



A Project entitled

**The design on music playgroup's curriculum influence on children's cognitive
development**

Submitted by

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Declaration

I, Chan Tsz Yan declare that this research report entitled “The design on music playgroup’s curriculum influence on children’s cognitive development”, is the only submission for the Honours Project to the Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK). It represents my own work under the supervision of Dr. Wong Wai Ying, Paulina and that it has not been submitted previously for examination to any tertiary institution.

Sally

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16 February 2021

The design on music playgroup's curriculum influence on children's cognitive development

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate the music playgroup's curriculum design and the lesson plan whether it can enhance children's cognitive development. The study will state the analysis result on the music playgroup's pedagogies that was used in the lesson and later assess whether a certain type of activities such as games can bring a significant enhancement on children's cognitive skills. Based on the study with the CEO Academy, Community Engagement and Outreach Academy of Creative Arts from the outreach unit of the Department of the Cultural and Creative Arts in Education University of Hong Kong. The music playgroup has 6 participants in the group of 1 to 3-year-old at CEO Academy. Data was collected by interviews. In a qualitative data analysis, the curriculum and lesson plans will also be evaluated. The design of the music playgroup is planned with integrated pedagogies like Dalcroze, Kodaly and Orff Approach, not to mention body movement is the medium to explore rhythm. The curriculum is planned in a theme that correlates with Hong Kong context which fully addresses local children needs. While the lessons are planned in a regular routine which starts from a "Hello" song and farewell with a "Goodbye" song, with multisensory components and plentiful opportunities to stimulate rhythm and tactile. The variety of media has successfully enhanced children's cognitive development in sensory, motor and memory.

Chapter 1:

1.1 Introduction

Nowadays a lot of the parents would love to let their children be ahead of the curriculum and explore as much as possible in the early stage. Some said the earlier the children expose to music, the earlier can develop skills accordingly, like cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development. A music playgroup is therefore emerged for children who aged between 1 to 3-year-old, to explore music with peers or with their parents before entering primary education. It consists of diversified activities and claims to stimulate children's skills development. It is involved with kinesthetic and singing, which aims to facilitate children's musical learning. Both activities are incorporated into the lesson to help children to experience the auditory as well as physical touch on tonal and rhythm patterns. In current situation in Hong Kong, there is no formal curriculum was found for music playgroup.

This research was based on the outreach unit of the Department of Cultural and Creative Arts in the Education University of Hong Kong, CEO Academy. CEO refers to the Community Engagement and Outreach Academy of Creative Arts (*Outreach - the Education University of Hong Kong*), established since 2008. CEO Academy has offered 3 kinds of music classes for various age groups. The youngest group includes a child who is 1 to 3-year-old and parent to join, while the other is the child oneself, age from 3 to 5-year-old, to participate. The oldest, age from 5 to 6-year-old, join as an ensemble group. All classes focus on children's aural skills as well as rhythms, songs singing and percussive instruments playing.

1.2 Research Objectives

The music playgroup is planned with varied activities to engage the children to participate the most in class, but in general is relating to develop children's social or emotional skills, sensory experiences, and auditory skills.

This research project aims to investigate the music playgroup's core curriculum and the lesson plan's design on whether can influence the children's cognitive performance. Besides, to assess the effectiveness on the presentation on games and evaluate the outcome.

The research questions are formed below:

Q1: To what extent the design of curriculum makes a music playgroup?

Q2: How a coherent lesson plan enhances children's cognitive development?

Q3: Which part of the cognitive skills is developed?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 What is Music Playgroup?

A music playgroup consists of well-planned activity in many forms such as movement, listening, singing, rhyming, instrumental play, language play, and visualization (Young, 2016). It is a co-operative activity among caregivers and babies, a led session that the content was led by a leader, a pre-written or taped activity, or a semi-structured session that included small groups for discussion. In short, the music playgroup is a chanting class that engaged with movement. The tutor will use different thought strategies like comparison, classification or making up links to improve children's reasoning skills. They are consistently modeling and showing encouragement and praise to the children, whereas a positive reinforcement for them to take part in music in the future. The more enjoyable participation for children towards an activity, the more positive attitudes the parents have.

One of the known pedagogies named as Orff Schulwerk, a framework design for learning music with experiences and movement (Shamrock, 1995). The design's aim is to build upon the games with sounds and movements and interact with the surroundings. Orff emphasized "elemental music", which not only means simplicity, but suits to the origins of artistic development. It means that the music playgroup cooperates with elemental music and developing one's artistic development through to movement, speech, and dance (Shamrock, 1995, 8). Another pedagogies that are often seen in music education, namely Kodaly and Dalcroze. The former one emphasizes reinforce and review musical concepts through experiences like games and movements. It is usually taught in speaking syllables, singing, listening and performing in groups (Colwell & Webster, 2011). While the latter one stresses

on one's body awareness that associates with rhythm and physical experiences in order to stimulate gross motor skills (Colwell & Webster, 2011).

According to Piaget's 1952 study found that children has developed 3 stages of cognitive development, where from birth to age two show sensorimotor stage, refers to a pre-language period that reliant on sensory and physical experiences; followed by a preoperational thought in language and conceptual development in age two to seven; and exhibit a concrete operation with logical thoughts in age seven- to eight-years-old (Erwin, 2003). Therefore, the music playgroup is a course that prepares children to learn language and a setting to expose to the surrounding sounds.

2.2 Activities that arranged in a music playgroup

In a developed music playgroup, it is arranged under a solid curriculum with games that involves repetition, imitation, improvisation, and exploration (Reynolds, 1998) and consists various activities that helps children to learn the cultural contexts through participation and develop their social skills. Pound and Harrison (2003) mentioned that the children could identify the familiar song and create a list of repertoires of favorites, take *Baa-Baa-Black Sheep* and *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* as an example. They can sing the melody and repeat the words and syllables easily since the songs are composed in nursery rhymes. The songs are usually taught in a tonal pattern, which is sung in the same tonality and keyality. Just as Reynolds (1998) insisted that the pattern has assisted them to hear the tonality syntax and the rhythm patterns, which is sung with some neutral syllable, whatever that is easily to vocalize, such as “mah,” and “bum.” Noted that singing in an acculturation pattern can prepare children audiation to sing in a “step-wise, diatonic, patterns with three pitches” (Reynolds, 1998). The cognitive development is highly shown in their age from 3 to 4 when they know how to decompose and reconfigure elements of the learned songs in different phrases as to produce an imaginative musical monologue (Forrester, 2010). They have an opportunity to find their leisure time to explore as they experience different music genre and performance ways through participation. The idea has been contextualized and let children to understand the meaning of a certain vocabularies. When they listen to live or recorded music, they will naturally be moving as a response since they recognize the melody or the activities that was done in class.

Pound and Harrison (2003) highlighted that playing games treats as a practice for children to learn music, but not all practice solely plays. Group activities such as playing with handmade

instruments such as shakers made from plastic bottles that filled with rice grains also allow children to develop auditory skills in rhythm and tactile stimulation. This also helps them understand the idea of taking turns or matching with one another. The process of sharing or taking turns represents an acceptance on each other without a complaint (Watts, 2018). They grew from taking turns and wait for the leading turn (Nortje, 2016). From experience, they can observe and sense from the environment, use language to interact with others and implement in their social circles. In short, the curriculum in the music playgroup is grouped with chanting as to build up the vocalization concepts and body movement related with “time, weight, space, and flow” (Reynolds, 1998, 16).

2.3 Advantages of joining a music playgroup

According to Williams et al. (2015), the research has indicated that joining some music-related activities such as repetitive rhythmic movement, singing songs that has distinctive prosodic contour change and percussive activity can enhance one's cognitive processing, phonemic awareness, and a better self-regulation skill. Another research also indicated that the interaction between parent and child has a "synchronic attunement", where an equally reciprocal exchange between the child and the caregiver (Forrester, 2010). The longer the bonding time, the intimate relationship can turn out to be. To maintain a healthy relationship, parents will bring their child to join a playgroup as to develop aural and motor skills. Like Watts (2018) pointed out in his paper that young children are ordinary observers who receives sounds in multifaceted entity and developed a musical sensitiveness. It is designed to strengthen the relationship between parent and child, and the interactive activities can stimulate the children's understanding on the object.

It is normal that children cannot play an accurate imitation of the tonal pattern that the tutor presented, but rather seen as an experience on vocalizing. With consistent aural training, their musical awareness or musicking will develop quickly. Like Williams et al. (2015) mentioned that playgroup has a large contribution towards children's prosocial orientation, as there are ways for children to practice sharing and imitating one another intentionally, cooperating one another, mutual responsiveness, and social interaction. In short, they will have a better self-regulation skill, with a measurement of a series of tasks such as asking children to wait, initiate, slow down or overturn a response. While they play music, they can retain initiative. This process is alike to making a conversation with one another. As they explore playing with different rhythm, listening to the wide range of sound qualities and technique for producing

sound, at the same time the children have demonstrated different sets of skills such as motor, aural and cognitive (Young, 2016). Their behavior is also being alertly observed during the session, such as the disposition, other characteristics as well as their personalities will be shown and adjusted. Undoubtedly, their creativity and imagination were shown and shared a cultural understanding and self-expression.

Like Koelsch (2010) mentioned that a music group can develop a stronger coordination, cooperation, and communication skills. It has provided a playful environment which allows children to play, cooperate, lead and follow (Nortje, 2016). The significant element of the music playgroup is letting children to move around under the rhythmic music environment. Take Colwell & Webster (2011) as an example, this pedagogy helps children to “develop musicianship by the internalization of sounds through muscles and nerves and externalizations through bodily movements”. As they dance together, it has developed a difference on sense of self and group. The physical motion is seen as an intuitive and initiate motion such as crawling, walking, skipping or hopping (Gordon, 2013). Most movement activities for children emphasizes the use of various parts of the body, like arms, legs, and hips. The body is treated as a significant medium that embodies music and show musical knowledge (Colwell & Webster, 2011).

Chapter 3: Methodology

I chose to conduct the research at CEO Academy in qualitative method to examine the design on music playgroup's curriculum and how this influence children's cognitive development.

3.1 Setting

The research is conducted in the outreach unit of the Department of Cultural and Creative Arts in the Education University of Hong Kong. The CEO Academy, the outreach Community Engagement and Outreach Academy of Creative Arts (*Outreach - the Education University of Hong Kong*), is a mixed-gender music playgroup. The study group was studied with 1- to 3-year-old class based on the interviews with different parties and the videos collected in CEO's Facebook page. Children participated in a music curriculum that lasts for 10-week, 50-minute weekly with parents. In the youngest group, there were 6 participants and 3 tutors (including the pianist and the assistant), whereas the class ratio was 1:2.

3.2 Participants

Interviewee	Tutor A	Tutor B	Program Consultant	Parent A	Parent B
Gender	F	F	F	F	F
Date	10/2/2021	18/2/2021	18/2/2021	22/2/2021	24/2/2021
Place of interview	N/A	EdUHK Pacific coffee	EdUHK B1 Office	EdUHK C-can Open Area	N/A
Duration of interview	48 minutes	38 minutes	45 minutes	30 minutes	26 minutes
Method	Zoom	Face to face	Face to face	Face to face	Zoom

Table 1: Interviewee's interview details

Table 1 has demonstrated the interview details with tutors, parents, and the Program Consultant. The tutors in CEO Academy are currently students from EdUHK, were invited to participate in this research project. Besides teaching the music playgroup in CEO Academy, they also teach instrumental courses outside. Meanwhile, they have been teaching at CEO Academy for 3 years or above and the parents have been joining CEO Academy for 2 years.

3.3 Qualitative Method – Interview

The research participants, including the tutors and parents, were referred from the Program Consultant. The interview was recorded in audio form and was done individually. There are 3 sets of questionnaires for different parties. Just as Table 2 below, it is divided into 2 themes relating to my research questions. First theme (**T1**) is related to the design of the curriculum or the lesson plan, while the second theme (**T2**) is pointing out to the developmental change before and after their children participated.

Themes	Research Questions
T1: the design of the curriculum / lesson plan	1
T2: cognitive development	2 and 3

Table 2: Research questions divided into themes

A short interview was held with the tutors and discussed on the lesson plans' designs and the ways they teach. I have collected the lesson plans and asked in depth on the teaching procedures. On the other hand, I also asked the parents to list about their child(ren) progressive change in cognitive development.

3.4 Interview Result

3.4.1 Program Consultant

The program consultant in CEO Academy emphasized that the objective of the music playgroup is to let children to learn music as an appreciation and to respond with movement through music. Through listening to music, they can make responses, and some can even find the music element like music's section or orientation. She also claimed that when children experienced music in early stage, they can reflect their feelings through listening to music or playing music. They can also learn to sing and listen to their voices as a tool to express themselves. As a result, children can be an active listener and transcend their feelings through kinesthetics. She also shared a case about her teaching experience and observed the children's development.

“Children are good at strong rhythmic song, they feel the strong beats easily and move accordingly. They are also quick learners in language, especially English rather than Cantonese. When I taught a color song, the children can sing along with the melody, but one finds difficult to pronounce “yellow”. He could not pronounce the syllable “ye”, so I made up a movement, just like a slide (moving from the bottom to top) with this word and co-operated with his dad. With some practices, the child finally can speak “yellow”.

This implies the purpose of this color song is not teaching the children to recognize color, but suggests the synchronized movement can be a tool or a stimulation to articulate an unfamiliar word. The wordings may be hard for children to pronounce. But after numerous trials, the child experienced and practiced, eventually he could articulate the word. It shows that he has understood the linkage between the word and the movement is interrelated.

3.4.2 Tutor

Tutors also concluded that they use different ways to attract children's attention in class and flexible to change the teaching procedures according to the children's performance. Like the "Hello" song, was a greeting song with movement but performed in different ways every week. Take the Program Consultant as an example, "the music is fixed, but movement is not fixed. Let the children to create their own and add in percussive instruments when needed."

Tutor occasionally would ask the children to lead a movement, and let peers to follow.

Sometimes, tutors may distribute the shaker to children and let children to create their own rhythm. This unpredictable movement can motivate children's learning objective because it is part of their creation. Meanwhile, this lead and follow time can act as an innovation and stimulate their creativity as well as their intimacy with parents. On the other hand, when the tutor introduces to a new song, she brings muppets to class and raise questions to help children to engage into the activity. She also frequently uses imitation and visualization in teaching. For example, she would first show the size of the animals and raise questions to let children to name and compare in visualization. Later, she would play some sound and let them to distinguish the differences between loudness and softness. Then, she correlated the dynamics to the animal's size and encouraged children to imitate the movement with her. Like the elephant would represent loud - *forte* (*f*), and the mouse would treat as soft - *piano* (*p*). By comparing the sound in auditory and visualization, children can grasp the idea in a concrete way by showing their understandings through movement.

3.4.3 Parents

Parents claimed that the aim of letting their children to join the music playgroup is to explore and experience as much as possible through participation. They liked CEO academy because EdUHK was spacious and they were able to experience to the fullest with various kinds of percussion instruments. This strengthened children's pulse and rhythmic sense. More importantly, they agreed that the relentless moving has brought their children joy, engagement, and involvement. Especially they would not allow their children to be completely free at home, and therefore this class is treated as a free time for them to experience and have fun. Not to mention, the interaction has also brought them closer and more intimate. Take parent A shared in the interview saying the teaching content was applied to children's experience and had demonstrated in their cognitive skills. The story was about her child has learned the song about "Caterpillar", the tutor distributed a finger light and asked them to find the stickers in the classroom. They were hidden in different places, like under the chair, at the corner of the room or behind the box. After they found the stickers, they needed to use their fingers to demonstrate how the caterpillar walks. They needed to use their finger lights to show the motion, such as crawling up or down. This activity has enlightened the learning atmosphere and could be found in the nature definitely. After the class, the child can even link the concept to the escalator, pointing to her mother, saying "up and down" as she saw the escalator's moving direction. This claims that the children could articulate a partial of taught vocabularies such as "caterpillar" and distinguish the direction because of the related motion that is experienced in class.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Design of the curriculum

Based on the CEO Academy, the curriculum (Appendix V, page 44-46) is designed with integrated pedagogies, including Dalcroze, Kodaly and Orff Approach. It is an accumulation of children's understandings and past experiences. Since the playgroup consists of a multi-model experience, whereas developing children's musical sensitiveness. Pedagogies included multi-sensory components, which helped children to develop their sensory skills in auditory, movement and visualization. In order to train their auditory skills, the tutors would play a 5-minute song in class and may raise questions to deepen their understandings. The song list is not limited to one genre (i.e. classical songs), but also Jazz, Indian or even Chinese folk music. The purpose of providing different kinds of music is wanting children to explore the diversity in music as much as possible. Since they are young, they would not have any preferences or fond of any genre. This is the best age to receive, process and respond.

For movement, it is usually linked with songs singing. Take Lesson 1 as an example, when the tutor introduced the "Hello" song with movement to children, besides teaching words and the melody, body movement was also incorporated. Dalcroze and Kodaly pedagogies were demonstrated when associated rhythm and physical experiences in a game format. When children were guided to play with percussive instruments such as xylophone, rain sticker, it is using Orff approach. As a result, many activities were implemented in order to drill on children's multi-sensory skills and stimulate their fine motor skills. Overall, it was designed in an interrelated topic throughout the lesson. When they sang the "Hello" song, they would ask peers to suggest a movement to associate the action and the rhythm. In other words, it was random every time and thus stimulate children's creativity. The topics would also come

across to the size or the position differences. They could experience and observe the contrast, understanding the concept of high and low, up and down, fast and slow, and move and freeze. The curriculum was renewed annually and kept implementing hit ideas. For example, some strong pulse songs were remained using and stayed in the same theme. Each theme lasted for 3 lessons and the final lesson was treated as a revision on all songs.

4.2 Design of the lesson plan

The lesson plan is written in a theme-based in order to let children to learn coherently and in a systemic way. Each lesson is designed with a theme and in a regular routine in singing “Hello” and “Goodbye” song. It is treated as a greeting song and a short ice-breaking time for children to get used to the setting. Each lesson will teach a song with new movements, use instruments or tools to link with the new song. Plus, a short listening time was provided for children to expose to other music genres. Tutor would spare some time for music game, story time or doing handcrafts. The activities were emphasized on children’s past experiences and mostly active participation that stimulate motor activities including experience, trial and error. These variety of media could catch their attention and fully engaged in class.

One of the tutors claimed that she wanted to add in visual arts elements into her lesson, and therefore she encouraged the children to make a hand-made shaker in class as to foster his or her creativity. The shaker then belonged to their percussive instrument. The more they expose to new percussive instruments, the more kinds of music are exposed. The outcome of this is helping children to recognize the instruments and its voices, who can also differentiate various sounds and able to tell the difference between loud and soft, fast and slow, long and short.

Nonetheless, tutors also used visualization aids to generate ideas, like identifying the song with the muppet or teach with the help of picture scores. The picture score (Appendix III, page 42) was used as a visualization in class. The topic is related and illustrated in daily items and was created in cultural context. The size and the proportion showed the rhythm difference, while the direction implies the location of the pitch, implying going up or down.

The hidden icon suggested the rest and the melody was limited to a narrow range of pitches. Like Reynolds (1998) mentioned in his book, songs are taught in a tonal pattern “step-wise, diatonic, patterns with 3 pitches”, in other words the song mainly focused on 3 pitches which are in the same tonality and keyality. When the tutor taught a new song, she used easy syllable “la” to help children to locate the pitch rather emphasizing on pronunciation. Surely, she also taught some easy words like “up” and “down,” together with movement to teach the song. As children vocalized and listened to the accompaniment, they realized the pitch is in descending form. Later when she showed them the picture score, they can easily follow and sing along. Picture scores and flash cards were useful to clarify the learning objective and a tool to present the content. The regular routine has brought advantages to children to understand the flow of the lesson and could understand the learning objectives in the variety of media such as picture scores.

4.3 Participation

Joining the music playgroup can differentiate a sense of self and group. As children sang and did the movement in class or at home, they could feel the differences of the orientation. They could find a coherency and cooperation when they played with peers. The constant active participation can also develop their motor skills and musical awareness. For example, when the tutor played a percussive instrument – rain stick that mimics raining sound. Tutors could ask children to think of the surroundings and later raised questions to enlighten the learning atmosphere. They first may not understand the word “rain”, but after numerous trials in aural and experience, they eventually could understand the content of the lyrics and have its own interpretation. In CEO Academy, there were plentiful opportunities to touch and experience to what they hear and respond. They were able to recognize to the objects and pronounce the words with the aid of physical movement. This stimulates their rhythm sense and motor skills. The wide range of sound qualities and technique for producing sound were also shown through experiencing percussive instruments and from the audio recordings. Meanwhile, the teaching content is related to daily lives, which facilitates children’s cognitive skills as they reflect on their experiences and understandings.

Chapter 5: Implementation

5.1 Discussion

Referred to the CEO's teaching belief that everyone is potential to be creative and artistic. With appropriate cultivation can enrich one's innovative characteristics. It is in line with the findings because the design of the curriculum has foreseen the playgroup's teaching schedule and clearly stated the learning objective for each lesson. It also helps children to equip the necessary skills as they explore the surroundings with sufficient practice on auditory practice and tactile. Just like what the Program Consultant shared, children were easily respond under the strong rhythmic song, they can listen to the rhythm difference and transcend their understandings through movement. They respond to what they hear rather than relying on visualization. Children may not be able to articulate or pronounce words in an early stage, however, this would not affect their cognitive skills on musical sensitiveness.

Thus, the result of the research has shown that there is a purpose on designing the lesson in a specific order and the lesson plan, as to build up a routine for children to follow and get used to the class. A regular setting and orientation can let children to be prepared and respond to the following task at ease. The group setting has generated a time limit for them to be active and play around or time to sit still and listen to music, which this would not happen at home. Therefore, this is the time for them to learn without limitation and plentiful opportunities to socialize with one another. They can even show their creativity and innovation through doing handcrafts or movement. The variety of media in a lesson has developed children's cognitive skills to the fullest since the ideas is linked to daily items and stimulates their musical awareness. As they respond through using body movement or with percussive instruments,

there is no limitation and is free to produce the sound. Like what Pound and Harrison (2003) claimed, children learn the most as they play.

It is common to start with a “Hello” song as an opening for a music playgroup. The song may sound different but share with a same purpose as a greeting, opening song. Take Barret and Westerlund (2017) as an example, they claimed the music playgroup has extracted the “Hello” song from Music Early Learning Programmes (MELP), which was informed by a music education or used in the music therapy. Tutor would play the guitar with an improvised accompaniment, so the tempi and mood can be switched differently. Every lesson would be spontaneous and unpredictable, which creates a delightful learning atmosphere. The movement is not permanent and it is flexible to change such as adding in ‘open and shut’ action. While the CEO Academy has fixed the song in a D major key in order to help children and parents to sing in an easy pitch, they also added in body movement or percussive instruments as they sang. Yet both organization’s movement may not be the same, they share a common goal – welcoming each other and stimulate children’s motor skills as well as encouraging using language as communication purpose.

The aim of the music playgroup is to help children to explore much in early stage and make response under musical stimulation. This significantly proved that the variety of activities have enhanced the intimacy between parents and children and accelerated cognitive skills development on auditory and tactile. The curriculum in CEO academy has applied with integrated pedagogy from western countries, but also correlated with the context in Hong Kong, which address local children needs. Nonetheless other skills like emotional, social and physical skills are also stimulated.

5.2 Limitation

In this research study, some limitations were found. Firstly, the sample size of CEO Academy is too small and only limited to a special group. There were only 6 participants in this research group, and I was expecting there are at least 10 participants join this music playgroup. On the other hand, I planned to interview 5 to 8 parents as an in-depth understanding on this topic but turned out there were only 2 participants willing to do an interview.

Secondly, due to the pandemic, there are no physical classes under Covid-19. All classes are now performed on zoom and the lesson time has shortened to 15 minutes. My target research audience was the live music playgroup; however, based on the social restriction, I have no opportunities to observe under live teaching mode and see how the children get along with their parents. Eventually I could only watch some video clips in Facebook that was published by CEO Academy. Apart from that, children had to attend music playgroup online and had less opportunities to experience percussive instruments with definite pitch. In this 15-minute lesson, the online teaching has only focused on drilling on singing or body movement. In short, children are not used to this teaching mode and cannot experience to the fullest. They are too young and not able to focus on the screen for more than 15-minutes, according to tutor B. Moreover, the listening part is also cancelled. Therefore, a lot of the teaching parts were switched or cancelled due to the pandemic. To sum up, the result of the research project is based on the collection from the interviews and the observation through the videos. Last but not least, the cognitive development of language is also not proved, because this setting group participants were too young to use language to express their thoughts. They can recognize and name the objects but cannot clearly state their inner feelings with language.

5.3 Recommendation

For my recommendation, I would like to know more about the differences on the practicality on cognitive skills that performed online and live teaching. The interaction has brought many advantages to children, since there are a lot of repetition, imitation and cooperation as shown in class. However, when the lesson is performed online, the activities may have to modify and fit within the lesson time – 15 minutes. With such a short amount of time, will the effectiveness in developing cognitive skills be affected? Therefore, if there are opportunities to compare the effectiveness of these teaching modes, it may foster and inspire the implementation of music playgroup in the future. The teaching mode may thereafter switched online due to costs savings.

Besides, if there is live teaching after the pandemic, I would like to go for a class observation and check how parent and children are interacted and engaged in class. Getting their feedback right before and after class is important to collect their genuine thoughts. Tutors, can also be interviewed once again and compare how they modified the teaching plan and understand what changes they made to ease their learning process. Last but not least, to investigate whether participating the music group can enhance one's language skills in an older group setting. Since the peers group is aged from 4-5 year old, they are able to use language to express their thoughts and feelings. Joining this peers music group may positively show that this can enhance their communication skills and activate their musical sensitiveness in a broader way.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

To conclude, a music playgroup can enhance children's cognitive development based on the implication on multisensory experiences from the integrated pedagogies that set in the curriculum as well as the coherent lesson plans. The implementation has emphasized the importance of interrelationship between surroundings and their experiences. Lessons were performed in an active participation and mostly drawn to daily items. It allows children to explore and experience with the variety of media, such as playing with percussive instruments, making handcrafts, learning to read the picture scores. The more the children explore to new items, the broaden their views are. Nonetheless, the constant drilling on rhythm, auditory and movement can strengthen their understanding of musical skills, knowledge and motor skills which is the aim of the activities' design and target. Thus, the design of the music playgroup curriculum is to develop children's multisensory skills in sensory, memory and movement. Apart from learning in cultural context, this can foster their creativity and musical sensitiveness. The music playgroup has proved that there is a significant improvement on children's cognitive skills by using integrated pedagogies in the curriculum.

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Appendix II- Consent Form and Information Sheet

Consent Form and Information Sheet for PARTICIPANTS

THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Creative Arts and Culture and Bachelor of Education (Honours) (Music) (Five-year Full-time)

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Study on the playgroup's curriculum design whether can enhance children's cognitive development

I _____ hereby consent to participate in the captioned research supervised by Dr. Wong Wai Ying, Paulina and conducted by Chan Tsz Yan, who is student of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Creative Arts and Culture and Bachelor of Education (Honours) (Music) (Five-year Full-time) in The Education University of Hong Kong.

I understand that information obtained from this research may be used in future research and may be published. However, my right to privacy will be retained, i.e., my personal details will not be revealed.

The procedure as set out in the attached information sheet has been fully explained. I understand the benefits and risks involved. My participation in the project is voluntary.

I acknowledge that I have the right to question any part of the procedure and can withdraw at any time without negative consequences.

Name of participant

Signature of participant

Date

INFORMATION SHEET

Study on the playgroup's curriculum design whether can enhance children's cognitive development

You are invited to participate in a project supervised by Dr. Wong Wai Ying, Paulina and conducted by Chan Tsz Yan, who is student of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Creative Arts and Culture and Bachelor of Education (Honours) (Music) (Five-year Full-time) in The Education University of Hong Kong.

The research is about to analyze how the playgroup's curriculum design and implementation can enhance children's cognitive development. The study will also focus on assessing the presenting ways of a certain type of games and evaluate the outcome.

The reason I chose to do a research on the outreach unit of the Department of Cultural and Creative Arts is because CEO Academy has offered different kinds of music activities for various age groups, from 2 years old to adults. The music playgroup has offered 2 classes, one is a group class which includes a child and parent, while the other is the child oneself, to participate. Both classes focus on children's aural skills, but also focuses on rhythms, songs singing and percussive instruments playing. Some institutions have offered similar kinds of music playgroups, however, the class time offered by CEO is longer than the others. The focus of the curriculum and the design on activities will occur the duration of a playgroup, so the research will evaluate the overall design and the progressive development on children's cognitive skills.

The methodology of the research

In this study, there are about 3 interviewers who are the professionally trained tutors in teaching music playgroups. For the contact information, I will ask our course consultant, Miss Zerlina Wong, with her permission to introduce some course tutors. I would also interview 5 to 10 parents in order to know more on the child's cognitive development.

A short interview before and after the music playgroup will be done with the tutors. I would like to ask more on the designs and the ways they teach and find out whether the design of a music playgroup can successfully enhance a child's cognitive skills. If there are class observations, I would like to be a part of the participants and evaluate the implementation of the activities. While interviewing the parents, I would like to know more on the background information and how long that they have been joining music playgroups. If possible, I will ask them to list out the examples that reflects the progressive change in cognitive development.

The playgroup will be held for approximately 10 weeks. With interviews preparation and summarize the outcome will take around 15 weeks to complete. The interview will take 15-20 minutes.

This research does not provide you with personal benefits, but the data collected will provide valuable information for studying the issue of learning motivation.

The potential risks of the research

For minimal risk research, I may ask for passive consent, that is, parents/guardians return the consent forms only if they DO NOT wish their child to participate. For all other research, active consent, whereby parents/guardians indicate their child may participate, MUST be obtained.

Your participation in the project is voluntary. You have every right to withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences. All information related to you will remain confidential and will be identifiable by codes known only to the researcher.

The results will be disseminated confidentially, and the names of the organization and the participants will not be shown. There may be some similar examples that will be extracted from the online journal articles and educational presentations.

If you would like to obtain more information about this study, please contact Chan Tsz Yan at telephone number _____ or their supervisor Dr. Wong Wai Ying, Paulina at telephone number _____

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research study, please do not hesitate to contact the Human Research Ethics Committee by email at hrec@eduhk.hk or by mail to Research and Development Office, The Education University of Hong Kong.

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study.

CHAN, Tsz Yan

Principal Investigator

Appendix III – “Picture score” in a teaching slide

The music playgroup tutor is trying to teach the student on the pitch in descending form, additionally the size and proportion of the image has demonstrated that the rhythm difference.

叉燒包

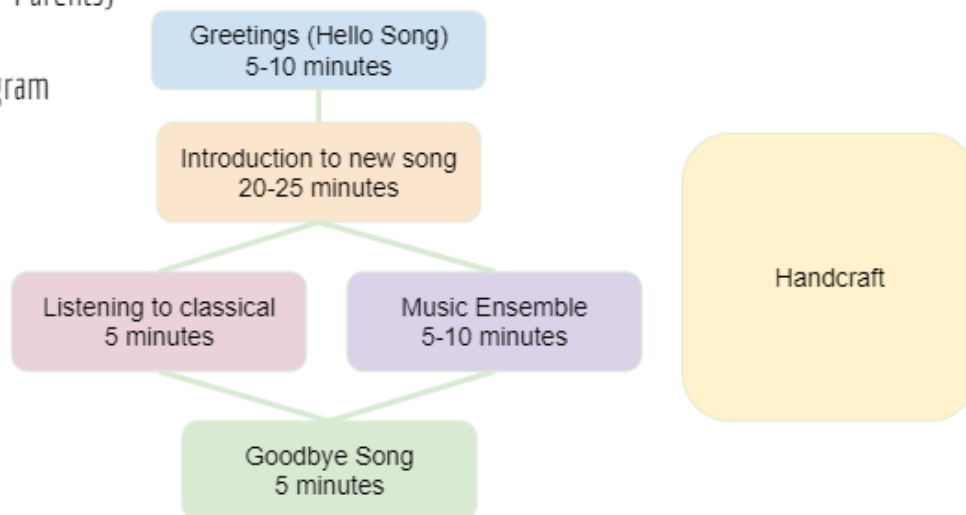


Appendix IV – Flowchart of the lesson routine

Flowchart of the CEO Academy Music playgroup lesson routine
(1-3 year old + Parents)

50- minutes

10-week program



Appendix V – CEO Music Playgroup Curriculum

Translated version (English)

Music Elements	Greeting + warm up	Body Movement/ Music elements	Song	Instrument/ Materials/ Tools	Listening/ Music Ensemble	Music Game/Story Time/art work
L1 Theme: Animals > Move and freeze > Steady pulse > Echo-singing > Pitch: So mi	> Greeting and knowing each other > Introducing “Hello Song”	> “Hello Song” with different body movements (Clapping hands, Stepping foots etc.)	> Rain Rain Go Away	> Umbrellas > Boom cracker > Xylophone > Rain Stick > Rain Drops	> “ <i>Radetzky Match</i> ” (2/4) by Johann Strauss	> Tapping out the 2/4 pulse by umbrella
L2 Theme: Animals > Call & Response > Steady pulse > Echo-singing > High,middle,low > Two line score	> Hello Song > Plays instruments in high/middle/low position	> Walking like “giant”/”mouse” to represent <i>forte</i> and <i>piano</i> > (loud and quiet)	> Owls in the tree	> Story book > Owl’s doll	> “ <i>Nocturne</i> ” by Chopin	> Picture score composition > Drawing owl’s tree
L3 Theme: Animals > Call & Response > Echo-singing > Steady pulse > Ti-ti,tā (sixteenth and eighth note)	> Hello Song	> Pretending different animals > High and low register	> 有隻雀仔跌落水 (節奏說白) (melody as “ <i>London Bridge is Falling Down</i> ”, speaking in rhythmic syllable)	> Xylophone > Hand drums	> “ <i>Morning</i> ” by Edvard Grieg	> Picture score composition in 4x4 grid

<p>L4 Theme: Animals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Call & Response ➤ Echo-singing ➤ Steady pulse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hello Song 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Walking in the Jungle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Xylophone ➤ Hand drums ➤ scarf 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “Minute Waltz” by Chopin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 狗仔追尾巴
<p>L5 Theme: Food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Call & Response ➤ Echo-singing ➤ Steady pulse ➤ Pitch: do re mi ➤ Two line score 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hello Song 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hot Cross Bun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Story book ➤ Hand drums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “Alla Turca” (Turkish March) Piano sonata No. 11 by Mozart 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Picture score composition
<p>L6 Theme: Food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Do re mi so la Pentatonic scale ➤ Call & Response ➤ Echo-singing ➤ Steady pulse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hello song 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Melody composition in pentatonic scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Jelly on the Plate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Xylophone ➤ Jelly ➤ Boom cracker ➤ balloon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “In the Hall of Mountain King” by Edvard Grieg 	
<p>L7 Theme: Food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pitch: Do, Re, Mi, Fa, So ➤ Call & Response ➤ Echo-singing ➤ Steady pulse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hello song 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Move and freeze 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 七彩糖果 (Rainbow candy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ xylophone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “Sandpaper Ballet” by Leroy Andersoon 	

<p>L8</p> <p>➤ Theme: Traffic</p> <p>➤ Call & Response</p> <p>➤ Echo-singing</p> <p>➤ Steady pulse</p>	<p>➤ Hello Song</p>	<p>➤ Fast and slow</p> <p>➤ Up and down</p> <p>➤ Round and round</p> <p>➤ Open and shut</p>	<p>➤ The Wheels on the Bus</p>	<p>➤ Hand drums</p> <p>➤ Stretch band</p>	<p>➤ “The blue danube” by Johann Strauss</p>	
<p>L9</p> <p>➤ Theme: Traffic</p> <p>➤ Call & Response</p> <p>➤ Echo-singing</p> <p>➤ Steady pulse</p>	<p>➤ Hello Song</p>	<p>➤ Mooze and freeze</p> <p>➤ Red and green light</p>	<p>➤ Taxi Taxi Come Please</p>	<p>➤ Traffic sign</p> <p>➤ Taxi card</p>	<p>➤ “Can Can Music” by Offenbach</p>	
<p>L10</p> <p>➤ Theme: Ensemble</p> <p>➤ Call & Response</p> <p>➤ Echo-singing</p> <p>➤ Steady pulse</p>	<p>➤ Hello Song</p>	<p>➤ Move and freeze</p> <p>➤ Revision of all music elements</p>	<p>➤ 小樂隊 (Little Band)</p>	<p>➤ Different instruments</p>	<p>➤ /</p>	<p>➤ Certificate delivery</p>



Appendix VI– Program Consultant Interview Question Set

Program Consultant Interview Questions

1. Have you taught any of the following ensembles?

Parent Children Ensemble

Kids ensemble

Music workshop

Others:

2. How long have you been teaching CEO?

1/ 2 / 3/ 4 years or above

3. What is your teaching belief?

4. Does your teaching belief match with the CEO's? Yes/ No

Reason:

CEO's belief: *We believe that everyone has creative and artistic potential. Appropriate cultivation can enhance personal beauty and kindness. We look forward to the future of community art schools to spread the value of art to every corner of the community based on innovation.*

5. In what extent do you agree with CEO's teaching belief?

6. Is there anything that you would like to share, if there is? (i.e. children's development – cognitive, language, audiation...)

7. What activities has trained students' cognitive skills? List 2 or more.

a. _____

b. _____

8. What activities has trained students' aural skills? List 2 or more.

a. _____

b. _____

9. Any significant group activities that helps skills improvement? Please list as much as possible.

- a. In-class observation: _____
- b. Any activity that was performed in class?
10. Do you think developing cognitive skills in this early stage is important? N/A ; Yes;
No
- Why? _____
11. Is there any regular review of CEO's lesson plans or curriculum?
12. How long has the curriculum been launched?
13. Are you a part of designing the lesson plan?
14. Have you added up any extra component into the lesson?
15. If so, what is the main purpose of the activity?
16. What will you change if you think this curriculum does not fit perfectly?
17. Which methodology do you follow as you plan the curriculum? (Orff?)

Appendix VII– Tutor Interview Question Set

Tutor Interview Questions

1. Which part of the playgroup are you responsible of, any specific field?

Administrative
Lesson planner
Curriculum planner
Customer service
Others:

2. How long have you been working in this company?
1/ 2 / 3/ 4 years or above
3. What is your teaching belief?
4. Does your teaching belief match with the CEO's? Yes/ No
Reason:

CEO's belief: *We believe that everyone has creative and artistic potential. Appropriate cultivation can enhance personal beauty and kindness. We look forward to the future of community art schools to spread the value of art to every corner of the community based on innovation.*

5. In what extent do you agree with CEO's teaching belief?
6. Is there anything that you would like to modify, if there is? (i.e. curriculum, activities, vision and mission, etc.)
7. What is the ratio of teacher and students in this playgroup?
8. What is(/are) the focus (foci) of CEO?
9. What activities has trained students' cognitive skills? List 2 or more.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
10. What is the ratio of activities in developing cognitive skills?

11. What form of activities is graded as developing cognitive skills? List 2 -3.

a. _____

b. _____

12. Any significant example of skills improvement? Please list as much as possible.

a. Parents' observation: _____

b. In-class observation: _____

c. Any activity that was performed in class?

13. Do you think developing cognitive skills in this early stage is important? N/A ; Yes;
No

Why? _____

Appendix VIII– Tutor Interview Question Set

Parent Interview Questions

1. Which kinds of playgroup have you joined?

Parent Children Ensemble

Kids ensemble

Music workshop

Others:

2. How long have you been joining CEO? From age _____?
1/ 2 / 3/ 4 years or above
3. Why do you want to join playgroup?
4. any other music class than CEO?

CEO's belief: *We believe that everyone has creative and artistic potential. Appropriate cultivation can enhance personal beauty and kindness. We look forward to the future of community art schools to spread the value of art to every corner of the community based on innovation.*

5. In what extent do you agree with CEO's teaching belief?
6. Is there anything that you would like to share, if there is? (i.e. children's development – cognitive, language, audiation...)
7. What activities has trained students' cognitive skills? List 2 or more.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
8. What activities has trained students' aural skills? List 2 or more.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
9. Any significant group activities that helps skills improvement? Please list as much as possible.

a. Parents' observation: _____

b. In-class observation: _____

c. Any activity that was performed in class?

10. Do you think developing cognitive skills in this early stage is important? N/A ; Yes;
No

Why? _____

Appendix IX – Audio Script (Program Consultant)**The Education University of Hong Kong****In-Depth Interview Transcript (Original)**

Respondent: Program Consultant

Date: 18 February 2021

Place: EdUHK B1 Office

Start time: 10:30 am

End time: 11:15 am

Researcher: Thank you for accepting my invitation for this interview today. The purpose of this interview is to understand the relations between joining playgroup whether can enhance children's cognitive development. Our conversation today will not be used for any other purpose and all responses would be destroyed after the completion of the study. However, you have the rights to stop at any time. If you would like a copy of this interview, I can send you a copy afterwards. If you have any questions during the interview, please do not hesitate to ask. Are you clear?

Respondent: Yes.

Researcher: Do you mind I record in audio?

Respondent: Sure. It's fine.

Researcher: Thank you so much! So let's begin.

1. Have you taught any of the following ensembles?

Respondent: I have taught all kinds of the ensembles ages ago, say possibly 12 years already. From 2005, I started teaching the music playgroup (1-3 years old) for 2 years and published a booklet. When I was young, I was an assistant in the music workshop (3-4 years old) and they used the Kodaly method. In 2006-07, I also led the kid's ensemble (6-7 years old) to play hand chime in APA. We were paid to make a TV show at TVB about music movement for children. At that time, we had opportunities to partner with Wong Cho Lam, surely you know him. There were about 10 episodes on demonstrating how children move along with music.

2. How long have you been teaching CEO?

Respondent: I am an organizer at CEO for 12 years since establishment, actually helping out the teachers behind the scenes. Such as helping the lesson plan.

3. What is your teaching belief?

Respondent: As a music playgroup, most of all it is linking with interaction via parents and children. You know, 20 years ago, music playgroup is never popular. Most of the parents thought learning music was learning musical instrument in primary school, and little experience in kindergarten age. But refer to the examples or research overseas, we understand that “mother” is the most innately person in life. Therefore, the lesson is planned with parents and promote this music learning group. We aim to let them to learn music as an appreciation and through music to response themselves with movement. We hope them to explore and experience as much as possible. Through listening to music, they can respond to it and find the music element, like pointing out the section or orientation of the music.

4. Does your teaching belief match with the CEO's?

Respondent: Yes, definitely quite similar. Children are growing in a happy atmosphere in different ages, and explore different genres of music such as jazz, rock.

Researcher: Thanks for letting me know the basic information. Before I move on to the next part, let me show you the CEO's teaching belief, so you can answer my questions below.

CEO's belief: *We believe that everyone has creative and artistic potential. Appropriate cultivation can enhance personal beauty and kindness. We look forward to the future of community art schools to spread the value of art to every corner of the community based on innovation.*

5. In what extent do you agree with CEO's teaching belief?

Respondent: As an early stage of experience point for children, using music and movement can be a way to reflect their feelings, including voicing and express themselves.

6. Is there anything that you would like to share, if there is? (i.e. children's development – cognitive, language, audiation...)

Respondent: Hmm, children are good at strong rhythmic song, they feel the strong beats easily and move accordingly. Also, they are quick learner in language, especially English. As we teach English songs, they learn new words faster than Cantonese. When I taught a color song, the children can sing along with the melody, but one find difficult to pronounce "yellow". He could not pronounce the syllable "Ye", so I made up a movement, just like a slide (moving from the top to bottom) with this word and co-operated with his dad. With some practice, the child finally can speak "yellow". I think this is unexpected, most of the time needs extemporaneous ways to support them.

7. What activities has trained students' cognitive skills? List 2 or more.

Respondent:

- a. We have a "Hello" song, basically like a greeting song that is linked with movement. The music is fixed, but we do not fix the movement, but let children to create sometimes, so they can be innovative. Even so, we add in some percussive instruments and can let children to experience longer.
- b. For children to sing, we usually sing in D major. After a few trials and we will let them to read the score. That's how we do the order in general, so they can train their ears too.
- c. Or we provide some worksheet or generate some QR code for parents to play at home and let them to listen at their free time.

8. What activities has trained students' aural skills? List 2 or more.

Respondent: Hmm, I believe all activities that includes singing, presenting movement, strong rhythmic or body percussion can help children to train their aural skills.

9. Any significant group activities that help skills improvement? Please list as much as possible.

Respondent:

- a. In-class observation: I think the oldest class, that's the kid's ensemble (6-7 year old) can perform the most on skills improvement when they play hand chime, such as score reading, the movement to hold the bell or how to correctly project the sound.
- b. Some group activity such as the children singing with their parent and make an artwork together can improve their skills. One that brings up to my mind

was the children playing ink chop to represent the rhythm, as they hear the strong pulse, they can do chopping.

10. Do you think developing cognitive skills in this early stage is important?

Respondent: Yes, because most of the time, as we listen to music, we are passive listener. But with children, we cannot be passive, therefore movement and dance are very important. Not just move along with the lyrics, but with elements or the features of the song, to show the feelings of the song and transcend to the kinaesthetic. For children, they can reflect their understandings through touching and movement and let the tutors to know that they received the learnings.

11. Is there any regular review of CEO's lesson plans or curriculum?

Respondent: Whenever there is new class, I would hold a meeting and review the lesson plans with the tutors. Say... possibly every 10 weeks and review, usually divided in seasons. Then we started discussing the lesson plans, but last year we did 2 online video class due to the pandemic. We pre-recorded and uploaded to Facebook, around 10mins each. Lately, due to the 3rd pandemic, we also used zoom to do 2 episodes for class. We only rehearsed twice and launched teaching. Around 6-7 members joined the discussion, and we found the limitation and highlight of the activities.

12. How long has the curriculum been launched?

Respondent: 12 years, but teaching materials switched and renewed annually (some not changed because it is hit or loop some new ideas – percussion, rhythm). We renewed the scheme of work and teaching material sometimes.

13. Are you a part of designing the lesson plan?

Respondent: Part of it. I would give suggestions to tutors. But mainly it is their choice to implement into the lesson.

14. Have you added up any extra component into the lesson? Or emphasize any training part?

Respondent: Some picture score with a QR code or some tools to help with the lesson. For older kids, we use hand chime and teach them how to ring the chime.

15. Which methodology do you follow as you plan the curriculum?

Respondent: I would say integrated, because CEO is mostly let children to move around and learn through instruments. Dalcroze is more likely to concentrate on movement, Kodaly in musical concept, and Orff method as they experienced with different instruments.

16. Does it value and foster children's musical creativity?

Respondent: Yes, as they understand the background of music, they can understand more and figure out new features. They just like a piece of white paper, absorbs whatever we offer and this defer in ages.

17. Is the content relevant to children's own experience?

Respondent: Yes. We train children to practice aural skills and be active as they listen to music. The movement can be done with singing class (progressive in 3 lessons). We also use some flash cards in games to drill with the rhythm (i.e. in Cantonese rabbit 白兔 as ti-ti, cat 貓 as ta) and imply to "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star". We do not start from the beginning of the song, but instead we start differently and unpredictable every time.

Researcher: Do you have anything else that need to add? Or clarify?

Respondent: No.

Researcher: Great! The interview is finished. Thank you for your valuable time! Our conversation today will not be used for any other purpose and all responses would be destroyed after the completion of the study. You have the rights to dismiss the research study at any time. Thank you once again!

Respondent: Noted.

Appendix X – Audio Script (Tutor A)**The Education University of Hong Kong****In-Depth Interview Transcript (Original)**

Respondent: Tutor A

Date: 10 February 2021

Place: Zoom

Start time: 11:30 am

End time: 12:18 pm

Researcher: Thank you for accepting my invitation for this interview today. The purpose of this interview is to understand the relations between joining playgroup whether can enhance children's cognitive development. Our conversation today will not be used for any other purpose and all responses would be destroyed after the completion of the study. However, you have the rights to stop at any time. If you would like a copy of this interview, I can send you a copy afterwards. If you have any questions during the interview, please do not hesitate to ask. Are you clear?

Respondent: Yes.

Researcher: Do you mind I record in audio?

Respondent: Okay.

Researcher: Thank you. So let's begin.

1. Which part of the playgroup are you responsible of, any specific field?

Respondent: I'm a lesson planner as well as the curriculum planner. We are part of the tutor and we can plan the lesson as well as the curriculum. Cause we need to hand in our lesson plan and curriculum to Ms. Wong and have a meeting before the start of the class.

2. How long have you been working in this company?

Respondent: I started since I was year 2, so probably 3 years already.

3. What is your teaching belief?

Respondent: I think... I want to include music and visual arts together, so the lesson will be more fun.

Researcher: Thanks for letting me know the basic information. Before I move on to the next part, let me show you the CEO's teaching belief, so you can answer my questions below.

CEO's belief: *We believe that everyone has creative and artistic potential. Appropriate cultivation can enhance personal beauty and kindness. We look forward to the future of community art schools to spread the value of art to every corner of the community based on innovation.*

4. Does your teaching belief match with the CEO's?

Respondent: Yes. I would say... it's pretty close.

5. In what extent do you agree with CEO's teaching belief?

Respondent: I believe music is unlimited and cannot be judged. It's pretty much very free in this musical and artistic environment.

6. Is there anything that you would like to modify, if there is? (i.e. curriculum, activities, vision and mission, etc.)

Respondent: The lesson lasts for 50 mins, but it's better to add 10 mins. Cause it's a bit rush every time. If there is an extra 10 minutes, I would like to add into the listening part. Currently they only have 3 minutes in this part, it's pretty short, to be honest.

7. What is the ratio of teacher and students in this playgroup?

Respondent: One pianist, me, and the assistant with 6 children. Not included their parents, so probably the ratio is 1:2.

8. What is(/are) the focus (foci) of CEO?

Respondent: Possibly letting the children to explore, realize and feel the music itself in a playgroup setting.

9. What activities has trained students' cognitive skills? List 2 or more.

Respondent: I taught them on dynamics and showed them some photos as to have connection with the size of the object such as (f= tiger; p = mice) and sometimes played with the xylophone. Also I tried to demonstrate the high and low notes with the images of animals like bird and elephant with a set of movement, such as waving two arms flying or imitating the trunk.

10. What is the ratio of activities in developing cognitive skills?

Respondent: It's varied, because some songs I rather want them to feel the rhythm difference. Take “有隻雀仔跌落水” as an example, (melody is same as “London Bridge is Falling Down”, sang in Cantonese only) I want them to hear the words are sang in a pair, which is implying the rhythm → *ti-ti*; while the single word will be *ta*. But of course, I will not teach

exactly the image of the rhythm, but only drilling on aural, clapping, and make sure they can hear the difference of the timing of the words.

11. What form of activities is graded as developing cognitive skills? List 2 -3.

Respondent:

- a. Hmm, actually quite a lot of activities related to develop their cognitive skills, let's say I use the picture score and they will know the song is moving along with the PowerPoint and imitate the movement as I run through it. Or when I asked them to follow my lead to play the rainbow bell. They can repeat my words or action once I give an order.
- b. I will say we have singing and some body movement when we sing the *Hello and Goodbye songs* and I will also summarize the whole lesson and apply at the end.

12. Any significant example of skills improvement? Please list as much as possible.

Respondent:

- a. Parents' observation: Little that I heard from the parents, but some said they would sing the song at home
- b. In-class observation: They learn to co-operate when they listen to my order.
- c. Any activity that was performed in class? Oh! We once made the shaker and they totally loved it! They kept playing at home too. Let me show you photo of this later..

13. Do you think developing cognitive skills in this early stage is important?

Respondent: Yes, of course. Because the connection between parent and child is very special and this can maintain innate feelings, plus they can interact with peers, since socialization is very important at the early stage.

14. Is there assumption that every child is musical?

Respondent: Maybe, I think it's just based on special case.

15. Is the material accessible to non-specialist practitioners?

Respondent: Yes to the classical recording because they can always find in Youtube, but no class recordings can be found online. Sometimes we do offer QR code for students to play at home too, but it's very rare.

16. Does it draw on a range of styles and cultures and present a positive image of cultural and linguistic diversity?

Respondent: Yes. We once sang a song near the end of October because it's close to Halloween. The song also called as *Halloween* (sing like... one little, two little pumpkins...) or some neutral Christmas song, *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*. At Easter we also sang and did some decoration, but not related to any religious items.

17. Does it avoid stereotypes in relation to ethnicity, gender, ability?

Respondent: Yes.

18. Does the approach advocated in the scheme fit in with in the general principles which underpin the curriculum as a whole?

Respondent: Yes. There are ways for them to be creative and artistic, such as imitating the movement for dynamics or drilling on rhythm.

19. Does it value and foster children's musical creativity?

Respondent: Yes. Lesson is not fixed as a whole, and free to add in more elements when needed. Just like I brought in the visual arts element, doing handcrafts when we have class or

simply ask them to create a movement when it's their turn to sing. They like it so much when they can make up something and let others to follow their lead.

20. Is the content relevant to children's own experience?

Respondent: Partly. I think in general they are not mature enough to build up or relate the music element that I tried to bring to class. Rather I would say, when we played the rainbow bell, I would arrange the performance order, children had to cooperate with their parent and play the rainbow bell together.

21. Does it recognize the role of aural skills and aural memory?

Respondent: Yes, around 2–3-year-old can solidly to perform the skills. They are able to clap according to the rhythm.

22. Are the activities sufficiently open-ended to ensure that children can join in at their own level?

Respondent: Pretty much. Depends on the music, I would let them to play and switch different instruments such as xylophone, boom cracker, shaker, drum, etc.

Researcher: Do you have anything else that need to add? Or clarify?

Respondent: No.

Researcher: Great! The interview is finished. Thank you for your valuable time! Our conversation today will not be used for any other purpose and all responses would be destroyed after the completion of the study. You have the rights to dismiss the research study at any time. Thank you once again!

Respondent: Hope the information is helpful to the research. Please reach me again if you need more information.

Researcher: Sure! Thank you for your help!

Appendix XI – Audio Script (Tutor B)**The Education University of Hong Kong****In-Depth Interview Transcript (Original)**

Respondent: Tutor B

Date: 18 February 2021

Place: EdUHK Pacific Coffee

Start time: 11:30 am

End time: 12:08 pm

Researcher: Thank you for accepting my invitation for this interview today. The purpose of this interview is to understand the relations between joining playgroup whether can enhance children's cognitive development. Our conversation today will not be used for any other purpose and all responses would be destroyed after the completion of the study. However, you have the rights to stop at any time. If you would like a copy of this interview, I can send you a copy afterwards. If you have any questions during the interview, please do not hesitate to ask. Are you clear?

Respondent: Yup.

Researcher: Do you mind I record in audio?

Respondent: No problem.

Researcher: Thank you. So let's begin.

1. Which part of the playgroup are you responsible of, any specific field?

Respondent: I am a lesson planner for the groups in the oldest and 3-4 year old peers. I also plan for the curriculum. Currently I am teaching the peers and ensemble class, which caters 3- to 6-year-old students. As I teach the peers group, I would also print the photo score to the parents and ask them to practice at home. Nevertheless, I was an assistant in the playgroup two years ago.

2. How long have you been working in this company?

Respondent: 3 years already.

3. What is your teaching belief?

Respondent: Mostly I want the children to be involved and engaged with movement when they express themselves with music, so they can actively participate in class. For example, I would introduce the music with the context, want them to imagine, then they will have the music sensation, and lastly to train them with movement like clapping with correct rhythm.

Researcher: Thanks for letting me know the basic information. Before I move on to the next part, let me show you the CEO's teaching belief, so you can answer my questions below.

CEO's belief: *We believe that everyone has creative and artistic potential. Appropriate cultivation can enhance personal beauty and kindness. We look forward to the future of community art schools to spread the value of art to every corner of the community based on innovation.*

4. Does your teaching belief match with the CEO's?

Respondent: Yes. I believe the context is related, but may not achieve the most of it, only progressive works can be done, since the children development is seen as a long-term process.

5. In what extent do you agree with CEO's teaching belief?

Respondent: Yes. Every child is different, and we are trying to let them explore the most of it.

6. Is there anything that you would like to modify, if there is? (i.e. curriculum, activities, vision and mission, etc.)

Respondent: Hmm.. I think most of it is alright and modified, because I always overrun anyways, hahaha. We have freedom to switch around and explore different possibilities.

7. What is the ratio of teacher and students in this playgroup?

Respondent: There are 3 tutors including me, but for students it's varied. Right now I have 8 students, really depends if the class is popular or not.

8. What is(/are) the focus (foci) of CEO?

Respondent: For sure, learn those music elements in a fun way.

9. What activities has trained students' cognitive skills? List 2 or more.

Respondent:

- a. At the first class, I usually make up some flash cards that's actually helping me out for controlling the discipline. Flash cards that are cartoon with words, for example, stop/freeze, run, sleep, clap, sit, wiggle. Children whenever see me holding the card will follow the card action, so it's easier for me to run the class.

- b. When I sing the song, I would present some body movement to imply the descending notes, like arpeggios with flow in body and do it with body percussion such as clapping with different parts of body or let them to make up innovative action.

10. What is the ratio of activities in developing cognitive skills?

Respondent: For Hello song and run through the music element takes around 10-15 mins each time. Then, I will teach the new song, really depends on the topic, we would go through the rhythm and the melody, and at last usually I don't have time to sing *the Goodbye song*. For zoom class recently, we repeat the song in different format, because the kids cannot concentrate that long, so we sing, for example, "*Gallop*" song for 10 minutes and then we end with *Goodbye song*.

11. What form of activities is graded as developing cognitive skills? List 2 -3.

Respondent:

- a. Hmm, when they have to perform my order, just like I will ask them to "run", "stop" etc. They know the word and sometimes singing will imitate me.
- b. They first would sing with easy syllable, use "la" to represent the scale , use "haha" _with gallop song, "clock tik-tok" with gallop! (PPT) It's different every time to make the atmosphere more fun and unpredictable.

12. Any significant example of skills improvement? Please list as much as possible.

Respondent:

- a. Parents' observation: Not that I can think of. Because they do not have lesson with us.

- b. In-class observation: When they do the action (movement) and can distinguish the voice of an animals, just like the song “Gallop”, talking about a horse. It’s all about audiation, imagination, imitation with animals. We basically will do it as a whole, they can recognize pretty much a lot of the surrounding things.
- c. Any activity that was performed in class? I think the music element that’s the concept or skills they gain from the class, or the basic pulse of a song. Because the action stop and freeze, run fastly or slowly, it’s actually integrated with different skills.

13. Do you think developing cognitive skills in this early stage is important?

Respondent: Yes. This can let them explore the surroundings, or take “*Ten Little Indians*” as an example, I can explain in context with them or bring a puppet to class to show them. It helps them to broaden their views and feel the timbre of the music.

14. Is there assumption that every child is musical?

Respondent: Sure, why not.

15. Is the material accessible to non-specialist practitioners?

Respondent: Yes, I will print out some notes that’s with a QR code and hand it out to their parents after class.

16. Does it draw on a range of styles and cultures and present a positive image of cultural and linguistic diversity?

Respondent: Yes, for language wise, it’s mainly picked some songs in English, rarely Cantonese or Putonghua. As a whole it’s important in element concept, we do it more likely integrated, because we put the ensemble at the end.

17. Does it avoid stereotypes in relation to ethnicity, gender, ability?

Respondent: I am neutral to it. But for my religion, I would not teach songs that is related to Halloween.

18. Does the approach advocated in the scheme fit in with in the general principles which underpin the curriculum as a whole?

Respondent: Yes. We tried to fit in and relate the items from the earlier classes.

19. Does it value and foster children’s musical creativity?

Respondent: Yes.

20. Is the content relevant to children’s own experience?

Respondent: Yes, we brought up some items that is seen from the child’s experience. Just like when I teach the “*Gallop*” song, I would explain the horse’s heel could make up the sound and can be an instrument to jam in together.

21. Does it recognize the role of aural skills and aural memory?

Respondent: Yes.

22. Are the activities sufficiently open-ended to ensure that children can join in at their own level?

Respondent: This year I let them to make up their own move, let children to contribute the song. For example, when I teach a new song, and came up to the new melody, I would ask them to think of an animal – tiger, then ask them what do they pronounce in nature? “Roar”. Then we will use “roar” to sing that phrase, so on with another phrase. Sometimes, they also imitate my movement, with random movement, well I let them to be creative and hand out some percussive instrument if they perform well.

Appendix XII – Audio Script (Parent A)**The Education University of Hong Kong****In-Depth Interview Transcript (Original)**

Respondent: Parent A

Date: 22 February 2021

Place: EdUHK C-can Open Area

Start time: 1:10pm

End time: 1:40pm

Researcher: Thank you for accepting my invitation for this interview today. The purpose of this interview is to understand the relations between joining playgroup whether can enhance children's cognitive development. Our conversation today will not be used for any other purpose and all responses would be destroyed after the completion of the study. However, you have the rights to stop at any time. If you would like a copy of this interview, I can send you a copy afterwards. If you have any questions during the interview, please do not hesitate to ask. Are you clear?

Respondent: Yes.

Researcher: Do you mind I record in audio?

Respondent: No problem! Don't worry!

Researcher: Okay. So let's start now.

1. Which kinds of playgroup have you joined?

Respondent: I have joint the parent children ensemble group, even was held by other company too.

2. How long have you been joining CEO? From age _____?

Respondent: Hmm, possibly 2 years? I have no idea because the pandemic has paused the lesson from time to time. I would say I only joined 3 seasons of playgroups, from 1 and half age.

3. Why do you want to join playgroup?

Respondent: Because I want to give the best to my child and let them to explore and experience as early as possible. Hmm, say child is just like a sponge, can absorb whatever it is taught in early stage. Plus, CEO Academy has offered a lot of resources and freedom for the kids to experience on their own.

4. Any other music class than CEO?

Respondent: Yes, definitely! She has joint a lot, just like if it is related to music, that would be the Hong Kong Children's Choir (HKCC). Other than that, will be the drawing, handcraft, ballet and English class.

Researcher: Thanks for letting me know the basic information. Before I move on to the next part, let me show you the CEO's teaching belief, so you can answer my questions below.

CEO's belief: *We believe that everyone has creative and artistic potential. Appropriate cultivation can enhance personal beauty and kindness. We look forward to the future of community art schools to spread the value of art to every corner of the community based on*

innovation.

5. In what extent do you agree with CEO's teaching belief?

Respondent: Yes! I would say... the most attractive reason that I join CEO is because it offers a lot of experience opportunities for my kid to explore and have hands-on practice, whether it's percussive instrument they offered such as drum, xylophone, shaker. Or just simply listening to music has been a great practice for my kid. Must mention that the setting is spacious, which allows my kids to dance and move around freely. Just so many possibilities to explore in variable ways!

6. Is there anything that you would like to share, if there is? (i.e. children's development – cognitive, language, audiation...)

Respondent: Hmm, in that 1 hour lesson, as a parent I basically just learn the way how the tutor teach in class, or technically that I have never thought of. Then I would also use this method to play or teach my child and apply at home. But I think in general when she joined this class, **her pulse and rhythmic sense has become stronger**. For singing, her articulation and pitch has performed well and gripped easily too.

7. What activities has trained students' cognitive skills? List 2 or more.

Respondent: Not sure if I can point out 2 activities. But 1 that comes to my mind was the game that... I forgot the name but let me explain... the tutor would hand out the "finger light" to the kid and asked them to use their fingers to find the insects flash cards that was hid around the classroom earlier. I think this "look and find" activity can help them recognize the animal, which helps the interaction. Plus always moving has brought them joy, engagement and involvement.

8. What activities has trained students' aural skills? List 2 or more.

Respondent: Oh! The rhythm game, the clapping or speaking with different wordings has helped her to speak more and listen to more words. Well, basically the rhythm sense gets stronger. Another is the game "Caterpillar", just like singing a short phrase of melody, emphasizing the ups and downs of the pitch. That hmm, actually helps them to get the sense of high and low, and when she moves with her finger, knowing what is "up" and "down". She can actually link up to escalator and tell me accordingly. Even when she sings the pitch, that reinforce her to get the pitch location.

9. Any significant group activities that helps skills improvement? Please list as much as possible.

Respondent:

- a. **Parents' observation:** This... I'm not sure, because I see how she grows every day. So not technically I know the difference.
- b. **In-class observation:** maybe when she sings the song that links to the body parts, she could sing it at home too! Plus she can dance with the song without hesitation.
- c. **Any activity that was performed in class?** I can't think of any now. Maybe tell you later if I remember any.

10. Do you think developing cognitive skills in this early stage is important?

Respondent: Of course. I think this is very important. I think below age 6, it is very important for children to learn and absorb the learnings. Not just language, but I mean the surrounding sounds can also help to develop the motor development. Plus it's good that they can hear, play and touch the materials surround us. Just like as I speak more English to her, she can

response and form sentence in English. But not Cantonese, she can only speak a partial of vocabularies rather than sentence.

Researcher: Do you have anything else that need to add? Or clarify?

Respondent: Hmm... nope. Time to back to work soon.

Researcher: Oh yes... The interview is finished. Thank you for your valuable time! Our conversation today will not be used for any other purpose and all responses would be destroyed after the completion of the study. You have the rights to dismiss the research study at any time. Thank you once again!

Respondent: If you need any additional information, please reach me again.

Researcher: Okay! Thank you!!

Appendix XIII – Audio Script (Parent B)**The Education University of Hong Kong****In-Depth Interview Transcript (Original)**

Respondent: Parent B

Date: 24 February 2021

Place: Zoom

Start time: 3pm

End time: 3:26pm

Researcher: Thank you for accepting my invitation for this interview today. The purpose of this interview is to understand the relations between joining playgroup whether can enhance children's cognitive development. Our conversation today will not be used for any other purpose and all responses would be destroyed after the completion of the study. However, you have the rights to stop at any time. If you would like a copy of this interview, I can send you a copy afterwards. If you have any questions during the interview, please do not hesitate to ask. Are you clear?

Respondent: Yes.

Researcher: Do you mind I record in audio?

Respondent: Sure!

Researcher: Okay. So let's start now.

1. Which kinds of playgroup have you joined?

Respondent: I let my children (2 girls – 2- and 4-year-old respectively) to join the parent children ensemble and let one of them to play in the kids ensemble when one of them grow older.

2. How long have you been joining CEO? From age _____?

Respondent: 2 years only. From 2 years old.

3. Why do you want to join playgroup?

Respondent: Well, first the location is so close to my place, and of course I believe music can facilitate their growth. Plus, there are various kinds of instruments for them to try and experience. For example, xylophone, rainbow bell, different kinds of drum – rain stick, percussion with different shapes, boom whacker. Nonetheless, there are activities that related to handcraft like drawing, make a self-made shaker and let them to follow the picture score to perform.

4. Any other music class than CEO?

Respondent: I also let my older kid to learn piano class, around age 4.

Researcher: Thanks for letting me know the basic information. Before I move on to the next part, let me show you the CEO's teaching belief, so you can answer my questions below.

CEO's belief: *We believe that everyone has creative and artistic potential. Appropriate cultivation can enhance personal beauty and kindness. We look forward to the future of community art schools to spread the value of art to every corner of the community based on innovation.*

5. In what extent do you agree with CEO's teaching belief?

Respondent: Yes! It's not a school in general, but it fits to its belief, I would say... it sticks to what it claims, helps the children to develop their artistic potential by offering different kinds of activities.

6. Is there anything that you would like to share, if there is? (i.e. children's development – cognitive, language, audiation...)

Respondent: As I mentioned earlier, the aural practice or drillings on the rhythm is shown when they do the clapping to distinguish the rhythm difference. Just like treating as a music appreciation and get to know the rhythm. The learning routine as they started or ended the class, they would have a song to sing together, oh the *Hello, Goodbye song*, is so much easier for them to get involved into the lesson.

7. What activities has trained students' cognitive skills? List 2 or more.

Respondent: Ya, just as I mentioned. The *Hello song* provides a routine and helps them to greet one another.

8. What activities has trained students' aural skills? List 2 or more.

Respondent: I think the game in rhythm can train their aural skills, at least ask them to clap or stop and follow can train them to listen to the tutor. Oh! Another one was interesting too! Using the rainbow bell to play the pitch that fits their name. Her name fits to the solfège name *s m d*.

9. Any significant group activities that help skills improvement? Please list as much as possible.

Respondent:

- a. **Parents' observation:** Maybe listen to the pitch and the rhythm, they become more sensitive and have a stronger motive to try and clap even they cannot follow it exactly.
- b. **In-class observation:** They can catch the pitch more easily.
- c. **Any activity that was performed in class?** N/A

10. Do you think developing cognitive skills in this early stage is important?

Respondent: Yes. I think the brain is developing from time to time. So if there is more stimulation, that will help them to grow fruitfully. Of course music treats as a great stimulation too, not limited to JUST language... but also visually, aurally and touch... These are part of the stimulations. The picture score also helps them to read too.

Researcher: Do you have anything else that need to add? Or clarify?

Respondent: No.

Researcher: Great! The interview is finished. Thank you for your valuable time! Our conversation today will not be used for any other purpose and all responses would be destroyed after the completion of the study. You have the rights to dismiss the research study at any time. Thank you once again!

Respondent: Ok.