

## **The Integrated Arts Experience in Music Class**

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### The integrated arts experience in music class

Music listening is an essential and fundamental activity in music education. Music listeners do not just receive the sound but create their own musical experience (Kerchner, 2000; Oh, 2006; Peterson, 2006; Reimer, 2003). This is done not only by selecting and focusing on some music elements and the relationships among the components (Kerchner, 2000) but also connecting their own background knowledge and past experience with imagination (Oh, 2006; Peterson, 2006). Therefore, “the attentive, [and] creative listener is making something new and personal during each listening experience” (Peterson, 2006, p. 20).

As part of an effort to understand listening experiences, many researchers have employed verbal, visual, or kinesthetic responses to music (Blair, 2007, 2008; Cohen, 1997; Dunn, 2005; Johnson, 2011; Kerchner, 2000; Verschaffel, Reybrouck, Janssens, & Dooren, 2009). These studies primarily dealt with these multisensory responses as a tool to understand the listening process and experience. In addition, some researchers argued these multisensory materials enhance music listening comprehension (Blair, 2007; Dunn, 1994; Johnson, 2011; Kerchner, 2000). However, in this study, drawing, which is one of the multisensory representations, was provided as an opportunity for students to express their unique experiences in an artistic way.

Music listening may include affective responses as well as perceptual responses (Dunn, 2005; Kerchner, 2000; Oh, 2006). These responses can create a holistic listening experience, connected to listener’s association and imagination. By providing an opportunity for students to express their listening experience in an artistic way, students’ arts experience can be expanded. Moreover, when students have an opportunity to express their listening experience, they can participate in the music listening actively (Espeland, 1987; Kerchner, 2000).

In this sense, the purpose of this paper was to explore the personal meaning and value of

the integrated experience of drawing and listening to music in music class.

Through this study two research questions were developed.

1. What is the character of the students' visual representation to the music?
2. What are the students' opinions about the activity of drawing while listening to music?

### **Literature review**

Blair (2007, 2008), Dunn (1997), Espeland (1987), Kerchner (2006), Oh (2006), and Verschaffel, Reybrouck, Janssens, and Dooren (2009) have investigated student response to music listening by using their verbal, visual, and kinesthetic representation of the listening experience.

Blair (2008) explored "students' musical expression as they make meaning while listening" (p. 1). As a fifth-grade music teacher, she found that the students employed enactive and visual strategies to form, represent, and express musical ideas. Through these enactive and visual representations, students could express and share musical ideas in a creative way. Through the process of developing and sharing their visual representations, musical maps, students "internally produced pathways of feeling and knowing that are a result of the imaginative response of body and mind when listening" (p. 11) and externally expressed the felt pathways. Although the map does not represent everything know and felt by students, they indicate salient features of the students' listening experiences.

Dunn (2005) investigated the creative aspects of the music listening process through student-created figural maps, a "visual representation of an individual's intuitive, musical sense of the piece" (p. 4). He argued the intuitive listening process involves unique cognitive and affective responses to music, creating a holistic listening experience with imagination. Through these mapping tasks, students were able to engage music in a holistic, imaginative, creative way.

Espeland (1987) and his colleagues conducted a responsive music listening project, 'Music in Use' in Norwegian primary schools. During the project, students engaged in a variety of activities with verbal, visual, kinesthetic, and musical expression. These various activities allowed the children's inner reactions to music to be overt. He argued "the relationship between auditive impression (music) and expression is ... crucial to the whole process of responsive listening" (p. 288). These processes and products were ultimately yielded from these processes were "form a basis for a discussion between teacher and child and sometimes between children about the music they have been listening to" (p. 289). The responsive listening made children more active and involved in exploring and listening to music.

Kerchner (2000) examined cognitive processes of music listening by twelve 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. Students were asked to describe their music experience with visual and kinesthetic means in addition to the verbal descriptions. Students represented their perceptions, affective responses, their musical knowledge, and style of thinking through the multimodal responses. The kinesthetic responses best captured children's linear thinking patterns. On the other hand, the verbal and visual responses generally featured their non-linear thinking strategies; students created a scene or draw an image. Kerchner expressed in these words, "the words or drawing captured the global essence of the music rather than a moment-to-moment account of the music as it unfolded" (p. 45). Kerchner concluded that "children have the capacity to be active participants during the music listening experience and are assisted in developing that capacity when provided with tangible means of expressing their perceptions and responses" (p. 48).

Oh (2006) explored children's subjective emotional responses to music through images, colors, and thematic content in their drawings and verbal descriptions. Children's drawings showed not only their perception of music with extramusical concepts of visual representations

but also their emotional experiences, the level of focused attention, and amount of musical knowledge. She concluded that “the findings of different and personal representations of images, colors, and thematic content suggest that each child’s subjective emotional experiences in music are connected to his/her association, imagination, and life experiences” (p. ii).

Verschaffel, Reybrouck, Janssens, and Dooren (2009) analyzed children’s visual representations of their experience when listening to simple sonic stimuli and complex musical fragments. They found students’ visual representations were categorized by two distinct classifications: (a) global notations, which represent the fragments in holistic way by one overall pictorial image, and (b) differentiated notations, “which try to capture one or more sonic or musical parameters in their temporal unfolding” (p. 261). These notations allowed the children to represent dimensions that are ‘extra-sonic’ or ‘extra-musical’ such as an action, scene or emotion. Especially, complex music fragments were taken from ‘real’ music compositions by famous composers elicited many more global notations than simple sonic ones. These fragments evoked the children more emotions, fantasies and memories.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

A music class from a private school composed of seventeen students between the grades of sixth to eighth grades participated in this research. These students were invited because they were in an intact class accessible to the researcher. Furthermore, nine students of the students were selected for interview based on their responses.

### **Materials**

For the purposes of this research, music and artwork were chosen for the lesson, response sheets were developed to collect student’s visual and verbal responses, and a questionnaire was

created to solicit information about the students' musical background and their experience regarding this research.

For instruction, a computer, audio system, and a beam projector were used to present music and painting. Audio recordings of C. Debussy's "Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune (Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun)" was played as a piece represented impressionism.

Ten examples of paintings of impressionism such as C. Monet's "Impression: Sunrise" and "Pleasure Boat Argenteuil", P. A. Renoir's "Woman in Boat" and "Dance at Le Moulin de la Galette", and E. Degas' "Coastal Landscape" were presented to compare the characteristics of art and music. These activities of comparing painting and music were provided to give students an integrated arts experience and to motivate students to be active participants in this research.

**Table 1**

***The list of Presented Paintings of Impressionism***

<b>Artist</b>	<b>Title</b>
<b>P. A. Renoir</b>	Woman in Boat, Dance at Le Moulin de la Galette
<b>C. Monet</b>	Pleasure Boat Argenteuil, Regatta at Argenteuil, Impression: Sunrise, Woman with a Parasol, three pieces among The Rouen Cathedral series
<b>E. Degas</b>	Coastal Landscape

Colored pencils and a blank paper were distributed to the students for their drawing. On the blank paper, students were asked to put their name and to draw freely with verbal descriptions while they listened to the piece of music. Students were instructed to produce a drawing on the paper and to respond to two questions on their paper. The first question was "What did you want to express?" and it was designed to understand students' expression more. The second question was "Why did you draw the way you did?" and it was aimed at grasping the

connections between their impression from music and the expression of drawing.

The questionnaire included both open-ended and multiple-choice questions. The questionnaire was composed of four sections. The first section was about their extracurricular music experiences including private music instruction and involvement in musical performing groups. In second section, personal musical preference was investigated including the amount of time listening to music and preferred genre. The third section was designed to know students' familiarity and preference for the recorded song. The students' opinions about the activity, drawing while listening to music were dealt with in the fourth section.

### **Procedure**

The researcher presented one lesson to the intact class of students. It took 50 minutes. In the beginning of the lesson, the researcher provided instruction about impressionism using art works and music. After the instruction, students were asked to draw freely and describe verbally while listening to the music. Also they were asked to make their own title of their drawings. When students finished their task, they received and completed a questionnaire.

The piece of the music was played three times during the research. When the researcher provided instruction about impressionism, the first few minutes of the piece was introduced. And then, while students were drawing and describing, the whole piece was played twice for about 20 minutes.

In order to gain in-depth information, nine students were chosen for a follow-up interview. The researcher chose the interviewees based on their responses. The interview was semi-constructed and the questions were related to the survey questions. This interview took about 5 minutes for each person.

### **Data analysis**



Students' drawing and verbal description, questionnaire and interview data were analyzed. All interview data were recorded and then transcribed by the researcher.

## Results

The results were obtained from the students' drawings and verbal descriptions, questionnaires and interviews. This results section is divided into three parts. The first part presents participants' basic information about gender, grade, and musical background. The second part analyzes the students' drawings as a visual representation of the music with their verbal descriptions. The third part contains the students' opinions about the activity. All names were reported using a pseudonym.

### Basic Information of Participants

Seventeen students participated in this research. Table 2 the dispersion related to gender and grade.

**Table 2**

*The Number of Participants*

Grade	Male	Female	Total
6 <sup>th</sup>	2	8	10
7 <sup>th</sup>	1	1	2
8 <sup>th</sup>	3	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>

All participants had a general music class once a week. Regarding extracurricular music experiences, thirteen students (76%) have taken a private music instruction. Of those thirteen, six students have played piano; five students, guitar; one student, violin; and one student, ukulele. The average time they have taken a private music lesson was 2.44 years (SD 3.29). Also fourteen

students (82%) have been involved in the school choir for 2.23 years on average (SD 1.09).

The students' personal preference for musical genre, average listening time, and familiarity to and preference for the recorded song were analyzed. Most students reported they liked pop music. Six students (35%) liked classic with other genres. They reported they usually listen to music 2 hours per day on average (SD 1.37).

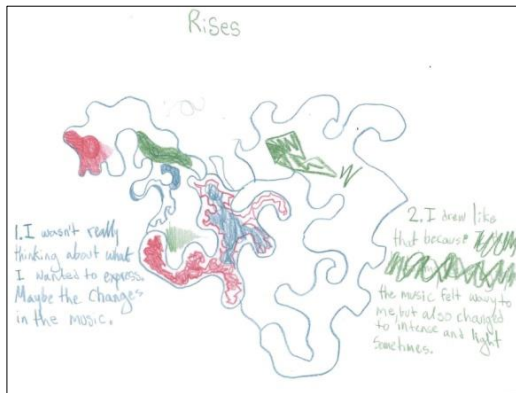
The average of familiarity to the music "Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun" was 1 (SD 1.11) on a scale of six (0 represented very unfamiliar and 5, very familiar). It can be interpreted they were unfamiliar with the piece. Lastly, the average of preference for the presented music was 3 (SD 0.85) on a scale of six (0 represented very dislike and 5, very like). Their preference for the recorded song leaned to like.

### **The Character of the Students' Visual Representation of the Music**

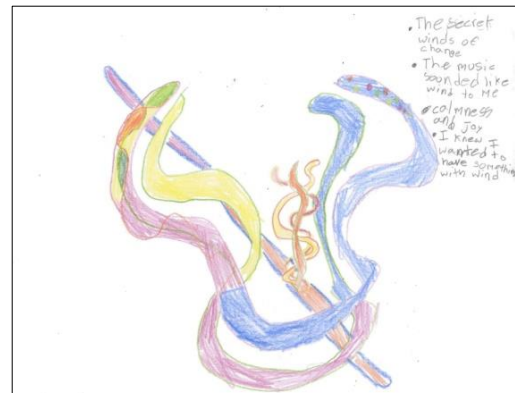
Students' drawings were analyzed along with their verbal descriptions. In order to understand students' intentions more fully, questionnaires and interviews were analyzed together. First, how the musical components of focused attention were represented in their drawings was analyzed. Second, how each student's perceived feeling was associated with his or her drawing was examined. Lastly, general characteristics of the students' drawings were addressed.

**The musical components of focused attention.** The students' drawings seemed to represent the musical components to which they mainly paid attention. The main musical characters represented in their drawings were the changing aspects of dynamics and tempo. For example, Shelia (8<sup>th</sup> grade) was focused on the change of dynamics. As seen Figure1, Shelia mostly drew wavy lines. She described, "I drew like that because the music felt wavy to me, but also changed to intense and light sometimes." Also, she narrated, "I figure a sense of music is so sort of irregular. I thought that sort of represents it." While Becky (6<sup>th</sup> grade) also drew wavy-

lines (Figure 2), she concentrated on the change of tempo. “I mean it is like slow but when it changed the music to be fast. It completely changed everything so I had to go where my plant B but changing of colors and weight.”



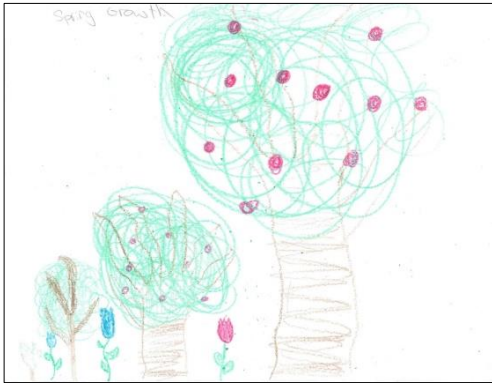
**Figure 1. Shelia's drawing "Rises"**



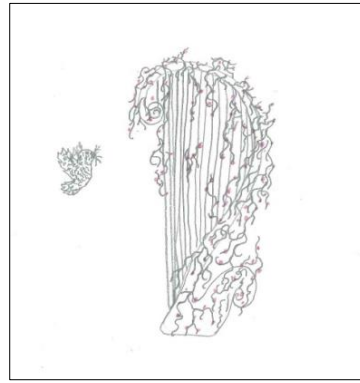
**Figure 2. Becky's drawing "The Secret Winds of Change"**

Furthermore, Kelvin and Cynthia seemed to include the concept of growth in their representation. Kelvin (6<sup>th</sup> grade) portrayed a growing tree by drawing four trees started from a small tree to a big one (Figure 3). He reported the musical component he paid attention was the volume. Cynthia (6<sup>th</sup> grade) depicted an ugly duckling which grew and changed as time goes on. Only Cynthia mentioned the key change affected her drawing. Cynthia's products will be discussed again later.

Melissa (8<sup>th</sup> grade) was the only one who reported her drawing was affected by the instrumentation. Melissa was focused on the harp sound and drew a harp but with very detailed ornaments (Figure 4). She described that “I thought of nature becoming a part of objects.”



*Figure 3. Kelvin's drawing "Spring Growth"*



*Figure 4. Melissa's drawing "Create"*

**The feelings perceived from the music.** Among the seventeen students, while nine students did not mention their perceived feelings from the music, eight students stated the feelings they perceived from the music while listening to it. The feelings that the eight students expressed were happy, warm, peaceful, calm and joy/ excited, lost, surprise, sad and happy, and inspired.

Dustin (7<sup>th</sup> grade) stated the music sounded happy, peaceful and warm. He said “because I’m happy in spring” in answer to the question, “Why did you draw the way you did?” This remark is very interesting, because it implies he felt happy while listening to the music. As seen Figure 5, Dustin expressed his feeling with sunny spring scene and bright colors. Regina (6<sup>th</sup> grade) drew “Breezy day” with many objects (Figure 6). She said “I wanted express how the song was sometimes calm and sometimes exciting.”



**Figure 5. Dustin's drawing "Spring-Set"**



**Figure 6. Regina's drawing "Breezy Day"**

Gary (6<sup>th</sup> grade) and Vera (7<sup>th</sup> grade)'s responses were different from other students' responses. Gary said the music made him feel lost. While he stated he focused on the component of tempo and used this to make a story, the interest in his response regards the emotion he expresses. Here is the story he made: Someone got lost and was nearly found. He got a rope but he realized he was on the island and abandoned. His response was far from a feeling of happy and calmness. Vera's drawing looks like abstract painting, but, the object in the middle of the drawing is a monster with two heads (Figure 8). According to her, she expressed a kind of discovery because she felt there were a lot of different things and patterns she did not expect in the music. She said that the place where is the last discovery is the ocean, so she expressed something unexpected and mysterious like a monster.



Figure 7. Gary's drawing "Lost"



Figure 8. Vera's drawing "Under"

**General characters of the students' drawings.** As shown above, students seemed to be able to express their own impression from music. Their drawings were viewed in two facets: image vs. story and abstract vs. concrete.

**Image vs. Story.** Most drawings captured an image, but some drawings had a story. In this context, story means “a piece of fiction that narrates a chain of related events” (“Story,” n.d., in the definitions). An important point to notice here is that story includes the course of time. Let us look at the example of Cynthia (Figure 9). She wrote down as follows.

It reminded me of the ugly duckling. The music seemed sad like when the duck was “Ugly” but changed to happy. This expressed his sadness, and wishes. I remember how I was sad like this music when I FAILED at piano but was HAPPY when I began to understand it.

As I mentioned earlier, only Cynthia talked about the change of key. Although it was not accurate terms in that Debussy did use church modes and whole tone scales rather than major and minor keys. She said since it was slow and almost minor key near the beginning of the piece, so she felt sad. “They got more happy and exciting because it was going to major key. It’s more up to beat.”

Another example of a story is Anita (6<sup>th</sup> grade)’s drawing. The title of her drawing was

“Back from hibernation.” Her drawing depicts a celebratory atmosphere for a returned squirrel from his or her hibernation. The squirrel is carrying a big bag and there is a special welcome banner. Even though her drawing captured only one scene, this portrayal implies another time period behind it such as hibernation and travel to come back.

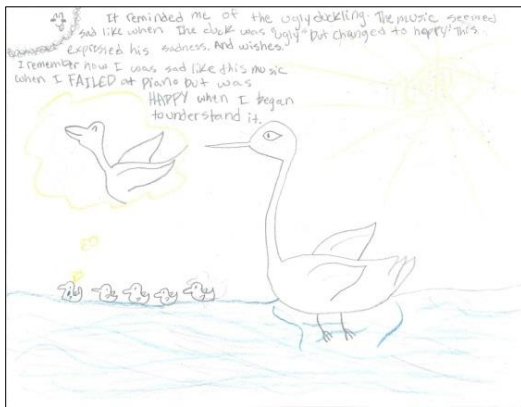


Figure 9. Cynthia's drawing "Ugly Duckling"



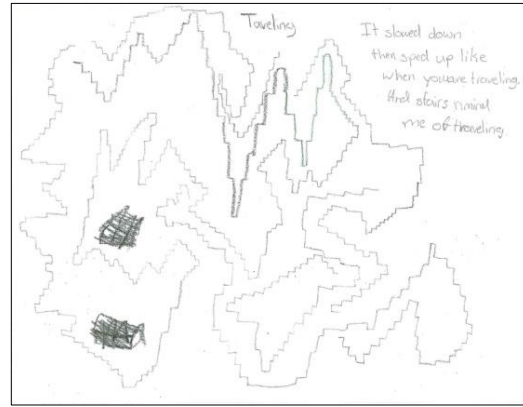
Figure 10. Anita's drawing "Back from hibernation"

**Concrete vs. Abstract.** Six students among the seventeen drew abstract paintings. Almost all of 8<sup>th</sup> graders (four students) employed abstract techniques except one student who drew a harp image (Figure 4). The rest of students using abstract techniques were all 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Among the drawings already discussed, Sheila (Figure 1) and Becky (Figure 2)’s were abstract drawings.

All three 8<sup>th</sup> male students drew abstract drawings. What is unique about their drawings is that they drew according to the flow of the music. They seemed to respond in a linear way. This could mean they reacted to the music as it occurred in real-time. Harold stated that “This represents a flow of ideas and moods. I started drawing one part and when I felt a change in the music, I started a new part. The different parts represent different of the music” (Figure 11). Michael reacted in a similar way to Harold. He said that “[The music] slowed down then sped up like when you are traveling. And stairs remind me of traveling” (Figure 12). Compared to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade males, it seemed most students’ drew in a non-linear way that captured the global impression of the music.



**Figure 11. Harold's drawing "A flow"**



**Figure 12. Michael's drawing "Traveling"**

### **The Students' Opinions about the Activity in Music Class**

In this research, drawing was utilized as an opportunity for students to express their unique impression from the music in an artistic way. One of the research questions was how students think and value this integrated activity of drawing and listening to music in music class. The students' opinions about the activity were investigated three aspects: paying attention to music, promoting imagination, and feeling excitement.

**Paying attention to music.** The students' opinions about the question "Does drawing help you pay attention to music?" were divided in two categories of responses. Eight students responded positively, while nine students' responses were negative. The positive opinions also can be divided into two types of responses. One type was that drawing helped them listen to the music more closely. Melissa said "I notice more while drawing." Shelia stated "It made me listen to the music more closely." The other point was that by drawing they had something to do while listening to the music, so it helped them not to be distracted. Elaine was expressed best when she said the following, "When you are drawing, you're thinking, [but] when you are doing nothing, [you are] sleeping." Also Shelia said "[It is] not letting you [your] mind wander."

The negative opinions were also divided into two stances. One view was that drawing distracted them from listening to the music. It was Vera's opinion that "I pay more [attention] to



music when listening only.” To borrow Harold’s phrase, “It stopped me from being distracted by other things but at the same time it distracted me.” The other negative view was that they just liked spacing out and relaxing while listening to music. Gary said “I like spacing out the best.”

**Promoting imagination.** This issue was only treated in the questionnaire. The responses about the question “Do you think the integration of drawing and listening to music promoted your imagination?” were divided in three areas. Six students answered this activity did not promote their imagination, while six students replied in the affirmative. Cynthia said “[It] makes you think differently” and “It made me think of things I normally wouldn’t.” On the other hand, five students didn’t respond to this question.

**Feeling excitement.** Almost all of the students (fifteen students) responded positively to the activity. Those who said they liked the activity and it was fun were in the majority. Especially, Becky showed her enthusiasm for the activity. In an interview, it was found Becky really liked to draw or do something occupying her mind while listening to music. She said when she expresses it in some way of dancing, drawing, or singing, not just sitting, she feels “bright, happy, calm, excited, [and] joyful.”

Elaine, Harold, and Michael gave different opinions about the activity. Elaine said she prefers to listen to the music only. According to Harold, he preferred learning how to make his own music. Michael said “It’s fun but I can’t do both at the same time.” However, most students showed positive point of view about this activity. Mary said “It helped me figure out what the music went in my point of view.” In the phrase of Regina, “When you draw, you (can) express what you feel the music is describing.”

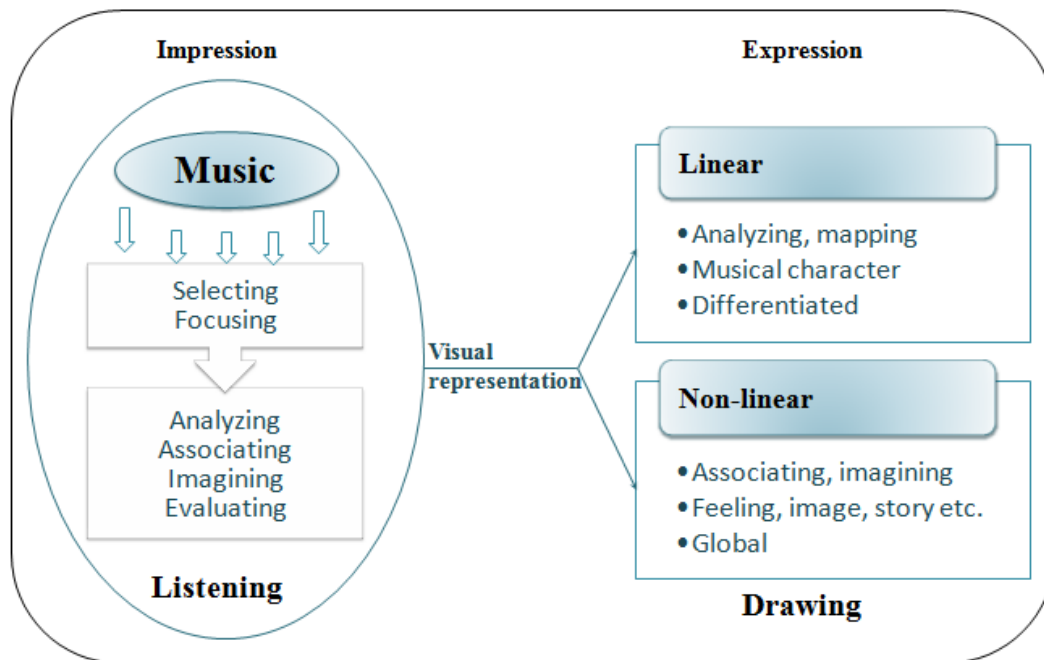
### **Conclusion and Discussion**

Students’ visual representations of the music and verbal descriptions showed the musical

components of focused attention as well as the feeling perceived of the music by the students. Even though students were not familiar with the music, they were able to perceive musical elements and create a metaphor of the music. Moreover, about half of the students mentioned the feeling they were impressed upon from the music and it was found that some students felt the same feeling they perceived from the music while listening to the music. Students' emotions were also represented to their drawing.

Drawing as a visual representation of the music listening experience can be classified into two categories: a linear response and a non-linear response. "A linear response" means a reaction to the music according to the flow of the music, like a music mapping. The representation focuses on musical elements such as melody, rhythm, articulation, texture and form. Verschaffel et al. (2009) called this differentiated notations, "which try to capture one or more sonic or musical parameters in their temporal unfolding" (p. 261). According to Espeland (1987), it is a result of structural listening (S-listening). He explained, "S-listening would try to make the children focus directly upon the structural elements of the music, the musical themselves" (p. 291).

On the other hand, "a non-linear response" represents emotional experiences as well as perception of the music. It draws upon association and imagination more than do linear responses. According to Verschaffel et al. (2009), it is global notations, which represent the fragments in holistic way by one overall pictorial image. The listening process of utilizing "the children's association and flow of imagery when listening to the music," (p. 291) is called associative listening (A-listening) by Espeland (1987). The categorization appears in Figure 13.



**Figure 13. The characters of drawing as a visual representation of music listening experience**

The studies, which employed invented notation or musical mapping, focused on students' cognitive process of listening to the music. These visual responses were used as a means to understand students' perception of music and as a pedagogical tool to help students to analyze music. However, in this research, drawing was used as an opportunity for students to express not only cognitive but also affective responses. Students were able to create a holistic listening experience combined with association and imagination. Dunn (2005) called such listening as intuitive listening. He described intuitive listening as "an active process involving unique cognitive and affective responses to music that extends beyond listeners' technical understanding of the music" (p. 1). Webster and Richardson (1993) argued that our affective response to music cannot be separated with cognitive response and musical thinking includes both responses. In this sense, students' affective response should be dealt with as much as cognitive response. Drawing can serve as an opportunity for students to express their holistic experience including cognitive and affective responses in music class.

However, drawing cannot replace the authentic music listening activity. Some students reported drawing distracted from their listening to the music. Although students were able to catch some characteristics of the music, it was on a very basic level. In this research, students were not instructed about the music and were not familiar with the music. They had only listened to the first few minutes of the piece before drawing, which may have limited their impression and expression. Espeland (1987) pointed out that we should “ensure that the listening, at some point, focused solely on the music itself” (p. 291). Therefore, drawing can be used as an entry point or final work in the repeated listening lesson.

Most students enjoyed this activity. They appeared to be focused on the task. Kerchner (2000) said “Children have the capacity to be active participants during the music listening experience and are assisted in developing that capacity when provided with tangible means of expressing their perceptions and responses” (p. 48) Through the opportunity of expressing students’ experience, students can engage music in a holistic, imaginative and creative way.

I conducted this activity after giving the students brief instructions about impressionism. For instruction, impressionist art works were presented, since I wanted to help students to understand the character of impressionism by connecting art and music. If we can cooperate with a visual art teacher for this activity, students could engage in this activity in a more deep and intense way. Also, students’ artifacts could be more elaborated. Finally, future research might explore these possibilities.

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