Children’s musical and social behaviours in the context of music-making activities supported by digital tools: Examples from a pilot study in the United Kingdom

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## Sample

Four children aged 5–7 years old recruited through a London-based state school

## Implications For Educators About

School innovation

# Abstract

Children’s enjoyable experience in music-making has been reported to be crucial for their social and musical development. This research investigates the way in which participant young children develop their musical and social skills by digital technology-supported music-making activities within a multicultural educational context. Two different software packages were used in the research. Data collection methods reported in the current article included observations and field notes, video analyses and dialogue analyses. Initial results indicate that children developed their musical knowledge as a part of their active interaction with others. In particular, their use of digital tools provided a supportive environment for collaborative music-making. In this process, which seems to be non-linear in nature, children were observed to develop negotiation skills, empathy and a tendency to verbalize their thoughts whilst exchanging their musical ideas. The initial findings, therefore, provide evidence that using appropriate music technology in a classroom can be of benefit for children to develop musical and social skills.

# Outcome

"Children mainly engage in ‘sound exploration’, ‘planning’ of their musical choices and the ‘assessment’ of these choices... Sound exploration seemed to
be dominant in their music-making process. Children’s ‘planning’ moments
seemed also to entail a big percentage of their music-making engagement. It
seemed to relate to their ‘assessments’, which were mainly referred to their
musical choices during the process rather than their assessment to the final
musical products. " (Charissi and Rinta, 2014: 47). Children “were often discussing about their musical choices and their next steps in music-making. Their verbal interaction seemed to shape their musical thinking… children were [also] communicating with each other by eye contact, body movements and singing… children’s non-verbal interaction had an additional role; it entailed a different way of each other’s scaffolding during their Planning in music-making process… The above described forms of interactions contributed to children’s musical thinking and the way that they were planning during the music-making process. In order to build a musical pattern, they often evaluated either musical sounds or their musical creations. This process was recursive and strategies were developed under their social and musical interaction as well as their interaction with the computer interface, which showed that children used the affordances of software packages” (Charissi and Rinta, 2014: 53-54).