

SSHRC Explore Final Report

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Project Title: The Intersections of Physical Literacy and Music in the Early Years: A Pilot Study

1.1 Project Summary

A group of six experts, in the field of early childhood education, physical literacy, play and music worked together to modify the System for Observing Fitness Instruction Time (SOFIT) for early music programs. The new tool became the System for Observing Music and Movement Instruction Time (SOMMIT). Two research assistants in the validation of a new observation tool and observed a total of 27 early music classes. The intention of the study was to understand the intersections of physical literacy and music in early years music classes. It was identified that there are opportunities to engage children in more movement activity during these classes as well as provide opportunities of free play and music discovery. Educating early music instructors may prove to enhance the construct of physical literacy in these types of programs.

1.2 Student involvement

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1.3 Dissemination and Knowledge Mobilization

One RA shared the findings at the MRU Research and Scholarship Days. The Director of the Conservatory has shared the findings at a conference. We plan to disseminate at the Teaching and Learning Conference in the fall. Dissemination via scholarly papers is currently underway.

1.4 Project Outcomes and Impacts

Two integral components of the research study; First component - Modify an existing validated systematic observation tool for early music programs. The tool explored three areas; 1. The types of fundamental movement skills being explored in music environments. 2. The activities that occurred the music lesson regarding sound production, rhythm development and free play 3. Understanding the behaviour of the instructor during the program Second component - Use of the tool to understand the intersections of physical literacy in early childhood music classes 27 programs were observed 11 were titled 'Adventures in Music' 16 were titled 'Discovering Music' 4 early music instructors participated in the study 39 minutes was the average class duration 2 research assistants were trained and conducted systematic observation Findings Variable one - Fundamental Movement Skills We looked at children's movement in relation to their movement within the space (locomotor skills i.e.. skipping, hopping), object manipulation (use of equipment i.e. tambourines) and stability skills (skills that are stationary i.e. standing, sitting, balancing) We found that most of the class time was spent in stability skills with approximately 21% of the class

time engaged in locomotor and object manipulation skills Variable two - Lesson Context Close to 35% of the class was involved in acquiring knowledge about music including making and producing sound 30% of the time was categorized as management. This refers to the instructor organizing the children, equipment or the lesson for a task. An example of this would include distributing equipment or asking children to find a spot to conduct a task 19% of class time focused on sound production 14% of class time focused on rhythm development Variable three - Instructor behaviour 31% of class time instructors were demonstrating activities to participants 29% of class time the instructors were instructing participants on activities or tasks to perform Limitations Small sample Pilot Study did not explore relationships between participants and participants and instructors. This is a component of physical literacy Physical literacy is more than physical skills and includes the social, emotional and cognitive aspects of well-being Opportunities Small sample size next time include more classes or include other conservatories in the study There is an opportunity for teacher education. Suggestions for more movement in these classes could be shared as well as opportunities for participants to express themselves, through free play, when learning music.