

## **Developing Musical Sensitivity and Creativity through Various Forms of Play Activities**

Hermie F. Cartagena  
University of the Philippines Visayas  
e-mail: [hfcartagena@up.edu.ph](mailto:hfcartagena@up.edu.ph)

\*Corresponding author: [gena@up.edu.ph](mailto:gena@up.edu.ph)

Published: 3 December 2021

Cite this article (APA): Cartagena, H. F. (2021). Developing musical sensitivity and creativity through various forms of play activities. *Malaysian Journal of Music*, 10(2), 74-89. <https://doi.org/10.37134/mjm.vol10.2.6.2021>

### **Abstract**

This paper presents the potential of various play activities in developing learner's musical sensitivity and creativity. The K to 12 music education curriculum guide of the Philippine Department of Education advocates the use of experiential learning and outcome-based learning in the classroom. One of the ways in which these methodologies can be promoted is by engaging learners in various play activities. However, there is a lack of literature showing the impact of such methodologies on Filipino learners. Using a priori deductive method, data from a series of interviews, observations, and video and picture analysis from this ethnographic case research were analysed to determine the implications of play activities in classroom music education. The interlocutors of the study are selected Ilonggo children, their parents, and some teachers. This study sought to answer the question of how can play activities be beneficial to classroom music education. Findings suggest that play activities can be a learning tool for the holistic development of the learners. Various forms of play activities provide an avenue for the learners to think or imagine situations divergently and have meaningful musical experiences as they portray various roles. Therefore, play activities provide the learners with a holistic learning experience and the agency to develop their musical sensitivity and creativity.

*Keywords: creativity, holistic learning experience, music education, musical sensitivity, play activities*

### **Introduction**

Music education provides a learning experience that is not limited to the four corners of the classroom. The playground is one of the places wherein various forms of play activities are observed. The playground is a space where the learners learn to identify and develop their potentials (Marsh, 2008). One of the play activities that are directly observable in the playground is singing games. The singing games provide children a musical experience that allows them to develop their musical sensitivity and creativity as they explore and experiment on various music patterns that are not directly taught inside the classroom (Marsh, 1995). The play activities allow children to think divergently and give them the agency to decide on the rules and roles they wanted to portray. Thus, the play activities are purely based on the subjectivity and interest of the learners. Play activities are flexible enough to accommodate the interest of the learners that may lead to the development of the learner's musical sensitivity and creativity (Marsh, 2008; Carson, 2017; Gonzales-Moreno, 2013; Guastello, 2009; Forehand, 2005; Stefanic, 2014).

In the Philippines, the K to 12 curriculum programme of the Department of Education advocates for the implementation of the holistic learning experience by employing a learner-centered or experiential learning approach that will develop learners to be culturally sensitive, creative, and musically inclined individuals (Department of Education; 2016, 2020). In line with the advocacy of the Philippine DepEd, the integration of play activities in the classroom can be viewed as an innovative tool for music teaching and learning. However, there is a lack of literature showing the impact of play activities in developing the musical sensitivity and creativity of Filipino

learners. The researcher sees the potential of play activities to be integrated into the classroom setting in promulgating the musical sensitivity and creativity of the learners.

The Social Cognitive Theory of Bandura and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory supports the idea of the study that various forms of play activities provide an avenue for the children to engage and learn from one another. Play activities provide a direct experience that leads to the understanding of oneself. It is with these activities that the learners can identify their strengths and potentials and may further fine-tune those potentials in the classroom instruction. With that, the social environment acts as a facilitator of learning development (Bandura, 2002; Brock et al., 2009; Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2010; Schunk, 2012; Scrimsher & Tudge, 2003).

Related to the theories presented above are some of the approaches in music that provide the learners a direct musical experience that encourages musical sensitivity and creativity. The Dalcroze and Orff music approaches highlight the learner's musical development and sensitivity through improvisation where various play activities are integrated. Children learn to be musically sensitive and creative individuals as they play, socialise, and observe one another. Learner's direct experience allows them to assimilate and accommodate new information that may lead to the development of their musical and creative knowledge (Anderson, 2012; Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2010; Jensen, 2005).

The researcher pursued this study because there is a preconceived notion that play activities are essential in enriching children's music and creative potentials. By integrating such activities in the classroom instruction, learners will have a nurturing environment, meaningful, and relevant learning experience. Also, this information can be beneficial in elevating the quality of music education in the country. This study sought to answer the question of how can play activities be beneficial to classroom music education.

## Related Literature

### Categories of Play Activities

There are various types of play activities that children enjoy. These activities, which are crucially important in children's musical and creative development, learning, and well-being, reflect the fact that the concept of the play itself is infinitely flexible, offering choices and allowing for freedom of interpretation (Brock et al., 2009). Play is not only seen as an aesthetic activity that provides entertainment to children, but this also possesses implicit ideas that are derived from the rules set as various roles portrayed are being played (Antipaso, 1988; Obsuna, 1983).

As cited by Brock et al. (2009), Hutt divided play types into three main categories: *epistemic*, *ludic*, and games with a rule. Epistemic play is associated with the development of cognitive or intellectual skills. Ludic, on the other hand, is a play associated with the development of social and creative skills. Lastly, games with rules fall under team sports or chess.

Meanwhile, Lopez (1980/2001) introduced to the Philippines the term "ordinary games", which are identified as physical games, games of dexterity or skill, and mimetic or drama games. Physical games are "characterised by energetic motor movements, bodily strengths, and endurance (p. 83)." Games of dexterity or skills are a type of memory game, and mimetic or drama game is a type of role-playing game.

Play activity, on the other hand, is not only limited to leisure activities that provide fun and exciting experiences to the children as other aspects also belong to the concept of play. "Rituals, liturgy, sacrament, and mystery would fall within the play concept. The ritual acts have all the formal and essential characteristics of play which transport the participant to another world or dimension (Huizinga, 1980, p. 24)." Huizinga (1980) also explained that "dance is an integral part of the play: the relation is one direct participation, almost of essential identity. Dancing is a particular and particularly perfect form of playing (p. 165)." Dance on this matter is not just a form of art, it is also a type of play that provides agency to the learners to be responsible in creating their movement routine using their body as a medium of expression (Himberg & Thompson, 2011; Ingold, 1994; McIntosh, 2006; Pucihar & Pance, 2014).

### Benefits of Play

Play activities contain musical elements that encourage learners to become more imaginative and explorative individuals leading to their learning development (Jaworski, 2012; Huisman Koops, 2010). Movements and bodily gestures or expressions can be observed directly in various forms of play. With that, children learn to absorb and adapt to the rhythm or rhythmic patterns, timbre, beat, and social norms (Campbell and Scott-Kassner, 2010; Pucihar & Pance, 2014). Consequently, play activities provide a holistic learning experience to learners for such activity may help enhance cognition (Del Carmen et al., 2015; Jensen, 2005; Lopez, 1980/2001; Nicolopoulou, 2010), improve emotional state (Barbosa, 2003; Brock et al., 2009; Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2010; Corral, 1975;

Delgado-Gallenero, 1977; Jensen, 2005; Huisman Koops, 2010; Lopez, 1980/2001; Ros & Demiris, 2013; Sprenger, 2010), enhance physiological aspects (Campbell and Scott-Kassner, 2010; Brock et al., 2009; Jensen, 2005; Russ, 1998), and establish social awareness (Barbosa, 2003; Brock et al., 2009; Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2010; Colwell, 2006; Lopez, 1980/2001, 2006; Ramos, 1978; Schwartzman, 2012; Theobald, et al., 2015).

Giving children the opportunity to play may lead to independent learning, wherein they learn how to process information and find answers to their queries through problem-solving. Learners become more flexible, creative, and productive individuals as they engage actively in their environment leading towards their holistic development (Gray, 2008; Kenny, 2014; Morrison et al., 2008). The absence of play in a child's life may create a negative impact and may lead them to experience difficulties in adapting to society as they grow old (Brock et al., 2009; Brown, 2010, 2013; Del Carmen et al., 2015).

### **Musical Sensitivity and Creativity in Music Education**

Musical activities integrated into music education involve listening to music, moving to music, singing musically, playing musical instruments, and creating music. Such activities may provide experiential learning that may tighten the music and creative potential of students (Garnett, 2014). According to Campbell & Scott-Kassner (2010), the creative impulse that is growing in children of all ages can be stimulated in various educational settings beyond the initial stages of exploration and discovery. To deny children the opportunity to work creatively with the materials and structure of music is to limit their capacity to think creatively and, most importantly, to limit the full exploration of what it means to be musical.

Enriching music experience is fundamental in the musical and creative development of learners. One of the ways to provide an enriching learning experience to learners is by establishing an environment that can encourage children to improvise, arrange, and compose music and movement (Gonzales-Moreno, 2013; Vitale, 2011). Giving learners the agency to be engaged in their desired play activity could motivate them to further their musical knowledge (Creech et al., 2013; Gonzales-Moreno, 2013).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The K to 12 music education curriculum guide of the Philippine Department of Education advocates the use of experiential learning and outcome-based learning in the classroom. One of the ways by which such can be promoted is by engaging learners in various play activities. However, there is a lack of literature showing the impact of such methodologies on Filipino learners.

### **Purpose**

This study provides some relevant insights on the role of play in enhancing children's creativity and musical sensitivity. This will also enlighten other researchers and readers on the importance of play in the development of learners' music and creative potentials. Furthermore, play activities contain music and creative elements that allow children to have diverse music and creative experiences that will result in the development of children's creativity and musical sensitivity. With that, the study sees the potential of such activities, when integrated into the classroom music education, can be beneficial to both children and educators—(a) providing engaging, meaningful, and holistic music experience to learners, and (b) uplifting the quality of music education in the country.

### **Methodology**

This ethnographic case study aims to look at the music education possibilities of play activities. Ethnography is the "root of qualitative research" (Colwell, 2006, p. 274). According to Cohen et al. (2013), ethnography "is a portrayal and explanation of social groups and situations in their real-life context" (p. 170). Also, it is the study and systematic recording of human cultures. The emphasis of this study is to know the individual case, knowing each unique and salient feature of the respondents. Furthermore, no generalisation was made in the study. To ensure the reliability and validity of the study, proper research procedures were administered – informed consent (ethics), key informant sampling, series of interviews, informant's document analysis such as pictures and videos as permitted, member checking, and triangulation of data from various sources.

## Scope and Delimitation

The study was conducted at District V-Mandurriao Elementary School (MES), Iloilo City, Western Visayas, Philippines, from March 2018 to October 2018 (Figure 1).

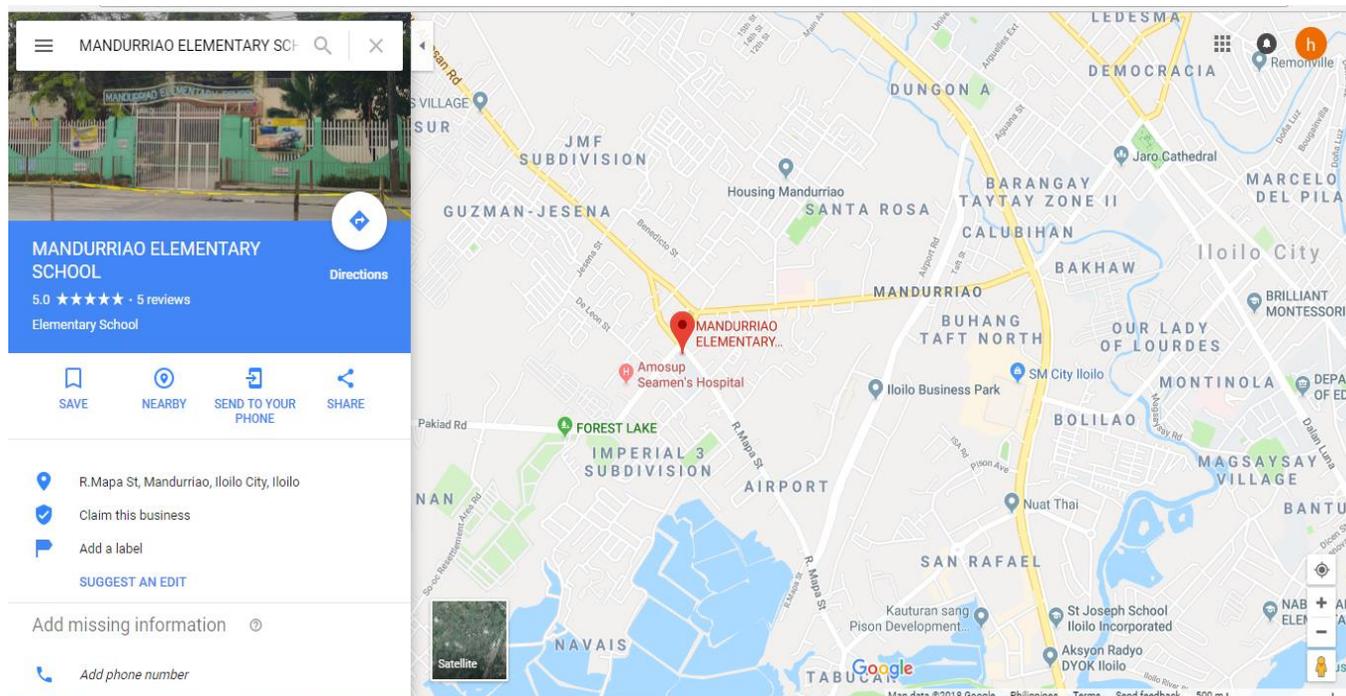


Figure 1. Map of Mandurriao Elementary School, Iloilo City, Philippines, “Google Maps” (2018)

The school is a typical public school in the Philippines that normally caters to all kinds of students from diverse families of varying economic backgrounds. In the context of MES, students are from the neighbouring suburban *barangays* and subdivisions. Usually, the population of students per class ranges from 40-60 students. The number of sections depends on the capacity of the school. For MES, there are different clusters or groups of students—English Science Math (ESM) students (2 sections per year level), star section (1 section per year level), and the regular class (10 sections per year level).

At present, the school offers various music and dance activities for their students such as drum and lyre, majorette, choir, violin ensemble, cheer dancing, dance sports, and hip-hop dancing. The school also offers summer classes in dance and music. Specifically, in dance, students may choose to learn hip-hop, Latin American dance, and contemporary dance; while in music, students are offered choices of lessons in voice, piano, guitar and violin. Learners are given the opportunity to explore, experience, and discover their music and creative potentials through these activities.

The MES was also selected for the study for it offers various musical and movement exposures to students. On a personal note, the school was chosen because of: (a) its proximity to the researcher’s residence, (b) the researcher being an alumnus of the school, (c) the researcher’s teaching experience for one year in the school. This means that the researcher is highly acquainted and immersed with the community or environment. Therefore, this said school may provide a good source of information related to the study.

The selection of the students was based on key informant sampling. Teachers in the school have identified students whom they consider musically sensitive and creative. From their selection, the researcher chose a final list of students who later became the interlocutors of the study. The study chose to involve the grades four to six (9-12 years old) students for learners at these ages are highly active in movement activities like dance and play. Moreover, these groups of students can already comprehend and follow instructions, doing things on their own. This means that movement activities can be easily captured and documented in these certain age groups. The primary source of the data was the interviews of the children, and this was supported by the interviews of their parents and teachers.

## Research Tools, Data Gathering Analysis, and Procedure

The data-gathering instruments of the study included an interview guide, audio recordings of interviews, a journal or logbook to record the researcher’s observation through field notes, and a camera to document the pictures and videos. The interview guide contained questions related to the dance and play movement activities of the learners.

For the interview, the researcher constructed questions based on the literature related to the study. The questionnaire was validated by experts from music and dance education. Validators were one dance professional, one music education lecturer, one ethnomusicologist-composer, and one Dalcroze specialist. Second, a permission letter was given to the Department of Education (DepEd), Division of Iloilo City, and the office of the principal to conduct the study; followed by a selection of interlocutors—key informant sampling. Third, a consent form was given to the interlocutors and the parents of the children.

The interview was done via a one-on-one interview with the interlocutor. However, for the teachers, a focused group discussion (FGD) was administered. The recorded interviews were transcribed. Then member checks and triangulation were administered to ensure the reliability of the study. Interviews that have undergone member checks were coded using the theories from the review-related literature. Triangulation processes of pictures, videos, and interview transcripts assured the researcher that the information provided by the interviewee is consistent throughout the study.

Meanwhile, field notes were taken from the observations while photos or videos of respondent's dance and play activities and performances inside and outside the school were analysed. As the researcher, it is part of the study to protect the interlocutors. Hence, the anonymity of the interlocutors was secured throughout the study.

### **Data Analysis**

A priori deductive and inductive thematic analysis was administered in interpreting the data. According to Ryan and Bernard (2003), some processes for interpreting the data included cutting and sorting, finding theory-related materials, finding similarities and differences, and discovering indigenous typologies. In the field, a group of researchers—three research members—independently analysed the documents and data to construct thematic analyses.

Also, procedures by Braun and Clarke (2012) were followed carefully: (a) data familiarisation, (b) generating initial codes (c) searching for themes, (d) reviewing themes, (e) defining and naming themes, and (f) producing the report.

### **Results and Analysis**

The engagement of the interlocutors, along with other learners, to various forms of play activities has contributed to the development of their creative expression and musical sensitivity. It is with these activities that learners learn new things that may lead to their holistic learning growth.

The play activities, which are natural to children, possess great potential in honing the musical abilities of the learners. By integrating such activities in the classroom instruction, the learner's learning experience can be more relevant and can likewise help elevate the learning environment which, in turn, can develop the learner's musical sensitivity and creativity (Figure 2).



*Figure 2. Various forms of play activities when integrated in the classroom instruction can lead in the development of learner's musical sensitivity and creativity.*

### Developing Musical Sensitivity through Play Activities

In terms of musical sensitivity, some forms of play engaged in by the children and the interlocutors involved chants and movements embedded with musical elements such as rhythm, timing, beat, and melody.

Sometime in June 2018, the researcher visited the school and observed the interlocutors during break time and class time. During recess, lunch break, and dismissal period, learners make use of their time to play with one another. Usually, a group of students was playing inside and outside their classrooms. Also, some children are playing in the playground and the field. In the case of the interlocutors, the researcher observed their various play activities, one of which is *langit lupa*. As the children recite the spoken rhyme, one of the players points his or her finger to each of the players in a clockwise or counter clockwise direction. The pointing finger synchronises with the tempo of the spoken rhyme. The musical element is embedded in their game activity. The players unconsciously develop their sense of time and rhythm:

In *langit-lupa*, the "It" points to a player at the start of the song. The "It" continues to point to each player at every syllable and stops only at the end of the song. (Ash, personal communication, July 6, 2018)

During lunchtime, while everybody is taking a noon break, the researcher noticed a group of grade five students who were playing "I wanna be a *tutubi*" (Figure 3) at the corner of the room. According to the child (player), the *tutubi* refers to a small stone. In this game, the children form a circle while seated on the floor. The "it" or the *taya* will be away for a moment in order not to see where the stone is hidden. As the children recite the lyrics, they would secretly pass the stone around from one player to another. After reciting the lyrics, the players will close their hands and hide the stone. The "it" will try to guess who among the players keeps the stone. The "it" can only guess once. The game goes through the cycle repeatedly until the "it" successfully guesses who is keeping the stone. The song goes like this:

*I wanna be a tutubi na* (I wanna be a dragonfly)  
*Sa aking kamay* (Like the one on my hand)  
*Nahulog sa bangin,* (It fell off the cliff)  
*Tinuka ng manok* (It was pecked by a chicken)  
*Na nanggaling sa bundok* (That came from the mountain)

## I wanna be a tutubi

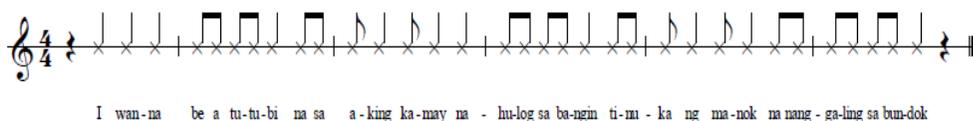


Figure 3. Notation transcript of spoken and songs of Ilonggo children

A few days after, the researcher went back to the school to further observe the interlocutors. During a lunch break, one of the interlocutors played BINGO (play song) with her playmates in front of their classroom while waiting for their teacher to arrive. The interlocutor was the *taya* (it) in the game. As the *taya*, she will recite the lyrics of the game's chant, while pointing to his playmates one after the other. At the end of the chant, the "it" will try to step on the foot of one of his playmates. They must be able to avoid getting stepped on by the "it." The chant goes like this:

*BINGO, nanay mo pala-bingo* (BINGO, Your nanay always plays bingo)  
*binato ng beynte singko* (She was hit with a quarter peso)  
*akala nya limang piso* (She thought it was five-pesos)  
*B-I-N-G-O, bingo.*

B I N G O Na nay mo pa la bin go bi na to ng beyn te sing ko

7  
 a ka la niya li mang pi so B I N G O Bing-go

Figure 4. Notation transcript of spoken rhyme and songs of Ilonggo children

As days go by, the researcher was able to document other play activities of the interlocutors. During a lunch break, a group of children [in Grade four ESM] was playing a singing game called *isa, dalawa, tatlo* (one, two, three). Han (one of the interlocutors) was one of the players. She was moving and performing some body gestures while singing a song mixed with Hiligaynon and Filipino words. In this game, the players should mimic the actions of the “it” while singing the song (Figure 5). The song goes like this:

*Mag isip-isip ng isa dalawa tatlo,* (You count one, two, three)  
*mag isip-isip ng isa dalawa tatlo,* (You count one, two, three)  
*sunda ninyo ako.* (Follow me)  
*Sunda sunda sunda ako,* (Follow, follow, follow me)  
*sunda sunda sunda ako,* (Follow, follow, follow me)  
*ikaw naman dason* (*ikaw naman karon*) (You would be next)

## Mag isip-isip ng isa dalawa tatlo

Mag i-sip i-sip ng i - sa da - la-wa tat-lo mag i-sip i-sip ng i - sa da-la-wa tat-lo sun - da nin-yo a -  
 - ko Sun-da sun-da sun-da a-ko sun-da sun-da sun-da a-ko i - kaw na-man da - son

Figure 5. Notation transcript of play songs of Ilonggo children

To further support the gathered data, the researcher conducted a Focus Group Discussion with the teachers. During the interview, the teachers unanimously believed that play activities are fundamental in the musical and creative development of the learners. Teachers even cited some examples to justify their claim:

*... [ang pag hampang sang Larong Pinoy] makabulig sa pag develop sang musical sensitivity .. like for example ang tin- tin bika (piko) ... may pattern man na siya*

... playing *Larong Pinoy* can help develop the child's musical sensitivity ... for example, *tin- tin bika* has a pattern (Teachers' FGD, 2018).

The teachers added that by playing sports, the learners can likewise develop their musical sensitivity. The teachers believe that any type of sport contains musical elements that can help enhance the musical sensitivity of the learners:

*... [ang pag hampang sang sports] makabulig, example sa volleyball na bala, di bala may three touches na bag-o mo [isaylo] sa piyak. May pattern, may rhythm and timing man na sya gihapon. Amo man sa music [may pattern]. Ang bata pwede na siya kabuhat sang mga sounds nga ara sa sports nga nagadasig kag nagahinay*

... playing sports can help establish musical sensitivity. An example is volleyball, where the players are given three touches to pass the ball to the other side of the court. It has a pattern, rhythm, and timing. Music also has a pattern. A child can create a sound (fast and slow) from these activities (Teachers' FGD, 2018).

Also, the teachers have observed in their classes that the interlocutors considered their dance improvisation as part of the play activity. The interlocutors, together with their playmates, improvise movements as they listen to the music:

*Ang ila na ya nga way indi lang na play nga daw [hampang gid]. Kundi ang ila na ya nga gina ubra, like for example kung ano ila nga mga stepping, amo man na ila nga gina hampang. Ga play sila music dayon ginasautan nila... Ara na da sila permi sa ibabaw sang stage kay dira man ang amon nga practice area [sa saot].*

Their way of playing is not the typical game. For them, dancing is a form of play. For example, whatever steps they learn in their class, they keep on repeating these as part of their play activity (Teacher's FGD, 2018).

The claim of the teachers is supported by the concept of play of the interlocutors. For interlocutors, they considered dance as a part of their play activity.

*Sa balay kis- a ga saot saot biskan wala music, ga-isip lang..kung may music gina-feel ang beat dapat timing*

At home, sometimes we dance even though there's no music, we just count only. If there's music, you just have to feel it ... should have timing (Pres, personal communication, July 5, 2018)

*ang hampang ko may kis- a may saot saot man*

Sometimes my play activity is dance (Han, personal communication, July 18, 2018).

Generally, the play activities of the interlocutors have contributed to the development of their musical sensitivity. The play activities of the interlocutors have provided them with direct music experiences that, in one way or another, influenced their musical sensitivity. The various play activities of the interlocutors contain musical elements that are essential in the development of their music potentials. Thus, by experiencing music through play activities, learners will be able to familiarise the different music elements as they sing, make gestures, and move their body. On the other hand, play activity does not only contributed in the development of interlocutors musical sensitivity. The play activities of the interlocutors likewise developed their creativity. The play activity contains learning processes that allows learners to explore and develop their creative ideas.

### Developing Creativity Through Play Activities

While observing the activities of the interlocutors within the school premise, the researcher has realised that the concept of creativity is formed through various direct and indirect learning experiences of the interlocutors. The interlocutor's rich play experience provided them the opportunity to become resourceful and imaginative individuals in portraying various roles they play. The interlocutors make use of their prior knowledge in developing creative ideas. Thus, the interlocutor was able to assimilate and accommodate information and develop their creative knowledge.

Ash, one of the interlocutors, has developed her understanding of the significance of play to children. During the interview, she explained that "The children should experience playing so they could learn something from their experiences". This idea only implies that varied play experiences provide children with the opportunity to learn various concepts that are beneficial for the learning development of the learners.

The concept of play is not only limited to physical activities. Other forms of play involved imagination like role-playing or dramatisation that have contributed to the activation of the interlocutor's creativity which is triggered by their interest. The interlocutors become *mabinuhaton* (creative) as they portray the various role they choose to represent. As the interlocutors portray the various roles they choose, they also learn to make use of the materials related to their play activity. Furthermore, their resourcefulness indicates how creative they are in using such materials in their play.

It was summertime when the interview was conducted with the interlocutors. The interlocutors, at that time, were currently enrolled in their summer dance class. During the interview, the interlocutors mentioned that their play activities allowed them to imagine things and play different roles based on their interests:

We are playing as if we are actor. (Franz, personal communication, July 6, 2018)

We also do role-playing, sometimes we play cooking. (Mimi, personal communication, July 6, 2018)

I play cooking, holding and playing the utensils, and then sell flowers. (Ash, personal communication, July 6, 2018)

I dress-up my Barbie when playing with it. I dress it like a princess, I braid her hair, and I sometimes put some accessories on her ... I stick the cut-out papers to the dress of my Barbi. (Han, personal communication, July 18, 2018)

I also dance when I am at home. Even if there's no music, I still dance. I just listen to the music in my mind. (Han, personal communication, July 18, 2018)

During break time, the interlocutors used to play with one another. If not making some dance routines, the interlocutors would play a "pretend game." The interlocutors would try to create a scenario in their play activity. As documented in the video in 2018, Ash (one of the interlocutors), together with another child, approached Franz (one of the interlocutors). They stood close together and pretended to be in a photoshoot as if they were models. Ash was the one choreographing the positions of her friends.

Furthermore, games that involve imagination are likewise reflected in the play activities of other children in school. As the researcher roams around the school premises, the researcher found a group of children playing on the stage during recess time. The children pretended to mimic how ramp models would walk. The children called this game *miss-miss* (from the beauty titles that start with Miss, like Miss Universe and Miss International).

The above concept of play is likewise supported by the teacher's interview. Teachers explained, in FGD, that in dramatization, children may be able to explore and experience a lot of characters which may tap their imagination as they portray these roles. Children learn to provide creative and musical inputs in their play activities. Hence, the dramatization taps both the creative and musical aspects of the child:

When you do role-playing you use your parents as your characters, as a child. You explore a particular character of a person. When children role-play, they do not limit their role-playing to their parents. They also role play singers. You become the audience. They have their music, especially if the child's interest is really into music or singing. Usually, they're really acting as if we have a show (Teachers' FGD, 2018).

The role-playing or dramatisation was also reflected and incorporated in classroom activities of other learning disciplines. The researcher observed some classes, during the field study in June 2018, to witness how the concept of play is integrated into classroom activities. In the science class of Ash and Franz (Figure 6), children had their performance activity. They were tasked to portray different roles representing different concepts they learned in their classroom discussion.

Aside from role-playing or games that involve imagination, other games triggers the cognitive domain of the learners. Being *mapamaagi* (strategic and resourceful) is one of the many attributes of creativity. Strategic games require the players to be critical in their game plan to achieve their game objective – to win. Being strategic is closely related to critical thinking which also intertwines with creative thinking. Children or players use their critical thinking as they think of a *paagi* (way) in solving a problem as they engage in play. The interlocutors mentioned games like *ins* and *panaguay* as an example of strategic games. Likewise, the interlocutors explained the process of the game. Usually, such games are played by children during dismissal period in the afternoon in the field or outside the classroom:

When you play “ins”, both sides have watchers. There are three lines on the ground. There are groupings, two groups. If you are the *taya* you should catch the players [of the other team]; if you catch them, then it’s your turn to play the games. (Ash, personal communication, July 6, 2018)

In playing *panaguay*, someone is the *taya*, then someone would count, then we will hide somewhere. (Pres, personal communication, July 5, 2018)



Figure 6. Dance presentation as part of interlocutor’s photo classroom activity.

During dismissal time (around 5:00 p.m. in the afternoon), several students can be found in different areas of the school. The researcher found a group of students who are playing strategic games such as basketball and Chinese garter (Figure 7 & 8). In basketball, the player’s objective is to shoot the ball on the ring. Bouncing or dribbling of the ball is required to the player who holds the ball. Meanwhile, the Chinese garter game objective is to cross over the garter or rubber thread. The player tries to jump as high as possible to successfully cross to the other side. Both games require strategic planning to win.



*Figure 7. Strategic games of children outside the classroom environment-Chinese carter game*



*Figure 8. Strategic games of children outside the classroom environment-basketball*

In support of the above idea, teachers of the interlocutors also agreed, during the interview, to the idea that strategic games are fundamental in the development of learner's creative thoughts. The teachers believe that learners may find the relevance of their activities in music-making:

*It's true that you have to be critical when you play those mind games. Maybe the same creativity [is activated] in music. When a child thinks critically, she can still use that in music when she creates notes and analyses the beat (Teachers' FGD, 2018).*

*For example, when she plays Rubik's cube, she uses timing when she thinks of how to solve the puzzle. The creativity is also there. There's a technique there before you can solve the puzzle. Technique and strategy are also considered as creativity (Teachers' FGD, 2018).*

Generally, the various forms of play activities played by the interlocutors, along with other children, are fundamental in their creative development. Such play activities provide the learners an opportunity to explore and discover their potentials that, in turn, develop their imagination, critical skills, and creative ideas

### Discussion

The findings of the study show that as children engage in various play activities (like role-playing, physical games, mental games, action songs, and dancing), children become creative, strategic, and musically engaged individuals. In turn, they can create their creative outputs out of the various movements that they can generate. This claim is supported by other related studies.

While all forms of human activity can be considered as a form of play (Huizinga, 1980), play activities vary according to individual subjectivity. The concept of the play itself is flexible and it offers a lot of choices and allows freedom of interpretation (Brock et al., 2009; Burnard, 2013). Such activities provide an opportunity for children for several interpretations and to distinguish the similarities and differences in terms of style, treatment, music, and strategies. As such, critical and creative thinking among children is developed (Hargreaves, 2012; Stefanic, 2014). Aside from that, engagement in various play activities also allows children to develop musical creativity and musical sensitivity as they explore and experiment with various music patterns in their play activities (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2010). As children continue to think more critically and be more musically creative, they can progress from simple to more complex outputs or learning outcomes. This result is also similar to the ideas of Anderson (2012), Campbell and Scott-Kassner (2010), Jensen (2005), Garnett (2014), and Perkins (2013) stating that the learner's direct experience provides them the opportunity to process information by assimilating and accommodating such information that may develop their music and creative knowledge. Thus, the various forms of play activities provide learners with direct experience that taps their music and creative potentials leading to a more favourable learning outcome.

Likewise, the findings also suggest that play activity, if within the context of the learners, provides a meaningful learning experience. Furthermore, using mother tongue or existing music materials that are embedded within learner's local play activities will provide them with more relevant and engaging learning experiences. Based on the experiences of the interlocutors, their play activities provided them with musical experiences. Aside from that, the local music materials found in the play activities of the learners may generate an understanding of their culture and environment. In effect, the local play (*larong Pinoy*) activities and music materials (local songs and chants), aside from establishing the learner's musical sensitivity and creativity, will develop a sense of identity and, likewise, establish cultural awareness. This information is beneficial for the educators to highly engage the learners with local play and music activities to further their interest in learning and, likewise, provide learners with more musical encounters leading to the development of learner's musical sensitivity, creativity, identity, and socio-cultural awareness.

### Conclusion

Play activities contain implicit and explicit information that is beneficial for the learning development of the learners. The play activities provide learners with authentic learning experiences. With that, learners develop consciously and unconsciously their music and creative potentials as they play and interact with one another. Thus, the integration of play activities in the classroom setting can be beneficial in providing the learners with a relevant and meaningful learning experience leading to holistic learning outcomes. This information can likewise be beneficial in the learning advocacy of the Philippine Department of Education K-12 curriculum program. However, there is a lack of literature in the country supporting the impact of play activities in developing learner's musical sensitivity and creativity. For

that reason, the researcher pursued this study because there is a preconceived notion that play activities can significantly influence the development of learner's musical sensitivity and creativity.

As the Department of Education in the Philippines advocates for student-centered education, the play activity can be one of the learning tools that can be used in classroom instruction to provide learners with a more relevant and encouraging learning environment and experience. Play activities are usually found in children's playgrounds. The playground is a safe space for children to explore and experiment on various things that will lead to their learning growth, and likewise, develop children's musical sensitivity and creativity. The experience of children in their play activities provides them the opportunity to understand their learning capabilities and develop their learning abilities. This only suggests that learners have the learning agency as they engaged in various play activities.

Play is a highly social activity. The interaction in play activities provides learners the freedom to portray various roles leading to learner's character development. With that, this study is anchored to Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. The study believed that the social environment is the primary factor for learning. Learners gain knowledge as they interact and observe their environment. Learners learn to sing songs and dances as they play with one another. Also, the learners learn to become socially sensitive individuals as they help others in learning the mechanics of their play activities. With that, the foundation of learning can be further strengthened. This can all be in the introduction

The findings support the claim of the study that the various children's play activities, within the context of the interlocutors, have a great potential in developing learner's musical sensitivity and creativity. The various play activities of the interlocutors, along with other children, allowed them to have diverse learning experiences. This, in turn, encouraged the learners to think divergently and become resourceful individuals in attaining their play objectives. With that, the learners learn to assimilate and accommodate various information and generate new knowledge. Furthermore, the interlocutors develop their learning system by codifying, give meanings, and provide symbols to their various play activities. Another factor to consider in delivering a more musical experience to learners is by employing the existing local music materials found in the play activities of the learners. Thus, the various forms of local play and music activities can provide learners with a holistic learning experience that, in turn, can help generate and develop the musical sensitivity and creativity of the learners and, likewise, establish a sense of identity and socio-cultural awareness.

In conclusion, the integration of local play and music activities in classroom instruction can be beneficial for both the learners and the educators. The learners may find these activities fun and enjoyable for it is relevant to them. Learning experiences become meaningful for the learners. For educators, they can engage the students in classroom activities. Also, through local play and music activities, motivation and interest can be tapped. Consequently, by tapping the motivation and interest of the learners, the learners could have a prolonged learning or attention span. Aside from that, the learners learn to socialize and understand different views and perspectives as they engage in these activities. Thus, the children become socially and culturally aware of their environment as they develop their musical and artistic expression.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the findings, local play activities contain implicit and explicit information that directly informs the learners through their play experiences. The play activities tap the learner's interest that, in turn, provide learners with an engaging learning experience. The diverse play experiences will give the learners, regardless of age, gender, and sexuality, a holistic learning experience that would lead to a more favourable learning outcome. With that, future researchers could conduct a study on integrating play in the classroom setting to determine the impact of play in the learning development of the learners.

### **References**

- Anderson, W. T. (2012). The Dalcroze approach to Music Education: Theory and applications. *General Music Today*, 26(1), 27–33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1048371311428979>
- Antipaso, V. B. (1988). *Ethnic games played by Kankana-ey children* [Unpublished Master's thesis]. University of the Philippines, Diliman.
- Bandura, A. (2002). Social cognitive theory in cultural context. *Applied psychology*, 51(2), 269-290. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1464-0597.00092>

- Barbosa, A. C. (2003, August 15). In focus: Traditional games in the Philippines. *National Commission for Culture and the Arts*. <http://ncca.gov.ph/about-culture-and-arts/in-focus/traditional-games-in-the-philippines>.
- Braun V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In H. Cooper, P. M. Camic, D. L. Long, A. T. Panter, D. Rindskopf, & K. J. Sher (Eds.), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol. 2. Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological* (pp. 57-71). American Psychological Association.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In H. Cooper, P. M. Camic, D. L. Long, A. T. Panter, D. Rindskopf, & K. J. Sher (Eds.), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol. 2. Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological* (pp. 57-71). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/13620-004>
- Brock, A., Dodds, S., Jarvis, P., & Olusoga, Y. (2009). *Perspectives on play: Learning for life* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315834399>
- Brown, S. L., & Vaughan, C. C. (2010). *Play: How it shapes the brain, opens the imagination, and invigorates the soul*. Avery. P. Burnard (Ed.). *Developing creativities in higher music education: International perspectives and practices* (pp.1-10). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315885223> Is the page number correct?
- Campbell, P. S., & Scott-Kassner, C. (2010). *Music in childhood. From preschool through the elementary grades*. Schirmer, Cengage Learning.
- Carson, S. (2017, January 17). The unleashed mind. *Scientific American Mind—The mad science of creativity, Special edition*, 28-31. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-unleashed-mind/>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2013). *Research methods in education*. Routledge.
- Colwell, R. (Ed.). (2006). *MENC handbook of research methodologies*. Oxford University Press.
- Corral, C. P. (1975). *The physical fitness of Iloilo public school girls ages 11-15* [Unpublished Master's thesis]. University of the Philippines, Diliman.
- Creech, A., Lopez-Real, C., Paterson, K., & Sherry, R. (2013). Creative assessment of creativity in musical performance: Lessons for institutional change. In P. Burnard (Ed.). *Developing creativities in higher music education: International perspectives and practices* (pp. 318-329). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315885223>
- Del Carmen, M. V., Diano, F., & Ole, A. (2015, March 2-4). *Designing validated “laro ng lahi”-based activities in mechanics* [Conference paper]. DLSU Research Congress, De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines. [https://www.dlsu.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/pdf/conferences/research-congress-proceedings/2015/LLI/019LLI\\_Del%20Carmen\\_MVC.pdf](https://www.dlsu.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/pdf/conferences/research-congress-proceedings/2015/LLI/019LLI_Del%20Carmen_MVC.pdf)
- Delgado-Gallenero, L. (1977). *The attitude towards physical education of the high students of the University of the Philippines College of Cebu* [Unpublished Master's Thesis]. University of the Philippines, Diliman.
- Department of Education (2016). *K to 12 curriculum guide: Music*. <https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Music-CG.pdf>
- Department of Education (2020). *2nd national K to 12 conference*. <https://www.deped.gov.ph/k-to-12/about/2nd-national-k-to-12-conference/>
- Forehand, C. (2005). *To journey into creativity* (UMI Number: 3203316)[Doctoral dissertation, University of Oklahoma]. ProQuest Information and Learning Company database.
- Garnett, J. (2014). Has music happened? The ‘Creative Musician’ and the paradox of experiencing music and learning as creative acts. In P. Burnard (Ed.). *Developing creativities in higher music education: International perspectives and practices* (pp. 11-22). Routledge.
- Google map (2018). *Map of Mandurriao Central Elementary School, Iloilo City, Philippines*. <https://www.google.com.ph/maps/place/MANDURRIAO+ELEMENTARY+SCHOO+L/@10.7159142,122.536981,15z>
- González-Moreno, P. A. (2013). Performance creativities in higher music education. In P. Burnard (Ed.). *Developing creativities in higher music education: International perspectives and practices* (pp. 87-99). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315885223>
- Gray, P. (2008, November 19). *The value of play I: Definition of play gives insights*. Psychology Today. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/freedom-learn/200811/the-value-play-i-the-definition-play-gives-insights>.
- Guastello, S. J. (2009). Creativity and personality. In Rickards, T., Runco M.A. and Moger, S. (Eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Creativity* (pp. 267-278). Routledge.
- Hargreaves, D. J. (2012). Musical imagination: Perception and production, beauty and creativity. *Psychology of Music*, 40(5), 539–557. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735612444893>
- Himberg, T. & Thompson M. R. (2011). Learning and synchronizing dance movements in South African songs—cross-cultural motion-capture study. *Dance Research* 29 (Supplement), 305-328. <https://www.eupublishing.com/doi/abs/10.3366/drs.2011.0022>
- Huizinga, J. (1980). *Homo ludens: a brincadeira como elemento da cultura*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Huisman Koops, L. (2010). “Deñuy jàngal seen bopp” (They Teach Themselves): Children’s Music Learning in The Gambia. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 58(1), 20–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429409361000>
- Ingold, T. (1994). *Introduction to culture*. In Ingold, T. (Ed.) *Companion encyclopaedia of anthropology: Humanity, culture, and social life* (pp. 329-349). Routledge.
- Jaworski, N. (2012). Soundwalks, community, and the secondary general classroom. *General Music Today*, 26(1), 34-37. DOI: 10.1177/1048371312453842. <http://gmt.sagepub.com/content/26/1/34>.

- Jensen, E. P. (2005). *Teaching with the brain in the mind*. ASCD Publication.
- Kenny, A. (2014). Sound connections for institutional practice: Cultivating 'collaborative creativity' through group composition. In P. Burnard (Ed.). *Developing creativities in higher music education: International perspectives and practices* (pp. 293-315). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315885223>
- Lopez, M. L. (2001). *A study of Philippine games*. University of the Philippines Press. (Originally work published in 1980).
- Lopez, M. L. (2006). *A handbook of Philippine folklore*. University of the Philippines Press.
- Marsh, K. (1995). Children's singing games: composition in the playground? *Research Studies in Music Education* 4 (1), 2-11. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X9500400102>
- Marsh (2008). *The musical playground: Global tradition and change in children's songs and games*. Oxford University Press.
- McIntosh, J. (2006). How dancing, singing and playing shape the ethnographer: Research with children in a Balinese dance studio. *Anthropology Matters*, 8(2), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.22582/am.v8i2.65>
- Morrison, S. J., Demorest, S. M., & Stambaugh, L. A. (2008). Enculturation effects in music cognition: The role of age and music complexity. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 56(2), 118-129. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429408322854>
- Nicolopoulou, A. (2010). The alarming disappearance of play from early childhood education. *Human Development* 53(1), 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000268135>
- Obsuna, I. M. (1983). *Laro ng lahi: A historic evolution of Philippine games*. Institute of Sports, Physical Education and Recreation.
- Perkins, R. (2013). Learning cultures, creativities and higher music education institutions. In P. Burnard (Ed.). *Developing creativities in higher music education: International perspectives and practices* (pp. 223-233). Routledge.
- Pucihar, I., & Pance, B. R. (2014). Bodily movement as inseparable part of musical activities. *Telesni gib kot nelocljivi del glasbenih dejavnosti. Glasbeno-Pedagoski Zbornik Akademije Za Glasbo v Ljubljani*, 20, 93-111. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/bodily-movement-as-inseparable-partmusical/docview/1644489609/se-2>
- Ramos, D. V. (1978). *A survey of leisure time interest of high school students in Bacolod city*. [Unpublished Master's Thesis]. University of the Philippines, Diliman.
- Ros R., Demiris Y. (2013) Creative Dance: An Approach for Social Interaction between Robots and Children. In: Salah A.A., Hung H., Aran O., Gunes H. (Eds) Human Behavior Understanding. HBU 2013. Lecture Notes in Computer Science, vol 8212. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02714-2\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02714-2_4)
- Russ, S. W. (1998). Play, creativity, and adaptive functioning: Implications for play interventions, *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 27(4), 469-48. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15374424jccp2704\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15374424jccp2704_11)
- Ryan, G. W., & Bernard, H. R. (2003). Techniques to Identify Themes. *Field Methods*, 15(1), 85-109. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X02239569>
- Scrimsher, S., & Tudge, J. (2003). The teaching/learning relationship in the first years of school: Some revolutionary implications of Vygotsky's theory. *Early Education & Development*, 14 (3), 293-312. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15566935eed1403\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15566935eed1403_3)
- Schunk, D. H. (2012). Social cognitive theory. In K. R. Harris, S. Graham, T. Urdan, C. B. McCormick, G. M. Sinatra, & J. Sweller (Eds.), *APA educational psychology handbook: Theories, constructs, and critical issues* (pp. 101-123). American Psychological Association.
- Schwartzman, H. (Ed.). (2012). *Transformations: The anthropology of children's play*. Springer Science & Business Media. Plenum Press.
- Stefanic, N. M. (2014). Creativity-based music learning: Modeling the process and learning outcomes in a Massive Open Online Course (Publication No. 3631459) [Doctoral dissertation, University of South Florida]. *ProQuest Dissertations Publishing*. <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/5315>
- Sprenger, M. (2010). *Brain-based teaching in the digital age*. ASCD Publication.
- Theobald, M., Danby, S., Einarsdóttir, J., Bourne, J., Jones, D., Ross, S., & Carter-Jones, C. (2015). Children's perspectives of play and learning for educational practice. *Education Sciences*, 5 (4), 345-362. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci5040345>
- Vitale, J. L. (2011). Music makes you smarter: A new paradigm for music education? Perceptions and perspective from four groups of elementary education stakeholders, *Canadian Society for the Study of Education*, 34(3), 317-343. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/canajeducrevucan.34.3.317>

## Biography

**Hermie F. Cartagena** is an Assistant Professor at the University of the Philippines Visayas, College of Arts and Sciences, Division of Professional Education, High School Department. He earned his Master's degree in Music Education at the University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City in 2018. He took up his Bachelor in Music Education minor in Physical

Education at the West Visayas State University and graduated as cum laude, academic year 2010-2011. Cartagena is a lifetime member of the Philippine Society for Music Education. He is also a *rondalla* player, choir conductor, and dance instructor/choreographer. Cartagena has mounted various cultural performances showcasing the music and culture of the Philippines. Recently, he mounted *tunog-tikang* I (2019) and II (2020) cultural shows highlighting Visayan music and dances. Aside from creative works, Cartagena also conducts a series of teacher and regional training-workshop in the Philippines at national levels.