Introduction

A little bit of theory…

- Music is a social activity. As members of cultural groups, young children engage in music in many ways and with different companions.
- The relationship between music and human social capacities has been the object of discussion in several fields.
  - Musicology: Ian Cross
  - “Music seems to embody the attitudes and emotions of others, which provides us with a basis for engaging both reflexively and reflectively with the music and with the inferred internal states of those with whom we are busy making music. Active participation in music-making helps make possible the alignment of our own emotional states with those of our collaborators, and may give rise to a sense of empathic community. Its effects might even outlive the activity itself; music may act as a scaffold that can help us to acquire the habit of empathizing” (Cross, Laurence & Rabinowitch, 2012, p. 340).
  - Neurosciences: Stephan Koelsch
  - “I dare to say that the social functions of music laid out here are universal in the sense that, although with different degrees, these functions played, and play, a role in musical behaviors in all cultures, past and present (one piece of empirical evidence is that in both Germany and India, ie, in an individualistic as well as in a collectivistic society, ‘‘social bonding’’)
promoted through music was predictive of music preference). I also presume that the cognitive, physical, and emotional functions of music are not universal” (Koeslch, 2010, p. 204).

- Social functions of music:

  - Contact
  - Social cohesion
  - Social cognition
  - Cooperation
  - Co-pathy
  - Coordination
  - Communication

**Child development, early childhood education, music education**

- Young children are drawn to music from very early on;
- Developing and growing in culture = new ways of interacting with others. Music plays important roles in these processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social interactions</th>
<th>Engagement of two or more social actors in complex co-regulated behaviors (verbal and non-verbal) and in many contexts.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social cognition</td>
<td>Group of processes that allow individuals to understand the emotions, intentions and actions of others and with others. Social cognition relies on human exchange of signals including, speech, facial expressions, and gestures.</td>
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</tbody>
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- Development of social cognition is complex!
  - Children’s imitation and learning from others;
  - Early understandings of intention and agency;
  - Knowing the minds of others;
  - Development of morality.
Three building blocks of social cognition

- Social referencing
- Joint attention
- Joint action

Examples in music
- Social referencing in the early childhood class
- Shared intentionality and young children’s musicking
- Rhythmic entrainment: potential to connect to others
- Musical preferences are driven by social interactions in the early years!

Young children’s musicking, social cognition and culture
- Culture is at the heart of social cognition!
  - Play and musical play
    - Issues of embodiment
    - Playing with objects vs. playing with toys

- Educational contexts, music and children’s social cognition
  - Potentials and challenges
  - From shared to collective intentionality (the role of schooling)
  - Implicit, reactive and deliberate experience
Concluding thoughts

- According to research, it is in early childhood that the effects of music learning on children’s social development appear to be more robust! (Kirschner & Tomasello, 2010; Trainor & Cirelli, 2015; Williams et al, 2015).
- Rethinking our roles as early childhood music educators.

Main references


Thank you for your attention!

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