Modelling, meaning through software design

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This paper builds upon an approach to modelling music education philosophy through the design and subsequent interaction of children and generative music making software. The research draws upon a 2004 case study where 600 four to eight - year old children were observed interacting with network improvisation using jam2jam software on laptops, electronic percussion and break dancing at Brisbane's Out of the Box festival of early childhood. The research examines the development of analytical tools which might be used to evaluate the qualities of meaning and engagement experienced by students by observing and recording evidence of personal, social and cultural meaning in dance, physical electronic percussion and laptop music performance. Issues about the nature and connection of gesture and sound are also raised through a comparison between the activities of dance, percussion and laptop manipulation. These data also generate implications for the further development of the software as a learning environment.

About the author

Steve Dillon is a singer, composer and senior lecturer in music and music education at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane. His major research foci revolve around creative practice as research, digital media portfolio systems, music education and meaning and the development of interactive music software for children.

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