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The Influence of Music Environment on Young Children's Musical Development: A Waldorf Kindergarten as an Example

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Abstract

Music is identified as one of human's multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983). Edwin Gordon (1997) proposed that children's musicality will continue to develop along with the interaction between genetics and environmental stimuli before the age of nine. According to above theoretical backgrounds, we believe the sooner the better that children develop music intelligences, and a rich musical environment must be provided to stimulate their musical potential. Nevertheless, children's musical development is reflected in their musical performance. By observing children's musical performance, we can explore the stages of their development in music learning (Welch, 2007). This study aimed to use a Waldorf kindergarten as an example to explore the influence of musical environment on young children's musical development. The researcher observed and analyzed the music environment content provided by the kindergarten and the music behaviors of two 4-year-old children from January 22, 2018 to July 10, 2018. Through the literature review, the researcher developed the music development indicators for dynamic, rhythm and pitch, in order to analyze the music behaviors of the two children.

Based on the observations and analysis results, the conclusions of this study were as follows:

1. The music environment provided by Waldorf Kindergarten was not for music teaching purpose. The teacher used pitch to bring in words and songs as transition to switch daily routine. Music was every moment to accompany children.
2. In Waldorf Kindergarten music environment, the development in dynamic of young children was consistent with or better than the same age children according to the literature.
3. In Waldorf Kindergarten music environment, children's development in rhythm, regardless of rhythm, beat, tempo, was consistent with or advance to their age according to the literature.
4. In Waldorf Kindergarten music environment, the two children's development in pitch was in line with their age according to the literature.

Based on the conclusions, the researcher made recommendations to kindergarten teachers, music teachers, teacher training, parents, and researchers who were interested in early childhood music education.

References

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