

Brief Descriptions of Process Styles: How Twelve Children Went About Composing

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Abstract

This paper is a discussion of different compositional process styles observed in twelve children. The children each composed six recorder pieces as part of a larger study (Smith, 2004). Based on coding and analysis of process data recorded on videotape as the children worked, three process styles of composing are proposed. The auditory process style distinguishes itself by the absence of writing and reliance on the ear and the instrument to create the piece. The visual process style consists of great amounts of writing and very little experimenti

children knew of this. They were accustomed to being routinely videotaped in music classes and other settings in their school and generally ignored the

ways of playing that reside in the muscles of the performer. For 10 of the 12 children these styles were evident and consistent across all their pieces. The other two used different styles of composing for different pieces, but were consistent within a specific piece.

Auditory Composing Style: The Absence of Writing

The first of these styles applied to only one child among the 12, Amy (all names are pseudonyms). She was academically a slightly above average student and her fourth grade Intermediate Measures of Music Audiation (IMMA) composite score was at the 80th percentile. Amy composed all of her pieces only by playing her recorder. Table 1 shows how Amy used her time in all six of her pieces. Notice that she spent no time writing. She was the only child for whom that was true. The other children all chose to use notation of one sort or another. By contrast, most of the other children spent approximately one quarter of their time writing something down.

Amy spent proportionally m

Visual Compos


A: The things I did before and, um, and then I match it and if it doesn't match, I

um, I think of something else. So then, if it's my final thing, I put it on the paper.

Table 2

Visual Compositional Process Style: Percentages of Time on Task

Piece	Total Time	Exp.	Hannah's Percentages				Practic
			Writ.	Dev.	Silence	Additive Repetition	



because I liked – usually I liked what I played.

And later, talking about her sixth piece, we had this conversation:

S: I wrote something down at the very, very beginning and then I didn't write anything for a long time and then I wrote that and then I didn't write anything for like two hours. Or ages.

R: Did you make this part that you did on it at first or did you write it first?

S: I made it first.

R: And there's the . . .

S: Yup. I played it several times before I actually wrote it down. Now I'm kind of humming the tune and singing the letters.

R: Do you know you are looking at your fingers to figure out what letters to write down?

S: Yeah, I, I, do that a lot cause a lot of the time I can't, I don't look down at my fingers. I should have, though, cause I found something I really liked and I did not remember it, cause I didn't look down and writt
t

C: Yeah, cause I just finger it.

R: Uh-huh, you finger it and it helps you remember what to write down?

C: Yeah. It

spent more time in silence and fidgeting
than he

by average mean score of the judges was ranked 49th. Somewhat surprisingly, his second highest scoring piece (51st) was also the one where he spent the most time writing. He consistently spent more time writing than in any other category of process stage except with his second piece (see Table 2). There he spent about 10% more time in development than in writing. Yet that was his lowest scoring piece which was ranked at 70th overall.

Among the visual

This is also consistent with previous research findings (Dunn, 1992; Rooke, 1991; Upitis, 1990).

One thing that was quite clear from
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