

Final report

1. Title: Health Musicking Practices in a Mainstream School
2. Aims and Duration: The Research aim was to study musical practices within a mainstream school setting. Data collection and analysis lasted approximately one year.
3. Summary:

I started this research project by asking whether musical practices (music therapy, music education and music in everyday life) interacted within a mainstream school setting. I wondered, if there is interaction, how and why this occurred and to what effect. In order to answer these questions I engaged in a qualitative study, inspired by ethnographic-methods - primary field observations of the day-to-day life of the school. I also engaged in action research methods, involving children, their families and staff in the process of data collection and analysis.

The study involved the entire school setting and all musical practices therein. As a music therapist, music teacher and special education team leader, my diverse role allowed me to observe a wide range of musical practices. For example, I could see how a child who comes to a regular session may ask to sing a song they learned in a music lesson with their class, or how they may sing this song when engaging in play outside with their peers.

What I came to understand was that musical practices do not exist in isolation. Musical practices develop and migrate from their origins and interact, as seen in the example above. As a result, I came to observe an overall interconnected musical ecology within the school. This music ecology afforded opportunities for inclusive and accessible musicking, identity and perception shifting, self-regulation and connection – for both the children and the staff. In regards to the fields of music education and music therapy, the research project illustrated ways in which their practices overlap and provided new ways forward in developing their scopes of practice.

The research became an action project as it influenced my day-to-day work as a music educator and music therapist. In regards to understanding and valuing the music of everyday life in the school (for example: the music children would sing at play time) I was able to include these observations within the music curriculum and my work as a music therapist. The project shed more light on people's (staff and children of the school) own connections and practices with music and valued these insights through incorporating them more within the overall school music ecology.

This research took place as part of my PhD with Nordoff and Robbins, Goldsmith's University.

Once the research is written up as a final thesis, it will be published online. I have also published part of this research within a special issue in, *Voices* – an online

music therapy journal.

The funding I received from MTC was invaluable. Crucially, I was able to purchase recording equipment and a laptop in order to collect data and transcribe/work with the data through writing.

<https://www.nordoff-robbins.org.uk/phd-programme/phd-projects/>

<https://voices.no/index.php/voices/article/view/3406>