

Enriching the Context for Musical Learning

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Abstract: In this article, the authors investigate how Korea's current educational policy's emphasis on artistic expression, and therefore music education, has been realized in the praxis of early childhood education. The authors view policy as discourses and texts that early childhood educators interpret and reinterpret within specific contexts. Policy rhetoric and practice fail to recognize the integration of musical conceptual development, expressive ability, creativity, and communication. The musical development of a child should be viewed as his or her right to nurture a musical self in a meaningful musical context.

Keywords: artistic expression, Korean early childhood music education, musical context, music integration, view of childhood

The value of expressiveness in music is deeply appreciated historically and culturally across different times and places. Pansori, designated as a Masterpiece of Oral Tradition and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2003, is representative of Korean vocal music. The expressiveness of Pansori has been built on philosophy, unlimited variations of musical struc-

ture, and elements of drama to convey the deep meaning of what cannot be expressed by text alone. This means of expression elevated Pansori into a profound and refined art form (The National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts 2004) that is highly regarded in Korea.

Western scholars such as Langer (1957) proposed that music conveys a meaning that cannot be conveyed through language, enabling us to present and to re-present inner deep and powerful feelings. Acknowledging this expressive nature of music, Boardman (2001) asserts that

The purpose of music education must be to introduce the young into the musical symbolic system so that they can use this system as performers, creators, and listeners and, thus, become skilled in the use of music as a vehicle for giving voice to the inner life of feeling—to “express the inexpressible.” (49)

The significance of expressiveness through artistic experience, including music, physical movement, and visual art, is reflected in the purposes of Korean early childhood education, which aims at strengthening young children's abilities and attitudes necessary for daily life in the areas of physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language development (Kim 2005; Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development 1998).

The national kindergarten curriculum sets forth five specific purposes for young children: (a) experience physical and mental health, (b) acquire basic life habits and develop an attitude necessary for social relations, (c) experience creative and artistic expression, (d) develop language experience for proper communication, and (e) develop an attitude to explore the possibilities of solving problems occurring in everyday life. The third purpose, children's experience of creative and artistic expression, aims to cultivate their curiosity and creativity by allowing them to express spontaneous thoughts and feelings, while addressing the policies applicable to Korean early childhood music education and defining its contents: exploration, expression, and appreciation of music, visual arts, movement, and plays are often considered art experience. Music education, considered a part of children's art experience, is thus required to be integrated with other educational contents.

The music contents of the national curriculum list the following:

Exploration: (a) Listen to the sound of the nature and environment and distinguish the different sounds. (b) Listen to the sound of various musical instruments.

Expression: (a) Make various sounds with the voice, different parts of the body, and materials. (b) Sing a song in various ways and enjoy singing. (c) Play

the rhythmic instruments freely and to the music.

Music appreciation: (a) Listen to the many different kinds of music and enjoy listening. (b) Share thoughts and feelings after listening to the music. (c) Respect different thoughts and expression of others. (d) Be familiar with Korean traditional music and the arts (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development 1998, 93–106).

Classified contents are divided into two developmental levels. The difference between the two levels is defined by the children's abilities or interests in this area of development. In other words, the content is organized into the developmentally appropriate level, which requires appropriate methods for each level. For example, one of the contents in exploration, "singing songs," is distinguished into two levels: Level one addresses "sing along as you listen," and level two addresses "sing songs in different ways." The content "enjoy singing songs" is considered as an indistinguishable level. The national curriculum is organized at the Metropolitan and Provincial Office of Education and based on the research of regional characteristics.

Unfortunately, at the local curriculum level, the national curriculum is applied exactly the same except for the addition of special activities. For example, in the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education, there are two additional activities in the music area. One is to explore the different environmental sounds in the city using Seoul as an example; the other is to replace the words of familiar songs inspired by Seoul's representative architecture—such as the Namdaemun and Gyeongbokgung Palace—with animals or flowers. The local curriculum represents its own limited local characteristics by applying the national curriculum.

In practice, the national and local policies are carried out by early childhood teachers' and directors. Children's musical experiences are thus deeply related to teachers' and directors' understanding and reinterpretation of the national and local curriculum that reflects Korean early childhood music

education policy. The purpose of this article is to inquire what the policies' emphasis on artistic expression is at the national and local level and how it has been realized in the praxis of early childhood education in Korea.

Research Methods

We view policy as discourse that influences early childhood educators' thoughts and actions. We also view policy as texts that are interpreted and reinterpreted by early childhood educators within specific contexts. To fully understand the various policies' impact on early childhood music education, we analyzed the discourses and texts shared by early childhood educators. Specifically, we deconstructed their ideas and practices regarding early childhood music education. We try to understand the policies by investigating how early childhood teachers construct young children's musical experiences in their classrooms. We interviewed early childhood teachers and directors and university professors, and we also visited kindergartens and day care centers to observe music activities. We collected music education textbooks and instructional materials. We deconstructed the meaning of terms such as *artistic expression*, *children's innate and natural interests*, and *developmental levels*, recurring in the national curriculum. We then contextualized those meanings into the practice of early childhood educational settings.

Meanings of Artistic Expression

Artistic expression in the national curriculum for early childhood education is narrowly conceived. Integrated arts education, of which music education is a part, is subordinate to other purposes: improving expressive ability and developing creativity and communication. The overriding developmental psychology perspective of the national curriculum confines the scope of artistic expression, limiting children's musical experiences. Artistic expression does not aim to introduce the young to the musical symbolic system and artistic concepts and skills, but attempts only to cultivate their aesthetic feelings,

emotions, and thinking stripped of the significance of musical contexts and experiences in which children construct musical meaning and knowledge. However, this kind of cultivation holds little promise for artistic expression.

Children's developmental need of expression is identified with their need to communicate with others. The curriculum affirms that "young children would be able to express [their] thoughts and ideas through artistic activities and therefore communicate with others" (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development 1998, 86). The significance of artistic expression as educational content rests on meeting children's needs to communicate with others and is identified with expression of the inner self. Artistic expression through the use of various art forms becomes a tool to enhance the development of young children's communication with others and the world. The national curriculum states that "the young children have a better command of expressing their feelings and emotion through the various art forms—music, visual arts, dance, movements, drama—than through verbal communication" (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development 1998, 86).

Artistic expression signifies not only children's development of communication through various art forms, but also their development of creativity through art activities. In the national curriculum's statement that various artistic activities allow children to express their inner self and therefore cultivate aesthetic values and creativity, the curriculum implies the value of artistic activities that include the development of creativity. Thus, artistic activities are interpreted as ways of expressing the inner self, improving expressive ability, and developing creativity (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development 1998).

Instead of recognizing the intrinsic aesthetic and cognitive value of music, the national curriculum depends on the growth of the child's innate desire to express him- or herself, communicate with others, and perceive the world. The national curriculum emphasizes that

creative expression develops through “a child’s active exploration by touching the objects, feeling and moving her/his body rather than for her/him to develop artistic concepts or skills” (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development 1998, 86). The curriculum further states that exploration facilitates perception of the artistic elements and thus develops creative expression and music appreciation. As children perceive more and more from direct experiences in an environment, their intrinsic interests and abilities will grow. The children’s active exploration of objects is also seen as the same as an expression of their innate interests or abilities. Then the teacher’s role is to design activities that take into account these innate interests and abilities. This view of children’s development limits children’s music experiences and only expects young children’s natural responses to it. The national curriculum downplays teaching the concept of the skills involved in artistic expression.

The national curriculum overlooks the abilities of young children to construct and reconstruct their learning experiences. Teachers in Korea believe that young children would not actively join in constructing the given musical experience. In determining the contents of music experience, teachers are concerned with the level of difficulty and seek a developmentally appropriate level for young children. The musical experience is seen as the children’s instinctive response rather than their active construction of knowledge with the aid of mediators.

The developmental psychology perspective evidenced in the national curriculum underlies a theorem of developmental psychology, that is, ideas of universal, linear, and ordered development. The ideas presume that all children follow a prescribed order of development and that the accumulated development of each order (or stage) directs a perfect development (Kim and Chung 2006). Perfect development is viewed as the sum of all the stages or the order of that development. Early childhood is considered an incomplete stage in itself, and thus it is seen as

preparation for the next development stage. Strongly influenced by developmental psychology, this view of early childhood is imbedded in the national curriculum, including music education.

Developmental psychology produces a causal determinism in understanding young children’s development as well as early childhood education (Burman 1994). Merely understanding the development of young children in terms of a norm or standard only addresses

and their efforts need to be supported in a guided participation, “building bridges between what children know and new information to be learned, structuring, and supporting children’s efforts, and transferring to children the responsibility for managing problem solving” (Rogoff 1990, viii). Such guidance will provide the direction and organization needed for children’s cognitive musical development that could eventually lead to creative expression.

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what knowledge they lack and limits or defines their lived experience within these boundaries. In contrast, Dewey (1938) argued that the lived experience of a young child is a force or a chain that reconstructs new experiences that result in continuous and lifelong development. Children’s experiences are not only a purpose, but also a means. In other words, the meaning of young children’s experiences exists not only within the norm of development, but also in an ever-changing experience.

Coming from a prominent constructivist perspective, Vygotsky asserted that higher mental processes differ qualitatively from lower natural processes: “The higher mental function does not develop as a direct continuation of the corresponding elementary function, thus constituting a new type of psychological formation . . . Human higher mental processes are function of mediated activity” (Kozulin 1990, 112). A child’s musical knowledge construction is also a function of mediated musical activities (Lim 2005). It is qualitatively different from spontaneous and perceptual musical understanding, which Korean early childhood music education values. Thus, children’s learning is a mediated process,

The given texts set the frame for the teacher’s interpretation and also for early childhood education’s discourses. This position reflected in the rhetoric reinforces the teachers’ attitudes of little or no intervention. The rhetoric also sets the scene for classroom practices where children need to actively construct their own world; however, the concept of musical learning for young children needs to be expanded. The child as a cognitive agent needs to develop the essential concepts that define the structure of the discipline that can be introduced at any age to express his or her inner feelings more successfully (Bruner 1960).

Musical Contexts for Artistic Expression

The narrow conception of artistic expression, the lack of aesthetic and cognitive substance of music, and the scant musical experiences provided are demonstrated in music education practice as well. Although many different types of musical activities are emerging in Korean classrooms, the activities remain a superficial musical conglomeration unguided by a comprehensive and cohesive understanding of musical

learning and teaching. The understanding of young children's developmental characteristics is linked with determining how artistic activities are organized in the classroom. The majority of music practices for young children in Korea are composed of singing, playing instruments, listening, kinesthetic expression, and making music (Ahn, Lee, and Chung 2006). Among all of these activities, singing is the most prevalent, but playing instruments is taking on importance. It not only is a vital part of the curriculum but also serves as a venue for musical performance for school projects.

We discuss the two most prevalent musical activities, singing and playing instruments in relation to the development of artistic expression.

Limited Repertoire of Music and Songs

The selection of the music is one of the most important steps in designing musical instruction. Boardman (1988) wrote,

Conceptualization occurs as a result of interaction with something which "embodies" the concept, an example which can be observed through sensory experiences. . . . Since the concepts we seek to help children gain are musical concept, that context will always be music. (4)

She went on to argue that musical examples for children's musical learning must be "music of value" and reflect many musical styles. As a major musical activity, the songs they sing are something the children interact with the most to build their musical concepts and, thus, musical experiences. The significance of what is and is not chosen for inclusion in the repertoire of songs is determined by the teacher and elicits a big concern in Korea, as evidenced by the following teachers.

Teacher A:

There are not many song choices we can choose from. . . . The songs we teach lean too much toward certain children's songs. It is an unbalanced diet. One day I thought this was not right and felt scared. The children need to learn various and more comprehensive songs. But children like those songs. They are cute and just in the right range for them. It is so easy for the teachers to use. The songs fit well

with the integrative themes of the school. They are like a gift covered with a beautiful wrapper at the department store, but the children get easily tired of them, and are not something they will pay attention to when they get older. They are too artificial. Children seem to like to sing the songs when we teach them, but I do not often hear those songs during their own play time. After 7 or 8 months I hardly hear those songs from the children.

Teacher C: "I am looking for some different songs, more lyrical, not that simple, and giving us more meaning."

Teachers often experience ambivalence in their song choices. Although teachers acknowledge the need to introduce a wider variety of songs and ones that are more musically challenging to their students and also do not feel comfortable staying with what they teach, they choose a certain limited song repertoire of a similar style. The songs they choose are cute, easy to sing, related to the integration theme, and entertaining. These songs appeal to the teachers' perception of children's developmental appropriateness because they are childish, suitable to a child's vocal range, have an appealing, simple text with many onomatopoeic and mimetic words, and are easy to perform. However, they are not musically challenging to the children and not as artistic as desired. The teachers' struggle with selecting songs is relevant with the statement of National curriculum. The national curriculum suggests that children listen to beautiful and musical songs, sing them in various ways, and enjoy singing for their growth of expression (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development 1998). In its commentary, the national curriculum makes some suggestions in selecting songs.

It is appropriate to select the songs which are in the range of "Re" to "La" in "C" major, thus, singable. It is important not only to select the short songs but to select appropriate words considering children's previous experiences. Children like such songs, for example, name songs, conversational songs, and songs about different parts of the body (e.g., head, shoulders, knees, and toes) as well as about family, nature and the seasons, and friends. They need to be beautiful and musical songs rather than informative and instructive songs. It is nice repetitive rhythmic

patterns and easy-to-remember texts and story that are contained in the song. (96)

Trying to meet the national curriculum's suggestions such as vocal range, functional songs (e.g., name songs), and theme songs (e.g., family songs), teachers do not have much success in finding beautiful and musical songs.

The teachers' limited repertoire of songs is a result of considering the developmental appropriateness of the songs. In choosing songs for children, their performance level becomes a yardstick for teachers to measure the developmental appropriateness of the songs. When the repertoire goes beyond their current level of performing ability, the teachers regard the children as not ready, causing learning to drag behind their development, rather than lead it. A child is not perceived as a capable, complete human being who is able to create a meaningful and expressive world of music beyond his or her level of musical performance, outside the performance, or in an unstructured performance free of conventional musical form.

It is hard to tell what makes one piece of music more meaningful than another. Boardman, Bergethon, and Montgomery (1997) suggested some guidelines, such as: Does the music stand the test of time? As the interviews indicate, the teachers were bored by repetitions of similar styles of songs and songs' music and lyrics. The children's spontaneous singing also quickly diminishes. Compared with the song repertoires of a culture that can last for centuries, the children soon lose interest in these songs.

Music in Korea needs to be taught by means of the so-called integration approach. The integration approach calls for connecting children's life experiences, needs, and interests with topics selected from subject matter, but the developmental perspective limits children's music experiences that should rest on the topics. As discussed before, learning musical concepts or skills is not developmentally appropriate. Figure 1 is a lesson plan for the "Spring Animals (Insects)" unit, which shows how the music is integrated into the unit.

The children are learning four different songs related to spring animals.

Integration is another factor for teachers to select the songs with limited aesthetic quality because the title and text are given priority over the music. As seen in figure 1, the songs need to be introduced according to the integration theme. The teachers generally look for topical associations to the unit's theme rather than conceptual links. There are not as many children's songs as needed that meet both unit themes and aesthetic values.

The units require songs, and as a solution, many newly composed songs in a convenient package became available for the busy and nonmusic major teachers. Rather than learning a few

songs in-depth, many different commercialized songs lead the classroom musical experiences. Convenience, the teacher's lack of expertise, pressure to integrate the material, and time constraints caused by a heavy workload contribute to using the music classroom as if it were a loud, beat-driven stereo rather than a space for creating artistic expression.

When a child interacts with a meaningful musical whole characterized by an aesthetic quality, we can expect musical experiences to happen and, in turn, become the resources for future expression of self.

The settings in Korean schools do not represent a promising picture, nor do

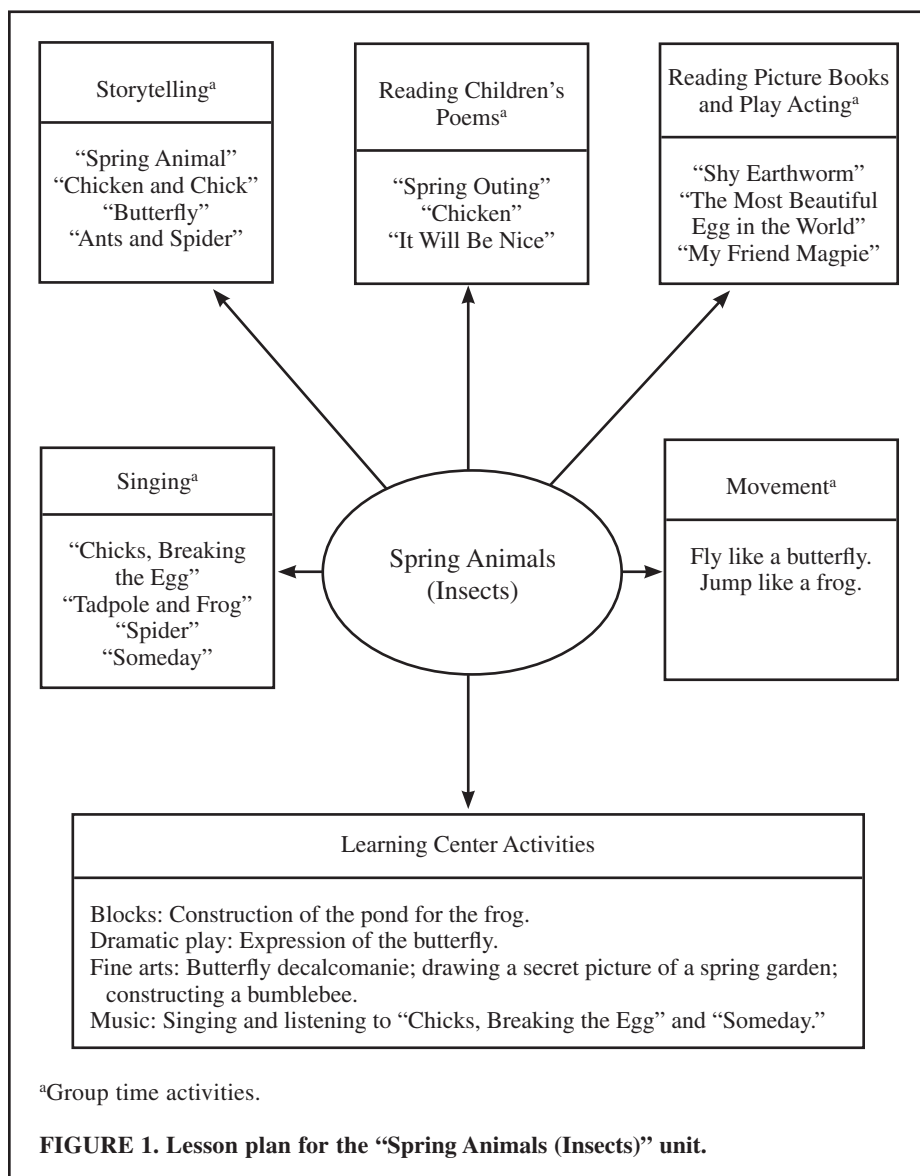
they reflect Korea's rich musical culture outside the classroom walls. Korean early childhood music educators are urged to incorporate a great range of songs with artistic value in their singing activities (Ahn, Lee, and Chung 2006; Ewha Woman's University Kindergarten 2002; Kim 2002). To reduce the gap between what educators desire and what educational policy calls for and what children are gaining in reality, it is urgent to examine the aesthetic potential of the song examples: "[their] power to help individuals find music to be a source of beauty and joy, to provide the freedom to participate in a special kind of immediate, personal expression that no other form of communication can emulate" (Boardman, Bergethohn, and Montgomery 1997, 13).

In addition, a wider variety of songs—such as world folk and art songs, traditional children's songs, classic Korean children's songs, and contemporary songs with artistic value—needs to be included to extend the song list and children's musical experiences with singing. Fortunately, Korean traditional songs are getting more and more attention from teachers and children. Dedicated teachers are collecting the songs and transcending various obstacles. But too much passion often creates another concern, that they either repeat the same musical pattern with one hundred different words or they try to replace the whole music curriculum with traditional music. According to Andress (1998),

From birth on, children hear a variety of vocal music performances such as choirs, solos, pop, rock, opera, and songs of many cultures. Children are not yet prejudiced against certain musical styles, so this is the ideal time to expose them to all vocal music. (87)

Vocal Exploration and Expression

Individual sound exploration and singing an unstructured version of a song, free from the dictates of conventional song form, are not encouraged in the classroom in Korea. Children's tendency to create their own version of a song during the activity is not accepted. Even singing a simple song with expression is rare. A rigid pattern of singing with a simple melody, rhythm



often accented with syncopation, in a loud voice represents a uniformed expression of almost every song. These songs are mostly accompanied on the piano played by the teacher with a sturdy tonic and dominant chord progressions. Loudness seems to imply competence. The teacher often asks for “louder” on an already loud sound. Other musical parameters such as phrases, articulation, and dynamics are hardly included in their expression. The interaction with tools and people comes from the aspect of the text, not from the musical expression or concepts. A rigid, inexpressive singing is more readily accepted than the encouragement of expressive singing.

Playing Instruments for Uniformity of Music

Playing musical instruments is another way for children to express themselves in the Korean classroom. The combination of singing with rhythmic instruments, playing simple songs, and performing in a large-group ensemble for special occasions are the predominant musical activities. Whatever form it takes, one of the most distinct characteristics of the musical performance is the uniformity of the music; every performer plays the same music. The following vignette from a kindergarten in the outskirts of Seoul, a socioeconomically less privileged area, provides a good example of a typical children’s music performance.

Four small ensembles composed of six children in each group are playing the rhythmic instruments. Each child owns the same set of musical instruments: a tambourine, a triangle, castanets, and medium-sized crash cymbals. All the children in these four groups play the same rhythmic patterns of the song with the same instruments at the same time. However, the class plays different instruments in turn. Now it is time for the triangle. Each child holds a triangle and plays it. The sound of the twenty-four triangles played by twenty-four children resonates throughout the classroom. “Raise your right hand,” says the teacher. The children show their small metal sticks. Then with their left hands

they hold the triangle by its knob-type holder. But some of the children grab the triangle itself, not the holder. The teacher guides the children in exploring the sound of this instrument, while teaching them how to hold the triangle by contrasting the timbres. She asks the whole class to play the triangle while gripping it. One voice calls out, “It does not make a sound. It is not a pretty sound.” “No, it does not sound pretty,” replies the teacher. “Let’s play without gripping it. Now how’s the sound?” she continues. “Sounds pretty,” respond the children. “What kind of sound do you hear?” the teacher asks. “It sounds like cahl-cahl-cahl,” says a girl. “Chak-chak-chak,” calls out some of the children and “Chang-chang-chang,” say some others. “Ah! It sounds like chang-chang-chang,” replies the teacher. “Twinkle, twinkle,” adds one boy. “Let’s sing the song we learned yesterday while playing the triangle,” leads the teacher. Then the teacher accompanies the song on the piano. The lyrics of each phrase ends with “ding-dang-dong.” The children play the rhythm patterns of these parts, but when the rhythm gets busy with many short notes, they have difficulty keeping up the beat. However, as the music slows at the end with longer notes, the bell sound of the triangle gets softer and everyone is playing in time (classroom observation, July 6, 2007).

By being aware of young children’s ability to construct and reconstruct their learning experiences, the teacher’s lesson is based on children’s universal, linear, and ordered development; therefore, the children’s musical experiences are limited to playing simple instruments. Rather than leading the lived musical experiences of children, she demands universal musical responses from them by assigning a certain rhythmic pattern played by twenty-four triangles at the same time. Their free expression and exploration of sound is minimal. Creating and improvising music with musical instruments is too far a reach. This is a pervasive phenomenon in instrument playing in Korean schools. Although the national policy encourages sound exploration and musical performances with instruments, it depends more on

children’s own natural interest in the sound and the natural growth of their innate desires to express themselves, rather than providing any suggestions for how to guide such explorations and performances. As a result, musically underprepared teachers often lead a drill-oriented, teacher-directed, linear musical performance. The teacher in the vignette said,

I have learned that children are learning through play and exploration. I think I have to give enough time for the children to explore the sound of instruments. But in reality, I demand the right answer and the right way to perform, rather than respecting their sound exploration. Probably this is the way I was taught.

Thus, the teacher herself is experiencing a discrepancy between the value she has learned at school and the value she has acquired through the enculturation process. Although she is willing to respect the autonomy of exploration and the children’s individual expression, she has neither learned how to do it through her life experience nor learned how to guide the children musically. Stimulating, responding to, and scaffolding the students’ musical initiatives are beyond many teachers’ capabilities. The teacher adds, “I wish I could learn more about how to help the children to explore the sound. I do not have much knowledge about this. There are not many resources or much professional development available to help us out, either.”

Musical expression and exploration through playing musical instruments can be a very satisfying musical activity for children (Richardson and Atterbury 2001). But in the vignette, both the pressure to teach the right way to show off for the parents and the limited knowledge of the teacher resulted in playing the twenty-four triangles in one room together, with the too-busy rhythm for triangle and without much artistic expression. Some of the children lamented, “Do we have to play the instruments again?”

Conclusion and Recommendations

In our study, we investigated the meanings and significance of early childhood music education that are represented

as artistic expression in national and local early schooling. Artistic expression cultivates students' curiosities and creativities through expressing spontaneous thoughts and feelings with the aid of music, visual arts, plays, and movements. As an integrated arts education in partnership with music, visual arts, plays, and movement, early childhood music education fails to draw on cognitive and artistically challenging aspects of experience. Both the national and local curriculum, including practices in the classroom, heavily depend on the growth of the child's innate desire to express him- or herself rather than guiding the child's construction of musical knowledge in context. Policy rhetoric and practice fail to recognize that the integration of musical conceptual development, expressive ability, creativity, and communication lead to fruitful artistic expression.

The music and songs with more aesthetic potential are often regarded beyond the children's developmental level, leading teachers to choose less aesthetically satisfying music and songs for their repertoires. Sidestepping the taboo of skill development in policy, the teachers impose music as a skill-oriented subject, ruling out artistic exploration and expression in musical performance. For children, the school music is what they enjoy, do not have to think hard about, practice, and understand on their own without much support. Musical context for these children is greatly compromised in Korea.

A child is not perceived as a capable, complete human being who can create a meaningful and expressive world of music beyond his or her level of musical performance, outside the performance, and in an unstructured performance, free of conventional musical form. A child is also not currently perceived as an incomplete human being who needs vigorous support from adults to continuously shape his or her innate musical self. Both perceptions drastically limit the benefits of music education in a child's beginning years. To rectify these misperceptions, music presented at this time in a child's life must be conceived as his or her dynamic life

force for re-forming the musical self. Specifically, the musical development of a child needs to be viewed as his or her right to nurture a musical self.

As Dewey (1902) argued, the knowledge of the subject matter and young children's lived experiences are not two separate entities, but a continuum. Knowledge of music is not an external object for young children to acquire, but it is alive within them. In other words, what matters is not how to translate

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the musical knowledge into developmentally appropriate activities, limiting their musical experiences, but how to provide freedom for the young children to explore and interpret this musical knowledge in their own ways. Knowledge of music serves as a tool for young children to communicate with the world of music and directs their musical experiences like a good map. Bruner (1960, 1996) also reinterpreted the significance of the knowledge of subject matter and suggested it is imbued with a dynamic force. The dynamic structure of knowledge enables young children to discover its principles, to make meanings out of it, and to steer it to future-directed learning. Korea's national curriculum ignores the perspective of the dynamic structure of the knowledge of music by not recognizing its intrinsic, aesthetic, and cognitive value and underestimating children's capacity for musical learning and development. A variety of music with a deep aesthetic quality needs to be present in the classroom for young children to explore, interact with, and interpret for them to construct musical knowledge through their musical

experiences. Only then will the dynamic knowledge of music open new possibilities for young children to lead new musical experiences.

How can we make great music accessible to young children? We argue that musical learning is not a process of natural unfolding, but rather a mediated process. In other words, the higher mental process of musical learning is a function of a mediated activity (Lim 2005). A child's construction of musical

knowledge is "not within, but between, in interactions," in the system (Walsh 2002, 103). The Korean national policy depends on the natural growth of the innate desire of a child to express him- or herself by engaging in unguided exploration and perception. From this perspective, a child's construction of knowledge is merely unmediated conceptualization. Bruner (1986) objected to this view and contended, "In the main, we do not construct a reality solely on the basis of private encounters with exemplars of natural states. Most of our approaches to the world are mediated through a negotiation with others" (93). We urge teachers to mediate the children's musical learning by supporting children's efforts. Lim (2005) suggested implementing the following conditions: (a) facilitate the mediational process with tools and interaction with other people; (b) study a small repertoire of music in-depth rather than many pieces of music; (c) build continuity between the musical activity settings; and (d) teach musical elements in relation to the musical whole. Through defining children's competence not in terms of what children can do on their

own, but what they can do with support, we should provide children with more movements, iconic pictures of music, three-dimensional materials, good quality musical instruments and resources, and, most important, human interaction to facilitate their interaction with music.

Knowledge, research, and teacher education in the field of early childhood music education is scant in Korea. This is well reflected in its national policy, as we have revealed in this article. There are only a handful of scholars, and it is only recently that music education for young children has gained recognition as a scholarly field (Kim, Park, and Yoon 2005). As a result, the structure of the discipline does not provide a solid foundation for music teacher education and educational practices. It is this lack of knowledge, research, and teacher education in the field of early childhood music education that contributes to the limited musical experiences and expression of young children in Korea. To make an informed change, development of scholarship guided by research is essential for successful educational practices. The national policy in Korea needs to be informed by both a deeper understanding of musical learning and teaching and more developed scholarship to guide classroom practices more effectively. To build solid scholarship in early childhood music education, Korea's higher education institutes and the government's awareness and support are greatly needed. Moreover, the early childhood education department needs to expand its program to accommodate early childhood music education in partnership with the music department. Although all early childhood education majors take the minimal required music courses, students with more interest and a background in music need to be encouraged to expand their study of music and music education to establish future leadership in the field of teaching music. Both the institutes of higher education and government need to recruit and invite scholars who can lead the program not only for undergraduates, but also for graduate students, and thus no longer trivialize teaching music to young children.

The teachers are adrift in their efforts in teaching music and are demanding direction, resources, and leadership. Early childhood education majors take two to four courses related to music education, but most are devoted to building piano accompaniment skills for the children's songs and learning music fundamentals. A music method course often serves as an introduction to a hodgepodge of different methods that lack a comprehensive and cohesive understanding of musical learning and teaching. Some kindergartens even hire music teachers—music majors who are hired by a private music company—from outside the school, but teachers and principals agree that, for the best results, music should be taught by the classroom teachers themselves.

Dedicated teachers spend their own money to pay for learning traditional Korean music and spend extra time to collect the songs for children that have been lost (i.e., traditional children's songs that were composed and orally transmitted before the influence of Western music), participate in newly introduced foreign workshops, and even move to a remote rural area schools to implement a traditional Korean music curriculum for young children. These expert teachers work miracles to overcome the local context and all the negative forces in teaching music to create a difference in children's musical life (Hope 2002). These teachers are eagerly looking for scholarly leadership in the field. Korea's higher education institutes and government should no longer ignore people's zeal for better music education; instead they should assume administrative leadership to support children's musical experiences and learning.

To conclude, we recommend collaboration and communication between music educators, early childhood educators, community musicians, community-based arts organizations, and area schools to broaden the scope of educational opportunities for both future teachers and children. Educational settings need to be extended, connecting the students to the realities of the world

with real music, real people, and real classrooms. It will take a whole community of learners to build a successful education program to better present the music to young children and provide a complex yet more accessible and familiar teaching and learning system.

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