



Music Matters @ MOPS Term 3 Report

KEY:

Jingle Sing (JS)

Little Star (LS)

Rosie's Rainbow (RR)

Music Leader (ML)

Key Workers (KW)

Introduction

The Term 3 report for Music Matters @ MOPS is a summary report which reflects the data presented in Term 1 and 2 and provides further examples of the children and their extended participation into Term 3 of the project. The Term 3 report summarises the findings against each outcome and incorporates literature examples which support these findings.

The Term 1 and 2 reports included examples and analysis of (i) the positive benefits musical experiences have had on the children attending MOPS (ii) effective practise in ML strategies and approaches and how these have supported the children's progression (iii) the development of new musical skills and musical learning (iv) the impact musical experiences may have on communication (v) independent musical interactions and sharing of musical ideas and preferences (vi) the benefits of ensemble experiences in promoting engagement and providing opportunities to interact with peers and make music together. In their study of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Janzen and Thaut (2018:3) suggest that musical experiences have a 'strong potential to promote and facilitate functional changes in non-musical brain and behavioural functions' including social, communicative and affective processes.

The Term 3 data further supports these findings, extending them, to describe the impact of time, consistency and familiarity on the children's confidence and musical explorations, enhancing their overall musical skill development. Familiarity with ML approaches; particularly ML's adaptability, support and response, extended many of the children's musical interactions as well as types of musical play. Examples of musical play were observed which involved elements of conducting/

leadership, repetition and initiation of the actions and musical features explored. The data provides examples of children's musical play moving beyond exploration to a rehearsal and/or performance of new musical skills and understanding. When space was provided for spontaneous interactions, children were able to practise and extend musical and communication skills, becoming aware of new achievements and successes.

Keen (2009:132) summarises Kim and Mahoney (2004) study on interaction styles and suggests that 'engagement may increase when caregivers are more responsive and less controlling or directive'. For example, by 'allowing the child to choose what he/she will do, following the child's lead, or sharing in the child's focus of attention' (Keen, 2009:132). Hammel and Hourigan (2013) suggest that the potential of musical experiences in this cohort is directly impacted by the role of the music teacher and effective practise.

Aims and Outcomes

Overall Aim: To develop children's participation in group & 1-1 music-making, improve workforce/children's Makaton skills with songs & rhymes & to share the results & benefits of this project.

The Term 3 report summarises discussions on the first aspect of the overall aim: ***To develop children's participation in group and 1-1 music making.*** New examples of the children presented in Term 1 and 2 are discussed, providing an insight into each child's musical progression over time. Examples discussed suggest that extended musical responses and musical learning can occur during consistent musical experiences which provide opportunities for continued rehearsal, performance and sharing of new skills and achievements. The Music Matters @ MOPS project has provided time and consistency in its music provision, allowing children, staff and ML's to build musical and communicative relationships and encourage musical growth and development. Eerola and Eerola (2014) support this suggesting that extended music education has positive effects on social skills, confidence, sense of achievement and opportunity.

VIGNETTES 1-5 provide new example/s from Term 3 of the children discussed in Term 1-2 and a summary of their musical progression throughout Year 1 of the project, as well as the role of effective practise.

VIGNETTE 1 - Child: DI

Examples

LS: DI is aware of and listening to the faster tempo and louder dynamics of the ML's guitar playing and singing. He smiles, looks towards ML, then shakes his shaker and pats his knee and chair reflecting the tempo. He swaps hands and pats the other knee. DI mouths or appears to say a lyric from the song just after ML sings it.

VIDEO: DI SHAKER

LS: During group drumming DI appears excited by ML's percussion song. He stands up and moves towards gathering drum and then stands on the gathering drum, jumping, making a big sound, smiling, very excited by this experience. His movements reflect the tempo of the music. He looks at ML, kneels down and drums a little before standing up again. At the end of the song he jumps consistently to his own pulse, patting his knees in time with a clear tapping sound. He appears to be listening to both sounds he is making in combination, rehearsing and performing his musical understanding and maintaining a consistent pulse.

VIDEO: DI GATHERING DRUM

Summary

These examples provide insight into both effective practise and changes in DI's musical responses and sensory exploration. The first example outlines DI's continued sensory and musical play during the music sessions. This example suggests his explorations have extended to be more responsive to the musical features with movements and instrumental play representing a clear pulse and some vocalisations of words can be observed.

In the second example, DI was provided with the freedom to engage in this way with a staff member nearby. Although only a short experience, which may have supported this type of exploration in terms of safety, DI was able to gain so much from this experience. His explorations continued to be sensory in nature, in particular proprioceptive and auditory hypo-sensory exploration. However, these sensory responses were accommodated into his musical explorations and reflected his musical understanding in a much more controlled way than previous examples. DI appears confident in the second example, sitting out of his supportive chair, and moving up to instruments independently, engaging in the musical experience with ML and peers. This appears to be the result of the adaptability of the ML providing the space, time and support needed for DI to explore in a way that met his sensory needs and allowed him to practise and perform his musical understanding.

VIGNETTE 2 - Child: CA

Example

LS: CA is sitting with KW who is supporting her to play the mini ocean drum. CA is moving a lot in this example and appears very engaged, attempting to make arm movements to create sounds on the drum. CA shares a big smile as KW supports her to play the drum during the tempo increase from ML. CA moves her eyes perhaps in response to sound changes in the song and an awareness of her own supported sound making. At the end of the song CA moves her hands to her mouth just as ML cues a stop, perhaps in response to this musical cue. CA appears to be enjoying the experience with relaxed and clear participation, smiling and very attentive.

VIDEO: CA OCEAN DRUM

Summary

This term's example of CA's musical exploration is from the whole group setting with LS. Different musical responses can be observed in this setting as the group explores sounds, musical cues and features, instruments and props together. The example above describes an extended musical interaction from CA through live instrumentation, perhaps supported by the one to one sessions in Term 2. The use of percussion may have also supported CA's response and attempts as sound making. As described in Term 2, percussion instruments can be accessible and encourage sound making in many different ways. Overall in this example CA appears even more determined to create sound independently and share her musical understanding, preferences and enjoyment.

VIGNETTE 3 - Child: MA

Example

LS: MA plays guitar with ML. She is strumming downwards, and ML is singing 'down' lyrics with a repeated tune, following the pulse of MA strums. MA strums with one hand then with both hands. When ML sings, MA laughs and looks at ML showing understanding of her own leadership and the playfulness of the musical interaction. MA then turns away towards KW, possibly showing she has finished and ML finishes song, offering praise.

VIDEO: MA GUITAR

Summary

In the example above, MA's musical play was consistent in pulse and the leadership/conducting was interchangeable between MA initiating the pulse, and ML matching and supporting this melodically and lyrically. MA appears much more confident in this musical interaction, practising her performance and conducting skills and enjoying leading the experience.

MA's responses overall term have transitioned from awareness of musical features and exploration of pulse through movement and percussion to initiating and performing musical ideas and engaging in musical interactions. MA's confidence in the musical structure, ML approach and her own musical understanding appears to have supported the performance of new musical skills.

VIGNETTE 4 - Child: IE

Example

LS: KW is helping IE to shake a shaker. IE appears very aware of the form of the piece and moves head in preparation for the 'achoo' short sounds. She smiles when this occurs. IE smiles again as carer continues to assist her to place hand on and shake the shaker in time. She appears very focused, engaged and aware of changes in the musical features, perhaps pre-empting these as she moves her head and smiles.

VIDEO: IE SHAKER

Summary

Changes in IE's musical responses can be observed in Term 3 with new musical understanding expressed through movement and shared enjoyment. IE appears to have gained confidence in her attempts to explore instruments with her KW. In another example in Term 3, IE moved her hand many times to place it on the shaker ready to play with her KW. Her familiarity with the ML's approach and expectations surrounding the musical experience appear to have supported IE to build confidence in her exploration and practise her musical skills.

VIDEO: IE SHAKER 2

VIGNETTE 5 - Child: TE

Examples

LS Written Obs: TE entered the session and headed straight over to ML. She put her hand to ML mouth and said 'Day O'. This response has remained with TE since Term 1 and she now associates the start of the session with this activity. TE was very vocal in this session overall, vocalising 'Hey' at the end of each drumming rhyme. She then started conducting the group by lifting her hands and singing 'Hey'. ML and other children followed TE's lead for three rounds of the drumming rhyme.

WRITTEN OBSERVATION

LS: TE performs a double time tempo, following ML cues, using a beater and a metal dish during the kitchen sink themed percussion activity. TE tries playing it on both sides comparing the sounds with a consistent pulse.

VIDEO: TE SINK EXPLORATION

Summary

Significant changes can be observed in TE's engagement, initiation of musical cues and patterns, performance skills and confidence during musical explorations. To conduct and lead the group involves understanding of the musical features, session format, ML approaches, peer interactions and awareness of the impact of her own musical actions on the ensemble experience. These moments can occur when sensory needs have been explored and musical skills practised in a free, adaptable and supportive musical experience. TE's initial explorations were often sensory in nature with musical understanding coming through within sensory play. These sensory explorations appear to have now been accommodated into her musical responses and new musical learning can be observed including performance skills as she shares her musical understanding with others. TE has built confidence through consistent musical experiences and the ML supporting her to perform the same introduction each week. This has allowed TE to engage from the very beginning of each LS session and know that her musical responses and ideas will be encouraged and recognised.

The second aspect of the overall aim: ***Improve workforce/children's Makaton skills with songs & rhymes*** is summarised in Outcome 3 relating to effective practise with new examples of how the use of Makaton has continued and progressed from Term 2-3. The final aspect of the overall aim: **to share the results & benefits of this project** is introduced in Outcome 1 below relating to the Sharing Concert which occurred during Term 3.

Outcome 1 - MUSICAL

To improve group/ensemble music making experiences that enable MOP's children to develop performance skills.

In summary of the findings for Outcome 1, ***VIGNETTES 1-5*** describe examples of the children's musical skill development and how extended, consistent and enjoyable musical experiences can support new musical behaviours and understanding. Outcome 1 has presented examples highlighting (i) musical responses and musical learning (ii) musical features and instrumentation (iii) sensory responses (iv) engagement (v) peer interaction (vi) the use of percussion and syncopation (vii) defined responses to musical cues (viii) independent exploration, interaction and sharing of musical ideas. Term 3 data provides examples of progression in these areas, in particular (i) confidence (ii) sensory exploration incorporating musical skills and understanding (iii) performance and leadership of musical skills in familiar musical experiences. Examples in ***VIGNETTES 1-5*** suggest that individual musical achievement, however this presents, is a result of confidence built through sensory and musical explorations, supported by effective practise.

Another goal of the Music Matters @ MOPS project was for the children to have opportunities to share their musical explorations with family and friends. This occurred in Term 3 with a 'Sharing Concert', where the ML's of each session came together, inviting family and friends of all children involved in the project to an open session which incorporated aspects of each of the music sessions.

The Sharing Concert provided a new insight into the impact of the project on the children as they performed and engaged in the musical experience collectively. Opportunities to share musical experiences such as these promote consolidation of skills and understanding in different contexts and allow children to experience an important element of musical learning; performance. For any musician learning

music, performance is a fundamental element of a holistic music education, providing opportunities to share musical learning and joy with others. Blair and McCord (2016:11) support this suggesting that during interactive musical experiences ‘the student can use the skills already attained and experience the meanings of his or her actions as part of a learning community’.

VIGNETTE 6 provides brief examples of some of the different ways the children engaged and participated in the Sharing Concert and potential benefits.

VIGNETTE 6 - Sharing Concert
<p>Examples</p> <p>MA: Confidently moving, vocalising and playing instruments throughout each song. Sharing this experience with a family member, offering affection to both KW and family member.</p> <p>AN: Kept ear defenders on and stayed sitting with family member throughout the concert. Was very engaged laughing, smiling, exploring instruments and engaging with his family member.</p> <p>IE: Also stayed sitting with family members and was calm and very engaged, observing ML's throughout.</p> <p>VIDEO: SHARING CONCERT 5</p> <p>Summary</p> <p>The children engaged and participated in the Sharing Concert in many different ways which were appropriate to them at that time. A more observatory approach was observed for some children, which appears to be a common response during sharing events such as this, as children become familiar with these types of experiences in different contexts. Through repeated opportunities such as this, the children can connect their musical experiences to their family life, make associations in different contexts and engage in shared enjoyment with family members. The Sharing Concert appears to have reinforced the importance of the children's musical participation and supported them to further develop confidence and performance skills. How this develops ongoing will be discussed in Year 2 reports.</p>

Other performance activities which continued into Term 3 were the Concertini performance which provided ongoing opportunities for the children to observe, interact with and experience musicians performing live. In summary of the potential benefits of live music performance opportunities for children, we refer to Ekedahl and Mateiro (2015:7) who suggest concerts and live musical experience's for children are:

an aesthetic activity which provides an impulse to mature the child's natural skills and creativity; a significant activity with great potential for social and personal development...a tool that could bring pedagogical benefits for the improvement of their learning...a means of getting familiar with different artistic models, music genres and styles, and a wide range of cultures; and,

lastly, as an educational experience that goes beyond the spoken and written language, which can offer something never before experienced, clarify aspects about oneself and about the world or, even deal with one's own emotions and irrationalities.

The data presented in Term 1-3 suggests that regular and repeated musical experiences can support musical learning and the extension of musical skills. The Music Matters @ MOPS project has provided multiple, varied, consistent and ongoing musical experiences which have supported the children (i) in their musical explorations (ii) to build confidence in performing musical skills and understanding (iii) to engage in independent musical interactions (iv) to share their achievements and enjoyment with peers, family members and staff. Research exploring musical experiences for children with additional needs has described further potential benefits such as in social and communication skills, emotional regulation, behavioural functions, self-esteem and reduced anxiety (cf. Darrow, 2011; Hillier, Greher, Poto & Dougherty, 2011; Kim & Mahoney, 2016; Janzen & Thaut, 2018).

Outcome 2 - PERSONAL

To improve communication in a vocal, emotional or physical way in response to thematic music & singing sessions.

Outcome 2 has explored communicative responses to music and effective tools and strategies in promoting communication. In summary of the data from Term 1-3 we see examples of progression in musical and communicative responses through extended musical experiences and staff and ML approaches. Music can be motivating and provide a free yet structured system where expectations relating to interacting with others and sharing ideas and preferences can be opened up and explored in different ways.

Communicative responses observed in Term 1 and 2 outlined examples of the children's (i) extended musical and communicative interactions (ii) sharing of ideas and preferences (iii) independent vocal exploration such as vocalising words, sounds and lyrics (iv) movement-based responses. Term 3 provides examples of increased confidence resulting in further communicative responses and performance of musical skills and understanding. Many of the children have begun to (i) respond vocally to the lyrics, sounds and communicative cues (ii) lead and initiate musical experiences (iii) share their enjoyment with others. In Term 3 we also note the benefit experiences such as the Sharing Concert can have on the children's social and communicative

understanding. As they share their musical achievements and preferences with peers, friends and families they begin to experience music as a social, interactive and communicative process, resulting in further motivation to engage and develop musical skills (Jellison & Flowers, 1991).

Communicate responses were supported further in Term 3 by the continued use of Makaton which is described in Outcome 3.

Outcome 3 - WORKFORCE

To develop MOP's Workforce Makaton skills to encourage children to sign, sing & hear songs & rhymes.

Outcome 3 has focused on effective practise and the use of tools, resources and systems, by ML's and staff, to support the participation, communication and musical learning of the children. Term 2 provided an initial summary of the use of one of these systems; Makaton. The use of Makaton is one of the main objectives of the Music Matters @ MOPS project, looking at supporting staff and ML's to confidently use elements of this system, and reflect on its impact on the children's musical and communication skills. Staff and ML's have continued to explore the use of Makaton in Term 3, learning new and more complex songs and encouraging the children to observe and copy.

VIGNETTE 7 highlights the continued application of Makaton into Term 3 including during the Sharing Concert.

VIGNETTE 7 - Makaton

LS: ML rehearsed a new song with more complex Makaton signs with the staff. They practised the signs together showing the children as they rehearsed. MA was fascinated watching ML carefully. IE was also observing. The room was calm, and staff were singing, signing and performing which was wonderful for the children to experience. These experiences can provide opportunities for the children to watch others rehearse and perform, sing, engage, communicate through sign and enjoy musical experiences, and in turn children may imitate these responses in their own musical explorations.

VIDEO: STARS SHINING MAKATON

Sharing Concert:

During the sharing concert in Term 3, LS ML led a song singing and playing ukulele. The staff sang and signed Makaton at the front of the room with some staff spread out across the space. The children and families were able to see the staff perform the Makaton signs and sing together. This allowed families and friends to see how Makaton is used during the music sessions and provided opportunities for ML's and staff to consolidate how it can be applied and its potential benefits.

VIDEO: SHARING CONCERT 5

Many of the children watched the staff as they performed. Two children could be seen singing and copying the Makaton signs. At the end of the song there was a smooth transition into the Goodbye Song which maintained the children's focus and continued signing through waving goodbye. Children and families copied by waving goodbye with their star props. Some children copied the actions and lyric cues, waving and blowing a kiss goodbye.

Outcome 3 also focuses on effective practise and the approaches, strategies and resources implemented by ML's across the sessions. Results discussed in the first year outline the benefits of adaptable approaches and the use of sensory resources and props on the children's musical and communicative progression. How musical experiences are presented, sensory needs supported, ML and staff approaches implemented, and repertoire/resources utilised, all impact the potential benefits of musical experiences (Hammel & Hourigan, 2013).

During the first year of Music Matters @ MOPS examples have been presented of ML's and staff (i) incorporating a variety of musical and sensory resources into their sessions to encourage musical play, participation, movement, communication and enjoyment (ii) adapting experiences and resources to ensure all children can access and engage in the musical experiences (iii) providing time and space for children to explore and share their preferences and musical ideas (iv) creating a consistent musical experience for children to build confidence and explore, practise and perform their musical ideas and understanding.

Conclusion

The Term 3 report for Music Matters @ MOPS summarises examples presented in the first year of the project and the impact continued musical experiences may have on children's musical learning, performance skills, social and communication development and overall wellbeing. Underlying the projects aims and objectives is an understanding that (i) for young children music is an inclusive, multisensory and motivating experience which can support the development of new skills and understanding (ii) for children with additional needs musical experiences are vital, providing accessible, multisensory, motivating and enjoyable experiences. These experiences can support new behaviours, responses and build confidence to explore and extend communicative and musical skills and share moments of success. Ockelford (2018:227) describes the importance of music for individuals with ASD suggesting that 'music may be important for all of us, but for those on the autism spectrum, it is nothing less than essential brain food'.

Research projects such as Music Matters @ MOPS are vital in our exploration and understanding of musical experiences for children with SEN and how we can best provide quality and adaptable approaches which support engagement, musical learning and progression for each individual. Ockelford (2012:8) suggests that 'by seeking to understand how people function in exceptional circumstances, we can shed light on how we all think, feel, and behave' and children with SEN may provide 'unique and powerful insights into what it means to be musical'.

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