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Revisiting video data to research children's involvement when engaged in purposeful musical activity

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Abstract

This paper discusses the value of using video recordings to support reflective practice. We investigated how video can be used to revisit events to evaluate the teaching and learning experience. Video data were used in a child-initiated music project emerging from planned group activities by a music teacher. The quality of the children's engagement in the music group was viewed through an observation format that focused on levels of involvement. The context for the research consisted of formal structured music sessions. The video allowed us to identify responses from the children to the group activities and to interpret signs of shared in-depth learning. We unpack the video data by using the involvement rating scale from the early childhood observation scales, Reflect, Respect, Relate. Through this exercise we were able to observe and analyse examples of the children's musical understandings. We conclude that utilising video to retrospectively evaluate involvement has the potential to enhance understanding of the quality of learning.

Keywords: Early childhood music, group learning, video data, involvement engagement

Introduction

When a music maker belongs in a community and identifies with that community, the community is increased by the gift, and even the music itself is increased (Angelou, 2004, p. ix).

This research paper was designed to explore the potential of revisiting recorded observations to explore the relationship between children's involvement in events and potential for in-depth learning. Of interest was the role that video recording can play in designing practice that stimulates children's involvement so the experiences become part of their world view (Piaget, 1960), in this case, their musical world view. The data were revisited retrospectively in order to develop a deeper understanding of the music the children engaged in during a specific project and to evaluate musical experiences by examining the children's response through levels of involvement (Laevers, 2007; DECS, 2009). Of particular interest was observing a group of children and the learning that can take place in such a context. In early childhood teacher programs, the idea of working with children in groups is often considered problematic as there is an understanding the content will be simplified to appeal to the largest number in the group (Collins & Kavanagh, 2013). However, the Reggio Emilia approach allows for the notion of the individual within the group (Rinaldi, 2006) and this was an idea that was supported from examining the observations and involvement ratings that were conducted for this study.

The focus of this research was the use of video recordings to observe teaching and learning in the context of group music sessions. The teacher in the videos had planned a series of music appreciation exercises for a group of children but these plans were derailed when the children became interested in one of the music examples and over a period of eight weeks enjoyed the video of *The Magic Flute* as a serial (Taymor, 2010). The children's experiences of the Magic Flute project have been explored elsewhere (Nyland, Acker, Ferris & Deans, 2015) and this paper specifically had the aim of concentrating

on the use of video for evaluation of learning events and for future practice as children's interests and competence were revealed in the recorded data. We use Laevers' (2007) theories about engagement and involvement as measures of children's learning to interpret the video data collected during the project. The Laevers' involvement rating scale from the South Australian quality assessment resource, *Reflect, Respect, Relate* (DECS, 2009; Laevers, 1994), was conducted three times to ascertain how engaged, committed, connected, involved and invested a group of preschool children could be when working co-operatively on a shared project that was quite abstract and ephemeral. The video recordings provided an opportunity to revisit the project as a whole (Nyland et al., 2015) and theorise about possibilities for pedagogical practice in the future.

In this paper, we provide an introduction to the research on using video material for critiquing and informing practice in relation to the importance of children's involvement (Csikszentmihályi, 1992; Laevers, 2007) and the value of revisiting events (Rinaldi, 2006). This can be particularly significant when studying young children and music as responses can be revealing but fleeting. Laevers' (1994, 2007) theories of involvement as an evaluative tool (Pascal, Bertram & Ramsden, 1997) are described and the instrument used for this research, the involvement scale (the Leuven scale) from *Respect, Reflect, Relate* (DECS, 2009), is presented. The video data from the research project are described and interpreted using the involvement rating scale. The theoretical approach adopted for discussion and implications is based on Laevers' (1994) work on involvement, Piaget (1960) on the development of a world view and Vygotsky's (1962) theory of the role the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) plays in learning and the importance of context. For this research Csikszentmihályi's (1992) conceptualisation of the concept of involvement, which he termed 'flow' (St John, 2016), has also been significant.

The question: What can studying children's involvement in a group music activity tell us about the quality of the learning and the musical experience?

Literature review

Using video in research

Video has featured in the development of social research in many disciplines including education and in recent times has become a substantial resource for situated studies. Researchers have started to unpack its theoretical and methodological potential and limitations (Goldman, 2009; Bezemer & Mavers, 2011; Heath, Hindmarsh & Luff, 2010; Knoblauch, Schettler, Raab & Soeffner, 2006; Sparrman, 2005).

Jewwit (2011), summarised the advantages and benefits of using video-data in research:

- Video can support an exploratory research design and extend data discovery.
- It can be reopened for later analysis and capture things not noticed at the time being present.
- Participants can use the camera to extend the researcher access to their life words.
- Video is shareable - participants can be invited to reflect and discuss it.
- It can be used effectively to support empirical comparison of strategies, style, and interaction across a data set.
- Video enables researchers to re-visit a moment 'not as past but formerly present'.
- It can re-awaken the memories and experiences of a researcher or participant (p. 8).

Video analysis can range from discovery-oriented approaches, with intent to expose unexpected phenomena, to top-down iterative approaches in which the records are used to identify and code activities that have been mostly conceptualized before the data were collected (Derry, 2007). Video recordings can also serve as a resource for assessing learning, either as part of a research study or as a core part of an instructional program (Hong &

Trepanier-Street, 2004). One of the advantages of using videos to assess learning is that they can include more information than can be recorded by paper-and-pencil recordings of observations and can be returned to over and over to provide further insights (Wang & Lien, 2013).

Research on how people learn with and from video, focusing specifically on the role of video in teacher learning, has become more popular in the past decade (Seidel, Blomberg & Renkl, 2013; Seidel, Strümer, Blomberg, Kobarg, Schwindt, 2011; Tripp & Rich, 2012). Learning can take place on two related levels – what and how individuals learn as they interact with video over time; and the learning that occurs at the system level, that is, changes in how a group of viewers use and learn from video over time. In this research video observations of a group of children participating in a formal music group have been revisited and analysed using a formal rating scale to indicate children's involvement in their learning.

Revisiting observations using video

Collecting data, during the course of an experience for the purpose of later reflection, interpretation and assessment is a process used frequently within the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education (Rinaldi, 2004). This process is considered to be part of documentation of learning that encourages "visible listening" (Rinaldi, 2006; p. 68), or "making perspectives explicit" (Dahlberg, 2011, p. 225). Listening is a primary task of the documentation process. Documentation helps the teacher, or researcher, to listen to the voice of the child, whether that voice is audible or visual and heard in words or actions. Such a record makes it possible to listen to the voice of the child in the context of relational exchanges.

The process of documenting can be undertaken with a variety of tools (Edwards, Gandini, Forman, 1998). Video can be employed to capture and share young children's capabilities and understandings (Mitchell, 2007). It is useful for situations where young children's competence may be overlooked, such as with pre-verbal children (Nyland, 2009) or those whose communication is non-verbal (Cox Suárez & Daniels, 2009). From the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education we get the statement that children have 100 languages with which they can express their thoughts and understandings (Malaguzzi, 1988). To be listening to the child means that we need to listen to the many ways the child is communicating. Video becomes an important tool to assist us to listen, since it allows for the "capture of things not noticed" (Jewitt, 2011, p. 8). Things not noticed often occur during a group time and when the activity has a musical focus the symbolic languages available for the child to express sympathy for an idea are myriad. This is particularly important for this retrospective use of video data as we can look for subtle signs that indicate involvement, such as eye movement.

Documentation allows us to also observe the child within the group, as well as the child interacting with the group (Acker, 2008). It is these interactions that make it possible for children to develop a collective story as their ideas and theories evolve (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 2011). The child is able to learn more with others than they would on their own, as other people's ideas build a scaffold for their own to grow (Malaguzzi, 1988; Piaget, 1960; Vygotsky, 1962). The momentum of the group is also conducive to children entering the flow of events (Csikszentmihályi, 1992). As this project developed over eight weeks, video allowed us to preserve and revisit:

> a collective story of a set of children… It extends the dance of life in the classroom from a moment of performance that disappears as soon as it is completed, to a dance that can be reviewed and studied by teachers as they analyse what worked well and where to go next. (Raikes & Edwards, 2009, p. 119)

By revisiting video documentation, we could observe multiple children within the group over time as their collective story blossomed. Using the involvement scales, we considered both the child within the group, and collective experience (DECS, 2009).

The importance of involvement

The RRR involvement scale, described below, was influenced by research into the meaning of children's levels of involvement when engaged in an activity where deep motivation is displayed. Intense, self-motivated concentration is thought to lead to long term learning (Csikzentmiháyli, 1992; Laevers, 2007; St John, 2016). Researchers who have been associated with the role of involvement in children's learning include those cited above as well as Vygotsky (1962), Rogoff, (2003) and Dewey (1910). Laevers also considers approaches to early childhood education that are focused on children's dispositions, interests and learning can reflect a focus on the importance of involvement (Woods, 2016). The focus of the task is also of import and music as a language of childhood has long been considered a crucial education experience in early childhood in its own right.

Pascal, Bertram and Ramsden (1997) have worked closely with Laevers' theories of involvement through the Effective Early Learning project. They differentiate between strong feelings towards an activity that may be emotionally motivated, for example, levels of distress a child may display when being asked to get off a swing and the learning that will come from intense, self- motivated attention to a task. The focus of this present research and revisiting was a series of interconnected group activities. The educator provided the time and space for the children to respond and interpret the adult musical material (St John, 2016). The invitation for engagement came from the music and the music presentation was sufficient for group involvement (Pascal, Bertram & Ramsden, 1997; Csikzentmiháyli, 1992). The children as a group had a relationship with the educator and the music. As St John (2016) writes: "this collaborative environment allows the learners in community to collectively experience the exhilaration of enabling each other to belong, to grow, and to learn" (p. 51).

The videos of the music sessions give a durable record over and the opportunity to examine in detail children's responses and interpretations of the music and the dynamic of the group by giving a cohesive frame for a collaborative group relationship. The method used here to reflect and interpret these records is through the application of the RRR involvement rating scale (DECS, 2009).

Involvement rating scale from RRR

The *Reflect, Respect, Relate* (RRR) Observation Rating Scale is a sampling tool used to help focus observation on predictors and outcomes of quality in order to assess the quality of the education setting. "The quality of the relationship between educator and children and the level of educator's engagement in children's learning are *predictors of quality* while the level of the children's wellbeing and involvement in their learning are seen as *outcomes of quality"* (DECS, 2009, p.80).

In this research, the involvement scale was employed as a measure to interpret how a group of young children were exposed to a project exploring the *The Magic Flute* and had created an environment where they appeared to be engaged at a high level in the learning activities offered (Nyland et al., 2015). The rating scales were designed for both formal and less formal use. The less formal approach includes the aim of observing "a small group of children for a particular purpose" (DECS, 2009, p. 19) and for this research we explored the children's interest in the group activity and this prolonged interest became a driver for a situation that introduced new ideas to the children, the teacher, parents and observers and made the adults rethink developmental ideas about children's competence.

Many researchers have used the Involvement Scale, which is taken from the *Leuven Involvement Scale for Young Children* (LIS-YC) (Laevers, 1994) as it has been a popular research instrument in the United Kingdom, Europe, Australia and New Zealand for the past 25 years (e.g., Papatheodorou, Luff & Gill, 2013; Woods, 2016). Researchers who have conducted involvement studies include Pascal, Bertram and Ramsden (1997) in their work with the *Effective Early Learning Project* in the UK, Paige-Smith and Craft (2011) who looked at group levels of

engagement and practice based research projects like the Western Adelaide Shores Partnership Early Years Network (DECS, 2010) who opted to use the Involvement Scale in an on-going study across eight early childhood centres, and Ebbeck et al. (2011) who used the scales pre- and post- implementation of a socio-constructivist early childhood curriculum to assess the quality of the approach in Singapore.

The research

The setting

This research took place in an early learning centre for children aged three to six years old. The centre provided a specialist arts based program for children and participated in research. The specific context was a group music session provided for children on a weekly basis. Mozart's *Magic Flute* was presented to the children as part of a planned music appreciation section of the weekly group music session. The children started to watch the Metropolitan Opera's film performance of *The Magic Flute* and at the end asked for more. What was meant to be an exercise presented in one week grew into a fully-fledged project that was video recorded over a period of eight weeks.

The participants

The participants in this research were a specialist music educator and 15 four-year-old children (10 girls and 5 boys) who attended the early learning centre.

Methodology and method

As this paper presents an active exploration of the importance of involvement in learning and the value of using revisiting to analyse levels of involvement we have used *The Reflect, Respect, Relate (RRR) Observation Rating Scale* (RRR) (DECS, 2009) to analyse our observations.

The Involvement Scale has nine signals (Table 1).

Table 1. Respect, Reflect, Relate; p. 82.

Involvement (Leuven Involvement Scale for Young Children, Laevers ed. 1994)
Observe children • concentration • energy • complexity/creativity • facial expression and posture • persistence • precision • reaction time • verbal utterances/language • satisfaction
Concentration, Energy, Complexity and Creativity, and Persistence are the four essential signals that must be present for sustained, intense involvement.

These signals of a child's involvement are assessed as high, medium or low, based on comparing the observed activity of the child to a description of the signals. These ratings are then summarised to give a rating of between 1 and 5, 1 indicating low involvement, and 5 indicating high involvement. A score of 3.5 is considered to be the lowest score for a supportive learning environment in relation to the involvement scale.

These involvement scores given for each sample observation of child's involvement are averaged in order to find the mean score for the setting.

The scales were designed to be used formally and informally to analyse four areas of experience. Only the involvement scale has been used here as the focus of group involvement is a reflection of the learning experience offered (Dewey, 1910; Laevers, 1994; Rogoff, 2003). The involvement scale was designed for assessing the quality of a learning environment. The physical space and content are important aspects of the learning environment. The observations for the scale were performed six times across three of the eight video recordings from weeks one, five and eight. Two children were chosen at random at the beginning of each of the recordings and then the involvement scale was conducted five minutes after the beginning of the streaming of opera *The Magic Flute*. Each of the six observations took place approximately 30 minutes into each music session.

The data

The following data are provided as an example of how the involvement scales were applied to the video observations. First are two examples of our observations, descriptions of the observation video, and analysis. Following this are the involvement scale ratings for the six observations given at the beginning, middle and end of the eight weekly music sessions, using the Leuven involvement scale in RRR.

Observation of Lili

The Magic Flute film is being streamed and projected on the wall of the music room. Lili sits with her legs folded underneath her, one shoulder turned towards the screen, her head turned towards the screen. Her hands are still, without movement, in her lap. Her mouth is slightly open. The teacher describes how the singers' faces are painted black to make them seem more magical. Veronica is calling out in excitement, describing what she sees, but Lili's eyes remain focused on the screen. For the five minutes of this observation, despite her slightly awkward pose, Lili remains motionless, only her eyes moving to follow the puppets on the screen.

Analysis of Lili's involvement

Concentration

We can see that Lili's attention is directed towards the activity and she is not distracted from her intense concentration.

Energy

Energy can be seen in Lili's her mental energy showing on her face and her controlled movement.

Complexity and Creativity

While "more often than not, complexity involves creativity" and the expression of new or personal ideas (*RRR*; pg.82) in this instance complexity is evidenced by her unbroken attention and her alert posture.

Persistence

Her persistence can be seen in her full attention and energy focused on the activity, she is not distracted and her activity is sustained throughout the entire video watching process.

Observation of Veronica

Veronica's legs are crossed. She leans her head and shoulders forward and up towards the screen, her mouth slightly ajar. Her hands are in her lap. She holds two fingers out stiff as if frozen for a moment or two. Her foot taps out the rhythm. The teacher describes the beautiful ladies. "They have their faces blacked out and white puppets on their hands, to make them seem more magical." "Puppet hands!" calls out Veronica, looking up to the teacher and smiling as she speaks. She returns to watching, her foot rising and falling with the pitch of the music. She suddenly turns to the teacher, "Me, me, me, me, me," she says. "They all want to be queen," the teacher extrapolates. She returns to watching. Knowing the story from reading the picture story book, Veronica turns and says, "When are they going away?" "Soon," says the teacher. She returns to watching. Another child asks a question but Veronica remains motionless, her eyes watching the screen. "They don't kiss him!" she calls out. She briefly looks away from the screen to come closer to the teacher and lean on her legs. "Do you know what happens next?" the teacher asks the children. "He wakes up!" calls out Veronica.

Analysis of Veronica's involvement

Concentration and Energy

We see Veronica's energy in her exuberant switches between expressing her thinking, and concentrating on the screen. She is using prior knowledge of the story to follow closely and comment.

Posture

Her posture is directed towards the activity, she leans into it, and later onto the teacher she is engaging with. The foot movement also expresses a bodily response to an element of the music.

Persistence

Persistence can be seen in the duration of activity. The opera had been streaming for 10 minutes by the conclusion of our observation, and the observation began 30 minutes after the beginning of the music session. Whilst Veronica moves about

and speaks to the teacher often, she does so to express the connections she is making between story and screen.

Verbal Utterances/language

Veronica expresses her thoughts and mental connections, predicting what will occur. She shares them spontaneously and quickly (showing her quick reaction time, another signal of involvement).

In this next section, the rating scales for 6 children are presented, including Veronica and Lili. These scales can be combined to indicate individual involvement and an overall assessment of the activity as a group exercise.

Discussion of the RRR results for the six children

Ratings were consistently high in the sample across the eight-week program, showing a sustained involvement by the children in a complex program that was meaningful to them. As described above an involvement score of 3.5 indicates a quality program and here we see ratings of between 4 and 5 and an average score of 4.75.

Revisiting video footage and applying the involvement scale enabled us to see subtle and varied responses to the music program. Lili and Veronica reacted in different ways to the opera. We see from Lili's observation a child who is motionless, and from Veronica's, a child who is moving, shifting

Involvement Scale rating sheet: 6 children observed during 3 music sessions

Involvement rating scale from RRR (DECS, 2009)

Veronica's Involvement Rating

Rating Observation 1: Time after commencement of music session: 31.21-37.21 Week 1			
Brief description of Observation Context: Beginning of opera, singers applying makeup, puppets: dragons, beautiful ladies, birds begin			
Signal	Low, Med, High	Combined rating	Notes
Concentration Energy Complexity & creativity Facial expression & posture Persistence Reaction time Verbal utterances/language Satisfaction	h h h h h h h h	1 2 3 4 5	Veronica

Lili's Involvement Rating

Rating Observation 2: Time after commencement of music session: 31.21-37.21 Week 1			
Brief description of Observation Context: Beginning of opera, singers applying makeup, puppets: dragons, beautiful ladies, birds begin			
Concentration Energy Complexity & creativity Facial expression & posture Persistence Reaction time Verbal utterances/language Satisfaction	h h h h h h h	1 2 3 4 5	Lili

George's Involvement Rating

Rating Observation 3: Time after commencement of music session: Time 32.40 – 37.40 Week 5			
Brief description of Observation Context: A teacher shows a picture of one of the characters the children have painted and reads the children's comments about the story. The movie begins but streaming gets stuck.			
Concentration Energy Complexity & creativity Facial expression & posture Persistence Reaction time Verbal utterances/language Satisfaction	m m m m m m m l	1 2 3 4 5 Moments of intensity and moments of inactivity = 4	George

Laura's Involvement Rating

Rating Observation 4: Time after commencement of music session: Time 32.40 – 37.50 Week 5			
Brief description of Observation Context: A teacher shows a picture of one of the characters the children have painted and reads the children's comments about the story. The movie begins but streaming gets stuck.			
Concentration Energy Complexity & creativity Facial expression & posture Persistence Reaction time Verbal utterances/language Satisfaction	h h h h h h h h	1 2 3 4 5	Laura

Luca's Involvement Rating

Rating Observation 5: Time after commencement of music session: 27.40 – 32.40 Week 8			
Brief description of Observation Context: Watching the end of the opera			
Concentration Energy Complexity & creativity Facial expression & posture Persistence Reaction time Verbal utterances/language Satisfaction	h h h h h m l h	1 2 3 4 5	Luca English learner

Leo's Involvement Rating

Rating Observation 6: Time after commencement of music session: 27.40 – 32.40 Week 8			
Brief description of Observation Context: Watching the end of the opera			
Concentration Energy Complexity & creativity Facial expression & posture Persistence Reaction time Verbal utterances/language Satisfaction	h h h h h h h h	1 2 3 4 5	Leo

her gaze and calling out. Without video footage to revisit, it is likely that our attention would have been focused on Veronica as she spoke to the teacher. If we had noticed Lili, it is likely that we would not have seen her subtle signs of involvement.

Whilst we can generalise this experience for the group, we can also consider the experience of individual children. George, in observation three, shows medium levels of involvement, as he shows moments of intensity, and moments of inactivity as he fiddles with his jacket, and stares at the wall. When the children laugh together at a comment, "I was dizzy from all that singing," George continues to stare. In observation 5, Luca, who is learning English as an additional language to his home language/s, we also see brief moments where he pays attention to his clothing before we see him tune into the group and the opera. Using the Involvement scale allows us to see the physical signs and behaviours that show Luca's involvement is for a large percentage of the observation, very high.

Employing the Involvement scale with the video and filling out the scale for different children allowed us to observe the experience of two children at the same moment in time. In addition, we could revisit and watch these children across the weeks. The "visible listening" to multiple voices that recorded documentation makes possible allows us to see subtle visual signs of involvement as the children were in the process of listening to the opera. Cox Suárez and Daniels (2009) suggest, video enables us to revisit an event to see languages that communicate but are not necessarily heard and therefore easily missed by an observer during an event.

Involvement and Pedagogy: Comments on the RRR findings

Within the process of rating involvement using the RRR scale, in the act of judging a signal to be present (or otherwise), we could appreciate the potential of the tool in terms of supporting reflective and reflexive practice. When educators within an early childhood setting begin to rate their own program by observing each other, they begin to question their own practice, asking, what are the levels of involvement that can be observed in response to my planned and spontaneous physical and social environment. Video allows the educator themselves to question and observe their own practice, at leisure and with the opportunity to revisit over and over and share with others.

Another aspect of practice that is often contested is the level of engaged learning that can occur within a group. Within early childhood teaching practice in Australia it is accepted that significant amounts of non-structured time and plenty of time to play and explore without pressure needs to be built into the program to allow children to develop their learning dispositions and sense of identity and wellbeing. Spontaneous 'teachable moments' are used, often to teach children individually when the opportunity arises, along with short small group (5 – 20 minutes) times, once or twice a day. This particular program was highly structured with high expectations held for the skill development of the children which were planned for through the formal arts offerings. It was therefore interesting to look at the RRR indicators of involvement of the children during the sessions and consider how challenging formal content could support the potential of group experiences. While the highly-structured learning environment did not limit the children's involvement and well-being, the scale highlighted that there was limited opportunity for children to co-construct meaning as the analysis identified that there was limited opportunity for children to wonder (i.e., verbally question) during the actual session. The scale showed high levels of involvement, in all signals of concentration, energy, complexity, facial expression and posture, persistence, precision, reaction time, verbal utterances/language and satisfaction. The film of the opera appeared to seize the children's imagination across the group. Their interest was scaffolded for eight weeks and this musical journey was documented through naturalistic observations, including videos, photographs and children's art

and voices. That the children were familiar with the story, had engaged in follow up discussions and art activities as well as introducing the characters into their spontaneous play meant the experience was not just confined to the planned group. The presence of the music across the daily program and appearing in different guises is an aspect of this experience worth exploring. Group learning can take on added value when carefully supported in a variety of ways.

This paper focussed on the value of revisiting events to seek further meaning of what might have occurred; it sought clarification if impressions that the whole group of children could be involved and the extent of their involvement. This has particular advantage for theories of individual and group learning experiences (Edwards, Gandini & Foremen, 1998; Kennedy & Barblett, 2012).

Implications

The question addressed in this research was: What can studying children's involvement in a group activity tell us about the quality of the educational experience?

Using video footage allowed us to go back and question our perceptions, to analyse the experience of individual children and at the same moment observe the children as part of a group and to examine the different experiences within the context of a group activity in a particular time-frame. Choosing two children from the group and observing their involvement at a particular time was be taken as a measure of the engagement shared within the group (Laevers, 1994).

A combination of the RRR scale and the video allowed revisiting of events and the opportunity to analyse descriptors, such as 'complexity and creativity' in more depth which affords more time and space for deeper reflection. Video data enables us to go back and see what has been missed and therefore challenge our perceptions of the learning process.

Researchers observed complex learning occurring as they watched the music sessions evolve with a separate project within. We could note children's responses and be confident that in multifaceted ways the children were engaged and involved over time. Our perception of group interest can also be taken as a measure of the content being offered. Using the RRR rating scale whilst observing video footage allowed the opportunity to "step back," from the excitement, emotion and attachment to the group, and to observe a little more objectively as the footage was studied for specific signals. We were satisfied that as a group these children were involved in *The Magic Flute* project. As the scale used to ascertain levels of engagement was designed as an indicator of program quality. That a group of children, of this age, remained interested across a number of weeks has to be an indication that the children were motivated by the activity and such involvement occurs when the activity is situated at a level that the child can find exciting, that it invites the child to participate in the learning through the mental state of being in the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1962) or Csikszentmihályi's (1992) idea of being in the flow. These young children, with widely varied experiences and competence, could all find a profound learning experience suited to individual tastes and desires is a sign this group project with individual and self-selected supports across daily activities was engrossing. To conclude, by revisiting the group situation through the use of video we were able to gauge the extent of the children's involvement and therefore presume the project itself presented the opportunity for high-quality learning through the children's implicit willingness to explore their understanding of reality and storytelling within this musical experience. An important implication for practice is to consider methods of recording events if revisiting is to be used to enhance pedagogical decisions. That the project was not confined to the group time is also an important issue to further

explore as this paper has only looked at the shared watching of the opera and the relationship of other activities, reported on elsewhere (Nyland et al., 2015), presumably played an important role in supporting such high ratings for involvement in a formal group of young children.

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