

‘Transmodal’ recognition and rhythm ‘in time’ as resources in formative assessment practices

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Based on an empirical study about affordances and meaning-making processes where students in Compulsory lower secondary school learn to play music together, this paper presents how multimodal instructions imply formative assessment. The data is derived from 13 observed music lessons in 8th form, video recorded in the course of one term. In order to enable a ‘fine grained’ analysis of student and teacher interaction their actions were transcribed into musical scores. By traditional western music notation and other graphical signs the model of transcription visualizes multimodal aspects of interaction such as speech, singing, sounding music, gesture, posture, gaze, facial expression and the course. As the teacher rarely demonstrated the parts on the instruments cohesion was achieved through recognition represented by transductions of the musical parts such as: adapted music sheets, constructed by the teacher, and in particular the teacher’s bodily representation of the parts. Significant was how the teacher used the voice to make signs which had the effect of producing kinaesthetic experiences, keeping time and to lead forward. The students in turn translated the sound into movements that facilitated their playing. While taking turns with the teacher progression could be observed in the way in which the movements of the students became increasingly embodied during practice. Significant was how instructions that were rhythmically linked to the beat of the music were most important for understanding, compared to signs off the beat. The findings warrant discussion of how rhythm, beat and ‘transmodal’ recognition (transfers and translations between modes) work as resources in formative assessment practices in music education as well as in other ‘teaching-and-learning’ practices in school, for example when it comes to reading, conversation and rhetoric.