to the music project. RR sometimes took photos of the sessions. She had a clear, tuneful, strong Alto voice and could be often heard to sing along during these sessions. This was most evident when we explored the Serbian language. In addition to English, she was fluent in Croatian and was singing along when the researcher introduced a Serbian circle game/song “Ide Maca oko tebe”. While the researcher was away on a conference, RR was relieving the PT who was also away; during this period, RR observed and noticed information on the children’s behaviour or comments in regards to the music project. According to RR, during this time the children missed the music corner and they were asking when the researcher was going to come back. She singled out Aki, Lou, Gagi and Jaspar who most often asked when they would do the music again. RR actively sought information relevant to the program; for example, she wanted to obtain the lyrics of the songs as the children wished to sing them during group times and was appreciative when the
researcher provided her with that. She explained, laughing heartily, she did try some singing with the children when they had group sessions but, apparently Lou was “better at it” than herself. RR was a cheerful and positive woman who brought enthusiasm into the kinder-room.

The following section will illustrate how the two educators of the ‘kinder room’, who were considered to be the main staff-participants for this research, participated in this music project. PT and PA had both been working with young children for several years. One was trained as a Preschool Teacher and the other had a Certificate 3 in child care studies. Throughout the music project, they were supportive and accommodating of the researcher. Their input become particularly valuable with respect to parent communication, which was dependent on collaboration of the child care staff in disseminating information, and taking an active role in the promotion of the program. They engaged in formal and informal interviews with the researcher and provided her with verbal anecdotal accounts on children and parents’ responses to the music sessions and the music learning centre. In addition, the PA completed an evaluative questionnaire at the completion of the music project.

7.2.4 The Preschool Teacher (PT)

An influential Figure for the children that participated in this study was a bilingual Preschool teacher. She had migrated from Sri Lanka and had been living in Melbourne for 10 years where she had completed a four year training (Bachelor of Education Double Degree in Early Childhood and Primary Teaching) at one of the Melbourne Universities. Her first Preschool teaching job was at a privately owned child care centre. She stayed there for 2 years but was happy to leave and get the job at this centre. For 3 years and a few months she had been working at this child care centre. She found this centre “more children oriented” than the previous one. Over the years, she had developed particular interest in education of children with disabilities and had been studying a course titled: “Children with Special Needs” at one of the major Victorian Universities, focussing on children with ‘hearing impairment’ and ‘language delay’. The PT appeared to be a discreet, calm, softly spoken person. She was very kind and courteous when interacting with the children and others, including the researcher.
At the time of the first interview, the PT had already formed some strong beliefs about educating young children. For example, she described her approach to programming as teacher-child oriented: “...Sometimes it comes off children, sometimes it is something I would like the children to really explore ... if there are some things that I want the children to learn and that is something which we have not have done and it’s not coming out of the children, I need to provide that environment so that I know whether they impressed it or not”. She further elaborated on the role of the teacher: “…by giving them something to bounce off on, they actually learn, because if you don’t provide to them they cannot know what is out there for them to learn.” PT grew up and lived most of her life in a structured, ‘pro-academic’ educational system. It became clear that her personal beliefs and experience guided her teaching: “There has been this research stating that early childhood needs a curriculum and I think that’s a really good thing to do, because there are a lot of things children need to be taught and it does not necessarily come out from the children or is inspired from the children straightaway without anything. We need to provide that environment.” She expressed the need for further guidance from the Curriculum and Policy makers: “It is really good to have that curriculum so that we know at the end of the year that even if it does not come from the children that we have provided and we have given opportunity to actually explore and we have a rounded child.”

When talking about culturally diverse music, the PT reflected with regret that this was not a high priority of the program. She referred to songs as a form of music: “…we don’t actually sing much...not many cultural songs, either, which we should...I have not done much of that, I should say.” She attributed this to time limitations and focussing on other aspects of the children’s development. She also expressed reservations about implementing a music program on a permanent basis. She felt unprepared to conduct music specific teaching and learning experiences. She highlighted that she was not a trained singer, and that she needed to practise her piano. University training had not equipped her to feel competent in this area of teaching. However, she believed that exploring music and singing in different languages would benefit the children and was eager to learn about more effective ways to do so in the future. She supported the idea of bringing diversity into the program, referring to two occasions where other people explored culturally diverse music with the children. “There have been some students...the last student I had - she taught them (children) a song in a
different language, which was good…That was the only exposure to song in a different language…And, then we had Jack and Molly, that’s a musical show – a couple come and do a musical show…they came and sang in different languages. But I personally have not taught them songs. I have not gone into that yet.”

Another aspect of interest was the way the PT used songs and singing in her program planning. Her song selection was based on their content and meaning of the lyrics:

“...If, say, we are looking at the theme of ‘Fish’, then I might sing a song related to fish.” She strived to have an ‘integrated approach’ to programming and correlate different areas of learning: “… I try to tie in everything with different activities I do. I try to tie it in to a particular theme of the month...that would help the children have reinforcement in different areas of what they are learning as well.”

Her response to the researcher’s presence was welcoming and appreciative. She articulated this it in the last interview:”... You have done a lot for us. It was good to have someone like you come and demonstrate how to conduct music sessions.” She commented on particular features: “…I like that you explored a variety of the songs and instruments with the children. The games you played were good, too. They learnt more than just musical concepts, like counting, for example. The children enjoyed having you immensely.” She further reflected on influence of the music program on the children: “…I heard them often sing the songs you taught them, or play games you did in the sessions. When we had group sessions they wanted to do some of the songs and games.”

At the time of the research, the PT was going through major changes in her private and professional life. She was finding study challenging as well as working work at the same time. She expressed this in one of the interviews and said she “needed a break”. This was reflected in her physical presence in the music project as she was away for more than half of the sessions (12/21).

The following observation is the first one the researcher documented on PT and the children sharing music.
20th November, 2008. (From Appendix I, Background Information).

Context: The children and the staff were seated on the floor. The (Preschool Teacher) PT introduced the new areas of playing for that morning. One of them offered some musical instruments. She referred to it as a ‘music corner’. She reminded the children to remember to keep these musical instruments in their allocated space. Most of the instruments were damaged. She also told the children that they will be listening to some Christmas music and she put the CD on (labelled by hand “Mary Mix-Xmas” - a compilation of Christmas songs, modern musical arrangements – tunes interpreted and sang in R&B style).

Sandro was in the music area PT joined him. He was exploring musical instruments. Most of these instruments were damaged. The PT sat next to him, in front of the CD player. The CD player was playing some R&B music. Sandro took a stick, pretending to have a microphone and asked the PT to change the music, which she immediately did. Some children’s music started. Sandro stood up and began to rhythmically stamp his feet, pretending to sing – using the stick as a microphone. Another child, Ben, momentarily joined, moving like a ballet dancer, widely spreading his arms, tip-toeing around. Sandro kept imitating singing, while Ben danced. PT smiled and clapped her hands to the beat of the song. When the song finished, Ben bowed. Sandro and PT applauded. Then, Sandro bowed – Ben and the PT applauded. The next song began to play – ‘Incey Wincey Spider’. “My favourite!” exclaimed Sandro. The PT started to sing the song, with a soft and tuneful voice. Sandro continued to “sing” with a microphone. Few other children were instantaneously attracted by this. By the end of the song, there were 5 of them participating in this spontaneous music experience. Two of them were stamping their feet to the beat. One girl (Rea) was carefully listening and observing; one of the boys played the castanets, effectively following the beat. Ben, from time to time, swayed his body, and at one point kneeled down, continuing to sway his upper body. The PT was singing and observing the children. When the song finished, Sandro said to the PT: “Please make another song, like that.” She smiled back and said: “Yes, after rest, will do it again. Now we have to pack up and get ready for lunch.”

This observation tells us that the PT is receptive to the children’s interest as she immediately changed the music from her choice to the choice of the child. The children did
not seem to like this type of music and this is not surprising since it was not simple, repetitive, clearly structured but was variable in structure and the female vocal performed long, vibrato, lower register singing lines, which made the words less understandable. The PT allowed the children to take the initiative and engage in an imaginative, creative, spontaneous music episode, while still taking a part by singing tunefully and clapping to the beat. The researcher saw this as an opportunity to complement the PT on her responsiveness. The researcher inquired about the first music choice and wondered why she had selected this particular CD. The teacher explained that she wanted to find another ‘Christmas CD’ as they always listened to “the same, old, ones”. While it is understandable that the teacher wanted a change and to broaden the listening music repertoire, this was not the kind of music that young children would usually be attracted to. It is better to employ familiar music or at least familiar type of music that the children like and can relate to then to select an ineffective and inappropriate resources.

The PT participated actively in two sessions, whereas in the rest she observed, took photos or engaged in other activities in the room. She sang with a pleasant ‘soprano’ voice, displaying a good sense of rhythm when participating in chanting and rhythm games in these music sessions. The following parts from Learning Story (Appendix A, Music Session 2) show how PT participated in one of the sessions.
...I set up the mats on the floor in a circle and the children quickly found their place. The PT set next to Kasja who was a new child which did not speak or understand much of English. To establish connection and the beat, we started with the simple, playful ‘command’: “Clap, knees, claps knees; clap your knees, please!” The children and the teacher followed the chant attentively looking and listening to my instructions. Most of them managed to keep the rhythm steady, but we repeated the phrase several times so that the few who were less confident could practice. I decided to start with the game ‘Hey, hey, what is your name?’

...The children and the teacher eagerly stood up. They moved with joy and giggled as they followed each of the instructions. They were turning around, touching the ground, tickling their toes, touching their nose, jumping up high, “reaching” the sky. The teacher was assisting Kasja to participate...With each repetition Kasja needed less assistance and the PT sensibly allowed Kasja to dictate how much help she needed.

...The children and their teacher responded with a lot of enthusiasm to this session and were impressed that I remembered their names... The PT encouraged the children to thank me for the session: “Let’s thank Aleksandra for the music session!” They all applauded and verbally thanked me. The PT let Kasja and Lou collect the mats...

These excerpts from the Learning Story inform us of the teacher’s positive reception and enthusiasm to participate in this session. She seemed to have regarded this event as a formal music lesson, showing her appreciation in a ceremonial way. It also showed the teacher’s sensitivity towards “a child with a need” and her ability to scaffold the child’s learning while at the same time sensibly back off when the child needed space for more independent self-expression.
Another significant person in this research was a Preschool Assistant (PA), who had 6 years experience of working in child care settings. She was an Australian, Anglo-Celt, who had lived in Melbourne most of her life. She had studied at TAFE and was an ‘unqualified child care worker’ but was considering doing more studies and becoming a ‘qualified child care worker’. She and the Preschool Teacher had been working together in the ‘kinder-room’ for the past 3 years. PA was a very supportive, ever smiling, enthusiastic person who contributed to this research in many ways - she participated in informal interviews, provided relevant verbal anecdotal information, and completed an evaluative questionnaire at the end of the music project.

PA had a strong, clear and tuneful ‘Alto’ voice and was fond of music, although critical of her “teaching” skills: “…I like music...sometimes I sing with the children. I do not really play any instruments, so I am not good at really teaching music like in the music school, proper music...I enjoy singing with them (children)...I need to learn some more songs, though.” PT described the way she would introduce a new song as follows: “...I just sing it (song) and see if they like it. If they do, they ask for it again. Normally, we pick songs that children already know...the popular ones, though. There is often, at least one child that would know the song...” Indeed, the songs she named were: ‘Twinkle twinkle’, ‘Baa Baa, Black Sheep’, ‘Miss Polly had a Dolly’, ‘Incey-Wincey’, ‘I’m a little tea pot’ and ‘The wheels on the bus’. According to PA (prior to the music project) these songs were occasionally shared in small groups as well as in the whole-group sessions. She also explained that children like singing along to the ‘Wiggles’ and ‘High 5’ but that since she did not really know the lyrics of the songs they (PA and PT) would “…put on a CD and let the children sing and dance to the music.” The children brought some of these CDs from home and dancing to this popular music was the most frequent “musical activity” children engaged in. This usually happened when the children needed to pack up the room, when they needed to gather together for a story time or if the weather was really bad and they needed some physical action. The staff did not join them in dancing or singing.

The question “Would you consider yourself to be knowledgeable of other cultures?” the PA thought was a difficult one. While she valued the fact that we live in a culturally diverse
society, pointing out that she was sensitive to the fact that the children come from diverse backgrounds, she also found this acquisition of knowledge somewhat challenging: “...there are so many cultures and customs that I am not familiar with. It’s hard to be sensitive if you don’t know what you should know”.

PA was enthusiastic about the music project keen to further explore different music repertoire and languages. This enthusiasm was sustained throughout the research. Unlike the PT, she never directly participated in the music sessions as she would engage in other jobs - like cleaning or setting up the learning activities, or changing sheets for the children’s beds - during this time. However, while engaged with ‘other’ work, she could often be heard singing along, sometimes she observed and took photos of some of the music sessions, made comments about the children’s participation or the researcher’s teaching methods and content of the sessions.

She developed an interest in the ukulele, and seemed encouraged to “have a go at it” when she learnt that the researcher had only recently started playing the instrument. She was pleased to obtain the chord chart and willing to have a few individual sessions with the researcher but this arrangement did not come to a realisation due to her work responsibilities, private commitments and circumstances.

At the end of the music program, PA completed a questionnaire which focussed on evaluation of the music sessions and music learning centre. Her comments on the music sessions were affirmative: “…I thought it was great, the children enjoyed it. They learnt different songs and different movements...We have learnt a lot... the different ways in which the children listened to you and the way you structured the activities... At group time they (children) wanted to sing the songs and play the games that you taught them…”

The Music Learning Centre, she found to be useful for children to actively engage with a variety of musical instruments and to explore items from different cultures: “…having all the different instruments and items something that the children all enjoyed, they loved it when they entered the room and saw the way music area was set out.” Like the CC, she found it problematic and demanding that the Music Learning Centre sometimes featured fragile and breakable items that often ended up elsewhere in the room or other places in the child care
PA regularly provided valuable information on parents’ feedback. In the questionnaire, she wrote: “Most parents commented about the Music Corner and how great and interesting it looked. Most parents also knew about the songs and games by their children singing them at home. All we had was really great feedback by most parents.”

7.3 Discussion

Teacher support and enthusiasm are strong determinants of successful music education. In the present study, children were exploring the musical properties of objects when they knew somebody was around with an interest in music and with the ability and drive to show them new things. Thus, teachers, as Prendergast (2008) suggests, need to perform in their role in a way that is ritualistic, healing and entertaining. Ritualistic, in this sense, refers to the adherence to cultural practices and a shared experience of culture through performance. In other words, teaching needs to occur within children’s known and expected boundaries.

When the researcher was in the centre, the children used the musical resources in a more musical manner. On the days of the music sessions, most children were observed to engage in, for example, experimenting with the sound alone or with a friend, talking about photographs displayed and recalling information from the music session. On the days when the researcher was not present, the children sometimes completely deserted or utilised this space for socio-dramatic play according to staff and parent observations. The drums would become tables for pizzas and musical sticks would be used as eating utensils. Good or poor quality resources are easily transformed when in the hands of creative, imaginative young minds, but in order to foster music exploration, teachers need to be proactive in promoting music learning. In the present study, teachers’ reluctance to foster music education seems to have been related to their levels of confidence, their knowledge of approaches and access to resources, and, lastly their prioritisation of other areas of learning. These barriers are very similar to those described in other Australian research (Bourne, 1988; de Vries, 2004, 2006; MacMahon, 1988; Sharpe et al., 2005; Suthers, 2004; Nyland & Ferris, 2007).
7.4 I am not a Music Teacher, how can I teach Music?

In this research, all staff claimed to value music, but not all had competence and confidence to do music with the children. Staff were rating their own music education competence as low and therefore were exhibiting low confidence to teach music. Their way of exploring music with the children and the choice of musical experiences varied in both frequency and content. This picture is not an atypical one. Sharpe, Harris and McKeen (2005), found that early childhood educators perceive music education a significant part of the early childhood curriculum but the use of music was “not always acknowledged or completely understood by early childhood educators” (p 23). Misconceptions about what music education is may stem from an educational tradition that, even in the early years, has heavily focussed on skill development alone (Forrai, 1998).

Where early childhood teachers feel that their main task in music education is to directly improve children’s singing or composing skills or their use of instruments, it is of little surprise that there has been ample evidence for the claim that early childhood teachers lack confidence in knowledge and skill to effectively teach music to young children (for instance, Dees, 2004; De Vries, 2004; Scott-Kassner, 1999; Suthers, 2004). In the present study, PT and PA found music important, and were generally supportive of the music project. However, from the very beginning of the study, they did not feel confident and competent to provide good quality music program for the children and, just like in de Vries’ (2006) study, they preferred it if the researcher “showed them how to do this”. It is not surprising that the educator (AC2) who had had a musical background was more competent and confident to teach music. She obviously had more connection to this form of Arts than some of the other staff members. It is, however, puzzling why other staff chose not to do much music, when clearly they were able to sing accurately, follow the rhythm (one of them even had basic piano skills), move to the beat and were generally responsive to children’s interests and needs. It clearly comes from their personal judgement of their skills to teach music, rather than their musical abilities. Another reason may also lie in a theoretical valuing music but not actually in practice. This is not atypical for child-care staff. The difference between the reality and the rhetoric is often a problem in the early childhood community (Sims, 1999).

For music to have a place in children’s centres, children’s daily experience with music
needs to be improved in several ways: the space used to engage in musical learning must maintain aesthetic quality, which also includes the state and quality of the musical resources. The type of musical exchanges and the time when music can and should be shared needs to be aligned with the learning preferences and dispositions of the children. This form of art should eventually become part of a children’s sense of community, allowing them, through playful interaction, to express themselves through music as a language.

7.5 Repertoire and resources

The centre lacked resources and the means to obtain high quality music material or to increase their skill by partaking in professional development.

In this study, PT and PA regularly used pop music during children’s rest time (for example, Mariah Carrey) and R & B music as an audio ‘background’ while the children were engaged in general play activities. According to de Vries (2010), this is not unusual: In his investigation 13 centres used Kylie Minogue CDs as part of their “music resources”. The staff in this research reported they never attempted to share songs from different languages. Sharpe et al. (2005) found that some early childhood educators utilize songs for exploring specific concepts such as ‘seasons’. This, too, was confirmed in the present research. The PT, for instance singing particular songs to go with changes in the weather like: ‘Pitter, patter raindrops’ and ‘Like a leaf or feather’. These are the common repertoire that would be expected. Songs in different languages can often have the same didactic purpose and should be explored with young children. However, songs are not the only representative of music from different cultures – instrumental music and musical instruments should be considered, too.

In this centre, music was often played on the CD player to indicate the start and end of “packing up time” or transition periods. The length of the time music was played depended on the children’s efficiency in packing up the toys or on their ability to get ready for the next segment of the daily routine as the music was switched off once the children had completed their task. More interactive use of music (see Observation with AC1, p.204) was employed to capture children’s attention. However, even in this case, music was a means to an end instead of a self-contained learning experience. This finding echoes results of de Vries’
(2006) study. De Vries found that music in the early childhood setting is primarily used for transition periods or to manage children's behaviour or emotive reactions. He also noted the absence of long-term music planning which was found in the present study, too.

Other than that, the most frequent way of exploring music in the kinder room was by the use of CDs, for example, ‘Wiggles’ and ‘High 5’. Barrett (1993) and de Vries (2004) found this to be common for many child care settings. In fact, some centres limited music to the use of ‘Wiggles’ CDs and the like. While young children may enjoy and even benefit from this form of musical experience, the early childhood educators could participate more actively in exploring such music (de Vries, 2010). Their role in music education has been aptly described by Prendergast (2008) as teacher as entertainer. Performing in this role, the teacher actively engages with children but makes no effort to facilitate co-construction. In other words the teacher propagates a particular message (playing music in the background, which suggests that this is the way to engage with music) rather than to discover knowledge together with the children.

They should carefully and selectively examine the possible musical and educational potential or shortcomings, offered by these popular ‘music groups’. Once they become more familiar and knowledgeable of the repertoire, and musical, aesthetic and educational properties they can choose what to sing and dance with the children rather than simply watch them or “take care of other business” in the room.

De Vries (2006) found that, in his study, staff were actively discouraging children from exploring music resources on their own terms as this was associated with increased noise levels and greater likelihood of damaging instruments. The present study partially corroborated this finding. As the researcher had provided the instruments, staff were concerned about all of them remaining intact and thus sometimes moving them aside when they were not needed for music sessions. Noise control may have been an issue, too, but none of the staff commented on this. However, given that children rarely used the instruments for their musical purpose when the researcher was not present, the staff in the present study put in place fewer restrictions on instrument use than de Vries described.
7.6 Policy and Curriculum – the larger context for the early Educators

The emphasis of school readiness forces teachers to adhere to principles of economic efficiency and technical structure when planning their work, rather than following a route emphasising aesthetics and artistry (McKenzie, 2001). As Prendergast (2008) notes, the aesthetic and artistic dimension is increasingly neglected.

As discussed in the literature review, the early childhood setting is a dynamic and multifaceted socio-cultural context influenced by a variety of factors such as family diversity (McInerney & McInerney, 2006), recognition of the importance of the early years (Rogoff, 2003), accountability requirements and shortage of qualified staff (CCCH, 2003). The early childhood educator’s work over the past few decades has become more complex because of changes in the characteristics of the child population, in particular dramatically increased ethnic- and linguistic diversity, and the inclusion of children with different abilities (Ashman & Elkins, 2005; Curtis & Carter, 2003) In addition, early childhood educators are currently expected to research contemporary theories and practices, make ethical judgements and be creative in finding solutions to a range of challenges. Some of these strains and demands also became manifest in the present research program.

As mentioned, these early childhood educators are working within the constraints of federal and State Curriculum Documents which do not strongly emphasise music. There is evidence to suggest that present policy positions represented in these documents would be further enhanced in coming years as implementation strategies are rolled out by state governments. As a general implication, this type of approach to education, that is, generic curriculum, has never privileged the arts.

The educators’ comments about professional development, what they would like to do and what they did were very revealing. Implication here is that behaviour management are privileged as being scientific and the arts are referred to as something desirable but not so essential (Suthers, 2008).

Messages about the importance of music in pre-service teaching courses are loud and clear. The time given over to music gets less and less (de Vries, 2009; Nyland & Ferris, 2007; Suthers, 2008) Rhetorical statements abound, more research is appearing in this area but
the practices of the Universities and Government are indicative of attitudes that play lip-service but give no resources. Therefore, given this situation these early childhood educators are in a difficult position.

One thing is certain, however, if the goal is to improve and popularize music education through the activities of early childhood teachers, the focus needs to be on building up their confidence and researching what appropriate pre-service or in-service experiences would result in required levels of competence. Aside from inter-personal differences, there are also more systematic intercultural differences with respect to the elements of music teachers are most prepared to engage with. For example, while some studies found singing to be the type of musical education teachers felt most comfortable with (Ebbeck, Yim, & Lee, 2008 [Hong Kong]; Seibenaler, 2006 [USA]) other studies found the exact opposite (Holden & Button, 2006 [UK], Suthers, 2004 [Australia]).

7.7 Improving teacher confidence

In order to tackle the lack of music in early childhood education, multiple avenues of actions are conceivable: new policies could be put in place that prescribe the amount of time that needs to be spent exploring music or incentives could be given to teachers provided that children reach a particular level of music proficiency. Such suggestions might bring more music into the classroom, but not the type of quality music education that is advocated in this thesis. In order to co-construct musical meaning with children, teachers need to be open-minded and enthusiastic explorers of music as ready to try things out as young children are. For this to happen, teachers must derive satisfaction and happiness from engaging with music and imparting others with their knowledge and skills. Ebbeck, Yim and Lee (2008) argued that teacher happiness related teaching music may impact the effectiveness of a music program. They suggest that there is an indirect link between teachers' perceived happiness and educational outcomes, mediated by their intrinsic motivation to teach: happy teachers have more intrinsic motivation and thus achieve better learning outcomes. The statements by staff in the present study showed that teachers are generally positively inclined to engage with music and even consider music education to be important. The core reason, therefore, why teachers are not teaching music more readily is because they do not
believe in their music teaching ability.

Hence, the key question for researchers to answer remains: How can teachers be encouraged to develop and deliver high quality music education programs in the face of their reluctance to employ music in the classroom? One possible approach could be through the identification of the type of music education that best suits teachers. If they do not see themselves as competent enough singers, they might be able to consider how movement can be used to teach children about music.

Yim, Abd-El-Fattah and Lee (2007) made a useful contribution to support this analytical differentiation among music teaching skills. Their *Teachers Music Confidence Scale* differentiates between 10 facets of music education and can either help teachers to reflect on their perceived strengths or could be employed by staff administrators to encourage teachers to initially work in areas of music education they feel most comfortable. It seems to make intuitive sense that aspects of music such as composing, which has been found to be the most daunting form of music education for teachers (Auh, 2006; Ebbeck, Yim, & Lee, 2008) is left aside until such time as the teacher has gathered confidence in other areas of music education. Obtaining a more detailed understanding of what teachers do and do not feel confident of doing with regard to music education is particularly warranted by a finding in De Vries' study (2006): Staff in this study indicated that they did not feel sufficiently competent to select the most appropriate music resources and de Vries therefore supplied participants with a selection of music CDs. It is clear that teachers struggling with selecting the right music are a long way from running diverse and child centred music classes. Becoming aware of these limitations is the first step in resolving them.

An alternative approach to build up teacher confidence and enthusiasm may be through professional development as carried out by de Vries (2006). In his study, de Vries found that with increasing duration of a demonstrated music program, staff became progressively more involved. They asked more, and increasingly specific questions. It seems that their understanding of how to use music grew and thus they requested more tailored resources for specific learning situations they had in mind. However, de Vries’ study was built on the clear understanding that staff were to attend, to watch, learn and to try out. The present study was based on a philosophy of self-determined levels of involvement for all
participants. It became clear that in the face of other duties their own assessments of their skills, staff did not want to deeply engage with the music sessions to further their own understanding and exploring novel teaching techniques. De Vries found that after the completion of the music program, staff largely, though not entirely, reverted back to old routines. In the present study, too, staff did not maintain the music learning centre or continued the music sessions with the children. This issue is further addressed in Chapter VIII and it is the subject of implications and recommendations in Chapter IX.
CHAPTER VIII: ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

8.1 Introduction

Chapter VIII revisits the data of all three participant groups with special reference to the key questions asked in this thesis. Starting with an exploration of how the children responded to the music sessions within the parameters of the research program, the chapter then continues to discuss, more broadly, how children generally react to culturally diverse music, given their personal and familial history. The chapter also investigates what importance early music education has in the minds of the parents and what opinions, if any, they have about how to teach and stimulate children musically. Lastly, the chapter relates the data from the centre staff to the question of how early childhood professionals conceptualise music education and to what extent they see, appreciate and promote music education as a way to discover and accept cultural diversity. The structure of the chapter follows the principal research questions as stated in Chapter I. The following sections address the questions and as the first question was double barrelled it is being divided into two.

8.2 How do young children respond to group music sessions?

Early childhood educators commonly use group sessions in a very specific and often fairly structured way (de Vries, 2004; Hamilton, 2003; Wright, 2003). Parents perceive structured session to be more educational than other forms of education, because the incidental and exploratory learning that happens during unstructured play cannot be easily integrated into mental schemata of cause (group session) and effect (learning and development). Group sessions are also encouraged by those parents and educators who prioritise children’s ‘school-readiness’. On the other hand, critics of formal group sessions have argued that the necessary focus on majority appeal neglects to adequately address the variety of interests, learning strategies and developmental stages within the group (Gibbs & Wilks, 1991).

In the present research program group sessions were an important part of the
educational strategy. However, the group format was not picked at random or for the sake of convenience, but instead fulfilled the dual purpose of enabling the children to learn about and through music while simultaneously engaging with one another socially. Forming new relationships within the music sessions increased the children’s levels of participation. Since all of them contributed in different ways during the sessions, the children were able to scaffold each other’s learning (Bruner, 1975). They were able to construct and co-construct musical understanding that heightened their confidence and encouraged them to further advance their ability to experiment. While structurally similar to Vygotsky’s concept of the zone of proximal development, the type of scaffolding fluctuated freely: Sometimes children advanced their understanding from interaction with one peer or the teacher (researcher), sometimes new understanding emerged from the collective action of the group, and sometimes interactions between children led to a reciprocal exchange of understanding, where each child functioned as an expert for the other. Hence, through group interaction, each individual within the group, because of the group, was able to explore the music in more depth.

It became clear that children reacted very differently to new musical experiences. Furthermore, the frequency and type of their contributions indicated varying levels of awareness. For example, the researcher observed that younger children were particularly mindful of the older children in the group. By being integrated in the group, the younger children felt connected to the older children. They also were given the opportunity to observe a variety of different learning styles and strategies. Thus, their own learning flourished as a result of observing their older peers and the researcher.

At the beginning of Chapter V there is the statement: “the children’s responses to music were differentiated, analytical and overwhelmingly positive” (p. 121). The group sessions during which children engaged with music side by side were particularly well suited to bring out these features. The following sections provide examples for each of these attributes, the individual approach to a group experience, children’s analysis of the musical material and their emotional responses.
8.2.1 The individual within the group

The children’s personalities, interests, learning dispositions and preference, background knowledge and musical competence all emerged during the group times. The children had their own unique way of behaving during the session. There was:

- the child who chose to exclusively watch her peers
- the child who chose to exclusively watch the music teacher
- the child who always wanted to sit by the teacher
- the child who learnt from observing
- the child who learnt from doing
- the child who experimented
- the child who was a ‘silent witness’
- the child who favoured musical instruments
- the child who favoured movement
- the child who favoured singing
- the child who favoured books
- the child who made regular suggestions and comments
- the child who always requested group time
- the child who introduced her home songs
- the child who always helped set up and pack up
- the child who requested resources
- the child who favoured humorous content
- the child who disliked the other children dramatising ‘scary’ content

Even the use of mats in a circle became evidence of the children’s personal preferences and their ability to differentiate. The centre used plastic mats for children to sit on. There were 20 of them – 17 with a cartoon drawing of a chicken, 3 with an elephant. Some children would become upset if they did not get to sit on the ‘elephant’ mat and the researcher had to negotiate that the children take turns at having particular mats. Their fondness of a particular placemat became such a distraction over the course of the sessions
that the researcher decided to replace them uniformly with another 20 identical mats that were made out of natural materials. Both the children and the researcher were content with this solution.

8.2.2 Analytical reactions to the music sessions

The children’s interviews indicate that they were capable of identifying why they liked particular songs or instruments. They were clearly able to name their favourites (Appendix D). During group times they used their language to describe the basic musical characteristics of songs, even when they did not know the actual term. Often, they associated their home-life experiences with the content of the session and were keen to describe parallels to the group. Some children analysed and identified structural characteristics of the sessions. This could be observed in their social play which mimicked the way that the researcher interacted with the group and the activities that that were facilitated. They demonstrated understanding of cause and effect by recognising the importance of vocal warm-up exercises. Understanding of causal relationships was also demonstrated in children’s reaction to the researcher’s absence. They were well aware that without this presence no music session would be held on the day. Instead of asking other staff for their regular music session, they asked when ‘the music lady’ would be back.

Elements of the sessions challenged the children’s auditory and visual memory, their spatial awareness and understanding of social conventions. In order to participate in circle games, for example, ‘Guess who?’ they needed to understand verbal and nonverbal instructions, concentrate on their listening and pay attention to the rules of the game. In order to play ‘Guess who?’ they had to be silent when required, speak or sing when appropriate, produce and identify an audio stimulus, and utilise their visual memory.

The children’s analytical and insightful responses are also seen in their self-reflection on their own learning, which empowered them to extrapolate skills learned during the group session and apply these in other contexts. For example, on the completion of the music project, the PT reported that some children seemed to have adopted the idea of visual recording and documenting and wanted to apply this method in other areas of their curriculum. She decided that she needed to get a camera as a number of children became
accustomed to visual recording (she borrowed the researcher’s camera in the end). Jaspar asked to be photographed while doing an activity (e.g. drawing, painting or a puzzle); Robie began to regularly call for photos to be taken at different stages of his constructions; Laura wanted to have an album of her “favourite things to take home and show her pa”. The children wanted their learning to be documented visually, just like it had been done in the music sessions. They seem to have realised the power of visual images and their use for recall, reflection and to inform others of experiences that were significant to them.

Sometimes, the children reflected aloud on their learning. For instance, in the music session that was attended by three new children (Mitch, who had been participating frequently, shared his knowledge and feelings about playing the piano accordion with Budika, one of the new children:

“Oh, you need to put your hand there, man. It’s hard, I couldn’t do it...I tried and tried...OK, try again...I’ll hold the belts for ya...if you put it there and stretch, the sound will come...see, that’s the way...OK. I’ll show you... I know a bit better how to do it now.”

As this example shows, the children became aware of the individual stages they had passed through and were able to articulate them. With this realisation came a desire to share their newfound skills with others (Figure 50).
8.2.2.1 Positive reactions

The group music sessions were highly appreciated and anticipated by the children. The children would always greet the researcher in a very friendly way. They would also invite her to stay at the end of the music session. Many would ask “what we are going to do today?” They responded to culturally diverse music sessions with delight, interest and high levels of participation. Their enthusiasm is evident in the written and visual records as well as in their positive feedback on the music sessions. The interviews showed that the children had definite ideas about their favourite repertoire; parents commented that children discussed the music at home; and pictures taken during the sessions captured engagement and approval reflected in their body language and facial expressions.

The music sessions left a lasting impression with children: Two children started to engage in role play in which they assumed the role of the music teacher during a music session. Children’s dramatic play frequently explores situations that they do not understand, that bother them or situations and people they want to emulate. That the children enjoyed their role play points to the interpretation that they were trying to identify with the music and the teacher.

Children were also inquisitive about the researcher’s actions when not at the centre and particularly so when a session was not held at the time they expected. Experiences need to have an impact for children of this age to actively and spontaneously remember them from one week to the next. The music sessions and the interactions with the researcher in the music learning centre were important enough to live in the children’s memories and imagination and prompt them to evaluate their ideas against the information they were able to retrieve from others.

8.2.3 Comment – children’s responses to the group sessions

In relation to the first question of ‘How do young children respond to group music sessions?’ it would appear that the sessions provided a valuable medium for learning with and from each other, while at the same time being a source of enjoyment. The learning
character of the music sessions was exemplified in situations such as when Aki showed Ali how to perform the movement of ‘Okina Kurino’ song, or when Kasja demonstrated to Moses how to hold a ukulele. The group music sessions also facilitated incidental learning. For example, Violet joined Aki and Sisi in their ‘drum conversation’ (Chapter V, p. 137). Violet tried to enhance this conversation by introducing another sound that was closely associated. Violet’s contribution extended this playful musical and social interaction and led to all children gaining insights into musical improvisation. Children’s ability to handle musical instruments without any instruction or direct modelling improved over the course of the research program. This, too, was a case of indirect learning. De Vries's (2005a) case study showed that with adequate support a child can make constant and substantial improvements in all areas of music learning. The present study showed that intensive one-on-one interaction is not necessary to effect gains and that children can at times be the best teachers. De Vries’ study further demonstrated that there are limits to learning at any specific stage of development and that even with intensive and qualified support, children are not necessarily able to progress some skills through the zone of proximal development. The structure of the music session might avert the frustration that might result from reaching a developmental threshold, as the music sessions and music learning centre addressed multiple concepts (music, culture, movement) at once and thus had broad scope for children to grow in different areas.

Using the Learning Stories to record the sessions on the one hand emphasised the social focus of the groups, but, on the other hand, brought out the character of the individual child within the group. The social orientation of the group sessions made this social sharing more valuable than group times devoted to developing ‘school readiness’ or to achieve ‘educational aims’ or devoted to the social expectation that children would sit quietly together. The potential of Learning Stories to bring out children’s learning dispositions as well as emphasising the social nature of the children’s learning was a major reason for choosing this observational and planning format for the research. As discussed in the literature chapter and illustrated in the Chapter IV, Learning Stories can be an integral part of socio-cultural approach to early childhood programming and planning as they are strategy that emphasises relational learning, importance of context and take into account individual histories and cultural experience.
8.3 How do Young Children Respond to Freely Accessible Music Play Space?

Another aspect of the children’s experiences examined in this thesis was using a designated play space as a music learning centre. This area was based on principles of play with the children being able to self-select to use the area and once they had chosen this they could choose what they would do, for how long and possibly who with. Play is a creative act (Hendricks, 2001) and is a medium where children may perform above their present level of understanding or they intuitively seek meaning through theorising about experience and previous social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). For this reason a space was designed, with help of the children, that would stimulate an interest in the musical activities provided and also had an aesthetic appeal. The examples in Chapter 5 indicate how this emphasis on aesthetics made the music learning centre a visual oasis in the centre. The centre was also a means by which children could extend their own learning after a session if they had been particularly engaged with an instrument, song, story, book, puppet or other type of prop. The following is an example, from the data, of children continuing exploration of a ukulele at the end of a music session.

As described in Chapter V the children used this centre in a variety of ways. Their play was strongly associated with music when the researcher was present but mixed with dramatic play and other activities when the researcher was not at the centre. They indicated a sense of responsibility as they modelled instrument use for each other, collaboratively shared exploration and worried about all children caring for the instruments. It is interesting that when the researcher was absent the music learning centre was packed away after a number of weeks so the children could have a ‘new’ activity.
3rd October, 2008.

Context: After the music session Rea and Sanja had a go at playing the ‘ukulele.

For or a minute or so, each were finding her own way of playing the instrument (‘independent’). This did not seem to satisfy them, probably because the overall sound that was created was not very pleasant.

They stopped, looked at each other and smiled. Rea suggested: “Let’s start together and we count, OK?” They started striking the strings across and both counted “One, two, three, four.” Sanja suddenly stopped and said: “Oh, when do we stop?” Rea also stopped playing. She looked at Sanja shrug her shoulders and replied: “I don’t know, you say.” Sanja paused and proposed:” We go up to 10!” Rea smiled and said: “And, and then we stop?” Sanja said: “No. Then we do it again and again.” Rea agreed (“OK.”) and the girls played the proposed pattern 3 times. The first time Rea counted to 10, while Sanja kept with the striking; the second time she started, but Sanja joined in and Rea stopped counting; on the third round they both counted gently stroking the strings. After they finished playing, the girls placed the ukuleles back on their spot and went to play in the ‘home corner.’

Comment: The girls were critical of the sound they produced on the ukulele and came up with a pragmatic, manageable, yet creative solution. They displayed good listening skills. Their negotiation was spontaneous and friendly. They handled the instruments with care.

The children were confident to help design the learning centre, use materials and request favourite objects and interests be brought back. Their tastes ranged from exploring sound, to colour and shape, books, dolls, photographs, pictures, dress ups and even how objects were displayed. The musical eggs were frequently arranged and re-arranged suggesting their sensual shape, smooth texture, colours and a pleasant sound that could be loud enough, but not raucous, were almost universally popular. The following observation demonstrates the extent of one child’s interest in the music learning centre and the variety of activities she was interested in. This child had time and was undisturbed by others or a routine so she could move systematically through what was on offer. Such opportunities over an extended period of time (months) might have remarkable results.
22nd February, 2008.

After lunch, all the children, except for Laura, who was waiting for her mom, were resting and lying down on their personal mattresses. PT (Preschool Teacher) played a Mariah Carrey CD. Since Laura was the only child moving around in the room, I encouraged her to play in the music area, which she keenly agreed to.

While exploring the music learning centre Laura was talking, singing and playing with the instruments, yet, without being reminded, she was very respectful of her peers’ needs and tried to be as quiet as possible. For example, she explained to me later that she knew that the little drum would make a ‘loud noise’, so she decided against playing with that one. It seemed that Laura was very pleased to spend some time alone in the music learning centre. The other children resting on their mats were curious about Laura’s actions as they raised their heads and observed as much as they could.

Laura’s time alone in the music learning centre provided a good opportunity for me to take some photos of her and when I asked for her consent, she was happy with the idea. She was commenting on the photos of herself and the other children that I had taken in a previous session and displayed in the music learning centre. Her comments indicated that she was recalling the activities depicted in the photos. When she finished she asked me: “Are you gonna put more photos of me?

Laura spent some time looking at the pictures of the children’s previous session prominently displayed. Systematically, Laura explored all of the musical instruments, starting from one side of the shelf to another.
8.3.1 Comment – Children’s responses to musical play space.

There are a number of issues that arise here. A main concern for the researcher was not being available to facilitate play and exploration in the learning centre. Even the children bringing other play objects into the play area could have taken on an integrated approach transforming the music as it became a part of with the wider play arena. This presumably needed a little adult guidance. The photos taken (see Chapter V, p. 132) suggest the area, as an oasis, was more important to the play than the making of music. As the children had indicated an ability to mix songs (Lullabies) into their spontaneous play with dolls there is a suggestion this learning centre did not achieve its potential. The responses of the staff and parents were interesting. They commented on the music centre, which was highly visible, but the idea that it should be packed up to make place for something “new”, was acceptable to both. This suggests the value of a designated area where children could ‘play’ music was not recognised. This did possibly limit the use of the learning centre and also suggests a narrow view of play. For the researcher, not being present for most of the time and therefore unable to facilitate music play constrained this part of the project which should have been most exciting.

One valuable aspect of the music learning centre that clearly emerged was the opportunity it provided for children to continue to be engaged in activities and events from the planned sessions. Approaching the same musical experiences across the planned and spontaneous play environments had a potential to strengthen both. Certainly the children’s levels of trust confidence and collaboration were astonishing at times. Their attempt to look after the play space and their concern about looking after the instruments suggested that adult support was needed if they were going to be able to utilise this space to its full extent. This has implications for the visiting specialist model.

8.4 How do children engage with culturally diverse music experiences?

One of the aims of this thesis was to introduce culturally diverse music experiences to children. The expectation was that children’s experiences with culturally diverse music
would be beneficial to the individual child, but would eventually also positively affect the family and benefit the culture of the centre. Furthermore, it was anticipated that most children would take more interest in their own and other cultures once they had been introduced to new ideas through the music project.

As Chapter V discusses, a number of children became increasingly curious about songs in diverse languages. Moreover, they engaged in singing, counting and playing circle games from different countries as well as exploring musical instruments and cultural items. Some children took more notice of particular aspects of culture and inquired further about them. Interest was aroused, for example, to discover the meaning of words. Jaspar asked, “How do you say ‘boy’ in Serbian?” “What is Mish?” (‘Cat’ in Serbian); Sanja was curious what “Giro, giro, tondo” meant (“Round, round” in Italian) and she wanted to explore the writing of words in Italian – the characters from the ‘There was an Old Lady’ song-book in Italian. Some children were intrigued by the origins of the musical instruments. For instance, Laura sought to find out where the rain stick was from – “the Aboriginal people, Africa or from the library”. The children inquired about the purpose of cultural items. When Aki brought a set of Chinese chopsticks into the centre both Jaspar and Inja were immediately interested (Appendix B). Initially, they handled the chopsticks as tools to poke each other. However, when they were informed that these were special Chinese objects, they started to wonder what the Chinese would use them for. First Jaspar asked the researcher “Are these sticks to hunt the animals in Chinese?” When the researcher explained this was not an accurate guess and suggested to the two go and ask Aki about the chopsticks’ and their purpose, they immediately set out and shortly afterwards returned with big smiles on their faces. “Aki showed that you eat with them”, Jaspar said, “but I like a fork.” “I like them”, said Inja and pretended to eat, holding one chopstick in each hand. As this example shows, it was the knowledge that the object carries some cultural meaning that prompted the children to give up their preconceptions and to find out more.

Children furthermore expressed a liking of the languages they were exposed to. Most of them especially liked African, some favoured Serbian and Japanese. They also became more interested in languages spoken by their friends in the group. For example, Nely wanted to learn Aki’s home language (Japanese) and Jan asked Gagi to teach him to count in German. Even though English was the dominant language spoken at home, for all but one child, none
of the children in the group were reluctant to engage with different languages. On the contrary, over the course of the sessions, a good number of children became increasingly inquisitive and, by the end of the sessions, indicated that they liked these other languages as much as English. Furthermore, the children retained the concept of many different languages and were confident in their distinction between languages. Some of them made the connection between the language spoken and the concept of nationality and inferred that speaking a different language is often a sign of carrying a different country’s heritage. They also started to pick up more subtle signs such as accents, which also led them to recognize that English was not the researcher’s first language either.

The changes found in the children’s preferences and their increased interest in cultural diversity was connected to the shared group experiences during the group music sessions. During these sessions, the children actively engaged with the repertoire - playing different games and exploring diverse languages through counting, singing and communal discovery of books (Appendix A). The culturally diverse themes explored in a group format helped to build relationships among the members of the group (Appendix A & B).

8.4.1 Comment – Children’s engagement with culturally diverse musical content

Understanding and appreciating cultural diversity is an important goal of early childhood education, particularly in a multi-cultural environment like Australia. The present research program found that using music as a vehicle for introducing concepts of diversity was not only fun for the children, but the playful approach also presented scope for children to draw their own inferences and to learn about diversity according to their own learning preferences. Experiencing diversity rather than being told about it helps to anchor the otherwise elusive concept in more tangible forms – in sounds, images, clothes, words and smells. The children's actions, questions and preferences suggest that the diversity component of the program was successful. Combining music and diversity education was not only effective, it also widened the range of material that could be used. For example, the song “Head and shoulders, knees and toes” may be used to teach music and movement, or be used to illustrate single elements of music, like beat, timbre, tempo as well as to obviously label different body parts. If the song is then subsequently performed in Japanese, this can further stimulate children's interest, teach them about diversity while at the same
time deepening their music skills.

More than just teaching children with a mainly English speaking background about other cultures, the present study showed that diversity education can provide a gateway for children from minority cultures to find their way into the group. For example, children like Kasja found the music and the sessions accessible. In the sessions, Kasja was extremely expressive even though she did not share a verbal language with the group. Diversity education increases the majority’s sensibility for recognising that a child in their group may be different, and be able to welcome and celebrate this difference. Children from minority cultures can become experts of their cultural heritage. Sharing their expert knowledge with others provides them with opportunities for personal growth, new friendships and greater social awareness.

In the literature review the concept of exploring diversity with young children as a worthwhile exercise was justified. The children’s responses to each other, to the music, and their intuitive enjoyment of difference indicates the value of introducing culturally rich material. The Learning Stories and staff- and parent anecdotes describing the children’s play with ideas and their unexpected articulations of cultural understanding through words and actions are all testimony to this.

Prendergast (2008) notes that the term ‘culture’ has been used to so many ends as to become too vague in meaning as to be of much use. That is an unproductive stance. A wide definition of culture should be perceived as a gateway to explore the concept of diversity. While cultural diversity in the present study was primarily related to the concepts of ethnicity and language, the group also explored other cultures – the general music culture, for example. Ethnicity and language are useful concepts to begin with because they are linked to very distinct cultural artefacts, which makes it easy for children to recognise differences. On this insight children can scaffold their understanding of culture as a shared set of values or beliefs or traditions.

8.5 Do Parents/Guardians Consider Knowledge of Diversity an Important Part of the Early Childhood Curriculum and do They Think Music is an Appropriate Educational Tool for Exploring Difference?
The parent-participants felt positive about cultural diversity and strongly believed that the children should explore and learn about different cultures (cf. Chapter VI). There was also an expressed feeling that exploring cultural diversity is especially important in a multicultural country like Australia. However, it is not entirely clear how parents rank awareness and appreciation of differences against literacy and numeracy, creative arts and physical education. Some of the parents’ comments seemed to indicate a belief that the conceptual knowledge of diversity and the development of positive attitudes can be learned incidentally or arises from spontaneous day-to-day social interactions between members of different cultures. Parents, therefore, do not necessarily see that culturally diverse encounters can be intentionally planned for, as they may see this as a different type of learning than the acquisition of formal language learning, like reading and writing. Certainly, the staff comments on professional development suggest that they had a hierarchical perception of what was most important for children to be taught. Music or cultural diversity education were well behind numeracy and literacy. However, the parents appeared to be increasingly aware that the exploration of cultures can greatly excite children and that emphasising culture could enrich the entire social environment of the centre. The example of Aki’s father presented in Chapter VI illustrates this point. When Aki’s father realised how enthusiastic she was about different cultures, he assisted her to follow up this interest and the next day she dressed in a Japanese outfit.

Judging by their informal comments and their survey responses, parents also considered the learning of songs and music to be of value. They stated that music and singing songs is fun for children to do and that it is an important part of their development. Parents noted that music is reflective of different cultures that children should come into contact with different types of music, while avoiding others. However, the majority of parents favoured standard children songs as the repertoire they taught and as the type of music they deliberately played for children. From this parent response it is not quite clear, whether parents thought that music is a good way to explore diversity. Parents were happy with how the program developed and took an interest in what their children told them about what they did in the music sessions and in the music learning centre. They became aware of the new songs that their children sang at home (Chapter VI) that some of these new songs even had become the children's new favourites (Chapter VI). The children also let their parents
know the music session were important to them by telling their parents they were upset when the music sessions did not happen or they missed them due to illness. In this way the children were promoting the music program to their parents and through their advocacy indicating how significant the music was to them.

How these insights translated into a change of attitude or into any concrete actions by parents is partly indicated through parent comments and enthusiasm for the study. For example, the parent quotes presented in Chapter VI (also see Appendix F).

**8.5.1 Comment – the parent’s knowledge of the music project**

The role of parents as role models, teachers and co-constructors of meanings has been extensively documented. The present research program showed that music worked well as a means to explore diversity. Parents can and should make use of this connection, especially since they consider both music- and diversity education to be important. While music may or may not be high on their list of priorities of educational goals, music nevertheless is highly prevalent: the parents in this study often sang to their children or listened to music at home, or in the car, when their children when present. Recognising the potential of these situations can enable parents to engage with their children in meaningful ways in what is currently more perceived to be having fun as opposed to learning through play. The parents partaking in the present study appreciated the value of the music sessions and the diversity component it entailed. The parents were asked about music and diversity in the initial questionnaire. At the end of the research their reflections indicated that music was still not more than an enjoyable activity.

That the parents were approving but seemed to maintain a commitment to a belief in education as something that led to progress in formal educational achievement, like pre-reading skills or even fine motor skills meant this finding was somewhat weak. The researcher had hoped that the use of narrative inquiry, as represented by the learning stories as a research tool, would encourage participation in the process of the children’s music program. However, this was not the case, with a few exceptions. There are a number of arguments that could be put forward here. One is that learning stories, as assessment and cultural tools, perhaps need to be embedded in something more concrete than the often
unstated beliefs about early childhood education that exist in Australia. Do we need a document like Te Whariki to articulate our history and cultural beliefs? If this is the case then this question should be thoroughly explored over the next few years as the new curriculum framework Becoming, Being and Belonging gets rolled out and enacted. Another suggestion is that learning stories as a tool need to be shared with other stakeholders in an educative way before they are implemented. Observations did not all consist of learning stories but this was the method designed to help engage parents. That the staff of the centre were unfamiliar with this approach to observing, recording and planning meant the parents had no knowledge of sharing children’s stories in such an active way. Learning stories, as a research tool, were justified in the literature review and the children certainly embraced this way of sharing their stories but it may be advisable to prepare a centre and parents for such an approach in any future projects. Certainly if participants are familiar with their tools the results should be more sophisticated.

8.6 Do the early childhood educators see the potential of using their music program as a strategy for exploring and promoting cultural diversity?

Before the music sessions commenced and the music learning centre was set up, this centre had no structured program for music education. Some of the staff expressed regret at the lack of music. Attempts to provide music experiences were minimal and not maintained so the presence of broken instruments was probably a strong message to children and families about place of music in the curriculum. Similarly, diversity education was not explicit. While diversity and social inclusion was an important value of the centre, this did not translate into raising awareness and bringing the concept nearer to children.

On the other hand, all staff were highly appreciative of the music program and stated that music education and the exploration of diversity were important issues to tackle. The situation at the centre epitomizes the perennial problem in early childhood about the difference between stated beliefs and practice (Sims, 1999). In regards to using music as a strategy for exploring and promoting cultural diversity, the staff said they believed in such a strategy but had not utilised this practice citing lack of time and low program priority as reasons. Just as reported in various instances in the early childhood literature (Dees, 2004; de Vries, 2004, 2006; Ebbeck, Yim & Lee, 2008; Scott-Kassner, 1999; Suthers, 2004, 2008),
the chief reason appeared to be that staff felt they lacked skills and therefore did not have the confidence to pursue an active music program. Interestingly, all reported that they would like to have ‘in-service’ training in music. However, they felt that the centre’s limited budget would confine any professional development to privileged practical skills like science or behaviour guidance. When considering the benefits of music and the manyfold uses of music in programs, the staff’s preferences for behaviour guidance workshops over music suggest a lack of understanding of the potential of music, even as a strategy for guiding children’s positive behaviour or assisting in the development of maths and science concepts. The way the centre staff employed music to control and manipulate group behaviours, noise levels, emotional reactions and to exert a soothing influence, is a common finding in childcare centres. This makes it surprising that music was not more strongly valued, apart from its musical elements, as they had a basic understanding of its value as ‘musak’.

All of the staff expressed satisfaction and enthusiasm for the music project with one even commenting how much fun, vitality and value it had added to the centre (Appendix F). Despite the enthusiasm (cf. Chapter VII), the staff did not seem to adopt ownership of the program. After deciding to have the researcher run the music sessions, staff were given the opportunity to partake in any of the sessions in whichever capacity they chose. Curiously, they mainly opted for passive observations or, conceptualising of the researcher as a music specialist, took the music sessions to be periods that allowed them to engage in other tasks. Furthering this impression, the music learning centre received scant attention when the researcher was not there—obviously staff felt that this was the music specialist area that needed to be preserved as it was for the times the specialist was present. Accordingly, there was a greater emphasis on children not breaking instruments than on playing with them. Often these instruments were put away in the store room for their own safety.

The staff members who shared music experiences with the children the most were AC1 and RR. AC1 was a permanent staff member working with the toddlers. RR was the centre’s regular reliever who often replaced the PT in the ‘kinder room’. AC1 had a dance background and RR was Croatian, had learnt English as a second language and was confident in using other languages when playing with the children. These staff were exceptions, and it is worth further exploring why this was the case.
8.6.1 Comment – Early childhood staff, music and diversity

The answer to the question “Do the Early Childhood Educators see the potential of using their music program as a strategy for exploring and promoting cultural diversity?” was verbally in the affirmative in relation to the music, noncommittal in terms of promoting diversity in the program and almost contradictory when their lack of active support was observed. This is a concern also discussed in the literature review. The way the staff used the music, for example at pack up time, with little reference to the music itself, even turning the CD off half way through the song, indicates a general lack of respect for this medium as evidenced by the way music was used to support routines and not given a voice in the program in its own right. Rinaldi (2006) discusses the importance of the arts as expressive voices for children that they should be respected for their aesthetic value and says that the aesthetics have rights in the Reggio Emillia programs. This is very different to the utilitarian approach to music taken by the staff in the centre. This seems generally to be the case in many centres in Australia as commented on by other researchers (de Vries, 2004, 2006; Suthers, 2004; 2008).

As well as including meaningful music experiences in undergraduate courses, as suggested by de Vries (2009), perhaps there is a need to recruit pre-service teachers who are more musically oriented and more committed to promoting cultural diversity. Indeed, the Music Council of Australia has identified pre-service teachers as a group to pay more attention to. In their policy statement, prepared by de Vries (2009) and addressed to the inquiry for the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care, the Music Council of Australia the following is stated:

Music training should be a requirement for all early childhood teachers and provision of such training should be added to the objectives following from the National Review of School Music Education. (p 1)

The need is even more pressing in zeitgeist where literacy and numeracy have become the raison d’être for education and increasingly emphasized in the government policy and
curriculum statements for the preschool year as well. The focus on early literacy has seen the arts take a secondary place in pre-service education and training and this is reflected in daily education experiences of children. Music especially is perceived as difficult and special expertise is needed to “do” music. This is less the case with the visual arts which are more visible in programs as expressive activities (Barrett, 1993). This latter point also relates to Ebbeck, Yim and Lee (2008) comments about teachers’ confidence and general level of happiness. As well as training, there are also implications about workloads, staff-child ratios, health and safety being privileged over the more creative and imaginative experiences and teachers being generally anxious about child behaviour. All these pressures must impact on relationships within the learning process. If teachers perceive themselves to be “to busy” and need to prioritise their tasks then lack of satisfactory music experiences might even create feelings of guilt. Such feelings are not conducive to encourage effective practice.

8.7 Discussion

The questions explored here are based on the idea that music education can have profound benefits for child group socialisation and their understanding and appreciation of culture and languages. Music is often associated with emotional expression and is used to help develop positive attitudes towards self and others (Burt, 2007). Music, when used as a teaching tool opens up new perspectives of novel concepts. A song about animals, for instance, has enormous potential to introduce children to an easy mnemonic about animal characteristics. The academic consensus is that early childhood is the best time to experience quality musical education as, developmentally, the early childhood stage is the most propitious time for children to develop interests and competence. A growing number of studies have put the spotlight on the fact that music, as one of the major expressive forms, is increasingly diminishing in early childhood curricula as pre-service education courses have changed and government curriculum documents increasingly concentrate on formal literacy and numeracy skills. The answers to the research questions of this thesis suggest that such a shift is not necessarily in line with the desires and convictions of parents and educators. Yet, a point has been reached where it is the children who have become the most active and vocal proponents of music and discoverers of cultural diversity. In the
present research program they became the catalysts of social diffusion.

Taking a step back to re-examine the data wholistically, the following statements can be made in reference to the research hypotheses: The original statement about music being relegated to a subsidiary position in the day to day curriculum was confirmed for this centre with adults actively supporting the notion of music in conversation but their actions belied this stated conviction. Studies discussed in the literature review suggest this is common-place and these staff members were in no way unusual. The lack of confidence they expressed is widely reported in the literature, too. Interestingly, some of the staff did have specific skills that could have been engaged to deliver versatile and enjoyable music session, but their overly critical self assessment seemed to have built up strong resistance to even make attempts. In some ways it resembles attitudes to the language of Mathematics, a domain in which many people claim incompetence without being able to articulate what it is they do not know and do not understand.

The research program and its outcomes met with the parents’ broad approval, but did not succeed in systematically integrating them as a substantial part of the music experience. Although the rhetoric in the centre’s philosophy statement promotes the idea of the parents as partners, in practical terms partnerships with families are extremely hard to define. The parents seemed satisfied if their children appeared to be happy and they liked the staff. The lack of deeper commitment to the internal affairs of the educational program is not just an issue for this particular research program, but is becoming a substantial concern with respect to the quality improvement and accreditation system. Receiving data is an integral part of both of these systems, but many child care centres report that parent feedback is becoming more and more difficult to obtain. Parents appear to be anxious about their children’s happiness and health, but do not see themselves as having an active role in a day-to-day program, which fosters both health and happiness. Such a demarcation of duty obviously has implications for all educational settings for children, especially very young children.

The children’s expectations of the music program were in many ways surpassed. The data clearly show how the children embraced the material they encountered. They quickly became competent as singers of songs and manipulators of the musical instruments. They
were able to draw quite abstract messages from playing with words of other languages and musical rhymes and patterns outside of their own culture. Their aptitude and interest in such activities is a strong argument for the importance of programs such as the one presented in this thesis. It also shows that there is a need to revisit the attitudes and values towards music that governments, training and education bodies, staff and families exhibit through lack of strong support for music an integral entity if early childhood programs. Group education and care settings with trained staff should be a place of opportunity for all children. In these spaces children must be able to receive a high quality education and, given its cultural importance, this must include music.

There are also implications here for how programs actually arrange and present experiences. While some early childhood educators decry group time as being too focused on achieving school readiness, this research program illustrates the idea that children can engage together, in small and large groups and these groups that are an effective avenue to scaffold learning. Group times and quality materials presented to and within groups should have their place in early childhood education. More attention should be paid to the content being explored and whether there is reciprocity in developing this content.

Another issue is that of aesthetics. As commented on earlier, this is a dimension of the early childhood program that has all but disappeared in recent years. Some centres who adopt particular approaches, like the Reggio Emilia approach, are more likely to be exceptions to this statement about aesthetics. Lack of attention to aesthetics is possibly part of the push down curriculum where formal learning takes precedence over developing personal tastes and a personal appreciation of beauty. Once again, the earlier point about literacy and numeracy becoming such singular focuses in early childhood has had an enormous and narrowing, impact on what is now considered appropriate education experiences for young children.

This chapter revisited the data from the three stake-holder groups and discussed their experiences and responses to the music project in relation to the research questions. To sum up the main points in this chapter are:

- In relation to the music sessions the groups were organised using different social
and educational aims than many group sessions. They proved to be socially successful. The children’s differing approaches to participation made the group experience valuable and this has implications for every day practice in early childhood settings.

- A socio-cultural approach to the shared experiences meant that children’s individual learning dispositions were visible.
- Children’s responses to the music sessions indicated there were sensitive to the content and also helped make the content accessible for others.
- Children took ownership of their own learning and were extremely receptive of the researcher whilst also integrating their own methods of music exploration into the context e.g. role play.
- The aim of exploring culturally diverse music as a valuable activity proved to be successful with the children showing interest, extending on the material through their level of engagement and playing with the words and items across play contexts.
- Parents were appreciative but only a few indicated an in-depth knowledge of the music project and most were not engaged. There are implications here for pre-service teacher education and the emphasis that is placed on parents as partners. If this is to become a reality there is a need to explore teacher – parent relationship and effective ways of communicating.
- The early childhood teachers who expressed an interest in cultural diversity stated they thought such knowledge was important but recognised it was not highly present in their program.
- Given the above the teachers gave verbal acknowledgement to using music to encourage the concept of diversity.

From this summary it can be seen that the music project was gauged to be a success for the children and less so for the parents and teachers. There is also the added issue that even for the children this was an intervention that took place over a number of weeks, therefore there was no opportunity for long term growth. These concerns are discussed in Chapter IX.
CHAPTER IX: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Introduction

This final chapter of the thesis takes a step back and looks at the implications of the research program. This thesis makes a contribution in the domain of research methodology and data treatment as well as in the rich description of a music learning program designed for an early childhood education setting. The music project explicitly featured elements of cultural diversity. With respect to the methodological approach, in this thesis, there was an emphasis on the use of multiple qualitative research tools. Furthermore, in terms of data structuring and refinement, this thesis presents a cohesive argument for the proliferation of narrative inquiry, through learning stories in this case, especially when a study purports to be naturalistic. Regarding such naturalistic methods, it is argued in the thesis that insights gained from the current research can be translated into early childhood policy or practice guidelines. Concrete suggestions have been offered. Lastly, the emergent nature of the research approach used in this thesis has opened the way for further enquiries into the relationship between early music education and cultural diversity, both on a micro- and on a macro level. The aims of the present chapter therefore are to (a) integrate the findings of this research into the existing literature and policy texts, (b) discuss design and methodological issues and (c) formulate how future research can complement the current work.

9.2 Integrating the findings of this research into the existing literature

The research reported in this thesis found that children were responsive to the music project but findings about staff responsiveness resembled much of the literature that already exists (e.g. de Vries, 2006).

As mentioned in Chapter VIII, there seems to be an issue about how music is considered by policy makers, curriculum designers and therefore staff, parents and community. In this research it was evident that parents especially were not actively involved in the children’s education program, which included the music project. This lack of awareness of the benefits that come with an adequate music education from an early age is not limited to parents,
who understandably are overwhelmed by the many competing suggestions about what is best for their child. If children come from a home rich in music they will have early childhood experiences in this important language of childhood. However, if not, then there is not a strong commitment, or will, to build music into the present early childhood curriculum in a meaningful way. This is evidenced by the publicity and consultations around the new National Early Childhood Curriculum, *Belonging, Being and Becoming* (DEEWR, 2009) which has been overwhelming, especially for practitioners. This document is hardly supportive of a strong music program in the early years and makes scant mention of this significant cultural language of childhood. Early childhood educators seem to struggle with the necessary insight to use music for more than just ‘a time filler’ or as the background for other activities. This, again, is not surprising as a more elaborate application of music in the early childhood setting generally needs to be taught, including the range of strategies to implement an adequate music program, an understanding of the difficulties that may present themselves and a general appreciation of the factors that affect learning and using music with young children. The intricacies of teaching music, however, have never been at the fore of the list of things prospective educators have been trained in and lately the already subdued attention to music has been further diminished.

In September 2008, the Victorian Department of Education published its new five year plan for education and early childhood development. Amidst a flurry of jargon and lofty promises about the best possible teachers in the best possible programs, the report emphasised the need to ensure children’s physical health, while simultaneously fostering their numeracy and literacy skills. No mention was made of children’s artistic development: visual, musical or other. This position is not new. A year prior the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet (COAG, 2007) released a report outlining the state’s plan to improve early childhood education outcomes. In this report no reference to children’s artistic development is to be found, either. Similar documents about the future of Australian early childhood education are much the same – they describe the structural changes that will support the development of all young children, yet they remain hazy with respect to what and how children should and would like to actually learn and explore (e.g. DEECD, 2009; DEEWR, 2009). It thus appears that Australia’s federal and state policy makers are not encouraging music education in the early childhood setting, although they also do not
discourage it as long as music education does not interfere with the literacy and numeracy targets.

While this last comment may appear cynical at first, it should be noted that the government’s singling out of literacy, numeracy and physical health (including fitness and healthy eating) has had an indirect impact on the scope of music as part of the early childhood educators training program. Nyland and Ferris (2007) noted that a study of early childhood teacher education program structures across Australian universities indicated that in most places music education had lost its separate standing as a subject in its own rights and has predominantly been treated as just one of many forms of creative expressions, collectively labelled ‘the Arts’. In light of the fact that the cognitive processes underlying emerging musical literacy are the same processes that children engage in multi-literacy situations (McCusker, 2007) this de-emphasis of music is unjustified.

9.2.1 Empowering design: A program for children versus children for a program

This present research was supported by early childhood literature that emphasizes the importance of the social milieu. Since the present study was set up against the theoretical background of a socio-cultural model (Carr, 2001) children were considered to be ‘partners’ or ‘collaborators’ rather than objects of study. The aim was to stimulate children's creative and participatory input and to encourage a sense of ownership of the sessions and the music learning centre. For the researcher this meant being mindful of the children’s right to choose to participate and to provide them with all information and liberties to make an informed choice about their level of involvement (Robins, 2003).

In attempting to make the study transparent to the children, the researcher, as Fasoli (2003) suggests, tried to provide opportunities for them to become aware of the data collection, procedures and equipment. The Learning Stories approach facilitated this two way communication; letting the children see what was recorded and giving them an active role in the generation and selection of data. For example, the children were invited to choose the photos they liked and place them in the data pool for interpretation. On a few occasions Gagi and Lou adopted role of photographers and would take photos for the study and the other children. Sometimes the children would signal when to take a photo. For
instance, Robie wanted to have a photo of his “Lady who swallowed a paper” (Appendix A, Music Session 14) or his “House for a miniature Japanese doll” (Figure 51).

Figure 50. Robie proud of his magnificent work.

Treating the children as collaborators required respect for their routines and preferences. This meant that the researcher strove to adapt to the children’s previous experiences and learning preferences and designed the program and delivery accordingly. For example, when considering the main features of the program, the researcher endeavoured to select numerous songs that were educationally appropriate and suitable for the program. However, only after meeting the children prior to and during the program delivery, the particular song and teaching strategies employed to introduce it to the children were chosen. Moreover, since the children were dealing with novel material they first had to have time to develop their own ideas and opinions about how to engage with this material and therefore the program evolved in a non-linear fashion.

To further ensure that the program reflected the children's interests, they were continuously encouraged to express their opinion. Perhaps years of personal and professional experience of working with preschool children enabled the researcher to accommodate and modify the program sufficiently and effectively. It would have been highly ineffective and inappropriate to insist on ‘sharing’ the material ‘one way’ and not to allow the children to participate in the process of decision making.

The researcher was careful to design the study around the concept of reciprocity. Gallop (2000) noted that in any given study it is the researcher who wants something of the participants (in this case the children). If the children, however, do not want anything of the
researcher or have nothing to gain from participation, then this can lead to a lack of personal investment by the children (Sumison, 2003). Conducting the music sessions, which the children looked forward to, and creating a music space for children’s spontaneous play was a strategy to help realise the children’s participation. The children could enjoy the benefits they perceived in the project. Moreover, the application of a socio-cultural model meant that children were able to enjoy the creative and participatory privileges in the study.

Child involvement and ownership in the present research program, was indicated through many of the children’s comments and requests. Children took over the responsibility for aspects of the program (“I’ll do the mats”), directed the decisions about session content (“Let’s do Umma Lella song”), anticipated future content (“Can we have another big drum, next time?”) and oversaw whether the program developed according to what had been negotiated (“Did you bring more puppets?”). On one occasion the researcher arrived at the centre to meet with the PT teacher. It was not the day she generally visited the centre to conduct the music sessions, and she had not intended to do so on the day. When the children spotted the researcher, however, they excitedly approached her and demanded that she stay and do a music session. For this research, it was essential to hear the children’s voice and thus, the researcher relented and joined an unplanned music session with the children. Children’s voices were actively sought in this participatory research project and this is an approach that is affirmed by the research literature cited in the thesis. The researcher could also take pleasure in conducting the research in an atmosphere of such positive relationships.

9.3 Design and methodological issues

The research described here was naturalistic, observations were uncontrolled and the researcher became an active participant in the children’s experiences. This led to the development of rich in depth knowledge of the centre and the program and close observations of children’s relationships, interests and aspirations. These characteristics were strength of the research as well as challenges.

9.3.1 Study characteristics: Factors that affected the design, delivery and assessment of the music program
In interpreting the results of the research program and assessing its methodological rigour, it becomes necessary to discuss some of the constraints related to the chosen research design. First, the strong emphasis on constructivist philosophy and, derived from it, the partnership with children at the forefront of methodological considerations had a decisive influence on the progression of the study. Second, the decision by staff to take a passive observer role rather than to be in an active delivery role had profound implications for the way the program was run, but, more importantly, it also affected the quality and quantity of data that could be collected without compromising the educational responsibilities.

Third, the progression of the research program was guided by ethical considerations which featured prominently in this thesis due to the strong emphasis on qualitative data collection. The following sections will look at these issues in detail.

9.3.2 Strengths and limitations of the methodology and the methods used: On the research tightrope

Every choice of research design comes with an inherent set of strengths, but, unavoidably, also with a set of weaknesses (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). The following section analyses the aspects of the research program that made it particularly suitable to the given study context, but also reflects on limitations arising as a result of the selected methodology.

One aspect of the research methodology that impacted on the results was the decision to adopt a qualitative focus. As demonstrated in the thesis, qualitative research approaches are capable of providing a complete, detailed description of a situation. Moreover, the data are not linked to a particular theme or topic or item, but instead provide a contextual snapshot often with rich, in-depth detail (Mertens, 2005). Given the organic development of the music sessions and the music learning centre, this approach was highly successful as it allowed for the analyses of data along many different thematic pathways. For example, during the course of the program it became obvious that older children role modelled and shared their knowledge with the younger children in the group. The learning stories of the early sessions depicted this behaviour and thus this facet of the program could be investigated in the various ways in which it occurred. The manner in which the sessions
unfolded also made it possible for the children to often take the lead and their interests and explorations became the focus.

This qualitative approach also made possible recording and reproduction of participants’ expressions in their own words. This is a generally undervalued aspect: reading how children describe their own musical experiences and how these same experiences are described by adults tells us something about where children’s priorities lie, how to talk to them in a way they understand and appreciate how adults may misunderstand children’s behaviour and intentions. For this research the children’s voices were extremely important.

However, a drawback to a qualitative approach is that their findings cannot be easily generalised to wider populations. From a constructivist perspective, this is a perfectly acceptable caveat as discovery and acquisition of knowledge is highly specific to each child and each learning context. This is not to say that there is no applicability of research insights from one study to the next. A music learning centre and music sessions as described here will almost certainly be successful elsewhere.

The chosen tool for recording and interpreting much of the data was Learning Stories and these provide detailed, rich data that can also profile the cultural context with the child as learner as a unit of analysis. As a narrative inquiry method Learning Stories have a role that can be generalized because of their value as a research tool in early childhood settings. Learning stories are increasingly being used in arts based research because they allow for multiple voices and shared perspective.

In this present research the Learning Stories are evocative of the children’s learning but input from the wider community of parents and staff was not readily available. The limited responses from these two stakeholder groups were a limitation of the research project. The design of the Learning Stories proved effective as research method but could have been used to provide even broader insights into what was happening within the music project. It also meant that except for the odd occasion data was only available for periods when the researcher was present. Other qualitative researchers using participant observation have had the same experience. De Vries (2006), too, laments that only limited data were available for the periods of time that he was not at the centre, despite the fact that staff had been
asked to take notes.

9.3.3 Including everyone

In early childhood settings all children have a right to participate in relevant learning experiences. Because this research consisted of an ‘intervention’ (not originally intended) by an outsider, meant that not all children were present when the researcher visited. This was one aspect of the project that was not satisfactory. In the same way centres who use outside specialists will usually exclude some children. This is why it is important that research like this strives to find ways of empowering generalist staff to share experiences of music and diversity with children. This conviction is shared by other researchers. De Vries (2006) in discussing the literature on sustainable learning from teacher professional development days highlighted the importance of ongoing support, or adequate follow up to the professional development sessions. He believes that developing the necessary skills to provide quality music education is possible for most early childhood educators. De Vries (2006) showed how a professional development program focusing on nine key skills can lead to significant improvements in teachers' aptitude and attitude to music.

Other studies have suggested that with adequate support and encouragement attitudinal change can take place. Research by Ebbeck, Yim and Lee (2008) presented data suggestive of an increase of confidence between pre-service and in-service teachers. The in-service teachers felt more confident to provide music education than pre-service teachers, however, it is not clear whether this result might not reflect a higher level of apprehension about teaching in general for pre-service teachers. In-service teachers also felt happier about music education. Ebbeck et al. further argued that teacher happiness about teaching music might also contribute to the effectiveness of the program. According to these researchers there is an indirect link between teachers' perceived happiness and educational outcomes, mediated by their intrinsic motivation to teach: happy teachers have more intrinsic motivation and thus achieve better learning outcomes. This is an important finding that should be further explored.

Another aspect of ‘inclusion’ was to do with arrangements within the centre itself. Even though all children from the kinder room were invited to participate, and the majority of
them did, it was not possible to include everyone from the group due to the centre’s schedule and routines. A number of children simply did not attend on the day when the sessions were conducted. Some parents even had to change the days their children attended so that they could at least sometimes attend a music session. These parents (Olga’s and Petra’s mothers) took notice of the music project and provided the researcher with positive feedback reporting that their children learned some of the songs from their peers. However, what happened many of the other children is not clear. It would have been of interest to explore how the non-participating children responded to the music corner. There was at one point a concern expressed by the children who participated in the music sessions that some of their “other” peers “did not look after” the music corner.

The children’s awareness of each other and the music was interesting to observe and was a timely reminder of how much children learn by being participant observers themselves. Everyday interactions among children are fertile grounds for the progression of musical knowledge and conventions. As they are constructing musical cultural conventions, children gradually build up a stock of shared customs and actions that are understood by all group members. The success of this process is elevated when the groups contain children of mixed abilities. Young children are provided with an extra source of information while older children profit from rehearsing acquired knowledge in the sharing process. Additionally, group times and peer education strengthen the group cohesion and can bring about new friendships. An over-reliance on peer education, however, would ignore that without any support provided by a teacher, the repertoire of musical cultural shared knowledge would remain fairly limited. It is important, though, that teachers appreciate and foster peer learning to make children feel that construction of their cultures is valued. These are the learning opportunities that children miss if shared music experiences are not an integral part of daily life at the centre.

9.3.4 Issues of being a Participant Observer

This is an issue other researchers have encountered (Berger & Cooper, 2003; de Vries, 2006; Suthers, 2004). De Vries (2006) embraced the dual role of researcher and research participant and he, too, was conscious of and remarked on the problem of continuously delineating the two functions. This was certainly the case in this present research where the
researcher often had to wear a number of hats and sometimes change them constantly.

During the delivery stage of the music program, the researcher was acting as a collector of data and as an active member of the group simultaneously. Quite obviously this double role always entails the danger that data are lost because of the researcher’s commitment to the teaching aspect of the project and thus experiences a lack of capacity for recording. To some extent this can be offset by asking other members of staff to take notes or photographs. This, however, is not a reliable strategy. As the present study showed, documentary support from staff varied widely – while some took a multitude of shots capturing many highly meaningful situations, others took only very few, or only commonplace pictures, which afforded little new analytical insight. De Vries faced similar issues of reliability when relying on staff as research partners and data collectors. In his study only limited data were available for the periods of time that he was not at the centre. Similarly, in this present study, the fact that staff viewed the researcher primarily as a colleague – and music specialist – meant that they did not undertake a systematic record of observations for the time that the researcher was not present in the centre.

Conversely, to the problem of potential data loss because of wearing the researcher hat, the wearing of educator hat also proved problematic at times. The provision of sessions sometimes suffered due to obligations associated with the research role, for example, fixing or looking after recording equipment. Both kinds of disruption occurred occasionally during the course of the study. While they did not result in a significant loss of data, or disturbance to the children, they were undesirable nevertheless. Moreover, this dual role dilemma also had an impact on the issue of reflexivity as feedback was mainly limited to the researcher’s observations and the children’s voice of experience.

In order to deal with reflexivity and minimise disruptions, the researcher attempted to maintain constant self-awareness of the role occupied at a given moment. This was also necessary in order to avoid changing the nature of the situation in a way that would disrupt the study. As McMillan and Schumacher (2006) note “... the data contain the researcher’s reflections on his or her own experiences as well as those of the real participants, [hence] the dual-role researcher must be exceedingly sensitive regarding which voice is represented in the study” (p.345). An aggregation of one’s own and participant impressions can be
buffered by using ‘reflexivity strategies’ as described by Pillow (2003). This, for example, meant that the researcher needed to be aware of her own background and extensive experience as an early childhood professional and how this history affected expectations of the early childhood setting as an educational environment. For example, the researcher was from time to time frustrated with the aesthetic appeal of the room that the music sessions were conducted in. The researcher also regularly shared her impressions with the participants and other informed colleagues, asking them their opinions about what she had written, which sometimes led to useful insights. Also, the multi-method approach was employed in order to safeguard against information selection bias.

Despite the potential pitfalls that lie within the researcher - participant approach, it has some distinct advantages while avoiding problems plaguing alternative strategies. Occupying both roles at the same time meant that the researcher had direct access to the children during the whole course of the music sessions. This reduced the dependency on second-hand reports, which can be problematic as the adult’s reproduction of children’s speech often eradicates authentic and meaningful aspects of their expressed ideas. Similarly, delivering the program ensured that it would comply with intended ideas. Furthermore, the children became accustomed to the researcher, which enabled her to adjust the program spontaneously. This would have been more difficult if the researcher had not delivered the program directly. The other alternative, that a third person would collect the data, is not much more appealing since this person would not have much contact with the children otherwise and, as an observer, might disrupt the usual intimacy present between children and the teacher-researcher.

An issue related to that of the dual-role is the problem of reactivity. Qualitative research depends to a great extent on the interpersonal contact between researcher and participants. Reactivity is created when the presence of the researcher changes the nature of the situation from what it would be otherwise. Reducing reactivity largely depends on the skills of the inquirer (Pillow, 2003). It was important to build trust in those involved in the research, but further down the track good relations needed to be maintained. Throughout the study, the norms of the situation were respected. Lastly, the approach to data collection and analysis was non-judgmental. In this study reactivity was partially addressed by structuring the project into different phases with smooth transitions and sufficient forerun
for each of the participants. Parents and staff were briefed on the study before data were collected. Similarly, children were familiarised with the presence of the researcher and the camera before the study commenced. These measures seemed to have taken effect, since both the staff and parents confirmed that children felt completely comfortable and eager to be part of the music project. Further evidence for this comes from the children, who adopted a playful approach to the sessions and actively participated in decision making in relation to the music sessions, the music learning centre, as well as data collection, selection and presentation. Some children perceived photo recordings as a game, which they were able to participate in if they wanted to.

The researcher conducted the music sessions in a manner that could be done by any other, generalist early childhood educator who work with the children. She demonstrated how music can be shared with young children, recorded the sessions and collaborated with other parties involved. This approach was in line with the naturalistic character of the research, and in the context of teaching in learning in early childhood settings was thought to be appropriate, sound and ethical. However, for the purpose of researching with young children in an early childhood settings, the possibility of involving another observer, who would also document the music sessions, is one to consider. Having an additional observer could provide another perspective and therefore probably more in-depth insights into varied aspects of the music sessions. To illustrate, the use of photographs is a good example. The photos of the music sessions were taken by different people, including staff, children and the researcher herself. While this was done in a way that would usually happen in early childhood settings, it is evident that these visual records vary. Whereas keeping this naturalistic approach is essential, it could be advantageous to have the music sessions also photographed by this, ‘second participant observer’ as this could perhaps provide a more consistent and systematic visual data set. Furthermore, the researcher and the second observer could then regularly discuss what to observe and how to take photographs (i.e. what to focus on, which moments to capture, when to take photos, which angle to take, the quantity and distribution of photos).
9.3.5 Confidentiality and consent

A general concern for researchers working with young children is increasingly that of right and consent (MacNaughton, Smith & Davis, 2007). Since children were meant and did take, an integral position in the design of the music program, it became clear that their involvement had to be substantial and the documentation of their actions varied and extensive to capture their individual interactions with the concepts being explored. This consideration introduced numerous ethical issues that needed addressing. Furthermore, the additional participation of staff and parents placed different ethical responsibilities on the researcher.

The overarching principles of maintenance of confidentiality and protection of privacy applied to all participants. Similarly, participation was entirely voluntary: Each participant was able to withdraw from the study at any time. In practical terms that often meant that if individual children did not feel like participating in the group music sessions, they did not have to. The question of consent was a special dilemma for the young children and there is a growing awareness of children’s rights when they are asked to participate in research (Alderson, 2008; Birbeck & Drummond, 2007). Children do not usually understand the ethical issues involved and, hence, it is mainly a question for the primary contact staff to have the children participate. In this study, consent was formally obtained from the parents or guardians, but children were additionally asked whether they would like to be photographed and interviewed and if they would agree that the researcher would “tell other people what they said”. In addition, the children were encouraged to participate in the selection of their photos for the display and the Learning Stories. All participants were fully briefed about the study’s aims and the nature of the program as this was thought to help all those involved to open up to the study and to embrace the opportunities for development that came with it. Some of the children even chose to take their own photographs (Clarke & Moss, 2005). Full disclosure has the secondary benefit of gaining parent support and involvement if parents perceive the program to have a direct effect on their child (Bull, Brooking & Campbell, 2008).
9.4 Implications and Recommendations

This research and the findings that have emerged suggest that the following recommendations for further research, policy development or changes to practice would benefit children’s early musical experiences in Australian early childhood settings.

9.4.1 Further research

Research will have an ongoing role to play in the development of music education. Part of it will be the monitoring of the state of music education in early childhood settings – an issue that has been increasingly discussed in recent years. Another role will be to develop resources for teachers to work with, strategies to get teachers, parents and children involved and ways to link music education seamlessly with other concepts such as diversity education. Research will also maintain its role as a way of advocating for policy and curriculum change. Lastly, research, as Bresler (2007) put it, will be “[r]esponding to the need of accountability [and] ... provide important evidence of the various contributions of music to children’s development and growth” (p. vii).

A practical example of how previous research facilitated the development of new materials is described in Poston-Anderson and de Vries (2000). Based on a review of existing literature these researchers established that active participation had been found to be important for enjoyable activities for children (e.g. Wood, 1997). Thus, in the design stage of the musical play the two researchers put much thought and effort into allowing for audience interaction extending this to a point where the audience (children) could even decide which scene would be played next.

9.4.1.1 Learning Stories and using Photographs in research

Learning Stories, originally designed to support the recording, planning and assessment of bi-lingual, bi-cultural early childhood programs in New Zealand have become an important research tool for researchers who pursue a socio-cultural perspective. Though not integral to
the narrative approach of learning stories, visual images have become a significant part of these records. They certainly make the stories available to the children for re-visiting and re-telling. Research with children and the use of visual images to help the children collaborate has become increasingly popular (Walters, 2003). This present study used photographs extensively to support the Learning stories, as ‘Running records’ and to help the children have a visual and aesthetic identity within the context. The latter refers to the children’s photos being placed around the mirror when extraneous materials had been removed (see Figure 52). The children also took photos (Figure 53, 54, 55 &56). They usually took close up shots of their peers or objects important to them. Figure 53 shows Lou’s interest in taking photos from the very beginning of the study. Initially, she did not know how to use the digital camera. She wanted to take a photo of the researcher’s hand. The researcher demonstrated how to use the camera and Lou had some practice. Eventually, she managed to take the photo of an intended motif.

Figure 51. Children’s portraits in a frame symbolizing their belonging.

Figure 52. Lou practiced camera handling; finding the focal motif - hand.
Figure 53. Gagi took photos in Music Session 9; being “trees” of ‘Okina Kurino’ song.

Figure 54. Robie took a photo of the ‘scene’ in the Music Session 8; and later on, a picture of Rea exploring the castanets.

Figure 55. Gagi photographed children who modeled handling the musical instruments the correct way for a display in the ‘Music Learning Centre.’

This increased use of photography and the access to digital technology means this way of recording and interpreting experience has become inexpensive and accessible to most. Given this, the use of visual images in research could be more thoroughly investigated from a number of angles. Alternative ways of presenting visual data could be explored. For
instance, it would be interesting to see how the children would respond to photos stripped of their colour (Figure 57). Would they be able to recognize the situations and recall events? Would they be able to identify themselves and others in the photos?

Figure 56. An example of a photo stripped of colour.

9. 4.1.2 Working with Children

The music sessions in the present study were mainly targeted at children aged 3-4. At the present point, where music education is generally absent from early childhood education, this seemed an appropriate choice. However, future research might investigate other ways in which music education programs can be implemented for younger children. This endeavor is particularly worthwhile given that the first three years of life have been found to be the most significant in the development of cognitive skills (see, for example, Oberklaid, 2005; Heckman, 2006) and it is in the first three years that children enter the adult world of language and culture (Brock & Rankin, 2008).

As this study showed, children are very receptive to music and quickly adopt musical content into their play (e.g. Lou, Inja, Laura, Kasja and Aki, singing songs learned during the sessions at other times during the week). It would, therefore, appear to be a worthwhile activity to invest more time and effort into music exploration and experimentation as
opposed to an approach where it is used mainly for entertainment purposes. In this respect future research can make an important contribution by corroborating mounting evidence of decreasing musical abilities in young children (e.g. Hoffman, 2006). Some teachers have recognised the missed opportunities associated with a curriculum devoid of music and taken matters in their own hands (see Kagan, 2006, for an example), but educational research could make a difference by conducting additional studies that evaluate easy-to-learn programs for teachers, with the aim of empowering those that do not feel musically confident to be able to incorporate meaningful music content into their teaching (de Vries, 2006, made some useful suggestions in this direction).

9.4.1.3 Working with staff

In this study the permanent staff (the Preschool teacher -PT & the Preschool Assistant -PA) were often absent when the music sessions were on. In addition, on several occasions, due to other commitments with either school or family, PT had to cancel scheduled meetings with the researcher. The researcher had been asked to use these meetings for sharing the relevant information and for the purpose of staff music development and was asked to provide more information on ‘Learning Stories’ method. Therefore, initially the music research was seen as an opportunity for professional development for the staff. That it did not come to pass is possibly a reflection on working lives within early childhood settings. Staff have a very busy life and it might have been better to leave options open and not to set high expectations for participation. As Sumsion (2005) has commented, child care staff are traditionally undervalued, under paid and overworked.

As mentioned earlier in the inclusion and participant observer sections of this chapter, the researcher had not originally wanted to adopt a researcher/ participant model. The main staff participants were at the outset invited by the researcher to conduct the music sessions and the researcher would have a facilitative role. However, the PT and the PA expressed a strong preference for the researcher to carry out and record the music sessions. Similarly, the staff were happy to let the researcher design and re-design the music learning centre as long as they were consulted in relation to the room space and safety of the children. They wanted to learn from a demonstration, so, from the very beginning of the
study, the researcher was perceived as a ‘music specialist’ and the music program was largely reliant on her presence. For the researcher this experience was satisfying and empowering in some ways, but frustrating in others ways. The staff’s high regard of the researcher’s input and a request of her to deliver the program was interpreted as a compliment and a sign of trust. However, this perception of an ‘expert’ seemed to have created a barrier for these staff to take on an active participation in the music project, as if they considered themselves as unqualified to teach music and they lacked music specialist knowledge. Hash (2010) showed that beginning teachers harbor exactly this attitude. In the present study, the researcher felt that the children could greatly benefit from a more active engagement of their room-educators. Generalist staff spend copious amounts of time with the children and therefore have ample opportunities to gain deeper insight into the children’s musical competence and development in general. They guide children’s learning and set key learning targets. Including staff in the research is worthwhile, as they are not only a source of invaluable information on the children but also because they can re-iterate messages or content more continuously than an external investigator can. The music project was highly appreciated and supported by the staff that provided valuable anecdotal information and feedback, yet, neither the music learning centre nor music sessions continued after the music project was completed, even though the children clearly expressed interest and requested more music. The idea of having a ‘specialist’ to carry out a program in the centre had its advantages, but once the program was completed, the music program was not sustainable.

A study conducted by de Vries (2006) showed the benefits of supporting teachers’ early steps in music education by providing them with material and ongoing training. It was planned to incorporate these elements into the present research study. However, this study did not succeed in establishing ongoing support routines beyond the withdrawal of the researcher/participant. De Vries notes that this might be an important step and noted that three months after the conclusion of his guided program the resources that had been obtained were still used in the appropriate way. This was not the case in the present study. When the researcher – the perceived music specialist – was not there, the children still used the items in the music learning centre, but often for entirely different purposes than during the session times. Staff did not use the resources at all and were, in fact, concerned that
they might get damaged. For de Vries’ sample of participants, time was still set aside to specifically teach children about music. However, the degree to which they implemented music seemed to have decreased because, as staff reported, they lacked both time to adequately prepare and understanding of how to further the structure of the music sessions. The same observation was made for the present research program.

As these observations show, it is unlikely that it is a lack of resources that inhibits greater engagement. Educationally appropriate music material and suggestions for activities and games are plentiful and easily accessible online. The core problem instead seems to be that either, staff still do not feel comfortable enough to teach music, or that they have not gotten into the habit of doing so and preparing music session demands a considerable effort for them, than alternative activities. It is a question for further research whether additional ongoing support and in what form, could bring about more sustainable change. Is it a question of prompts, where e-mail or SMS reminders could alert teachers to the need to include music in their curriculum, or a question of more supervised practise, where interaction with the researcher is slowly paced out over a longer period as de Vries (2006) advocates? Do staff need to be provided with suggestions and written instruction on how to use materials, as de Vries did, or should they instead be left to generate their own content? Such questions deserve further attention.

Reviewing the process of working together Poston-Anderson and de Vries (2000) wrote about the necessary elements leading to successful research collaboration. In their opinion “proximity of partners, explicit definitions of roles and shared responsibility” (p. 8) were the most important factors. They further noted that consideration of each other and a feeling of dependability were critical, too. Reviewing the results of the present study, it appears that similar factors would also be key determinants of successful collaboration between researchers and early childhood professionals. For example, the notion of explicit roles was not fully articulated in the present research study. Staff were aware and had clear expectations about what the researcher was doing, but their contribution to the research was left undefined. Further research could explore whether this approach facilitates or inhibits staff commitment.
9.4.1.4 Working with parents

The early childhood literature promotes partnerships with parents and many texts suggest strategies for communicating with children’s families. As the child’s most important developmental context the family must be included in the child’s educational endeavors. However, maybe more sustained research is needed to explore communicative strategies that would assist staff in early childhood settings and parents in having a greater understanding of each other’s roles and therefore being able to share the child’s education experiences as a collaborative exercise. In this research the parent literature was consulted and many and varied attempts were made to reach out to parents and share the music initiatives being introduced. Many strategies came straight from text books, suggestions from staff and the researcher’s own professional experience. The limited success these strategies met with suggest more sophisticated and in depth knowledge of the relationship between parents and staff is needed.

There are many issues that acted as constraints and maybe we expect wrong things from parents. In this research, the music session time could not change due to the ‘family grouping’ that happens in the centre in the mornings and afternoons. Most parents were using the centre because they were working. Is there an inherent contradiction between the two functions of the child care centre that is work place support and education? This study, like others before (e.g. McLaughlin, 1991; Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke, 2000) aimed to highlight the importance of including significant others from the child’s environment. Some children brought knowledge gathered at home to the music sessions; Aki, for instance, sang ‘Okino Kurino’ she learned from her family. Rea focused more on non-English songs, which is consistent with her mother’s endeavour to expand her children’s interest in other cultures. The fact that some parents of children participating in this study strongly endorsed the music program certainly contributed to the children’s attitude and ease of engagement.

9.4.2 Policy development

In 2006, the Council of Australia Governments (COAG) indicated that research into the provision of childcare, as well as preschool education and literacy should be given a higher priority in the future. Following this announcement more and more studies have looked at
the state of music education in the early childhood context with largely similar results. Building on the insights gathered already and the research that is yet to come, there is a clear mandate to establish new policies that will support a more committed vision towards music education. The following section outlines the direction in which future policies could be developed.

9.4.2.1 Curriculum that supports an active music program

As curriculum documents become increasingly an instrument for policy and service delivery then there is a need for these frameworks to support good practice in the arts as well as promoting popular initiatives of the day. There is research and experience to indicate that music is an important aspect of human culture and childcare centres, which are a significant part of the culture of childhood, should be a place where this culture is celebrated and enhanced through diversity of experience. It will only be through meaningful commitment that the arts will take their rightful place in the early childhood curriculum. There is an identified need for music to be recognized in government policy documents.

Policy support is also increasingly vital in light of future teacher’s deteriorated attitudes towards music. Hash (2010) found that pre-service teachers consider music as one art among many. Further, the study showed that pre-service teachers also have an expectation that music ought to be taught by a specialist. If the erosion of confidence to teach music and the lack of insight of music’s unique and independent contribution to young children’s development is the result of weakened policy, then it will be necessary to reverse this trend to re-establish music in the classroom.

9.4.2.2 Implications of specialist programs not being inclusive

As music dwindles from the university programs for pre-service teachers there is an increasing reliance on visiting specialist programs or music teachers. For children, who learn most effectively through play the idea of a weekly session is not the most beneficial way to be introduced a new concept or language. There is also an issue of access as such programs
have an added cost and may be beyond the reach of many families already paying high child care fees. This is an equity concern.

9.4.2.3 Staff pre-Service Training and Education

Staff training could also focus on a change to teachers’ self-perception in their role as facilitators of a music program. As Prendergast (2008) notes, staff actions are described, seen and thought of in terms of ‘performance’ – in other words staff adopt a particular role. The nature of the performance and the requisite actions can be perceived in a vastly different way. Sawyer (2004), for instance, sees teaching as improvisational performance. He argues that this definition implies a high degree of collaboration and the essentially emergent nature that ought to be a substantial part of education. Adopting such a role model to guide their professional development, staff may be more inclined to engage in activities where they are less proficient and where their collaboration with children results in true co-construction. Young (2006) makes a similar point in reasoning that much music in early childhood is performance because of the manner in which it is organised, usually around large groups, relying on the teacher leading and children practicing repertoire. If staff could rethink their roles and emphasise children’s agency and the importance of play then the place of music in the curriculum and staff anxiety might change.

9.4.2.4 Staff Professional Development

Teacher support through professional development sessions requires a separate mention here. De Vries’ (2006) study showed that good teacher professional development does impact on staff motivation and capacity to teach music (see also Kent, 2004). During the course of his development program, staff commenced holding music sessions independently, where none had been before. This involved a method of professional development delivered through direct demonstration which was also designed to kick-start an interest in music among the entire early childhood community. De Vries reported that staff were highlighting children’s musical accomplishments to parents, who, in turn, would approach the researcher to talk about their interactions with their children about music. In
response to the strong parental interest, De Vries even conducted a workshop for parents.

This format of professional development workshops has some appeal on a number of grounds. First, it enables music work with multiple teachers at the same time and is a time-efficient way of disseminating information. Second, just as the children can scaffold each others’ learning during the music session, so too can teachers scaffold each others’ learning during a professional development session. Third, professional development sessions are an opportunity for teachers to further their knowledge in areas of interest. As has been shown in this thesis and other studies (e.g. Sharpe et al., 2005), teachers are generally very supportive of the idea of incorporating music into the curriculum. Attending a professional development session can also have the psychological effect of feeling that they have taken the first pro-active step in the direction of more and better music education. In terms of community-based social marketing models (e.g. McKenzie-Mohr, 2010) attending a professional development workshop is a form of public commitment, which, according to cognitive dissonance theory principles, should eventually lead to further actions in the right direction. In summary, developing the necessary skills to provide quality music education is possible for most early childhood educators. De Vries (2006) showed how a professional development program focusing on nine key skills can lead to significant improvements in teachers’ aptitude and attitude to music. The approach warrants further investigation.

Teacher as researcher has also become a focus in recent years. According to current policy guidelines (DEEWR, 2009) teachers already are supposed to fulfil a host of tasks more traditionally associated with a research role. The present thesis underlines the usefulness of such an approach. The role of the researcher in the research programme was essentially that of teacher/ researcher. From a constructivist perspective, this pairing of roles was highly beneficial as the insights gained from the learning stories (researcher role) were influencing and steering the course of activities that were carried out (teacher role). Teacher reflections published in the literature (Custodero & St. John, 2007; Suthers & Niland, 2007) also show how classroom research can directly influence planning and implementing the future music experiences. Just like Berger and Cooper (2003), however, it is important to document the design of the research component – and there should be a design – to document the classroom context, and the findings. Arthur et al. (2008) and Pillow (2003) provide an interesting insight into how teachers can reflect on their work and many of the strategies
were successfully implemented in the present study, too.

9.5 Practice

This penultimate section of the thesis summarises some aspects of the research program that worked well in the child care context or alludes to elements that could improve practice as indicated by this study or the literature. Already discussed has been the value of learning stories, various uses of photography and the teachers’ predicament. What has also emerged has been the use of groups as social learning contexts.

9.5.1 A different perspective on ‘mat time’: Using the social group to enhance music learning

This research has indicated that it is possible to rethink large groups in early childhood settings. Research into large groups has found them to be an ineffective way of stimulating children’s learning. (eg. Gibbs & Wilks, 1991). However, the reciprocal relationships, collaborative efforts, acceptance of differing ways of participating or not participating meant these groups were very different from a session where children will passively follow the teacher’s lead. Advantages to offering children a group activity were observed. There may be educational benefits to group time that are yet to be explored. Specifically, group time provides children with incentives and opportunities for varied and pronounced social interactions, especially in the form of playing games. Musical games can easily be enjoyed by children in a group setting even at a very early age (McDonald & Simons, 1989) and fosters their social and musical development (Marsh, 2004).

9.6 Conclusion

If musical artists wished to see an immediate reaction to their work, they should perform in front of young children. Whereas adults often hide their reactions to compositions, to rhythms and songs, children usually display openly how they feel about what they hear: If they like the sound they may readily jump, dance and laugh. If they dislike it, they might run away and hide or even start crying. Their reaction to music seems to be spontaneous and generally unambiguous. Adults often find these immediate reactions charming or endearing, possibly because also adults would like to engage in the occasion in just the way that
children so freely demonstrate. In many places across the world, adults play “happy” music to improve their children’s mood and to keep them entertained, just as they are entertained by music. There is nothing wrong with that - music indeed has an effect on people’s mood, feelings and wellbeing. However, how many adults realise the importance that an active exploration of music can play in a child’s social, creative, and cognitive development?

The assumptions underlying this thesis were that, given appropriate opportunities, young children show great enthusiasm for music, especially singing and dancing. Music is also exceptionally well suited to teach children about cultural diversity and fuel their curiosity for other cultures. Based on these assumptions, the researcher explored children’s responses and engagement within culturally diverse music program and the children’s attitudes towards diversity. The findings corroborate an argument from earlier literature that children develop more interest in cultural diversity as a result of higher exposure. Furthermore, it also confirms the importance of provision of music education for young children. In this study, following musical experiences, the children’s musical ability improved even though the text and melody of songs were from different cultural backgrounds. This was possible due to use of teaching approaches, strategies and repertoire that complied with criteria of appropriate early childhood curriculum. The results of this thesis show that children, staff, and parents responded positively to the music program, with children being promoters and advocates of the music. They embraced the culturally diverse content as they eagerly participated in the music sessions, played in the music learning centre and contributed with their insights, comments, and ideas throughout the program. This success is attributed to the constructivist approach to teaching, which assigned a high value to children’s contributions and the catering for individual preferences. This research supports the argument that musical development and appreciation of cultural diversity are two significant aspects of a child’s life, which, if introduced in a meaningful way, within a context of relationships, quality content and interesting materials will enrich children’s lives and add a variety of immediate and long-lasting benefits.
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Appendix A.1 – Music Session 1

Music Session 1

1st February, 2008.

Observation

Before the session

This morning the PT was sick, so RR, the centre’s regular reliever, was replacing her in the room. PA, the permanent staff member was quite happy with me proceeding with what I had suggested we do with the mirror. I started taking the display items off the mirror. Initially a few children came up to watch and soon after they were helping and talking about the mirror that was being uncovered. I could not take photos of all the children as some of them had not returned their consent forms. (The centre does not have a camera to take photos. The PA said that it went missing. I will have to see what can be done about this issue).

I found out from the PT that the alphabet pictures were partly made by the children. They followed the stencils of the letters and stuck dots together to form individual letters. I thought that it would be good to create a book from these items/letters. PA liked the idea.

As the mirror became more visible the children were excited to see their own reflections and reflections of others. Jaspar, who was helping with taking off the blue-tack said: “Hey, I can see myself” while he was smiling, making different facial expressions. Gagi and Josh arrived and happily waved their arms in front of the mirror. They also joined in taking of the blue tack.

PA asked the children for attention and said: “When the music starts I want you to start packing up”. She then switched on a CD player. The song started.

Few children were singing while packing up: some a phrase or two, others finishing words of the refrain. Some children, like Kasja and the Ali were giggling and dancing. They seem to be packing up quite efficiently as they managed to pack up fairly quickly. They arrived at the carpet area and continued to sing, dance or/and do the actions of the song (For example, “Wash your face”). When the song stopped, Gagi said: “Do it again!”
Before the children went to play outdoors, RR (the centre’s regular staff reliever) had to go for a 15 minutes tea-break. A child-care agency reliever came to replace RR and was helping to set up the children’s lunches. PA was busy making the children’s beds (putting the sheets on). I felt that this was an appropriate time to have a music session as a group. There was nobody available to take the photos of this session.

“You’ve got a name, so you can play this game!”

We started off by creating a circle on the carpeted area. The children were asked to sit on their mats. I invited Kasja to sit next to me. She smiled and readily found her mat. I sat in a crossed leg manner and all the children simply followed. Jaspar laughed, saying that the circle looked more like an oval, which was true.

We started off with a simple warm up: “Clap knees, clap knees, clap knees, please”. All the children participated, yet they responded in different ways. Most of them were imitating non-verbally, a few were imitating actions whilst attempting to say the words, and Rea just observed. After the fourth repetition, we were ready for: “Hey, hey, what’s your name?”

Hey, hey what’s your name?

You’ve got a name, so you can play this game!

Everyone, everyone - turn around

Everyone, everyone - touch the ground

Everyone, everyone - tickle your toes

Everyone, everyone - touch each others’ nose

Everyone, everyone - jump up high

Everyone, everyone - reach the sky

Everyone, everyone - show your shoe

Everyone, everyone - that will do! (clap, clap, clap)

I stood up and started to chant “Hey, hey, what’s your name...” All children but Kasja got up, following instructions. They liked the chant and they demanded a repeat. They were jolly and playful with one another while at the same time focussed on following verbal and nonverbal instructions.
During the repeat I changed the wording of some parts, for example:” Don’t turn around...Don’t touch your nose...” and I stopped demonstrating the movements. The children listened carefully and acted according to the words. When the chant finished with a phrase: “…sit on the floor”, most children readily sat in their previous positions on the mats. During the chant, Kasja stood and observed others closely, sucking her finger. When we finished, Sanja said, smiling: “This is so much fun!” For the rest of the time, Kasja would sit when the children sat and would stand up when the children did so, too.

As soon as we sat, Laura let us know that on the same morning, on the way to childcare, she saw a fly: “I thought it’s a bee, but my mum said it’s a fly. It was huuuuu-uge and noisy! I got scared!” She further explained that her mum told her not to worry as the fly would “get out of the car if I open the window”. The others attentively listened to Laura asked: “And?” Laura paused for a second, looked at him and smiled:” It fled out when mum opened the window”. He seemed relieved as he sighed:” Oh, good for you! Bee would’ve stung ya!” A. added: Yeah, I got stinged before…it hurts.” The children seemed to be taken by this little story as they were curiously looking at Laura “It was just a noisy fly!” She and a few others laughed out loud. Gagi put his fingers into a pincer grip and waved his hand in front of Laura’s face. “ZZZZZZZZZZZZ” she giggled back, pretending to close the window. We all had a laugh. Kasja joined in the laughter, too. I told the children that I knew a funny song about a bee and that I could sing it to them if they would like me to. The reply was positive, so I sang the song. They seemed to really like it, as they wanted it to be sung three times in a row. They appeared to particularly enjoy the dramatisation and the humorous aspect of it, as they laughed, joining me in acting out the lyrics of the song. Kasja occasionally smiled, keeping her hands on her lap. Some children started singing along, especially the repeated phrases. Gagi who was sitting beside me was singing in tune.

**Bumble Bee**

I’ve got a little bumble bee
Won’t my mother be surprised with me?
I’ve got a little bumble bee,
Ouch! It bit me!!

I’m shaking up my little bumble bee
Won’t my mother be surprised with me?
I’m shaking up my little bumble bee,
Ouch! It stung me!!

I am squashing up my little bumble bee
Won’t my mother be surprised with me?
I am squashing up my little bumble bee,
Blyaaah – my hands are all dirty!

I am wiping up my little bumble bee
Won’t my mother be surprised with me?
I am wiping up my little bumble bee.
Woo! My hands are all clean – yeah!!

Jaspar said: “Squashing isn’t nice. It killed the bee."

This remark started a short discussion about the meaning of the song. Gagi replied “It’s just a song” “It’s funny”. Jaspar agreed: “I know, I’m just saying”.

“Sure, it is not nice to hurt the bee. It is good what Laura’s mum did this morning. Gagi is right, though, it is just a funny song”, I explained. “I now can sing you another version of the song, if you like”, I offered. “What is version?” asked Jaspar “Version in this case is the same music with the different story”, I tried to be specific. “Oh? Can we hear version bee?” Jaspar curiously. I started to sing:

I’m bringing home a baby bumble bee
won’t my mama be so proud of me
I’m bringing home a baby bumble bee

Yuck!!!! That bumblebee got honey all over me!

I’m tasting the honey from the bumble bee
won’t my mama be so proud of me
I’m tasting the honey from the bumble bee

Yuck!!!! It’s all over me!!!

I’m wiping off the honey from the bumblebee
won’t my mama be so proud of me
I’m wiping off the honey from the bumblebee

Uh Oh!!!!!! Here comes mommy!!!

Jaspar and the rest of the children listened carefully. A few of them joined in with the actions. Aki told the group: I like this one. It’s nice. I like babies”. Jaspar added: “The other one is funnier”. Gagi agreed: “I like the first one best!”

Before we finished with the session, I asked the children what they would like to do next time. Gagi said that he would like me to sing more funny songs, while Sanja suggested: “I like the bee song. I like to sing it all the time”. Jaspar requested: “Bring the guitar…the electric one”. Aki said she would like to play “the name game” with her friend Nely

Aki, Laura and Nely kindly started to pack up the mats as soon as the session had finished. When I was leaving, Inja approached me, gave me a hug, and said:“ Make sure you come on Friday and stay for lunch!”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Learning story analysis</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taking an interest</strong></td>
<td>All the children in the room wanted to participate in the session. They displayed enthusiasm and interest in a variety of ways, as they readily cooperated and followed diverse instructions throughout the session. Their attentiveness was particularly evident in the section of ‘Hey, hey, what’s your name?’ when they responded accordingly to change of words (i.e.: Do not turn around.”) Similarly, ‘The Bumble Bee’ song stimulated an interesting discussion with reference to what is right and wrong; the children also enjoyed the humorous aspect of this song. These children already had some awareness of tempo, pitch and duration; they used this knowledge to participate in the singing and movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being involved</strong></td>
<td>The children’s interest was kept to the very end and beyond the session. They were cheerful and playful with one another while at the same time focussed and successful in following verbal and nonverbal instructions. Their discussion about the bees song and preferences between the 2 versions indicated a high level of mindfulness in their participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persisting with difficulty</strong></td>
<td>In the ‘Clap knees’ chant, it was evident that each child was working out her strategies to successfully follow the instructions. Some children were attentive to verbal, while some to non-verbal instructions. Some of them imitated my actions, and a few of them copied my actions whilst attempting to say the chant. The child who is unfamiliar with English language (Kasja) just observed but seemed keen to be part of the group. Their reactions were different and all joined in requesting repeats so they enjoyed the level of challenge in the exercise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expressing an idea or feeling</strong></td>
<td>The session involved many expressions of ideas, feelings, emotions and excitement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The children indicated a sophisticated knowledge of narrative forms as they expanded Laura’s story and then enjoyed different versions of the bee song.

Jaspar was curious about a new term ‘version’; he tried to utilize this term into the sentence: “Can we hear version bee?”

Some children verbally expressed their suggestions for the following session so they were able to anticipate future activities.

**Taking responsibility**

The session was initiated by an adult (me). However, all children participated voluntarily and followed my and their peers’ leads in a collaborative way, offering comments. Their joining in on elements of the music was most enthusiastic. They were highly motivated, self-directed and interested.

Laura’s story intrigued them.

Aki, Lily and Nely kindly started to pack up the mats as soon as the session had finished.

**Short term review**

**What learning was visible?**

- Responded positively as individuals and as a collective
- Followed the prompts on the floor to sit in the circle – coped well with a change of formation
- Sang and danced a new repertoire
- Used own strategies to respond to instructions
- Followed verbal instructions
- Followed non-verbal instructions
- Jaspar, Gagi, Aki, Laura, Inja, Ali confident to speak in front of the whole group
Jaspar, Gagi, Sanja and Aki carried on a discussion and articulated their wishes and opinion

Jaspar posed a linguistic question

Engaged in story telling

Displayed helpful action

What to do next?

Remember the children’s names

Repeat the repertoire

Make sure Aki and Nely have an opportunity to perform together

Observe the children’s learning styles

Pay attention to the children’s singing, sense for rhythm, their movement and expression

Bring the guitar – in response to Jaspar’s request

Make copies of the repertoire for the teachers and families

Appendix A.2 – Music Session 2


Observation

Before the session

When I arrived this morning, the children and their PT were engaged in a group session. The PT was reading ‘Handa’s Surprise’ book. There were 14 children seated in front of the PT, seemingly deeply engrossed in the story. The children were making comments, asking questions or answering simple, literal questions that PT was posing to them. For example, PT asked: “Did she have all the fruit when she got there?” Robie responded: “Hah, I don’t think so!”

After she had finished reading and talking about the story, the PT asked: “Shall we sing our favourite song before we go and play?” and she switched on a CD that was already in the CD player. The song started: ‘Shoo fly, don’t bother me!’ PT sang along, quite in tune and with character; the children also
joined in singing and making gestures to the song. As a group, they sounded quite out of pitch but well in rhythm and they seemed to all know the lyrics. Some of the children looked at each other while impersonating the song-characters.

“One more song!” suggested the PT and played ‘Down by the station’. The children once again readily joined in singing and doing the actions. The song was repetitive and with each repeat the children sang with more confidence and gusto.

The song stopped and PT asked: “When I put the music on, what do you need to do?”

The children replied: “Go at the table”. The PT further confirmed: “When the music starts we pack up for somebody else to be able to play...When the music stops we can play inside and outside”, she further explained.

She then played ‘Down by the station’ once more, this time turning the volume down and whispered: “I am going to play it softly, this time.” She then clapped whilst saying each child’s name, indicating for them to bring their mat back and choose an area they would like to play in (for example, the Book Corner).

While they were packing up, one of the boys – Gagi– asked me in passing: “Can you sing that song again...and the other one?”

Inja also asked: “Can you sing that song again?”

I replied, “Which one?”, although I knew what they were talking about, “I know lots of songs...?”

Inja answered and smiled: “Are those bee songs you know? I love bee songs; they are very, very, silly.”

I told both of them that after they finished with their play we would do some singing and dancing. They both smiled back and Inja seemed elated: “Yeah, I like that!”

“I’ve got a little Bumble bee; won’t my mother be surprised with me?”

I set up the mats on the floor in a circle and the children readily joined me for a singing session, as they quickly found their place. Kasja set next to the PT.

We sat on the mats and we started with the chant: ‘Clap, knees, clap, knees, clap your knees, please!’ The children followed this attentively looking and listening to my instructions. Most of them managed to keep the rhythm steady, but we repeated the phrase several times so that the few who were less confident could practice.
For the second song ‘Hey, hey, what is your name?’ The children and the PT readily stood up. They moved with joy and giggled as they followed each of the instructions as best as they could. They were turning around, touching the ground, tickling their toes, touching their nose, jumping up high, “reaching the sky’.

After repeating the whole chant, I changed the instructions. For example:” Don’t tickle your toes...touch each other ‘s nose”. This made the children focus even more as they listened carefully and then performed the required action. Some of them laughed out loud when they were to touch someone else’s nose.

It was evident that some children, while able to follow the general directions, added their personal responses to the rhythm, tempo, dynamics and meaning of the words.

As soon as we finished with ‘Hey, hey’, Gagi suggested: “Can you do that funny song again?”

“Funny song” I asked. “The one about a ... (I waited).

“Beeeeee! ”The children exclaimed.

Apparently, the “Bumble Bee “song had been very popular. The PT said that the children had been asking her about “the lady who sings this song”. I pretended I could not remember what the song was about. When asked about the characters in the song Gagi said “A boy and bee”. Inja said:"A girl and a bee”. The children told me that there were two characters and that the bee stang. I challenged them on the number of characters. “Ehem, are you sure that there were only a boy or a girl and a bumble bee in the song?” There was no reply for a few seconds but just then, Sanja excitedly recalled: “Oh, a mother!!” “Aaaah, the mother! “, others confirmed.

The singing was fun and most children joined in singing and carrying out the actions immediately. Gagi and Inja in particular seemed to have learnt the lyrics quickly. I could hear Gagi sing in tune.
The children responded with a lot of enthusiasm to this session and were impressed that I remembered their names. They gave me a big applause for that. Some of them were asking me when I was going to come again. They were very pleased to hear that this would be the following Friday. The PT encouraged them to thank me for the session. Kasja and Laura collected the mats and deposited them on the table.

**Learning story analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Taking an interest</strong></th>
<th>The children readily joined me for a singing session, as they swiftly found their mat on the floor. They participated with different levels of competence and collectively remembered the characters in the song.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being involved</strong></td>
<td>The children were attentive and keen to sing, dance and interact with each other. When alternate words were offered in a song they concentrated as they could perform the different actions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Persisting with difficulty** | As in the previous session, when we did ‘Clap, knees’ it was apparent that the children used own strategies to follow the instructions. In the case of ‘Hey, hey, what’s your name’, the photos show that most children were closely observing and listening to the teacher (me).

Some children were challenged by multi-tasks – keeping time, singing and listening for changing instructions. |
<p>| <strong>Expressing an idea or feeling</strong> | It is evident in the photos that some children, while able to follow the general directions, added their personal responses to the rhythm, tempo, dynamics and meaning of the words. Their requests for a previous song and memory of the contents were an expression of their enthusiasm. |
| <strong>Taking responsibility</strong> | They showed appreciation by thanking and applauding me for the session, inviting me to “come again”. Kasja and Laura collected the mats and deposited them on the table. Some children had to persevere to carry out the tasks. Participation was voluntary. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short term review</th>
<th>The children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **What learning was visible?** | • Responded positively as individuals and as a collective  
• Liked the humour  
• Followed the prompts on the floor to sit in the circle – coped well with a change of formation, dynamics, tempo, volume  
• Sang and danced a familiar and slightly modified repertoire  
• Used own strategies to respond to instructions  
• Followed verbal directions  
• Followed non-verbal instructions  
• Sanja, Gagi and Inja verbally recalled the information from the previous session  
• Gagi and Inja learnt the lyrics of the ‘Bumble Bee song’  
• Gagi sang tunefully  
• Expressed appreciation and desire for more sessions  
• Could recollect and retell the bee song |
| **What to do next?** | • Repeat the repertoire  
• Bring the guitar in response to Jaspar’s request  
• Introduce a tune to ‘Hey, hey what’s your name’, accompanied by the guitar  
• Print out the photographs of the session and display them in the room/centre foyer  
• Seek feedback from staff |
Appendix A.3 – Music Session 3

22nd February, 2008.

“I never heard that one!”

For this session I brought my guitar with me which immediately drew the children’s interest and attention.

As soon as they saw me, they approached me, asking to do some singing. We soon packed up the room and a few of the children helped setting up the mats in a circle for the rest of the group. They worked well together and were able to create a reasonably round shape. This session allowed the children to sing and dance as either a group, individually or in pairs.

It appeared that they really enjoyed this new experience. They particularly liked dancing with their close friends. Aki and Nely seemed very pleased to dance together, smiling throughout the dancing, giggling when “touching each other’s nose”. They wanted to “do it again” and in the second round Kasja joined in. Inja insisted to ‘do it by herself’, being confident and able to follow the instructions very well. Gagi wanted to also ‘do it by himself’ nevertheless was smiling when Kasja stood up and joined in the dance. When dancing as a whole group, I changed the lyrics to have the children “turn around” several times. This spinning obviously had a “dizzying effect” on them. Sanja, Keili and Ali seemed to enjoy this as they kept laughing while spinning around.
I noticed that the children remembered all the words of the songs we had practiced previously, and they were confident in doing the accompanying actions.

When we played a ‘Guessing game’ (guess the tune played on the guitar) only some of them understood the concept. However, all appeared keen to participate in this game. Some of them, like Jan and Josh, were curious about their friends’ responses. They looked at each other and smiled when V. “got it wrong”. Gagi, Sanja and Ali were accurate in guessing the popular tunes, such as ‘Miss Polly had a dolly’ or ‘Incey, Wincey spider’...Gagi even distinguished between ‘Twinkle, twinkle little star’ and ‘Baa, baa black sheep’. When I played a Serbian tune (a traditional, folk song) Nely and Aki laughed. Aki said: “I never hearded that one!” Josh said he heard something like that in a Greek restaurant. Jan thought this was funny as he laughed out loud. Jaspar said” I’ve been to restaurant with that music...and I saw a movie with a funny guy who played this big instrument...and made lots of noise.” Jaspar demonstrated (onomatopoeically) the sound of, I believe, the trumpet. The rest of the children laughed. Rea and Josh repeated the sound, placing their hand on their mouths: “Too-too-tooooooo”. I asked the children if that sound was different to the guitar sound. They nodded to confirm. Gagi said that the guitar made soft sounds while Jaspar’s one was “loud and a bit crazy”. The children laughed at Gagi’s comment. Jaspar tried to describe how a trumpet looked: “It’s this long thing and it’s shiny, like...like a spoon and the guy was spitting ...ha-ha-ha!” The rest joined in with laughter. I told them that I would bring a photo of a trumpet. Jaspar suggested: “Bring the real thing!”
Following this discussion we started to sing. The children could choose the repertoire and I played the tunes on the guitar. They asked for ‘Twinkle, twinkle’, ‘Baa, baa black sheep’, and ‘Old McDonald’ sang or chanted along when the melody was played. In the ‘Old McDonald’ song individual children suggested animals for the singing verses. Inja wanted to sing the ‘Bumble Bee’ song by herself. Aki also asked if I could play the “bee song”. Inja stood up; she sang close to the song’s melody. Most other children sang along, performing the actions, accompanied by the guitar. I played for them now a familiar chant - ‘Everyone, everyone turn around’ to the tune of the song ‘Teddy bear turn around’. The children, once again, continued to participate dancing in pairs or in a small group. Jan and Josh had a giggle at Kasja and Sanja dancing as the girls were occasionally hugging each other, while Rea decided to stay seated and to observe her peers dance.
The children were keen to explore the guitar, so I encouraged them to describe it and tell me what they knew about guitars. After listening to them, I told some basic facts about the guitar (Guitar comes from...) after which I let them ask further questions and answered these. Inja, Gagi and Jaspar contributed to this discussion. For instance, Jaspar noticed: “I saw one with the cable...this one hasn’t got a cable.” Gagi added, “This one is not a rock guitar”. Inja confirmed: Rock guitar is loud and makes people shake their heads”. Some of the children wanted to explore the instrument closely and
have a turn of handling it and making sounds. Ali laughed out loud: “It is too big for me! I can’t hold it! I want to put it on the floor”. Gagi commented on the different pitch of strings, finding out that: “This one is high... this one is low”. Jaspar carefully handled the instrument, and said: “This one is made from wood and it has a hole in middle. Do you put things in there?” Violet’s response was: “I don’t like it. It’s big.” Kasja wanted to have her turn before the rest of the children, so she started crying while waiting: “My turn.” I told Kasja that she would take the guitar around, after Ali finishes with her turn. Kasja looked at me and, wiping her tears, said: “OK”. Ali approached Kasja and kindly said: “Your turn.” Kasja carefully took the guitar and continued to show it around the circle.

Observation

After the session, the PA and the RR mentioned that one of the parents who used to be my student welcomed the idea of more focus on music in the room. She said that “I was a beautiful person”...and that she would be very happy for her child to participate in this music project.

I was about to leave, when Inja insisted I stay for lunch. I joined her table.

While we were having lunch, the children were asking if I could stay all day. In response, I told them that I would come again next Friday. Gagi asked me to bring my guitar again. Jaspar said: “We can also do...” (demonstrating drumming on the table’, smiling) looking at others, as if he was waiting for them to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning story analysis</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taking an interest</strong></td>
<td>As soon as they saw me, they approached me, asking to do some singing. They were familiar with the formation as they sat in the circle. Discussion indicated they were very observant and comments about the rock guitar was an example of how outside knowledge was brought to the group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being involved</strong></td>
<td>The children showed sustained interest throughout the session and were open to new activities. It appeared that they really enjoy this new experience. They particularly liked dancing with their close friends and some added their own dimension which amused the other children. The guitar evidently captured the children’s interest and their discussion of the instrument itself and description of the sound was most graphic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persisting with difficulty</strong></td>
<td>When we played the ‘Guess who?’ game, some of the children did not seem to understand the concept. However, they were interested in how their peers responded to this problem-solving situation. Some children clearly understood and were excited when others guessed the ‘wrong’ song. They could identify the tunes showing good musical memory and already had sense of rules. The children showed various levels of familiarity with the guitar as they engaged in exploring and handling of this musical instrument. They observed each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expressing an idea or feeling</strong></td>
<td>They used descriptive words – they seriously discussed the guitar, they talked about previous musical events and enjoyed variations and added some of their own touches – e.g. hugging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taking responsibility</strong></td>
<td>The children were responding to others. They handled the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Short term review

#### What learning was visible?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The children:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Responded positively as individuals and as a collective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Showed interest in the guitar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Realised that the lyrics of the ‘Hey, hey, what’s your name’ were very similar to the new song: ‘Everyone, everyone, turn round’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Followed the prompts on the floor to sit in the circle – coped well with a change of lyrics, formation, dynamics, tempo, volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sang and danced to a familiar repertoire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Demanded their favourite songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Used own strategies to respond to instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Followed verbal instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Followed non-verbal instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inja sang in front of the whole group, accompanied by the guitar; at places in tune.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gagi sang tunefully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Kasja was keen to participate; she had just started learning English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ali, Nely and Gagi supported Kasja and gladly let her dance with them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Musical memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduced outside knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Showed understanding of rules of simple games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What to do next?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring the guitar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include the drums in the sessions, in response to Jaspar’s request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce simple singing exercises – warming up voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat repertoire - children’s choice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix A.4 – Music Session 4**

3\(^{rd}\) April, 2008.

“Oh, dear, that does not sound good!”

For this session I was a few minutes late. When I arrived, the children were waiting for me, seated on the carpet. Sanja pointed out:” We’ve been waiting for a looooooong time”, though she smiled. I apologised and explained that I had to go back for the guitar, which I had left in front of my office. “This made me late and then I had to run as fast as I could to get here, nearly on time.” The children accepted this as they were glad I had remembered the guitar. Sanja quickly stood up and said: “I’ll get our mats!” She brought the mats and the children organise them and they sat in the circle.

I took the guitar out of the case and said: “I need to...I need to...”

“You need to play the songs! “Jaspar added.
“I would like to play the songs, true.” I said. “OK”. I coughed and I placed my fingers on the ‘C major’ chord. I energetically stroke a chord. At this point, Jan suddenly turned towards me, curiously looking at the guitar. Jaspar said:” Oh, dear, that does not sound good!”

“I know... I need to...” I paused and repeated again: “I need to ...”

“You need to tune it” said Rea, with a quiet but confident tone of voice.

“That’s right”, I confirmed. “Hmmm...How do I do that?” I was “puzzled”.

“I know, Jaspar replied, “You fix the strings, like last time...He stood up and pointed ...“you turned this one and this one”. The children waited patiently and once I stroke the C major again, they smiled and a few voices excitedly concluded: “You fixed it!”

As in the previous sessions, we then sang together, accompanied by the guitar. I wanted to hear the children’s voices. I made mine fade away and would only played the tune. Most of them would be initially singing, but after a few beats would stop or adjust their voice volume to ‘piano’, some voices even dropped to whispering.

I placed the guitar aside: “The guitar is tuned. Let’s tune our voices a bit!” I suggested. “What, tune voices?!” Jaspar inquired. “Yes. We can do some warm up exercises, too.” I answered. “Like in soccer?” asked Josh “Yes”, like in soccer, when sports people warm up their bodies to play. For singing - we can warm up our voices to sing”, I extended the simile.

The tuning exercises I then introduced stimulated a bit of laughter amongst the children. They found the imitating of yawning especially funny. However, when they started singing again, they seem to be more relaxed and confident and even though the singing was not so tuneful, I could hear more of them trying to sing or echo the melodic phrases. “Well, then we need to warm up our bodies, too.”
said Jaspar “Good idea! “ I replied. “Stand up, everyone!” The children readily got up. ‘Clap your hands, stamp your feet, jump up high and hear the beat!’ We repeated these actions twice, and then I asked out loud: “I wonder which song would be good to warm up our bodies...hmmm...” Jaspar excitedly said: “I know - heads and shoulders!”  I sang: ‘Heads and shoulders...’ while the children followed the actions, focussed only on the movement.

Ali suggested: “Let’s do the name song!” She referred to ‘Hey hey, what’s your name’. The children liked the idea and we once did it as a chant and the second time accompanied by the guitar (to the tune of ‘Teddy Bear turn around’). Afterwards, Sanja and Aki wanted to do the ‘Bee song’ – the girls sat down, crossed their legs, their peers followed. We all seemed to be ready but nobody was starting. Ali looked at me, smiling: “We’re ready.” I put my hands together, started shaking them, but “could not remember” the lyrics. “You’ve got a little bumble bee...” helped Ali. Some children giggled, waiting for my response. “Oh, I’ve got a little bumble bee...” I continued and the children joined in singing and actions.

It was time to finish the session. “Shall we now relax our bodies and voices?” The children agreed. Some lay down, several stayed seated, a few stood up and started shaking their limbs. After a minute of silence, they begin giggling.

I invited the children to individually bring their mats. As they handed over their mats I sang back to them: “Thank you Rea, thank you Violet...” (Using the melody of the ‘Heads and Shoulders’ song). I packed the mats and was just about to leave, when Jaspar approached me and sang out: “Thank you Kasandra”. His sang in a more talkative manner but had a big smile on his face.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning story analysis</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taking an interest</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Being involved**       | The children were attentive throughout the session. For example, at the end of the session they handed over their mats, all patiently waiting for their turn. Jaspar cleverly applied what he had learnt as he playfully ‘thanked’ me by
singing - imitating the way I communicated my appreciation to the children. He displayed confidence to sing in his own manner.

**Persisting with difficulty**
Shy about singing without me. On a second attempt to sing accompanied by the guitar, I could hear them trying to sing melodies.

The children could understand the soccer analogy and were able to extend it. Some are starting to play with their singing.

**Expressing an idea or feeling**
The children anticipate what will happen, show enthusiasm and some are beginning to display imagination in their use of the music and movement.

**Taking responsibility**
Sanja readily helped set up the mats for the session. The children paid attention to each other’s suggestions and comments and respected each other’s physical space. They were good at turn taking throughout the session. They are able to follow instructions, make suggestions and display individually how they will perform a task – e.g. relaxing at the end.

**Short term review**

**What learning was visible?**
The children:

- Responded positively as individuals and as a collective
- Showed interest in the guitar
- Participated eagerly in the warm-up exercises
- Rea and Jaspar expressed their realisation that the guitar needs to be tuned before it is played
- Jaspar related information from one to another context – warming up bodies as we warm up voices
- Sang and danced to a familiar repertoire
- Used own strategies to respond to instructions
Appendix A.5 – Music Session 5

10th April, 2008.

“One, two, three, mother caught a flea!”

As they had indicated in the previous session, the children were really keen to include the drums in our music sessions. As soon as we sat down in a circle, Jaspar suggested: “Can we have those drums (pointing towards the music corner)?”

We “tuned in” with some body percussion games where the children clapped hands, tapped feet, clicked fingers, slapped thighs, and made vocal sounds which allowed them to feel the rhythm as a physical experience. Next, we incorporated the actual drums. Initially, the children were trying to imitate the hand movement (demonstration) I was doing on the drums. Some used their hands to clap along, others tapped on the floor, Laura nodded her head while a few just observed and listened intently.
We discussed the difference between the various drums we used – the sound they produce, their physical features, how we handle them, materials they are made out of, songs that might be suitable for them. The children wanted to take turns in exploring the drums.

Jaspar described one of the drums: “It is made out of wood, it’s a bit heavy… it has metal bits. I like this hole here (showing underneath) and here (showing the top of the drum) is smooth...You can make a scratchy noise (he demonstrated this by using his nails and wiggling his fingers). It makes this sshshshshshsshsshs sound! “And”, he raised his voice, “you can use it as a little table...ha-ha!” Sanja smiled and added: “And this one can be a little chair!”

In the meantime, the PA was setting up the room while the other staff (reliever) was sitting and was observing the session.
Another highlight was the ‘Bumble Bee song’. As in the earlier sessions, the children wanted to sing it, repeatedly. I again pretended that I did not remember the words of the song. The children sang and acted it out with confidence and had a laugh about my “bad memory”. I noticed that all of them were singing. Some children, like Nely and Kasja were, from time to time, looking for non-verbal cues from their peers.

After we had exhausted the ‘Bumble Bee song’ I asked: “Hey, how about another funny one?” I decided to introduce a humorous rhyme with a similar content. This traditional rhyme is good for use of gesture (pantomime), mimics and vocal dramatisation of characters:

One, two, three, mother caught a flea

She put it in a teapot and made a cup of tea.

The flea jumped out – mother gave a shout!

Father came in with his shirt hanging out!

The children listened intently and broke out into laughter. Jaspar started the chant again: ‘One, two, three …’ I repeated it once again. The children giggled when I departed from the original text and referenced them instead. For example, “Laura came in with her hair sticking out!” The biggest laughter came after: “Ali came in with her pants falling down!” They really liked this rhyme. Sanja concluded: “We can’t to this one with other numbers, it won’t match.” Jaspar giggled and said: “One, two, three, four, father made a roar!” (He used his voice to create onomatopoeia of the roaring sound, like the roar of a lion). The rest of the children laughed; Ali encouraged him: “Ha-ha! Do it again!” “Yeah!” joined cheerfully most others. A few boys started to roar. This seemed to make Violet somewhat anxious as she came and sat next to me. It was time to finish the session. Violet helped collect the mats. The children were keen to go into the music learning centre (music corner- as they refer to it) and explore the drums.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Learning story analysis</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taking an interest</strong></td>
<td>The children were eager to explore the drums. They liked the new rhyme. They were able to play with the concept of rhyme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being involved</strong></td>
<td>The children were attentive throughout the session and got quite excited when I introduced the ‘One, two, three’ poem. They participated and could recognise the patterns of beat and rhyme.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Persisting with difficulty** | The children needed to work out how they could produce the sound on the drums. This allowed me to observe their different ‘learning preferences’.  
When we performed the ‘Bumble bee song’, few children seemed to have forgotten the order of the actions. Nevertheless, they, from time to time, looked at others for non-verbal cues which enabled them to actively participate. They were able to be scaffolded by their peers. |
| **Expressing an idea or feeling** | Some children were quite talkative. All children were good listeners.  
Jaspar and Sanja used variety of words to describe the instrument and its functions (including, nouns, verbs, adjectives, onomatopoeia). They displayed humour and an understanding of rhyme (colour) and were able to extend on the basic chant by playing with beat and rhyme. |
| **Taking responsibility**    | The children handled the new instruments with care. They were able to take turns, carry on conversation, and respect each other’s space. |
### Short term review

**What learning was visible?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The children:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Responded positively as individuals and as a collective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Showed interest in the drums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Participated in the warm-up exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Jaspar described the drums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Responded in a personal way to the drum-play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Listening skills - Followed verbal instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Were observant – followed non-verbal instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Aki enjoyed the humour of the ‘One two, three’ poem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Aki engaged in chanting and creating new verses for the ‘One, two three’ poem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Aware of concept of rhyme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Could play with beat of chant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The teachers**

- PA was setting up the room while the other staff (reliever) was sitting and was observing the session.

### What to do next?

| **Include the drums in the session** |
| **Introduce counting in different languages** |
| **Introduce a song un/accompanied by the drums – for ‘Umma Lella’ song** |
| **Continue with simple singing exercises – warming up voices/bodies** |
| **Repeat repertoire unaccompanied by the drums** |
Appendix A.6 – Music Session 6

17th April, 2008.

Observation

Before the session

The children were pleased to see me again. They greeted me in a friendly manner and cheered: “Yeah, the music lady is here”.

They immediately asked if we were going to do some music. “I like playing those funny games!” said Robie.

Once they noticed that I had brought some new photos they surrounded me and wanted to help with displaying them on the mirror. Aki saw her friend’s Nely’s portrait. She pointed to it and said to me: “This is my friend, I like her... she is beautiful”. Robie noticed that his friend Mitch was not on the display: “What about Mitch? Where’s Mitch?” I explained that not all the children had been photographed. I took the photos of all the children that were missing on the board. Robie made “funny” faces and laughed at his photo while Ali said, as she pointed at the photos: “I like all the happy faces... my mum bought me this top”.

“It’s like a river, red river!”

After all the photos had been put up on the mirror, I invited the children for a music session. They quickly sat in a circle, eagerly waiting. No staff members were available to take photos of the session and none of the children felt like taking photos.
“Let’s see how many there are today!” I started counting the children in Japanese. The children listened attentively. Robie said: “Hey, that’s another one!” Aki smiled and exclaimed: “That’s Japanese!”

“Oh”, you know Japanese?” I asked Aki “They are numbers”, she replied. Gagi immediately started counting in German: “1, 2, and 3…” while the rest of the children listened to him curiously. “It’s German”, he smiled at everyone and informed us: “My dad knows German”.

In today’s session I also had brought a large piece of material (which I call a ‘music-veil’). I told the children that this was a special music-veil that helped me sing “in foreign languages”. I used this term instead of ‘different’ as I was interested if any of the children would comment on it. Sure enough, Jaspar inquired what ‘foreign’ meant and was content with an answer – ‘different languages’ – from different countries, like Serbia, Japan...Gagi added: “I saw foreign forces on TV”.

The children seemed to like the look and the feel of the material, so I kept it on the floor for them to explore it further.

The first song today was the ‘Umma lella’ song. I asked the children if they knew what language that was. They had some time to think and eventually said: “It’s not Japanese, is it?” “No”, I replied. “It’s not”, agreed Aki “I know!” said Sanja., looking at me, “Italian?” Once again, I shook my head. “No”. “Oh, well, it’s not English...not Japanese, not Italian” Jaspar counted, using his fingers. “It must be something!” he laughed out loud. “It is from a continent called A...a...a...” I tried to give them a clue. “America!” exclaimed Gagi “America is a continent, but the song is from Africa”. I replied. “Aaaahh”, he gently hit his forehead, like Handa!” (Referring to a book ‘Handa’s surprise’).

I sang the song again and the children started joining in the singing (repeating phrases) and clapping. They were good at keeping the beat and I could hear Gagi, Janely and Lou already singing the melody.

During the last phrase, where they needed to sing TUN GE the children lost the rhythm, but this was to be expected as the words changed all of a sudden.

Umma lella, lella, lella, (clap, clap)
Umma lella, lella, lella.
Umma lella, lella lella,
Umma lella, lella, lella.

Oku bina, bina, bina, (clap, clap)
Oku bina, bina, bina,
Oku bina, bina, bina,

Oku bina, bina, tun ge!
(clap, then tap left thigh with the right hand and right thigh with the with the left hand)
I invited the children to include the ‘music-veil’. “Since this is a music-veil it really wants to play the music”, I explained and asked them to hold onto this material. I let the children explore the music veil, as they were responding to my instructions: “Wiggle, wiggle and stop!” We repeated this several times and then introduced change of volume – from piano to forte. The children responded to the change of dynamics and tempo. When I whispered “wiggle, wiggle...” phrase in a ‘piano’ volume or the children shook the ‘music veil’ gently. When I used a strong voice and said the words really fast, the children shook the music veil vigorously. Gagi exclaimed: “It’s like a river, red river!” the children laughed and started shaking the music veil even more energetically. Jaspar concluded: “Now it’s like the ocean!” I invited the children to make a sound of the ocean: “Swish, swish, swish!” Gagi, Lou, Ali and Sanja joined in creating “the sound of the ocean” whilst others kept shaking the music veil, appearing endorsed in the new ‘mood’ that was created.

They children liked the idea of singing the ‘Umma Lella’ while using the music veil. Some laughed and sang at the same time. Most children sang when no additional action was required but when shaking the music veil at the same time, only a few, including Gagi, Inja and Laura sang along.

We repeated this exercise while standing. Violet and Nely had their soft toys with them, so we placed them on the ‘music veil’ to “dance”. This brought a lot of laughter as the little toys were flying around and at one stage one of them fell off. Once again, we explored different dynamics and tempo. The children responded to changes in both and, this time, Gagi, Ali, Laura and Jan sang along piano or forte – when appropriate.

I noticed that the children were still eager to move around and that they enjoyed playing with the music-veil, so I decided to bring in the movement song “Walk around the room”.

```
Walk, walk, walk
Walk around the room.
Walk, walk, walk
Walk around the room.
Walk, walk, walk
Walk around the room.
Walk and walk and walk and STOP!

Run, run, run
Run around the room
Run, run, run
Run around the room
Run, run, run
Run around the room
Run and run and run and STOP!

Way down, way down and stand up!
Arms up high can you reach the sky?
Fly, fly, fly
```
Fly around the room
Fly, fly, fly
Fly around the room
Fly, fly, fly
Fly around the room
Fly and fly and fly and STOP!

And, sit down.

We lifted up the music-veil repeatedly, so that it looked like a parachute. I sang, while the children followed the instructions. They participated well as they moved together with ease and handled the music veil with good coordination.

It was planned to end the session at this point as the children were supposed to have afternoon tea, but they insisted that we do some more music. We sang the ‘Umma lella’ again, this time seated in the circle.

Before the session finished, I “wanted to see how many danced and sang but when counting, “I “could not remember” number three in Japanese, making a pose…”seeking help”…Robie looked at me and slowly said: “San?” (Correct). “Yes!” I clapped and everyone else joined the applauding. I counted one more time in Japanese; Gagi repeated German and Inja counted in English.

Some children continued singing ‘Umma Lella’ later on as they were sitting at the table waiting for their afternoon tea to be served. (For example, Kasja repeated several times: “Oku bina, bina, bina, oku bina, bina, bina.”)

**Learning story analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taking an interest</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being involved</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persisting with difficulty</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effort as they applauded.

*During the last phrase of the ‘Umma Lella’ song where the children needed to sing tun-ge, they lost the rhythm. Once we repeated the song several times, some children followed the rhythm with an ease. Some practiced the easier phrase after the session.*

| Expressing an idea or feeling | The children were interested in other languages than English. Aki recognised Japanese language. Gagi counted in German. An understanding of different languages was evident in one child using English and another remembering song. They were able to dramatically illustrate the sounds different types of water might make. |
| Taking responsibility | The children handled the new ‘artefact’ (the ‘music veil’) with care. They were curious about Aki’s and Gagi’s use of other languages than English. They were able to take turns, carry on conversation, and respect each other’s space. They exchange different knowledge and ideas. |

**Short term review**

**What learning was visible?**

- Responded positively to the session
- Aki, Gagi, Sanja and Rea named other languages than English
- Showed interest in the new repertoire – language, song
- Aki engaged in singing in a different language to English
- Aki enjoyed and followed with confidence ‘Walk around the room’
- Listening skills – moved to singing instructions
- Were perceptive – noticed non-verbal instructions

**The teachers**

- Could not take any photos of the session
- Competent at soundscapes
- Displayed good memories
- Welcomed new material
- Displayed problem solving skills

**What to do next?**

- Include the drums in the session
- Continue counting in different languages
- Introduce a new, humorous song unaccompanied by the drums – ‘If you like to be a monster’
- Continue with simple singing exercises – warming up voices/bodies
- Repeat repertoire un/accompanied by the drums

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**Appendix A.7 – Music Session 7**

**Observation**

**Before the session**

When I arrived this morning, it again was evident that the children were very happy to see me; they were asking if I brought more instruments for them to play with. Apparently, according to the childcare regular staff, the children had made ample use of the small drums in particular, during my absence. The centre’s Assistant Coordinator (AC1) was very appreciative of the musical resources I had brought; she observed part of the session.
“If you like to be a monster, now’s your chance!”

The music session was successful. The children participated well, displaying good listening skills and an ability to move to the rhythm individually and as a group. The PA was setting up the beds for ‘rest time’; nevertheless, she was tuned into the session and sang along with us. There was a reliever in the room as well – she sat and observed us and also took photographs of the session.

As in previous gatherings, a few of the children were eager to help so they organised the mats and other things until we were ready to proceed. We counted how many people we had in a circle. Most children joined in counting the mats in English; I first counted in Serbian. “What’s this language?” inquired I informed them it was Serbian, the language I spoke with my family, who lived, far away, in Serbia. Sanja asked how far away; “…a day and night in the plane”, I tried to illustrate. “Oh, that is far!” she concluded. “Sure is, added Jaspar, “I bet it’ the Moon is even more far!” He looked at me for a confirmation. “It certainly is.” I agreed. We continued counting – Aki joined me counting in Japanese, while Gagi did the German on his own.

The main instrument I had brought today was the big drum, which instantly stimulated a discussion. We talked about the sound, the drum’s physical features and where it came from. Jaspar noticed that it had colourful pictures. Sanja asked if I was going to leave it for them in the ‘music corner’. Ali described it: “It’s a kind of drum. The top bit feel soft and smooth, the round bit is tough…you shouldn’t hit the round bit, it hurts.” Ali said that she had gone to a street festival with her family and had seen a bigger drum, on the street: “I never saw such big one! It was huge!” When asked how big, she pointed to the small rectangular table in the book area - “Like that, but it was round and it was on the ground, it had tiny sparkles on the side.” “How did it sound?” I asked Ali “Oh, it was good, nice sound…I saw people dance to it”, she smiled. “I think you might have seen a ‘gathering drum’”. I told Ali “Gathering drum” she repeated. Jaspar added: “Yeah, ‘cause people get together and dance to it.” he looked at me, curiously raising his eyebrows: “That’s right – people may dance or sing or just simply listen to the gathering drum.” Gagi inquired:”Oh, can we take that one outside” (referring to the big drum), looking at me and then at the PA. The PA replied, smiling: “Maybe…if we make sure we are looking after it” “Yay!” exclaimed Ali and Gagi “We will look after it! Ali promised. Gagi and a few others nodded their heads to confirm. Jaspar said laughing: “We can do gathering mattering outside!” Ali and other children joined him in laughter.
I first demonstrated a few different rhythm patterns on the drum. The children listened and watched attentively. Kasja even recognised the ‘Umma Lella’ as she exclaimed: “Oku bina song!”, when I played the rhythm of this song.

The children did very well with dancing. They were singing with more confidence and accuracy than in previous sessions. It was interesting to observe that they sang more if I only played the drums. When they were asked to drum along on their body while singing, they seemed to almost exclusively focus on their actions and the singing was markedly reduced. We played a game where the children, for example, “moved as big or small drums” using their hands, arms and feet, keeping up with the beat that I practically dictated. All the children participated actively, except for Rea who decided to observe. Once the children had mastered the movements, I introduced another element - a song ‘If you like to be a monster’ (suitable for this type of movement). In the earlier encounters, some of the children used onomatopoeia (like roaring) and I thought this song would invite them to engage in creative movement while they could, at the same time, utilise all the elements we have explored so far, in the repertoire. This was actually a poem which I have made up music for.

If you like to be a monster
   Now is your chance
   Everybody is doing
   The monster dance
   You stamp your feet
   Wave your arms around
   Stretch them up, stretch them up and put them on the ground.
   ‘Cause you’re doing the monster song!

   Whoo-oo-haa!
   You’re doing the monster song!
   Whoo-oo-haa!
   You’re doing the monster song!
   Whoo oo- haa! Whoo-aaa! Whoo-aaa!
   And you stop!
As expected, the children liked it very much, especially that onomatopoeic (Whoo-haa!) part of it. They moved their feet to the beat, using different parts of their bodies, and attempted to make “scary” facial expressions.

Aki and N. were initially hesitant about participating. Rea also, at first, kept observing the rest of us. Eventually, however, everyone was up and dancing, “being a scary monster”. RR (the regular staff reliever) joined in dancing, too.

The children were pleased when I left the drum for them to explore, in the ‘music corner’ (music learning centre). Gagi promised to look after it.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Learning story analysis</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taking an interest</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Being involved**          | Counting in different languages. Most children joined in counting the mats in English, Aki joined me counting in Japanese, while Gagi did the German on his own.  
They were involved musically with the new song (follow the beat) physically (using body parts to move in space), socially (relating to one another) and emotionally (expressing excitement, anxiety, laugh). |
| **Persisting with difficulty** | The learning expectations were at times challenging especially when children attempted singing and making rhythmic patterns of the same time.  
It was very clever of Kasja to recognise the rhythm of the song (displaying good rhythmic memory/recognition skills).  
Some children experienced discomfort when exposed to “If you like to be a monster’. Aki and Nely were initially hesitant about participating in the dance. Rea also at first kept observing the rest of us. |
| **Expressing an idea or feeling** | Some children used extensive vocabulary and illustrative language to describe the big drum. |
| **Taking responsibility**   | The children were eager to help and organised the mats and other things until we were ready to proceed. The same happened at the end of the session – the children helped with packing up. This has become commonplace and is a gesture of enthusiasm.  
The children were pleased when I left the drum for them to explore, in the music area. Gagi understood the value of it as he promised to look after it. |
In the ‘If you like to be a monster’ song it was noticeable that a few children got a bit hesitant. Their peers showed empathy, allowing them more time to join in the “monster-dance”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short term review</th>
<th>The children:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Responded positively to the session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Aki, Gagi again counted in other languages than English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Were curious about the big drum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Responded well to rhythm games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Liked the new song ‘If you like to be a monster’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Engaged in singing in a different language to English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Used listening skills - followed singing instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Were perceptive – followed non-verbal instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Kasja recognised the rhythm of the non-English song and expressed part of it verbally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Displayed empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Persisted in trying to multi-task (sing and make rhythm)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| What to do next? | • Include new instrument in the session – musical eggs |
|                 | • Play a listening game |
|                 | • Include the big, medium and the small drums |
|                 | • Continue counting in different languages |
|                 | • Continue with simple singing exercises – warming up voices/bodies |
|                 | • Follow children’s interest in the session – repertoire |
|                 | • Talk to Aki and N. about “monsters”? (Follow up on this with staff). |
This session started out with a count of all children attending in the group. The children then deduced and brought the equivalent mats number. Robie took a photo of the ‘scene’. As in the previous sessions, I started by counting in English and then Serbian and Japanese. Aki helped count in Japanese. The rest of the children listened to this carefully. Jaspar added confidently: “I know how to count in Serbia (n): It’s edan (in Serbian “Jedan”), dva (in Serbian “Dva”), three (In Serbian “Tri”)...he then stopped, looked at me and smiled...“Ahm...” Chetiri (In Serbian” Cetiri”), pet (In Serbian “Pet”), shest (In Serbian “Sest”), I started counting, making a pause in between the numbers: “Sedum (In Serbian “Sedam”)” Rea said happily. “Osam, devet” I continued in Serbian, “Dese” (In Serbain “Deset”), added Aki. I was surprised that the children could already recall this information. “You have a very good memory! You remember all these words!” “I am good at remembering numbers!” said Jaspar. “We played these games outside, when you get to count. J (RR) counts in Serbian; she knows your language.” (He referred to RR – Regular Reliever, whose mother tongue was Croatian, where counting, below 100, is identical to Serbian).

All of this counting inspired the children to initiate the ‘One, two, three’ chant.
One, two, three,
Mother caught a flea.
She put it in the teapot and made a cup of tea.
The flea jumped out
Mother gave a shout.
Father came in with his shirt hanging out.

Once again, the children really enjoyed the humour, rhyme and action of the finger/hand play. They anticipated that I would place their names in the ‘story’ and heartedly laughed when someone “…came in with her t-shirt hanging out!”

For today’s session I brought a set of non-transparent chests. One of them had instruments inside it, the other one was empty. Following the ‘One, two, three’ rhyme, we played a guessing /listening game where the children identified which chest had an instrument inside. In order for them to find the correct chest, they needed to listen carefully, when I shook the chest, causing the instruments inside (for instance the bells) to generate characteristic sounds.

The children enjoyed this game and displayed good listening skills. For example, Jan concentrated well and multiple times identified where the sound was coming from. He also recognised the actual instrument.
After several rounds of this game, the children asked for the big drum that had been used in earlier sessions. We started off standing forming a circle and then proceeded with the free body movement.

Observation

After the session

After the dance, the formal part of the session was finished. The children, however, eagerly took the opportunity to explore the drums further.
Aki and Sisi played the drums, creating a music conversation where both of them “became cats”. Aki started a cat’s onomatopoeia “Miaou, Miaou” and then tapped the drums twice, while repeating: “Miaou, miaou”. Sisi giggled and responded quietly, raising her pitch: “Miaou, miaou”, while tapping the small drum. Then they repeated this simultaneously, several times. Violet, who observed them play, decided to join in, tapping the drum that she was holding onto: “Woof, woof!” she exclaimed. They laughed and continued to play their drums, raising their voices.

**Learning story analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Taking an interest</strong></th>
<th>Today was the first time that we played a listening game, which the children seemed to really enjoy – they were curious and focussed on listening and on the outcomes of the ‘guessing’ task. They also extended their musical play into a conversation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being involved</strong></td>
<td>Counting seems popular, especially with some children. The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persisting with difficulty</strong></td>
<td>The new game was challenging. However, the children who participated displayed good concentration and listening skills and were successful when identifying where the sounds came from; Jan even identified the instrument that made the sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expressing an idea or feeling</strong></td>
<td>Throughout the session, the children talked, when appropriate, chanted, used gesture, mimicked and danced freely to the drumbeat. The children were also able to introduce animals and drum sounds into a play conversation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taking responsibility</strong></td>
<td>As in previous sessions, the children’s responsiveness and interest in not only the content of the session but also organisational aspects contribute to an overall success. The children followed the rules of the “listening game” playing it in a complete silence, when required. This allowed the individual children who were the “listeners” to participate effectively. The children were pleased when I left the new instruments for them to explore, in the music area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Short term review** | The children:  
  - Responded positively to the session  
  - Aki, counted in Japanese  
  - Jaspar counted in Serbian  
  - Used diverse strategies for counting (for example, saying the numbers and simultaneously using finger-counting, listening to the numbers counted and finger counting)  
  - Were curious about the chest and the “listening game”  
  - Responded well to drum-rhythm games  
  - Listening skills – focussed on the sound produced by the specific instruments |
Jan identified the hidden instrument by listening to its sound

Sisi, Aki, Violet engaged in “drum conversation” using their imagination

Showed each different ways of playing the drums (for example, single handed, two handed, with finger tips)

**What to do next?**

- Bring back simple singing exercises – warming up voices/bodies
- Talk to staff to also encourage these ‘music conversations’
- Play the ‘listening game’
- Bring in the ‘What do you think my name is’ game
- Include the big, medium and the small drums
- Continue counting in different languages
- Follow children’s interest in the session - repertoire

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**Appendix A.9 – Music Session 9**

16th, May, 2008.

**“Umma lella”**

For today’s session, we had to go outside as the room was not available. The PT informed me that the children had not gone outside for a few days due to the presence of the bull-ants in the playground. Some of the children of the regular group wanted to have the music session; some were eager to play elsewhere - in the sand-pit or a cubby-house. A number of children from the toddlers’ group came to observe (these children were not allowed to have their photos taken).

We explored the drums individually and as a group. ‘Umma lella’ was the song we repeated several times – I encouraged the use of different dynamics, tempo, and expression. I let the children share the drum, which they played while I sang the song. Some played to the beat, others to the words. When I stopped singing, the children stopped for a moment, but soon continued to beat the drum. It was
obvious that the instrument was too small for that many hands, but I wanted the children to experience this for themselves. Kasja and Violet appeared focussed on looking for other hands to touch, Jan seemed to enjoy the playfulness of it, while Gagi looked a bit angry and was quick to suggest: “It’s too hard. Stop, please. Take turns!”

Gagi asked me to sing in another language. Since we were seated near a big tree, I chose to sing ‘Okina Kurino’.

Ooki na kuri no ki no shita de
Ooki na kuri no ki no shita de
  anata to watashi
  naka yoku asobimashou
  ooki na kuri no ki no shita de.

Under The Big Chestnut Tree (English)

  Under the big chestnut tree
  You and me
  Are playing happily
  Under the big chestnut tree.

Gagi described it: “It sounds sad, but it’s nice. I like your voice.” He asked the meaning of the words and when I translated, he insisted we get the see-through scarves from the music corner. I brought the scarf and Gagi placed one on Jan and the other on himself and asked me to repeat the song about the chestnut tree. “This is our tree”, he explained. Jan kept smiling during the song and without commenting followed the actions Gagi demonstrated. The children enjoyed this imaginative play using their bodies as the trunks of the trees and the scarfs as the canopy of the trees.

Once we stopped with singing, Gagi asked if he could have a hold of the drum and I gave Lou and Jan a scarf each. “I am your best friend?” Gagi asked Jan, who replied” Yes, you and Robie.”.
Lou, Jan and Gagi once more decided to play on the drum. This time, the four of us sang “Umma lella” together. Lou and Jan followed the melody, while Gagi sang well in tune.

Jan concentrated on beating the drum. He initially used his finger tips (both hands) and then eventually his whole hand. The pattern he was playing was sounded like a drum roll - “Tabadabadabadabadabadabadada”. Lou, on the other hand, used her palms to beat the drum in 4 times 4 rhythm (4/4). She whispered “One, two, three four” initially and then repeated this pattern several times.

Lou laughed and wanted to sing what she called the “Okubina song” (‘Umma lella’) with the “tree dancing on her head”. She placed the scarf and shook her head and waved her arms: “Oku bina, bina, bina, oku bina, bina, bina...”
At this point Gagi offered to take some photos of Lou and myself. He was pleased with the result:
“You look nice...I like taking photos. My dad lets me...” Lou was pleased with the photo.

At the close of the session, Lou asked me to take her to the music corner, to show me “something”. She approached the display, pointed to a photo of herself with another child and said: “Me. I showed it to my mum. She’ll get me the drum!” I asked her to tell me what she was doing in the photo. “I was playing the drums and Josh, he showed me how to do it properly.” Lou then looked at the photo above hers: “That’s Aki and that’s Nely. They are best friends”.

# Learning story analysis

**Taking an interest**

Today was the first time that we had a session outdoors. Not all of the children of the regular group wanted to have the music session; some were eager to play outside as they had not this opportunity the whole week.

**Being involved**

The children wanted to explore the drums individually and as a small group. ‘Umma lella’ was the song they wanted to repeat several times. They were playful with the instrument and with each other. They responded to different dynamics, tempo, and expression.

The children enjoyed imaginative play using their bodies as the trunks of the trees and the scarfs as the canopy of the tree.

**Persisting with difficulty**

It was obvious to children that the instrument was too small for that many hands, they quickly realised that they had to use a single hand. Each child displayed a different respond to this challenge. Kasja and Violet enjoyed the social and physical interaction, Jan seemed to enjoyed the overall atmosphere created, while Gagi was trying to find a practical solution – to take turns.

**Expressing an idea or feeling**

Gagi verbally expressed his frustration, using a convincing tone of voice, giving a constructive suggestion: “It’s too hard. Stop, please. Take turns!”

He also effectively used words to describe the ‘Okina kurino’ song and took further interest in its language.

**Taking responsibility**

Gagi contributed to documenting of the session. He kindly offered to take some photos of Lou and myself.

I felt that somehow Lou realised that this music project is important to me and this is why she decided to show me the music display in the music learning centre.

**Short term review**

The children
| What to do next? | • Encourage “music conversations”
• Play the “listening game”
• Bring the guitar
• Play the “What do you think my name is?” game
• Include the big, medium and the small drums
• Continue counting in different languages
• Continue with simple singing exercises – warming up voices/bodies
• Follow children’s interest in the session - repertoire |

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**Appendix A.10 – Music Session 10**

27th May, 2008.

**Observation**

**Before the session**

Today I came to see PT to give her some resources for designing an aesthetic environment and for music education in early childhood settings. The resources were books, CDs and photographs. There was no session scheduled for today. However, once the children spotted me, they surrounded me, insisting that we “do music”.

- Lou, Gagi, Jan, Josh, Kasja, Violet choose to participate in the session
- Curious about the “Okina Kurino” song and its origins and meaning
- Shared the drums
- Each of them played the drums in a different manner
- Were imaginative
- Lou commented on the display in the ‘music corner’
‘Che, Che Koolay’

I brought some new ‘musical eggs’ for the music corner. Robie and Zizi were busily working on their art work. They did not participate in the music session. However, throughout the session, I could hear Robie sing along, while Zizi quietly worked and from time to time observed what was going on in the session.

I let the children examine the ‘music eggs’. The children commented on their colour and noticed that “they are the same size and they sound the same but they are different colour”. Jaspar commented on the box: “I like this wooden box; ha-ha, you can put real eggs in it!” The rest of the children laughed at this idea. “Ha-ha, funny music!” he added, as he shook one of the eggs. “They were in the box” said Rea “Box?” I asked. “In the guessing box” she explained. “Yeah, we used them in that game when you get to guess what’s in the box.” added Jaspar.

“Which song should we sing with these ‘musical eggs’? “ I asked the children. Laura readily responded: “‘Umma lella’ one!” We sang the song twice and the third time we divided into two groups. One group sang any given line which was then repeated by the second group. We then had
the children with the golden egg and myself sing the line and the children with the eggs in other colours repeat the singing phrase. Some of the children, like Kasja and Sisi kept shaking their eggs throughout the song. Jaspa only shook his egg when it was his turn to sing, as he was holding a red egg.

Rea suggested that each member of the group should have two eggs to click together, while we sing ‘Umma lella’, but when the children counted the eggs, they realised that there were not enough eggs for them all. However, we still proceeded with this idea, as Jan, Leone and Violet were happy to hand their eggs to other children, while they joined in singing.

I had planned to introduce the ‘Che, Che Koolay’ song to the children and thought this was a good moment to do so. There are particular actions for each phrase of the song, which on this occasion I did not present to the children. I simply sang the song and let them respond spontaneously. Most of them started shaking their eggs to the beat, and some attempted to sing along. This was most obvious when the phrase was repeated. At the end of singing the song for a second time, I lifted up my arms for “Hey” and the children happily joined in.

Che che Koolay, Che che koolay
Che che cofisa, Che che cofisa
Kofisa langa, Kofisa langa
Cacashi langa, Cacashi langa
Kommma dye-day, Kommma dye-day
Kommma dye-day, Hey! (Say loudly together)

We repeated the song again and this time, Jaspar exclaimed the ending of the song: “Hey!” I asked him to collect all the music eggs and place the new boxes in the music corner. He started collecting the eggs. Aki suggested: “Let’s put all the reds together and all the green together and all the gold together!” “OK”, replied Jaspar asking everyone to pay attention where they would place their eggs. Once all the eggs were collected Jaspar looked at them, and laughed out loud: “Ha-ha, the golden ones might sing in the box – ‘Che, che, KooLeee’ (Koolay)!” He changed his voice to a more baby-like sound, when he sang ‘Che, che Koolee’. The other children thought that was very funny. All,
especially JN., burst into laughter. The eggs were placed in the music area. Our spontaneous music session was finished, once again, on a happy note.

![Image of children playing with eggs](image)

### Learning story analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taking an interest</strong></td>
<td>The children associate music session with my presence. They have expectations persistence. Their engagement with materials constantly adding their own ideas is a measure of their interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being involved</strong></td>
<td>The children expressed a variety of feelings and comments as they enjoyed the musical eggs. The aesthetics of the eggs - sound and colour appealed and led to the children proposing ways of grouping sound and colour – a variety of ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persisting with difficulty</strong></td>
<td>When the children with the golden egg and I sang the line and the children who held the eggs in other colours were supposed to repeat the singing phrase, some of these children, like Kasja and Sisi, kept shaking their eggs throughout the song - they did not seem to understand the instructions. This was a difficult task accomplished with different levels of competences it required initial grasping of the concept of pattern, the listening skills to know when to participate and he concentration to react accordingly to a cue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expressing an idea or feeling</strong></td>
<td>Jaspar collected all the musical eggs and placed the new boxes in the music corner. He started collecting the eggs. Aki cleverly suggested: “Let’s put all the reds together and all the green together and all the gold together!” “OK”, replied Jaspar asking everyone to pay attention where they would place their eggs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The children responded accordingly.

**Taking responsibility**

*The tuned helping into a sorting game. They asked for a music session as none had been planned.*

**Short term review**

*The children*

- Were very eager to have a music session even though it was not a “music session day”
- Chose to sit in a closer circle than usually (when we use the mats)
- Enjoyed playing the musical eggs – most understood the colour rotation
- Liked the new song ‘Che, Che Koolay’
- Were imaginative
- Jaspar recalled the phrase of the new song

**What to do next?**

- Encourage “music conversations”
- Play the “listening game”
- Bring the guitar
- Play the “What do you think my name is?” game
- Include the big, medium and the small drums
- Continue counting in different languages
- Continue with simple singing exercises – warming up voices/bodies
- Follow children’s interest in the session – repertoire
Appendix A.11 – Music Session 11

3rd August, after a 7 week break

There are no photos of this session due to camera failure. I should have bought another one along.

“This is a double piano stretcher!” (Accordion)

This session was the first after a long interval of seven weeks. Despite my absence, the children’s enthusiasm for music seemed unabated. The PA, for example, reported that the children kept asking when I was coming back. PA and PT observed that Laura, Lou, Kasja, Aki and Sanja were singing the songs in their free play, especially ‘Umma lella’. I noticed that the music area had been removed. The PT explained that after four weeks, they removed the music area, “as the children needed something new to do”. She added that I could again set up the music area, in a different part of the room if I liked. I asked the children if they would like me to set up this music corner. Their answer was a very vocal yes. Jaspar said, “Yes, please, bring some new musical instruments...when I grow up, I am going to live in a big room with lots of musical instruments.” “Why?” I was intrigued. “Because I like musical instruments and I can fix them up.” “Who else is going to live with you?” I asked. “Nobody. Just me.” PT smiled and asked “Why is that, Jaspar?” He looked at her and laughed: “What girl would like to live with me?!”

Since the music corner was to be set up anew, this was a good opportunity to ask the children what instruments and items they would like. They each in turn had a chance to make suggestions. The list of their suggestions consisted of the same instruments and other items that we had in the past but I kept in mind Jaspar’s request for novel items and instruments. The other non-music resources I had brought (for example, Chinese dolls, Aboriginal cards, Indian glass elephant figures) were still in the room and available for the children to play with. Aki asked if I could bring some more wooden dollies as they “are lovely”.

The children, as they had done before, helped with setting up the mats in a circle and seemed very keen to take part. We warmed up our voices, stretched our bodies and then performed the songs we have shared together in the previous sessions.

Today, I wanted the children to see my piano accordion. Jaspar called it “a double piano stretcher”. Ahmet said that the instrument came from Russia. Rea knew that the instrument was called accordion. I played several folk tunes. The children seemed impressed with the sound of this
instrument. Robie described the sound: “This one is a happy one”. I then changed the instrument and played the guitar. Jaspar and Sanja noticed that although my guitar was different it sounded no different to my other one. They were correct – I explained that I have brought a different guitar for this session, as I had to lend my other one to a friend.

When I played the guitar, all the children sang and performed actions. I could hear Jan, Aki, Sanja, Rea, Lou, Laura and Robie, sing mostly in tune. I also noticed that their voices were stronger and that they sang with more confidence, than 7 weeks before.

At the end of the session, they insisted I stay longer for afternoon tea. I promised to come again on Friday...

## Learning story analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taking an interest</th>
<th>This session was the first after a long interval of seven weeks. Despite my long absence, the children’s enthusiasm for music seemed unabated. The PA, for instance, reported that the children kept asking when I was coming back. When asked what they would like in newly constituted music centre the children’s reply indicated they had a good memory of previous artefacts.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being involved</td>
<td>The children displayed interest and enthusiasm and happily shared their previous knowledge. Jaspar felt comfortable enough to take a verbal risk and give the accordion the wonderful name of “double piano stretcher”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persisting with difficulty</td>
<td>Jaspar came up with a creative name for ‘accordion’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing an idea or feeling</td>
<td>Some children were quite talkative, others more good listeners. They were happy to label tunes with emotion words showing an ability to relate feeing to sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking responsibility</td>
<td>The children helped with setting up the mats in a circle and seemed very keen to take part. At the end of the session, few children helped pack up the mats. The children’s suggestions for the music corner were sensible and appropriate for the space we had available. They clearly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
remembered previous encounters, could mentally revisit, plus plan future extensions to the music learning centre.

They invited me to stay for afternoon tea.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short term review</th>
<th>The children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Were very eager to have a music session again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Remembered and performed with enthusiasm the repertoire we had shared in the previous sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ‘Umma Lella’ seemed to be the most popular song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Jan, Aki, Robie, Sanja, Lou, Laura, Rea sang more in tune and with more confidence than before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sanja noticed the difference between the two guitars used in the sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Jaspar was interested in the design of the instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Jaspar called the accordion “a double piano stretcher”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Aki liked the wooden dollies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The children missed the ‘music corner’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The teachers:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Reported that the children really missed the music sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Removed the music corner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Were happy if I set up the music area again</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to do next?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Set up the ‘music corner’ again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bring the guitar – celebrate the Olympic Games</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Counting in different languages
• Continue with simple singing exercises – warming up voices/bodies
• Follow children’s interest in the session – repertoire
• Look for the children’s size accordion

Appendix A.12 – Music Session 12

Observation

Before the session

Once again, the children were very enthusiastic when they saw me arrive. The staff were apparently extremely busy the whole week – the PT and PA had forgotten that I was coming today, so they had to pack up the room before the group music session could commence. PT instructed them: “OK, children now we need to pack up, Aleksandra is here to do the music”... “Yeah!!” was a collective reply. The PT continued: “I am going to put the music on...” She then played a lively song from a CD and the children started to pack up the blocks and clean up the rest of the areas. While packing, most of the children were singing, dancing, and banging the blocks to the rhythm. Aki told me that the next song is the angry one and the one after that one is a scary one. She also asked me to come closer and she kissed me.

We watch Olympic Games

As we were about to start the session the children started commenting on my clothes as I had come dressed in the Australian National Handball uniform. Jaspar said: “I watched the Olympics” while Lou
complemented me: “I like your soccer dress”. Ahmet concluded: “You are a soccer player and a music teacher.”

Once I had satisfied their curiosity about handball, the children appeared ready for the music session. Remembering the last time I had come, they asked why I did not bring the piano (portable, electronic). This, I explained to them, had not been possible due to the heavy rain and thus the potential damage to the instruments. The children then asked whether all instruments must be kept out of the rain and we spent some minutes in which they continued asking questions about instruments and their sturdiness, which I answered as best as I could.

Jaspar recalled that I was also supposed to bring another instrument - “A big one!” he exclaimed. I explained that I could not carry the instrument (accordion) because it was too heavy and I had an injured leg and was limping. The children giggled about my limping.

We then proceeded with the session. They were excellent at recognising the tunes, following instructions and now more confident when singing ‘Che Che Koolay’. Rea remembered that this was an African song and Lou and Aki were saying that it was like the ‘Oku bina’ song; (I wonder if they seem to have realised the linguistic/phonetic similarity…?)

The most repeated of this session was the ‘Monster song”. All the children readily joined in dancing and acting out as “monsters”. They fully responded to this stimulus – they moved to the beat, and enjoyed the melody, character and the lyrics of the song. The text led them in their action, as they stamped their feet, waved their arms, and crinkled their faces. However they did not sing, but only became vocal when happily “raging” in the “whoo-oo-haa-aa” bit.
Observation

After the session

After the formal part of the session, I left the guitar on the floor which attracted a few children. Lou, however, sensibly suggested: “One at the time”. I placed a chair for the children to take a turn individually during their afternoon tea time.

Nely was the first one to have a turn. She decided to let go of her soft toy in order to handle the instrument with more care. She pulled a few strings, stroking them with both hands, several times. “I finished” she said and rushed back to sit next to her best friend Aki.

Robie handled the guitar in an appropriate manner. He also decided to experiment with it - he placed his hand on the bottom of the strings. “Hey, now it is more different”, he noticed. “What is different?” I asked. “The hole makes it sound loud” he explained. He appeared really absorbed in exploring the sound and I felt reluctant to interrupt this by asking further questions.
“It’s heavy... I hold it.,” said Klara

‘I am tuning the guitar here’, said Jaspar “I am making it squeak... Ha-ha”

“You need to bring a small guitar... this one’s too big... I can’t get to them (knobs)”.

Violet joined Jaspar and while Jaspar was plucking the strings she was twisting the knobs on the guitar-neck as she would be tuning them. Then they swapped and Violet plucked the strings while Jaspar tuned the instrument. She told me that her mum bought her a pink violin and that looked like a small guitar.
| **Learning story analysis** |  
| **Taking an interest** | Once again, the children were very enthusiastic when they saw me arrive. They asked questions and made comment about my rather different physical appearance. Most of them were, in some way or another, familiar with the Olympic Games. They were able to associate soccer and handball which indicates an intuitive understanding of different origins of sport.  

| **Being involved** | The children were quite involved in all parts of the session. The children were keen to explore the guitar further and the different approaches to the exploration were marked. Knowledge of outside events, the Olympics, instruments not present in previous observations of guitar tuning were evident.  

| **Persisting with difficulty** | The children found the guitar challenging to handle due to its size. Violet found a solution where they alternated between the strings and the knobs. He children were able to organise having turns. 

Jaspar demanded a smaller guitar.  

| **Expressing an idea or feeling** | The children were excellent at recognising the tunes, following instructions and now more confident when singing “Che Che Koolay’. Rea remembered that this was an African song and Lou and Aki were saying that it was like the ‘Oku bina’ song; (I wonder if they seem to have realised the linguistic/phonetic similarity..?) The reaction to the monster song was interesting suggesting some children are now gaining a vicarious pleasure out of the music game that was originally a bit scary.  

| **Taking responsibility** | The children, as they had done before, helped with setting up the mats in a circle and seemed very keen to take part. At the end of the session, a few children helped pack up the mats. The children frequently took responsibility of their own learning through their questions, showing natural curiosity and suggestions, indicating an understanding of the materials and how to extend use. |
They handled the guitar with care and were able to take turns of the guitar, after the formal part of the session was completed.

**Short term review**

The children

- Were very eager to have a music session again
- Rea remembered that the ‘Che, Che Koolay’ was an African song and Lou and Aki were saying that it was like the ‘Oku bina’ song; (I wonder if they seem to have realised the linguistic/phonetic similarity?)
- Remembered and performed with enthusiasm the repertoire we had shared in the previous sessions
- ‘Umma Lella’ seems to be the most popular song, so far
- Jaspar is interested in the design of the guitar
- The children were interested in exploring the guitar individually – photos show that all of the children have a different approach

The teachers:

- PT, as observed in previous occasions, used music for having children to pack up the room

**What to do next?**

- Keep an eye on the ‘music corner’
- Bring the guitar
- Continue counting in different languages
- Continue with simple singing exercises – warming up voices/bodies
- Follow children’s interest in the session – repertoire
- Introduce another humorous poem “Monster’s song”
Appendix A.13 – Music Session 13

22nd, August, 2008.

Observation

Before the session

As soon as I arrived for today's session, many of the children ran towards me, hugged me to say 'hello'. As on previous occasions, the music was on and the children needed to finish packing up before our music session could begin. Some children were singing along while cleaning up, some dancing, some appeared more focussed on tiding up.

Josh and Jan organised the mats in a circle. They unpacked and liked their new “music mats “which I had brought. Neither the PT or the PA were in the room; instead, there was an agency staff-reliever in to room. She initially just observed the session but soon enough joined in.

“A child went out one day…”

The children participated very well today. They wanted first to do the ‘Monster song’. They remembered most of the lyrics and danced with a pronounced display of facial and gesture
expression, especially during the “Whoo-oo-ha!” part. This part was experienced by the children as very dramatic and funny. They got very excited when I introduced a new poem: “I eat kids - yum-yum!” This is a humorous poem that children of this age typically enjoy. The children in our music group were very enthusiastic about it and were quite good at dramatising it. Initially, they needed assistance with acting out and saying the phrases. We used a simple – ‘clap, clap, clap, knees’ pattern of body percussion to accompany the lyrics.

A child went out one day.
She only went to play.
A mighty monster came along
and sang its mighty monster song:

“I EAT KIDS YUM, YUM!
I STUFF THEM DOWN MY TUM.
I ONLY LEAVE THE TEETH AND CLOTHES.
(I SPECIALLY LIKE THE TOES.)

The child was not amused.
She stood there and refused.
Then with a skip and a little twirl
she sang the song of a hungry girl:

“I EAT MONSTERS BURP!
THEY MAKE ME SQUEAL AND SLURP.
IT’S TIME TO CHOMP AND TAKE A CHEW AND
WHAT I’LL CHEW IS YOU!”

The monster ran like that!
It didn’t stop to chat.
(The child went skipped home again
and ate her brother’s model train.)

Once the poem had been chanted twice, I invited volunteers to enact it. Robie and Laura dramatised (repeated after me) the phrases of the characters of the girl and the monster. Robie managed to depict a very a scary monster; Laura acted as a very confident girl. They both managed to keep the original rhythm of the phrase, each time they repeated their allocated parts. The second pair was Lou and Gagi. Lou wanted to be a monster but Gagi refused to be a girl, so we had Leonie to act the girl’s role. Lou got a bit nervous and shy, repeating the words in a whisper, while Leonie repeated her part with also a quiet but confident tone. Both of them kept the beat steady. At this stage, the children stopped the ‘body percussion’, but some of them were chanting parts of the poem. I could hear Jan saying some of the words.
The following pair was Jaspar and Laura suggested we use a chair for the monster to hide underneath. He placed it outside of circle and explained: “Here, this is the monster-house.” Laura was unsure of what to do at first. I suggested she find a playground. Laura decided to stay in the circle.

This last ‘edition’ ended up to have only Jaspar, Laura and myself chanting the words. The rest of the children seemed really tuned in but they were curiously observing the new ‘stage’ in silence. Jaspar’s interpretation and presentation of the monster was well received. The children especially liked when the “scared” monster run away from the girl.

We extended this ‘performance’ by having multiple monsters/girls. Laura suggested that the girls sit in the circle and the monsters walk around the circle. Gagi initiated that boys march around the girls, keeping up with the beat, while the girls focused more on the presentation of the ‘brave’ girl-character by creating a very ‘proud disposition’(raising their eyebrows, using their body language, stamping their feet in protest).

*AC1 (Assistant Coordinator), who had observed part of the session, approached me later on and said that “the session was fantastic”.

At the end of the “I eat kids – yum, yum!” segment, the children were keen to do more music. Fortunately, I was able to extend the session. We sang their favorites ‘Umma lella’ and ‘Hey, hey, what’s your name?’, both songs I accompanied with the guitar. Kasja liked this change as she said: “I like Okubina song with guitar!” (Referring to the ‘Umma Lella’ song).
Close to the end of the session, one of the parents arrived and joined in the circle. Gagi asked me to sing a song in a different language. I asked him if he meant the one about friends under the chestnut tree – he could not remember that one.

Since agi. wished for a non-English song and the children were in mood for movement, I decided to introduce the ‘Paki, paki’ song. For this, the children stood up in a circle and I encourage them to imitate the actions I showed.

Pakipaki pakipaki (clap)  
Tamariki ma (children)  
Pakipaki pakipaki (clap)  
Tamariki ma (children)  
Kanikani, kaninani (dance)  
Tamariki ma (children)  
Kanikani, kaninani (dance)  
Tamariki ma (children)  

Huruhuri, hurihuri (turn around – turn)  
Tamariki ma  
Huruhuri, hurihuri (turn around – turn other way)  
Tamariki ma  

E peke, e peke (jump)  
Tamariki ma (children)  
E peke, e peke (jump)  
Tamariki ma (children)  

They seemed to like the song and were engaged in dancing and listening to the instructions and followed them with ease. We repeated the song accompanied with the guitar. I prompted them what to do in English. Most children ended up dancing freely. This was to be expected as this was the first time they heard the song and the language must have been unfamiliar to them.

Observation

After the session

At the end of the group session, some of the children wanted to handle the guitar. Even though I assisted the children, when they asked to handle the instrument, I tried to let them explore it freely as
well as oversee the turn-taking. The children took turns with an ease. It seemed that they were content to partake in both observing and playing.

Leonie said it looked like a ‘cello’. It was interesting to see that Jan and Josh seemed so natural with the guitar. Jan plucked first E then high E string and commented that the sound was the same and different.

Jaspar, as in the previous session, looked at the guitar’s design, touching (manipulating) the tuning pegs: “Here you tune the guitar”. He impatiently turned towards to Lou, who was standing next to
him: “Please... Move away, I can’t do it. I need space to make the sound!” Lou moved aside. Jaspar continued: “Hah, see, like this...no sound”, he pressed the strings firmly with both hands.

Kasja seemed interested in the individual sounds of each of the strings. She plucked each of them with her left hand - E, A, D, G, B and E again, while she did not move the right hand from the initial positioning.

Aki observed the previous children play with the guitar and when it was her turn, she spent a few seconds gently striking the strings with her left hand. She then started singing “Twinkle, twinkle” and played along. Jaspar was still there; he joined in singing quietly. When the song finished, they looked and smiled at each other. Jaspar said: That’s a clever way!’

Just before I left, Aki came up to me and said, with a serious tone: “I did not like the monster one”.

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<th><strong>Learning story analysis</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taking an interest</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The children were very welcoming and affectionate towards me. It was interesting to see how their familiarity with materials made their explorations more sophisticated.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Being involved</strong></td>
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| **Persisting with difficulty** | Some children are becoming more skilled in handling the guitar. The children’s suggestions and changes during the dramatisation was an indication of how challenging this activity was.  
Lou appeared a bit shy to perform the role of the “girl” in the play “Monster song”, however, she coped with the challenge well as she whispered the words out. |
| **Expressing an idea or feeling** | The children participated very well today. They wanted first to do the ‘Monster song’. They remembered most of the lyrics and danced with a pronounced display of facial and gesture expression, especially during the “Whoo-oo-haa!” part. This part was experienced by the children as very dramatic and funny. They got very excited when I introduced a new poem.  
They dramatised it – in pairs; we extended this by having multiple monsters/girls. However, thi was strong material and one child managed to repeat at the end she did not like the monster song. |
| **Taking responsibility** | The children participated well at all times – including setting up and packing up. They were flexible and tolerant of each other when they had an opportunity to explore the guitar individually. They helped each other with the dramatisation and made thoughtful suggestions for adopting this monster chant-drama. |
| **Short term review** | The children  
- Were very eager to have a music session again and wanted some extra time  
- Liked the new mats for the session  
- The children enjoyed the content and dramatisation of |
the new humorous poem “Monster’s song”; Aki did not like it.

- Remembered and performed with enthusiasm the repertoire we had shared in the previous sessions
- The children were interested in the guitar; Jaspar especially curious about its design
- Interested in exploring the guitar individually – photos show that all of the children have different approach

*I would not typically expect to have young children dramatise a new material like the “Monster song”; however, I wanted to see what would happen if I did invite the children to enact it and take roles; they were keen to explore this.

The teachers PA was there.

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<th>What to do next?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Expand resources in the ‘music corner’</td>
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<td>Bring culturally diverse puppets and dollies for the session</td>
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<td>Continue exploring different languages</td>
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<td>Introduce a new traditional story/book/song: There was an old lady”</td>
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<td>Continue with simple singing exercises – warming up voices/bodies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow children’s interest in the session – repertoire</td>
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Appendix A.14 – Music Session 14

30th, August, 2008.

“The wicked old witch ...where is my apple?”

For session 14 I had decided to bring numerous new items, for instance, puppets, as the children had enjoyed the pretend play aspect of the “I eat kids – yum, yum!” during the previous session.

As expected, the children were happy to see all the puppets and even more excited when I told them that I would leave them in their music corner. We talked about the different types of the puppets, their origins and the children had an opportunity to explore them closely.

Some children paired with their friends, like Ali and Keili or Aki and Sisi, while others played alone.

Sanja and Ahmet spent some time playing with the puppets individually. Once Ahmet worked out how to handle the marionettes, he picked up the soccer player miniature, approaching Sanja: “I
scored a goal...and... and you?” Sanja turned around and responded, in a changed voice: “We are the queen and the king...we’ve just got married”. Ahmet had a giggle but seriously asked: “Where do you hold these two?” (Puppets). “You just hold anywhere, she said, “They are soft. Look, they have more layers here (showing the underneath layers of clothes) Ha-ha, it’s like a skirt!” She showed the king’s costume and they both laughed out loud. “This one is wearing soccer shorts...I have one at home” said Ahmet “I like the queen’s dress more” said Sanja.

Leo got interested in the old, plastic “Witch” from “Snow white”. He placed it on his hand: “The wicked old witch ...where is my apple?” Violet, who was sitting near Leo, got a little bit scared of this “Old witch” and when later on Leo gave it a scary voice “I’m gonna eat you all up...Yummy children!” then laughed and shook the puppet towards the others, she started crying. I invited her to sit next to me and gave her some special, old books to read. She seemed comforted and her attention shifted to these books.
Holding one of the string puppets Jaspar told Rea: “Look, you can do this one with one hand...want to try”? Rea was initially reluctant and the first few minutes spent just observing others. Then she decided to play with the wooden marionette, “Pinocchio”.

Robie did not participate in our session. Instead, he decided to stay at the table engaged in the activity he was doing with the PT. Jan had a turn with the ‘Little Red Riding Hood’ puppet. He played silently. Lou was singing “Muwarruno, muwarruno, muwarunno, muwarrunno...” Once she stopped, I asked her what she was singing. “I am putting her to sleep... she won’t understand English...I am singing muwarruno song” (Referring to ‘Mumma Warruno’).
“Hey, look!” said Jaspar: “This book can play music!” He then opened and closed the doors of the box several times trying to generate sound. Ahmet joined in and listened, to play “tap, tap, tap, tap (as in 4/4 bar). Jaspar looked at him and smiled. Ahmet grabbed the two Japanese wooden miniatures and started making clicking sounds, using these wooden people-miniatures. Jaspar repeated the played patterns of ‘tap, tap, tap, tap’, while Ahmet added an extra click to each ‘tap’: tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap, as if playing crochets Jaspar again clicked the box, matching the crochets with double amount of the quavers.

After the children’s spontaneous play with the puppets and dolls, we shared a traditional singing story, entitled: ‘There was an old lady’. I had brought the book with illustrations for each major event of the story. As I sang the song, I flipped the pages accordingly.

There was an old lady who swallowed a fly.
I dunno why she swallowed that fly,
Perhaps she’ll die.

There was an old lady, who swallowed a spider,
That wiggled and wiggled and tickled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly.
But I dunno why she swallowed that fly -
Perhaps she’ll die.

There was an old lady who swallowed a bird;
How absurd, to swallow a bird!
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider
That wiggled and wiggled and tickled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly.
But I dunno why she swallowed that fly -
Perhaps she’ll die

There was an old lady who swallowed a cat.
Imagine that, she swallowed a cat.
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider
That wiggled and wiggled and tickled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly.
But I dunno why she swallowed that fly
Perhaps she’ll die.

There was an old lady who swallowed a dog.
What a hog! To swallow a dog!
She swallowed the dog to catch the cat
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider
That wiggled and wiggled and tickled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly.
But I dunno why she swallowed that fly
Perhaps she’ll die.

There was an old lady who swallowed a goat.
Just opened her throat and swallowed a goat!
She swallowed the goat to catch the dog
She swallowed the dog to catch the cat.
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider
That wiggled and wiggled and tickled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly.
But I dunno why she swallowed that fly
Perhaps she’ll die.

There was an old lady who swallowed a cow.
I don’t know how she swallowed a cow!
She swallowed the cow to catch the goat
She swallowed the goat to catch the dog.
She swallowed the dog to catch the cat.
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider
That wiggled and wiggled and tickled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly.
But I dunno why she swallowed that fly
Perhaps she’ll die.

There was an old lady who swallowed a horse -
She’s dead, of course.

The children soon joined in repeating the phrases and some were singing the chorus “Perhaps she’ll die” or at least the word ‘die’. I could hear Rea, Jan, Aki and Ali sing in tune.
Next, we repeated the song without the book, just using prompts. The children remembered the sequence and, once again, joined in the chorus, laughing when the old lady “died”. The story allowed for exploration in different modes — story (book) sharing, puppets, singing, and finger play. The children enjoyed the humour of it, as well. Some of them were able to replace the names of the characters in a different language. I encouraged the PT to introduce these words in Singhalese. I told them a shorter (translated) version of the same story in Serbian. The children were quite amused and were able to follow the story even when I tried to trick them by changing the sequence as Ahmet and Rea both commented on it and reminded me of the correct order.

Observation

After the session

Just before I left, Robie asked if he could look at the “the old lady” puppet, an item specifically designed for illustration of this song. He was holding some cut-out paper he had created at the table during the session. He placed the pieces next to the puppet. I came up closely to hear what he was saying, but realised that he was actually singing: “There was an old lady who swallowed a ball – she’s gonna fall!”
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taking an interest</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>They were interested in all of these new resources and their origins and they eagerly took an opportunity to explore them closely. The children’s play with the puppets indicated understandings about drama and identification in dramatic play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being involved</strong></td>
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</table>
| The children explored and commented the new resources in a range of ways. Some paired with their friends, like Alisha and Keili or Aki and Sisi, while others played alone.  
Sanja and Ahmet spent some time playing with the puppets individually.  
Jaspar and Ahmet were quite creative – transforming the wooden boxes and miniature Japanese dolls into ‘musical instruments’. They engaged in imaginative play which is higher order thinking as well as showing skills at collaborating. |
| **Persisting with difficulty** |
| Violet expressed emotional difficulties when exposed to one of the “old witch” puppets whom Leo gave a character. Fortunately, Violet was able to regulate her distress by allowing herself to be distracted with the books. |
| **Expressing an idea or feeling** |
| The children engaged with the song indicating an ability to sequence, an understanding song structure (verse and chorus), some could pitch accurately and they could enjoy the drama of the song story. |
| **Taking responsibility** |
| The children, as always before, participated well at all times – including setting up and packing up. They were flexible and tolerant of each other when they had an opportunity to explore the materials individually, in pairs or small groups.  
Even Robie, who did not participate directly in the session, contributed by offering his creative and humorous verse for an “old lady”. |
| **Short term review** |
| The children |
- Were very eager to have a music session again and wanted some extra time
- Liked the new resources – dolls and puppets
- Were interested in exploring the dolls and puppets individually or/and interacting with others – photos
- Used puppets – gave them voices or silently explore them
- Enjoyed the content and dramatisation of the new traditional humorous poem/book/song “There was an old lady”
- Robie, Jan, Aki and Ali sang in tune, when filling in the last word of the phrase: “Perhaps she’ll - “die”
- Jaspar was interested in the design of puppets
- Jaspar and Ahmet used non-musical objects for music making
- Robie – created own prompt and a rhyming singing line for the song: “There was an old lady who swallowed a ball – she’s gonna fall! “
- Once again, Violet got a bit frightened; Violet is a big fan of books
- Lou sang the ‘Mumma Warruno’ song to a dolly, realising that the doll might not speak the same language

The teachers:
The PT was supervising Robie and Zack at a table experience and then preparing the tables for children’s lunch

**What to do next?**
- Leave these culturally diverse dolls and puppets in the ‘music corner’ – leave it to teachers’ discretion when
they want the children to have these resources available

- Continue exploring different languages
- Continue with simple singing exercises – warming up voices/bodies
- Follow children’s interest in the session – repertoire
- Re-visit ‘What do you think my name is?’
- Present the children with the “Music Project Albums” which contain photos and stories about our music journey – these can be taken home for the families to explore and contribute to

Appendix A.15 – Music Session 15

5th, September, 2008.

“What do you think my name is, I wonder if you know?”

For this session, I had decided not to bring new instruments, but instead present the children with the music albums created from our music sessions. At first, he children seemed confused. “Where’s your music stuff?” Robie wondered. “There is a music stick...see...” said Jaspar, pointing towards the wooden egg-stick. “I bet will do that guessing game” (referring to “Guess a name game” we played in the previous sessions). There was a moment of silence.

I lifted the albums up, some of the children started reading the letters. Sanja spelt out “M U S I C”. She, could not string the individual letters together to form the word. However, she speculated: “They are stories or pictures in there.”
As soon as I opened the folder, the children realised that the photographs inside the album were of our music sessions and from the music area. They were interested in viewing them. As the children looked at images, they were recalling the events, situations and even identified the song/actions presented in the photographs.

I explained to the children that each of them would have an opportunity to take the folder home and share it with her or his family. I counted (In Serbian) ‘Eci, peci, pec, ti si mali zec, a ja mala prepelica, eci, peci, pec’ to select the first person. Aki was very excited to be the first one.

When the children’s curiosity about the folders had been satisfied, Jaspar suggested playing “the name game”. The rest of the children readily accepted this call and they sat back in the circle, waiting for me to start. I counted the children, once again chanting a Serbian counting game “Eci, peci, pec” and Sanja was chosen.

The game: One child covered with a blanket is positioned lying in a middle of the circle; there should be a soft pillow or a similar material underneath the child as this experience could be long and the child should be comfortable.

As the child lies underneath the material and consequently cannot see, all children sing:

“What do you think my name is?
I wonder if you know.”

The teacher chooses a child who says her/his name.

“Cause, my name isn’t…” the selected child says somebody else’s name.
The child underneath the material needs to guess the name of the child which gave the wrong name. If not successful, the child that was covered can ask questions about the child that sang/spoke someone else’s name. The teacher might need to suggest or rephrase the questions.

Sanja immediately and with confidence recognised Jan’s voice.

Jan recognised the voice of Jaspar. The children were now able to fully understand the concept of the game and made it more challenging. Lou managed to recognize the singing voice of Kasja even though Kasja cleverly changed her voice colour.

The task for Jaspar was even more complex as Ali changed her seating position, after she sang “Liiiiiilly” in an elevated pitched tone. Jaspar did, eventually, guess who the person was as he posed adequate questions, such as: “Is it a girl or a boy?” “Who is her best friend?” “What colour is her hair?”

Rea guessed with confidence that Jan sang her name. The children displayed a good understanding of the game.
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<tr>
<td><strong>Taking an interest</strong></td>
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| **Being involved**         | The children spent a prolonged period of time trying to recall the events from the photos.  
They also liked revisiting ‘What do you think my name is’ which is typical of young children who like re-playing games over and over again. |
| **Persisting with difficulty** | The children had difficulty with the unfamiliar and used a variety of strategies to make sense of the situation. Reading the individual letters in the music album was an amazing way to solve problem of what was to happen. |
| **Expressing an idea or feeling** | They constructed a new name for this song: ‘The name game’ which shows that they may prefer the descriptive to an instructive title. |
| **Taking responsibility**  | The children showed respect for each other and allowed as much time as needed for each participant to problem-solve, when playing the game. They have a strong sense of rules for these simple games and can self-regulate their own participation to make the games a social success.  
The children also readily helped pack up at the end of the session. |
| **Short term review**      | The children  
- Were displaying prolonged attention span and good listening skills |
- Were familiar with each other voices
- Understood the “What do you think my name is?”
- Liked the idea of the music albums - eager to take them home
- Seemed to have certain expectation of the session – they expected musical instruments

**The teachers:**

No permanent teachers present in the room.

The centre’s regular reliever RR was setting up the tables for the children’s lunch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to do next?</th>
<th>Bring a new instrument ‘ukulele’ in response to the children’s comments on the size of the guitar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singing accompanied by the ukulele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce ‘Okina Kurino’ song (a few children have heard this song, in outdoor session – 9).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix A.16 – Music Session 16

12th, September, 2008.

‘Okina Kurino’
Today, as soon as everything had been set up for the session, Gagi reported that some children were not playing properly in the music corner. He went and picked a few items that were damaged and showed them to me and everybody else in the group. We decided to talk about this after the session and find the ways how to fix this problem.

The children were excited that I brought an ukulele for them to explore. They were eager to have a turn with it. Jaspar commented: “This one is much better size...Your other guitar is so big, haha, as cello!” “This one’s sound like the guitar...only it small...it’s a baby guitar!” concluded Lou.

We passed the instrument around and everybody had an opportunity to touch, feel, look and have a try to play the ukulele. Kasja (as with the guitar) focused on the sound that was produced when she would pluck the individual string. She demonstrated to Moses: “Like this, hold it.”

Today, there was also a boy in the group that had not attended any of our music sessions before. It was evident that the children who participate regularly in the session handled the instrument in a more appropriate manner.
Moses used his fingers in a parallel manner as he would press the fret and the string at the same time, by the same fingers, for example, pointers. Robie made an advanced observation when realised that only placing finger/s onto the fret, does not result in any sound. “Hey, this one is not like an electric guitar”, he concluded.

After all the children had explored the instrument, I used the ukulele to play the ‘Okina Kurino’ tune to them, without singing. Aki recognised the song and started quietly singing along, while the rest of the children carefully listened.

I invited her to “perform the song” with me, which she readily accepted. Once we finished, Aki asked: “Can Ali come, please?” Ali happily joined and we sang the song again.
The children noticeably enjoyed the tune and the singing and we repeated it, once again, all together. Lou suddenly remembered this song had featured in an earlier session: “I know this one, we did it in the outside, with the scarf” she observed. Gagi looked at her: “I don’t remember this one. I remember we played the drums”. I could hear both Lou and Gagi singing some words. Aki was even more confident as she sang clearly and tunefully. The new participant kept smiling throughout the session at all times, whether he was doing the actions or curiously observing his peers and friends sing and play.
After repeating the song a number of times; we talked about its meaning. I initially asked Aki to tell us what it was about. At first she was shy to answer, shaking her head and slowly saying “No”. When I said that the song was about friends who wanted to play together under the big chestnut tree, she smiled and nodded vigorously. Gagi asked what the Chestnut tree looked like. I told him that for the next session I would bring him a photo of it. Ali’s response to the chestnut tree was the following association: “I like playing with Aki outside...we played under the tree the other day.” Ali and Aki both giggled.

We also talked about what body parts we had used in the song and how. Ahmet noticed that we did not move our feet or legs, just arms, hand and head. Robie shared that he enjoyed gestural aspect of the song: “I like when we point finger...that’s funny”.
In the last segment of the session, we looked at two books which I had brought that looked at fingers and toes. After reading it, I encouraged the children to recall all other songs in which we used toes and fingers. Jan, Aki, Ali, Robie, Gagi, Lou, and Sanja all correctly named at least one. Sanja furthermore added: “We also moved our faces.”

Learning story analysis

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taking an interest</strong></td>
<td>Children were interested in the ukulele. They were able to compare it to the guitar and discuss its advantages in regards to size.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being involved</strong></td>
<td>Children took turns, modelled and Moses used his fingers in a parallel manner as he would press the fret and the string at the same time, by the same fingers, for example, pointers. Robie made a sophisticated observation when he realised that only placing finger/s onto the fret, does not result in any sound. “Hey, this one is not like an electric guitar”, he concluded. Children listened and indicated recognition of familiar music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persisting with difficulty</strong></td>
<td>Exploration and handling of the instrument was difficult for a new child. His exploration, however, provided insights for other children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expressing an idea or feeling</strong></td>
<td>The children noticeably enjoyed the tune and the singing and asked for a repeat. The tune evolved memories of previous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The children were curious about the meaning of the lyrics and disused the body language that had been used.

**Taking responsibility**

Gagi reported that some children were not playing properly in the music corner. We talked about this after the session and we came up with solutions.

The children were able to articulate their care for the instrument, problem solve the issue of communicating to others about care for the music centre and were able to action their ideas.

**Short term review**

The children

- Were eager to explore the new instrument
- When playing (with) the ukulele used different strategies
- Some children compared and made comments on the difference and similarities between the ukulele to the guitar
- Liked the new song “Okina Kurino”
- Aki sang in Japanese
- The children enjoyed the new books and were able to relate the information from the book to the experiences from our music sessions
- Music corner – the children expressed issues with some of their peers who do not participate in the music not respecting the environment
- The teachers:
  - No permanent teachers present in the room.
  - The centre’s regular reliever RR was on her break, relieved by the agency staff that observed the session and took some photos of the session.
### What to do next?

- Expand on the books ‘My fingers’ and ‘My Toes’. Explore the use of hands – play the hand-game “Hello hands, how are you?”
- Look at the use of feet – introduce the ‘Giro, Giro Tondo’, circle, singing game in Italian; encourage sideways movement
- Find out about Moses – if he is going to be participating in more sessions
- Encourage peer teaching

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**Appendix A.17 – Music Session 17**

19th September, 2008.

“Hello feet, how are you?... I will do the beat!”

Once I arrived for the session, the children autonomously began clearing away other toys, counting their numbers and placing the appropriate number of mats in a circle. After we warmed our voices, we started the session with ‘Hello hands how are you?’ All the children performed the gestures and some of them chanted the words, together, with me. They were confident with parallel turning of the hands, while rotating the left and right hand in opposite directions caused a bit of confusion for some of them. We slowed the tempo which led some of them to achieve the desired action. Jan and Kasja, in particular, seemed to do this with ease.
Jaspar suggested analogously playing the same for the feet. ‘Hello feet how are you?’ As soon as we finished with the first round, Jaspar grabbed the ukulele and said: “I will do the beat!” He looked at me for approval. “Good idea”, I agreed and we, once again, chanted: ‘Hello feet how are you, Hello feet how are you, hello feet how are you – ta-ta-ta-ta-ta!’ and he kept the beat steady as he gently tapped the bottom wooden part of the instrument, with his right hand, put in a fist.

We put our feet together and I improvised the movement – which the children imitated with laughter.
They had a giggle during the section of the game in which we tried to lift the legs and move them in the manner of scissors. This is the point where some children changed to their own, different rhythm as they were struggling with the physical effort and technique required.

Following this demanding exercise, it was time to stand up and stretch. I started singing ‘Atama Kata’ and very soon the children recognised the song and engaged in actions.

\begin{verbatim}
Atama kata hiza tsumasaki
hiza tsumasaki
hiza tsumasaki
Atama kata hiza tsumasaki
Tanoshina.
\end{verbatim}

Some of them tried to add the words when we repeated it the song. I complimented them on being so clever and singing ‘Heads and Shoulders’ in Japanese and suggested we try and sing an Italian song ‘Giro giro tondo’ as this song’s actions include elements of light movement. In contrast to earlier times we performed this song, I encouraged the children to do the sideways step with their feet. This was initially a bit challenging for them. Soon, however, I could see and hear them moving their feet to the beat of the song, but none of them was singing.
Giro, giro tondo
Casca il mondo
Casca la terra
Tutti gui per terra.

When I repeated the same melody in English (‘Ring a ring a Rosie’) some of the children sang along.
The children insisted I read to them ‘My fingers’ and ‘My toes’ as a closure of the session. Rea said that we should take our socks off to show our toes. “I can wiggle my toes really fast!” He laughed out loud. The other children joined his laughter.

Today, Kasja and Violet collected the mats.

**Learning story analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taking an interest</th>
<th>The children are eager to participate. They are independent, confident and know how to ‘set-up the scene’. They found the new activity of using feet instead of hands; they revisited this activity.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being involved</td>
<td>All children were able to engage in vocal warm-up exercises, followed by the hand-game. Once again, their individual learning preferences were apparent. Their approach was playful as they responded to new materials. lawn. Jaspar, as he often does, furthered the new learnt concept as he suggested the foot-game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persisting with difficulty</td>
<td>Exploration and handling of the instrument was difficult for a new child. His exploration, however, provided insights for other children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing an idea or feeling</td>
<td>The children persisted and managed to perform the more complex hand movement when we slowed down the tempo. They attempted a foot-variation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The children used differing strategies and humour to tackle the in this session.

**Taking responsibility**

The children, once again, showed their cooperative and supportive nature as they followed Jaspar’s initiative to play ‘Hello feet, how are you?’ with enthusiasm.

When we played the ‘Giro, Giro, Tondo’ singing game, the children held hands and engaged in a friendly manner with one another displaying personal connections. They share, support and actively contribute.

**Short term review**

The children

- Were eager to play with their hands/feet – some responded individually and moved their body parts in a distinctive way – for example, observing and performing action, at the same time; only observing and saying the words; observing, saying the words and performing the actions simultaneously.

- Did not sing but performed the movement of ‘Giro, Giro, tondo’, while they did sing when playing ‘Ring a Rosie’ ie in English

- Recognized that the ‘Giro, giro, tondo’ circle/singing game and ‘Ring a Rosie’ were very similar

- Enjoyed revisiting the books (My fingers, My toes) and were able to relate the information from our music sessions the content of the books

- Jaspar’s response was creative

- Rea responded with humour

The teachers

- No permanent teachers present in the room.

- The centre’s agency reliever was cleaning up the room
Today’s session, began with the same routine we had established in previous weeks: first, setting up the room, then warming up our voices. However, the warm up had to be shorter today as the children were overly keen to hear the small accordions I had brought for the first time. We sang a few of their favorites songs, which I accompanied on the accordion. We then talked about the similarities and differences of the accordions. Jaspar made the following comments: “This one is larger (piano accordion) and it makes a louder sound” “They are small, they’re made for children” “I think they are (both) made out of metal…plastic…wood...they have colours, white buttons…they make funny noise when you stretch them…I can hear the air.” Ali added: “They both have butterflies (pointing towards the middle part, coloured in red)”. 
There were a few children in the group today who do not normally attend the music sessions. One of the children, Jing who was participating in the music session for the first time, looked very surprised and curious about the instruments. She repeatedly asked me: “My turn?”

After we had spent some time with the accordions, Robie insisted we play a ‘Guess the name’ game. The rest of the regular participants agreed. I counted aloud: “Eci, peci, pec…” and heard Aki., Robie and Ali counted parts with me. Ali was the first one to guess. She happily crawled under the ‘music veil’ and layed down in a foetal position. She remained there quietly and concentrated on her listening.

I decided to probe Ali after singing the phrase: “What do you think my name is, I wonder if you know…’cause my name isn’t”, I actually sang the line: “Mumma Warruno”. The rest of the children watchfully listened, and R. started giggling. Once I stopped singing I asked: “Ali, who was that?” Ali took off the veil, and popped up, smiling at me: ” It was you - singing that song about a baby!” Aki clapped her hands approving: “Yeah, it was. Good guess Ali!” Lou added: “I like that one, I sing it to my baby sistah”.
Ali chose Aki to be the next person in the circle and we continued playing the game until all of the children had a turn. The four of the children who do not normally attend the sessions needed some assistance to play the game, but they seemed to enjoy themselves as they were cooperative and keen to participate.

Observation

After the session

After the formal part of session, the children wanted to explore the accordions further. They organised themselves and we had two people at a time examining an accordion each
Robie and Mitch decided to swap their instruments. After a few minutes, Robie concluded: “I don’t wanna have a go any more, I can’t play a nice song, like in Greek restaurant.” Mitch laughed, saying: “I can’t play a song, but I can play noise.” They both laughed and let Aki and Lou have a turn.

Aki and Lou agreed to do the same as Mitch and Robie and swapped their accordions, after a few minutes of playing. The girls seemed to focus on the different sounds produced when multiple buttons were pressed.

I suggested to Lou that she try to play individual keys/buttons. She started doing this carefully and slowly and after going over all of them, she returned back to her initial way.
Aki also started to play an individual tone and at the same time sang along “O-one, two-o, three-ee, fou –our...” The length of her tone was correct and she also sang in tune some of the tones. When finished, she closed the accordion and placed it on the chair: “Your turn...”

All the children in the group wanted to explore the accordions and those who were regular members of the music sessions and therefore more experienced, assisted the others with the handling of the instruments. For example, Mitch was holding the belts so that the accordion is fixed and comfortable to play or explaining to Ziggy how to produce a single sound.
Jing was very happy to have a turn. Keili reminded her to share. However, when Keili had an opportunity to play, she decided not to. Hence, Jan and Mitch went to play with the accordion again, while Keili stayed close by, observing them.

### Learning story analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Taking an interest</strong></th>
<th>All children showed interest to actively engage with music, including those who do not usually participate in the sessions; displaying cooperative behaviour and levels of self-regulation. Their engagement with the instruments was self-deprecating and humourous.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being involved</strong></td>
<td>The children have trusting relationships; can laugh at their attempts and are playful in their approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persisting with difficulty</strong></td>
<td>The four of the children who do not normally attend the sessions needed some assistance to play the game, but they seemed to enjoy themselves as they were cooperative and keen to participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expressing an idea or feeling</strong></td>
<td><strong>Taking responsibility</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Ali displayed good listening skills and an ability to recall relevant information – “…It was you - singing that song about a baby!” Most children show a tendency to set more difficult tasks and help direct sessions. | The children used variety of modes to express themselves. They verbally requested their favourites songs, described instruments, posed questions. The more experienced children shared ideas on how to handle the instruments with those less experienced; they used verbal and non-verbal language to encourage their peers to actively engage with the musical instruments. Aki was creative in her problem solving; as she applied her knowledge of numbers to a sequential key-board structure; she discovered her own way of playing the piano accordion and seemed content with that. | The children
- were eager to play with the accordions
- compared the two accordions – pointing out similarities and differences
- were keen to explore the instruments on their own displaying diverse ways of handling and playing the instruments
- shared the instruments well |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to do next?</th>
<th>more experienced children assisted less experienced ones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>who are regular participant in the music sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>handled the accordion in a more appropriate manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aki sang and played individual keys of the piano accordion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>were confident at playing the “Guess who?” game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers</td>
<td>No permanent teachers present in the room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The centre’s agency reliever was cleaning up the room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and took some photos of the session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singing, accompanied by the piano accordion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Play ‘Guess a song’ game (play the tunes on the accordion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Let the children explore the accordions and the ukuleles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revisit previously shared repertoire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce a new song ‘Scoo-bee-doo be’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bring more culturally diverse resources for the session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and the music corner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read ‘Handa’s surprise book’ (some children are already</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>familiar with this book as PT read it to them).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A.19 – Music Session 19

3rd October, 2008.

Observation

Before the session

Before the musical part of the session, we explored some Australian items, with Aboriginal motives and pictures of Melbourne. Robie and Violet were particularly interested in these, making comments on their design and colours. Ali recognised some photos of Melbourne. Laura remembered and pointed out that we had sung “Mumma Warruno” which is an Aboriginal song. The children were glad that these items were placed in their music corner.

“Handa’s from Africa...she knows this song”

After we set up the area and warmed up our voices and bodies, we began a revision of the songs we had previously shared. The children were encouraged to guess the tune I was playing on the accordion by trying to sing it or continue singing the phrase. Whenever we played this game, some
children would verbalise their answers, while some of the children, like JN., would follow my instruction and sing the words of the song. In this particular session I encouraged the children to try to only sing or chant the lyrics rather than just guess the song/chant. This idea seemed to appeal to Jan as he was smiling and concentrating on listening and would quietly sing the tunes which he recognised easily and quickly. He and the rest of the children laughed when they realised that I tried to trick them by playing a rather dissonant, funny ‘melody’ which I made up ad hoc. Jan was amused with Robie’s’s suggestion that I should guess what songs they were singing and then play them on the accordion.

After this first game I shared a story with the children titled ‘Handa’s surprise’. They were familiar with the story as I had read it to them in the earlier stages of the program. This time I wanted the children to think of the song which could be sung by the main character of the book, a girl called Handa, who was taking some fruit through her village to her good friend. Rea and Lou suggested ‘Oku Bina’ which is an African song (it is actually titled ‘Umma lella’, but ‘Oku Bina’ is also part of the text). I asked the children to explain why they had proposed this song. Rea said because it was her favourite. “My favourite, too!” added Laura and a few others as well. Jan looked at me intently. “What do you think Jan?” I asked. “Handa is from Africa...maybe she knows this song” he suggested.

Next we revisited the song ‘Giro, Giro, Tondo’. Jan sang quietly and did the actions confidently, laughing when some of the girls could not get up on time after they squatted at the appropriate time during the song.

The next song was the children’s selection. It was ‘Scoo- bee- doo- bee’ an obviously popular song that most children were highly familiar with. Since they were already positioned in a circle, this was a suitable choice. Interestingly, even though the children knew the lyrics of the song, most of them favoured doing the dance only. I assume this is because the actions were quick, continuous and quite engaging. The addition of song to the dance coordination may have been too much for them to
perform well. Jan performed confidently, keeping his eye on the rest of the group. I noticed that, often, during music sessions, Jan watchfully observed others.

When we performed ‘Umma lella’ and ‘Che, che, Koolay’, the children sang and cheerfully engaged in actions. I could hear Ali’s clear and melodic voice singing, while she was seated on the floor.

‘Okina Kurino’ followed. Aki was very keen to perform the song with me. She sang confidently, tunefully, smiling. Some of the other children joined in the actions, others listened intently. Violet was rocking, following the beat in time.
We had started this session with warming up our voices and bodies, especially hands (‘Hello Hands, how are you?’ by Ciro Paduano), so we finished with the familiar hands game, ‘Let’s pat our hands’ with a short improvisation where the children needed to pause and follow my singing command. Jan, Ali and Rea, first listened to the instructions and then carried out the action. Most other children became confused and engaged in the actions immediately; however, soon they all understood the concept and followed the instructions with ease. This was reflected in the common beat we achieved.

Observation

After the session

As after each session, I did some follow-up with the children. The follow-up took the form of individual, pairs or a small group (maximum 4). Jan, Aki, and Violet were first to explore instruments, a ukulele and the accordion. Violet was quite enthusiastic, energetically and happily producing a strong, dissonant chord on the accordion. Jan was waiting for his turn as his attempt to “play along” did not seem to please him.

Aki concentrated to hear the sound: “It’s hard to hear. Violet, you are hurting my ears” said Aki. Violet played for about two minutes. Aki stopped playing and just sat, observing the other two.
Jan patiently waited for the moment to explore his instrument and as illustrated in the photo, he seemed to know what to do. He told me that he saw me play the “big guitar”.

When Violet left, Aki took the accordion and started singing and playing individual notes: “O-one, two-o, three,” as she had done previously, in session 17. She then decided to use double and triple fingers on double and triple tones. This time, it appeared, she used more of a random selection of keys. Aki played out all of the keys and when finished, she closed the accordion and placed on the chair. Jan decided to have a turn. He used the first and third finger of the right hand and second and fourth finger of the left hand. His right hand was moving across the keyboard, held in the same position, while he kept his left hand fixed on the two buttons. He was looking at his right hand while playing.

Rea has participated well. As in most sessions, she articulated fine ideas, and was careful when handling instruments, taking a good care of all the resources in the music area. Today Rea suggested that we take the photos of the children playing with the instruments “properly” and place them in the music learning centre, as some of the children who are not involved in the music sessions have been damaging the equipment. This way, Rea argued, the other children can imitate the correct behaviour. Jan volunteered to demonstrate and pose for a photo.
Jan was playing drums, Rea joined in and after few beats, she decide do bring the musical-eggs. They spent about five minutes, focussed on producing sounds, without talking.

Soon, Ahmet and Josh joined them, each taking a drum. Ahmet started singing the ‘Umma lella’ song, but stopped after the first phrase, as he noticed that I took a photo of this. I placed the camera aside and sang ‘Umma Lella’, while the four of the children played the drums. Jan and Rea were keeping up the down beat by tapping the drums with an open-hand. Josh played the same beat using the musical eggs. He knocked them onto the drum surface (1, 2, 3, 4), exchanging hands, while Ahmet vigorously used his finger tips creating a “tagatgatagatga” sound.

Sisi and Rea spent some time exploring the ukuleles in the music corner.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Learning story analysis</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taking an interest</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being involved</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persisting with difficulty</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expressing an idea or feeling</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taking responsibility</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Short term review

**The children**
- were eager to play with all the instruments
- were confident throughout the repertoire
- were keen to explore the instruments on their own, displaying diverse ways of handling and playing the instruments
- as in previous sessions, displayed individual learning styles when singing and dancing – the way they seem to learn with/from others is consistent. For example, Ahmet always looked at the teacher while engaging in the experience; N. often looked at her close friends, Jan, quite immersed into the experiences himself, took interest in how other children engaged.
- shared the instruments well
- Jan related the content and the character of the book ‘Handa’s surprise’ to the content of our music session – the Umma Lella song – naming the common denominator to be ‘Africa’
- Laura expressed the liking of and remembered that ‘Mumma Warruno’ is an Aboriginal song

**The teachers**
*PT was tidying up the room and observing the session, singing along. The agency reliever took the photos of the session.*

### What to do next?
- Revisit ‘There was an old lady’ as in this session we did not have time
- Bring more culturally diverse resources for the session and the music corner
- Display the photos of children demonstrating “How
Appendix A.20 – Music Session 20

10th October, 2008.

‘There was an old lady who swallowed a fly’

Today’s session was set out differently as the room was not ready for floor use and the children insisted on starting straight away. We could not go outside, either, so I invited the children to sit around the tables. We briefly warmed our voices and started with the game ‘Clap knees, clap knees, clap knees, please’. Robie suggested we clap ‘table’ instead. Good idea, we thought, and did a round of that. Again, the group consisted of some children who had not participated in any of our previous music sessions. I could notice the difference between these children and those children who regularly participated in the sessions. The latter were quite confident, accurate with the beat and the actions, whereas the other few children seemed very enthusiastic, yet their actions were out of sync with the beat.

I brought my guitar and we sang the children’s choice of songs. All the children joined in singing ‘Twinkle, twinkle, little Star’. The children referred to the previous session and requested we do ‘There was an old lady’. The children participated well. G. wanted to use the lady-puppet and he sang with a strong voice and well in tune, while I accompanied him on the guitar.
Jessy, for whom this was the first music session with us, was confident and wished to take the lady around so that when the character was “swallowed by the lady” the children could raise the object representing the animal in the story to be placed in the lady puppet’s mouth.

The rest of the children liked the idea and were eager to take a part.

When we finished with the song, Robie stood up and approached Jessy: “Excuse me, can I have take something out?” The boy looked at me and when I approved by nodding he let Robie place his hand inside the puppet’s mouth (which is the pouch). Robie took out the fly puppet and said: “See, this one is good for that flea song!” Gagi agreed: “Yeah, let’s do it!” Robie suggested we chant ‘One, two, three’ while marching around the room. We formed a
long “train" and Robie led ahead: “One, two, three, Robie caught a flea; he put it in the tea pot and made a cup of tea. The flea jumped out, Robie gave a shout, Josh came in with his eyes rolling out!” Josh, who was behind him, had a giggle, so did the rest of the children. Then, Josh stepped out of the column. The children were marching and laughing while at the same time paying attention to the words of the now marching chant. Before afternoon tea, each child’s name was mentioned in the chant, so that he/she could go and wash his/her hands. This way, when the last person in the column had had a turn, we ended the session.

***Before the session, during the children’s rest time, Sisi’s mum came to collect Sisi who was still asleep. She said that she was amazed with how I could keep up the intonation when I sang to the children ‘There was an old lady’ as I had made long pause in between verses, allowing the children enough time to identify the puppet and to place it in the old lady’s mouth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning story analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taking an interest</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The children coped with the change of the setting. They actively participated in the session. They accepted Robie’s idea to march around the room which suggests that they do prefer that type of formation. They could see that a puppet could be used to meet different situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being involved</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The children were involved throughout the session. Robie led the group into the new formation, the rest of the children became highly involved in this, displaying obvious enthusiasm and ell developed listening skills. The children are always ready with suggestions on how to extend activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persisting with difficulty</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of the children who had not participated before in our music sessions were unfamiliar with some of the repertoire, however, they appeared to enjoy the session as they curiously observed and listened to the rest of the group attempted to join in singing, and the games.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expressing an idea or feeling</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children show that they could sequence, had a sense of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
narrative; could use props across songs and were humorous in working together.

Some children posed questions and offered ideas; others followed up on these ideas, displaying good listening and turn-taking skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taking responsibility</th>
<th>The children were cooperative and collaborative, some showing initiative (R., G.) as they respected the change of circumstances and the areas where we could conduct the session.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Short term review     | The children

- Were eager to take a part (puppet) in the song ‘There was an old lady’
- Recalled and followed the sequence of the song ‘There was an old lady’
- Enjoyed singing accompanied by the guitar
- All children sang “Twinkle, twinkle, little start”
- Took initiative – R., G., the new boy
- Offered creative ideas – RJ.’s marching game
- Used verbal and nonverbal language to interact with one another as well as to participate in the story

The teachers

PT was tiding up the room and observing the session, singing along.

| What to do next? | Revisit the repertoire – follow children’s interest
- Provide each child with an award certificate
- Seek the children’s feedback – conduct interviews in a form of pretend play. |
Appendix A.21 – Music Session 21

17th October, 2008.

“I’ll be the first guesser!”

Today was our final session. I decided to place chairs in a half-circle, rather than using the mats. Lou and Jaspar were surprised: “What about the mats?” I explained that they could keep them but that today we will be seated on chairs. Lou, Jaspar and the others positioned themselves, ready for “music thingies” as Lou called it. Jaspar speculated: “I bet Aleksandra has something special in her basket!”

I invited the children to choose their favourite songs, games, chants today. They were happy about this arrangement and were keen to start.

The order of their favourites was: ‘Umma Lella’, then ‘Che, Che, Koolay’. In both, the children sang confidently, tunefully and performed the actions with enthusiasm. Through these particular songs, it was clear that the children ability to sing melodically improved remarkably over time.

‘Okina Kurino’ was another popular song. Aki suggested it and the rest of her peers cheerfully approved. I invited them to come closer to where I was sitting, in order to enhance the interaction among them. Robie and the girls complied and continued to perform the actions, while Violet and the rest of the boys sat back and just observed.
“How about we now play that other game, when you have to guess the person?” asked Robie as he sat down on the floor. “I’ll be the first guesser!” We played the game until all children, who wanted to, had a turn.

Olga had a turn, for the first time. She seemed a bit nervous, but was able to identify Laura’s voice which made her smile.

At the end of the session the children sat back on the chairs. When I showed them their certificates of participation that I had created, and thanked them again in front of all peers and staff, they were very happy as they patiently waited for their full name to be read out. “Please come again... we’ll do more music” said Jaspar when it was his turn to obtain the ‘award’. “I will,” I promised, shaking his hand. He looked at me smiling, raising his eyebrows: “But, make sure it’s before I start school.” Later on he came to tell me he learnt how to write his name and surname and that “diploma” had only his name.
Some of the parents who came to collect their child seemed pleased, too. The relief-staff took a group photo of us, asking everyone to smile and show their “award”.

Learning story analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taking an interest</th>
<th>It seems that the children like the change – although they were surprised to have to sit on the chairs. They indicated an appreciation of a collective ritual and applied their previous understanding of a shared formation as they readily found their place in the new formation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being involved</td>
<td>The children were immersed in all parts of the session. They were comfortable with having a choice of active participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persisting with difficulty</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Expressing an idea or feeling | The children were keen to choose their favourites today. The order of their song preference was: ‘Umma Lella’, then ‘Che,
Che, Koolay’. In both songs, the children sang confidently, tunefullly and performed the actions.

‘Okina Kurino’ was the next popular song. The children were confident to request ‘Guess the name’ and all participated well when we played it.

**Taking responsibility**

At the end of the session the children sat back on the chairs and proudly obtained their ‘certificates’. They contributed not only throughout the session, but also by giving me some verbal feedback, which I have noted down as part of their ‘Interviews’.

**Short term review**

The children

- were enthusiastic about the session
- appreciated their certificates
- offered creative ideas
- named their favourite songs/games
- used verbal and nonverbal language to interact with one another

The teachers

The PT joined us in the group photo; she provided me with brief feedback:

“Thank you so much Aleksandra for all the sessions and the music corner. The children really loved doing music with you. They kept asking when you are going to come. PA and I also learnt a lot from you. I especially like the songs and the games you shared with the children. It is so nice for the children to be exposed to different languages. I personally really benefited from it and will try to sing more songs in my mother tongue.”

**What to do next?**

- Visit the centre several times.
Appendix B
Observations

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Observation 1 - Lou interested in taking photos


Lou had many bracelets on her both hands. They were colourful and were making noise when shaken. I offered to take a photo of her. She agreed. After she viewed the photo, she asked if I could do another one. I then offered her a bit of play with camera. She excitedly grabbed it and started pressing buttons. I advised her to do this carefully, demonstrating how to use the camera. She soon held the camera in a correct way and started taking photos. I helped her with pausing and rewinding the images. She wanted to take a photo of my hand and managed to take the photo.

She noticed that I was writing notes in my note book, saying: I want to write to my mum...Its Ingrid and John, and Chloe and Rene.

“OK” I replied, starting to write “Dear...” She looked me and confidently requested: “I can write it by myself”. Sure, I replied, here you are. She then took the pen and the note-book and started writing: “Dear mum and...”, she then began to sing the words. I could not identify what she was singing. She said: “I need to take this to my locker.” I suggested that she draw a picture. I thought that she might like to see the video of herself, so I filmed her drawing. She giggled when she watched that video. “That’s Lou!” she concluded with a big, confident smile.

Comment:

Lou is curious about the camera. She is quick to learn how to handle it. She is observant and familiar with writing a letter to someone, showing clear understanding with the writing style. Lou is displaying confidence and good social communication skills.

Observation 2 - Singing with Lou, Sisi and Aki

15th February, 2008

I told Lou that I have to go, but she insisted that I stay a bit longer. “I want to take more photos! “ - She demanded. I explained that I could stay only for a little while. I placed my hands on my face, pretending to play a trumpet, singing: “I can stay a little while” She laughed and started doing the same. “Please stay a little while!” I then started humming “Twinkle, twinkle, little start” – she joined in grabbing one of the rollers, placing them in front of her mouth, like an instrument. Two other girls joined in, all were “playing” the tune of “Twinkle...” One of them suggested we do “Baa, baa, black
sheep”. So, we did. The other requested: ‘A B C D’. This time, Lou and I sang the words while the other two “played” their “instruments”.

I was enjoying myself with this little group, so I decided to do a ‘Ring a ring a Rosie’, I started with an Italian version, curious how they would respond to it (Giro, Giro, Tondo). They participated well, but seemed to enjoy more the English version as they asked to repeat it three times. The three girls displayed a good sense of rhythm; they were able to coordinate their bodily movements and were singing the lyrics of the song.

Comment:

Lou is experimenting with her voice, showing imagination as she uses a roller as a trumpet (non musical object for a musical instrument). The girls were consistent with a melodic line, as if they realized that the songs are very similar in their music. They are familiar with the lyrics of these three songs. They preferred the more familiar version of ‘Ring a ring a Rosie’, showing good coordination.

Observation 3 - Ali and Kasja connecting


Context: Before the session, all the children had to pack up the room.

Kasja seemed to be busily packing up but every now and then she would look at me, carefully observing what I was doing. Soon, the floor was free to place our ‘musical mats’. I asked Ali to bring them over. Ali came with the mats and said: “Kasja wants to help, too, she’s saying: “Sit down, sit down”. At that very moment, Kasja approached us and asked: “Help?” Ali smiled and looked at her, giving Kasja her some mats. Kasja helped with setting up the mats in the circle. When finished, she pointed to one of the mats: “Kasja” and then she pointed to the next mat: “Ali”. Ali smiled and set next to her.

During the sessions, the girls sometimes looked at each other and smiled.

Comment:

Ali is showing strong pro-social behaviour and empathy. Kasja is perceptive and nonverbally initiative. She wants to be part of the group and is proactive about it.
Observation 4 – Ali showing empathy and interest in diversity

22nd February, 2008.

Today, after the music session, Ali approached me and said: “Let’s learn Kasja’s language! Let’s learn some Poland (Polish) …Is it hard? Then…we could understand why she’s crying.”

Comment:

Ali is showing empathy and understanding of another child’s needs to communicate her feelings. She is aware that Kasja is limited in her self-expression as she speaks another language than English

Observation 5 - Laura in the Music Learning Centre

22nd February, 2008.

Context: Today, prior to my music session, I set up a dedicated music area in the room, while the children were playing outdoors. When the children returned to the room, they were curious and excited about the changed area in the room, which I introduced to them as the ‘music learning centre’. One of the children, Indiana, ran to me after briefly examining the music learning centre to obtain permission to play there: “Hello, you are the lady who sang us those funny songs…the bee and the fly…I can’t wait to play in there…when can we play in there?”

Other children also commented. Robie, for example, remarked while pointing to the music corner: “It looks great. Are you going to leave it for us?” After a brief pause, during which he scanned the music learning centre again, he added: “Please Kassandra, can I have a tiny, little, try of hose cool eggs [a set of music eggs]?”

After lunch, all the children, except for Laura, who was waiting for her mom, were resting and lying down on their personal mattresses. PT (Preschool Teacher) played a Mariah Carrey CD. Since Laura was the only child moving around in the room, I encouraged her to play in the music area, which she keenly agreed to.

While exploring the music learning centre she was talking, singing and playing with the instruments, yet, without being reminded, she was very respectful of her peers’ needs and tried to be as quiet as possible. For example, she explained to me later that she knew that the little drum would make a ‘loud noise’, so she decided against playing with that one. It seemed that Laura was very pleased to spend some time alone in the music learning centre. The other children resting on their mats were curious about Laura’s actions as they raised their heads and observed as much as they could.
Laura’s time alone in the music learning centre provided a good opportunity to me to take some photos of her and when I asked for her consent, she was happy with the idea. She was commenting on the photos of herself and the other children that I had taken in a previous session and displayed in the music learning centre (see Figures 1-3). Her comments indicated that she was recalling the activities depicted in the photos. When she finished she asked me: “Are you gonna put more photos of me?”

The music learning centre. Pictures of the children’s previous session were prominently displayed.

Systematically, Laura explored all of the musical instruments, starting from one side of the shelf to another.
Laura played with and explored the various instruments in the music learning centre.

Of particular interest to her was a series of miniature song books, each of which she examined carefully. She decided to line the music books up according to her preference. Inspired by the images in the book, she started singing quietly in which I joined her. Laura knew some of the lyrics, but was also making up words whenever the text was unknown.

Laura examines the music books; orders them and starts singing the individual songs.

Comment: In this situation, Laura obviously liked order and seemed to have enjoyed the opportunity to take her time in the music area. Perhaps this is not always possible, especially when there are more children in the area playing at the same time. Laura is aware of the sound quality that certain instruments produce. She displayed knowledge of available songs and clear order of preference.

Observation 6 - “One, two, there four, father made a roar!”

10th April, 2008.

Context: Inja invited me to stay for lunch. She saved a seat next to her. The other children at the table were Laura, Rea, Keili, Sanja and Jan.

While we were eating, the children we giggling as Laura was repeating the verses of “One, two three”. Laura said: “What about my one – One, two, three four, father made a roar?” They all laughed. Inja said “Lion made a roar!” Laura added:“Inja made a roar! They both laughed. Laura suggested: Aleksandra, write this down ha-ha! Inja said: “We need more words to match; though...it’s good to do it together...it’s easier.” OK. Write, said Laura, Inya made a roar, Aki played a po, Sanja
cooked a do!” Everyone laughed out loud. Inya said: “Ha-ha, we can sing the nice words even when we don’t know what they mean.”

**Comment:**

The children are being playful with words displaying creativity and well developed cognition; as well as humor. They are good at turn taking in a spontaneous conversation.

**Observation 7 - Lou talking about friends**

16t May, 2008.

Context: Lou and I were sitting in the cubby house, pretending to cook lunch. She spoke about her friendships. I asked her to tell me about her friends.

“My best friends are my girls” said Lou, “I like playing with them. We have good games.”

“What kind of games do you play?” I inquired further.

“We like playing on swings, sing songs, playing school, cooking. E brought some chopsticks for cooking...they were nice...red colour and shiny...her grandma bringed (brought) them from Japan...”

“What about the boys?” I asked Lou.

“Oh, dear, boys can be rough. They wanted to pinch them (chopsticks)...Rajan used them for playing the drums...ha-ha...They’re (boys) good for running games, though...”

“What songs do you sing?”

“Hm...the songs you teached (taught) us. Okubina song and the bee song.”

“Oh, that’s nice.” Said I.

“Yes, they’re nice songs, you are nice!” complemented Lou, looked at me and said: “Oh, dear, our lunch is ruined!” She looked at in the pot and proclaimed: “All burned! We have to start from scratch!”

**Comment:**

Lou seems to have gender preference. She displayed good command of English language as she carries on a conversation and speaks in extended sentences and uses it effectively in ‘pretend play’. She is obviously employing ‘generalisation (e.g. “teached us” instead of taught us) as she is not using irregular verbs. Lou is able to recall information from the past. It appears that she like ‘Umma Lella’ song.

**Observation 8 - Aki and Nely dancing**
27 May, 2008.

Context: Aki and Nely were alone in the book corner. Aki was holding a fan. They were standing; they started spinning and laughing. Aki began to spin and sing: “Umma lella, umma lella, umma lella, falling down...umma lella, umma lella, umma lella getting up!” Nely followed Aki’s initiative and the girls span and then fell down several times. Aki initially sang the actual tune but by the end the melody disappeared as the laughed every time they fell down. Nely did not sing. When Aki stopped singing and suggested: “I’m thirsty now...let’s get some water!” Nely readily got up” “I’ve got a new bottle!”

Comment:

Aki is initiative in her musical play. Both girls seem to enjoy each other’s company (as previously observed). Aki is creative and playful with the song. She can sing in tune. Nely appears to like listening to Aki’s instruction; she prefers not to sing, maybe?

Observation 9 – Jaspar is clever

5th September, 2008.

Jaspar said that in Australia people speak many languages but all have to speak English, which he liked and he thought this was good as “everyone can understand each other better.”

Comment:

Jaspar is aware of linguistic diversity of his country as well as the pragmatic aspect of the society that employs on common language.

Observation 10 – Rea comments on Learning Stories

5th September, 2008.

Rea told me she liked to look through the Learning Story Albums with her family. “My mum likes reading these...She says they’re nice stories... The coloured photos are better, though.” I asked her if they read the stories together, she explained that sometimes she tells the story to her mum and her sister and sometimes her mum reads the stories to them.

Comment:

Rea is critically looking at the aesthetic appeal of the stories. She and her family take interest in our documentation.

Observation 11 – Chopsticks
Aki brought a set of Chinese chopsticks into the centre. Jaspar and Inja were immediately interested. Initially, they handled the chopsticks as tools to poke each other. However, when they were informed that these were special Chinese objects, they started to wonder what the Chinese would use them for. First Jaspar asked me: “Are these sticks to hunt the animals in Chinese?” When I explained this was not an accurate guess and suggested to the two go and ask Aki about the chopsticks’ and their purpose, Jaspar and Inja immediately set out and shortly afterwards returned with big smiles on their faces. “Aki showed that you eat with them”, Jaspar said, “but I like a fork.” “I like them”, said Inja and pretended to eat, holding one chopstick in each hand.

Comment:

The children were interested in this new object. They are aware that it comes from a different culture to their own. Both are content with the idea to ask the ‘informed’ friend for more information.

Observation 12 - Rea and Sanja playing ukulele

3rd October, 2008.

Context: Rea and Sanja had a go at playing the ‘ukulele in the music learning centre.

For or a minute or so, each were finding her own way of playing the instrument (‘independent’). This did not seem to satisfy them, probably because the overall sound that was created was not very pleasant.

They stopped, looked at each other and smiled. Rea suggested: “Let’s start together and we count, OK?” They started striking the strings across and both counted “One, two, three, four.” Sanja suddenly stopped and said: “Oh, when do we stop?” Rea also stopped playing. She looked at Sanja shrug her shoulders and replied: “I don’t know, you say.” Sanja paused and proposed:” We go up to 10!” Rea smiled and said: “And, and then we stop?” Sanja said: “No. Then we do it again and again.” Rea agreed (“OK.”) and the girls played the proposed pattern 3 times. The first time Rea counted to 10, while Sanja kept with the striking; the second time she started, but Sanja joined in and Rea stopped counting; on the third round they both counted gently stroking the strings. After they finished playing, the girls placed the ukuleles back on their spot and went to play in the ‘home corner.’

Comment:
The girls were critical of the sound they produced on the ukulele and came up with a pragmatic, manageable, yet creative solution. They displayed good listening skills. Their negotiation was spontaneous and friendly. They handled the instruments with care.

Observation 13 - Kasja, Lou and Laura playful with ‘Umma lella’ song

12th October, 2008

Context: Kasja did not attend the last formal session as she was sick. I organised another visit to come and personally give her ‘certificate’. She was very pleased with that and affectionately said “You are my friend”. I showed her the ‘interviews from the other children and asked her if she wanted to have her interview done. She took my hand and said” Aleksandra, we go to sand pit and do cooking.”

In the sandpit, we “cooked” with Lou and Laura who instantly joined us. We ‘made lunch’ and were ready for “school”. The school “was” in the nearby cubby house. Lou suggested: ‘I’ll be the teacher, you’ll be the schoolies.” Kasja, Laura and I obediently sat down in front of the ‘teacher’. Lou said: “Let’s make a nice circle…stand up…hold your hands in circle…there…now, sit down, please.” We all followed Lou’s instructions. “Hm...What shall we sing today?” asked Lou “Okubina song!” suggested Kasja excitedly. Lou smiled back and started clapping and singing “Okubina, bina, bina” Kasja, Laura and I joined in singing and clapping. After repeating this phrase twice we finished with ‘tun ge’. Kasja said: “One more time!” Lou said: “OK. This time, we sing softly, like little birdies.” She was about to start singing when Laura said: “That’s not how it goes.” Lily and Kasja looked her, puzzled. “Umma, lella, lella, lella...she started clapping her hands, “That’s how it goes!” Lou and Kasja bot had a giggle. “I like Okubina’ concluded Kasja, “Me, too!” added Lou smiling. “We can have two songs! Ha-ha!” she looked at me as she was waiting for approval. “We can, if you like” I agreed. We all had a laugh. “OK. We sing Okubina softly and Humma lella loud(ly).” We sang the ‘Oku bina part’ one more time and then Laura suggested we stand up and do “Umma Lella”. Lou said: “Oh, good idea! Let’s stretch our bodies, too!” Kasja readily stood up and stretched her arms “up high”. We sang and danced “Umma lella’ with strong voices, much energy and enthusiasm. Lou sing in tune, while Kasja and Laura oscillated in intonation.

Observation 14 – Nely interested in Japanese language

17th October, 2008.

Nely seemed really keen to explore further Japanese with her best friend Aki. Nely said: Aki, can you teach me how to say ‘hello’ and ‘bye- bye’ in your language? Aki smiled back and said: “Which one? English or Japanese?” Nely giggled back” Japanese, silly! “
Comment:

The girls are sharing their knowledge and impressions of a language different to English. Aki si ware that she knows two languages.

Observation 15 – Jaspar’s and Lou’s reflection on my voice

17th October, 2008.

Jaspar said to me: “I like your voice when you sing better.” He was comparing my talking voice to my singing voice. Lou said: “When I grow up, I’m going to sing like Aleks.”

Comment:

Jaspar and Lou are making a qualitative comment; shows aesthetic awareness. Lou is forming aspirations. She may be critical of her vocal ability?

Observation 16 - Lou creating funny verses

24th October, 2008.

Lou readily set on the swing and requested: Come on Alex, push (me) high up in the sky!”

I started pushing and encouraging Lou to use her legs in order to keep the rhythm.

Laura joined on the other swing and asked me to give her a push, too: “I can do it, just give me a little one, please!” I pushed Laura who then continued to swing.

Lou said: “Push me again!” as she held tightly onto the swing. She started to swing and begin singing: “Okubina swingolina, okubina pusholina!” Her singing was tuneful. Laura joined in by softly humming the melody. The girls’ intonation and movement on the swing matched. Lou repeated “Okubina swingolina, okubina pusholina!” several times and we all laughed when she lost her breath due to the force produced by the swing and finished with a thunderous, talkative voice: “Okubina Stopilina!” Laura stopped, hopped off the swing, looked at me and concluded, smiling: “Lou is clever...she’s funny!”

Comment:

This observation shows that Lou and Laura can sing melodically, in tune. Lou is being playful with the words of her favourite song. She constructs new, creative versions that fit well rhythmically and phonetically. Laura enjoys her friend’s experimentation, realising that what Lou is doing is smart, yet unconventional.
Appendix C
Conversations with Children

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Conversation with Inja

Inja was in the ‘home corner’, busily ‘cooking’. At one stage, she looked up, noticing that I was observing her. She smiled and waved to me to come over, asking:

A: Inja, you look very busy...what are you doing?

I: I am making breakfast.

A: Hm...smells nice...Who is it for?

I: It’s for me. Everyone else has gone to work.

A: Oh, I see.

What are you making?

I: I am making English muffins.

A: Oh, nice.

What do you need for English muffins?

I: Ah...you need staff...you need sugar, flour, oil milk...that’s all...oh, no, I’ll add some chocolate.

A: It sounds tasty. How many are you going to make?

I: Lots!

A: Nice.

Why are they called English muffins?

I: ‘Cause they come from England, you silly! She laughed.

A: I see. That makes sense.

I wonder if there are other muffins?

I: Arrr...not really...hm... Serbian muffin?

A: I don’t think so. No.

I: Oh, what about an Aussie one? There must be one!
A: There might be one, yes.

I: You can have one, if you like. I know!! You can come here and play some music and I can cook. OK?

A: OK. What kind of music should I play?

I: Hm...you pick! Pick some nice music.

A: Hm...nice music...what music is nice to you?

I: It’s nice to listen to...you can play it on the guitar or sing...OK?

A: OK.

I brought over my guitar and start playing ‘Twinkle, twinkle’. Inja looked at me, smiled, and continued to “cook”. Half way through a song she began to hum along, occasionally looking at my hands or making an eye contact with me. Her singing was rhythmical and close to tune.

Comment:

Inja is engaged in socio dramatic play. She employed music as a background/entertainment. Perhaps this is something she has observed elsewhere or she just simply associate music with me and expect some kind of musical engagement from or with me. It could be both. Indiana informs understanding of 3 different countries. She seems to understand the roles and the tasks of the ‘performance’ and ‘accompaniment’.

Conversation with Lou

2nd May, 2008.

Context: Lou was sitting on the floor in the music learning centre lining up all the different drums. I sat beside her and started a conversation.

A: Can you please show me how you play this drum?

L: Show you? You know how to play (Smiles, hesitating).

A: I can play but I like to see how you play. The other day it looked like you were having fun with it.

L: It is fun! The big (drum) one is also fun. The tiny one is cute, it makes small sound.

A: What about this one? Can you show me what kind of sounds it makes?
L: OK. I can play it like this (Lou demonstrated: alternating hands, she taps on the drum). Like this (Demonstrated – both hands tapping rhythmically at once). I know! I can play and sing the African one: “Okubina, bina bina, oku bina, bina, bina” (sang and tapped the beat of the words)

A: What else can you sing and play?

L: Hm... you can play and sing more; I only like to do the Okubina song.

A: Do you like other songs that I play?

L: Yeah, I like other songs but I like this one the best. Hey, I tried scratching it, like Jack. It made a funny sound. You can’t sing to scratchy sounds – ha-ha!

A: Can you show me how you make funny scratchy sound?

L: Like this, you scratch it and you wiggle your fingers. Shrrrrrrrrrrrr. It’s shhhhhhhhhhh sound. Haha!

A: Haha, sounds a bit like a broken TV.

L: Broken TV? I’ve never sawed a broken TV.

A: I had a TV that did not work and it made same sounds like the drum. The picture was funny, too. I could not see much, it looked like snow.

L: I am going to the snow one day. I’m going to take my special gloves,’ cause it’s cold.

A: Good idea, snow can be quite cold. Tell me L., which instrument would you like to take to the snow with you?

L: Hm...I would like...hmm...I would like the eggs.

A: Why would you take the musical eggs?

L: I like them. They make nice sounds and I can put them in my pockets.

A: how many would you take?

L: I would take all the colours and one golden one for my baby sista’. Oh, I would take one...no, no, some more to give in the car.

A: To give them in the car? To give them to whom?
L: Everyone. Not the driver, just us.

A: Why would you like to give the musical eggs?

L: ‘Cause then we can play all together. We can sing and play.

A: Sing?

L: Sing songs, silly! Sing songs! L. Laughed out loud.

A: Songs like..?

L: Songs like... Just songs and staff.

A: I wonder which songs...?

L: Miss Polly, Twinkle, Twinkle...nice songs.

A: Can you sing me a nice song?

L: Naah. I don’t want to now.

A: Shall I sing you a song?

L: Yeah. You sing! (Smiling)

A: You can choose the song.

L: (Smiles) Hm...Sing the Che, Che one. I started singing. Lou listened attentively; she was smiling and nodding her head to the beat. When the song finished L. clapped her hands, smiling: Now you play and sing!

A: OK. Do you want to grab the other drum and we play together?

L: Yep, I’ll get it! (She got up readily and brought the small drum)

A: You don’t want to play the same one?

L: No. I want this one.

A: Why is that?

L: I just do.
A: OK.

I began to sing and play the drums. Lou started to softly tap both hands simultaneously on her drum and she continued tapping throughout the song finishing playing at the same time I finished with the phrase: Tun-ge!

L: Now we swap.

Lou gave me her drum and took mine.

A: Now you sing and I play?

L: Naah, you sing and play and I just play. OK?

A: OK.

The song was repeated; I played the small drum, singing in piano dynamics most parts of the song. L. accompanied the song adjusting to the volume as she softly taps onto the drums, alternating hands.

A: That was fun!

L: Yeah. That’s fun.

L: I have to go to the toilet.

A: Sure. Do that. Shall we pack up now?

L: You pack up this time and I pack up next time. OK? (Smiling)

A: OK.

L. hurriedly went to the toilet.

Comment

Lou lies experimenting with three different types of drums, creating “scratchy’ sounds, for example. She also understands the concept of instrumental accompaniment to singing. She has a preference for a particular song; she recalls a full phrase. The other song she mentions in this conversation is also of African origins. Apart from drums, she also likes musical eggs, which she would like to share with her family members. She verbally negotiates her role in packing up.
Conversation with Jaspar

5th September, 2008.

Today, Jaspar set next to me and noticed my new bracelet. This initiated the following conversation.

J: Aleksandra, I like your bracelet...it’s made out of wood?”

A: Yes, it is. How did you know?

J: It looks like wood. It’s brown.

A: I see.

J: Why are there people on them (Referring to single parts)?

A: They are pictures of Serbian Saints.

J: Saints?

A: Yes, these are called ‘Saints’.

J: Hm...I only know footy Saints, they’re St Kilda Saints, and they don’t look like that.

A: These are different Saints – people in Serbia think that they did good and nice things for other poor people and that’s why they call them Saints and paint their pictures.

J: What nice things?

A: Nice things, like giving people who have no food to eat or helping them do their work if they’re sick.

J: Do they give them goodies?

A: What do you mean by goodies?

J: Goodies, like toys and stuff.

A: Maybe they gave some goodies, too...to make people feel better.

J: They’re like Santa Clause but they’re different...they look different. Santa gives goodies if you ask him.

A: Did you get any goodies from Santa?
J: No. My mum and dad gave me some goodies – they said Santa left them for me.

A: Oh, what did you get?

J: I got a book about insects and some plastic tubes for experiments.

A: Experiments?

J: Yes, with water and colour. You get to put water and mix with colour…it’s fun…it’s see through.

A: Sounds nice. What would you like to get from Santa next time?

J: Oh, I’d like instruments, lots of instruments.

A: What kind of instruments?

J: Musical instruments – drums, accordion, guitar, everything!

A: Oh, that is quite a few instruments.

J: I know, my mum said I have to pick one only.

A: Which one will you choose?

J: I don’t know…I have to think which one… But, my dad said I can pick another one. Haha!

A: Haha, you will have to pick two then.

J: Yep, you can help me pick, OK?

A: OK. I will if you like.

J: Can I try it on?

A: Try on my bracelet?

J: Yep.

A: Yes, here you are.

J: Oh, it’s stretchy. Just a bit loose.

A: Does it feel nice?

J: It feels nice and light.
A: It look good on you.

J: It looks good on you. Here, thanks!

He handed back the bracelet and with a friendly smile said: “See you on Friday!”

Comment:
Jaspar often shows curiosity about others. He is able to report on his real life experiences and is relating this information to our conversation. He, possibly, understands the concept of ‘reward’ for good deeds.

Conversation with Aki

19th September, 2008.

Context:
Aki was sitting on the sofa, exploring the ukulele. The other children in the room were engaged in a variety of different activities. I sat next to her and started a conversation.

A: Do you like playing with the ukulele?

A: Yes, I do. I like it very much. I like the yellow one these days.

A: Why do you like it?

A: The yellow one?

A: Yes, why do you like to play the yellow ukulele?

A: I like to play it because it’s a nice colour and I can hold it. It’s not heavy and it makes nice music.

A: How do you make nice music?

A: How? I just hold it like this and then I use my fingers. Like this (demonstrates – strokes across the strings). I also like playing one. Like this (demonstrates playing a single string by using her pointer as she moves it upwards).

A: What happens when you play one at the time?

A: I make a soft sound.

A: Can you make a loud sound?
A: I don’t like loud sound. I only like soft sound. It’s lovely.

A: What about these? (Frets)

A: Oh, I don’t remember what they are called. Hm... I don’t know (smiles). You can press them, like this (demonstrating pressing all the strings) or like this (one finger on one fret).

A: I see. What are these called? (Strings)

A: They are called strings.

A: And this one?

A: That one’s called the small neck.

A: The small neck?

A: Yes. That one’s the small neck and the big guitar has the long neck.

A: I see.

A: I like this one more. The big guitar is good, but I can’t hold it. It’s good when you put it down on the floor.

A: How about this one?

A: That one’s for tuning. Hm... tuning spot?

A: Tuning peg?

A: Smiles. I don’t remember... What’s this hole called?

A: Sound hole.

A: That’s a funny name. Like, the sound falls in the hole. (Smiled)

A: Yes, it is a bit funny. Does the sound fall in the hole? Where does the sound go?

A: The sound comes out to our ears... it makes music.

A: The sound makes music?

A: The instrument makes sound. The sound makes music.
A: What sounds do you like?

A: I like soft sounds. I like singing sound.

A: Singing sound? Like..?

A: Like when you sing. I like your voice sound. You voice is beautiful. I like my mum's sound. My mum has a nice sound. You know who makes a funny voice? Nely (friend). She makes me laugh. She’s funny.

A: How do you like your voice?

A: I don’t know.

A: Do you like your voice?

A: Yes. When I sing nicely, yes.

A: Do you like singing?

A: Yes. Sometimes, I don’t, though.

A: When do you like singing?

A: Hmm. I like when I like to do music.

A: When don’t you like singing?

A: I don’t like it when I want to play something else.

A: What else do you like to do?

A: I like play with dress ups. Dress-ups are the best ...I like to dance with my friends; when we all get dress ups. I’ll show you my favourite?

A: That would be nice. A (went to the dress up area and brings a piece of material): I love this one!

The researcher takes a photo of Aki and shows it to her.

A: That’s ‘lovely.

A: Shall I play some music for you to dance?”
A: I can dance with music in my head! (She sways and spins around).

Comment

Aki is interested in the ukulele and is particularly fond of the yellow one. I have noticed in my previous observation that Aki is very aesthetically oriented child. She often comments on design, colour and physical appeal of objects. She also reflects on other non materialistic properties. She would, for example, comment on a melody or a sound of songs, like she did in this conversation. She recalled the information from music sessions, remembering parts of the instrument and was curious about the part she forgot the name of. Dancing is one of Aki’s favourite activities. In this instance she is imaginative and moves her body creatively using a prompt. She carried on this conversation with interest and competence, displaying good listening and verbal and nonverbal expressive skills.

Conversation with Jaspar

26th September

Context: Music Learning Centre. This conversation took place after the music session. For a while, Jaspar wanted to explore the accordion and after that, he was happy to have a chat to me. I was writing notes at the same time as well as recording our conversation. He was aware of the method I was using to record, commenting while friendly smiling: “You need to write all I say, don’t ya?”

Jasper: J; Aleksandra [the researcher]: A.

A: You have been playing with it for a while (Accordion)?

J: Yeah. This one is nice, ‘cause is got lots of buttons and you can press them. You need to hold it properly and stretch...it doesn’t work if you don’t stretch.

A: So, it makes sounds when you hold it properly and stretch?

J: Yep, it makes short and long sounds. If you keep your finger long, it makes long sound.

A: What happens if you do not keep your finger long?
J: Then it makes a short sound, like this (Demonstrates).

A: OK. Let me write this down.

J: Write: the sound can be loud or quiet. If you stretch really hard it makes a loud sound...and write, accordion is from Germany. Your one’s from your grandma, though.

A: That’s right. People think that it comes from Germany. Yes, that was my birthday present. Can you please show me how you would make a sound?

J: Nods; “yes” (Demonstrates). But if you stretch too much, it is hard to get back, so don’t stretch too much.

A: Tell me about the buttons...

J: These (showing to the left hand side) or these? (Referring to the right hand side).

A: Both.

J: OK. These here are easier to play ’cause you do not have to stretch. These here are harder. My arms get sore.

A: Tell me about the sound?

J: The sound is nice, but I can’t make the song sounds. Ha-ha! You can make the songs. You play the songs. When I grow up I am going to have lots of instruments to make lots of sounds.

A: Yeah?

J: I’ll get lots of instruments. My mum says I can get some but I have to look after them. They cost money, she says. Lots of dollars!

A: Which instruments would you have?

J: Hm...this one and the other accordion, the piano one...the drums, I like the drums, the big one...hm...piano... trumpet, silver one...oh, and that really big one, golden one, I don’t know the name...it’s in the book...

A: OK. That’s a lot to write.

J: Yeah.

A: Would you like to show me?
J: Yep. I’ll get the book! (Brings the book and finds the photo of the horn).

A: Horne. That is the horn. True, it is a silver one. Why do you think it is silver?

J: It has to be golden or it gets too wet. It can’t be wood. Wood can smell. Gold doesn’t smell, it’s just clean and shiny.

A: So, you will have the accordion piano accordion, drums, piano, trumpet, and horn...any other instruments?

J: Yep. Guitar...just one...and the instruments from here (music area)...and yeah, the beautiful, golden one, I’ll show ya! (Turns the pages of the book and finds harp) This one! I like this one. I’ve never seen this one. You didn’t brought it.

A: That’s a beautiful harp...I do not have a harp to bring. Harps are really large...

J: Large? Like?

A: As large this shelf.

J: Oh, you got to be strong to bring that one.

A: Yes, you need special case on wheels for that.

J: Smiles. Have you played it?

A: No, I have not played it. I have seen someone play it. I see it in the orchestra when I have concerts.

J: Oh, you are allowed to touch it?

A: No, I am not. There is a harp-player who plays her instrument. She knows how to play quite nicely.

J: It sounds nice?

A: Yes, very nice.

J: Like?

A: Like, ehem, have a look at it...what do you think?

J: Hm...I think it sounds like a guitar, a big one – it has lots of long of strings... (slows down so that I can write) ...I know, maybe like lots of guitars...Only they are soft sounds maybe...?

A: It sounds a bit like the guitar. It reminds me of lots of different rain drops.
J: Rain drops? Really? Can I come to orchestra?

A: You can. You can tell you mum and dad to take to a concert.

J: I’d love to! How do you do that?

A: You need to find the concert you would like to see and then...

J: And then I get my mum to get the tickets?

A: Yes, that’s right.

J: Is it lots of dollars?

A: Not too much.

J: How much?

A: Ehem...50 dollars.

J: Fifty!? I can count to hundred.

A: Is fifty a lot of dollars?

J: I’ll ask my mum. How many instruments to see?

A: It could be many, even 100.

J: Wow, 100!!! Wow! How many of these (showing the harp)?

J: One or two.

J: Aaah, ’cause it’s big and hard to bring?

A: Yes, it is big and there are many other instruments on the stage. There are many violins on stage...

J: (Interrupts) what’s stage?

A: It’s a place where all the musicians are sitting or standing and they are playing. They play for their audience. The audience sits on the chairs and watches and listens to the musicians play.

J: They play together?
A: Yes, they do, sometimes together, sometimes alone. They play together and they also take turns. There is a conductor who shows the musicians when to play.

J: Conductor?

A: Yes. Conductor conducts the concert. He or she uses a stick and points to the musicians.

J: Stick? Ha-ha, that’s funny! What kind of stick?

A: This longish, and thin sick. I will bring you a photo of the orchestra and a conductor. OK?

J: Yep. Bring it... Are you a conductor?

A: No, I am not a conductor.

J: But you show us how to play music.

A: That’s true. I do. But I am not a conductor. I am a music teacher. I didn’t go to school for conductors.

J: What’s the school cold?

A: Music Academy.

J: Academy? I know Academy. Policemen are Academy.

A: Yes, they go to Police Academy.

J: Can I go and play now?

A: Yes, thank you for talking to me.

J: Smiles: You have lots to write! Don’t forget the photo! Oh, aren’t’ you gonna take the photo of me?

A: I can’t... the camera’s battery is flat.

J: Ah, you have to recharge it. You can do it next time. OK?

A: OK. Thanks.
Comment

Jaspar has consistently shown his interest in the design and mechanical features of musical instruments. In this conversation he explains the process of sound making, comments on the outcomes of the use of different techniques to play the accordion. Jaspar separates the sound making from music making. He seems to relate it to training, performance and knowledge of the “more informed” adult. He is familiar with a number of different instruments and his comments inform that he has also being exploring the music book available in the music corner. Jaspar evidently gives aesthetic value to musical experiences and is becoming aware of its monetary aspects. He shows curiosity and excitement for a new concept: musical concert. Jaspar is aware of his input in my research and understands the use of my equipment – photo camera, in this case.

Conversation with Robie

24th October, 2008.

Robie built a house for a Japanese lady (as he put it). I was just about to leave, when he asked me to come over and take a photo. I told him that my camera went out of battery, he cleverly suggested: Use your mobile. Mobiles are cool; they can do lots of things – take photos, too. They also play music, you know?

I applauded to his idea and took my mobile phone out. He was very particular about the angle I was taking to capture images. He wanted the whole house to be the focal point. We had a conversation about it.

R: “She is small, but she likes to live in a huge house...she is the queen!”

I asked him where the “Japanese lady” came from.

“From the shops, you silly!” He replied cheerfully. “She is from the shop. I thought you bought it from the Asian shop.” I smiled back, confirming; “Yes, I did buy it from the shop. What do you mean by ‘Asian’ shop?

R: Asian shop is the shop with goodies from Asia.

A: Asia? Oh, where is Asia?

R: Asia is made in China. Did you go the one in the shopping mole?”

A: “Which shopping mole?”
R: “The one that has lots of stuff…different goodies…I saw little dolls like this one there…the lady said
- only looking, no touching; I like touching this one.”

A: “I bought it from a shop on Station Street in Fairfield.”

R: “Hm…I dunno that one. Is it big?”

A: “It’s big, as this room”

R: “Oh, the one I go to is bigger…not much, though. They also have instruments?”

A: “Instruments?”

R: “Yep. Musical instruments…and those bells with birds.”

A: “Interesting shop. Do you like any of them?

R: “Yes, I do. There’s one big like this (showing app 30 cm) and it has a birdie coming out of the
house…its funny…and I like the tambourine…it has a funny man with a big belly on it. Ha-ha! Oh, I’ve
got to go and wash my hands! Leave the lady here, OK?” he rushed towards the toilet.

Comment

Robie is proud of his doll house. He shares information and shows interest in other cultures and music
and his community surroundings. He uses verbal and non-verbal language effectively.
Appendix D
Children’s Interview Responses

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The children were asked before the sessions commenced the following questions:

- Which song do you like?
- Which musical instrument do you like?
- What language do you speak?
- What language do you like?

***They were also asked to tell why?

- How do you learn music?

The children were asked the following questions after the music project. I set up an area where they could come to talk to me. We pretended to have an office, with the table, chairs, drawing materials.

- Which song do you like?
- Which musical instrument do you like?
- What language do you speak?
- What Language do you like?
- What did you like in the music corner?
- What did you like in the music sessions?
- Is there anything you did not like?
- How do you learn music?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which song do you like?</td>
<td>“Bells.” (did not give any further information about it.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which musical instrument do you like?</td>
<td>“I liked the red guitar” (she referred to the ukulele) I wish I can take it home”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you speak?</td>
<td>“English”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Language do you like?</td>
<td>Her favourite language was English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Corner</td>
<td>“I like the small books and the big drum.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music sessions</td>
<td>“I like you...because you look nice and you always bring nice things”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Is there anything you did not like?”</td>
<td>“I don’t like the wicked old witch. The yucky one” she referred to the puppet from “The Snowwhite” collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you learn music?</td>
<td>“You learn it when you play instruments.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ali’s interview responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which song do you like?</td>
<td>“I like Twinkle, twinkle...because it’s lovely.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which musical instrument do you like?</td>
<td>“I like the big one (drum) ...we get to play (it) together. Emma and I play together. She is the cat and I am a dog...ha-ha!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you speak?</td>
<td>“English”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you like?</td>
<td>“English...’cause it’s lovely.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you learn music?</td>
<td>“I learn it when I do music.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which song do you like?</td>
<td>“I like the Bumble Bee song” ...because it’s funny.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which musical instrument do you like?</td>
<td>“I like drums...’cause they’re fun and people dance to them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you like?</td>
<td>“I like every languages.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Corner</td>
<td>“Mmm...the little dollies, I love the tiny one with shiny colours (Referring to the Japanese miniature). My mum said she’ll get me one of those.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music sessions</td>
<td>“I like when we dance and sing the songs. I like the Bumble bee” ... “I like when you sing...I like your voice.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Is there something you did not like?”</td>
<td>“I didn’t get a turn of the accordion...I was sick.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you learn music?</td>
<td>“My sister has music notes. She learns music. I learn when we sing and I played instruments. I listen.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inya’s interview responses

Which song do you like?
“I like galumph went the little green frog one day (singing)...’cause it’s funny!”

Which musical instrument do you like?
“Hm...piano...because it’s nice to listen (to) nice music.”

What language do you speak?
“English”.

What language do you like?
“English...yeah, English...'cause it’s English.”

How do you learn music?
“From the teacher?” (smiling)

Which song do you like?
“I like the bee song and the funny one when you say somebody's name...and their hair is sticking out...sooo funny!” (referring to the “One, two three” rhyme).

Which musical instrument do you like?
“I like the little eggs, they are colourful and they make soft sound. I like when we did “Koolay song” with the eggs. I had two!”

What language do you speak?
“English”.

What language do you like?
“I like Emma’s language...and I like her dress.” When asked which language Emma spoke she replied: “Emma knows English... I don’t know the other one...name...was it Italian?”

Music Corner
“I like the little dollies and the eggs...and the drums...and the rain-stick...and I like the small guitars.” (Referring to the ukulele).

Music sessions
“I like to sing all by myself...I like your songs. They’re nice”

“Is there something you did not like?”
“We can’t take the toys home.”

How do you learn music?
“Ahm...I play the staff in the music corner and I sing and dance with you and my friends”
**Gagi’s interview responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which song do you like?</td>
<td>“I like 5 little monkeys…” ’cause it’s fun!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which musical instrument do you like?</td>
<td>“I like best the one like a piano... mmm... accordion? ... I didn’t get to play much. I like when you played it... You play lots of instruments.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you speak?</td>
<td>“English”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you like?</td>
<td>“I like English the best... because it’s easy.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you like?</td>
<td>“I like English... German.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you like?</td>
<td>“I like German, English... Japanese... mmm... that’s it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Corner</td>
<td>“I like all the instruments and toys... The big drum... but Libby had to take it away... someone scratched it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music sessions</td>
<td>I liked the funny songs. The flee and the bee... and the funny monster... Ha-ha... I eat kids... yum, yum!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you learn music?</td>
<td>“I listen to nice music with my parents.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you learn music?</td>
<td>“Is there something you did not like?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I did not like... somebody broke the black fan in the music corner... I did not get to play with it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You study and you learn things about music. You listen to music. You sing. You dance... ahm... that’s how”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Robi’s interview responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which song do you like?</td>
<td>“My favourite is Spiderman song... ’cause it great!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which musical instrument do you like?</td>
<td>“I like the electric guitar... because it’s strong and cool!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you speak?</td>
<td>“I only know English... (How do you like English?) I like it. (Why do you like it?) It’s OK.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you like?</td>
<td>“I like English.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you learn music?</td>
<td>“I don’t learn music, I only listen to music.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which song do you like?</td>
<td>Rajan favoured “Okubina” song over all of the rest he knew.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which musical instrument do you like?</td>
<td>“I like the drums, all of them make a nice sound. The big drum is cool... and Clara put all the eggs, haha, in the big drum – when you put eggs in the drum you have two noises.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you speak?</td>
<td>“English”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you like?</td>
<td>“I like English, I like Japanese, I like... I like the monster language! Haha”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Corner</td>
<td>“I like the big drum, it’s so cool!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music session</td>
<td>“I like the game with the blanket. I always guessed.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Is there anything you did not like?”</td>
<td>“Mmm... no.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you learn music?</td>
<td>“I learn about instruments and... when we sing together... I learn new music.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aki’s interview responses

Which song do you like?
“I like Twinkle, twinkle little star...because it’s soft and beautiful.”

Which musical instrument do you like?
“I like all instruments...because they make music.”

What language do you speak?
“English”.

What language do you like?
“I like Japanese...cause it’s nice.... I like English...Hm...That’s all.”

How do you learn music?
“I sing and dance with my Nikitta and Silvia and my mum and my dad.”

Which song do you like?
Emma liked the “Humma lella song” the most “because it’s nice and happy ...it’s different”.

Which musical instrument do you like?
“I like the guitar. love it ...I love things that are wood”.

What language do you speak?
“English and I speak Japanese to my grandma. My grandma is here.”

What language do you like?
“Japanese ...because we speak at home Japanese and my grandma is here”.

Music Corner
She liked the Spanish fan in the music corner as well as the large Chinese one. She explained: “I like those big fans. I like the pictures on them. It’s good when we danced behind the fan.”

“I like when we played the ukulele, I like the yellow one the best.”

Music sessions
“I like to dance with Nikitta and Aleisha”, replied Emma, when asked what she liked to do in our music sessions. “I like when we you play the guitar and we get to dance to it”.

Is there something you did not like?
“The monster song is scary...I don’t like when boys scare me.”

“I don’t like...some toys in the music corner getting broked.”

How do you learn music?
“I learn to sing and play... I played the guitar and ukulele and accordion and I like playing drums.”
### Ahmet’s interview responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which song do you like?</td>
<td>“Spiderman DVD...cause I saw it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which musical instrument do you like?</td>
<td>“I don’t know.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you speak?</td>
<td>“English”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you like?</td>
<td>“English...because... (No further answer).”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you learn music?</td>
<td>“I learn things from teachers and mum and dad.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which song do you like?</td>
<td>Aidan liked the “Humma lella” song “because it’s easy to sing”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which musical instrument do you like?</td>
<td>“I like accordion..because I like playing it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I like the sticks... because you can play on the book-shelf, table and the drums”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you speak?</td>
<td>“English and Albanian.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you like?</td>
<td>“Albanian”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Corner</td>
<td>“I like the sticks and the eggs and the drums, the two drums.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music sessions</td>
<td>“I like when we dance. I like the accordion. I like soccer. Did we do soccer? Nah, ho-ha, I like the little things, like soccer, remember?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Is there anything you did not like?”</td>
<td>“No.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you learn music?</td>
<td>“From you.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lou’s interview responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which song do you like?</td>
<td>“I like Miss Polly had a dolly...'cause I like dollies.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which musical instrument do you like?</td>
<td>“Oh, I like drums! Because I’m laughing when I’m playing it! I like the big drum. When I saw it, I love it! I like the accordion. My pa has one, only pink.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you speak?</td>
<td>“English”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you like?</td>
<td>“African - because it’s fun”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Corner</td>
<td>“I like the little elephants (The Indian miniature figures)...because they have pretty sprinkles... and... I like those Japanese dolls...because they are shiny and they are tiny... and I can put them in my pockets.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Sessions</td>
<td>“I like when we sing “Okubina song”. I like when we played the name game with the blanket.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Is there something you did not like?”</td>
<td>“Naah”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you learn music?</td>
<td>“I learn lots of music! I learn songs, instruments. I like playing games. You’re the teacher, you know how!”(Loughs)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rea’s interview responses

Which song do you like?
“I like Twinkle, twinkle and Baa, baa black sheep...because they are nice songs to sing.”

Which musical instrument do you like?
“My favourite are maracas...because they are nice to play.”

What language do you speak?
“English”.

What language do you like?
“English.”

How do you learn music?
“With my mum and instruments.”

Which song do you like?
“I like Humma lella” song the most...because it’s nice to sing and do the actions”.

Which musical instrument do you like?
“Eggs make nice sound and they sound like maracas”.

What language do you speak?
“Australian...I know those songs in different languages-Italian, African, Japanese.”

What language do you like?
“I like English... because I know English”.

Music corner
“I like everything.”

Music sessions
“Singing ...and...And...I like when we get to play the instruments by ourselves”, referring to the immediate post session periods.

“Is there anything you did not like?”
“I didn’t like when it’s noisy in the music corner.”

How do you learn music?
“I learn what I like to sing and play and how to play instruments. I practise.”
## Kasja’s interview responses

Kasja had just started learning English and attending the childcare, when the music project had begun. She was from a Polish background.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which song do you like?</td>
<td>“Okubina song... that’s my favourite song.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which musical instrument do you like?</td>
<td>“Drums.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Corner</td>
<td>“Drums.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you like?</td>
<td>No answer (smiling).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music sessions</td>
<td>“I like Okubina, bina, bina bina.” (singing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Is there something you did not like?”</td>
<td>“I wanna sit next to you.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you learn music?</td>
<td>(Smiles) “I don’t know. I play?” (Smiles)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jan’s interview responses

Which song do you like?
“I like Spiderman song... because I like the Spiderman.”

Which musical instrument do you like?
“I like piano... because... because my sisters... I have piano at home, my sisters gave me piano.”

What language do you speak?
“English”.

What language do you like?
“English... because we speak English.”

How do you learn music?
“I play music and I sing.

Which song do you like?
“Humma Lella song’... because we all sing it together”.

Which musical instrument do you like?
“I like the big drum, because it’s fun for playing a Scoobee-doo-bee song (referring to the “Scoobee-doo be song”) with someone else... with Rajan - he plays one egg.”

What language do you speak?
“English”.

What language do you like?
“Mmm... the Humma Lella one... mmm... African.”

Music Corner
“I like playing there... I like playing with my friends.”

Music Sessions
“I like when we sing and play together. I like when you play the guitar.”

“Is there something you did not like?”
“Mmm... I don’t know.”

How do you learn music?
“I learn music when we play games and sit in a circle and together... I like when you sing songs with us.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanja’s interview responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Which song do you like?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I like Baa baa black sheep...because it’s cute, I like cute songs.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Which musical instrument do you like?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I like, I like, I like ummmm...tambourine (!)...because it’s fun.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What language do you speak?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“English”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What language do you like?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I like English.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How do you learn music?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I learn it, silly, like I learn things.” (smiling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Which song do you like?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Twinkle, twinkle little star... because, when I sing the tune, my sister falls asleep” (referring to her younger sister).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Which musical instrument do you like?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I love the shakers (referring to the musical eggs) the most...because I can put one in each hand and they make soft sound”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What language do you speak?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“English”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What language do you like?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I like English.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music Corner</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t know...I like, I like the little dollies...I like the shakers...I like the rain-shaker...the small one (Referring to the ‘Rain-stick’). It sounds like rain.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music Session</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I like when we get to sing and play the games. I like the game with the blanket (referring to the “Guess the name” game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is there anything you did not like?”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I never get the elephant mat” (Referring to the initial, mats that belonged to the child care, used in our music sessions. Five of them had the image of an elephant while the rest had a chicken)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How do you learn music?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I learn songs, I learn games, I learn...I learn funny songs...ahm...I learn ukulele the best.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jaspar’s interview responses

Which song do you like?
“I like Incey Wincey Spider... ‘cause I like spiders; spiders are insects.”

Which musical instrument do you like?
“Instrument? I like the old CD player...’cause it has lots of bits and pieces... but it doesn’t work anymore”.

What language do you speak?
“I only speak English”.

What language do you like?
“I like your language” “My language?” I asked, “Yep! Serbian is funny. I like funny things.”

How do you learn music?
“I learn music when I listen to the sounds.”

Which song do you like?
“The monster song was in the first place- “I think the monster one is funny and it’s not scary one bit!”...” I like the name song, too and the guessing one, as well.” (He explained, referring to the “Hey, hey, what’s your name” and “What do you think my name is?”) When asked why he liked these songs, he said that” the boys did a good job dancing together... jumped high! (Shawing the action; referring to the phrase in the “Hey, hey...”).

Which musical instrument do you like?
“I like the accordion. It makes a good sound when you play. I don’t like when the children play it— it made a terrible sound. I like the belts.”

“I like the big drum...the colours. You can put a little one on top of it. The little one makes different sound.”

What language do you speak?
“I speak English. I know a bit your one: jedan, dva, tri, cetiri, pet sest, sedam (smiles) hm...I can’t remember the est.”

What language do you like?
“I like your language” “My language?” I asked, “Yep! Serbian is funny. I like funny things.”

Music Sessions
“I liked musical instruments.”... “I liked the monster song, when we danced and you played the guitar...Hey, I like the other one...when I was the monster...haha!” (Referring to the “I eat kids, yum, yum!” poem). I like to trick people when I change my voice. Haha, I also tricked you that time!” (Referring to the “Guess the name” game).

Music Corner
“I like lots of instruments and things...I like the big drum, you should leave it there.”

“Is there anything you did not like?”
“Nah. I like everything! I like more things! Can you bring more instruments?”

How do you learn music?
“I learn music when we have music session.I learn songs, I learn musical instruments...I like looking what’s inside...we learn music when we do things, we don’t learn music if we don’t do things.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Laura’s interview responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which song do you like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Twinkle twinkle is my best... ‘cause I like to sing it with my sister.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which musical instrument do you like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I like, I like the piano... ‘cause piano has lot sof sounds... it sounds beautiful.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you speak?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“English language.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“English... English is language.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you learn music?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I learn from books and songs and CDs and on TV.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Josh’s interview responses

Which song do you like?
“Hmmm... Spiderman... cause I like Spiderman.”

Which musical instrument do you like?
“I like the guitar and drums.”

What language do you speak?
“English. ... You?”

What language do you like?
“English... because I speak English and I like it.”

How do you learn music?
“I listen to music and sing songs sometimes.”

Music Sessions
“Dancing the Monster Song.”

Music Corner
“I like playing with drums.”

“Is there anything you did not like?”
“No.”

How do you learn music?
“I learn music when we have group music with you and then I learn more in the music corner.”
Keili’s interview responses

Which song do you like?
“I like Oku bina, bina song...It’s nice. I like the language.”

Which musical instrument do you like?
“I like the egg shakers...they are nice and colourful.”

What language do you speak?
“I speak English.”

What language do you like?
“I like English...because English is my language.”

Music Sessions
“I like the accordion.”

Music Corner
“Don’t know.”

“Is there anything you did not like?”
“Monster song.”

How do you learn music?
“I learn music when we play the game with a stick and the musical blanket.”

Which song do you like?
“Hm...I like twinkle twinkle and Baa Baa black sheep...because they are just nice songs.”

Which musical instrument do you like?
“The bells, I think...They are nice to play with.”

What language do you speak?
“English.”

What language do you like?
“English...because we know how to talk (in) English language.”

How do you learn music?
“I just learn singing and listening.”
Mitch’s interview responses

Which song do you like?
“The best song is Spiderman song...‘cause it’s fast and Spiderman is fast! Oh, and “I like Postman Pat...‘cause I like it...I like the black and white cat...my cousin gave me to wathc it on TV.”

Which musical instrument do you like?
“Rock guitar for sure! Because it has power and it’s great!”

What language do you speak?
“I speak English...shshshshshshshshs (laughs).”

What language do you like?
“I like two Engishes; English and Aboriginalsh.”

Music Sessions
“Man, I like all the cool instruments.”

Music Corner
“I like all the little people [figures]. I like the soccer players and the big drum.”

“Is there anything you did not like?”
“Nah.”

How do you learn music?
“I learn when I play the instruments in the music corner. I played a bit, but it doesn’t sound like good music...a little bit, though.”

“Which song do you like?
“The Monster song is the coolest song...it’s so funny! I like when we scare the girl outside.”

Which musical instrument do you like?
“The big guitar and the one you brought and was in the music corner.”

What language do you speak?
“Only English, but I know some othersongs.”

What language do you like?
“I like two Engishes; English and Aboriginalsh.”

How do you learn music?
“I am not a music-man; I don’t learn music. I will learn the guitar, you know?”
Nely's interview responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which song do you like?</td>
<td>“I like Twinkle Little Star...’cause we sing it... Emma and I like (to) sing it with dress ups.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which musical instrument do you like?</td>
<td>“I like soft instruments ... bells...because they are soft.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you speak?</td>
<td>“English.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you like?</td>
<td>“English...because we talk English and write in English.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you learn music?</td>
<td>“I dance.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which song do you like?</td>
<td>“I like Umma lella song..’cause it’s fun to clap’it sing it with Emma.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which musical instrument do you like?</td>
<td>“I like playing with the big guitar...’cause it is fun and it makes soft and loud noise.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you speak?</td>
<td>“English language.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language do you like?</td>
<td>“I like English...because we talk in English and write in English.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Sessions</td>
<td>“Dancing with Emma.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Corner</td>
<td>“I like dancing with Emma.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anything you did not like?</td>
<td>“I don’t know.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you learn music?</td>
<td>“With Aki and Sisi”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Children Interview Answers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Before music project</th>
<th>Following completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>VIOLET</strong></td>
<td>“The one in the book...Five little ducks...’cause I just do.”</td>
<td>“Bells.” (did not give any further information about it.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALI</strong></td>
<td>“I like Twinkle, twinkle...because it’s lovely.”</td>
<td>“I like the Bumble Bee song” ...because it’s funny...hm...I like Huma lella song...because it’s nice and happy...it’s nice and easy to sing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INJA</strong></td>
<td>“I like galumph went the little green frog one day (singing) ...’cause it’s funny!”</td>
<td>“I like the bee song and the funny one when you say somebody’s name...and their hair is sticking out...sooo funny!” (referring to the “One, two three” rhyme).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GAGI</strong></td>
<td>“I like 5 little monkeys...’cause it’s fun!”</td>
<td>“I like the bumble bee and the flea...ha-ha...they make me laugh.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ROBIE</strong></td>
<td>“My favourite is Spiderman song...’cause it great!”</td>
<td>I liked the African song Okubena...I like it because it fun to sing and play drums.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AKI</strong></td>
<td>“I like Twinkle, twinkle little star...because it’s soft and beautiful.”</td>
<td>“I like “Umma lella song the most...because it’s nice and ...it’s different”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AHMET</strong></td>
<td>“Spiderman DVD...cause I saw it.”</td>
<td>“I like Umma lella” song...because it’s nice and easy to sing”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOU</strong></td>
<td>“I like Miss Polly had a dolly...’cause I like dollies.”</td>
<td>“I like the Okubina song the most ...’cause it’s a beautiful song. I like the rhythm.” (referring to the “Umma lella” song).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REA</strong></td>
<td>“I like Twinkle, twinkle and Baa, baa black sheep...because they are nice songs to sing.”</td>
<td>“I like Umma lell song the most...because it’s nice to sing and do the actions”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>KASJA</strong></td>
<td>Klaras had just started learning English and attending the child-care, when the music project had begun. She was from a Polish background.</td>
<td>“Okubina song... that’s my favourite song...I like it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JAN</strong></td>
<td>“I like Spiderman song...because I like the Spiderman”.</td>
<td>“Umma Lella song’...because we all sing it together”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SANJA</strong></td>
<td>“I like Baa baa black sheep...because it’s cute, I like cute songs.”</td>
<td>“Twinkle, twinkle little star... because, when I sing the tune, my sister falls asleep” (referring to her younger sister). Umma Lella is the best one, to...it has the best music...I don’t like singing it ...I like dancing it. I like when we do it with the musical blanket.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Favorite Song (Reason)</td>
<td>Comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JASPAR</td>
<td>“I like Incey Wincey Spider... ’cause I like spiders; spiders are insects.”</td>
<td>The monster song was in the first place - “I think the monster one is funny and it’s not scary one bit!”...” I like the name song, too and the guessing one, as well.” (He explained, referring to the “Hey, hey, what’s your name” and “What do you think my name is?”) When asked why he liked these songs, he said that” the boys did a good job dancing together... jumped high! (Showing the action; referring to the phrase in the “Hey, hey...”).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NELY</td>
<td>“I like Twinkle Little Star...’cause we sing it... Emma and I like (to) sing it with dress ups.”</td>
<td>“I like Umma lella song..’cause it’s fun to clap’; I sing it with Emma.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAURA</td>
<td>“Twinkle twinkle is my best...’cause I like to sing it with my sister.”</td>
<td>“Umma lella... ’cause it’s fun...I like when we all sing it and you play drums.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEILI</td>
<td>“Hm...I like twinkle twinkle and Baa Baa black sheep...because they are just nice songs.”</td>
<td>I like “Oku bina, bina song...It’s nice. I like the language.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MITCH</td>
<td>“The best song is Spiderman song...’cause it’s fast and Spiderman is fast! Oh, and “I like Postman Pat...’cause I like it..I like the black and white cat...my cousin gave me to wathc it on TV.”</td>
<td>“The Monster song is the coolest song...it’s so funny! I like when we scare the girls outside.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOSH</td>
<td>“Hmmm...Spiderman...cause I like Spiderman.”</td>
<td>“I like the Umma Lella song...no, I like better the funny one – One two three, Aleksandra caught a flea.” (Laughs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIOLET</td>
<td>“Hm...I don’t know”. (frowns)</td>
<td>“I liked the red guitar” (she referred to the ukulele) I wish I can take it home”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALI</td>
<td>“I like drums...’cause they’re fun and people dance to them.”</td>
<td>“I like the big one (drum)...we get to play (it) together. Emma and I play together. She is the cat and I am a dog...ha-ha!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INJA</td>
<td>“Hm...piano...because it’s nice to listen (to) nice music.”</td>
<td>“I like the little eggs, they are colourful and they make soft sound. I like when we did Koolay song with the eggs. I had two!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAGI</td>
<td>“Maybe guitar...because, because it’s good.”</td>
<td>“I like best the one like a piano...mmm...accordion? ... I didn’t get to play much. I like when you played it... You play lots of instruments.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Quote 1</td>
<td>Quote 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROBIE</td>
<td>“I like the electric guitar...because it’s strong and cool!”</td>
<td>“I like the drums, all of them make a nice sound. The big drum is cool... and Clara put all the eggs, ha-ha, in the big drum – when you put eggs in the drum you have two noises.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKI</td>
<td>“I like all instruments...because they make music.”</td>
<td>“I like the guitar... love it ...I love things that are wood”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHMET</td>
<td>“I don’t know.”</td>
<td>I liked the accordion...because I like playing it. And, I like the sticks...Because you can play on the book –shelf, table and the drums”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOU</td>
<td>I like, I like tambourine is nice...hm...I don’t know which one’s my favourite.”</td>
<td>“Oh, I like drums! Because I ’m laughing when I’m playing it!” She was in particular fond of the big drum, as she put it: “When I saw it, I love it!” Lily also added: “I like the accordion. My pa has one, only pink.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REA</td>
<td>“My favourite are maracas...because they are nice to play.”</td>
<td>“Eggs make nice sound and they sound like maracas”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KASJA</td>
<td>Klara had just started learning English and attending the child-care, when the music project had begun. She was from a Polish background.</td>
<td>“Drums.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAN</td>
<td>“I like piano ... because ... because my sisters...I have piano at home, my sisters gave me piano.”</td>
<td>“I like the big drum, because it’s fun for playing a Scoo-bee-doo-bee song (referring to the “Scoo-bee-doo be song”) with someone else ...with Rajan - he plays one egg.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANJA</td>
<td>“I like, I like, I like ummmm...tambourine (!)...because it’s fun.”</td>
<td>“I love the shakers (referring to the musical eggs) the most...because I can put one in each hand and they make soft sound”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JASPAR</td>
<td>“Instrument? I like the old CD player...’cause it has lots of bits and pieces but it doesn’t work anymore”.</td>
<td>“I like the accordion. It make s a good sound when you play. I don’t like when the children play it – it made a terrible sound. I like the belts. Hmmm...I like the big drum...the colours. You can put a little one on top of it. The little one makes different sound.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NELY</td>
<td>“I like soft instruments...bells...because they are soft.”</td>
<td>“I like playing with the big guitar...’cause it is fun and it makes soft and loud noise.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAURA</td>
<td>“I like, I like the piano...’cause piano has lot sof sounds...it sounds beautiful.”</td>
<td>“I like the piano ..’cause it’s beautiful instrument... sounds beautiful. I like beautiful stuff.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEILI</td>
<td>“The bells, I think...They are nice to play with.”</td>
<td>“I like the egg shakers. ..they are nice and colourful.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAME</td>
<td>RESPONSE 1</td>
<td>RESPONSE 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MICHAEL</td>
<td>“Rock guitar for sure! Because it has power and its great!”</td>
<td>“The big guitar and the big drum, the one you brought and was in the music corner.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOSH</td>
<td>“I like the guitar and drums.”</td>
<td>“The drums, the big and small.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 3. What language do you speak?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VIOLET</td>
<td>“English”.</td>
<td>“English”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INJA</td>
<td>“English”.</td>
<td>“English”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAGI</td>
<td>“English”.</td>
<td>“English...German.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROBIE</td>
<td>“I only know English.”</td>
<td>“I speak English...I know what you speak...you speak Serbian”. ‘What language do you like? “I like English, I like Japanese, I like...I like the monster language! Haha”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKI</td>
<td>“English”.</td>
<td>“English and I speak Japanese to my grandma. My grandma is here.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHMET</td>
<td>“English”.</td>
<td>“English and Albanian.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOU</td>
<td>“English”.</td>
<td>“English, Talian, Japan, African..hm...that’s all!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REA</td>
<td>“English”.</td>
<td>“Australian...and...I know those songs in different languages Italian, African...and Japanese.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KASJA</td>
<td>Klara had just started learning English and attending the child-care, when the music project had begun. She was from a Polish background.</td>
<td>No answer (smiling).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAN</td>
<td>“English”.</td>
<td>“English”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANJA</td>
<td>“English”.</td>
<td>“English”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JASPAR</td>
<td>“I only speak English”.</td>
<td>“I speak English. I know a bit your one: jedan, dva, tri, cetiri, pet sest, sedam (smiles) hm...i can’t remember the rest.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NELY</td>
<td>“English”.</td>
<td>“English language.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAURA</td>
<td>“English language”.</td>
<td>“I speak English and I can speak some words...they’re not English words...next time.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEILI</td>
<td>“English”.</td>
<td>“English.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MICHAEL</td>
<td>“I speak English-shshshshshshhs (laughs)”</td>
<td>“Only English, but I know some other songs.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOSH</td>
<td>“English. You?”</td>
<td>“I speak English.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 4. What Language do you like?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VIOLET</td>
<td>“English...Because.”</td>
<td>English because I like it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Language(s)</td>
<td>Reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALI</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>‘cause it’s lovely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INJA</td>
<td>English, English</td>
<td>‘cause it’s English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAGI</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>I like English the best...because it’s easy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROBIE</td>
<td>English...I like it ‘cause is my language.</td>
<td>I like English, I like Japanese, I like...I like the monster language! Haha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKI</td>
<td>English....cause it’s nice.... I like English...Hm...That’s all.</td>
<td>Japanese...because we speak at home Japanese and my grandma’s here”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHMET</td>
<td>English...because...hm...</td>
<td>Albanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOU</td>
<td>English...cause I know English.</td>
<td>African... because it’s fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REA</td>
<td>English.</td>
<td>“I like English... because I know English”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KASJA</td>
<td>Klara had just started learning English and attending the child-care, when the music project had begun. She was from a Polish background.</td>
<td>No answer (smiling).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAN</td>
<td>English...because we speak English.</td>
<td>Mmmm...the Umma Lella one...mmm...African.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANJA</td>
<td>English...because we talk English language.</td>
<td>“I like English.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JASPAR</td>
<td>“I like English...I like ...I don’t know the name...it’s another language...’cause it’s different and people, they speak and nod their head(s) and wave their hand (s).”</td>
<td>“I like your language...Yep! Serbian is funny. I like funny things.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NELY</td>
<td>English...because we talk English language.</td>
<td>“I like English...because we talk in English and write in English.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAURA</td>
<td>English... English is language.</td>
<td>“I like English...because we live in Melbourne and we speak English to people”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEILI</td>
<td>English...because we know how to talk (in) English language.</td>
<td>“I like English...because English is my language.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MICHAEL</td>
<td>English...because I don’t know any other!“</td>
<td>“I like two Englishes; English and Aboriginalsh.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOSH</td>
<td>English...because I speak English and I like it.</td>
<td>“English and African.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 5. How do you learn music?**
| VIOLET | “How? I don’t know.”  
(smilng) | “From you, Aleksandra...You learn it when you play instruments.” |
| ALI | “I learn it when I do music.” | “When we have music and you bring us instruments to play with. My sister has music notes. She learns music. I learn when we sing and I played instruments. I listen.” |
| INJA | “From the teacher?”  
(smilng) | “From you, silly, the music teacher Aleksandra. Ahm...I play the staff in the music corner and I sing and dance with you and my friends.” |
| GAGI | “I listen to nice music with my parents.” | “We learn music when we play and sing and play the musical instruments. You study and you learn things about music. You listen to music. You sing. You dance...ahm...that’s how.” |
| ROBIE | “I don’t learn music, I only listen to music.” | “I learn music every day in the music corner. I learn about instruments and... when we sing together...I learn new music.” |
| AHI | “I sing and dance with my Nikitta and Silvia and my mum and my dad.” | “I learn to sing and play... I played the guitar and ukulele and accordion and I like playing drums. I learn lots of music and songs. It’s my favourite, It’s lovely.” |
| AHMET | “I learn things from teachers and mum and dad.” | “From the teachers and my mum and my dad, but more from you.” |
| LOU | “From my pa.” | “I learn lots of music! I learn songs, I play instruments. I like playing games. You’re the teacher, you know how.( Loughs) We learn music together...when we sing and dance...when we get to play the instruments...but it’s a bit hard...we need practisin’.” |
| REA | “With my mum and my sister...with musical instruments.” | “I sing and play the music with my friends and at home. I learn what I like to sing and play... and how to play musical instruments. I practice here and at home with my mum and my sister.” |
| KASJA | Klara had just started learning English and attending the child-care, when the music project had begun. She was from a Polish background. | “Singing.” |
| JAN | “I play music and I sing.” | “We learn it from you...when we play the games in the circle. I like when you sing songs with us.” |
| SANJA | “I learn it, you silly, like I learn things.”  
(smilng) | “Oh, I learn musical songs and musical instruments and musical games from musical project. “I learn songs, I learn...” |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JASPAR</td>
<td>“I learn music when I listen to the sounds.”</td>
<td>“I learn when I do music. If we don’t do music, we don’t learn music. I learn when I look at the instruments inside. I learn music when we have music session. I learn songs, I learn musical instruments...I like looking what’s inside...we learn music when we do things, we don’t learn music if we don’t do things.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NELY</td>
<td>“I dance.”</td>
<td>“With Emma and Silvia.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAURA</td>
<td>“I learn from books and songs and CDs and on TV.”</td>
<td>“From you, from books, from TV, from the radio...my mum sings aloud in the car.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEILI</td>
<td>“I just learn singing and listening.”</td>
<td>“I learn music when we play the game with a stick and the musical blanket.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MICHAEL</td>
<td>“I am not a music-man; I don’t learn music. I will learn the guitar, you know?”</td>
<td>“I learn when I play the instruments in the music corner..I played a bit, but it doesn’t sound like good music...a little bit, though.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOSH</td>
<td>“I listen to music and sing songs sometimes.”</td>
<td>“I learn music when we have group music with you and then I learn more in the music corner.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIOLET</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INJA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAGI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROBIE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKI</td>
<td>She liked the Spanish fan in the music corner as well as the large Chinese one. She explained: “I like those big fans. I like the pictures on them. It’s good when we danced behind the fan.”</td>
<td>“I like when we played the ukulele, I like the yellow one the best.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHMET</td>
<td>“I like the sticks and the eggs and the drums, the two drums.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOU</td>
<td>“I like the little elephants (The Indian miniature figures)...because they have pretty sprinkles... and... I like those Japanese dolls...because they are shiny and they are tiny... and I can put them in my pockets.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REA</td>
<td>“I like everything.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KASJA</td>
<td>“Drums.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Question 6. What do you like about the group music sessions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JAN</th>
<th>&quot;I like playing there...I like playing with my friends.&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SANJA</td>
<td>&quot;I don't know...I like, I like the little dollies...I like the shakers...I like the rain-shaker...the small one (Referring to the ‘Rain-stick’). It sounds like rain.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JASPAR</td>
<td>&quot;I like lots of instruments and things...I like the big drum, you should leave it there.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NELY</td>
<td>&quot;I like dancing with Emma.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAURA</td>
<td>&quot;I like all the instruments. I like the rainstick.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEILI</td>
<td>&quot;Don’t know.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MICHAEL</td>
<td>&quot;I like all the little people [figures]. I like the soccer players and the big drum.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Question 7. Is there anything about the music program that you did not like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VIOLET</th>
<th>&quot;I don't like the wicked old witch. The yucky one&quot; [she referred to the puppet from &quot;The Snow-white&quot; collection].</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALI</td>
<td>“I didn’t get a turn of the accordion...I was sick.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INJA</td>
<td>“We can’t take the toys home.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAGI</td>
<td>“I did not like... somebody broke the black fan in the music corner... I did not get to play with it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROBIE</td>
<td>“Mmm...no.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKI</td>
<td>“The monster song is scary...I don’t like when boys scare me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I don’t like...some toys in the music corner getting broked.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHMET</td>
<td>“No.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOU</td>
<td>“Naah”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REA</td>
<td>“I didn’t like when it’s noisy in the music corner.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KASJA</td>
<td>“I wanna sit next to you.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAN</td>
<td>“Mmm..I don’t know.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANJA</td>
<td>“I never get the elephant mat” [the place-mats initially used belonged to the child care. Five of them had the image of an elephant while the rest had a chicken]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JASPAR</td>
<td>“Nah. I like everything! I like more things! Can you bring more instruments?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NELY</td>
<td>“I don’t know.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAURA</td>
<td>“No.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEILI</td>
<td>“Monster song.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MICHAEL</td>
<td>“Nah.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E
Photo Analysis (Example)

- Looking and listening to the teacher
- Leaning forward to hear
- Interacting with a peer
- Listening
Imitating; joining in doing the action

Observing others; smiling

Responding with a smile:

Feet apart, balanced; performing the action of the song while looking at Laura who is chanting?

Sitting in preferred position

Tapping knees to keep up the rhythm; observing others; chanting

Smiling

Chanting spontaneously

Focussed on the ‘performance’

Observing others; smiling
Engaging in conversation with a “teacher”

All children sitting in suggested position

Leaning forward; laughing

Holding her new bag
Joining in actions of the chant

Acting out the chant

Observing

Performing in a pair

Observing
Clapping “That will do”

Doing “That will do”. Kasja joined in imitating actions
Observing how the guitar and how it is played

Listening and observing

Singing alone accompanied by the guitar

Observing how the guitar and how it is played
Adding own movement to the song “Reach the sky” – responding to music, not following the instruction

Responding to music and lyrics “Reach the sky!”

Stretching, extending arms; High on toes

Observing and listening

Observing and listening

Extending arms

“Reach the sky” – responding to music, not following the instruction
Taking turns – all children indicate they want a turn by standing, except for Rea
Interested in exploring and handling the guitar
Appendix F
Staff and Parent Data

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Interview with Rea’s mum

4th April, 2008

C: Rea’s mum

A: The researcher

Context – Following today’s Music Session, I met R’s mum just as I was leaving the child care centre. She greeted me with a big smile. We then had a brief conversation about the music project. I learned that she appreciated my work with the children and that she was impressed with R’s singing in different languages. I asked her if she had some time so that I could record our talk immediately. She confirmed and the following conversation excerpt illustrates this:

C: “…she has been singing the songs …she loves that Umma lella one. She sings it very often, at home in the car, outside…She was initially very particular and preferred if I did not joined in. [laughs] Last week she said I could.”

A: “Yeah?”

C: “Yes. She organised her sister S and myself and taught us the song.”

A: “How did she go about this?”

C: “Oh, she made us sit on the floor and suggested: You may want to cross your legs; it’s easier to clap and pat your knees”. We followed these instructions and she sang the song. I was not allowed to sing along [laughs.] She said I should follow the actions, while to her sister, she said: “You [Sky] sing nicely and sing softly.”

A: “So, you just did the actions?” I asked.

C: “That’s right. [laughs] R. has already sung this song to her sister, so both of them sang and we all did the actions.”

A: “Why do you think she insisted you do not sing?”

C: “I don’t really know, we sing other songs together [pauses] perhaps, I should’ve asked her? “

A: “Yes, it would be interesting to find out.”

C: “Maybe next time I will be allowed. “

A: “So you sang the song once or..?”

C: “They sang it several times…I think three times. R’s said we should do it quieter and then louder and faster and slower. She’s a little musician, you know. “

A: “She certainly is”.

C: “Oh, and she told us that this is an African song and people in Africa sing with the drums. …she reckons I should ask you for a little drum and the eggs…she said the songs sound very nice when you play it. “

A: “That will be no problem – she can take them this weekend. I actually have some extra instruments, so I will bring them on Friday for you.”
C: “Oh, thanks. That would be lovely. We do have instruments, too, but I guess these are special ’cause they are from her little school”.

That Friday Rea took the box with the musical eggs and the little drum. The following week, I asked C. to tell me what happened. This time Rea let her mum join in singing. Rea explained that sometimes people need some time to learn a new language so they should only listen and this is why her mum needed to wait. She also demonstrated how to use the musical eggs. Rea encouraged that they take turns in singing or playing the eggs or singing different parts of the song. Apparently they had a wonderful time and C. described it as a “mini music session”. She wished she had recorded this “lovely experience”.

Notes from talking to Olga’s mum about the music project

19th September, 2008.

Olga’s mum observed part of the session today. After the session was finished I approached her to have a chat. She said that she was very pleased to see that there is a music corner available for children. Olga, in her opinion, really likes music and especially those songs in different languages. “It’s a pity I can’t bring her on a day when you are here. We were lucky to get some extra days.” Olga apparently wanted to play a guessing game at home; she was particular which material they used as a “music vale”.

Olga’s mum asked if this was now a permanent change in the room – she said that “this would be great”. She also offered to bring some items that relate to different cultures. “If you would like, I could bring some table clothes with motives from different countries and magazines that are exploring different cultures. They were as large as dining table-clothes. I thought that these could be good to also use as “music vales”.

Notes from talking to Petra’s mum about music

26th September, 2008.

Petra’s mum approached me today. “Aleksandra, I am very pleased that Petra is taking so much interest in music.” Petra”, she further noted, “was talking about the music learning centre frequently while at home. She always takes me in the mornings to have a look “what’s in there”… “I like how this area looks. It’s very inviting. She [Petra] has been singing the songs she learnt from her kinder friends. I had a look at them but I don’t know all the melodies. Unfortunately, I don’t read music so the music score would not help. Perhaps I will come one day when you have a session.” I realised that this was a good idea – having the repertoire for families in audio format, too.
Notes from talking to Assistant Coordinator (AC1)


The AC1 approached me explaining that the centre does not do as much music as they should. She said: Only A. in toddler’s room does it regularly; “she is a ballroom dancer and does lots of movement with the little ones.” She further expressed her enthusiasm about the music project: “I am looking forward to you coming and doing music. The children will love it and the staff will benefit.”

Notes from conversation with Preschool Teacher (PT) on her professional life

2nd February, 2008.

PT seems to be very busy with her work and school. She is studying at one of the Melbournian University ‘Children with Special Needs’ Course. PT told me that she is coming to the centre before the children arrive, to do all the work, rather than to take it home or stay afterwards. She apologised that he did not have time to look at the books I had given to her, so I asked if she would like me to assist her with ideas or recommend good resources. She seemed relieved and said that that “would be best”. She asked if I could help her do some learning stories as she would like to do more this year. She explained she wanted to use ‘portfolios’ for the children and has started gathering everything already on the computer, however, she pointed out that this is at an early stage - the children do not have much information in their portfolios. For example, RA’s and JN’s portfolios have only a title page and a drawing. Most children do not have anything yet. For this exchange of information, PT would need to come to my office, so we thought that Saturdays may be good to use. She usually goes to church on Saturdays in the morning, so after that we could catch up. This is fine with me, as it is part of my research time.

Notes from conversation with Preschool Teacher (PT) and Preschool Assistant (PA) in regards to mirror changes and music session


PA and PA liked and are happy to go with the idea of displaying children’s photographs on the mirror. They both expressed they appreciated my effort and as PT put it, “it would take (them) a long time to reorganize this space and do the photos of all the children. The PT gave me some positive feedback for the music session. She said: “I enjoyed myself today. It was good to see the children get into it. Even Kasja liked it; she’s been struggling to settle in, it was nice to see her happy.”

Notes on conversation with Assistant Coordinator (AC2)

8th May, 2008.

“It’s great what you’re doing with the children...I like how it’s all visible on the display...a very good way of promoting music. You have brought so much value, vitality and fun to the centre, there is much we can do with music.” AC2 expressed interest in learning a new, culturally diverse, repertoire of songs: “I do a lot of singing and dancing, but need to learn some new songs, especially in other
languages (than English.” She commented on the music session she came to observe: “That was great. The children really surprised me. I wouldn’t expect them to be so confident in trying out drama, I don’t think they have done anything like this before.”

Notes from a conversation with Regular Reliever (RR)

Date: 3rd August, 2008.

While I was at the conference, RR was relieving the PT who was also away; during this period, RR observed and noticed information on the children’s behaviour or comments in regards to the music project. According to RR, during this time the children missed the music corner and they were asking when I was going to come back. She singled out Aki, Lou, Gagi and Jaspar who most often asked when they would do the music again.

RR wanted to obtain the lyrics of the songs as the children wished to sing them during group times. She explained, laughing heartedly, she did try some singing with the children when they had group sessions but, apparently Lou, Inja and Gagi were “better at it” than herself.

Next time I gave RR the whole set of the songs. She was very appreciative: “Great, now I can join Lou ha-ha!”.

Notes from talking to Centre Coordinator

19th, September, 2008.

The Child Care Coordinator approached me today. She said: “Aleksandra, the children enjoy doing music with you. I hear them sing the songs and in the morning – they show their parents your music display. Thank you very much for all the instruments and resources you bring...” she, nonetheless, continued: “I am really sorry, but I had to remove a few small, fragile items, as they got damaged and one of them being glass...is not safe for the children. “ The items were placed on the shelf above the ‘signing in’ book. They were soon replaced with the wooden miniatures.

Notes from talking to Centre Coordinator (CC)

26th September, 2008.

When I was leaving the centre CC again approached me holding a few small items: “These ones were in the toddlers’ room...I guess some of them really like them and smuggled them when we had family grouping. We both had a laugh. “Do you know what they are called?” I asked her. She paused and then said:

“Russian Babushkas’?”
“They are Russian, but are actually called matryoshka. Lot of people seem to call them babushka dolls.

“Oh, really?” she raised her eyebrows.

“Interestingly, babushka is the Russian word for grandmother and has little to do with matryoshka as this word is derived from a female noun the Russian female first name matryona. Still, many people refer to them as babushkas, maybe it’s easier to say babushka than matryoshka...and they look so warm and loving, like grandmas usually are.”

She smiled and nodded: “Or maybe it’s because they look a bit like babushkas?”

“Interesting”, she replied and smiled again, “Something new I learn today. Thanks!”

Notes from talking to the Centre’s Regular Reliever (RR)

24th October, 2008.

Context: Today I visited the centre to see the children who were away on our last session.

RR told me the most fascinating information about Lou holding a music session with all the children. She said that Lou managed to keep all her 17 peers involved. She apparently placed the mats in a circle and invited her friends and peers to come to do ‘Music’. They all readily set down and followed Lou’s instructions. They sang Umma Lella and Bumble bee song. Laura suggested they do “1, 2, 3, mother caught a flea” where the children laughed as they made up their own versions. Lou closed the “session” by singing everyone’s name to go and wash their hands for lunch: “Thank you Rea, Thank you Jan ...” RR said:” Aleksandra, I was impressed. Lou was doing what you were doing and the rest loved it. Even I joined in a circle. Ha-ha!”

Interview with the Preschool Teacher

11th December, 2007.

Context: This interview was conducted in the coordinator’s office. The centre’s coordinator replaced the kinder teacher in the kinder-room, so that she could participate in this interview. We had about 30 minutes allocated for the interview, as the coordinator had many tasks to complete and could not pare more time out of her office.

Interview transcription

A: There are several questions that I already kind of structured, but then we will just talk as we go. Is that OK? Thank you for your time.

PT: Yes, my pleasure.

A: Would you please tell me how long you have been working as a kindergarten teacher?

PT: I have been working as a kindergarten teacher for five years and about 3 years and a few months in this centre.
A: So, where did you work before this centre?

PT: I worked at a centre which is now an ABC learning centre in B... and after that I came here to ‘Eucalyptus Tree’ (* Please note: real name of the centre name has been changed).

A: Did you want to change jobs or did they close the centre down and they opened ABC...?

PT: No, I wanted a change. It’s because I found that there might be a lot of things that might not go hand in hand with some of the practices in the centre. So, yes, because of those things that I had to do. And I found it’s better to work here ...it’s more child oriented and...

A: The other child care was not child–oriented?

PT: Yes. So that is the main reason.

A: So you stayed here already for three years, which means that it might be satisfying?

PT: Yes, it is a really good centre. It’s good because it’s a community based centre, so all the funding is used back on the children and it’s recycled in that way, which is a much better way. And it is a smaller place, too. It’s only a 44 place centre, and the ratio for this centre is good. I mean in the kinder room we have only 20 children a day with two staff and we have individually more time to spend with children than when having 30 children with two staff; and that actually brings down the number of children in my planning for the whole week, too. So, these are a couple of reasons why...

A: Where do the children come from - this area, B...?

PT: Most of them from this area, some of the children are children of the academics at the nearby university and some are the students’, who bring their children in. So, some come in part-time, some might be full-time...

A: ...for a semester or so? ...Must be hard sometimes.

PT: Yes. That’s right. They change according to their lectures. So first semester they might do two days, next semester they might do a few more days. So it depends. And that actually...once those places are filled, first the students are given priority and then the staff are given priority, then it’s open to the people in the community as well.

A: And is it very culture diverse or is it homogenous?

PT: We are not really culturally diverse this year. Last year we were. We had lots of different nationalities.

A: So, it is nationally diverse?

PT: In backgrounds, it’s diverse this year as well as last year. Every year we have changes in the room and the culture and diversity of the room in different aspects. So it is different. It is a bit different where nationality is concerned. Most of them are Australians.

A: ...or at least Australian speaking?

PT: Yes, that’s right.

A: I have noticed there are some children whose names sound international, like ‘Sandro’, Jing....So, you come from Sri Lanka and you came here to study and you studied at...?

PT: XXX University... I came here 10 years ago and I did a Bachelor of Education.

A: How many years was that?
PT: It was four years. Double degree for early childhood and a primary.

A: Do you have any specific interests in terms of early childhood education, any particular area that interests you?

PT: Yes, now my interest is more towards special needs and early intervention in early childhood and I have already begun or rather finished one part of a graduate diploma in early intervention and I want to focus on hearing impairment and language delay.

A: It must be challenging to study and work..?

PT: Yes, it was. That’s why this year has been a break for me. This semester. I needed a rest from my studies and work.

A: Ok, we might talk about “special education” and what it really means at some other point. Inclusive education is my interest, too. ...Perhaps you can tell me a little more about growing up in Sri Lanka. Are there any particular life features you would like to highlight?

PT: (pauses and thinks).

A: What is the schooling like, for example?

PT: The schooling system is very different, so when I came to Australia I came straight to University, so it was a bit of a cultural shock to me. Because that is not the way we studied at home. We come from a very traditional educational background, too. It’s not so open ended as Australia, where we are given the tools to go out and take ownership of our own education. But, at home, you are literally given all the materials and we study word by word. It was a very traditional educational background I came from.

A: What about growing up in Sri Lanka as a child?

PT: I think that Sri Lankan education is quite different. For me to come up here and study was a challenge. If I had not come from such a strict structure it would be easier for me to go off the rails here. However, because it was such a strict structure I was able to come and apply myself here even though it is different. So that’s what I think is actually really good here. There is less structure. I am glad I had this ability to... (pauses)

A: ...ability to adjust to different ways of learning and teaching?

PT: Yes, that’s right. It was challenging to do because of the background I come from. I don’t challenge theories but absorb them and I think that is a good thing about the Sri Lankan education and the background I come from it taught me how to adjust.

A: So what is it like for young children in early childhood settings in Sri Lanka?

PT: Early childhood is quite similar to primary education or secondary, where children are given to write and read, like instant, for example number. The way we would teach number here is very different to how we did it back home where we would actually memorise and write the number.

A: More by instruction...?

PT: Yes, that’s right. And here it is more open-ended and we see that they could learn numbers in many ways — through different activities outside, through their playtime and that’s very different back at home because it is so structured. It is all to do with books. Even the early childhood system is like that. But we do not have childcares in Sri Lanka. Now we do see it coming in the last few years, but in my time we did not have childcares. We grew up with
domestics, where domestics look after us when we are younger and we go into kindergarten when we are three or four and from kindergarten we go into school.

**A:** When do you start [school] from?

**PT:** We start school at five.

**A:** So what about music education in your early childhood? Have you done much music...and even in homecare, would you be doing things like music and arts or was it just studying books...?

**PT:** When we were with the domestics often they would teach us songs. There is a difference between parents teaching us and the domestics teaching us and we tended to pick up a lot of things from the domestics. Their ways of learning, their ways of teaching were particular, their way of looking at life. So we picked up a lot of things, things parents had to come in and undo.

**A:** Could you give me an example?

**PT:** Things like superstition. If they want us to eat something and if we don’t want to eat they will come and say to us: So and so will come and get you. And they would literally build that thing to you and then when your parents come back they will have to undo that because that’s really bad impact, they build a sense of fear in us and if that got strong enough you could actually carry that into adulthood.

**A:** What kind of songs did they sing?

**PT:** Most of songs were traditional, English songs. That’s because I lived in the city. My parents and I, we always spoke in English and we very rarely spoke in our mother tongue to each other. But with the domestics we spoke Tamil. I speak Singhalese, too, because I lived in a city where it is predominately Singhalese.

**A:** Are your Singhalese and Tamil as good as your English?

**PT:** My Singhalese... I am not very confident with, but my Tamil is okay. I just have not used it much for now ten years. I don’t have many people here talk to me in Tamil. But when I do go back home it comes back very fast. It just takes you a couple of days to get into it.

**A:** So, when you were with your domestic carers you would listen to more traditional songs and with your parents..?

**PT:** With my parents, we used to sing lots of religious songs and I do come from a very religious background. I am an Anglican Christian. So we went to church quite often. There we sang and we were exposed to lots of singing. I did music when I was young. I played the piano, but since I came here I had not much exposure and not much opportunity to practice on the piano. When I do see a piano I want to sit at it, but otherwise lots of things I have forgotten, actually. But it is like languages. It comes back if I sit down and practice a bit.

**A:** Do you use it in your teaching?

**PT:** I do for a concert. I have last year and the previous year we did have a concert and I taught children the songs, so I brought the piano - keyboard with some songs. And last year at Christmas time, we sang lots of Christmas songs together, while I played for the children. I really enjoy music. I really enjoy singing with the children and actually playing and singing just that I don’t have much opportunity to do that.

**A:** Why do you feel that way?

**PT:** It’s because we do not have an organ here and sometimes I bring it in, the one it’s there now.

**A:** You can sing without an instrument.
PT: Even without the organ we sometimes do some singing during group time.

A: What kind of singing. What repertoire? Does it vary?

PT: Yes, it varies. Sometimes it depends if I am doing a particular theme. For example, if, say, we are looking at the theme of ‘Fish’, then I might sing a song related to fish. So I try to tie in everything with different activities I do. I try to tie it in to a particular theme of the month. If we to weather, for instance, to go with changes in the weather like: ‘Pitter, patter raindrops’ and ‘Like a leaf or feather’.

A: So, you are looking at the content of the songs, at the lyrics – if they fit in the theme?

PT: At least for one or two songs I try to tie it is with the content to the theme and then that would help the children have reinforcement in different areas of what they are learning as well. If I do ‘fish’, for example then I could bring a book about fish, as well, so I try to tie in the song and everything with the music, so I have a theme for every month. And the theme is actually a group goal which I have and not an individual goal, so on top of the program planning I have for the individual children and I have a group goal as well. Sometimes it comes off children, sometimes it is something I would like the children to really explore, so I provide it to them and if they impressed it then really enhance it.

A: Your program could be described as a teacher and child centred?

PT: Yes, because if there are some things that I want the children to learn and that is something which we have not have done and it’s not coming out of the children, I need to provide that environment so that I know whether they impressed it or not.

A: And how do you go about this, how do you provide this environment?

PT: By giving them something to bounce off on and they can actually learn, because if you don’t provide to them they cannot know what is out there for them to learn. There has been this research stating that early childhood needs a curriculum and I think that’s a really good thing to do, because there are a lot of things children need to be taught and it does not necessarily come out from the children or is inspired from the children straightaway without anything. We need to provide that environment. It is really good to have that curriculum so that we know at the end of the year that even if it does not come from the children that we have provided that and we have given opportunity to actually explore and we have a rounded child.

A: So how do you do your music? For example, do you always sing in English or do you explore other...?

PT: We don’t actually sing much...not too many of the cultural songs, either, which we should...

A: ... having knowledge of different languages, you can even translate some of the songs...

PT: I have not done much of that, I should say. There have been some students, the last student I had. She taught them a different language, a song in a different language, which was good. She did not even know where I came from. That was the only exposure to song in a different language. And then we had Morning Jack and Molly, that’s a musical show – a couple come and do a musical show. And they came and sang in different languages. But I personally have not taught them songs. I have not gone into that yet.

A: I have noticed that where you set up that music area, you have quite a few instruments and they are set up in a particular way...

PT: It was mainly on an individual interest that I picked it up, where there were a group of children I was playing with before and from that group there are few who are very into music and beats.
So during the day, in my program, what I did was I put instruments out. The first couple of weeks I had a recorder. That’s how I began. We used to listen to to we used to listen to stories. So they had headphones and they listened to sounds and stories. And some children brought in their tapes as well and brought in their stories. The parents brought CDs, so we played that as well when they are dancing. Sometimes they played that and we sing along with that. So, the instruments I left there is for children to go up there and spontaneously play along with it.

A: Are those instruments going to stay there?

PT: No. These two weeks it is more a group program, where it is not individual based, we don’t have so many children this week and more older children who are going to school and just trying to help them to really practice some of the skills of the independence and helping them to learn to write their names at least before they go to school and to count. So that, when they go to school they don’t have a cultural shock as much...before they are going...Oh, I have to go back in the room.

A: Sure, thank you for your time. That was very useful.

Initial Interview with the Preschool Assistant (PA) in regards to music teaching and cultural diversity


A: How do you go about sharing music?

PA: Well, I like music very much and sometimes I sing with the children. I do not really play any instruments, so I am not good at really teaching music like in the music school, proper music...but I can have fun with a bit of singing.

A: I have heard you sing with to the children – you have a nice, pleasant voice. They seemed to enjoy singing with you.

PA: Oh, thanks. I enjoy singing with them. I need to learn some more songs, though.

A: Hopefully, you will like the songs that I am going to share with the children.

PA: I am sure, I will.

A: I also hope to learn some new repertoire from you – teachers, the children and even their families. I am always after a beautiful song that would appeal to children. Do you happen to know any songs in other languages than English?

PA: Hmm, not really...I mean, I know ‘Fre-re-zques’ but everyone knows that one. Ha-ha! I am looking forward to learning some more songs from you.

A: How do you usually go about introducing a new song to the children?

PA: Aham...I just sing it and see if they like it. If they do, they ask for it again. Normally, we pick songs that children already know...the popular ones, though. There is often, at least one child that would know the song...

A: Could you give some examples?

PA: Twinkle, Twinkle, Baa, Baa, Black Sheep, Miss Polly had a Dolly, Incey-Vincey, I’m little tea pot, The wheels on the bus.
A: Are these the songs that you share with the children during group sessions or do you sing them at any time...or...?

PA: Sometimes they are part of the group session, when we put on a CD and let children sing and dance to the music. Sometimes, I just sing with a small group of children.

A: OK, I wanted to ask a few questions about culture. I know you have only few minutes to spare, I’ll try to be brief. Do you consider yourself to be culturally sensitive?

PA: Oh, that is a hard question. I really respect other cultures and I like living in such multicultural country. I try and learn about the children, but, to be honest, there are so many cultures and customs that I am not familiar with. It’s hard to be sensitive if you don’t know what you should know.

A: So, you could say you are sensitive to the fact that the children come from diverse backgrounds and you appreciate this?

PA: Yes.

A: How diverse is your group at the moment?

PA: Hm...we have a few children that are from different countries. Like Jing, she is from China, Kasja, from Poland. Some children are born here but their families came from elsewhere.

A: Do you happen to know any other language than English?

PA: No. Unfortunately, not.

A: Perhaps you would like to sing in some other languages? I hope that we can explore this possibility together.

PA: Yes, that would be nice!

A: I better let you have a coffee. See you inside.

PA: See you, thanks. I need one! Ha-ha!

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**Interview with the Preschool Teacher: her confidence and competence to teach music**

Date: 15th February

Context: I had a set of questions in mind (Inspired partly by ‘Teacher’s music confidence scale’)

A: N. I am interested in what usually happens here. If I followed you through a typical day, what would I see you doing?

PT: In the morning, check who is in, set up the room and talk to L.(PA) about the daily plan. Then we normally follow a structure: children have a family grouping and then morning tea. After that we set up a program for them.

A: Program includes, or example?
PT: For example, table activities, floor activities, maybe painting, drawing, painting, whatever we have planned for them. We normally have a focus child and a whole group goal.

Before we have a group time, we encourage the children to pack up their activities. Then we all sit together and have a group time.

A: What do you do during this group time?

PT: We often share books and stories. The children really like listening to the stories and I like to read them books. L. (PA), too. We both do a quite a bit of reading to them as they need to be exposed to a variety of literature. They soon will go to school and it’s good to nurture these habits.

A: I remember you saying you do not do much singing...Do you also do some music during this time?

PT: Yes. We do. We sing some songs, sometimes. The children have few favorites. But mostly, we share stories.

A: What are their favourite songs?

PT: They’re the popular ones. Like, ‘Twinkle, twinkle’, ‘Incie Wincey Spider’...They also like ‘Baa, baa black sheep’, ‘Miss Polly had a dolly’...

A: If I looked your written plan, what music learning experiences would I notice?

PT: Hm...We plan fortnightly...so, we don’t have music every time...when we do, we have singing, dancing, sometimes I write the CD title for dancing, for example or a song title.

A: What would be your preferred way of teaching music?

PT: Hm...I think maybe singing...not that I sing that often...but I think I can sing, so let’s say singing.

A: Is singing with children something you like doing?

PT: Yes, I do...just I don’t seem to do it very often...we are always busy...

A: Would you say you are confident to do singing with children?

PT: Yes and no. I mean I can sing, but I am not sure how to really teach children singing or music.

A: On a scale from 1-5, one being not confident, how confident you feel to teach music?

PT: Hmm...Music? Maybe 2. Singing, maybe 3. I feel we didn’t do much music at Uni and now with my studies and all, I have not much time to catch up...

A: So, we could say, you are more confident and happy when you do singing with the children than other modes of music?

PT: Yes, I guess we can say that...even though I played a piano as a child, I’m afraid I don’t know how to teach children any musical instruments.

A: That is not very atypical; many early childhood teachers feel the same as you.

PT: Oh, good to know. I do like music, but need to get better at it.

A: Do you think music is important? What do you believe about early music education?

PT: I believe that music education is important but perhaps neglected in day to day working with children, ’cause there are other areas that dominate our program, especially when it comes to preparing children for school. We try to do a lot of problem solving and pre-literacy and
numeracy activities. Parents want their children to be competent academically when they go to school. They want them to at least know their name and to count.

Like with everything, children do need to be exposed to good quality music. They (children) should learn music but there is no time to do this and people are not skilled to teach them.

A: People, meaning children’s parents ...?

PT: Yes, parents, teachers. They are not necessarily trained to teach music and they use music more for fun, relaxation or just spontaneously when they are playing, or driving the car.

A: How do you feel about improving your music teaching skills?

PT: I’d like to do more music with the children...I am not a-musical...I played a piano as a child...I’d like to do some In-Service in music ...

A: When do you plan to do ‘In Service’?

PT: I would like to do it this year, but we had to choose between some other ones...guiding children’s behavior and numeracy and science. Maybe next year...I’m sure I’ll learn a lot from you.

A: I can give you some more information on that, if you like. There are a number of places you can go and conferences in Melbourne.

PT: Yes, thanks. That would be good...I am also looking forward to learning from you.

A: Thank you so much for your time, I shall see you tomorrow.

PT: Yes, thanks for coming, see you tomorrow. Children have been asking about you.

Interview with the Preschool Teacher before the end of the Music Project

17th October, 2008

A: Thank you for taking this interview, N. I know that we have been often talking about different aspects of the music project; however, I would really appreciate some more formal feedback from you. I realize that you do not have much time, so I got a set of questions here that would not take too long to answer.

N: That’s fine, Aleksandra. I am glad to assist, if I can.

A: Please tell, me how you found this ‘music project’?

N: I found it to be really good and valuable experience for all of us. The children really enjoyed it.

A: Let’s start with the music sessions. How did you find the music sessions?

N: I found them really great. Thank you so much, Aleksandra. You have done a lot for us. It was good to have someone like you come and demonstrate how to conduct music sessions.

A: Anything in particular?

N: I like that you explored a variety of the songs and instruments with the children. The games you played were good, too. They learnt more than just musical concepts, like counting, for example. The children enjoyed having you immensely. I heard them often sing the songs you thought
them, or play games you did in the sessions. When we had group sessions they wanted to do some of the songs and games.

A: Do they favor any songs or games?

N: Oh, they liked “I’ve got a little bumble bee”, “Umma lella’, “Che, Che, Koolay”. They also liked the monster one. The games...they liked the one with ‘guessing names’. Rajan made up his version of it. Hah, some of the children were confused, but he had fun.

A: Is there anything in specific you would like to mention about the sessions?

N: I suppose the most important for me was to realize that the children are so enthusiastic about music and different instruments. We learnt a lot from you on how to conduct a good group session. Even simple strategies, I like how you organize children and how sometimes you let them organize themselves. They have really made a lot of progress. I was amazed to see how some of them became so confident.

A: Do you think that having culturally diverse music program benefited the children?

N: I think, yes. You made it obvious that music and cultural diversity are strongly connected. The children really enjoyed singing in different languages and they loved all the items you brought for them to play with. I realize more and more how this is important...I think that we can do more in this area?

A: We? Do you mean you and me?

N: I mean us, staff here... or me, as a teacher. I should do more singing in Singhalese or sing the songs that you’ve taught us...It’s just sometimes too many issues to deal with and we don’t always get to do what we really want... it’s so nice to have an extra person to focus on one area. It can be challenging to cover all areas.

A: Is there any aspect of the music sessions that you found challenging?

N: Not really. Oh, well, I would find it challenging to play so many instruments like you (laughs) but otherwise I did enjoy them. I enjoyed observing them even more then participating.

A: How did you find the ‘music corner’?

N: It was very nice to have an area especially for music. The children really like going in there. Although, sometimes I am not sure that they were really playing music.

A: I felt it was a bit difficult for you to keep up with that music area, at times...the room is quite open in design...

N: See, our room is very small and sometimes bits and pieces got lost. That worried me, as I know that you put so much effort into it. So, sometimes, it was challenging to keep all the resources in the area. Hah, some children even got tempted to take few little dolls in their pockets. Also, being a small room, we could not keep the music corner going when you went to Europe. The children needed change. But, they were certainly glad when you came back and set it up again.

A: How did the parents respond to music sessions?

N: Oh, the parents really appreciated, even though they were too busy to bring their questionnaires, almost all of them commented how lovely the music corner is and how their child has been singing and teaching them the songs. They were really impressed that their child could sing in other languages. Emma’s parents really liked the music albums. Emma’s grandma was visiting so they could share the visuals with her. I am not sure if she speaks English, but it was certainly easy for her to see what was going on from the photographs.
A: What was the parents’ response to the ‘music corner’?

N: Many parents commented on how beautiful it looked. Jonathan’s parents loved seeing his photos in the music corner. They were very proud of him. He looks so cute on those photos, doesn’t he?

A: He does. They all do look lovely. I had a wonderful time here, thank you so much. I should have made one of this ‘awards; for you, too!

We both had a laugh.

Preschool Assistant’s response to the Questionnaire at the end of the Music Project

Date: 24th October, 2004.

*(from her hand written responses); PA expressed she preferred to do this questionnaire than to be interviewed.

Music sessions:

How did you find the music sessions?
I thought it was great, the children enjoyed it. They learnt different songs and different movements.

What have you learnt from them?
We have learnt a lot. Different songs and movements. The different ways in which the children listened to you and the way you structured the activities.

Is there any aspect that you found challenging?
No.

Music Corner:

How did you find the ‘music corner’?
It was great, the children enjoyed it. At different time it became messy and instruments were found in different parts of the room. Only one issue was breakable /plastic Glass.

What was positive about having this area available?
The positive thing about having this area, was having all the different instruments and items something that the children all enjoyed, they loved it when they entered the room and saw the way music area was set out.

Is there any aspect that was challenging?
The only thing I found challenging was making sure all the items are looked after.

Children’s responses:

How did the children respond to the music sessions?
7/8.*** answered for both:
They responded well they used the Music Corner to play with the instruments and other items. At group time they wanted to sing the songs and play the games that you taught them.

How did the children respond to the ‘music corner’?

How did the parents respond to the ‘music corner’?
(9/10) Answer:

Most parents commented about the Music Corner and how great and interesting it looked. Most parents also knew about the songs and game by their children singing them at home. All we had was really great feedback by most parents.

If you have any additional comments, suggestions, critique...please feel free to add that.

The children really look forward to your visits, they really enjoy the time and all the different experiences you bring.

Thank You.
Appendix G
Reflex Notes - Examples

- I feel that the children and staff appear to be quite friendly and welcoming. That is really great!

- I am not sure if the PT really felt comfortable when we did an interview as she was from time to time looking at the Dictaphone. Perhaps I should not have the interviews audio-recorded and just write notes?

- I find the environment aesthetically unappealing and at times challenging to be there. Interestingly, the children seem very happy and are engaged with a variety of the materials that are set up in the room. I would like to provide some support for the teachers in regards to the aesthetic and educational design of the environment.

- It was disappointing that the PT cancelled our meeting again. This is now the third time, which makes me realise that she is very busy and does not seem to be able to commit to these meetings. I will not insist on having any additional meetings but will be readily available if she initiates more collaboration.

- I gave the PT a number of resources that she could consider using for the music education. She does not seem to have time to read all of them as she returned and said she had no chance to look at them. Perhaps I should have selected one at the time, as the PT looked a bit overwhelmed and suggested I picked the ‘best’ examples. My enthusiasm for music should encourage her to do music it should not “engulf” her...

- It seems to me that Preschool teacher and Preschool Assistant prefer not to participate actively in our music sessions. Perhaps they learn more efficiently by observing? Should I encourage them to join in?

- I decided not let the staff decide if they want to participate actively or not. I think that is more fair on them, although believe that they would benefit more if they did, at least, sometimes take a part in the music sessions.

- Perhaps it was a bit naïve of me to think that the music learning centre can sustain without my presence. It is evident that the children associate music education with me rather than with their teachers. I should respect their ways and do not show my
disappointment; they have been very supportive of the project, perhaps I expect too much.

- I need to talk to the parents more. I think I will ask to come when the children are being collected, so that some incidental conversation can occur with the children’s parents.

- It seems that parents who want to talk, they do (very few); other just rush in and out.

- I will offer PA and the PT to choose if they want to do an interview or fill in a questionnaire at the end of the music project; they might feel more comfortable to respond in their own time.

- It appears it was a good idea to allow for this flexibility. The PA chose the questionnaire; she seemed to be at ease that she did not have to do a structured interview.

- I should have done an audio recording of the songs. This way might have been a more practical and assessable way for the parents to become involved and share the repertoire. Why didn’t I think of that earlier?!
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Songs of the Sessions

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Hey, hey, what's your name?

Child/ren are invited to perform the actions while standing in the circle and in the middle of the circle, once they become more confident.

It is good to establish the beat before doing the chant and actions (one, two, three, four)
Clap, knees, clap knees,
Clap your knees, please - the teacher models the actions.

This is uplifting and simple to follow chant. The children respond to it with a lot of enthusiasm. They particularly enjoy performing this in a variety of ways - alone, with a friend or the whole group. When I introduce the melody (Tune to the "Teddy bear, turn around"), children enjoy doing the actions, sometimes only dancing, while I sing and play it on the guitar.

Hey, hey what's your name?
You've got a name, so you can play this game!
Everyone, everyone - turn around
Everyone, everyone - touch the ground
Everyone, everyone - tickle your toes
Everyone, everyone - touch each others' nose
Everyone, everyone - jump up high
Everyone, everyone - reach the sky
Everyone, everyone - how your shoe
Everyone, everyone - that will do! (clap, clap, clap)

Featuring: chanting, singing (rhythm, listening, tempo, dynamics) action; interaction, social and emotional expression

Name Game – Child will be saying own name

One child walks around the circle and chooses another who replies.
I wonder what your name is.
I really want to know. Your name is...
(Child says her/his name)
Everyone sings: Hello, hello, hello, hello,
Hello, hello, hello.
(Children can shake hands or do something together)

Featuring: chanting, singing (rhythm, listening) action; interaction, social and emotional expression, self-expression - identity
Guessing Name Game – Child will be saying someone else’s name

One child covered with a blanket is positioned lying in the middle of the circle; there is a soft pillow or a similar material underneath the child as this experience could be long and the child should be comfortable. There are three different ‘music vales’ to use - one is a very see-through material, the second is less see-through and the third is the least see-through. Initially, I would start with the first /music vale/, so that the child does not feel isolated and can also have a peak around, if really in a need.

Variation of Guessing Name game

All children sing while clapping:
What do you think my name is?
I wonder if you know.
The teacher chooses a child who says her/his name.
"Cause, my name isn’t..."
the chosen child says somebody else’s name.
The child that is covered needs to guess who was that who had said someone else’s name. If not successful, the child that was covered can ask questions about the child that sang/spoke someone else’s name. The teacher might need to model these questions.
Featuring: singing, listening, circle game, rules, self-expression, singing

One, two three

This poem is good for dramatising. Change characters and reactions in a humorous way. Encourage the children to do so, as well.

One, two three,
Mother caught a flee
She put it in a teapot
And made a cup of tea
The flee - jumped out!
Mother gave a shout!
Father came in with his shirt hanging out...

Main music and movement features: chanting, acting out.
Featuring: chanting, action; interaction, humour, self-expression, imagination, creative thinking
This song can be done while children are sitting in the circle. The lyrics are simple, humorous, inviting for acting-out and they provoke discussion. The melody is pleasant, simple and children generally easily master it after few times of singing. Educational possibilities: singing, action, dramatisation, humour, reflection on lyrics.

I've got a little bumble bee
Won't my mother be surprised with me?
I've got a little bumble bee,
Ouch! It bit me!!

I'm shaking up my little bumble bee
Won't my mother be surprised with me?
I'm shaking up my little bumble bee,
Ouch! It stung me!!!

I am squashing up my little bumble bee
Won't my mother be surprised with me?
I am squashing up my little bumble bee,
Blyaaah - my hands are all dirty!

I am wiping up my little bumble bee
Won't my mother be surprised with me?
I am wiping up my little bumble bee.
Woo! My hands are all clean - yeah!!

Another version: Baby Bumble Bee Song
I'm bringing home a baby bumble bee
won't my mammy be so proud of me
I'm bringing home a baby bumble bee
Yuck!!!! That bumblebee got honey all over me!
I'm tasting the honey from the bumble bee
won't my mammy be so proud of me
I'm tasting the honey from the bumble bee
Yuck!!!! It's all over me!!!!
I'm wiping off the honey from the bumblebee
won't my mammy be so proud of me
I'm wiping off the honey from the bumblebee

Uh Oh!!!!!! Here comes mommy!!!!!
**Umma Lella**

This song is a very popular song amongst children and adults. It has a nice, cheerful melody that invites children to readily respond to by singing and bodily movement.

The first part that is accompanied by clapping and children easily master and manage to clap in time, while singing.

The second part, where they are meant to lift and shake their hands is a little bit more challenging, initially, however, the lyrics are easily sang.

- Umma lella, lella, lella.
- Ummal lella, lella lella,
- Umma lella, lella, lella.
- Oku bina, bina, bina,
- Oku bina, bina, bina,
- Oku bina, bina, bina,
- Oku bina, bina, TUN GE!

Featuring: singing, action, different language than English, interaction with peers and objects.

**Che, Che Koolay**

This song is melodic and it is done in an echoing manner, which enables children to readily participate in singing and accompanied actions.

- Che Che Koolay, Che Che Koolay
- Che che cofisa, Che che cofisa
- Kofisa langa, Kofisa langa
- Cacashi langa, Cacashi langa
- Kommma dye-day, Kommma dye-day
- Kommma dye-day, Hey! (Together)

Featuring: singing, action, different language than English.

**Scoo Be Doo Song**


This song is jazzy and inviting for movement. I normally invite children to dance and sing it in a circle. This way they can observe the teacher and each other.

Featuring: singing (rhythm, listening, tempo, dynamics) action; interaction, choreography.
**Walk around the room**

"Rainbows, trees and tambourines". Susie Davies-Splitter and Phil Splitter. Date: 1999-2003

This song can be done in a circle; we also used the 'music blanket' to hold onto or lift or place on the flour. Young children tend to mostly perform the actions, while the teacher sings the instructions.

- Walk around the room.
- Walk, walk, walk.
- Walk around the room.
- Walk, walk, walk.
- Walk around the room.
- Walk and walk and walk and STOP!
- Run, run, run.
- Run around the room.
- Run, run, run.
- Run around the room.
- Run, run, run.
- Run around the room.
- Run and run and run and STOP!
- Way down, way down and stand up!
- Arms up high can you reach the sky?
- Fly, fly, fly.
- Fly around the room.
- Fly, fly, fly.
- Fly around the room.
- Fly, fly, fly.
- Fly around the room.
- Fly and fly and fly and STOP!
- And, sit down.

Featuring: singing (rhythm, listening, tempo, dynamics) action; interaction, space and body awareness.

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**There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly**

This is a children's song with a cumulative structure. The song was written by Alan Mills, the lyrics were by Rose Bonne[1] Probably the best-known version of the song was released on Brunswick Records in 1953 by Burl Ives.

The song tells the story of an old woman who swallowed increasingly large animals, each to catch the previously swallowed animal. There are many variations of phrasing in the lyrics, especially for the description of swallowing each animal.

There was an old lady who swallowed a fly.
I dunno why she swallowed that fly,
Perhaps she'll die.

There was an old lady, who swallowed a spider,
That wiggled and wiggled and tickled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly. 
But I dunno why she swallowed that fly - 
Perhaps she’ll die.

There was an old lady who swallowed a bird: 
How absurd, to swallow a bird! 
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider 
That wiggled and wiggled and tickled inside her. 
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly. 
But I dunno why she swallowed that fly - 
Perhaps she’ll die.

There was an old lady who swallowed a cat. 
Imagine that, she swallowed a cat. 
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird... 
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider 
That wiggled and wiggled and tickled inside her. 
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly. 
But I dunno why she swallowed that fly 
Perhaps she’ll die.

There was an old lady who swallowed a dog. 
What a hog! To swallow a dog! 
She swallowed the dog to catch the cat... 
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird... 
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider 
That wiggled and wiggled and tickled inside her. 
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly. 
But I dunno why she swallowed that fly 
Perhaps she’ll die.

There was an old lady who swallowed a goat. 
Just opened her throat and swallowed a goat! 
She swallowed the goat to catch the dog... 
She swallowed the dog to catch the cat. 
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird... 
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider 
That wiggled and wiggled and tickled inside her.

She swallowed the spider to catch the fly. 
But I dunno why she swallowed that fly 
Perhaps she’ll die.

There was an old lady who swallowed a cow. 
I don’t know how she swallowed a cow! 
She swallowed the cow to catch the goat... 
She swallowed the goat to catch the dog... 
She swallowed the dog to catch the cat... 
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird... 
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider 
That wiggled and wiggled and tickled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly.
But I dunno why she swallowed that fly
Perhaps she’ll die.

There was an old lady who swallowed a horse -
She’s dead, of course.

Featuring: reading, singing action, interaction with puppets, memory, concept of farm animals,
humour, imagination, use of past and future tense, concept of ‘cause and effect’.

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**Monster song**

This is a poem that most children like. Children appear to get pleasure from it even more, when the poem is sung. The lyrics are imaginative. The song inspires children to act-out as “monsters”. They seem to particularly enjoy the mood of the song.

If you like to be a monster
Now is your chance
Everybody is doing
The monster dance
You stamp your feet
Wave your arms around
Stretch them up, stretch them up and put them on the ground.
‘Cause you doing the monster song!
Whoo-haa!
You’re doing the monster song!
Whoo-haa!
You’re doing the monster song!
Whoo-haa! Whoo-haa! Whoo-haa!
And you stop!

Featuring: singing (rhythm, listening, tempo, dynamics) action; interaction, acting out, imagination, emotional expression
I composed a melody for this poem.

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**Baa, baa, black sheep**

Baa, baa, black sheep,
Have you any wool?
Yes sir, yes sir,
Three bags full.
One for the master,
One for the dame,
And one for the little boy
Who lives down the lane.

Featuring: singing, math concepts.
I Eat kids Yum Yum!

This is a humorous poem that children of this age typically enjoy. The children of ‘Numdaji Kwei’ were very enthusiastic about it. There were quite good at dramatising it, even though they initially needed assistance with acting out and saying the phrases.

by Daniel Lee

(Garbage Delight: Another Helping, Key Porter Kids 2002)

A child went out one day.
She only went to play.
A mighty monster came along
and sang its mighty monster song:
"I EAT KIDS YUM YUM!
I STUFF THEM DOWN MY TUM.
I ONLY LEAVE THE TEETH AND CLOTHES.
(I SPECIALLY LIKE THE TOES.)
The child was not amused.
She stood there and refused.
Then with a skip and a little twirl
she sang the song of a hungry girl:
"I EAT MONSTERS BURP!
THEY MAKE ME SQUEAL AND SLURP.
IT’S TIME TO CHOMP AND TAKE A CHEW AND
WHAT I’LL CHEW IS YOU!"
The monster ran like that!

(The child went skipped home again
and ate her brother’s model train.)

Featuring: chanting (beat), action, interaction, dramatisation, humour, discussion.

Mumma warruno – Aboriginal lullaby

I place children in a circle and we have a doll in middle of the circle, resting on the ‘music veil’ with golden stars. This doll can be shared amongst the children when we sing the lullaby together.

Mumma warruno
Murra wattuno
Mumma warruno
Murra wattuno.

Featuring: singing, circle game, interaction, music style-lullaby, different language than English – Aboriginal
Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star

The English lyrics have five verses. The repetition of the first two lines at the end of each verse is not in the original, but is needed to fit the usual melody. Below is the whole text, without the repetition of the first two lines added.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky!

When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light,
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

Then the traveller in the dark,
Thanks you for your tiny spark,
He could not see which way to go,
If you did not twinkle so.

In the dark blue sky you keep,
And often through my curtains peep,
For you never shut your eye,
Till the sun is in the sky.

As your bright and tiny spark,
Lights the traveller in the dark,—
Though I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

Featuring: singing, action; poetry.

Giro, Giro Tondo

This is a circle game, sang in Italian. It is played in the style of the "Ring a Ring a Rosie".

Giro, giro tondo
Casca il mondo
Casca la terra
Tutti gui per terra.

Featuring: singing, circle game, interaction, different language than English - Italian
**Okina Kurino Kinoshitade (Under the Chestnut Tree)**

This is an interactive song. Children can do it in pairs or mirror image movements of the teacher.

Ooki na kuri no ki no shita de  
Ooki na kuri no ki no shita de  
anata to watashi  
naka yoku asobimashou  
ooki na kuri no ki no shita de.

English Translation:  
Under the big chestnut tree  
You and me  
Are playing happily  
Under the big chestnut tree  
My translated version:  
Come and play with me  
Under the big chestnut tree!  

Featuring: singing, circle game, interaction and different language than English - Japanese.

**Atama Kata (Heads Shoulders)**

This is an action song, like the Eanglish version ‘Heads and shoulders’.  
Atama kata hiza tsumasaki  
hiza tsumasaki  
hiza tsumasaki  
Atama kata hiza tsumasaki  
Tanoshina.

Featuring: singing, body parts, different language than English - Japanese.

**Let’s get the rhythm**

This is a simple, inviting chant, where children can use body percussion and the last phrase where counting happens, can be told in a different language.

Let’s get the rhythm of the hands (clap, clap)  
We’ve got the rhythm of the hands (clap, clap)  
Let’s get the rhythm of the knees (pat, pat)  
We’ve got the rhythm of the knees (pat, pat)  
Let’s get the rhythm of a dance (sway, sway)  
We’ve got the rhythm of a dance (sway, sway)  
Let’s get the rhythm of the feet (stamp alternating feet)  
We’ve got the rhythm of the feet (stamp, stamp)  
Let’s get the rhythm of the number 9:  
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9!

Featuring: chanting, listening, circle game, counting, body percussion.
Ide maca oko tebe – circle game from Serbia

Children sit in a circle. One child goes around the circle, pretending to be a "mouse". He/she drops an object (i.e. handkerchief) behind somebody (the "cat"). The rest of the children are singing and when the song is finished, the "cat" is meant to stand up, grab the object and chase the "mouse" around the circle. The "mouse" has to sit in the "cat's" position. If this happens, the mouse becomes the "cat". If the "cat" manages to touch the mouse before he/she sits down, the "cat" takes another turn.

Ide maca oko tebe
Pazi da te ne ogrebe
Cuvaj mijo rep.
Da ne budes slep
Ako budes slep
Otpasce ti repl!

Featuring: singing, circle game, interaction, different language than English – Serbian, humour.

Eci, Peci Pec – Serbian counting rhyme

Eci, peci pec
Ti si mali zec
A ja mala prepelica
Eci peci pec.

Featuring: counting game, phonetics of Serbian.

Pakipaki (Maori)

Pakipaki pakipaki (clap)
Tamariki ma (children)
Pakipaki pakipaki (clap)
Tamariki ma (children)

Kanikani, kaninani (dance)
Tamariki ma (children)
Kanikani, kaninani (dance)
Tamariki ma (children)

Huruhuri, hurihuri (turn around – turn)
Tamariki ma
Huruhuri, hurihuri (turn around – turn other way)
Tamariki ma
E peke, e peke (jump)
Tamariki ma (children)
E peke, e peke (jump)
Tamariki ma (children)

Featuring: singing, listening, imitating, different language than English – Maori.
Appendix I
Background Information from Initial Visits.
Visit 1: 30th October, 2007.

3-5 Room

Music area

The ‘music area’ was set next to the book corner. There were more than ten instruments: 3 tambourines (one of them a small, one large; one damaged), sticks, two small bells – one on a stick, another blue one for a hand-shake, baby-size drum, two triangles. The ‘tables’ were created out of large wooden boxes. The book corner had a variety of books. Some of them were falling off the shelf as there was not enough space. For 45 minutes no children played in this area.

There was a variety of CDs – including “The Wiggles” and “H 5”. Some of the CDs were donated by families, others belonged to the centre. One of them was titled “Multicultural songs” (A copy, with a hand written title). I asked where the CD was from, the PT and PA could not remember which family gave them his CD.

One of the children left the instruments on the floor, after she had explored them for a short time.

Mitch and Jing

Music corner was free for 45 minutes. The first children to spend some time there were Mitch and Jing. It was Mitch who initially started the exploration, but very soon Jing left the ‘nature corner’, joining Mitch. They both busily examined the instruments, doing this rather on their own.

Mitch even insisted on “her space” to play the drums: “Only me!” she said. Jing seemed to be quite happy to comply with this request, as she moved to the other side, making space for Mitch. There she discovered triangle sticks, picked them up, initially treating them like chopsticks, pretending to eat. She, then, decided to beat them against each other as one would play with tapping sticks. After a few sounds she placed one stick back on the table and took the triangle part, holding it correctly, producing evenly sounds with the other stick.
Morning tea discussion – Jing, Mimi, Zara (staff member)

While the children were having morning tea, it was interesting to observe the room’s routines, the group dynamics and the children’s topics of conversation. One of the girls, Jing, did not speak any English and the staff were trying to work out whether Jing wanted to have milk or water. After asking several times: “Milk or water?” Zara (Staff member) brought the jars and placed them in front of her, repeating “Milk or water”? Jing did not seem interested in either food or drink.

Mimi, a five year old girl, who was sitting at the same table, thoughtfully suggested that there are some words that we could use. “Her name is Jing, but maybe it’s Jing. It is a bit around like that”, she said nodding her head while gesturing with her hand in a circular motion, as she was confirming her statement. “Go and see on yellow paper... her language.” Mimi pointed, directing me towards the door with the display. I went there and read out words written up on the paper: drink, eat, toilet... the children from that table, watchfully listened. I then approached Jing asking: “Che”? She discretely smiled and nodded her head: ‘No’.

Jing, exploring books. Two girls speaking about dark-skin-people in the book

The children were still having morning tea. Jing insisted on leaving the morning tea table and went to ‘nature corner’ where she picked up two stones; she then curiously started to observe and smell the flowers arranged in the area. I decided to join, taking a book, beginning to read it aloud. She turned towards me seeming tuned into my reading. The book was factual and looking at food and farming (see photo below). While reading, I intentionally simplified the text; pointed to the photos, and after a few pages, Jing started pointing to some items presented on each page, as if she was counting them. Occasionally, she would look at me, friendly smiling.

At one point, there was a photo of children from Africa. This is when two other girls joined us. One of them said: “They are from AFREKA, they are dark people. The other one expressed her opinion in a similar fashion: “They are dark from...from Efika.”
This is how the ‘nature’ area was set up by a student-teacher.

**Sandro**

Sandro set in the book area, holding her dolly, exploring one of the Disney books. After few minutes, she placed the book back on the shelf and went to the music- instruments-table. She picked up the triangle and played 5 beats, creating 5 fairly similar sounds in length and volume.

I was observing children play from the little sofa, placed in the book corner. Sandro set next to me for a short while; soon she stood up and grabbed the sticks, turning towards me, looking at me, smiling. Just then, two sisters (Laura and Mimi) came hurriedly, trying to hide under the table (which was too small for that action). Mimi explained: “We are playing hide and seek!” Sandro placed the sticks back where she had found them and again came back to the ‘book corner’ and set next to me.

**Mitch**, in the meantime, happily lined up the drums, added the tambourines, using both hands to create sounds. She seemed to be carefully listening to the sound-changes as she was bending her head and placing her ear onto the musical instruments. The intense expression on Mitch’s face was telling that the noise in the room was making this ‘listening’ more challenging. The relief Preschool Teacher Jing approached Mitch trying to encourage conversation: “Do they make different sounds?” Mitch seemed to be ignoring the question as she looked up at Jing for a moment but without any other acknowledgement continued immediately with her explorative play. Jing made a comment: “I don’t think that music corner should be next to the Book corner”... It’s too noisy.”

**Sandro**

Sandro was quite busy elsewhere in the room as he did not appear to pay attention to the music area for more than an hour. However, once he approached the music area, he seemed to be keen to play there, looking quite focussed, spending more than 15 minutes exploring the available musical instruments.

At one stage, it looked as he was using the instruments to construct. When I asked him what he was doing, he replied: “I am playing with everything”. Two of his female peers wanted to take one of the two tambourines that Sandro was playing with, but he used his body to ‘protect’ his side of the table, placing it right in front of them, categorically requesting: “I am playing here! Go over there!”

**Visit 2: 15th November, 2007.**
3-5 Room

The children were about to go outside, but their Preschool Teacher (PT) was on her own and before going outdoors, that she had to set up the tables for lunch. The children spent the whole morning inside and appeared restless; they were meant to sit on the carpeted area. Some of the children stood up and started to chase each other around the room, making funny, “scary” facial expressions and sounds. The noise level noticeably increased. I was just about to ask the PT if I could help out when the Assistant Coordinator 1 (AC1) entered the room. She looked over towards the PT who nonverbally indicated she needed help. The AC1 walked towards the carpet area and ended up standing in a ‘star’ position. This drew the children’s attention which, one by one, filled the carpeted area. The AC1 slowly popped down and started to sing:

When all the cows were sleeping
And the sun had gone to bed
Up jumped the scarecrow
And this is what he said!

(Refrain)
I’m a dingle, dangle scarecrow
With a flippy floppy hat
I can shake my hands like this
And shake my feet like that!

(She repeated this first phrase and the refrain).

She sang/ talked with a character, changing dynamics, varying the intonation of each line. The children were familiar with the song. They seemed much focussed on the song and the actions. They joined in imitating AC1’s movements. Some of the children stayed in a lying position, a number of them stood up and started to energetically shake their feet and hands; a few were singing, some were chanting Along, laughing; one girl sat aside, carefully observing. After the song was done, AC1 told the children to get their hats and to line up at the door. In a very few moments, the children were standing in the line ready to go outside. One of the boys was repeating/singing” I’m a little dingle scarecrow”... The girl who was standing behind him giggled, asking: “How do you know he’s little?” The boy turned around, appeared to be puzzled. He looked at her and said: “I don’t.” The girl continued to explain: “You’re singing I’m a LITTLE dingle scarecrow, silly!” The boy’s eyebrows raised, his eyes open widely. He was just about to speak when, at that moment, the PT stood in front of the line: “Well done kinders, this is a beautiful line! Let’s go have fun outside!” The children obediently turned towards the teacher and on her invitation readily ran outside. The boy went towards the sandpit; the girl grabbed one of the swings. The PT stayed outside while the Preschool Assistant (PA) came from her tea break and started setting up the beds for rest time, on the carpeted area.

I asked the AC1 is this would be a typical way to make the transitions in the programs smoother and more pleasant for her, she replied, smiling: “Yes, a popular song or a good story always captures their (children’s) attention!” When asked what other popular songs she would use, she replied: “They like action songs, like ‘Five little monkeys’. I commented on the children’s responses and how the song really captured their interest and how it was fascinating to observe that while all seemed to be familiar with the song, everyone joined in a different manner. The AC1 said: “Yes, they like this song. It’s a good way to get their attention.” (Questions - unanswered!)
Laura

Laura was on the swing. She politely asked me to give her a push (even though she was quite capable of using the swing competently), which I did. She started chanting “up and down, up and down, my feet are going up and down”. I decided to join in the chant. Laura started giggling: “Can you sing it?” “Up and down, up and down your feet will go. Up and down, up and down, up and down, show me so.” I sang tonically matching the ‘up’ and the ‘down’. Laura smiled and responded accordingly. She seemed to like this little game as she asked me to sing it again, this time trying to sing along, quite close to the tune in a slightly higher key. After the song was done, she suggested: “How about another one…Twinkle, twinkle…” as she started to sing, once again. I joined in, whilst still pushing her on the swing. She then asked me if I knew a “funny Twinkle Little Star”. I replied that I did not really know it. She started laughing and singing loudly: “Twinkle, twinkle, little star, daddy bought a motor car!” Now you do a song that I don’t know! She said excitedly.

I asked her if she knew the song ‘Atama kata”…She said: “Sing it first”. I sang the first phrase: “Atama kata...”Laura looked at me seriously: “I don’t know that one...Where from?” “Have a guess”, I replied. She started thinking: “It’s not English?” she asked. “No”, I nodded. She paused and then said: “Italian?” I said. “It is not English and it is not Italian”. Laura frowned and said. “It’s hard...Intelligent?!” I laughed and said: “The song might be intelligent, but the language is not called intelligent.” She did not seem to want to give up guessing, although she frowned and said: “Do it again!” I sang the full part of the song: Atama, kata hiza tsumasaki...tanoshina’. She excitedly remarked” Hey, I know that one. It’s heads and shoulders!” I confirmed: “It is! In another language...the name starts with a letter J...but it sounds like J, Ja...Ja” I gave her a bit of clue. She raised her eyes brows and opened her eyes widely, saying: Ah, it’s Japan!” I confirmed, once again: “Yep, it is.” Laura requested I sing it again while she did the actions of the song.

Lou in the toddler’s room told me to sing ‘Wiggles’ – “Party” song. She said that “It’s tricky” (to sing it). Aki said that her dad knows that song.

They both showed me how they could dance to it – happily trying to spin around, repeating a phrase ”It’s party”.

Visit 3: 20th of November.

Christmas theme

This morning ‘Christmas’ seemed to be the focus of the today’s program. The children and staff were excited about creating their ‘Christmas Tree’ in the afternoon. The room was ready for the children to play. Most activities were offered at tables and most were exclusively ‘Christmas’ theme oriented.

Music area

The music area was presented in the same place next to the book corner. The instruments available were pretty much the same as during my previous visits. A new addition to the area was a poster, titled ‘Music’. (Reflex Note: Look at the content next time!)
The book corner was reduced in size.

**Group session – sharing a story about Christmas**

The children were seated in front of PA (staff member) who was reading them a story about Christmas presents. Many of the children wanted to comment on the story, the illustrations, ask questions or relate the content of the book to their personal experiences. PA told them that they would be able to talk about the book after she had finished the reading. Some children still kept asking or commenting on the book. After the story finished, PT approached the group asking PA if she could show them “something special”. She further explained that (today) they are going to do the decorations for the Christmas tree. The children seemed enthusiastic and excited to hear this. PT then introduced the areas which were set up for the children to play. She reminded the children to remember to keep the musical instruments in their allocated space. PT also told the children that they will be listening to some Christmas music and she put the CD on. (“Mary Mix-Xmas” - a compilation of Christmas songs, modern musical arrangements – tunes interpreted and sang in R&B style).

As soon as N. let the children choose what they would like to play with, two of them - Mitch and Lilly, went to Music area. They both grabbed one triangle each, played 5 even (app.) beats, placed them back on the table and left the area. This play lasted for about 10 seconds.

The rest of the children appeared very busy in other areas: two of them explored animals set up on the small table; 3 played with cars, energetically moving them on the table; 3 of the children started doing pasting, assisted by one staff and the rest of the children (4 of them) began to prepare ‘Christmas decorations’ at the table. PA was supervising this little group. In the meantime, PT walked around the room, making sure that the children are engaging in the program, encouraging them to participate in a positive manner and reminding them to keep the equipment in the allocated areas.

**The boys were exploring musical instruments. Ben liked to move like a ballet-dancer**

2 boys decided to come to the music area. One picked the triangle, the other the little drum. After a few beats, the boy with the drum placed cymbals on his ears, as the sounds of the triangle ‘accompaniment’ bothered him. Just then, Ben, tip-towing, moving in a ballet-like manner arrived in front of the other two boys, spinning around, waving his arms (like birds would when they fly) smiling. The boy with cymbals did not seem to pay attention to Ben’s dance and he decided to leave. The other boy curiously looked at Ben, briefly smiling and then turned back to the table where he choose to play with mice-castanets, holding them in front of his face, using them as hand puppets. Ben joined him and they both started making high pitched, husky sounds as if they were imitating mice. This lasted for several moments. They then placed the ‘mice’ back in their previous positions and left the area.

There were no children in the music area for another 10 minutes – except for one boy finding a ‘hiding place’ in there as he was playing ‘Hide and seek’. No children seem to pay attention to the music form the CD.
Sandro musicking

Sandro approached the PT, who was standing in front of the store room, which is located next to the music area. He asked her to take him inside the store room, to “see” or “show something”.

They both came out giggling. PT (PT) gave him a friendly hug and then went to see what the children were doing in the ‘cars area’. Sandro took a triangle, approached me and while holding it in one hand used the other to point to the grazed spot on his leg, explaining that he had hurt himself. “Oh, how does it feel now?” I asked him; “It’s better” he replied. He then decided to move away from the book corner, wanting to join the game that two other boys were playing – they were moving around the construction table, snapping with the constructed ‘castanets’, making funny noises. Sandro tried to keep the rhythm of the snapping by playing the triangle. This obviously added a different tone to the game, sound and fun-wise. The other boys laughed and, and made several circles around the table, each time increasing the speed. After the 5th cycle they stopped playing the game.

Sandro went back to music area. PT returned to the kinder room and joined Sandro in the music area. PT returned to the kinder room and joined A. He was exploring musical instruments. Most of these instruments were damaged. The PT sat next to him, in front of the CD player. The CD player was playing some R&B music. A took a stick, pretending to have a microphone and asked the PT to change the music, which she immediately did. Some children’s music started. A stood up and began to rhythmically stamp his feet, pretending to sing – using the stick as a microphone. Another child Ben momentarily joined, moving like a ballet dancer, widely spreading his arms, tip-toeing around. Sandro kept imitating singing, while Ben danced. PT smiled and clapped her hands to the beat of the song. When the song finished, Ben bowed. A and PT applauded. Then Sandro bowed – Ben and the teacher applauded. The next song began to play – ‘Incey Wincey Spider’. ‘My favourite!’ exclaimed Sandro. PT started to sing the song, with a soft and tuneful voice. Sandro continued to “sing” with a microphone. Few other children were instantaneously attracted by this. By the end of the song, there were 5 of them participating in this spontaneous music experience. Two of them were stamping their feet to the beat. One girl (Rea) was carefully listening and observing; one of the boys played the castanets, effectively following the beat. Ben, from time to time, swayed his body, and at one point kneeled down, continuing to sway his upper body. The PT was singing and observing the children. When the song finished, Sandro said to the PT: “Please make another song, like that.” She smiled back and said: “Yes, after rest, will do it again. Now we have to pack up and get ready for lunch.”

I saw this as an opportunity to complement the PT on her responsiveness. I inquired about the first music choice and wondered why she had selected this particular CD. She explained that she wanted to find another ‘Christmas CD’ as they always listened to “the same, old, ones”.

Sandro was building with the instruments, again.

Sandro seemed to be building with the instruments. He used the large tambourine as a base and placed in the middle a small drum, adding another, smaller tambourine on top of that and then the triangle, following with the bells, making sure that the construction is stable. He then used another big stick to hit the construct from the side. PT approached him, explaining that that manner of instrument handling will damage them – showing him a hole on the tambourine and a little drum. He seemed to listen carefully, soon placing the instruments back where he got them from.

Music area

The music corner had been changed – an electric keyboard was added to it. The poster was found in the store room, said the PT.

The keyboard worked. It was not clear how the children were using it. I would like to find out about this next time.

Some of the instruments did not have all parts. For instance, triangle could not be held and there was only one stick for the two of them.

Jing was in today. The sheet for her language is covered by another sheet of paper which is looking at children’s rotations.

Group session was focusing on the concert at the end of the year.

PA and the children were having a group time. She had 5 of them standing in front of the rest, who were seated on the floor. The ‘performers’ were practising their ‘thank you’ expressions for the coming ‘graduation’ and the Christmas concert and all the children sang the below song. PA sang along, well in tune (to the first lines of ‘Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star’) with a clear diction.

“Thank you for helping us all
We have learnt and grown,
Thank you for helping us all
We are so glad you did”.

Each child then was encouraged to take their card (from the floor, placed in front of them) and express their thank you. For example, Ben said: I would like to thank my mum and dad...”.

**Jing cooking outdoors**

I spent some time interacting with Jing. She and I were “cooking”. She seemed to respond well to non-verbal cues; For instance, when “asked” if she wanted a drink, she smiled and followed me to the room to get her bottle. She did not seem to respond to name ‘Jing’ and I thought that it would be good to find out if she had another - Chinese name. Later on, I found out that her Chinese name was Jing.

**Gagi told me about the language his parents spoke at home**

While outside, at the swings, Gagi told me that his dad speaks “Geman” (or similar pronunciation). He laughed at me when he heard how I pronounced it, trying to correct me by repeating it several times, slowly and clearly. No matter how hard he tried to articulate, I still did not seem to repeat the word correctly. We both had a good laugh. Gagi also explained that he spoke only English.

**Visit 5: 4th December, 2007.**

**Lou – the hairdresser**

Lou recognised me from the previous visits. She asked if I wanted to come to the hairdressers. She and another girl and a boy were busily playing in the ‘hairdressers’ area’. Soon, her friend’s hair was done. “Whose turn is it?” Lou addressed the other two. She also looked at me, curiously raising her eyebrows. I nodded (no): “I am not sure who will be next”. She smiled at me and decided to go and find another ‘customer’. She walked around the room, approaching different children individually, posing a question, in a rather polite manner: “Would you like to have a haircut?”

**Visit 6: 11th December, 2007.**

**Lou addressing the letter for her parents**

As soon as Lou noticed that I had arrived, she ran towards me and gave me a warm hug. She was quite pleased to see that I had brought that letter she had written to be sent to her family. She readily started to write her mum’s and dad’s “address”.

Lou’s friend Sasa was nearby, asking Lou what she was doing. Lou replied “I am writing a letter to my mum” and there is a story inside”. (She must have been referring to a learning story I wrote to share with Lou’s family and her teachers). This seemed to have intrigued Sasa who patiently and watchfully observed Lou writing. Lou then invited Sasa to “add” something. “You wanna draw?” Soli nodded and readily grabbed the envelope, drawing few more lines.

When the letter was finished, Lou run to place it in her locker. When she returned, she asked me politely: “Can I take more photos?” and was thrilled when I allowed her to use the
camera. She was trying to work out which button was "the important one", I prompted her by asking if she remember whether the small or the big button was the one to press. She straight away pressed the correct (larger one) and took a photo of her friend Sasa. They both giggled when seeing the shot as it was evidently done not as intended. (See photo below).

Lou had another go, this time she was more successful.

Lou then asked me if she could use my pen and paper and said ‘Thanks’ when I gave it to her.

Sasa wanted to also draw, as well as another friend who joined us in the meantime. I went and got some drawing tools and the girls busily started creating their works.

Lou offered to draw Sasa’s hand on the paper (Perhaps as this was something I did last time with her?).

Lou started spontaneously humming. Sasa patiently waited for Lou to finish her hand “stencil”. Keili suggested “Let’s all do our hands!” Lou’s humming became more noticeable ad the blonde asked “What’s that song you’re singing, Lou?” Lou continued drawing and humming without any direct response, but suddenly started singing “Baa, baa black sheep”. Keili immediately joined in while Sasa and I repeated the song for the second time. It was easy to recognise the melody of this popular song. All of them kept drawing and singing at the same time.

3-5 Room

The music corner was minimised to the CD player.

The kinder room was decorated in the spirit of Christmas.

I talked to the PT about ‘notice boards’ and displaying potential and offered support which she was quite happy about.

The Toddlers’ room was also decorated for Christmas. It also had a board with the ‘Christmas Tree’ stencils that the children decorated. I what other celebrations or festivals are followed in the centre and was told ‘Easter’, Mothers’ and Fathers’ Day and children’s birthdays.
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