



No need to be a musician - Low threshold musical activities for ECE

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ECE**

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The purpose of this thesis was to create a cohesive whole that consists of the theory packed thesis and a practical portfolio. The thesis contains the theoretical background, presentation of the portfolio outputs as well as the conclusion and reflection. Theoretical background consists of early childhood education and music in it, short review of what music is, how it affects well-being, what is musicality as well as main points of children's musical development.

The portfolio is a practical package of ideas for planning and implementing musical activities for children in specific goal-oriented activities as well as in small moments between planned activities. This portfolio is formed with the aim to bring the joy of music to everyone as well as providing ideas for musical education for those that need them. Link to the portfolio is at the end of the thesis.

Keywords: Early childhood education, music, musical education, musical activities, low threshold

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1 Introduction

In this chapter I will explain the form of the thesis, introduce the subject and the choice of topic.

1.1 The form of the thesis

A portfolio thesis allows a student to dive deeper into a topic of their choice within their field of study. The student gathers information on the topic and combines it into a coherent product that includes a report and a portfolio. (Laurea n.d.)

I am making my thesis in a form of a portfolio. This means that there will be a written report that will be published into Theseus and a portfolio that will be published on a yet unchosen platform online. The written report will be in English and the portfolio in Finnish. This is to make the portfolio easier to access for the professionals in the field, this will hopefully make it easier to gather feedback. The aim of the portfolio is to form a collection of tools and tips to professionals working in early childhood education to get new ideas for musical education. For this I will collect needed information and theory from literature as well as add things that I have personally found useful working in the field. The report will contain an introduction, theory, description and a link to the portfolio and a conclusion that includes reflection on the project. The portfolio part will contain different forms of materials, for example videos, links, images, and text and so on. (Laurea n.d.)

1.2 Introduction to musical education in early childhood education

Music has an important place on the early childhood education, this is due to its varied extensive benefits. Music on its own has a value as something that affects people's wellbeing and health positively. On top of this it is an extremely useful tool for children's development and, learning. (Ruokonen 2016, 13-14)

According to THL (2022) in 2020 about 77% of the 1-6-year-old children attended early childhood education. This means that while the home circumstances also affect children's musical development does the musical activities in the ECE also create the base for the future for most of the children.

According to a study about the quality of ECE in the everyday life by Karvi (2019) there is improvements to make when it comes to art-based activities. The following figure shows early childhood education professionals estimates of how often they have carried out activities that enable artistic experiences and expression within their groups (%). In this study it is seen that out of the art-based activities the musical activities were carried out the most when compared to visual arts and physical expression. 61% of those who answered reported weekly planned and goal oriented musical activities. Out of the replies only 29% stated that musical activities were daily. So, 90% of these groups had music at least weekly which does not seem too alarming. But there is still 10% who reported musical education to occur monthly or even less. This means that there are a lot of children who are left without the benefits of music.

Most reported obstacles for carrying out art education (visual arts, physical expression, and music) were structural issues; widely varying times for the children's attendance, non-standard hour childcare (vuorohoito) as well as the lack of spaces and materials. Other issues for organising the art education according to the professionals were lack of knowledge, structure of the work time and absences.

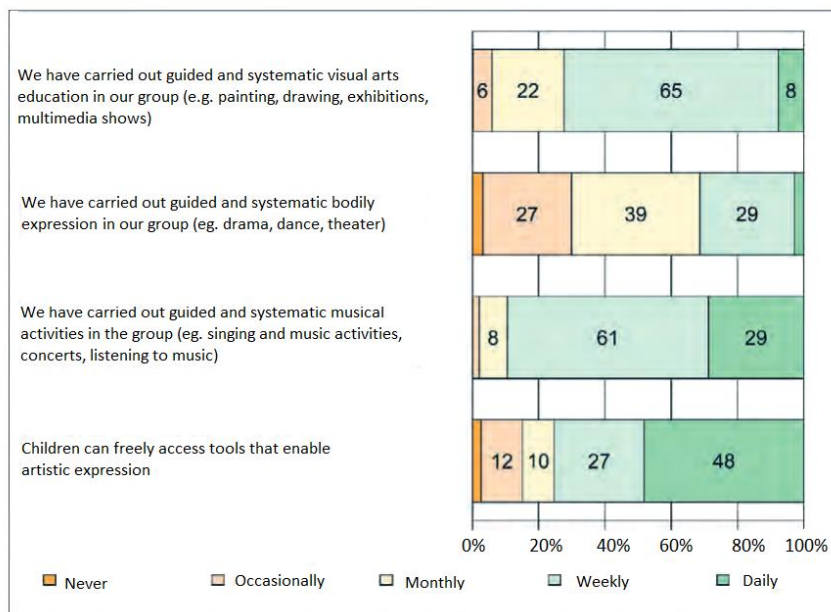


Figure 1: Karvi 2019

1.3 The choice of topic

I have worked in early childhood education as a trainee and an early childhood nanny since I graduated from high school. As a part of my studies, I have been working towards the qualification for teaching in early childhood education. I have known for years that I want to

use music as a part of my work in the future so writing my thesis about musical education in the ECE was an easy choice. As music has always been a big part of my life and I have realised during my work how valuable tool it can be I want to bring up all the simple ways that it can be included in the everyday work in the ECE world.

I have experienced some people working in ECE struggle with offering musical activities. Often this has been explained with the lack of musicality or new ideas. Whether it is the lack of ideas or confidence it is a shame that the endless possibilities of music are not getting utilized. As I cannot fix the structural issues that prevent musical education, I hope it could at least be easier to organise with these practical tips. The aim of this thesis is to dive into music in the early childhood education and musicality itself. To answer the question why music is useful and how to arm professionals with more low threshold musical activities.

2 Theoretical background

In this chapter I will briefly explain what early childhood education is and describe what are the expectations of musical education in ECE. Musicality will also be explained as well as what music is and how it affects well-being. I will also briefly go through the bases for children's musical development by the ages.

2.1 Early childhood Education

According to the early childhood education law (2018) early childhood education is a whole that is formed by goal-oriented and systematic care, upbringing, and teaching. ECE highlights the importance of pedagogy. Early childhood education can be offered in a day care unit, in a family day care unit or in a form of open early childhood education work in a suitable place. One of the objectives of ECE according to the law is to offer art based versatile pedagogical activities and to enable positive learning experiences.

In this thesis I will be concentrating on the day care work but of course the findings could be adapted to other places as well.

2.2 Music in early childhood education

According to the national core curriculum for early childhood education (2022) the aim within the field is to give musical experiences to the children alongside with strengthening their relationship and interest in music. As the children are accompanied into immersive music experiences and to observe the surrounding sound environment. They develop their

understanding of music through activities where they learn about volume and strength of sound, duration, and tonal colour. Children get different experiences of music when singing, using nursery rhymes, experimenting with a variety of instruments, listening to music, and moving to it with the educators. Children get to experience making music with their own bodies, the basic beat and rhythm in words. They are given a chance for the use of imagination and encouraged to express their thoughts as well as feelings that the music has sparked. This can happen for example verbally or visually. Children are also given a chance to create music together and practice small performances as well as to enjoy the success of the performance. Music can also be used as a tool with other methods to dive into past with music from the time of the grandparent's generation, to learn about other cultures and languages and so on.

Ahonen (2017, 200) states that early childhood education has to make sure that all the children regardless of their backgrounds get equal chances to dive into music in various ways. This means that instead of limiting music into individual activities it needs to be acknowledged and present constantly in the everyday life.

The main point of the music in the ECE is the journey of trying new things and learning instead of the final product. For example, the Christmas concert that the children perform to their parents is just a small part of the whole project. Before the actual performance there has been all the planning and practicing. This part has been where the learning happens, what kind of experiences the child has and how they come to think about music. The performance, however amazing it could be, is the cherry on top of the whole sundae. The experiences and joy of music is the main goal of ECE's musical expression, not executing certain tasks and getting evaluated based on the performance. (Ahonen 2017, 196. National early childhood education law 2022)

The National early childhood education plan (2022) creates the base for children's transversal competences. These competences contain values, skills, will and knowledge as well as the ability to use them. The NECE plan lists the following transversal competences to promote.

- Thinking and learning
- Cultural competence, interaction, and self-expression
- Taking care of oneself and managing daily life
- Multiliteracy and digital competence
- Participation and involvement.

It is natural to include the cultural competences, interaction, and self-expression into musical activities. The other competences come also as a part of the musical journey. The competence of taking care of oneself and managing daily life includes practicing emotional

skills, for which music is an excellent tool. Shared musical experiences give a chance to improve thinking and learning competences for example through helping children recognise their strengths. For multiliteracy and digital competences it is possible to for example digital musical tools. Participation and involvement are developed through the situations and activities where the professionals actively create possibilities for the children to be heard. All in all, through musical activities it is possible to develop all the transversal competencies. (Ahonen 2017, 44-59. Lindeberg-Piironen & Ruokonen 2017, 345-351)

According to Ruokonen (2016) music is nowadays mostly seen through its instrumental value. As the demand for efficiency and productivity is cutting into the time that we give to music we are losing on the benefits of it. As music has such an extensive list of benefits, we should give it more time in the field of learning.

As seen on the attached figure 2, learning music always includes three parts which are learning in music, learning about music as well as learning with music. Learning about music includes learning about different music genres and general knowledge. Learning in music means for example the readiness to play, sing as well as creative expression. Learning with music covers the ways music can be used to learn new skills and knowledge in for example social life, one's own well-being or school subjects. Music is an irreplaceable tool to all educators but as based on early childhood education plans the educators need to also bring up the value of music itself. The joy and experiences music gives are the base of why music is in the early childhood education just as well as why it is used as a tool. (Ruokonen 2016, 14-15)

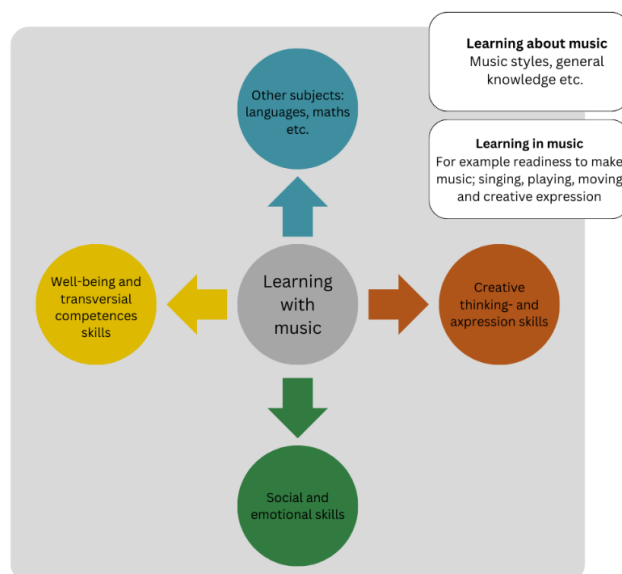


Figure 2: Ruokonen 2016, 15

2.3 Music

In this chapter I will explain what music is, which channels humans experience music through and how it can affect a person's well-being.

2.3.1 What is music?

Britannica (2023) defines music as art that combines human or instrument sounds. It follows the cultural standards regarding rhythm and melody as well as harmony in majority of Western music. Music appears in different forms in every human society and is used for countless purposes from rituals to communication and entertainment.

So, what is music made of? According to Lindeberg-Piironen (2017) music is an entity that is combined of smaller components. These components can also work on their own or be combined in different ways to create something new. Music has its order, duration, and contents as well as beginning and ending. All this forms its form and overall structure. The attached figure describes the main concepts that form music.

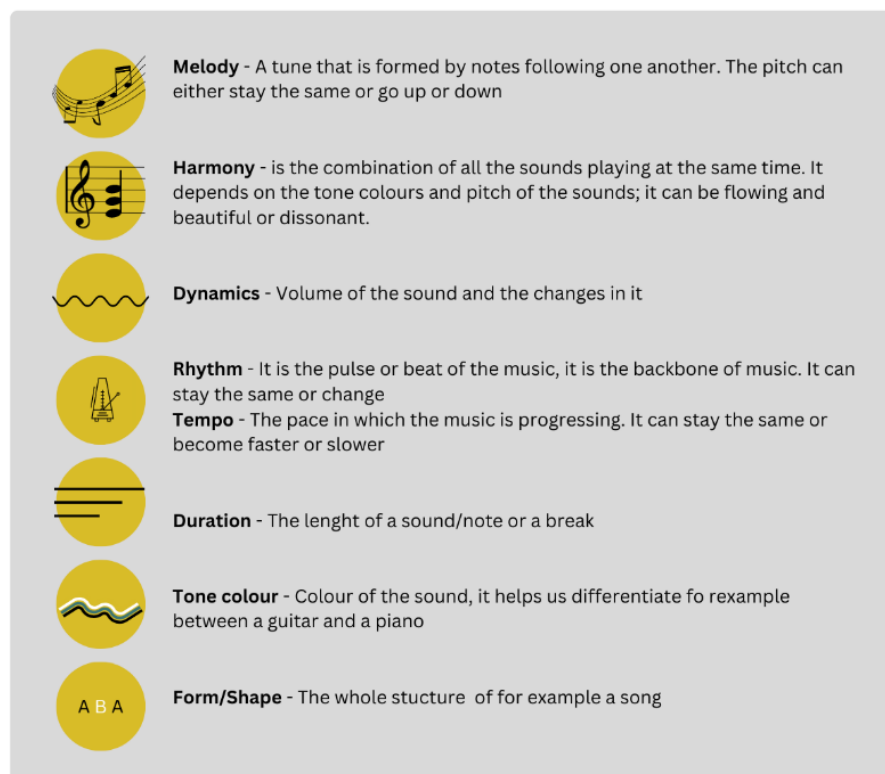


Figure 3: Ruokonen 2016, 14-15, Lindeberg-Piironen 2017, 33-35, Luukkala & Grahn 2018, 23

In this thesis music will be defined as any sounds or rhythms made with one's own body or with any instrument or object with the intention to make music. To sum it up if the sounds or noises are made with the aim to form music, it is considered as music.

2.3.2 The channels to experience music and the interaction with them

According to Lindeberg-Piironen and Ruokonen (2017) our musical channels are open even before being born. These channels that are portrayed in the figure 4 are also used to getting familiar with one's surroundings.

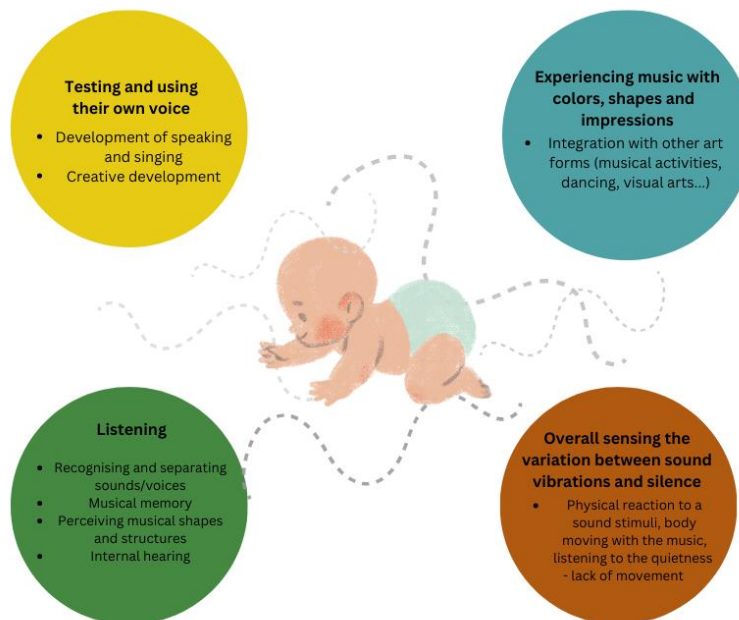


Figure 4: Lindeberg-Piironen & Ruokonen 2017, 17

Regardless of if a musical experience is private or shared every individual experiences music through their own channels and history. Person's relationship with music works just as any relationship, positive experiences feed it and help it grow stronger while negative ones put a strain on it. This is why it is important that the ECE professional creates the kind of circumstances where they can support everyone's relationship with music. (Lindeberg-Piironen & Ruokonen 2017, 18)

2.3.3 How does music affect well-being?

Music is a physical phenomenon that, affects humans on a psychological, physical, and social aspects. Music is a huge part of the life of almost every human, it is around us in many forms. We can hear music into the womb before we're born, it surrounds us in advertisement in the shops and is a crucial part of social events throughout the life span from the christening to the funeral. Music supports well-being, listening to pleasant music can for example lower the stress levels. Depending on what we listen to it can control our alertness, we can choose calm music to relax or something more energetic activate us. Music can enhance performance in tasks and can be used for rehabilitation. It extensively affects learning, especially auditory and spatial perceptive skills. Music is used for recognising emotions, regulating them, and dealing with them by either listening or playing. It develops emotional and social skills and behaviour within social settings. Musical experiences support creativity, imagination, self-confidence, trust in one's own abilities. As music supports comprehensively the development of skills and strengths on a wide range it improves the quality of life. (Ruokonen 2016, 13-14. Kaikkonen, Salo, Vannasmaa & Mäki 2020, 6-14. Huotilainen 2011, 40-42)

Music is an essential part of culture, as such parts of it are present in all human interaction. It is a living form of culture, it moves knowledge from generations to the next, it can be used as a communication tool and in integration. While children learn about musical cultures they learn about the world, get to try new ideas, roles, and things. They learn through music and can begin to find their place their culture, communities, and the world. Music brings people together as it is communal in its existence. Music can be used to raise the spirits in a situation and entertain for example birthdays, these shared experiences support inclusion. (Ruokonen 2016, 13-14. Lindeberg-Piironen & Ruokonen 2017, 20-22)

2.4 What does it mean to be musical?

Being musical is not a magical special talent that either does or doesn't exist within you. On the contrary musicality is an everyday thing just as music itself. It is a bunch of universal skills of perceiving and distinguishing music. Musicality is innate but nobody is born with the abilities to hear tonalities or play instruments. Musicality is a variety of skills that present themselves in varying degrees in different people. Most of the people are quite equally musical with each other and most of those that deviate from these are still only slightly more or less musical. Those that are particularly musical are very few and the amount of those depends notably depending on the criteria of how musicality is evaluated. Simply put, everyone is musical, just how much and in which way changes. (Nurmi 2019, 7-8)

In everyday life the ability to sing is often used to describe musicality, but this is not a fitting way to assess one's musicality. There are many things affecting singing skills, including practice, being nervous and so on. Nurmi states that everyone has the ability to improve their musical skills and learn to sing or play. And that it is impossible to state theoretical limits on how far an individual could develop their skills. (Nurmi 2019, 7-8, 15-17. Lindeberg-Piironen & Ruokonen 2017, 17)

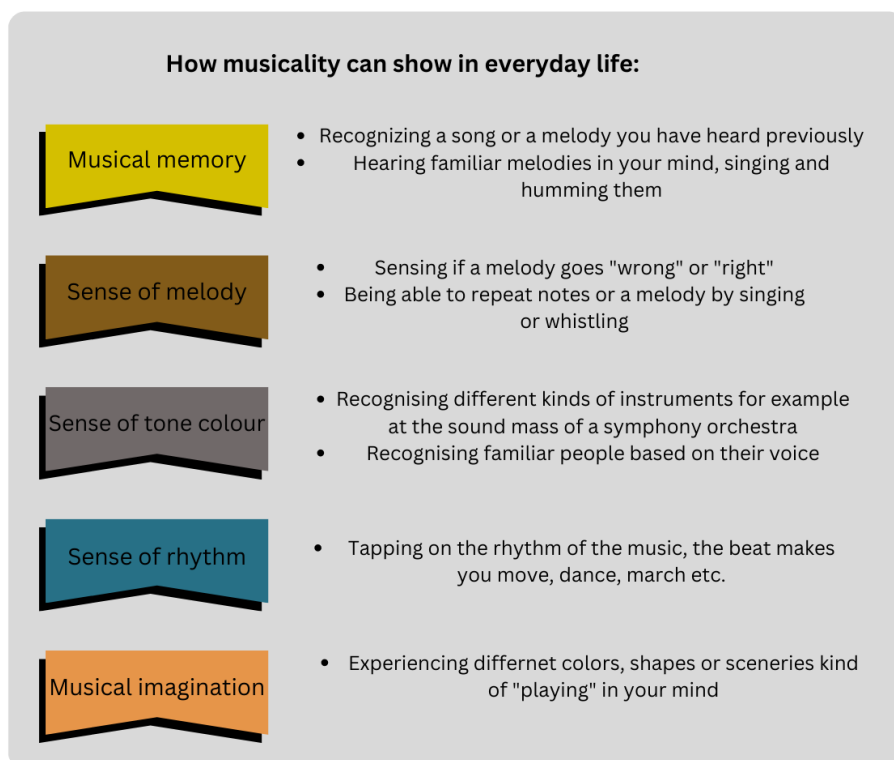


Figure 5: Lindeberg-Piironen & Ruokonen 2017, 13, Luukkala & Grahn 2018, 6

The exception to the rule that everyone is musical can be for example people with amusia. Amusia can cause for example inability to hear differences between notes or rhythms. Even this doesn't mean that the person wouldn't be able to enjoy and participate in music in other ways. For example, even if the person wouldn't be able to differentiate notes from one other they could still have a good sense of rhythm. There are people who have an average ear for music and a sense of rhythm, yet they still can't enjoy music, this is called musical anhedonia. (Nurmi 2019, 16-17)

According to Nurmi (2019, 37) there could be something on our culture that reduces the prevalence of musical skills or even could be hindering children's early musical development. He states that musical skills are notably more common in some non-Western cultures compared to ours. Back in the day many households used to have an instrument, people sang together, and folk music was a part of everyday life, but a lot has changed from that. Nurmi

takes as an example an average person from Germany, the range of songs they know is very limited and might suffer from stage fright. As comparison he brings up people in South Africa who know plenty of songs, can perform quite complicated rhythms and do not get insecure about performing. Nurmi also writes that the belief that musical skills only occur on few selected people is common in western countries. This overlaps with the tendency of viewing one's own musical skills negatively in our culture. Musicality and early development in music flourishes in societies where music is a natural part of everyday life, and people don't harbour negative feelings like shame about their musicality.

One thing mentioned sometimes when talking about musicality is absolute pitch. This means being able to name the heard notes or to repeat them fast and precisely without a reference note. In practice this means for example being able to say that the song starts from a C note without being able to check it from a piano. The absolute pitch is more likely to occur on those who have started musical studies by the age of six. There are also some other factors that affect the development of the perfect pitch, once that are known are at least persons genes, native tongue and sight. It is notably more common in Chinese students compared to American ones due to the importance of intonation in Chinese. It is also more occurring in blind than seeing people as well as people on the autism spectrum. All in all, this rare ability is in no way is it required to being musical or even a musician. (Nurmi 2019, 74-75)

According to Nurmi (2019, 74-78) beginning a musical hobby at a young age during the sensitive period naturally helps learning certain skills. This does not still mean that starting young would be necessary or even a good thing always. Young children do not possess the ability to concentrate on technique for a long time and they're not capable of independent learning. Lack of outside support and not having inner motivation yet can interfere with the interest in the music hobby. The point of children's musical education should be joy and the versatile experiences. The quality of practice and inherited inclinations seem to affect highly skilled individuals more than early starting age on the instrument. This information combined to the fact that music learning can be started at any age means that there is no reason to rush even if the goal is later professionalism.

All in all, musicality is a pot of traits in different amounts, it can be trained if the person feels like it, but it should be a thing to bring joy not something to compare when it comes to ECE. (Nurmi 2019, 15-17)

2.5 Music and children's development by ages

In this thesis I will be referring to children between the ages of 1-6 since that is the relevant age group for early childhood education.

Understanding the children's developmental stages creates the bases for planning and implementing musical activities. Naturally not all children's age and development go hand in hand as all children development is unique. On the attached figure is shown the main points of children's musical development by ages from one- to six-year-olds. (Lindeberg-Piironen & Ruokonen 2017, 63)

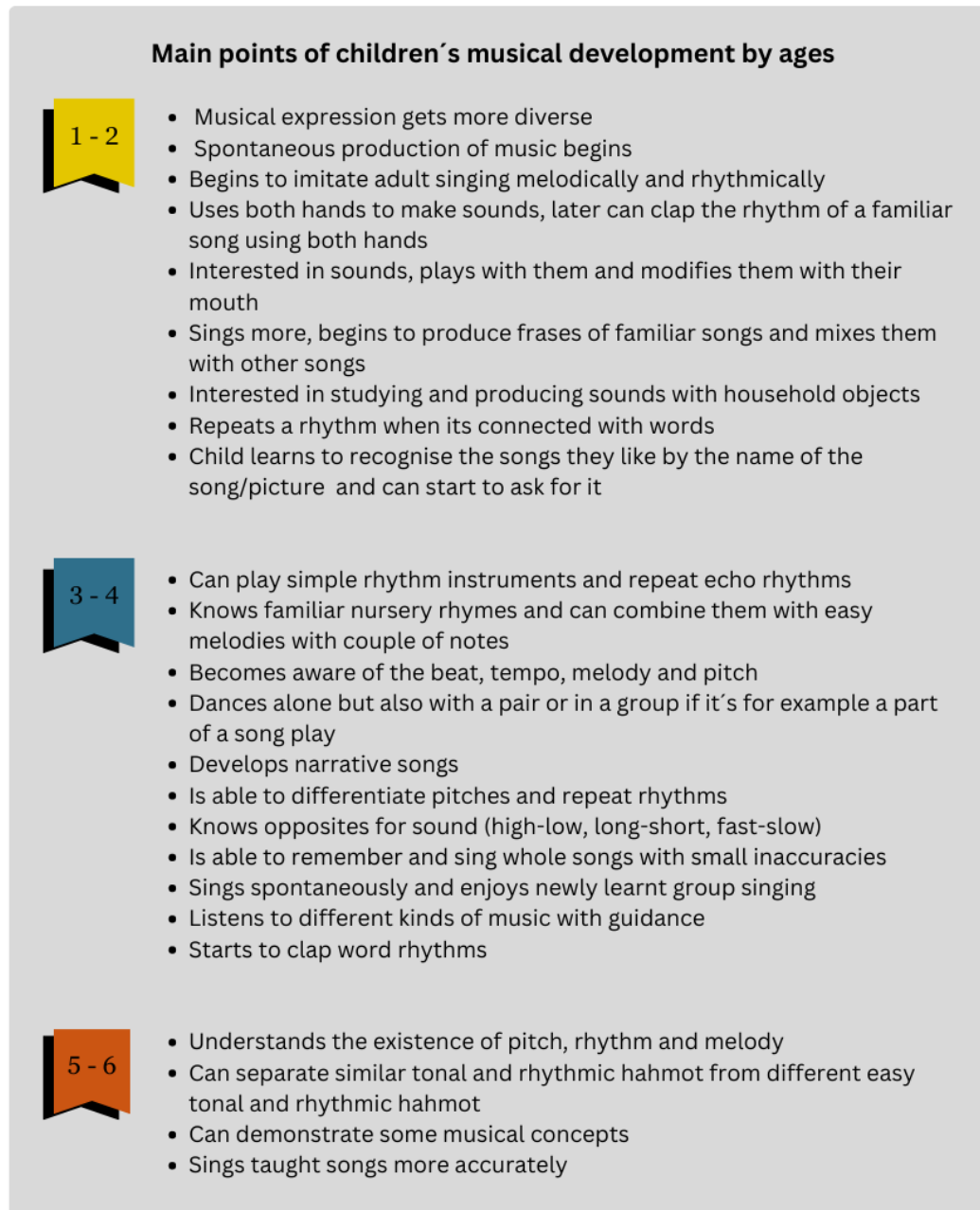


Figure 6: Lindeberg-Piironen & Ruokonen 2017, 104-124

3 Presentation of portfolio outputs

In this chapter I will explain the choice of the thesis type. I will also describe the portfolio outputs, the decisions behind them as well as the connection to the working life.

3.1 The choice of the thesis type

I chose the portfolio form for my thesis because I thought it would reflect my interests and previous skills and experience. I am in my professional and personal life more on the practical side so I wanted to produce something that could be used in working life. This combined with my interest in music as a tool and my previous experience turned into the idea to write about low threshold musical activities.

3.2 Portfolio outputs

The theory part of my thesis is in English as it is the language, I study in. As most of the early childhood education field is in Finnish, I thought it would be more practical to have the portfolio in Finnish. This is also due to the fact that it would be easier to find ECE teachers to read and give feedback on it. The following table lists the contents of the portfolio.

Table 1: Portfolio contents

1. Introduction	Introducing myself and the idea behind the portfolio.
2. Attitude is the key	Theory: What is expected of an ECE worker. What is important when organising musical activities.
3. What is it to be musical?	What is musicality made of and what kind of people are musical and how.
4. What is music made of? - Terms	Basic musical terms explained

5. Tips for planning activities	General tips and ideas on how to organize the activities and what kind of things to include and take into consideration.
6. Beginning the activities (tuokio)	Beginning the activities and some ideas for that.
7. Playing	Focus on playing body percussions as well as instruments. Ideas on how to include these in different ways and what to consider while planning and implementing activities.
8. Listening	Focus on listening as a method. Ideas on how to include listening in different ways and what to consider while planning and implementing activities.
9. Singing	Focus on singing. Ideas on how to include these in different ways and what to consider while planning and implementing them
10. Musical activity (musiikkiliikunta)	Focus on musical activities. Ideas on how to include it in different ways and what to consider while planning and implementing activities with physical movement.
11. Ending the activities (tuokion lopetus)	Ending the activities and thoughts on how to do this with younger and older children.
12. Ready activities	Ready activity songs and other activities that could be thrown in whenever needed, as a part of other activities or when transitioning from one activity/space to another.
13. Other creative activities	Integrating music with other activities. Chapter 13 is other creative activities that either combine music other kinds of creative activities or other ways to have

	creativity developing activities in different ways.
14. Other tips for everyday work	In chapter 14 is more tips for other situations in everyday life and the importance of music as a natural tool in those situations.
15. More reading materials	Chapter 15 has a short list of more reading materials for those that would be interested in learning more about.

As I wanted to produce a more practical package for the field, I chose to limit the amount of theory on the portfolio. I wanted there to be a good number of practical ideas and tips while still backing the information up with the theory. The first chapters created a solid theoretical framework for the essence of the thesis that music is for everyone, and musical activities do not have to be something massive. Then the middle of the portfolio gives ideas on implementing and planning activities. Singing, playing, listening and musical activity were specified on their own chapters since they're main methods of musical education. Integration as the fifth method is mentioned in the later chapters where I list ways to combine music with other activities.

I chose the pictures for each chapter's title from Pixabay and created all the rest based on my source materials with Canva. I wanted to use the visual components to support the text and to make the contents easier to understand.

4 Conclusions and reflection

In this chapter I will describe the feedback that the portfolio got and analyse my own learning throughout the process. I will also analyse and evaluate the whole thesis process, the final products as well as follow-up plans.

4.1 Feedback gathering

As there was no working life partner for the thesis process there was no feedback gathered during the process or for the final product. As to estimate the usefulness for the working world I wanted to get feedback on the portfolio. When I had produced most of the portfolio, I

decided to get the thoughts of some professionals before adding the finishing touches. I chose to contact people working in the field through a closed Facebook group for early childhood education teachers. The only requirement to join the group is to work as an early childhood education teacher or being about to graduate with the qualification. The educational background of the members varies from university to university of applied sciences. As these people are working in the field as teachers, they have the best understanding on what would be useful in practice.

I posted on the Facebook group asking for people who would be interested to read my portfolio and would have the time to leave feedback within a couple of days. This ensured that I would have enough time to go through and analyse the feedback. I stated that feedback would be appreciated from both people who are interested in music or have experience with it and those who are not so much into it or lack experience. This way there would hopefully be a variety of answers from different viewpoints and the feedback would cover many experiences about the usefulness.

The link to the portfolio and the feedback form was sent to the participants via Facebook messenger. As the platform for the feedback form, I chose Google Forms due to it being easy to access with a link and not requiring the participants to login. The ways Forms also gathers the answers to bar charts as well as making it possible to read individual answers was beneficial as well.

Within 12 hours from posting 15 people replied to me and I decided that would be a reasonable sampling for the limited time I had for going through and analysing the answers. The links to the portfolio and feedback form was sent to the ones who were interested as a private message.

4.1.1 The feedback form

The goal for the questions in the feedback form was to establish whether the portfolio would be useful in practice. Furthermore, the questions were formed in a way that they would indicate the quality of certain aspects of the portfolio. These were readability, visuality, the information (both theoretical and practical) as well as the overall length of it. Free feedback was formed to catch anything that the previous questions could have missed. None of the questions were marked as compulsory so the participants could leave feedback even if they did not want to answer all the questions this way nobody would be limited out of answering.

While forming the question form, I was not sure whether the middle option to the first three questions should be “I don’t know” or “neutral”. I ended up choosing the former but after

reading the answers I thought it could have been better to have the option “neutral” or “neither agree nor disagree” on it. Technically this does not change the results as the middle option is still counted as not agreeing or disagreeing with the statement. But if the questionnaire would be a part of a study there would be a difference between not knowing and not agreeing or disagreeing.

The feedback form was formed in the following way:

Assess on a scale from 1 to 3

(1= I disagree, 2= I don't know, 3= I agree)

1. Contents of the portfolio were clear and easy to understand. (Reading)
2. The portfolios appearance is clear and orderly. (Visuals)
3. I learned new theoretical knowledge while reading the portfolio.
4. I learned new practical things/ways to work while reading the portfolio.

Asses on a scale from 1 to 3

(1 = Too short, 3 = Appropriate, 4 = Too long)

- 5.The portfolio's length was good.

Give feedback, no word limitations

6. Was something missing from the portfolio? What?
7. Was something/some part especially good in the portfolio? What?
- 8.Open feedback:

4.2 Feedback analysis

11 people out of the 15 to whom I sent the portfolio link and the feedback form answered. All the people answered the 5 statements, 10 people also replied to the open questions 6-8.

Statement 1: Contents of the portfolio were clear and easy to understand. (Reading)

Nine out of the 11 people agreed on the statement about readability that the contents of the portfolio were clear and easy to understand. Although nobody fully disagreed with the

statement, two chose the option “I don’t know”. Based on this clear majority viewed the portfolios readability as good and those who did not still did not think there was any major problems.

Statement 2: The portfolios appearance is clear and orderly. (Visuals)

Ten out of the 11 people thought that the visuality of the portfolio was good, the appearance was clear and orderly. Only one person chose the option “I don’t know”. Based on nobody disagreeing with the visual side of the portfolio and almost all the answers agreeing I concluded that the visual side worked well.

Statement 3: I learned new theoretical knowledge while reading the portfolio.

3. Opin uutta teoria tietoutta lukiessani portfolioita.
11 vastausta

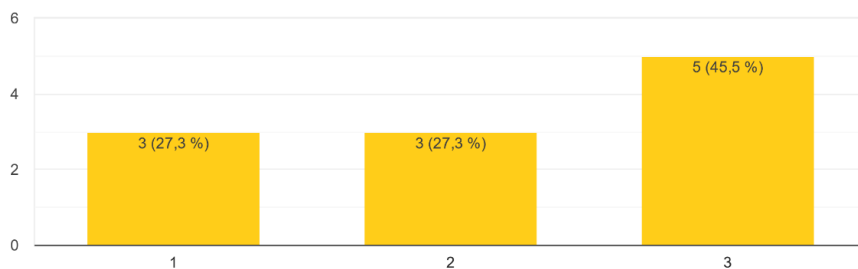


Table 2: Statement 3

This question divided people’s opinions into all three categories. Three people stated that they did not learn new theoretical knowledge. Also, three people answered that they were not sure if they did. Still five, so, almost half of the people stated that they learned new theoretical knowledge. Based on this most of the people were not sure or did learn something new, some of these answers were explained later by the open questions answers.

Statement 4: I learned new practical things/ways to work while reading the portfolio.

4. Opin uutta käytännön asiaa/toimintatapoja lukiessani portfolioita
11 vastausta

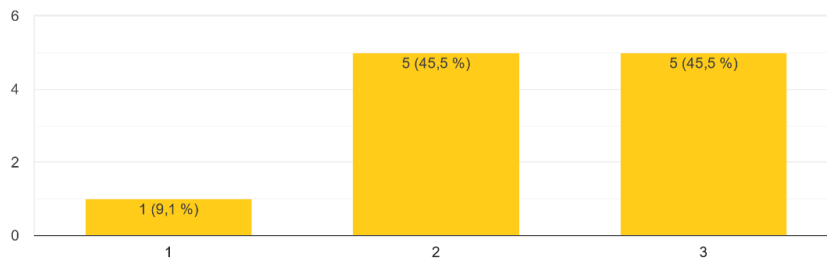


Table 3: Statement 4

One person answered that they did not learn new practical things or ways to work. The rest of the answers was divided evenly between five who learned new things and five who were not sure. Based on these results I concluded that the practical content of the portfolio would be useful for people working in the field.

Statement 5: The portfolio's length was good.

5. Portfolio oli sopivan mittainen.
11 vastausta

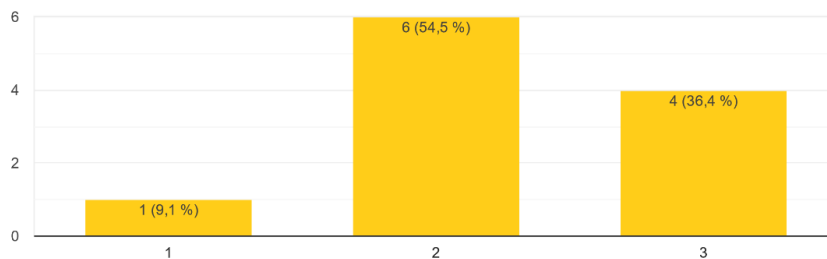


Table 4: Statement 5

Six out of the eleven people thought that the portfolios length was good. Four stated that it was too long and one that it was too short. Majority thought that the extent of the portfolio was suitable, with around third of the people stating that it is too long. Due to this I kept the portfolio within the length it was during the feedback gathering and concentrated on making corrections to already existing materials.

Question 6: Was something missing from the portfolio? What?

The most brought up thing ended up being concrete tips, four people thought that there could have been more of those. Some were added after the feedback analysing as I was finishing the portfolio. The second most mentioned was rhythmic, this was something I was already planning on including into the portfolio with also mentioned body percussions.

One person mentioned that a bigger variety of sources would be good since the books that I was using as my source material were quite popular. The same person also mentioned that they had quite some previous experience on the subject. Due to this I concluded that the materials I was using would still be enough for people with less experience. I was tempted to add more materials and sources after reading this comment. I figured that with the time left on the whole process and given the feedback that the portfolio length was good I decided against it.

At this point of the portfolio process, another thing that was brought up was spelling errors and long sentences by three people. This was something that I corrected later after I had finished the content and started with the fine tuning.

As specific activity interests were mentioned outside musical activities as well as instrument building. The latter I added onto the integration part, but I chose not to do a separate chapter about outdoor musical activities. I decided that it was enough to have other ideas and specify on other chapters that musical activities could be done in any environment. Also brought up was emphasizing the spontaneous use of music in everyday work more than it already was. I took this idea and tried to incorporate it into wherever necessary when finalizing the portfolio.

Question 7: Was something/some part especially good in the portfolio? What?

The most mentioned things were the good visuals of the portfolio and the number of practical tips both mentioned by 5 people. It was also stated that the portfolio was clear and that there was a good amount of theory. This balance was something I had focused on since for the portfolio to be practical it should contain less theory while still having enough to back up the practical side.

Two people said that the portfolio felt encouraging to read, the writer's personal interest on the subject was and it was also stated that the attitude of the text made it clear that music is for everyone. This was good to hear as the essence of my thesis was that everyone can organise musical education.

The other things that were mentioned were that the portfolio was easy to take in, practical, and felt like a complete package. One person said the structure was good, also the versatility

of the materials got mentioned as well as the direct links into song materials. All of this backed up that the way I had organised theory and practice within the portfolio and how the content was accessible to the reader.

Question 8: Open feedback

The portfolio was described as a useful package that would especially work for beginners. Two people stated that because their previous knowledge they did not learn anything new, one still mentioned that the portfolio was a good reminder about many things. One person also stated that regardless of their previous knowledge they learned something new. It was to be expected that someone with a lot of experience on the subject would not learn anything new on it. As this person had written some of my referencing material it made even more sense. Still getting the feedback from another person that after years of organising musical activities they learned something new was very encouraging.

Five people said that they either got ideas from the portfolio, could use it in the future or would use it if they had access to it on the next semester. One person even messaged me after giving the feedback asking if they could access the portfolio after it will be published. Based on all of this I concluded that the portfolio was working well and continued with the premade plan while adding some small details that got mentioned in the feedback.

4.3 Analysis of the portfolio process

The portfolio process was very challenging to me, especially in the beginning I was having hard time understanding what exactly I was doing and what form to follow. I required quite a lot of guidance to move forward on each part of the process as well as rather a long time to process between each step. Due to these issues, I did not have quite as much time as I would have liked to have for finishing touches.

The theoretical report was a more challenging process as it was naturally more theoretical. As I started the whole thesis process on this part the whole idea was still forming. Throughout the process I slowly figured out the form for this thesis and the work got easier.

The portfolio was faster and easier to make compared to the theoretical part. This was to be expected since it was less formal and was more on the practical side. As I had concluded the theoretical framework by the time, I started with the portfolio I had a comprehensive understanding on the subject of music within the ECE. I used a lot of my previous knowledge and combined it with all the new information I gathered during the process.

4.4 Analysis of the final product

Based on the feedback from the early childhood education teachers I have concluded that the portfolio could be useful as a booklet or other form. It could be useful specifically for those who do not have a lot of experience about musical education in ECE. Based on the feedback there could still be something new for those who have worked on the subject more. At least it could work as a reminder not to take musical education too seriously, it is important but should be enjoyed. So, all in all if there could be some future use for the portfolio, for now it won't be developed further since I do not have a working life partner that could use it.

I am quite happy with how the portfolio turned out. There would always be more ideas to write down, but it turned into a quite balanced package between the theory and practice. I feel that the way it was compiled is easy to use and the contents work for the intended use. As for the theoretical report I feel that taking into account the issues with starting the whole process the final product turned out good. While it could be longer it contains all the essential theory and concepts on the matter.

The two parts of the thesis; theoretical report and the portfolio form a coherent whole. The goal was to form a deep dive into the matter of music in the early childhood education setting and a practical portfolio that was backed up by the theory on the subject. The thesis manages to fill these objectives.

4.5 My own learning from the portfolio

I feel that I learned a lot during the thesis process. I had quite some practical knowledge on the subject from my previous work and volunteer experience, but I was lacking on the theoretical side. I gained significant amount of understanding on why many things are done the way they usually are. While reading I realized many of the activities I have seen in practice, or I read about are practicing so many more things on children that I expected. I became aware that while the main goal of an exercise can be for example practicing rhythms it might at the same time have multiple other learning experiences underneath. I previously knew that music is a good tool but during the process I still learned so many new ways it can be useful. I did not know before hand for example on how well musical activities can be tied to transversal skills or how well they can train other goals issued by the national ECE plan.

Naturally I picked up a lot of new practical ideas or ways to alter the activities I had implemented before. I also feel that my guidance skills improved while writing the portfolio. I reflected a lot on the methods I use and chose into the portfolio while explaining specifically how some activities are implemented and why.

I also learned a lot about musicality. While I have been aware that everyone is musical in different ways, I was not aware of all the ways it can appear. I had for example never thought that such simple things as recognizing your friends voice or separating a violin from a guitar by listening to them would be part of the sense of tone color.

I feel that the whole process of this thesis has improved my sense of myself as a professional. While reading on the subject and compiling the report and the portfolio I learned a lot of information and practical knowledge that I can use in the future. I also felt that as I got feedback from people working as early childhood teachers my work got validation through the feedback. This naturally supports my own belief in my skills, knowledge, and work. While I was reading through the feedback, I realized that one of the people who responded had written some of the materials that I had used. It was naturally interesting to hear what a person who's work I used had to say about my portfolio. While the portfolio was not ready at that point, I got constructive feedback on how to improve. It was especially encouraging to read that my text was conveying that the essence of musical education is joy, and it is for everyone. For me the knowledge that people think that I have made something useful that emphasizes on happiness and learning is an important thing on my professional journey.

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Appendix 1: Link to the portfolio

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