

UC Irvine

2016 Conference Proceedings

Title

What the body knows about teaching music, Abstract

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/14w3m44x>

Author

Bremmer, Melissa

Publication Date

2018-01-08

Peer reviewed

BODY of KNOWLEDGE

What the body knows about teaching music

Melissa Bremmer

Shulman (1986) has suggested that teachers develop a unique kind of knowledge through practice that intertwines content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, hence the term “pedagogical content knowledge” (PCK). Traditionally, the teacher’s PCK has been researched from a constructivist or information processing perspective. However, the music teacher’s body plays a central role in teaching music: teachers have the ability to communicate and instruct music in physical ways. In this presentation I will discuss a research study that took an embodied cognition perspective on the PCK of specialist preschool music teachers teaching rhythm skills. Through video fragments I will demonstrate that the bodies of these teachers can take on different roles in the teaching process of rhythm skills: their bodies model rhythm skills, guide rhythm skills through gestures, assess rhythm skills and correlate emotions elicited by a rhythm activity. Thus, teachers’ bodies become a strong mediating factor for preschoolers to experience and learn rhythmical structures of a given music as their bodies transform the invisible and intangible world of rhythms to a visible and tangible one – bridging an abstract and sonic realm to a concrete and physical world for the preschoolers. The teachers’ bodies can thus create a multimodal learning environment that gives preschoolers access to a shared meaning of music.