LEARNING BEHIND THE STAND:
THE BELIEFS, ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF BEGINNING STRING PLAYERS IN
A DEMOCRATICALLY ENGAGED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

By

Betty Anne Gottlieb

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Music Education – Doctor of Philosophy

2014

ABSTRACT

LEARNING BEHIND THE STAND:
THE BELIEFS, ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF BEGINNING STRING PLAYERS IN
A DEMOCRATICALLY ENGAGED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

By

Betty Anne Gottlieb

With the intention of informing teaching practices in large ensemble settings, the purpose of this study was to describe a democratically engaged ensemble classroom and examine the perceived meaning and value attributed by the students to what and how they were learning. Four research questions guided this inquiry: (1) How do students perceive what and how they are learning in an environment in which they are asked to contribute creatively and critically? (2) How does this learning environment influence students' perception of personal musical meaning? (3) How does participation in this learning environment influence students' musical decision making? (4) How does participation in this learning environment influence student development of musical identity?

To answer these questions, I employed an ethnographic single case study design. The orchestra teacher and 21 sixth grade students, eleven girls and ten boys, from a semi-urban Midwestern school district served as primary informants. The teacher, Mrs. Peterson, was a highly trained string musician with a background in Suzuki teaching, early childhood music education, and creative music-making. In addition, Mrs. Peterson incorporated a democratic leadership style. The student participants represented two sections of sixth grade orchestra and were divided into gender-based focus groups to facilitate discussion.

Data sources included focus group interviews with students, semi-structured interviews with the teacher, field notes, and observations. Interviews were video and audio taped, and then

transcribed for analysis. Additional data consisted of informal interviews, researcher notes, and the study of learning artifacts (e.g. parent communication and student work). Trustworthiness was enhanced through triangulation of data sources, teacher-participant member checks, persistent observation, and external review of analysis.

Two overarching theme areas emerged from the data: (1) Multi-faceted learning environment and (2) Facilitated democratic practices. The first theme focuses on the learning environment and three ways in which the students described learning in this environment: (i) Messy – based on the prevalence of sound, student interaction, and the learning process; (ii) Relevant – accomplished in part by the incorporation of facilitated musical critique, student participation in musical decision-making, and regular development of student creativity and composition; and (iii) Social – described as the interactive nature of the learning that occurred as well as the nature and strength of relationships that developed in orchestra. The second theme, Facilitated democratic practices, highlights the teaching practices and leadership style Mrs. Peterson used to engage her students: (i) incorporating different modes of teaching and learning based on modeling and creativity, (ii) integrating student input through the use of purposeful dialogue, and (iii) developing student autonomy through choice.

Based on the results of this study, I suggest the following implications for music education: (1) music teachers need to re-envision themselves as participatory democratic leaders, shedding the traditional didactic and competitive approach; (2) instrumental music teachers should use a combination of critical listening, problem-solving, and creativity to enhance student self-evaluation and note reading; and (3) by empowering student music-making, teachers can prepare their students for life-long learning. Additional suggestions for further research are also included.

To my teachers – family, friends, and mentors – for your inspiration, friendship, guidance, and an occasional kick in the rear. Words cannot express my love and gratitude.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

"Can you help me with the notes in this song?"

On a beautiful, sunny weekday afternoon students enter a quiet ensemble room. Chairs stand neatly stacked at the back wall by a row of stands. The piano has been placed by the front of the room at an angle to the front board. The sweet smell of grease and chocolate wafts in from the nearby cafeteria – cheeseburger and chocolate chip cookie day. The students are carrying their instruments and backpacks, which are straining from the weight of books, folders and other homework materials. Conversations range from homework details to what students watched on TV the previous evening. The cacophony of sounds emanating from the room grows in volume as conversations continue, chairs and stands scrape against the floor, instruments are removed from cases, students begin to tune, and others play or practice.

The content of the conversations shifts to music and newly learned skills like vibrato. "Listen to this!", one boy directs his friends. He then proceeds to play a tuneful melody ending with a long bow and a wiggle in his left hand that resembles a beginning vibrato. "Cool! Did you make that up yourself? How'd you make your hand do that?" The other boys start peppering the first boy with questions.

Near the front of the room, two girls have set up their chairs and stands, cellos and music. Now that they had all their materials, one girl asks the other: "Can you help me with the notes in this song?" She points to a piece of music with her pencil that has letters written over some notes and not over others. The two of them hunch over the stand pointing, counting or spelling up and down lines and spaces, and writing in letter names. After finishing the part needed, the second girl asks the first: "Can you show me the first part of Perpetual Motion? I can't remember how it goes." Not three notes later, "Oh yeah!" and she starts playing along.

The cacophony of conversations and playing dissolves into harmonious melodic movement and a large ensemble rehearsal ensues. Throughout the ensemble, I observe conversations, gestures, knowing looks, smiles, furrowed brows, and note writing. The teacher encourages and even initiates these behaviors asking students to engage with one another and to contribute ideas throughout the rehearsal. "Kendra, would you show Sandy the bowing we did yesterday while she was out?" "What bowing shall we use to play our D major scale today?" "Who has an idea for how we can make these two measures even more exciting using dynamics?" "What makes this passage tricky for our left hand?" "How could we practice this passage to make it easier?" Student suggestions are incorporated or at least explored with the guidance of the teacher. The sounds that flow from the ensemble grow richer as the rehearsal progresses.

At the end of the class, along with the clanking and clanging of stands and chairs as the students clear the ensemble room, I hear animated conversations with the teacher and between students regarding what had transpired in class that day and how to use the information learned. "Did you see Trista's vibrato? She is really good!" "Can you teach me how to tune my own bass?" "I'm going to go work on the song I am making and try to use that bow thing we did today." As the students head out the orchestra room door to their next class, the conversations naturally shift to homework and food, video games and friends. The room grows quiet but still seems to be abuzz with the vibrancy of the interactions and learning that just took place. (Field notes and observations)

The instructional underpinnings in this vignette may be somewhat different from those in a typical school orchestra rehearsal. In contrast to the didactic, teacher-centered model of ensemble teaching, in which the teacher directs, instructs, and conducts, this vignette suggests a

collaborative musical venture in which the teacher participates, facilitates, and guides. The students are active participants, contributing to and experimenting with musical ideas. This way of teaching and learning is described in the literature as collaborative, cooperative, democratic, constructivist, and facilitative. In my own experience, situations that mirror those in the vignette tend to be more rewarding, and contribute to richer and more meaningful musical interactions than those in which the teacher determines every aspect of the musical process.

Background and Context of the Study

Of particular interest for this study were the context of the ensemble classroom and the students' perceptions of their experiences of learning therein. When studying the human experience, Clandinin (2006) suggests using a qualitative research paradigm to provide a depth of understanding of the individual(s) and the context. A number of qualitative studies have investigated instrumental ensembles on questions of music transfer and learning (Dabczynski, 1994; Kruse, 2007; Silva, 2007; Waldron, 2006), identity (Macdonald & Wilson, 2005), rehearsal experiences (King, 2006; Kraus, 2003), community (Finnegan, 1989), culture (Campbell, 1989; David, 2001; Dodd, 2001) and intergenerational or lifelong learning (Busch, 2005; Chiodo, 1997; Schilf, 2000). The participants in these studies ranged from high school aged to adult, which suggests the need for studies focusing on the perceptions and learning of younger students, specifically those children in upper elementary beginning their instrumental instruction in school programs.

In settings other than the instrumental ensemble, music education researchers have focused on how music is transmitted from person to person (Wiggins, 1999/2000, 2007), on interactions and learning in various bounded social groups (Koops, 2006), or on how to teach critical thinking (Silvey, 2005). Wiggins (1999/2000, 2007) has investigated music transmission

and shared learning experiences with young children. Veblen (1996) and Veblen and Olsson (2002) have studied community music and the process of music transmission in cultures around the world. Campbell (1995, 1998) has been influential in the arenas of cross-cultural music learning, music as culture, and music transmission. Silvey (2005) researched student perceptions of knowledge development while learning a choral work. He suggests three categories of experience when learning a new work: (a) impression – initial opinions and comparisons to previous works learned, (b) construction – problem-solving with the score including transforming notation to sound, and (c) understanding – developing a relationship with the piece.

In the instrumental ensemble classroom, the teacher traditionally has been the main source of knowledge and skills, imparting them to the students. Learning among and between students might be rare, if not altogether absent in this type of setting. Developing a learning culture, or ensemble community, and incorporating modes of music transmission and knowledge development that occur between and among its members might have a profound effect on students' perceptions of learning and music-making as they begin their instrumental studies.

What follows are discussions on the topics of democracy in education, musicianship and musical knowing, learning in a social context, motivation in music, and creativity in teaching and learning. These discussions frame the context of this study and are followed by the purpose and problems guiding this research.

Democracy in education. Democratic principles used for the facilitation of learning in general education settings have been enacted since the beginning of the 20th century, most notably by John Dewey and further developed by Kurt Lewin. Dewey (1916) set forth an educational theory based on social interaction, awareness, and connected, educative experiences, which he tested in an experimental school. Dewey's seminal work *Democracy and Education*

has influenced philosophers and practitioners alike. Dewey (1916) states "A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" (p. 87). According to Kratus (2012), this idea of democratic living has its roots in ancient Greece, when democracy was considered "a means of human interaction designed to maximize the contributions, responsibilities, and benefits for all members of a society" (p. 95). Lewin (1999a) writes:

> A child in a democratic atmosphere… is not treated as an object but, as a person, is given explanations and reasons for the events in his surroundings and especially for necessary limitations of his freedom; he is given the right to make himself understood, to ask questions, and to tell 'his side of the story.' He is given a chance to make a choice and to make his own decisions wherever this is reasonably possible. Such a child will develop a better emotional basis for social living and will be prepared to shoulder responsibilities when he becomes mature enough to play with other children of his age (p. 322).

Building upon the work of Dewey, Lewin and Lippitt (1938) researched autocratic and democratic learning contexts, providing descriptions of the two learning atmospheres. In the analysis, Lewin and Lippitt reported greater tension and incidents of aggression in the autocratic group along with more careless and unfinished work, less stability without the leader, and a greater sense of egocentricity. In contrast, they described the democratic group as more cooperative with "a much higher incidence of offering and asking for cooperation" and having a more objective attitude including "more give and take of objective criticism without personal involvement" (p. 298). The democratic group structure was more stable than that of the autocratic group and was able to effectively reduce the dominating behavior of one participant who switched from the autocratic group to the democratic group. The products produced by the

democratic group were of superior quality and they had a more developed sense of group

ownership of the products and goals. Lewin and Lippitt suggested that some of these

characteristics might be mediated with different groups and leadership styles.

When discussing group dynamics, Lewin (1999b) suggests that leadership styles do not

lie on a continuum with total authoritarian control on one end and complete freedom on the

other, but rather as a triangle with the three points being autocracy, democracy, and laissez-faire.

He suggests that each leadership style has similarities with each of the other two styles and that

democratic leadership is not "something *between* autocratic discipline and lawlessness"

[emphasis in the original] (p. 286). Lewin argues that democratic leadership does not mean a

lack of leadership, but rather organization against chaos, just as it does in autocracy. Unlike

autocratic leadership, however, leaders in a democracy give members freedoms and create

environments in which the members are more internally motivated and a part of the process.

Lewin states "The democratic leader is no less a leader and, in a way, has not less power than the

autocratic leader" (p. 286).

Retaining individuality and working toward social consensus are accepted as the

foundations for a democratic society. Woodford (2005) and Jorgensen (2003) consider the use of

dialogue and shared decision-making, especially when supported by mutual respect, to be central

to a functioning democracy. Individuals in a democratic society must learn what Lewin (1999b)

describes as their role to play, including responsibility to the group and sensitivity to other

individuals. Elshtain (1995) describes this as having "democratic dispositions." He suggests that

these dispositions include "a preparedness to work with others different from oneself toward

shared ends; a combination of strong convictions with a readiness to compromise in the

recognition that one can't always get everything one wants; and a sense of individuality and a

commitment to civic goods that are not the possession of one person or of one small group alone" (p. 2). The skills and values necessary to function in such a society must be learned and practiced. One does not innately know how to work with others on a common purpose unless he has had the experience of doing so (Dewey, 1938; Garrison, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Hahn, 1998; Elliott, 1995). In other words, education is necessary for democracy. Is democracy, however, necessary for education? If citizens are to exercise their rights in a democracy, should they not first have the skills to function in such an environment? How does one learn these skills?

Kratus (2012), Woodford (2005), Dewey (1916, 1938), Garrison (2003), and Darling-Hammond (2006) suggest that providing opportunities for students to learn to think and act with understanding, cultivated in a democratic setting, should be a fundamental precept of education. Incorporating democratic ideals into the school classroom is not the same as treating the class as a democratic governing structure. Kratus (2012) shares the notion of applying "democratic *principles* in teaching and learning to underscore the concept of democracy in its *ideal* form, rather than a reference to any specific political structure of government" (p. 98). These principles include: (a) inclusion of all members, including their access to "responsibilities and benefits of the unit" (p. 98); (b) considering diversity an asset; and (c) embodiment of "a dynamic process of change" (p. 99). Print, Ørnstrøm, and Nielsen (2002) suggest that the active participation of the members ensures the effectiveness and longevity of democracy. They describe examples of democratic schools in which the students "have the right to participate in the process of decision making" (p. 194). It is important that we prepare teachers to be able to create these opportunities for their students and to navigate the balance of power inherent in sharing the decision-making process. The works of Dewey (1916) and Woodford (2005) are commonly examined for their

pedagogical models espousing the principles of democracy, which promote experiential learning and student engagement, in which teachers are encouraged to allow students to have a more active role in their learning.

Today, with greater emphasis on cooperative learning in the classroom, music educators are turning to informal music learning as examples of a social learning paradigm, generally in small group settings, such as chamber ensembles, folk groups, or rock bands, with the idea that this type of learning is less possible in a large ensemble setting. Research in this area generally illustrates that the participants engage in thoughtful discourse for the purpose of developing a musical product that will have meaning to them personally and as a group (Allsup, 2003; Berg, 1997; Bononi, 2000; Campbell, 1995; Goodrich, 2005, 2007; Green, 2008; Jaffurs, 2004, 2006; King, 2006; St. John, 2006; Waldron, 2006). Each person may have a defined role and may contribute at varying levels, but each person functions as an autonomous member of the group.

In this era of testing, teacher accountability, and performance driven curriculum, teachers may be driven to the didactic, teacher-centered classroom model and further away from democratic principles (Allsup, 2003; Berg, 1997; Kratus, 2012; Woodford, 2005). Students have fewer opportunities to learn and practice their critical and creative thinking skills as emphasis shifts to passing state-mandated tests (Hursh, 2007). Hursh (2007) found that educational expectations are lower, and time and materials are devoted to test preparation, not enrichment, in schools where test preparation is emphasized (p. 507). In these kinds of conditions, we lose the opportunity to open the mind of a child and cultivate free and independent thought. Yet, free and independent thought is the basis upon which this democracy and its public education system were founded (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Musicianship and musical knowing. According to Swanwick (1999), "Music is a way of thinking, a way of knowing." In each moment students are creating music together, they are also making instantaneous informed decisions about how and why to play the notes on the page based on their musical knowledge and experiences. Meeting the demands of the music requires musicianship (Reimer, 2003). "To meet a musical demand is to confront a musical possibility and decide what to do with that possibility" (Reimer, 2003). In other words, using the knowledge they have learned about past musical practices, theory, history, context, and the mechanics of producing sound, musicians make decisions as to how they want the music to sound. Stubley (1992) describes the convergence of multiple factors in the musical experience in this way:

> "The musical experience, be it that of listener, performer, or composer, is an intentional act in which individuals accept the musical event as their own, shaping what is given in relation to their own fund of past experiences and knowledge. The experience has a social dimension to the extent that musical styles define collective frames of reference through which meanings are shared in a larger social context. It has a historical dimension where tradition creates an awareness that musical sounds have been interpreted in a particular way in the past and that this way of shaping or understanding has special significance or value." (p. 8).

Elliott (1995) describes five forms of musical knowing that comprise "musicianship." The first four—formal music knowledge, informal music knowledge, impressionistic musical knowledge, and supervisory knowledge—contribute to "procedural knowledge," the essence of musicianship, according to Elliott (1995). The many facets of musical knowledge are in play at any particular time while interfacing with a piece of music (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). The ability to organize the knowledge and put it into use while playing to create a quality aesthetic or artistic

experience is what Reimer (2003) calls "knowing within" and Elliott (1995), borrowing terms from Donald Schön, describes as "thinking-in-action" or "knowing-in-action." Because musicianship is ever developing, these types of musical knowledge may be in their beginning stages in early instrumental classes. Instrumental music educators strive to assist young players to refine their skills, generally in large group situations.

Campbell (1995) and Green (2001) investigated the music acquisition and composition processes of garage band and rock band musicians. The participants in their studies tended to learn informally, by listening, experimenting and shared music-making. The use of aural transmission for sharing and learning music is also found in folk and other non-classical music genres (Dabczynski, 1994; Dodd, 2001; Kruse, 2007). Musicians with a highly developed sense of aural understanding may have experienced an advanced level of what Gordon (2003) coined as *audiation*. Gordon (2003) defines audiation as "the capability of hearing and understanding music for which the sound is not or may never have been physically present" (Gordon, 2003, p. 3). Children with a more developed sense of audiation tend to create more cohesive and developed compositions and do so without the use of notation (Gordon, 2003; Kratus, 1989). The action of using learned knowledge and making decisions about how to play while performing could also be considered musicianship.

Making music in a social context. "Musical discourse is inherently social" (Swanwick, 1999). In other words, music reflects the social context for which, for whom, and by whom it was written or performed. Past performance practices, the context or cultural climate of the rehearsal or performance venue, the community in which the ensemble resides, even the cultural climate of the ensemble itself can influence repertoire choices and interpretation. According to Shouldice (2013) students' musical success can be tied to the nature of the learning environment.

The social environment, as well as the ability level of the individual player, has an impact on the musical product. In a large ensemble environment, such as a school orchestra, it is impossible to develop a musically and educationally rich learning environment without regard for these factors.

In public school education, the student population can be diverse, representing various cultural backgrounds, as well as different socio-economic, religious, and educational backgrounds (musical and otherwise). Swanwick (1999) contends that "Music bridges the space between individuals and between different cultural groups" (p. 27). This may be so, but it is important that the music chosen to do so be carefully selected and taught in culturally sensitive ways. The musical director must know the backgrounds of the students in the orchestra so as to make informed decisions regarding curriculum as well as pedagogy and classroom environment. Each student has different experiences with the music because of what she brings to the ensemble in terms of her background and past experiences (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Gembris & Davidson, 2002; Reimer, 2003). Swanwick states, "all music arises in a social context and …it exists alongside and interleaves with other cultural activities" (1999, p. 27). Although the orchestra has a culture of its own, each member brings to the ensemble her own cultural and social identity that all weave together when playing as a unit. It all becomes part of the musical discourse.

Swanwick states, "The social and cultural contexts of musical actions are integral to musical meaning and cannot be ignored or minimized in music education" (p. 32). The nature of making and sharing music is personal and allows for close friendships and an ensemble culture of its own to develop (Adderly, Kennedy, & Berz, 2003). The extent to which students feel that the music classroom is a "home away from home" reflects how much they value the feelings of

connections with others (Campbell, Connell, & Beegle, 2007). Each member's cultural identity must be recognized and embraced to create a unique ensemble culture. "Individuals who share a culture are most likely to interpret and define social situations in similar ways because of their similar socialization and cultural experiences" (Paul & Ballantine, 2002, p. 569). It is up to the teacher to make informed curricular decisions to assist in creating this culture.

Student engagement in instrumental music. When considering long-term effects of instrumental music education, teachers must examine many aspects of teaching and how they play into fostering individual student achievement and musical independence. Koops (2006) suggests that in settings in which children have more control, children show their independence through choice, language use, and decision-making. She states that "children exhibit less agency inside the school classroom and at adult-controlled… music events" (p. 212). Research suggests that intrinsic motivation and autonomy in musical decision-making contribute to persistence and active engagement (McPherson, 2006). Much of what we know about motivation in music education comes from the research of Asmus (1986a, 1986b) and Austin (1988, 1991). Asmus studied motivation in music through the lenses of Attribution Theory and achievement, suggesting that children who attribute their successes and failures to effort are more likely to persist in their studies and will demonstrate greater achievement. Austin examined student self-concept and competition in relation to student achievement and motivation. His findings suggest that competition inhibits rather than enhances student achievement and that students with greater self-esteem had more motivation.

Many studies have investigated various facets of motivation in instrumental music settings. Parker (2001), Sandene (1997), and Stabley (2000) investigated motivational factors and teaching techniques that provided support for developing student engagement and autonomy.

12

Parker studied an exemplary orchestra pedagogue to document the motivational techniques that he used with his students. She noted three elements that contributed to this teacher's success in the classroom: (1) a distinct lack of competition in the ensemble in an effort to refrain from student comparison, (2) his sense of humor, and (3) making students feel valued and respected, both in and out of the classroom. Sandene investigated variables that had an affect on student motivation in the instrumental classroom. Results suggest that providing opportunities for student input enhanced student motivation. Stabley spent a year investigating the effects of chamber music on middle school string players' intonation and attitude toward music. The results from this study suggest that providing students with autonomous experiences in small groups positively affects their attitudes toward music making.

Additional research has shown that intrinsic motivation and autonomy in musical decision-making contribute to persistence and active engagement (McPherson, 2006). Elam and Duckenfield (2000) suggest that helping students develop autonomy in decision-making is inherent in student-centered, teacher-facilitated environments. Scruggs (2009), and Scruggs, Freer, and Myers (2009) compared learner-centered and teacher-centered teaching practices for differences in student learning and independence. Their findings showed that students from the learner-centered ensembles demonstrated greater engagement and independence.

In a 2010 study, Legutki examined motivation in the band setting using self-determination theory, as defined by Ryan and Deci (2002), and the Relative Autonomy Index, a composite score calculated using the scores from specific subsections of his questionnaire. Students in Legutki's study reported an emphasis on the social component of participation in band as a factor in their satisfaction from and motivation in band. Results from this study showed that students who reported having greater autonomy also had a greater sense of competence as

musicians, more interest and enjoyment in participating in music activities, and were more intrinsically motivated. These students also tended to report having a greater sense that their psychological needs were being met, and were less likely to feel pressure or tension. In his recommendations for teachers, Legutki suggests "teachers can play an important role in fostering intrinsic motivation and feelings of competence in their students by providing autonomy support in their classes" (p. 181). Examples of providing support for autonomy included encouraging students to think critically, evaluate, and make decisions. Legutki also discussed the importance of using informative feedback focusing on student progress and improvement, as opposed to comparisons, to aid in supporting autonomy.

Hurley (1992), Perkins (1998), and Mowery (1993) focused on motivations for beginning, continuing and/or dropping string music instruction. Hurley addressed the cognitive processes of students in their decisions to begin, continue, or discontinue string instruction. Emphasis in the study was on perceptions of achievement, expectations, and personal values in mediating achievement behaviors, including decisions regarding choice. Perkins' study of the factors relating to student participation in strings programs documented the following reasons for participation in orchestra in order of strength: desire to make music, influence of the teacher, extrinsic activities, musical ability, extrinsic available options, and family influence. Mowery examined the influence of selected personality variables from the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator as well as gender, race, family status and socioeconomic status as predictors of attrition in string programs. Of the variables studied, Mowery found that the manner in which students perceive information was the greatest predictor of students dropping out. "In practical terms, the decision is directly related to the ability of a student to perceive effectively the information needed to

acquire knowledge, develop playing skills, and develop positive attitudes that will continue to motivate the student to achieve…" (p. 107).

Creativity in teaching and learning. Green (2008) suggests that advancements in music education towards foci in motivation and curriculum have included changes in content, integrating "high" and "low" musics as well as "Western" and "non-Western" musics into the curriculum. With the integration of new content, however, "one area within music education has remained relatively unaffected – that of pedagogy… [New] content was largely approached through traditional teaching *methods*" [emphasis in the original] (Green, 2008, p. 3). Related to her research on the informal music making practices of popular musicians, Green (2008) recommends that teachers consider incorporating informal teaching and learning practices into the school environment, which will be a departure from the traditional methods of teaching and learning music.

Kratus (2007) posits that teachers, and the music education profession in general, need to think and teach creatively to keep music education vibrant and relevant for today and for the future. He describes two factors contributing to the impetus for a needed paradigm shift in American music education: (1) changes in the way music is experienced, and (2) the dichotomy between in-school and out-of-school music practices. Kratus identifies a number of areas in which the dichotomy of practices is illustrated in current practice including differences in musical genres listened to and played, size of the music making unit, instrumentation, and the end goals of the music making. Developing strategies that address the two above factors will require, according to Kratus, ingenuity, passion, talent, and belief in change. Kratus promotes thinking creatively and developing new practices, connecting within the profession as well as outside the profession for the reform needed to keep American music education vital.

Mursell (1956) considered creativity not as a separate component within a music program, but as a coordinating factor that should be incorporated within the entire program. In defining his intention, Mursell used the term *creative response* as it applied to children and to teachers assisting children in responding creatively to music. To Mursell, a number of components comprise creative response: (a) it produces something new, (b) can be a gradual process, (c) is an individual's internal discovery, (d) "needs help and guidance" (p. 333), (e) can be inhibited, and (f) "is the essence of growth" (p. 336). Expanding upon the last part of his definition, Mursell equates learning and growth with the metaphor of an explorer – one whose hard work and use of learned knowledge and skill assists in discovery rather than a gathering or piling up of extant items.

MacDonald and Miell (2000) suggest that creativity is underutilized in the classroom setting and that social factors contribute to children's success in creative endeavors. Efficiency and effectiveness of teaching creativity were sited as potential deterrents to teachers for incorporating socio-cultural approaches to teaching creativity in the classroom. MacDonald and Miell studied social factors associated with learning during compositional activities. Their findings suggest that partners who already have a history of working together are more likely to be successful in creative collaboration and produce a higher quality of work.

Inherent in experimentation and creativity is the notion of originality or trying something new. Some students might shy away from creativity as they may feel vulnerable or fear the risk of making a mistake. Competition also "can inhibit creative work" (Runco, 1999, p. 166). Johnson (2000) suggests that teachers need to model risk-taking as part of the learning process for their students. Helping students to work through taking risks or the fear of making mistakes

may encourage students to more readily engage in Johnson's three-part process for learning: (a) risk-taking, (b) analysis of the results, and (c) making changes accordingly (p. 13). He states:

"By letting students in on this reasonable risk-taking process, we model some of the best attributes we can hope to develop in our students…. When we can share our successes and failures and model the entire process of decision making, evaluation, persistence in the face of adversity, and change as opportunity for growth, students will have a first rate lesson on learning, regardless of the subject matter" (p. 14).

Johnson was specifically referring to classroom management and what others had used for teaching reading and writing, but as he suggests, these ideas may translate well to the music classroom. One method by which Johnson recommended teachers assist students in developing responsibility for their own learning was to give the students choices. Another was to involve students in the process of making decisions and, in so doing, give them ownership of the results, similar to characteristics of democracy in education discussed earlier.

Chapter Summary

Consider an octet or a small chamber orchestra. Each person is responding and contributing musically to what she sees and hears in a rehearsal or performance. We teach our students to function in and contribute to the large ensemble by the manner in which we set up our classroom or rehearsal environment and by the expectations we have for our students. Though this can be accomplished in an autocratic environment, ensemble members may find music-making more fulfilling in a more democratic environment because they have a voice in the process. In an ideal world, perhaps each classroom would encourage student-initiated contribution, cooperation and accountability.

In musical performance, one person can retain their individuality while working in tandem with others, contributing to the total outcome of a group, thinking and acting on received information all at the same time. As discussed above, this musically collaborative independence is regularly demonstrated in chamber music performances. How might an environment and culture of collaborative independence be nurtured in a large ensemble format? Might the traditionally autocratic orchestral ensemble function even more highly if operated in this manner?

In large ensemble settings, it may seem necessary to relinquish some individuality for the benefit of the greater good. It may also seem natural to assume that the musical product depends on the ability of each of the members to play or sing with a uniform concept of sound. Coming to an agreement on what the sound concept should be is much easier with fewer people involved in the decision-making process. As a result, teachers may make those decisions rather than involving students in the decision-making process. In an attempt to encourage our students to become autonomous musicians, we might consider providing them with opportunities to make and test their own musical decisions in a large ensemble.

Although many studies exist on democratic teaching and learning in high schools and beyond (Adderly, Kennedy, & Berz, 2003; Goodrich, 2007; Allsup, 2003; Berg, 1997; Bononi, 2000), I found little research on this topic that has been attempted with students in intermediate school or upper elementary school at the beginning of their foray into instrumental music. The reasons for the more prevalent focus on older students are understandable. Older students tend to be more articulate, more able to reflect, and more consistent in their behavior. We should not neglect, however, the time in students' lives when they are beginning to form their opinions about music, when they are highly social, and when they are traditionally given the opportunity

to enter into the world of instrumental music. I believe upper elementary students can also shed much light on what, how and in what environment they believe they learn musical skills and knowledge best.

Music teachers know that there are certain fundamental skills that students need to build upon to play their instruments with good musicianship. The manner in which these skills are taught, and the music chosen for the application of these skills should energize and excite the students' sense of learning and enjoyment in the class. Buell (1990) studied an exemplary college ensemble director and concluded that effective instruction came from the development of positive learning environments, the appropriate linking of teaching strategies to instructional goals, and the stylizing of instruction that reflected the needs and individual differences in the students. An effective teacher who creatively facilitates and helps cultivate her students' ability to make decisions and contribute to the process of making music by using democratic principles in an ensemble environment may influence student perceptions of music making and learning that encompasses more than just classroom music. She also may foster her students' abilities and desires to be lifelong music makers.

Purpose and Problems

With the intention of informing teaching practices in large ensemble settings, the purpose of this ethnographic case study was to describe a democratically engaged ensemble classroom and examine the perceived meaning and value attributed by the students to what and how they were learning. Specifically, I investigated instrumental students' beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions about their early ensemble experiences in a teacher-facilitated learning environment, and the influence of the learning environment on the meaning and value the students placed on their musical experiences. Research questions included:

1. How do students perceive what and how they are learning in an environment in which they are asked to contribute creatively and critically?

2. How does this learning environment influence students' perception of personal musical meaning?

3. How does participation in this learning environment influence students' musical decision making?

4. How does participation in this learning environment influence student development of musical identity?

The questions asked of the students were developed to identify ways in which the participants' learning and musicianship were influenced by the environment in which they learned. The questions focused on how the participants' perceptions of learning were influenced by their experiences and interactions in an environment in which the teacher acted as a facilitator and the students were asked to be creative, cooperative, and collaborative.

Definitions of Terms

Teacher-facilitated: Nurturing and supporting student needs and interests, teachers use structured guidance, rather than didactic teaching methods, to provide student-centered and autonomy-supportive learning. (Reeve, 2006). This teaching method has elements of informal and formal learning and is democratic in nature.

Democratically-engaged: The act of employing the democratic principles of inclusion, diversity, and change as set forth by Kratus (2012) for the purposes of education and development of understanding among actively engaged participants.

Democratic leadership: A leadership style, as described by Lewin (1999b), in which the leader is the authority, creating limitations for the benefit of the group, but providing freedoms

for and active participation of the members in the group. Motivation behind group action tends to be more intrinsic in nature.

       Democratic ideals: Three components of democracy in its ideal form, rather than in a political form, comprise what will be considered in this study as democratic ideals: (a) inclusion of all members; (b) considering diversity an asset; and (c) embodiment of "a dynamic process of change" (Kratus, 2012, p. 99).

CHAPTER 2: Related Research

The purpose of this study was to investigate student perspectives on learning in an ensemble environment characterized by teacher facilitation guided by democratic principles. Teacher-facilitated learning has elements of informal and formal learning and is democratic in nature as established in Chapter 1. In this chapter, I look at research on the context of music making by school-aged children in an ensemble, large or small, in and out of a school setting. Few studies describe teacher-facilitated learning environments explicitly, but rather those that involve collaboration or cooperation.

The following studies represent works closely related to the development of meaning, transmission of knowledge, problem solving, informal versus formal education, and music as a culture in musical settings. These issues are not easily explored in quantitative research, resulting in the inclusion of primarily qualitative research studies in this chapter. As Jaffurs (2006) wrote, "If we want to create meaningful connections for students, we must be willing to understand the whole child, not just the child we see in our classrooms" (p. 193). I will discuss the questions framing each study as well as information regarding the nature, quality and structure of the learning environment.

In-School Learning Environment

The literature presented in this section consists of qualitative studies investigating the learning environment in a school ensemble or originating from a school ensemble class. Of the five studies that will be discussed, only Adderly, Kennedy, and Berz (2003) investigated the large ensemble environment. Four studies explored smaller ensemble environments including a jazz band (Goodrich, 2007) and chamber groups (Allsup, 2003; Berg, 1997; Bononi, 2000).

In a collective case study, Adderly, Kennedy, and Berz (2003) used structured interviews to "investigate the world of the high school music classroom" (p. 190). Sixty students from one high school performing arts department, 20 each from band, orchestra and choir, responded to interview questions posed to each student individually by one of the three researchers. In addition to attending to the need for consistency among researchers, care was taken in forming and ordering the questions in an effort to allow for rapport to be established at the beginning of each interview and so that questions would flow naturally from topic to topic (p. 193). The questions focused on four issues: "motivation to join music ensembles and to remain, perception of the musical community as a whole, the meaning and value that music ensembles engender for their participants, and the social climate of the music classroom" (p. 192). When analyzing the interview transcriptions, Adderly, Kennedy, and Berz organized the data by ensemble and gender, as well as by issue, which was accomplished by assigning the interview questions to one of the four focus areas (p. 193).

Of the four focus issues, the last two have particular relevance to this study. The responses given by the students that related to the meaning and value of participating in the performance ensemble were separated into musical and non-musical benefits. Non-musical benefits included music-making being an emotional outlet, providing a place in which to grow personally, and providing a place in which to develop friendships and become part of a community (pp. 199-200). Musically, students valued performance, creativity, and "exposure to a variety of music" (p. 198). Regarding the social climate of the ensembles, students reported that they tended to spend most of their time with those who were like-minded, and likened the music classroom to a "home away from home" (p. 203). It is clear from the quotes the authors

included that many students recognized and appreciated the opportunity to spend time with those they deemed similar in ideas and dispositions.

Goodrich (2005, 2007) investigated the nature and workings of an exemplary high school jazz band. Participants included members of the band, the director, and the assistant director as primary informants. Additional information was gleaned from secondary informants including the principal and adult mentors. Goodrich employed ethnographic techniques such as observation, interview and artifact collection in gathering the data. Goodrich occasionally became a participant when he would "fill in" on his trumpet in a few rehearsals (2007, p. 99). Goodrich mentions that he felt this infrequent participation helped him gain the trust of the musicians for the duration of the project.

One of the themes from Goodrich's initial study, peer mentoring, emerged as a factor that contributed to the high quality and success of the jazz band program (2007, p. 94). Peer mentoring subthemes included student interactions in and out of the rehearsal. In-school interactions included modeling and conversations on style and technique, while out-of-school interactions ranged from helping each other transcribe solos to jam sessions or concert attendance (2007, p. 106). Reputation and high expectations as perpetuated by the director, who embodied the role of teacher as facilitator, and current and past band members helped create a positive and nurturing atmosphere in which students could grow musically and socially (2007, p. 109).

In contrast to the previous two studies, Allsup (2003) created the opportunity to investigate a group dynamic, in this case during the compositional process. Instead of observing an extant musical ensemble, Allsup proposed his study to his students and asked for volunteers to create a group that met outside school hours to create their own music. The group was to work

collaboratively to create music of any genre using any readily available instrument (p. 29). Nine of Allsup's high school band students volunteered to participate in the after-school music creativity project. As part of the collaborative inquiry process, the students were expected to share in the development and implementation of the design of the study with Allsup serving as facilitator (p. 29).

The collective group elected to split into two smaller ensembles. The contrasting compositional styles were reflected in the nature of the collaboration within the groups (p. 30). Allsup described Group 1 as more of a "jam band" in which its members made music as a response to what they were hearing from each other in a continuous format. Discussions through and about the music were encouraged and respected, exemplifying a collaborative and democratic music-making environment (p. 31). Group 2 took their inspiration more from the classical and jazz genres, discussing elements of form, tonality, style, and tempo before making any music (p. 32). The members of Group 2 began by developing musical ideas apart from the group before sharing them for synthesis into the final work. Allsup reported that only during the creation of a jazz piece did the members of Group 2 begin to display more collaboration in music creating (p. 32). Allsup mentions that the instruments the participants chose to use may have influenced their musical decisions. Group 1 decided to use guitars, keyboard, and drums, while Group 2 members chose to use their traditional band instruments. Because the groups were asked to determine the genre in which they wanted to compose, the participants were given the opportunity to draw upon the music that was most meaningful to them, "from *their* musical worlds" (p. 35).

Allsup discussed two themes that emerged through the analysis of the data: mutual learning and democratic action. Because of the collaborative nature of the music-making

processes used by the participants, Allsup characterized the peer learning as a "process of discovery" with opportunities to explore new ideas (p. 34). Democratic action, while part of this collaborative process, manifested itself in the way that students worked with each other as well as in the manner in which Allsup engaged with the students during the study. As the lead investigator as well as a participant in the study, Allsup viewed his role as more of a facilitator, teaching "with… rather than to his students" (p. 34). The students noted a change in social dynamic through the course of the study. The environment became more collaborative and participants changed roles, especially that of Allsup from "coat" to coach. In other words, students first perceived Allsup as wearing a figurative "lab coat," performing experiments and doing observations as if in a laboratory. By the end of the study, the students viewed Allsup's role as more of a participating guide.

Given an open framework in which to work and the social nature common to this age group, students naturally drew upon past experiences and personal preferences to create something collectively that had meaning to them. Students developed modes of communicating musical ideas that were based on music and experiences that were familiar and meaningful to them. Each group's dynamic was different, but the interactions between the members seemed to develop along the lines of respect and value of a common goal. Allsup called this "community-in-the-making."

Because of her interest in learning through group dynamics, Berg (1997) also took an ethnographic approach to her study. Through observation, field notes, interviews and artifact collection, Berg gathered data on the exchanges among and perceptions of the members of two high school chamber ensembles at two different locations. The purpose of Berg's study was "to describe how students in two pre-collegiate small chamber music ensembles reached conclusions

26

about musical interpretation through social interaction" (1997, p. 230). Her questions centered on patterns of musical thought and action, and how students assisted each other in moving through Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development [ZPD]. Vygotsky defined ZPD as "the distance between [a child's] actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). In other words, he believed that problem-solving in a group has the potential to incorporate more advanced strategies than if each member were to work alone.

Berg noticed a number of differences between the two ensembles' rehearsals during the analysis of the data. She suggested that some of these differences could be attributed to prior chamber music experience, length and difficulty of the pieces studied, and rehearsal styles (pp. 125-126). Differences also might be attributed to the relationships the students had formed in and out of the ensemble environment, to the differences in the ensembles themselves—a string quartet versus a violin, horn, and piano trio—as well as to the pedagogy demonstrated by the coaches. Berg documented the amount of time spent on various musical attributes, however, and found that both ensembles tended to focus on tempo, intonation and ensemble, with less time devoted to dynamics, phrasing, and tone quality (p. 242).

The nature of the music practiced in rehearsals was influenced by the size and frequency of the formal sections of the music as well as the proximity to a performance (p. 232). Interactions between the students were mediated by the roles that students held and shared within the ensembles. These roles were not fixed but fluctuated, and did so more in the trio than in the quartet (p. 252). Students used the tools with which they had experience or had experience applying in various situations. The ensemble members used what they knew and worked from

27

ideas suggested or focused on by their coaches when working toward a musical goal of the group. Berg suggests, in her implications, that the chamber music coach must "both facilitate and constrain the development of students' musical understanding and skill" by discussing "*how* to rehearse" as well as provide strategies for resolving conflict (p. 257). Berg suggests, that "an individual's overall chamber music experience was contingent on the particular ensemble to which they had membership" (p. 127).

Bononi (2000) videotaped a beginning saxophone quartet's rehearsals over a period of four months to study how members learned to perform in a chamber ensemble. The primary data were taken from videotapes that were reviewed, transcribed, coded, and analyzed. Additional data were gathered in the forms of post-performance "debriefings," fieldnotes, and a background questionnaire (p. 31). Through the course of the study, Bononi paid particular attention to student verbal interactions as indicators of thought processes and transfer of musical knowledge from their experiences in band for problem-solving in the small ensemble. From his findings, Bononi suggests that students transfer knowledge between similar experiences, in this case from large band rehearsal to saxophone quartet. The students focused on rhythm, tempo and intonation, as did the ensembles in Berg's (1997) study. An additional focus in this study was the manner in which transfer occurred, either prompted or unprompted. Bononi suggests that differences among the individual learners in the group contributed to the degree of prompting needed and the amount of transfer that occurred. Bononi's findings also support the idea that the teacher can be effective in the role of facilitator; transfer increased with teacher prompting.

Out-of-School Learning Environment

For comparison, the five studies in this section explore the environment and music transmission in non-school-affiliated instrumental ensembles comprised of school-aged children.

Three studies focused exclusively on the inner workings of garage bands (Campbell, 1995; Green, 2001; Jaffurs, 2004, 2006). These studies explore informal music making processes and describe the participants' perceptions of their experiences in the ensembles. A fourth study examines the value and meaning of participation in music as reported by students involved in youth arts organizations in Australia (Barrett & Smigiel, 2007).

To better understand the nature of music learning and transfer in a garage band setting, Campbell (1995) interviewed and observed nine males between the ages of 14 and 16 who were members of Seattle-based rock bands. Campbell reported that all but two of the participants had formal training on an instrument, not necessarily the one played in the band, and that they had prior connections to other members of their bands through school or from their neighborhood. Music was learned by an immersion process in which all the members listened to a song on their own and came to rehearsals with bits and parts to put together as a group (p. 15). Campbell observed informal peer learning and a general democratic atmosphere during rehearsals in which natural leaders emerged as resident expert musical models. Each member helped other members of the group achieve the sound desired by the collective. The common goal was "to play music" with a secondary goal to make money doing so at gigs (p. 14).

In two ethnographic case studies, Jaffurs (2004, 2006) investigated the learning environment of a garage band comprised of her current and former students. In the initial study, Jaffurs collected data through observation, interviews, field notes, video and think-alouds, focusing on the formal and informal learning that became evident in the rehearsals. During the pilot study, the group was in its infancy, having grown out of the idea of friends to form a band. Members of the band displayed varying levels of ability on their respective instruments, which contributed to the overall quality of the sound and interactions displayed by the group in its

formative stages. Jaffurs reported that the students were able to articulate that they needed to improve their playing skills to be able to create the sounds for which they strived.

Discoveries in the pilot study led Jaffurs to revise her questions and redefine the purpose of her second study "to discover how members of a garage band interacted with each other in and out of formal and informal settings and at the boundaries of these environments" (2006, p. 71). Jaffurs expanded her observations to include the group at a rock music camp and at a performance in addition to rehearsals. Five current and former students of the researcher made up the band in the pilot study (Jaffurs, 2004). For the subsequent study, three of the original band members comprised the group studied (Jaffurs, 2006). The playing ability of the three remaining students was more equal, which may have played a part in the difference in interactions between the members and quality of the rehearsals.

Jaffurs investigated the processes, rather than the end product, in which the group engaged when creating, rehearsing, and learning. Although the music they were learning as a band and that which they learned at school were deemed separate, Jaffurs noted some crossover. The skills learned in the school's instrumental program carried over to the proficiency for some of the band members on their respective instruments. The nature of the interactions outside of school was reportedly more collaborative than one might see in a school setting, in which a music or instrumental teacher might direct the learning of the group. None of the members was named as a leader, but one in particular emerged as the "go-to guy" when there were questions, and he "usually had the final say in musical decisions" (2006, p. 147). Jaffurs notes that rehearsals were fluid but tended to have a similar structure and mode of communication. Non-verbal communication in the form of eye contact or gesture was used more often than verbal

discourse. Jaffurs suggests that the common interests, goals and understandings of the members contributed to the lack of verbal explanation.

In her conclusions, Jaffurs suggests, "members [of a large ensemble] should spend time learning to communicate with their ensemble, as one group, constructed the same way they will make music together. On-going discussions and class meetings as friends and acquaintances may be the first step towards more productive musical communications and vital to their success and growth as musicians" (2006, p. 183). Choice and contribution on the part of the students may empower them to take ownership of the music-making process as they would in a garage band. Collaboration rather than competition may promote a more positive and accepting classroom environment. "Children's self-evaluations of their ability and self-directed affect are decidedly more negative when they are focused on winning, out-performing another, or surpassing some normative standard than when they are focused on trying hard, improving their performance, or just participating" (Ames, 1992, p. 264).

In a collective case study, Barrett and Smigiel (2007) interviewed 25 children who participated in extra-curricular youth music settings that were not affiliated with public school music programs. Six to eight students each from 27 youth arts organizations were nominated by the music teachers to be interviewed for this study. Four of the 27 youth arts organizations were music organizations resulting in the 25 children who participated in this study. The participants ranged in age from 5 to 18 years old and were evenly distributed, six each, among children's choir, orchestra and community band, with seven interviewed from the music theatre organization.

For the interviews, Barrett and Smigiel asked the children to bring "an artifact (sic) that was important to them and that represented their engagement and participation in the youth arts

organisation" (p. 42). The use of "artefact-elicitation," reportedly a less commonly used research tool, was intended by the researchers to help quickly establish rapport with the children and focus the interview on the topic: "children's perceptions of their valuing of and involvement in the arts" (p. 42). The researchers found five emergent themes through analysis of the transcribed interviews: 1) love of performance, 2) shared purpose, 3) desire for challenge and professionalism, 4) quality of relationships developed, and 5) opportunities for individual growth and well-being in these settings. Participant comments and critiques of experiences in school music programs as compared to the youth arts settings were generally negative in nature. The authors suggest that the musical commitment exhibited by these students "disposes them to take a critical view of music education wherever it is experienced" and the students' perspectives "offer music educators important insights into children's desires, needs, and expectations of music participation" (p. 47).

Learning Both Inside and Out of School

One of the most recent dissertations reviewed for this study combined both in and out of school observations. Thibeault (2007) observed and interviewed six high school students over the course of one year. Each of the six participants was involved in multiple musical ensembles both in and out of school. Using ethnographic data collection methods, Thibeault detailed his observations and interactions with the participants to determine how students' concepts of *music* and *musician* were "affected by participation in different music learning and music making environments" (p. 168). An underlying impetus for this study was Thibeault's family background, which was musically rich in both informal and formal music making. Thibeault was struck by a dichotomy between the traditionally formal training in schools and the informal learning that generally goes on in student ensembles outside of school music. The idea of a

dichotomy between in-school and out-of-school music practices supports the ideas put forth by

Kratus (2007) for change in the music education profession to reflect societal and technological

changes. The data gathered from the six participants shed light on activities deemed either score-

centered or setting-centered (p. 147).

Thibeault notes that activities featuring score-centered music making, "what lies at the

heart of most music education in American high schools, are built around a musical work with a

largely fixed identity, leaving room for creativity primarily through interpretation" (p. 146) An

example of a score-centered setting is a large ensemble like a choir, orchestra, or band, in which

the music is generally notated and the players are expected to be of a "single mind," generally

that of the conductor (p. 148). Setting-centered music making depends upon the players, the

music and the environment, and tends to be improvisatory and/or aural in nature. One of the

student participants was an active Bluegrass fiddle player in which "jam sessions" included

playing and learning tunes by ear. Setting-centered music making has infinite possibilities for

interpretations because of the social and environmental dynamic in which each member can add

or change the interpretation within the performance of a tune (p. 148).

To effectively illustrate the differences and potential benefits of each form of music

making, Thibeault describes six areas in which the two approaches differ. Already discussed are

the areas of interpretation and of creativity through the use of improvisation, or, as in the case of

score-centered, the lack thereof. The third area Thibeault describes involves the role of the

performer. In score-centered music making, the performer "is the instrument of the composer

and conductor's creativity," (p. 148) whereas in setting-centered music making, the performer is

more independent, which Thibeault allows is controversial in some school settings.

In reference to the fourth area of *mistakes*, Thibeault notes that "mistakes can be

productive opportunities for educational growth" (p. 149) but that the tendency is to eliminate mistakes in score-centered environments or to miss the opportunity of correcting mistakes by letting them go in setting-centered environments. The last two areas Thibeault discusses address concerts with large ensembles. For the score-centered large ensemble, performances can be "efficient" and at a high level of competence. Concerts involving large numbers of people for setting-centered environments tend to be challenging because of the autonomy and interplay between musicians inherent in the genre. Thibeault states that in setting-centered environments, "the process is more important than the concert" (p. 149).

To conclude, Thibeault suggested four ideas for change in the current system of large ensemble music education to incorporate the benefits from both approaches for the benefit of students. His four suggestions were (1) incorporate creative music education—meaning composition and improvisation, (2) reimagine the role of the ensemble teacher—to be more facilitative than the traditional didactic role of the conductor, (3) "lift the traditional anchor"—to incorporate new ideas and teaching practices that move away from the score-centered and didactic traditions, and (4) recover *play* in music—the joy and pleasure in the process of making music that students may lose as they progress through more score-centered learning environments (p. 157).

Chapter Summary

Few qualitative studies have focused on the social interactions and environment of the ensemble in a school setting with children in elementary or intermediate school levels. The studies discussed above were limited to those that investigated instrumental ensembles consisting of members who were of pre-college age. Social issues of community and interactions between members were addressed in all the studies. The interactions between students and how those

related to the overall functioning of the group were more a focus in the studies that investigated smaller ensembles. The meaning that participants expressed in connection to the music they were playing or experiencing was of interest to Adderly, Kennedy, and Berz (2003), Allsup (2003), Campbell (1995), Jaffurs (2004, 2006) and Barrett and Smigiel (2007). Goodrich (2007) was the only researcher to specifically study mentoring as a social interaction between students in an ensemble, as was Allsup (2003) for democratic learning, although the topic was briefly discussed in other studies. All but one of the studies concentrated on high school aged students.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

This chapter presents a detailed description of this study. It begins with a presentation of the researcher's lens, followed by an explanation of the research design, site and participant selection, procedures, participant profiles, data collection, data analysis and interpretation, trustworthiness, and limitations of the study.

Researcher's Lens

Having taught in the elementary and intermediate instrumental ensemble realm for over a decade, both in the public school setting and in enrichment programs, I have had the opportunity to work with students of varying abilities, from elementary age to adult, and from a variety of backgrounds. Each student brought a unique perspective and set of skills to the ensemble of which s/he was a part. The ways in which the students worked together, and with me as the teacher, when experiencing musically compelling and fulfilling learning and performing, both individually and as a group, were of particular interest. I reflected on my teaching practice as well as the classroom/ensemble culture that had developed. One of my main goals in teaching was to help students become autonomous, creative, and thoughtful music makers. To do this, I endeavored to teach in a democratically-influenced style that engaged the students in the process of music-making. I developed questions regarding what the students thought about what and how they were learning and whether or not this made a difference to their ownership of their musicality.

When faced with large numbers of students meeting for relatively short and intense rehearsal periods once or twice a week, educators may feel that an efficient teaching strategy would be to follow an autocratic teaching model. In this model, information is disseminated from the podium to the students, who then are expected to absorb all the information regardless of

their investment in it. In spite of the ease and efficiency of using an autocratic teaching model, I found it much more rewarding to include the students in the process of making music, involving them in musical decisions from program order to interpretation and articulation. My goals as an educator included giving students the tools to play their instruments well, to be creative in their musical interpretations and compositions, and to enjoy making music when they were not in my classroom or rehearsal. If I were to *tell* my students what and how to play, they may not have felt motivated or empowered to make music at home. I felt that I had done my job well if a student came up to me and asked if I would listen to what he had figured out or made up on his own, especially if that student would then play with a beautiful tone and technique, with thoughtful attention to any number of musical aspects that might present themselves in a piece.

These ruminations and reflections led me to investigate settings in which other ensemble teachers use democratic principles or teacher-facilitated, student-centered activities, specifically in beginning instrumental classes. Facilitating student decision-making toward the beginning of their experiences with learning to play a musical instrument may influence students' motivation to continue to participate and/or their engagement in the musical process in years to come. Because of my expertise in the area of string education, I thought an orchestra setting would provide a greater connection and fewer technical issues to understand between me, as the researcher, and the participants.

Ethnographic Case Study Design

Researchers have shown increasing interest in qualitative research in music education to illustrate musical ideas, events, interactions, or contexts for a particular person or group of people (McCarthy, 2002; Paul & Ballantine, 2002). McCarthy suggests four reasons for this current trend: (a) the move away from the didactic teaching model toward "democratic

curriculum and pedagogy;" (b) philosophers' viewing "music as social action," the process of which intrinsically holds value and meaning, (c) "perspectives from social constructivism provid[ing] new lenses for investigation of music education settings;" and (d) the greater diversity in our classes requiring us to "incorporate different perspectives" (2002, p. 563). Paul and Ballantine (2002) suggest sociologists may have increased interest in qualitative research in music because music experiences are closely related "to group affiliation, family and socialization, religious upbringing, and socioeconomic and even sociopolitical status" (p. 566). The whole person, or social group, and the influences thereon can be revealed by the results of a qualitative study. If we do not know the context, then the results are meaningless, for the context is partially responsible for the observed results.

Musical ensembles provide an interesting conundrum for researchers who seek to understand the meaning and value assigned to experiences by individuals. In an educational setting, musical ensembles generally cater to large groups of students, many of whom learn the same part in a similar way for consistency in performance. It is unusual for the individual student to have the opportunity to create, perform, or make musical decisions, but rather participate in a social experience in which there are common goals and common understandings. Because of this interconnected social nature of music making, music researchers tend to study ethnographic data when studying musical ensembles, especially when considering changing instruction or the curriculum (Szego, 2002). "The objectives of ethnography are to apprehend the way that people construct, operate in, experience, and make sense of their world; to do so in situ; and to do so in a way that affects people's normative conduct as little as possible" (Szego, 2002, p. 707). That is, to observe the participants in their natural setting, documenting with clearly understood bias and with little interference, as if to be a fly on the wall.

In view of the fact that the questions I would be asking examined perceptions and associated meaning, a qualitative research paradigm was the natural research design to follow. I focused primarily on the students' perceptions of working and learning together in a teacher-facilitated environment, as opposed to one that is more autocratic. Therefore I chose to use ethnographic data collection techniques within a multiple-case study design (Creswell, 1998). Because students from two sixth grade orchestra classes were the focus of this study, the multiple case study design was appropriate (Yin, 2003). As many teachers can attest, each class of students can create their own culture and may function in ways that are unique to the students who make up a particular class. In preliminary observations of the site and the two classes that were the focus of this study, I felt that the multiple-case study design was appropriate and might reveal differences between the classes and in their perceptions. On further review of the data, the two classes did not in fact provide distinguishable differences and thus the study is presented as a case study of one teacher's classroom and the perceptions of her sixth grade students.

Site and Participant Selection

Through discussions with university professors, observations of and conversations with various teachers, a few teachers were identified as having democratically engaging classrooms. The background and philosophy of one of the teachers, Mrs. Peterson, resonated with the type of classroom learning environment that I was interested in studying. The school, Greene Intermediate School, was located in a semi-urban area, which is defined in more detail in the next section. The student body was diverse in cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic background and varied in learning abilities, creating the potential for a rich, socially dynamic environment. This environment may not be representative of school environments that many current teachers

may encounter; the results, therefore, are not intended to be generalizable, but to inform teaching practice by providing insight into this particular learning environment.

After observing Mrs. Peterson, I spoke with her regarding her interest in and the possibility of doing my study in her classroom. Mrs. Peterson laid the groundwork for contact with and approval from the principal of the school. Through various modes of communication, preliminary approval from the principal was secured. In a subsequent on-site appointment with the principal, I provided a formal description of the study and demonstration of participant and school protection. The principal then gave formal approval for conducting the study pending the approval of the University review board. All required materials were submitted to and approved by the Michigan State University Social Science/Behavioral/Education Institutional Review Board [SIRB].

Students were chosen in consultation with Mrs. Peterson and the principal to ensure a lack of scheduling conflicts as well as to ensure fruitful and articulate responses in the interviews. Students in both sixth grade orchestra classes were asked to serve as participants and were provided with the SIRB approved Consent and Assent forms to read through and sign with their parents. 21 students returned both forms indicating their interest and willingness to participate in the study. In an effort to foster a safe sharing environment and encourage conversation, I formed four focus groups—two groups from each class divided by gender.

All student interviews took place on school property in a meeting room or empty classroom during the students' lunch and/or recess time. Conveniently, all the sixth graders had lunch immediately following their orchestra class and were familiar with the idea of meeting with teachers at that time. Prior to the interviews, I provided both the students and the teacher with the SIRB approved lists of questions that I would be asking (see Appendices A and B

respectively). The assistant principal suggested protocol for meeting with the students that included a lunch pass and note to inform teachers and lunch monitors of where the students would be during that time. Because of the number of questions and the fact that the first class's lunch time occurs at the same time as the second class's orchestra period, I developed a schedule for meeting with the students once a week during the month of May. This schedule provided flexibility in the case of field trips or other conflicts that might arise, and allowed me the opportunity to observe full instructional time of both classes (see Appendix C). In this scenario, three of the four focus groups met five times for 20 to 25 minutes, which is the length of their lunch and recess time minus travel and lunch procurement. One focus group was able to move through the questions much faster than the other focus groups and met only four times. At the conclusion of the data collection, I provided a pizza lunch for the participants of each class.

Participants and Setting

The teacher and sixth grade students from the Greene Intermediate School String Orchestra program served as my primary informants. Every child in the school was enrolled in a performance based music class. Of the 180 students in the sixth grade, 55 were enrolled in the orchestra program. The rest were in band or choir. To maintain the anonymity and welfare of the participants, all names and locations were assigned pseudonyms, and resources that had identifying information in their titles have been omitted from the references (e.g. school and state websites).

The United States Census Bureau (2010) classified the area in which the school was located as an urban area outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area. The school was part of a district adjoining a medium sized city in the Midwestern United States and served approximately 375 students per year. While the area was considered urban, the population of the

41

school district did not enable its classification as a more densely populated "urban cluster" (United States Census Bureau, 2010). The school's descriptive materials identified the area as a semi-urban school district. At the time of this study, the term "suburban" was not included on the federal website or in any federal documents pertaining to the 2010 Census or metropolitan classifications. Therefore the term semi-urban was adopted to describe the region in which the school district was located.

I gathered the following information specific to Greene Intermediate School from the state's education website for the 2008-2009 academic year. Approximately half of the student body was eligible for free or reduced lunch (see Table 2) and most of the students identified as white, black or Hispanic (see Table 3). While not a specialized school, Greene Intermediate School served only fifth and sixth grade students. In the 2008-2009 Annual Education Report for Greene Intermediate School, the principal noted the focus on teaching the students to be "responsible citizens and learners." She also identified the school as having an inclusive model of special education, and about one fifth of the student population was involved in a program assisting students with special needs to feel connected to their peers in general education.

Table 1

Eligibility for Free and Reduced Lunch at Greene Intermediate School

Program	% of Student Body
Free Lunch	40%
Reduced Lunch	10%

Note. Information gathered from the United States Census Bureau, 2010, and the school's state education website.

Table 2

Racial Demographics for Greene Intermediate School

Race	% of Student Body
White	40.5%
Black	22.3%
Hispanic	17.5%
Multiracial	15.5%
Asian	4%
Indian	.2%

Note. Information gathered from the United States Census Bureau, 2010, and the school's state education website.

Mrs. Trisha Peterson – Strings teacher. A number of criteria aided in the decision to choose Mrs. Peterson and her classes for this study. She was a highly trained musician and educator with degrees in performance and music education. University faculty and string teaching colleagues recommended Mrs. Peterson based on their observations and collaborations with her as a teacher and performer. Although this study occurred early in her school teaching career, Mrs. Peterson was an experienced teacher, having taught for many years with highly regarded string pedagogues as a Suzuki instructor, during which she led group classes and string orchestras in addition to teaching private lessons. Her most recent degree prior to this study was at an institution at which the faculty espoused ideals of democratic teaching, and focused on creativity and the individual.

Mrs. Peterson was also chosen because of her teaching approach, which stemmed from a deep grounding in two distinct teaching philosophies – those of Suzuki and Gordon – as well as her experience with individualization of instruction for diverse student needs. The philosophies

of both Suzuki and Gordon begin with an aural approach, determine readiness for future learning, scaffold and sequence learning for future successes, and focus on the individual. One additional component of Music Learning Theory that was exemplified in Mrs. Peterson's teaching was her use of creativity. Although teachers steeped in different methodologies may approach teaching similarly, I believe it was Mrs. Peterson's depth of understanding and belief in these aural and individualized approaches that provided the initial basis for choosing her classroom environment for this study. Mrs. Peterson's also had much success and experience working with children of various backgrounds and abilities, including students with special needs. She had been successful in individualizing instruction for each and every student both individually and in group situations, and was consistently creating and implementing classroom activities that addressed the interests, readiness, and needs of each individual in the class.

Student participants. As stated previously, students were chosen with the assistance of Mrs. Peterson and the principal to ensure a lack of scheduling conflicts as well as to ensure fruitful responses in the interviews. All student participants were in the sixth grade, and all but one were in their second year of learning to play a stringed instrument. Four focus groups were created from the students who responded positively to the request to participate in the study and who brought back signed consent and assent forms. Because the students were in two classes that met during different periods in the day, and because of the potential for discomfort in mixed company, the students were grouped by gender and by class. Students were involved in the development of the pseudonyms, but some were changed to maintain appropriateness. The personalities and backgrounds within the groups varied widely.

Student participants – Girls. Eleven girls participated in the study with one self-selecting out after the first two interviews. Initially divided into groups of seven and four for the

44

interviews, the second group became a trio after the one participant decided to leave. The larger of the two girls groups, 6AG, included the following personnel: AJ, Skya, Blossom, Victoria, Violet, Roxy, and Waterfall. In general, these ladies were bubbly and gregarious, all were friends or friendly with each other, and all of them participated easily in the conversations that were prompted by the questions in the focus group interviews. This was AJ's first year in orchestra, and Roxy had switched in the summer between years from violin to cello. The rest of the girls from both groups were in their second year of playing a particular string instrument.

The smaller group of girls, 6BG included Paige, Cookie, Elm, and Bobby. 6BG was the quieter group, replying to questions in soft voices, sometimes giving no more than a few words. The small number of girls in this group may have contributed to the apparent shyness the 6B girls exhibited in the interviews as compared to the more outgoing and conversational interviews I experienced with the girls from 6A.

Student participants – Boys. Ten boys participated in the study, eight regularly. Two boys did not attend regularly because of absences on the days of the scheduled interviews. The boys groups were split evenly, five and five, with no less than four per group on days when students were absent. Hiram, Naja, Hunter, Cap, and Earnest comprised the first group of boys, 6AB. Mark, Walt, Fred, Alex and Bruce formed the second group of boys, 6BB. All of the boys were in their second year studying their current instrument and both groups readily and easily responded to the questions I posed during the focus group interviews.

Student participants – Other notable characteristics. The focus groups represented the diversity that was apparent at Greene Intermediate school and within the orchestra classes. If all twenty students were in a picture together, the viewer would see a group of racially and ethnically diverse children. For Bruce, English was his second language, Spanish his first. Hiram

45

had family in the Middle East and had grown up hearing his father play tunes on his guitar based on non-western music. Skin color and cultural background varied in each group, but neither played a role in selection for inclusion in the study. One student had been identified as having special needs. The diversity added to the richness of the data because of the musical backgrounds associated with the represented cultures and family experiences. Naja regularly practiced African drumming and dance with his family. Victoria's father was a classically trained vocalist. Almost all of the students reported having a family member that made music, either currently or in the past.

Data Collection

Principle forms of data collection included observations, field notes, video and audio recordings of rehearsals and interviews, group and individual interview transcripts, and collected artifacts. I used both audio and video equipment for the focus group interviews to assist with transcription as well as to ensure backup recordings should one device fail. I used an Olympus VN-4100 Digital Voice Recorder, Handy Recorder H2 by Zoom Corporation, a Flip Ultra Video Camera, and a JVC Everio GZ-MG70 Hard Disk Drive Camcorder to record all focus group interviews. For the interviews with Mrs. Peterson, I used only the H2 Zoom audio recorder. In addition, I used the Flip Ultra Video Camera to record class observations. H2 Zoom audio files were converted to MP3 format and transferred to iTunes for playback. Flip videos were downloaded onto my Mac laptop computer and the JVC video recordings were transferred to DVD. Interviews were reviewed prior to each subsequent interview with the intention to inform future questions for the focus groups. I transcribed each interview so that I could maintain confidentiality. I used both audio and video recordings for accuracy in transcription, as well as to

develop a richer connection with the data. For each visit to the school, I kept detailed field notes, which contributed to rich and accurate description of the events witnessed.

I began visiting Greene Intermediate School and the two orchestra classes about two to three times a month, beginning in February, 2006. The main objective of these initial visits was for my presence to become familiar to them, and for the students to come to know me as a teacher, accepted and respected by their teacher. Fine and Sandstrom (1988) suggest developing a rapport with preadolescent children based on trust, respect, understanding, and researcher comfort in the setting. For this reason, I used these visits to observe the students and their teacher, and help students with minor instrument repairs and tuning when these actions would not be intrusive to the normal functioning of the class and the authority of the teacher. Because formal approval from the SIRB was still pending when I first visited the classroom, the students were not initially told of the full nature of my presence, just that I was interested in how they make music and that I was a student at a nearby university.

Once I received the formal approval for the study, I explained my study fully to the students and asked for their participation in focus group interviews. I then developed a schedule for regular observations and focus group interviews. Within two weeks, I was able to procure the signed consent and assent forms from the children and set up the first interviews with the focus groups. All interviews were conducted during the month of May. Focus group interviews were scheduled once a week, with both groups of boys meeting on the same day and both groups of girls meeting on an opposite day. The only exception to this schedule occurred when the students had a school conflict and agreed to an additional meeting in one week. Teacher participant interviews occurred at the end of the month. See Appendix C for dates of all observations and interviews.

Data Transcription and Analysis

All interview data were transcribed verbatim using Microsoft Word and then put into a Microsoft Excel database for labeling, ease in coding and retrieval. The researcher, using the above software, did all coding and data analysis. The labeling system used for the focus group interviews included a four-digit alpha-numeric abbreviation. The first digit indicated the grade level – 6. The second digit reflected the orchestra class in which the students were enrolled – A or B. The third digit referenced the gender of the focus group – G for girls, B for Boys. The final digit designated the specific focus group interview – each group was interviewed 4 to 5 times. For example, quotes from a girls' group interview was coded 6AG3 for sixth grade, orchestra class A, girls, interview 3. In the results chapters, quotes are followed by a citation listing this four-digit location code. This code also allowed for ease of locating the original text in the full transcript, which was kept to "maintain the context of the raw data" (Patton, 1990, pg. 381). See Appendix C for interview dates associated with the location codes and transcript excerpts.

All data were coded and analyzed for emergent themes and sub-themes. Using the search functions in Microsoft Word and Excel, I was able to develop consistency in coding as well as sort the data for frequency of codes. I read, listened to, and watched each interview multiple times through the transcription process and again during analysis to ensure accurate transcription and description of body language. While reviewing data sources, I highlighted statements that exemplified each participant's descriptions of their experiences and understandings of learning in Mrs. Peterson's classroom environment. I reviewed codes for similarities, refining and grouping them into categories, which led to emergent themes.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that trustworthiness is determined by the establishment of four components: (1) credibility, (2) transferability, (3) dependability, and (4) confirmability. Lincoln and Guba suggest a number of techniques for establishing both credibility and confirmability, but only one each for transferability and dependability. To establish credibility, I employed the following techniques: triangulation of resources, peer debriefing, member-checks, and persistent observation. Confirmability was established through triangulation of data sources, length of engagement in the class over a period of four months, member checks, peer review by a colleague in music education, member-checks, persistent observation, and cross referencing of transcripts and field notes. Member-checks were conducted with the teacher by providing her electronic transcripts of her interviews for review and editing via email. Because of the age and potential reading comprehension of the student participants, I asked students for clarification of and/or elaboration on their answers in subsequent focus group interviews rather than giving them a transcript to edit and return.

The one technique Lincoln and Guba suggested for establishing transferability is the use of thick description. They suggest that the reader will be able to determine the extent to which the conclusions and analysis are transferable to other situations and people by the level of descriptive detail presented. Creswell (1998) posits that these descriptions can be presented in many forms such as metaphors, stories, or verbatim conversations. By providing the context and detail, the author provides sufficient description for the reader to evaluate transferability. Throughout the results chapters, I endeavor to describe the context, social interactions, emotions, and dialogue in vignettes to provide the reader with the opportunity to evaluate transferability to her own situation.

External review was the one technique suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1995) for establishing dependability. To do this, one would ask a researcher not involved with the study to examine both the process and the results of the study. Feedback from this external audit is intended to foster accuracy and honesty in presentation of the study (Creswell, 1998). In addition to the peer review mentioned above, I asked two colleagues in higher education who were experienced qualitative researchers in fields other than music education for feedback on the findings, interpretations and conclusions. Their feedback assisted with clarification and accuracy within the study.

To establish confirmability, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the use of an external audit, detailed description of research steps, triangulation of resources, and statement of researcher's bias. As stated previously, I engaged two peers for an external audit. Triangulation of resources was accomplished through the use of transcripts from the students and the teacher interviews, field notes, and artifacts. A statement of my researcher's bias begins this chapter and is embedded in the study for clarification. In addition, I kept journal notes throughout the duration of the study to document my thoughts and ideas as the study unfolded.

When designing the questions I would ask the students and the teacher, I began to wonder what effect they would have on the participants' future thoughts and behaviors. As the researcher, I did not want to influence the participants, but to get at the core of *their* perceptions and beliefs. The questions, therefore, are carefully worded for clarity as well as to maintain an air of neutrality. These questions were reviewed and approved both by music education faculty and the SIRB. Prior to the first focus interview and at all focus group interviews, students were provided with the list of questions (See Appendix A). I also provided the questions I would ask of Mrs. Peterson prior to our formal recorded interviews (See Appendix B).

Limitations of the Study

A qualitative case study does not lend itself to generalizability, but can provide insight into teaching and learning that can inform current and future practice as well as lead to further study and understanding of the observed trends. Inherent in a case study is also the element of subjectivity. A case study is context-specific making it difficult if not impossible to replicate. As the researcher and participant observer, my biases, both known and unknown, may have influenced the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Although I had spent time in the classroom over a period of four months, the length of engagement and point in the academic calendar could both be considered limitations of the study. The six-week duration for formal data collection was bounded at the beginning by state mandated tests for the students and by the SIRB approval. The conclusion of the study was limited to the end of the spring term and the academic curriculum.

While every effort was made to select a variety of participants who were articulate and demonstrated the potential for varied viewpoints, ultimately only those who met the criteria of the principal and returned both consent and assent forms were considered for participation. The age of the participants might also be considered a limitation. Due to the developmental changes that occur during early adolescence, the student-participants might have felt inhibited in responding to my questions as well as be limited in their ability to be reflective. Regardless, the information provided by the participants in the interviews is naturally highly subjective, situation specific and, possibly, only partially representative of the students' perceptions.

CHAPTER 4: Multi-Faceted Learning Environment

Classroom Vignette

The room is fairly large, with high ceilings and a blackboard that runs across most of the front of the room. Two large storage cabinets and a sheet music cabinet cover most of the wall next to one of the entrance doors. A metal rack stands by the back wall to store extra shoulder rests, endpin stops, folders, and other accessories for student use. Posters, pictures and sayings pertaining to making and learning music adorn the walls and part of the blackboard. Awards with student names and pictures decorate the front of the large storage cabinets. A small office, its windows half covered with inspirational quotes and pictures of famous string musicians, sits opposite the storage cabinets. Next to the office is a small storage room in which students store their instruments during the day. It is tucked in the back corner of the orchestra room and also serves as a passage to the band room. When the band is playing, the sound travels through the passageway, muffled only by the two doors on either side of the storage room. On top of one of the tall cabinets in the corner of the room sits the orchestra mascot, Snoopy, playing a violin.

This learning environment may resemble any number of music classrooms. Music teachers often decorate their class space to provide an atmosphere in which the students will learn and grow. This particular classroom did not strike me as atypical when I first arrived. The layout was similar to classrooms I had seen with storage, a piano, a stereo, an office, stacks of chairs, and stands lined up against the walls. Although the items and layout appeared commonplace, certain aspects of the decorations and set-up indicated a classroom with a distinct student-focused atmosphere. Student work displayed around the room included practice charts, pictures drawn by students, pictures of students, student-created technique reminders, and student-created rhythms with their accompanying sayings. The rules posted at the front of the

room were partially student created. I later learned that the structure of the class and the placement of certain items around the room were also partially student determined. The students were integral to creating the physical environment as well as the musical and learning environment.

Students described the learning environment in orchestra to be one of great contrast to what they experienced in academic subject classrooms. This was a point of departure for discussions and comments within the interviews that described many facets of their learning, the environment, and what they valued. The students described academic classrooms that were quiet, orderly, and punitive; in which information was disseminated, the teaching approach was singular, and in which individual achievement was prized over that of the group. These ideas will be presented as they relate to the various themes presented throughout the document to assist in bringing the orchestra learning environment to light.

In this chapter, I describe the learning landscape as I observed it, and as it was related to me by the students and their teacher. The three theme areas discussed in this chapter relate to learning as (a) messy, (b) relevant and (c) social/familial. Within these theme areas, the ideas discussed include the physical, social, and contextual factors relating to the learning environment, as well as elements that differentiated the learning environment in orchestra from the students' academic classrooms. Conversations and descriptions of observed interactions are included to provide context for the reader under each of the theme areas. Please note the use of "BA" to represent BettyAnne as the researcher in the conversations.

Learning is "Messy"

Landscapes and soundscapes. *Stands scrape against the floor and chairs are dragged around the room to form small groups. A few violinists and a violist have lined up at the piano to*

get tuned and to ask questions of the teacher. Two cellists work diligently, writing information

onto their music. They talk softly, pointing to the music, sometimes picking up a cello to try a

fingering. Two violinists are playing one of the ensemble tunes together, counting off and playing

from beginning to end. Other small groups form about the room to practice tunes together. In

one group, a violinist plays a tune that he is composing for a friend and seems pleased with the

feedback he gets. All of this happens at a soft rumble while the teacher coaches a small group

through a tune. Rarely is the room silent, devoid of musical sound and/or children talking and

working with each other (Field notes and observations).

While this description may strike some as chaotic, noisy, or disorganized, it is a result of

the deliberate practices and student initiatives Mrs. Peterson used to develop the type of learning

environment she was trying to establish for the students. Students were allowed, even

encouraged, to move about the room and interact with their classmates. Mrs. Peterson actively

promoted peer learning and discussion, which sometimes lent itself to a level of sound that

required a piano chord to bring the class back to a singular focus. Mrs. Peterson described her

classroom learning environment as follows:

> *I talk about how my class is "messy." It feels messy because I feel like there is a*
>
> *lot of this (makes talking motion with her hand). Sometimes it's chatting, like Paige today*
>
> *was chatting. I'm sure she was talking about her weekend, but there were a couple of*
>
> *moments I looked over at her and she was pointing to the music. They're learning behind*
>
> *the stand, and I'm okay with that.*
>
> *Messy is that there is not one leader and a group of followers. That there is more*
>
> *noise in the classroom. That there's more talking. It's not me standing there giving*
>
> *directions and "you better… listen because here are my directions." I'm okay going off*

on a tangent with them. I'm okay if somebody asks me a question. We did that the other

day with Hunter. We were playing through our scale and I asked him to show you this

today too. He was rotating at the frog and he had that flexibility. So I'll notice something

like that and then I'll feature it and then it will take us in another direction. That's what I

mean by messy, where the class will take you… You go there together and the class leads

you in that way. I'm okay with that. (Teacher Interview, May 22, 2009)

To understand student experiences and perceptions of learning in this orchestra

environment, I asked students "If you could use one word to describe orchestra class, what

would it be and why?" While the children did not specifically mention the word *messy*, they

corroborated Mrs. Peterson's statements regarding the messiness of the learning environment.

Most specifically, the students mentioned the noise or sound levels they recognized as part of the

learning environment of orchestra. Much of this was attributed to talking in class, but also to

sound levels of people playing their instruments and that of the band coming through from the

next room.

Waterfall: Noisy. Because some people are talking or we play the instrument and there

are a lot of people there.

Elm: Sometimes there's too much talking and doodling.

Alex: The tuning line can be kinda loud… when we're [in the] tuning line, it's like really

loud and stuff so noise doesn't bother me as much.

Hunter: It is very loud. 'Cause everybody talks sometimes when we're getting tuned.

Cap: It's kind of annoying though when you can hear bands next door. 'Cause they're

really loud. (Focus group interviews: 6AB1, 6AG1, 6BG1, and 6BB2)

All focus group participants agreed that some unstructured talking and playing were appropriate and even vital to their learning, but at times it was considered too much and impeded class progress. Cookie called these "chaotic and crazy" days, when students would play and talk out of turn. Students related that Mrs. Peterson provided *doodling* time during class, which allowed them to try out concepts or have individualized practice time, but could also be distracting to some students. Participants defined doodling as messing around on their instruments, which could mean practicing a piece of choice, improvising, or just making sounds. Mrs. Peterson was purposeful in providing time during class for students to doodle, but the prevalence of this doodling time led some students to feel that the class itself lacked structure.

Flexible class structure. When asked to describe the typical day in orchestra, the students were consistent in their description of a regular class structure. Walt, Paige, Cookie, and Bobby all detailed a 'normal' day in orchestra with chunks of time devoted to similar learning concepts or activities as illustrated in the following exchange.

> *Walt: Yeah, at the beginning we do the tuning, which is like everybody else said which is where we do a lot of our socializing, and then we begin with our warm-up, and that's pretty easy. Then we start. Usually we start with our Essential Elements books. We do that until about like, I'd say twenty after and then for the rest of the time we just do songs that we have on our sheets. We usually go up right until lunch time.*
>
> *Paige: I know that everyday, at the beginning we do the warm up, or the scale, and then it depends… we were focusing on "Entry of the Tumblers." There's usually a certain song we're trying to focus on and to get done, which will come in there. And we used to usually play Perpetual Motion every day.*
>
> *Cookie: And we play Essential Elements.*

Bobby: And like we always, ...she always tries to have us play the same songs like at the same time of every class. Like... for... the warm up she tries to do it in a certain time and then... when we try to play out of the book it's like around a certain time too. (Focus group interviews: 6BB1 and 6BG1)

Mrs. Peterson reflected on her class preparation and structure including technical and musical objectives, but that allowing students to take her on learning tangents was par for the course and welcome in her classroom. Although Mrs. Peterson had an overall structure for each class as well as long-term goals for the students, her approach was one of flexibility. Students in these classes asked questions related to music, music making, and learning in general, as well as those related to social interactions. As quoted earlier when describing the messiness of learning in her classroom, Mrs. Peterson felt that answering the students' questions was important for the students' growth. She was happy to follow the tangents provided by the students on these topics, endeavoring to keep the conversations relevant to the students, to their learning, and to their interactions with others in orchestra. In other words, Mrs. Peterson was teaching not only music, but life lessons. This flexibility was noted by the students, as well as the relaxed atmosphere that it engendered. Students described the flexibility Mrs. Peterson provided within this structure as creating a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. Walt, however, also notes a feeling of less structure, even though he was able to delineate an overall structure as quoted above.

Walt: The word I would probably use is easy-going.

BA: Easy-going? Why do you say that?

Walt: Well, Ms. P doesn't really have a set plan for every day, she just kinda goes with how long it takes to like tune for example and then we just kind of go wherever we want from there, so it's pretty easy-going... (Focus group interview: 6BB1)

Mark similarly described the manner in which Mrs. Peterson created the learning atmosphere, but seems to consider it more positively than Walt. "Yeah. Easy-going. She is not very strict, well sometimes she is, but she never raises her voice" (6BB2).

Learning through mistakes. A common occurrence in this learning environment was the making of mistakes by the student and the teacher. The manner in which the participants viewed mistakes contributed to the idea of the messiness of learning. Mrs. Peterson viewed these moments as opportunities for teaching and learning within the general structure of the class.

Part of a process of learning to play a musical instrument is learning how to work through your mistakes in positive ways. I can be vulnerable with [the fifth and sixth graders] as a teacher and as a person. I can model that it's okay to make a mistake. I think the 5th and 6th graders just appreciate it as part of the process. This is just what we do…Today was an example of that because we are learning this new piece and I would say two months ago they would have bucked and said 'I can't play this piece. I just can't get it.' They were not forgiving themselves because they wanted to have it right. Violet and Roxy have come a long way in a short amount of time in terms of their ability to be okay making mistakes and not playing something perfectly (Teacher Interview, May 22, 2009).

Mrs. Peterson was referring to a moment in a recent observation in which Violet and Roxy made mistakes in some excerpts from a new piece they were learning. The girls tried the excerpt again and improved each subsequent time. In the following exchange from our final focus interview, the girls discuss the idea of making mistakes.

Violet: Kind of, like you just make a mistake, "Oh, big deal." then you just move on,… but you know you made it, but it doesn't really matter 'cause you are still learning.

58

Waterfall: Everyone makes mistakes.

BA: So are mistakes a bad thing?

All: A resounding "No" from everyone present.

Violet: No. 'Cause you're just learning.

Victoria: Everybody makes mistakes.

A.J.: It's a part of learning.

Blossom: Never ever ever ever ever. Mistakes are good because you learn. (Focus group interview: 6AG5)

The boys discussed mistakes and the ways in which they were addressed in class in three of the focus interviews. This first conversation arose from discussions surrounding the best part learning in the orchestra environment.

Walt: Mrs. P usually isn't very angry if we don't play it right the first time. She always is just "well how can we improve that" or "I think we should play that again."

Mark: yeah.

Walt: There's a lot less punishment for doing something wrong, not like public, behavioral wise, but like learning wise.

Mark: mmhmm. You can make mistakes, basically.

Walt: Or at least more mistakes.

Mark: More mistakes. Yeah.

Alex: I like that it doesn't like, if you make a mistake in the class, like miss a note, it doesn't affect your report card, which is nice.

(Focus Group Interview: 6BB2)

The next exchange regarding mistakes occurred during a third boys' interview and was in response to a question about learning in a large class.

Alex: If you're like playing a song and you mess up it doesn't sound like it. If it was a small group and you mess up it might ruin the whole song, but with the big group, they still carry on the song and you can just join back in.

Walt: Yeah. And like Alex said,… not everybody is self-reliant, and so if you mess up, it doesn't really matter that much.

Mark: It literally gets drowned out by the rest of the people if you mess up. (Focus Group Interview: 6BB3)

In the final interview with the boys from orchestra class A, Hunter, Ernest, and Hiram spoke about mistakes as evaluation and discovery tools.

Hunter: I think one mistake for a song isn't a bad thing. It just tells you that you just need to practice more on that piece.

Ernest: 'Cause then we have an opportunity to fix it and get better at playing the instrument.

Hiram: You know it. If you made a mistake, now you know it.

BA: You know where the mistake is?

Hiram: Like instead of an F sharp you do an F natural. So it's like you sort of learned a new note because the F natural, and stuff like that.

(Focus Group Interview: 6AB5)

Classroom vs. ensemble learning environments. While music teachers may acknowledge and describe differing learning and environmental dynamics between academic classrooms and music classrooms, the student descriptions of their perceived differences between

these contexts shed light on certain variables. Students reported valuing and understanding the necessity for some of the differences.

> BA: *"How does the classroom environment in orchestra compare with other classes you are in?"*

> *Mark: I think the first one, and most obvious one – less noise, with everybody playing, some people talking.*

> *Alex: Less noise in science or something else.*

> *BA: So there's more noise in orchestra.*

> *Mark: Which is expected.*

> *A.J.: It's a lot funner. (referring to orchestra in comparison to regular classrooms)*

> *BA: In what way?*

> *A.J.: (Adamantly) Because you get to play an instrument. You don't have to sit in the chairs all day holding a pencil and writing. (Focus Group Interviews: 6BB2 and 6AG3)*

What some of the students did not discuss were some of the similarities that orchestra and academic classrooms inadvertently shared. A.J. obviously does not care for sitting in chairs all day writing with a pencil, but I observed her involvement in these same activities in orchestra. The only difference was that one of these activities, writing, was her choice. A.J. spent time in every orchestra class writing, as did many of her peers. Students, still learning pitch names, wrote them in their music, while others wrote fingerings or technique information.

Emphasis on interaction. Students placed great emphasis on the interactions in which they engaged during orchestra, between students and the teacher, as well as among themselves. They also reported these interactions as being integral to their learning. Although bearing similarities to certain interactions that occurred in the academic classrooms, students reported

that those that occurred in orchestra were more frequent, more engaging, integrated into the

learning and instructional environment, and supported by the teacher.

> *Elm: It's more interaction. You're always busy too. And then we're always working on*
>
> *something. There's something similar with them (academic and orchestra environments).*
>
> *Sometimes they'll [academic teachers] pause classes to help kids and then that's what we*
>
> *do in orchestra too.*
>
> *Paige: The kids in* [orchestra] *class are more helpful than they are when it comes to… the*
>
> *other classes. In orchestra, we're all trying to help each other out, instead of… in other*
>
> *classes when sometimes… kids don't feel like helping you or something.*
>
> *Victoria: I think that teachers should be like Mrs. P and kind of the environment where*
>
> *the teacher makes sure that we understand what we are playing.*
>
> *Violet: Maybe make the classes more interactive, cause in orchestra, you're playing an*
>
> *instrument and in other classes… you're not really interactive in the class. (Focus Group*
>
> *Interviews: 6BG1 and 6AG3)*

Students valued these interactions, which influenced their earlier descriptions of orchestra

as enjoyable, easy flowing but not rigidly organized, and engaging. The organization of the class,

student and teacher views of making mistakes, and how students were allowed to interact while

learning illustrate a portion of the "messiness" of learning in this orchestral classroom context.

These interactions, during which students may have played or talked for and with each other,

contributed to the soundscape and flexibly structured learning environments as described earlier

in this chapter. What follows are student comments on how these interactions differed between

their other classrooms and orchestra.

Paige: In orchestra you can help each other all the time, but in the other classrooms you

can't always have partners to help you.

Elm: It's kind of different from your other classes in (pause) it's more fun because you

get to interact… and play songs and stuff.

Walt: (referring to orchestra class) Again, a lot more easy-going, a lot less, like,

structure. We just kind of play what we need to play if we need to play it, you know?

(Focus Group Interviews: 6GB2 and 6BB2)

Paige and Elm clearly valued the interactive nature of the orchestra classroom, and Walt enjoyed the seemingly flexible nature of the class structure.

Freedoms. Having various freedoms and choice were frequent themes throughout the interviews and observations. According to the students, freedoms afforded in orchestra were not common in academic classes, in which the class structure was much more rigid. Students spoke of choice as a valued commodity in orchestra that they did not have the luxury of enjoying in academic classrooms.

Paige: (talking about her academic classes) Usually they don't let us choose.

Bobby: Being able to sit in a different seat every day.

Roxy: Mrs. P, she is really like energetic and she's really nice and… she'll let us goof off

for a minute but then we can get right to work, but there are other teachers, they just

want to work the whole time and then, they don't give us much freedom. And Mrs. P,

she'll let us talk a little bit if we have questions and our teachers, our other teachers,

won't. (Focus Group Interviews: 6BG2 and 6AG3)

The girls seemed to be more agreeable with having a flexible class structure that includes time for peer-to-peer interaction than the boys. This could be due to the more social nature of

girls compared to boys at this age. As noted above by Bobby, the students were allowed to choose their own seat everyday. During my observations, however, the students tended to sit in the same area within a section and generally with the same stand partner.

Freedom and responsibility were regularly interwoven in Mrs. Peterson's classroom as illustrated by the issue of seating. Students were responsible for setting up their own chairs and stands prior to the start of class each day. Mrs. Peterson provided guidelines for how and where chairs and stands should be set up for each section, but the students were allowed to choose where they would sit for class. The fact that Mrs. Peterson traveled to this school just before classes began provided the impetus for developing a strategy to preserve instruction time. She was purposeful, however, in coupling this responsibility with a freedom. Mrs. Peterson considered the balancing of responsibility with freedom to have a positive effect on her students' social development as well as on the class dynamic. The following excerpts provide insight into this balance of freedom with responsibility using the framework of choice, with regard to seating arrangement and classroom behavior management.

> *"When you're choosing to disrupt your own learning because you're talking, that's one thing, but now it's disrupting the learning of others and so that's becoming a problem for all of us now. It's not just your problem and it is your choice if you are going to choose to not learn…" I think [about] giving kids of this age group that choice… This age group is beginning to define themselves outside of boundaries and they are trying to set their own limits…*

> *"Well this obviously isn't working for you today." Sometimes I'll do that with the kids. "It's not working for you guys to sit next to each other so I think you are going to have to choose to sit somewhere else." So it is still always their choice. "It's your choice*

64

as to where you sit, and here are your choices." (laughter) Choices with limits, I guess. It

is also more fun to learn with your friend. Friends are so important to 6th graders, or at

least I think they are. They seem to be really important to these 6th graders in

particular….

 I also think that it comes down to priorities. Is it more important for my students

to be quiet and attentive, or is it more important for them to have a created space that

allows them to take risks in their learning and be more engaged? Obviously I live in the

latter. And I believe that students are more likely to take risks and enjoy the process of

learning if they are with people they know well. (Teacher Interview, May 22, 2009)

Many of the students noted and appreciated the freedom to choose and develop class

structure, but also noted that some students took advantage of these freedoms. The following

exchange among one group of boys illustrates that they valued certain freedoms, but that more

direct regulation by the teacher may have worked better for them.

Alex: Maybe just a little bit more organized.

Mark and Walt: Yeah!

Walt: Having it be a little more organized would be better…

BA: So how would it be more organized? What kinds of things are you thinking about with

more organization?

Alex: Yeah. Like the seating kind of gets out of control sometimes. But usually people sit in

where they usually sit, but someone like takes your spot or something, it gets confusing.

Mark: yeah and you go up to the tuning line, you come back and your chair's gone.

Alex: So if we could choose our seat, but then we had to stay there, then that'd be nice.

(Focus Group Interview: 6BB2)

At the following focus group interview, Alex added, "Some days I kind of wish we had assigned seats, but I don't always want to sit next to some people. It's a win/lose situation" (6BB3). The boys in this conversation spoke specifically about the chair arrangement. This, however, was the only example they gave in which they would have liked more direction from the teacher. Because the students were provided with guidelines for developing classroom structure in orchestra, this may have been a departure from the culture and environment to which they were accustomed in their academic classrooms, and therefore it felt "disorganized."

When describing the messiness of the learning environment in orchestra, the students spoke about mistakes, structured vs. non-structured learning time, and roadblocks to learning. They were acutely aware that learning to play an instrument and learning to read musical notation is not necessarily an orderly process and that it is different for different people.

Learning is "Relevant"

Students related connections between what they were doing in class to experiences and understandings of life outside the music room, but were not always reflective enough to be aware of the meanings of these connections. When asked specifically about those connections, the students did not easily articulate them. Students spoke of familial connections, learning connections, life connections, their impetus for choosing an instrument, and character development.

Familial connections. Participants reported having family members as models and that they were influential in their decisions to participate in music making. Parents, siblings or extended family members may have played an instrument in the past or were currently playing an instrument. Some of these family members had related their experiences of playing an instrument or demonstrated their music making. Walt had thought about playing a wind

66

instrument but then learned that the family owned a string instrument and reasoned "why not?" Naja was accustomed to an active musical household in which the family regularly engaged in music making and dancing. In this particular school, students were required to take band, orchestra or choir. The greatest influence on instrument choice reported by the participants was a parent, but siblings and extended family members also had an impact on instrument choice and participation. Students were also attracted to the sound or timbre of the string instruments.

> *Waterfall: I've always wanted to play the violin, and my mom too so I just kind of decided to do that.*
>
> *Ernest: My mom played cello and the violin, … and my aunt played the violin.*
>
> *Roxy: Well, I was gonna be in band first, because my brother was in band and I always wanted to be like with my brother. Then like I just listened to the strings and I just liked it better and my mom said I would be good in that. So I did violin the first year then cello the second year.*
>
> *Elm: My sister played the violin and that got me interested because I liked the sounds of the strings.*
>
> *Walt: I saw myself playing the trumpet when I was younger and then I realized that I had already had violins from my grandparents and great grandparents and that the violin was kind of like in the family, and so I thought "Why not?" and I played with the orchestra.*
>
> *BA: Are you happy with that decision?*
>
> *Walt: (without hesitation) Oh, yeah. I think I am, but I also think if I was in band, if I decided to stay, I'd also be happy too. I mean like learning both would be really cool. (Focus Group Interviews: 6AG1, 6AB1, 6BG1, and 6BB4)*

Choosing the instrument they were to play seemed more a process of elimination than a choice for some, although some chose to switch instruments like Roxy, who went from violin to cello for the second year of orchestra.

A.J.: I sang last year and I didn't really want to sing. And my friend she plays the

saxophone and like it's really really heavy and I didn't really want to carry a really

heavy instrument so I decided to play the violin.

Blossom: I really wanted to feel how it would really be playing a different instrument,

like [an]… instrument not that you have to blow on or always have to clean it out and

stuff, or have to sing. I really wanted to play with a bow or something.

Alex: My brother played trumpet and I didn't like the sound of the blowing, but, and I

heard the violin and I liked how soft it sounded. It just sounded like really nice, and so

that's why I joined orchestra. (Focus Group Interviews: 6AG1 and 6BB1)

A few participants mentioned familial models of current music making practice. These included composition, performance on instruments of different cultures, discovery learning on a familiar instrument, and regular practice and performance.

Cap: My dad plays his [instruments] all the time. [He] plays the guitar and the electric

bass, and my mom used to play the clarinet, which the cats hated.

Paige: My dad plays the saxophone, and my grandma can play the piano.

Hunter: My grandpa plays all the time. My grandpa plays the electric guitar and the

regular guitar, and he played the drums. He's making a new song right now. He… has

the drums in his basement and like a stereo set and everything. I like to go down there.

It's fun. I make a lot of noise.

Elm: My sister plays the violin and my mom plays the piano sometimes. My mom sometimes tries to figure out the songs on the piano. Well, she tries to figure 'em out while I'm playing 'em.

Naja: I make African dance moves, with my grandmother, mother, [and] cousin… My whole family plays the djembe, and my grandmother plays the dunduns. (Focus Group Interviews: 6AB1 and 6BG1)

The participants had been exposed to string music prior to beginning their studies in the school program, including attendance at a live local professional orchestra concert. Some students spoke of additional ensemble performances, live or recorded, they had heard or seen with family members that also had an impact on their choices and perceptions of playing in orchestra.

Bobby: 'Cause my mom always used to take me to orchestras and I saw the instruments and they looked cool to play.

Naja: [Orchestra is] Jazzy

Ernest: Jazzy in orchestra.

Naja: 'Cause I heard some jazz music that my grandma played on the radio all the time and I like the bass and stuff.

Roxy: (speaking about the crossover string group called Bond) 'Cause they kind of mix different types of music, but it's with strings so it sounds cooler 'cause normally the only strings that you hear are like, are like classical, and then they make it like, different, like they'll mix classical and something else.

Walt: There's this band called Nuttin but Stringz, they were on America's Got Talent. And they are like the best violin players ever. (Focus Group Interviews: 6BG1, 6AB1, 6BB4, and 6AG5)

Learning connections. Student participants spoke of their learning needs and skills in relation to what they would or did learn in orchestra. Although the students were asked directly for these connections, their answers and connections to particular activities varied. Violet spoke of one of the influences on her choice to begin taking string lessons, whereas Hunter related the emotional effects of learning in orchestra in comparison to academic classes.

Violet: Because my 4th grade music teacher, she told my parents that it'd be a good challenge for me to play a stringed instrument.

Hunter: I think it helps relax me sometimes because like there's a lot of tensions when like the teacher's yelling at us, [in other classes]. (Focus Group Interviews: 6AG1 and 6AB4)

Cookie, Paige, Elm, and Victoria made more direct connections between skills learned in orchestra and those utilized in other components of their lives.

Cookie: It gives you more patience and you can work with other people better.

Paige: Like to be patient with others around you 'cause if they don't get it, it's not like something you need to get upset about, you can just help them out so they could learn it faster, so then everything would be like… they would already know how to do it so then you'd be ready for the next time.

Elm: It might help us with patience, because we have to like stop and wait for other kids.

Cookie: And teamwork.

Elm: Like on the practice-a-thon.

Victoria: Yeah, like when we have to work together, it kind of helps us out when in other classes or other places how to work better with kids... (Focus Group Interviews: 6BG2, 6BG3, and 6AG4)

Developing life skills. Students developed life skills in orchestra pertaining to character development such as compassion, persistence, and problem solving. Participants were aware of social skills they were developing in orchestra class. Mrs. Peterson modeled many of these skills for her students and explained her actions, using much of the terminology the students used in their responses. The following quotes from Violet, Roxy, and Waterfall exemplify this.

Violet: It kind of teaches you... not to be inconsiderate of other people because then you know how it feels when other people are inconsiderate of you when they're talking.

Roxy: Um kind of like what Violet said, but you learn about ... what difficulties they've had with songs and different [musical concepts].... *Like somebody might have trouble with major ... That kind of went in with the practice-a-thon 'cause when you were in your different groups and you're not normally with those people then you can learn what ... their difficulties are and how they deal with things. So you kind of get to know them better.*

Paige: In orchestra you learn to keep trying. Like if you don't know how to play a song and you keep trying at it and practicing it. And you can use that in a lot of things. You can use that in your other classes... Like if you are trying to learn something... like learn something in math... you keep trying at it..."

Waterfall: It's like life. You don't have to show off. (Focus Group Interviews: 6AG1, 6AG3, and 6BG2)

Ernest described difference between passive music listening and active music making, especially the use of creativity and freedom afforded the musician when playing his instrument.

> *Earnest: 'Cause when you listen to a song, you like listening to songs, but when you're playing the instrument you get to play the song, so if you're just practicing you can decide to play the song however you want. (Focus Group Interview: 6AB4)*

Prior to beginning this study, I had been asked to refrain from identifying any student with special needs that participated in this study or would be described as part of my observations. This topic, however, did surface in one focus group discussion in which we were talking about student interactions, and during a number of observations in which Mrs. Peterson demonstrated her ability to address individual needs and to lead class discussions. Participants mentioned certain students by name and spoke of both positive and negative interactions with them in a matter of fact manner. This rational and non-judgmental discourse may be related to open discussions facilitated by Mrs. Peterson, and potentially other teachers within the school. I observed a teacher-facilitated discussion in one orchestra class during which the students brainstormed how to help a particular student, who was absent, be more successful. An attitude of non-judgment and acceptance was modeled and expected throughout this discussion.

Learning is "Social/Familial"

Peer-to-peer interactions. Common to the nature of adolescent children is the need for social interaction. The students were given many opportunities for peer engagement in their orchestra class, again a contrast from their perceived experiences in their academic classes. The students reported structured as well as unstructured, yet equally encouraged, peer learning activities, during which they had the opportunity to talk with each other. During instruction, I observed students interacting and talking mostly about ideas related to music or the current

techniques. Although the students may have been talking with each other about various musical ideas or learning concepts during class, students reported that orchestra was sometimes perceived as social time.

> *Alex: A lot of people think it more of a social time sometimes.*
>
> *Mark: yeah*
>
> *Alex: which it really isn't. (Focus Group Interview: 6BB2)*

Students did discuss non-school related information, but this was generally limited to the beginning of class, during set-up and tuning, and sometimes during Mrs. Peterson's targeted instruction with another section, generally confined to stand partners, at a low volume and in a non-disruptive fashion. Violet speaks to this in the following exchange.

> *Violet: It's different because… there can be a lot of people talking at once, but then if you're in just a regular class… you have to take turns talking.*
>
> *BA: How does that affect orchestra class?*
>
> *Violet: Cause they could be like talking about how to help each other and then you have to ask a teacher like in another class like for help. (Focus Group Interview: 6AG3)*

Violet illustrates the differences between the interactions in orchestra and those of the orderly nature of the academic classroom in which students must take turns, wait for each other, and only ask questions of the teacher. This is not to say that disruptive behavior did not occur in this classroom, but its culture was such that disruptions were frequently in the form of an outburst of a student with a pertinent question or statement.

Identity and social dynamics. Students felt that the familial atmosphere, created in part by the social nature of the class, was an important aspect of the learning environment and had a number of positive effects on student learning. Referencing this atmosphere, students reported

these effects as related to instrument choice, seating, meeting new people, developing

camaraderie within sections, as well as contributions to their learning.

> *Roxy: I like orchestra 'cause of the instrument that I play, and the music that we play and*
>
> *the people that are in orchestra.*
>
> *Mark: Like all family, kind of, because we all just know each other forever, you know, it's*
>
> *really cool because, it's like people you never met, you already know them now…*
>
> *Basically it seems like you're close to the people who play your same instrument and*
>
> *your same part so it seems like… you guys are a group, you know.*
>
> *Walt: I feel that too, kind of. I mean, … there are a couple people in our class that I*
>
> *would not like to be family with. [laughter from all]*
>
> *Alex: Very, very true.*
>
> *BA: But in general, the majority of the class,*
>
> *Walt: yeah.*
>
> *Fred: My best friend in orchestra is Bruce.*
>
> *Alex: I have many [friends], 'cause all my friends joined orchestra.*
>
> *Walt: We've been stand partners for the last two years now. [referring to Mark]*
>
> *Alex: All my friends, we all like talked about it and we all wanted to do orchestra, so. My*
>
> *best friend was in my class last year, but now he's not in my class.*
>
> *BA: Oh. Is he in the other section?*
>
> *Alex: Yeah.*
>
> *BA: But you still get to play concerts together.*
>
> *Alex: Yes. (Focus Group Interviews: 6AG2 and 6BB1)*

74

In the previous exchange, Alex, Fred, Walt and Mark noted the influence and depth of friendships related to their orchestra experience thus far. The boys also related the nicknames they had developed or adopted to identify students in each ensemble. They considered themselves "orch dorks" (6BB2).

Walt: I wish there were more second violin, viola people though.

Mark: Yeah

Walt: Seems like the predominant group is violin ones.

Mark: Yeah. Because there's like three or four of violin twos and that's it.

Walt: and like two or three cellos.

Mark: Mmhmm. (Focus Group Interview: 6BB1)

In this last exchange between Mark and Walt, the boys are referring to the multiple sections within the orchestra, all of whom are now playing distinctly different parts, either rhythmically or tonally. The students are fully aware of the different sections and numbers of students within each section, but also identify with their section and value the contributions of each section as it relates to the sound of the whole group. As Walt expressed after that day's rehearsal in which both classes combined to rehearse "Entry of the Tumblers": "The energy you can feel, like the vibe… while we were in the middle of it, just the feeling of togetherness" (6BB2).

Students also referred to negative effects of the familial nature on the learning environment. As Paige and a few of the boys describe in the quotes below, students may have difficulties with friends, who may also be in orchestra, and the "drama" follows them to each class.

Elm: There's all these different moods at different times and everything's changing.

Paige: Well, to me it depends on the day. Because it depends sometimes on what happened before 'cause sometimes you have drama with each other and then it comes into the orchestra. If it's really bad and you're in orchestra with the person, it brings it into orchestra.

Walt: Or they're really snappy at you, but for the most part it seems like all the groups, like the violin ones and the cellos all kind of stick together, um, it's kind of like a clan thing going on…

Mark: Clan, yeah.

Alex: But it's nice that we all have a love for one thing so it makes it better…

Fred: Yeah

Alex: … than just the mixed class, 'cause we're all focused on learning our instruments, most of the time at least.

Fred: Yeah. It's really good.

Walt: But other than that, I guess we all get along pretty fine. (Focus Group Interviews: 6BG1 and 6BB1)

One of the activities that Mrs. Peterson used in class to engage the students in thinking about and developing musicianship was creativity. This mode of learning will be described in the next chapter, but the connections students made to this activity illustrated the development of their musical identities. The question asked of the students related to how they felt about making music. Students responded with statements of external support from parents and friends, their recognition of role models and expertise, and using music for self-expression.

Hiram: I'll say that it's really awesome, because it's your own song, you made it, and if it sounds good then people like it and people play it and I'll be happy about that because it's your song and they're playing your song.

Hunter: Me? I'm making my own song right now. It's pretty awesome, ask Cap. I played it for him… Making your own music, I love it 'cause you get to choose. You can be like E then go to the D string and go back to the A, play B and then go back to D and go to A then slur from E to D go vocalizes yeah. It's awesome.

Naja: It's like your own type of music. Like nobody comments on it.

Hunter: Your own type of style.

Naja: Yeah.

Fred: What's really important about orchestra is like working together, teamwork and like help each other out and maybe help them if they're stuck.

Alex: You get support from people in a big group. (Focus Group Interviews: 6AB4, 6BB2, and 6BB3)

The girls provided supportive comments in one of the focus interviews while identifying themselves and others as good musicians.

Elm: Cookie. <looks at her friend and smiles> Cookie's pretty good. She's played for three years? There's actually quite a few kids who are really good in our class.

Cookie: Yeah. Like Elm's good too and Bobby's good

Elm: <makes a scrunched face and makes a "so-so" motion with her hand in response to the comment that she is good.>

Cookie: They can do the notes and usually they don't have problems with it.

Elm: Alex is pretty good, 'cause he usually stays on beat. In other words he plays the right notes and everything like that.

Bobby: Well, I think I am, and then I think Cookie and Elm are because they figure out the notes and try to like stay on beat most of the time.

Elm: Sometimes we would practice together. A.J. is actually pretty good for her first year…. The teacher is actually quite good too!

Bobby: My mom always says how good you've been playing since 5th grade. Teachers, the same thing.

Cookie: Well teachers, like sometimes if they come to your concert they'll say something like "You did really well."

Elm: yeah

Cookie: And some teachers, they know we have a concert so they don't pass out homework so we won't be like rushing and won't be able to focus on our music.

Elm: Well, my mom always encourages me after the concerts and she'll tell me how good I did, how well we stayed together and how much we've improved since the last one.

(Focus Group Interview: 6BG3)

At the conclusion of the interviews, students were asked to create an identity representation, which could comprise of a list or pictures of things that were important to them and that made them who the were at that time. Many of the products from this exercise included one or two items pertaining to music. For examples, see Appendix F.

There were times, as one would suppose, where Mrs. Peterson took the reigns much more firmly. These autocratic moments were present every day as she taught concepts, rehearsed music, and corralled inappropriate behavior. In the days leading up to a concert, more time was

devoted to rehearsing than creativity and therefore was less flexible in its structure. Students, however, related that they were aware of the need for more teacher-structured time especially during concert preparations or in behavior management situations.

> *Probably, my favorite aspect of orchestra is like we're playing pieces that everybody knows, like the CanCan and Ode to Joy. The chances of the band playing a song that everybody would recognize right away, I think is pretty slim. Another thing is like when we were playing Entry of the Tumblers, the energy that you can feel, like the vibe (Walt, Focus Group Interview, 6BB2).*

Chapter Summary

The "vibe" of the orchestra classroom environment was the blending of many elements. The topics discussed thus far include those aspects that describe more of the landscapes and soundscapes one would encounter when visiting this classroom. The policy in place at this school required all students to enroll in a group music class each of the two years during which they attended. For numerous reasons, these participants had all chosen to play a string instrument for one or both of those years. The requirement to participate in one musical ensemble contributes to the understanding of this particular learning environment. Students are not able to choose whether to join an ensemble, but rather choose which ensemble they would like to join.

Of the influences the students shared for choosing to play a string instrument, friendships and family influences were the most often stated. Most of the participants cited a process of elimination, instrument sound and playing process, as influential in their decision to participate in orchestra. In addition, the participants spoke of the inclination to learn with peers who are similar to themselves, noting observed characteristics of students who participated in the three ensembles available at this school. The interactions between friends, teacher, and other

classmates in orchestra, however, directly affected the participants' views of the classroom environment as being familial and dynamic. Participants cited friendships, whether preformed or developed within orchestra, as one of the dominant influences on the general atmosphere of the orchestra classroom environment – including seating decisions, student-initiated interactions, and overall classroom mood and learning.

The context for learning, the physical and social environment in which these students learned to make music using stringed instruments, incorporated student interaction, recognition of and necessity for the making of sound, and relevance of music and music-making in the lives of the students. As the students made clear from their experiences, learning in an academic setting had the tendency to be individualized and necessarily quiet, whereas learning in the orchestra setting required sound and interaction. The students categorized the prevalence of sound as noise, but upon further questioning, clarified these sounds to include relevant and non-relevant talking, relevant and non-relevant music-making, and other sounds such as those that came from outside the classroom. Relevant talking and music-making occurred during facilitated discussions, interactive learning activities, and student initiated interactions. Participants expressed their preference for more of the relevant and less of the non-relevant talking and music-making, while recognizing the normality of both in the orchestra classroom, lending to the level and frequency of sounds in the orchestra learning environment as compared to the academic learning environment.

Again in contrast to the academic classroom, the participants spoke of the greater amount of interaction in orchestra necessitated by the course material and as encouraged by the teacher, but all within a flexible structure. The structure of each class remained relatively consistent but with flexibility to include explorations of student interests as they generally related to music,

music making, or social development. Students felt that the learning environment was conducive to initiating interaction with peers and the teacher to facilitate their learning in the orchestra environment.

CHAPTER 5: Facilitated Democratic Practices: "Wait! What about my input?"

"Education is fundamentally a process of empowerment. Empowerment grows as we experience and learn from the effects of our choices and actions. This process of education as empowerment means that a society or a classroom becomes more educative as it becomes more democratic, and more democratic as it becomes more educative." (Garrison, 2007, p. 523)

In this chapter I will explore in more depth the modes of teaching and facilitated learning that I observed in this orchestra classroom, with a particular focus on how the students revealed an empowered and democratic learning experience. The learning environment as described in Chapter 4 was affected greatly by the modes of teaching and learning utilized by Mrs. Peterson and experienced by her students. The modes of teaching Mrs. Peterson used in her classroom included (a) aural modeling as a motivator and practice assistant, (b) facilitated interactions using questioning, (c) competition, (d) group interaction, and (e) creativity. Similarly, the participants reported learning aurally and visually, and through interactions, mistakes, and experimentation. Within each of these modes, Mrs. Peterson was not only intending to teach musical technique and knowledge, but also concepts related to respectful and musical interactions between the students and with others. Mrs. Peterson's methods and classroom environment are illustrative of the quote at the beginning of this chapter in which Garrison speaks of the relationships among education, empowerment and a democratic society.

Modes of Teaching And Learning

"Listen first." *"Where do you find this rhythm?" Mrs. Peterson plays a rhythm from a new piece on the piano and then asks the students to find the rhythm that they hear. "Please say the rhythm: eighth note eighth note shh eighth note eighth note eighth note shh shh." Students*

repeat the rhythm verbally then play their scale warm up with the new rhythm. Mrs. Peterson

follows the warm up by playing different parts from the new tune on the piano providing the

students with an aural context of the new tune. (Class observation, March, 2009)

Aural modeling as motivator and practice assistant. Because of the teacher's

background in Suzuki's Talent Education and Gordon's Music Learning Theory, much of the

learning was facilitated by the teacher's modeling. Students had the opportunity to hear and see a

concept or tune modeled in multiple ways. As illustrated in the above vignette, Mrs. Peterson

modeled with her voice, on an instrument, using movement, or a combination of two or more of

these teaching strategies. Mrs. Peterson most frequently used the piano to provide harmonic

context and rhythmic demonstrations, and used a string instrument for demonstrations of

instrument specific techniques and tone development.

When speaking with me, students regularly referenced the opportunities they had for

active listening and how they learned from the aural models provided by Mrs. Peterson and their

peers. They reported that Mrs. Peterson would prepare students for learning a new piece by

playing it on the piano, playing short passages for students to repeat, or accompanying the group

while they played. A few students mentioned the aural model as a method for self-evaluation

when practicing at home. If what they had just played did not sound like what they remembered

from class, they would stop, think it through, and try again. The exchange below illustrates how

the students viewed the aural model as a motivator for working through or taking on challenging

techniques or pieces.

Roxy: (describing orchestra class) *Challenging because… Well it's kind of funny and*

challenging at the same time because if we're playing a new song, Mrs. Peterson always

plays it beforehand, so we'll hear it and we're like "Oh that sounds really fun!"… then

we'll play it and it's like "oh this is really hard." but then we'll keep doing it because it

sounds good.

BA: So how does hearing it help you learn it?

Violet: Cause you know the tempo and how fast or slow to go.

A.J.: It's like the rhythm of it. You hear it and then it's kind of like… more challenging

when people learn it. We're grateful when people really learn it after we hear the rhythm.

Roxy: It like sticks in your head. And so once you play it, it's like "oh, that doesn't sound

like how Mrs. Peterson played it." So you do it again and it's like "oh that sounds, that

matches." So you can kind of compare it to how it's supposed to sound (Focus Group

Interview: 6AG1).

At the following interview, A.J. reiterated the idea that aural modeling provided an

avenue for self-assessment, but that it was also used by Mrs. Peterson as an opportunity to

provide peer modeling.

A.J.: She sometimes has other people play it. Say you were confused on a really hard part

on a song then she'll have a person who really gets it play that, and then you can kind of

say "Oh now I understand because I forgot this part" or "I didn't do my fingering right"

or "I wasn't playing on the right string" (Focus Group Interview: 6AG2).

The above quotes illustrate how students used the aural model for context as well as

evaluation. Mrs. Peterson adopted aural modeling, a tenet of both Suzuki's and Gordon's

philosophies, to provide an aural concept to which the students could compare their own playing.

When talking about practicing with the group or practicing on their own, participants mentioned

using the aural models as an evaluation tool they used not only for themselves, but also to

evaluate their peers' progress. The following quotes from Skya illustrate two thematic ideas discussed thus far: 1) aural models to assist with learning and 2) peer learning and interaction.

> *I remember when like this year sometimes… I'd be like "How do you play that song again?" or like "How do you do that?" to one of my friends, and so I think that just by hearing them play or them giving ideas you see how different they think from you and that's okay and you also learn from them (Skya, Focus Group Interview: 6AG3).*

Like Skya, many of the participants spoke of the aural models in relation to learning. The aural and visual models provided by Mrs. Peterson and peers presented opportunities for students to self-assess, relate current skills with desired skills, and clarify understandings. When they asked each other or their teacher "How do you do that?" the students were generally asking for that person to play for them, demonstrate the skill, rather than explain it. In the next exchange, the boys discuss how they know how a tune or exercise should sound.

> *Walt: We either listen to [Mrs. Peterson] play it on the cello*
>
> *Mark: which doesn't happen too often. or piano.*
>
> *Walt: But she usually plays the piano*
>
> *Mark: Yeah.*
>
> *Walt: Or she has us sing or clap the beat before we actually start playing so we can kinda get a feel of the piece*
>
> *Fred: She like starts the song, she tells us first about how it's going to sound.*
>
> *Mark: We just kind of know how when it sounds good, 'cause it's hard to say because when your instrument's out of tune or you missed a note, you can tell, but when you play it right, you can kinda tell that too. Pure sound. (Focus Group Interview: 6BB3).*

Through a teacher led activity in which Mrs. Peterson provides an aural model, the boys describe their understanding and development of their aural assessments of their own playing. At this point in their learning, the students are matching pitch, and comparing what they play with their aural memory. In other words, they are developing their audiation skills. I observed students reading musical notation in class, even being able to read notation backwards, but learning from reading music is conspicuously absent from participants' comments regarding learning.

From watching and listening to participants play and talk about their learning, it was apparent that these students had a deep connection to the pieces they could play by memory and valued the ability to self-assess and correct by listening. Students would launch into playing a piece they liked by ear, commonly joined mid-performance by friends. Corrections were made because the notes "didn't sound right" rather than referencing the notes on the page for correctness. When working in small groups or interacting about music, these students modeled or demonstrated for each other, then explained things in the music. Their audiation skills were being utilized as they played and evaluated their own playing and the playing of others.

Facilitated interactions using questioning. While modeling was one of the predominant modes of teaching and clarifying concepts and behaviors, Mrs. Peterson also used a number of interactive teaching modes. When working on a concept, she often questioned students in a way that would require them to restate, demonstrate, or analyze the information. These question and answer periods were conversational in nature, and encouraged peer discussion. The following exchange illustrates the kinds of questions Mrs. Peterson would use to facilitate conversations, encouraging students to provide clarification of a concept in their own words or actions.

"Hold your instrument and drop your hand. If that is hard, what might be the problem?"

Students respond with shoulder pad ideas.

When students begin talking over each other or trying to turn the conversation in another direction, Mrs. Peterson would usually say "Who has the floor? Whose idea are we fleshing out?" (Class Observation, March 2009).

These conversations also served as models for respectful discussion between class members, and provided natural resting points during the 50-minute classes.

Modeling respectful interaction. As stated in the previous chapter, participants reported a greater amount and encouragement of interaction within the orchestra class in comparison to their non-music classes. Continually assessing student readiness for peer-learning activities, Mrs. Peterson purposely included opportunities for student input, modeling respect, and reserving judgment.

Mrs. Peterson was insistent about using respectful language, owning up to mistakes, and learning from mistakes. She modeled these ideas in an effort to show respect for "each other as musicians," and she guided students to have an awareness of their use of words and actions when interacting with others. Mrs. Peterson explains it this way,

Whenever we have an idea, one of the things that I am just adamant about is that we not say that someone's idea is stupid. Everyone's idea is equal. This is not about being right. This is about being together (Teacher Interview, May 22, 2009).

During one observation, Mrs. Peterson asked students for feedback regarding a creativity exercise they were working on as a class. A student was speaking and another interrupted. Mrs. Peterson, politely asked the second student to hold his thought because the first student "had the floor." If a student said something in a manner that may have seemed rude or offensive to

another, even slightly, Mrs. Peterson restated the comment or question in a more positive manner, at the same time encouraging students to think about the words they were using and their intended effects.

Researchers suggest students at this developmental stage, approximately age 9 to 12, may find it difficult to separate the musician from the person, or the music-making from the person, (Kroger, 2000). Mrs. Peterson spoke of this as one of the reasons for modeling the respectful language and interactions.

> *That's the core of that whole separating out the "you" as a person and "you" as a musician… If you fail in a passage, you are not failing as a person… I can model that… it's okay to make a mistake, kind of separating out the person from the musician, not in a bad way… Your musician person is you as a person too, but the mistake piece of that is when you are working on something, your self-worth is not wrapped up in your mistakes as a musician* (*Teacher Interview, May 22, 2009*).

When observing Mrs. Peterson speaking with her students and when discussing her students away from class, Mrs. Peterson always spoke passionately about each one, what they brought to the class, and what they were working on. The end of this quote reveals Mrs. Peterson's view of her students as developing young individuals, and that mistakes are a part of learning, not a part of their character.

Modeling persistence and problem solving. Developing student understanding of the process of learning to play an instrument was, from my observations, center to Mrs. Peterson's teaching process. Learning to learn and working through challenges seemed to be the main emphases. Mrs. Peterson modeled persistence in class by providing opportunities to strategize, demonstrating practice concepts, and guiding students through these strategies and concepts.

If I make a suggestion for improvement [students might] think I am being critical of them as people. They haven't spent enough time in the 'process' of learning. I believe that stems from having time with other teachers who didn't encourage independent thinking in the classroom. Having to think for yourself validates you as a thinker.

[We talk] about how it is okay that we made a mistake. By modeling that, I think it also puts another dimension of thinking out there for them. I am involving them in the whole process of making rather than simply telling them, "we are going to play this then this, and one day you might have a window into my mind on that, but not today."
(Teacher Interview, May 22, 2009)

Student perceptions of persistence in and challenges to learning. As quoted in the last chapter, Roxy talked about motivation to continue learning a piece, even though it felt difficult. Similarly, Skya appreciated the guidance from Mrs. Peterson when learning a new piece.

I like it when we're all playing together and then Mrs. P brings out a new piece and she plays it on the piano for us and then we kind of jump around [the piece] a little bit and start playing it and it's like a challenge but I think that's really fun (Skya, Focus Group Interview: 6AG3).

To Skya and Roxy, the technical challenge of a piece was less of a deterrent to persist in learning when they liked the sound of what they were learning to play. Participants noted their frustration with other elements that tended to obstruct their learning. Walt mentioned the student to teacher ratio, suggesting that a coach for each section could aid their learning potential. Blossom mentioned the *soundscape* of the environment being a challenge to her learning.

Blossom: Well there are some people who whistle during class when you're not supposed to. A lot of people are trying to be quiet, trying to learn more…

89

Earnest: It's sometimes complicated because two instruments are playing different parts, and you can do your part but you have to stay concentrated on your part. (Focus Group Interviews: 6AG1 and 6AB1)

Relating to Mrs. Peterson's thoughts above regarding perfectionism as a roadblock to learning, students related numerous skills they felt they needed to focus on in order to play well.

Waterfall: You have to hold it, you have to position to get ready. It's a lot of work.

Blossom: Hold your bow right.

Victoria: Sometimes it can be hard because you don't know what the notes are for a new piece and it can be frustrating because you don't know anything and then we have to keep on playing it and stuff and you don't really know… (Focus Group Interview: 6AG1)

Motivating with competition and challenges. When asked about competitiveness and their view of making mistakes in class, the participants all stated that they felt supported and encouraged by Mrs. Peterson and each other. Competitiveness was generally initiated by the students, whereas providing challenges was associated with Mrs. Peterson. Roxy describes one instance in which Mrs. Peterson does provide an air of competition, but is in the form of group competition and does not single out individuals.

A.J.: She challenges us in a good way. She doesn't challenge us like "oh you did this wrong."

Roxy: yeah, sometimes mess up or (interrupted)

A.J.: She challenges us and like "you need to work on this a little bit because you are just a little not sure about it." or something like that. So she kind of helps us but [she] doesn't be mean or anything.

Roxy: About the like competitive thing. Sometimes she'll be like "ok. Let's see who does

better, the violins or the violas and cellos." That's like the only thing. She'll do that

sometimes, but then the rest of the time we'll be like "oh yeah, we're so better."

Violet: But it's kind of fun competitive.

Roxy: Yeah we do that. It's fun though. (Focus Group Interview: 6AG1)

The boys reported initiating competition among themselves as a form of one-upmanship and as a means to an end. Hunter said he practiced his vibrato "because Walt is really good at it and I don't like the fact that he's better at vibrato than me and I want to be in chamber orchestra next year, so I work on my vibrato…" (Focus Group Interview: 6AB1). Alex, on the other hand, said it depended on which of his friends were in orchestra with him. Alex mentioned a particular friend with whom he competed "just because we wanted to…" Most of the boys agreed that the students in orchestra were generally supportive of each other. Friendly competition was a normal occurrence in orchestra, but it presented itself in large group efforts and group identity formation – e.g. cellos versus violas – rather than through chair placements and honors. As Walt stated: "It's definitely a section thing."

Incorporating Student Input

Based in the environment that Mrs. Peterson cultivated, students in Mrs. Peterson's classes had what some may consider an uncommon opportunity – they were asked for their suggestions. Mrs. Peterson was empowering her students – providing experiences that allowed them to make choices and learn from them. Subthemes that emerged included creativity, composition, small group interaction, choice, decision making, and empowerment. Mrs. Peterson described her thoughts on the balance of power related to incorporating student input in the following excerpt.

There are times that they have to learn… that they have classroom procedures

and they have to fit within that mold, but then there are times that I take suggestions. I

think that one of the ways we did that this year, and I'm starting to do that with my 5ᵗʰ

graders now, is by having them just offer different ways of playing things, getting

involved in the creation of their own music.

So we take Perpetual Motion and we start thinking outside the box. So we've got

this piece that we've all learned. It's all eighth notes. How boring! It's in D Major. It's

all the notes of a D Major scale over nine lines. What else can we do with this piece? I

give them an idea and then I let them go. They begin generating ideas. They're talking to

each other. (Teacher Interview, May 22, 2009)

Each time students provided ideas, variations, or suggestions, Mrs. Peterson would do

one or more of the following activities: (a) help the students try them; (b) expand upon them; (c)

make them more musical; (d) apply them to current, past, or future learning; or (e) restate them

so that they were technically understandable for the students. When asked about this practice

after one of the classes, Mrs. Peterson replied that she believes "the kids learn better when it

comes from them." For example:

"We have a request to change our warm up." Mrs. Peterson sings a dotted rhythm "Dee

dah dup" while bowing Down Up Down in the air with a lift at the end, making the last

note short. This idea was demonstrated first by one of the students then reinforced for the

entire class by Mrs. Peterson. One of the girls who had forgotten her instrument that day

was doing a snap snap clap, which demonstrated the accent on the final note. Each of

these ideas was written on the board either in notation or prose or both. (Field notes –

April, 2009)

During one particular class, Mrs. Peterson was guiding students to manage long bow strokes, specifically those that occur in pieces in triple meter – three beats to a measure. She begins by drawing the notation for quarter notes on the board and then asks students "How might we keep three beats, but use longer bows?" One student plays a half note followed by two eighth notes. This is notated on the board and then discussed in terms of bow management – how much bow and at what speed the bow travels for each note played. Following this brief discussion, Mrs. Peterson leads the class in trying the new idea with and without the instruments. Again she asks the question "How might we keep three beats, but use longer bows?" A second student gives an idea that works with the longer bows, but extends the pattern to 5 beats. Instead of telling the student they are wrong, Mrs. Peterson notates, discusses, and leads the class in practicing the 5 beat pattern, which still addressed the idea of bow management.

When students created variations on Perpetual Motion, Mrs. Peterson made the connection between the performed variation and its notation. She would confirm the rhythm aurally and then notate it on the board. Many of these rhythmic variations were subsequently notated and compiled for use in rhythm recognition activities. By the time students were creating ostinatos for "Land of the Silver Birch," they were notating their creative ideas and checking their work with each other and with the teacher. In this way, the Mrs. Peterson had provided the students with documentation and ownership of their creativity that they could then share with others in addition to facilitating note reading.

Students were only in their second year of instrumental lessons and were still learning to recognize rhythmic and tonal notation. They had music and put it on the stand in class, but many played the ensemble tunes without looking, or looking periodically to check a note. Students did reference the music, however, when developing and working on their own arrangements or

ostinatos for a tune. If something did not sound right, students might reference the written notation for confirmation or correction of the melody.

Students had been working on a tune entitled "Perpetual Motion." Mrs. Peterson used this tune to guide students' learning about many musical concepts, like style and dynamics as well as note reading. Even though the students had already performed the piece on a concert, Perpetual Motion was regularly included as part of the lessons. Each time they played the tune, students provided ideas for incorporating a new concept into the performance. Since they had recently identified and defined crescendos and decrescendos, one student suggested that the class play Perpetual Motion with a crescendo and decrescendo for each phrase. The students were able to make audible differences in their playing that showed their understanding of the dynamic concepts they were using. In addition, students smiled and their body language changed with the dynamics. Some showed the dynamic changes by opening and closing their upper body as they played. Mrs. Peterson also showed the dynamics on her face with excited smiles, and with growing taller and smaller as she played the piano. Even students that did not seem to smile much were smiling while playing this variation of Perpetual Motion. (Class Observations, May 2009)

Incorporating student input was not only limited to music making practices. Students were involved in developing class rules and behavior cues. The phrase *quiet transitions* was used frequently by both teacher and students. When asked about this phrase, the students responded with the following exchange.

Mark: Yeah, that's a big thing.

Walt: That's a word she uses, that's her favorite phrase.

BA: Did she come up with that or did you guys?

Alex: We did.

Walt: She did.

Mark: Well the students did, I thought

Alex: Yeah, because when we were making the rules for what we wanna do

Mark: yeah

Walt: Oh, well she adopted it. It's her word now. You have to pay her royalties to say

that.

All: (smiles all around the room!) (Focus Group Interview: 6BB1)

Creativity. *"Orchestra class would be boring if we just sat around and do songs without having something else to do with it. So we like mess around with the songs and we do a lot of cool things with it" (Blossom, Focus Group Interview – 6AG1).*

Incorporating student input by providing opportunities for students to be creative with learned material was a hallmark of Mrs. Peterson's teaching. Almost daily, students had the opportunity to exercise and experiment with their musical knowledge and skills in creative ways. These activities also typify Dewey's (1938) experiential learning and Garrison's (2007) thoughts as quoted at the beginning of the chapter – students were learning "from the effects of [their] choices and actions." As with the dynamics example earlier, Mrs. Peterson incorporated ideas from students who were exercising their understanding of newly learned material.

Mrs. P: Who has another way we can play this piece?

(Student demonstrates a bowing using dotted rhythms and with the bow releasing from the string at the end of each two note pattern.)

Mrs. P: Oooh! Great bowing! Let me see if I have this right.

(Mrs. Peterson picks up a violin and tries what the student demonstrated and the student nods.)

Mrs. P: Ok. So their bowing lifts a little off the string at the end. Let's try it.

(Mrs. Peterson goes to the piano to play an accompaniment using the student's new rhythm and articulation. All students play the new bowing on their familiar piece with success.)

Mrs. P: What shall we call that bowing so we can add it to our list?

Student: Choc-late, Choc-late

Mrs. P: Got it. Wonderful. (writes it on the board) Who has another way to play this piece?

Student: Could we play it with all low 2s?

Mrs. P: That might sound really cool. Would that be using the major or minor pattern that we know?

Student: Minor pattern.

Mrs. P: Alright. Let's give it a whirl!

(As before, Mrs. Peterson steps behind the piano to provide harmonic support for the new variation created by the student.) (Class Observation, March, 2009)

This scene provides a glimpse into a regular teaching and learning occurrence in Mrs. Peterson's classroom. Students provided ideas and each was given a try. With some, the students were more successful than with others, but all were tried, at the very least by the teacher to model if it was even possible. Occasionally, Mrs. Peterson would clarify, restate, or model the idea to ensure all students understood. This type of experience came readily to mind for the participants when asked about opportunities to be creative in class.

BA: Do you have opportunities to be creative in orchestra class?

Mark: Yeah. Big time. Like in Land of the Silver Birch, when you're playing the DDDF, DDDF, I like to do DDDG. It sounds a little better.

Alex: You're able to have songs go faster and sometimes you're able to trill and stuff. And when we do the scale, we can do different things with it.

Walt: change the beat

Alex: Yeah. Like instead of duhn duh (singing two sustained notes) we can go duhn dut, duhn dut (singing two notes of unequal length and articulation for the first two pitches in a scale).

Fred: It can be kind of fun to be creative.

Naja: Yes. Like in ostinatos, you make your own ostinatos. Like on ostinatos, she lets you create your own way to be in tune with the song.

Elm: Like with Perpetual Motion, she asks us how many ways could we figure out and we're supposed to try and get to a hundred and we would just name stuff.

Skya: Like when we were learning Perpetual Motion this year, she got this piece of paper and we're learning a hundred different ways. It was kind of like a contest to see who can make up more ways to play Perpetual Motion, like we did backwards, wacky posture.

Elm: Like play Perpetual Motion in D major or minor….

Cookie: And we could play it without D or A strings. (Focus Group Interviews: 6BB3 and 6AG2)

As mentioned above, the students were asked to create ostinatos or variations for tunes they already knew. The list of variations on Perpetual Motion had begun not long before I began observing and was displayed conspicuously on the board in the front of the room along with a

few of the variations written out in rhythmic notation with the corresponding rhythmic sayings. On a number of occasions, a student would tell me proudly "that one is mine" with a smile on his face. The backwards variation, suggested by one daring student, was probably the most challenging, especially for the newer readers. By the time the year ended, more than 50 variations of the tune were listed on the board, all created or suggested by students in the classes.

Participants reported the incorporation of variations into their home practice as well, citing the enjoyment they get from having the capability, or feeling empowerment to change the tune. Roxy shared the following statement about how she has used the idea of creativity for greater enjoyment.

> *Like when she says like um make the variation different or the string. At home, like because when we practice we do it like every day so it kind of gets boring because you play, you probably most likely play the same song in the same order every time then so if you decide "oh I'm really bored of this" then you can go and like play it on a different string and you can start on a different note or stuff like that. You can change it around and then it makes it more fun (Roxy, Focus Group Interview: 6AG3).*

Composition. Building upon the concept of creativity, Mrs. Peterson also provided opportunities for students to compose. Students had parameters within which to work, or were given ideas to manipulate to create a composition. One activity the student participants related during the focus group interviews was associated with the idea of creating an ostinato, a repeated rhythmic or melodic motive. Naja referred to ostinatos as a creative experience above, and here the girls define the term in their own words.

> *Elm: With Land of the Silver Birch we got to try to make up a (interrupted)*
> *Cookie: Ostinato.*

Elm: Yeah, an ostinato.

Cookie: Is it kind of like how one person plays a melody or something to it and then it fills it in and it's the same a little bit…

Cookie: Like at the concert we played one…during Land of the Silver Birch.

Elm: It's kind of like the back beat…

Cookie: Yeah

Elm: One to try to keep us on beat and two because it kind of adds more to the song.

(Focus Group Interview 6BG3)

Students would have the work time to compose, but were not required to share their compositions. The act of composing was the given activity, but the evaluation of their work provided the opportunity for critique. Students were evaluating their own work by listening for fit then by preference. The girls noted that not all of their compositions were worthy of sharing with the full class.

Roxy: Sometimes there's ones that you think of but you don't think that they're that good and so you don't want to share 'em.

BA: What would make it better or worse than another idea?

Skya: If it didn't fit.

Blossom: Like if we have a stand partner, we'll try to see if they like it too and see if they will fix anything … to make it better.

AJ: Like no one agrees with it. Like your stand partner is like "uh well I don't really like that. Can we change it up a little?" And then you're like, "well I really like it" and then you kind of hear the others' and then it's like "Oh, I don't really like mine. I think I should make mine better." (Focus Group Interview: 6AG4)

Participants also described their individual composition activities. During one of my visits to Greene, Hunter played for me a portion of a composition he was working on for a friend. He said he composed regularly, but did not write the compositions down in musical notation. He would play them many times to remember them or he would record them. Other students also composed, but did so as a pastime: *My friend and I made up [a song] one day while we were bored and he was spending the night. (Walt, Focus Group Interview: 6BB1)*

Small group interaction. Mrs. Peterson routinely asked students to respond to modeled concepts by interacting with each other or by providing alternative models (e.g. singing, describing, analyzing, and/or differentiating between ideas). At other unprompted points during classes, students would model for each other, discuss, write, and read rhythms and pitches, incorporating the actions and processes modeled by Mrs. Peterson and their peers in class, what Mrs. Peterson termed "learning behind the stand." Utilizing these various techniques, Mrs. Peterson was able to increase repetitions, a necessary component of knowledge and skill acquisition, while maintaining student attention, interest, and engagement through peer learning. These peer-learning episodes were a regular part of Mrs. Peterson's classes. This next vignette describes one example of small-group, peer-learning sessions.

"Can you listen to us now?" As I walked toward the classroom area, a cacophony of sounds greeted me from many directions. Rounding the corner, two clusters of students were playing, discussing and gesturing to points in their music. In the next hallway, four girls sat facing toward each other with intense looks of concentration, holding their violins. They were similarly engaged, writing in their music, discussing and then playing. Inside the classroom, even more clusters of varying sizes and mixed instrumentation were actively working on various exercises and pieces. A violinist in another group jumped up and walked around to peer over her

friend's shoulder. A brief discussion ensued followed by the violinist returning to her chair and

resuming of music making.

Mrs. Peterson floated from group to group with a clipboard, checking progress,

answering questions, and giving suggestions. A member from one of the hallway groups came in

to find Ms. Peterson. "Can you listen to us now?" Her group was ready to play something for

her. Written on the board were tasks with point values associated. Some were specific as to piece

and length, others were guidelines or parameters so students had some ability to assess their

own playing and choose something with which they would be successful:

> *Play a review song = 20pts*
>
> *Play through the entire Entry or Resolution = 50pts*
>
> *Learn a NEW E.E. song = 30pts (starting with #40)*
>
> *Improve anything = 30pts*
>
> *Play a scale – DM, dm, GM, gm, AM = 10pts*
>
> *Play a part of any piece = 10pts*

This was the second session the students had to work in this way and were getting the whole

class period to work in these small groups. Students were actively engaged in their own and their

friends' learning. (Class Observations, Feburary, 2009)

This vignette describes what Mrs. Peterson called a "Practice-a-thon." She had instituted

it in the spring semester to facilitate more interactive learning for the students, provide guided

practice time, and to allow students to progress at a more individualized rate. Mrs. Peterson had

laid the ground work for her students to productively engage in these small group learning

situations by modeling respectful interactions, working out solutions, using creativity, soliciting

student input, and extending student understanding. During this period of time, students would

self-select into small groups to work on various skills, exercises, or repertoire. A list of suggested items for practice was written on the board along with point values as described in the vignette. Mrs. Peterson provided these in an effort to provide incentive for working on items of varying difficulty as well as for encouraging students to show improvement. Awards were given to those groups with the highest point totals, but accruing points was reliant on at three factors: (a) the ability of the teacher to get around to each group to hear progress, provide feedback, and award points, (b) the initiative of the students to prepare and demonstrate their learning, and (c) the ability of the students to work together, including their ability to stay on task.

Mrs. Peterson noted a discrepancy between the strategies employed in academic classrooms to facilitate peer learning and those used in traditional orchestra classrooms. Mrs. Peterson was specifically referring to reading stations and opportunities for small group work.

> *So there are opportunities for them to take care of their own learning, which we don't do a lot of in orchestra… I'll go into another classroom and they have small independent study groups or they've got reading groups, or they've got people working together in pairs on projects. They rotate and they move around their classroom and they get to do all those kinds of things, but in orchestra, for some reason, we have them sitting in the same place every time we see them. We don't get them moving around the classroom, walking or standing in their chairs, or doing wacky things. (Teacher Interview, May 22, 2009)*

Having observed this approach in non-music classrooms and likening it to chamber music, Mrs. Peterson incorporated small group interactive learning models into her own classroom in the form of the Practice-A-Thon as well as other small group activities. Mrs. Peterson encouraged peer-to-peer interaction during the large group rehearsals, which could take

the form of stand partner assistants, student tutors, peer requested assistance, and respectful conversations between students across the ensemble facilitated by Mrs. Peterson.

While Mrs. Peterson is working with the violins on a section of a piece, two cellists are deep in soft conversation, pointing to their music, asking each other questions, demonstrating left hand fingerings, and writing in their music. I learned later that one of the two switched to cello just this year and the other was helping her figure out notes and fingerings. This peer-tutoring was facilitated by the seating that was encouraged by Mrs. Peterson based upon her knowledge of the students' dispositions and needs (Field notes and Observations).

The students were able to articulate their current abilities in comparison to their peers and regularly took on mentorship roles or assisted others when needed.

Bobby: Like last year, I had the same stand partner because she always had trouble reading the music and she knew that I could help her with it, so Mrs. Petersen just put us together.

Naja: We help each other with notes. Help people stuck on a note.

Ernest: If your standpartner kind of messes up, you help 'em or if they're startin' to play the wrong note you can tell 'em. That's what we usually do.

Paige: If they [peers] can't help you understand it, you ask the teacher…

Alex: I learn from some of my friends, just different ways to improve songs like longer bows and better bow hold and stuff (Focus Group Interviews: 6BB3 and 6BG1).

Student Development Through Choice

In this orchestra environment, Mrs. Peterson was providing many opportunities for students to make choices. While some choices, like ensemble and instrument decisions as described in Chapter 4, were more informed by preference and social influences, the choices

103

Mrs. Peterson gave her students incorporated critical thinking. These students were learning to exercise their autonomy.

Decision-making. The students noted a process for each decision-making opportunity. They were given opportunities to make decisions, but only when there was enough information to make an informed choice. One student noted the importance of knowing the general ability of the group when making a repertoire decision. Violet said "kind of depending on how hard the thing is to do and then we choose which is easier, for more people." The students reported the most common procedure was voting.

A.J.: We vote.

Roxy: If there's a song that we don't like and people are complaining and stuff, she'll say "OK. We can either play this song or we can play this song. Which people want this song and then which people want this song?" and then it can depend on that.

Ernest: For songs, we have a lot of variations for the songs. What we do is we play through 'em all and we vote on which ones we wanna play and then, sort of like a democracy. <softly> monarchy.

Hiram: Sort of like what Ernest said except sometimes we have ways that we play different songs.

Cap: or like how many times we play them, like um, that, I forgot the name like au Claire whatever.

BA: Au Claire de la Lune?

Hiram: Yeah. We have to decide if we want to play it two times or one time; and we decided two because it's really short.

BA: So how do you resolve a problem? So like if something comes up where people

disagree.

Naja: We vote.

BA: Why is it important for you to have the choice?

Naja: So we won't get mad at the teacher and say "Oh my g-d. She chooses everything.

We can't choose anything."

Cap: It's a lot easier if you play songs you want to play.

Hiram: Yeah.

Ernest: It's more fun so you play better.

Cap: Yeah.

(Focus Group Interview: 6AB2)

As Ernest alludes above by his softly stated "monarchy," not all decisions are left up to the students. The participants recognized Mrs. Peterson as a figure of authority who has their best interests in mind. When nearing a concert date, the students stated that they had the opportunity to pick certain selections that they would like to play for the concert. Other tunes were not on the options list because Mrs. Peterson had decided that those tunes must be on the concert. According to Mark, however, "if there's like a concert coming up, we always, you know, think of what we should play, what [is in the] set list, what should go first, what should go last." He was aware that he and his classmates would be included in the repertoire choices. Skya and A.J. describe it this way:

Skya: I agree on the voting thing, but also if it doesn't sound, if it's like a brand new

piece and we have a concert coming up, if it doesn't sound that good, then she'll think

what's best for us so we don't embarrass ourself.

A.J.: She kinda picks sometimes the piece for us. We don't always vote. Sometimes she's like "Oh we're gonna play this piece because I thought it would be good for you guys." So we play it and we kind of like it and then we'll keep going on with the piece. (Focus Group Interview: 6AG2)

Roxy notes that as 6th graders, they are voting more this year than they did last year. Students related this to their awareness of their developing skills.

Victoria: I think that we choose more now because we're older and because we have a more variety of songs. We kind of know a lot more songs than we used to since we started. Cause when we started we didn't get to pick. And we didn't have that many songs to play, to choose from.

A.J.: We're picking more this year because of how when we get in intermediate school we're playing harder songs so I think she's just preparing us for intermediate school and maybe to keep continuing orchestra. (Focus Group Interview: 6AG2)

Empowerment. The participants spoke not only of choice, but the value of their choices and having input into decision making. During one class observation, this recognized value of student input was highlighted by the sincere pleading of one student who, at the wrap up of a class discussion and decision stated, "Wait! What about my input?" Mark and Alex commented on this specifically in relation to those differences with their academic classrooms.

Mark: ...it seems like we have a lot more say in orchestra than we do in other classes.

Alex: 'cause we couldn't choose to skip health, but we can choose to skip 5 Note Samba. (Focus Group Interview: 6BB2)

During the second interview with one of the boys' groups, I had asked the question regarding changing one thing in their other classes to make them more like orchestra. The boys clearly valued the opportunity to choose and have input, but again realized the need for limits.

Naja: [Voting] makes you powerful.

Ernest: I like [voting]. 'Cause it gives us more control over what we want to play, 'cause we're the ones actually playing the instruments, so it's good to have a choice of what you're playing.

Cap: Yeah.

All: nods

Alex: I think it'd be better if we had more of a choice in what we do.

Walt: Yeah that too!

Mark: Yeah.

Walt: If we could have more power as to what we do. Although, if we did have power, we would never do anything.

Mark: No. Is that a bad thing?

Walt: Yeah.

Mark: I don't know.

Alex: Then we'd be here for no reason.

Walt: Yeah. We'd be here for no reason.

Mark: Mm we could learn stuff in our spare time. (Focus Group Interviews: 6AB2 and 6BB2)

Students reported feelings of value and worth when discussing the various modes of providing input and the opportunities to choose.

Skya: When we get to vote, I think it's really good because, it's you know like we get to have some say in what we wanna play for um the concert.

Paige: Sometimes [Mrs. Peterson] will try to get all of our opinions to see which one we would want to do better and she would tell us like "This is what we'd have to give up if we're gonna do this." ...and then we kind of all get to decide it instead of just her deciding it. She kind of like involves everybody else so it'll be like what we all want to play. (6BG1)

Violet: It makes me feel like [thoughtful pause] your teacher's not just picking the song and you, like Skya, you get some input on it. (Focus Group Interviews: 6AG2 and 6BG1)

Chapter Summary

Toward the beginning of my time at Greene Intermediate School, I had the opportunity to attend one of their orchestra concerts. I went early to help tune and set up the stage, then got out my notebook and started writing. What follows is an account of the concert that pulls together all the learning processes described in this chapter: aural modeling, student interactions, persistence, and incorporating student input. Mrs. Peterson also provided brief descriptions for the audience of the processes that would be displayed throughout the concert, including the lottery for the soloists, the use of student created variations, and the inclusion of the tunes that the students felt best represented their work.

The March Concert. *All 55 sixth grade orchestra members were squeezed onto the small Junior High School stage. The wings of the stage were barely deep enough for an upright piano, but just enough room for the principal of Greene Intermediate School and Mrs. Peterson to stand backstage prior to the concert. The students' chairs were just far enough from the edge of the stage apron to allow for a person to walk, save for the flag stand which had an unfortunate*

108

interaction with a bass player and a cello prior to the concert, necessitating a change in its location.

The fifth graders, having just performed their portion of the concert, were now seated in colored plastic chairs on the floor closest to the stage, instruments in their laps or laid on their sides next to the chairs. Excited about their portion of the concert, the fifth grade students talked excitedly with each other and their parents up until the sixth grade orchestra began their portion of the concert.

Between two pieces, Mrs. Patterson spoke about how strongly she felt about allowing the students to be creative and make decisions for themselves. Some of the variations the group was about to play were the chosen few of many that the students had created. The students voted as to which variations they wanted to include on the concert. During the introduction to one of the student-created variations, a girl made eye contact with Mrs. Patterson and broke into a huge grin. She was the composer of that particular variation.

Students had volunteered to play a solo and names were put into a hat. Those who performed on the concert were randomly selected so as to avoid favoritism and to give everyone an equal shot. One person from each class performed a solo. In the fifth grade classes, both happened to be upper string players. The first was a violinist who played "Allegro" by Suzuki. She got a little mixed up near the beginning, looked back at her friends for support and then started over. She made it through, took her bow during the applause and then made her way back to her spot in the orchestra. When she got back to her chair, her friend gave her a high five, and she gave the well-known sign for "whew, that's done." The look on her face, though, was one of pride and accomplishment. She had just performed an entire song by herself in front of over a hundred people! (Observation and Field Notes, March, 2009)

This concert was a true representation of the students' learning and the variety of processes by which it happened. The safe and encouraging environment described in Chapter 4 may have contributed to students' willingness to share their ideas, but the students also noted a different reason – their ideas mattered. Not only did Mrs. Peterson use ideas that individual students offered in class, but she also provided opportunities for students to share minority and majority views through a number of student empowering processes. Students voted on whether certain pieces would be included in the program, the number of repetitions to be performed, and which variations they would like to play. After having played 2 or 3 interpretations of a line, the students discussed and voted on which one they liked the best and then wrote it into their music. While facilitating student creativity and interactions, Mrs. Peterson had also shown the students that she valued who they were and what they had to share. Helping them negotiate this sharing of ideas, Mrs. Peterson had empowered the students. They were agents for their own learning.

CHAPTER 6: Summary, Implications, and Suggestions for Future Research

"When education is understood as the construction of meaning, rather than merely the transmission of knowledge, the primacy of the student's engagement in the process becomes self-evident. Obtaining this engagement pedagogically requires the student's continual discovery and renewal of self-direction; this is possible only in a democratic environment." (Garrison, 2007, p. 523)

In this chapter, I summarize the current study on student learning in a democratically engaged orchestra classroom, and discuss the research questions and findings. Based on the findings, specific suggestions for developing teacher-facilitated and democratically engaging practices in the orchestra ensemble classroom will be offered. I will conclude the chapter with implications for music education and suggestions for further research.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this ethnographic case study was to explore and describe a democratically engaged ensemble classroom and examine the perceived meaning and value attributed by the students to what and how they were learning. The rationale for the study included a lack of research investigating the learning environment of a beginning instrumental ensemble in a school setting specifically with upper elementary school aged children, and the need for more research on string teaching and learning. The following research questions guided this inquiry:

1. How do students perceive what and how they are learning in an environment in which they are asked to contribute creatively and critically?

2. How does this learning environment influence students' perception of personal musical meaning?

3. How does participation in this learning environment influence students' musical decision making?

4. How does participation in this learning environment influence student development of musical identity?

Methodology

This study was designed as an ethnographic multiple case study for the potential to address differences between two sixth grade classes in which I investigated student perceptions of teaching and learning in a democratically engaged environment. Upon review of the data, the two classes did not provide discernable differences to merit the multiple case study design and was therefore presented as a single case study of one teacher's classroom and the perceptions of her sixth grade students. The purposefully selected string teacher, Mrs. Peterson, incorporated the philosophies and methodologies of Suzuki and Gordon, who both promote the development of aural and executive skills. She was experienced with individualization of instruction for diverse student needs and embraced creativity as an integral part of the curriculum. The student participants included 11 female and 10 male students chosen from the two sixth grade orchestra classes held at a semi-urban intermediate school in a Midwestern state. The student participants were divided into four focus groups by gender and assigned class for ease of scheduling and to facilitate discussion.

Ethnographic research techniques used in this study included classroom observations documented through field notes and video recording, focus group interviews with the students, semi-structured interviews with the teacher, and post-concert teacher reflections. Additional data sources included teaching and learning artifacts (e.g., parent communication, student work) and researcher notes. Prior to the interviews, I provided the students and the teacher with the list of

questions I would ask in interviews (see Appendices A and B respectively). Focus group interviews occurred in the month of May according to a schedule developed with the student-participants (see Appendix C). Each focus group interview was audio and video recorded to assist with transcription accuracy. Teacher interviews were audio recorded and member-checked for accuracy and intention via email. Because of the age of the student-participants, focus group interviews were member-checked by asking clarifying questions in subsequent interviews. Student responses varied between individuals, but they generally confirmed their own and many of each others' answers, which provided a source of triangulation of the data. Each layer of data collection and analysis deepened my understanding of the learning environment to which I was privy for 4 months from February to May of 2009. Analysis of early observation and interview notes yielded preliminary codes that later emerged as salient themes in the data (see Appendix D). Trustworthiness was enhanced through triangulation of data sources, teacher-participant member checks, persistent observation, and external review of analysis.

Overview of the Findings

Two overarching theme areas emerged from the data: (1) Multi-faceted learning environment and (2) Facilitated democratic practices. The first theme focuses on the learning environment and three ways in which the students described learning in this environment: (i) Messy, (ii) Relevant, and (iii) Social. The second theme highlights the teaching practices and leadership style Mrs. Peterson used to engage her students: (i) incorporating different modes of teaching and learning, (ii) integrating student input, and (iii) developing student autonomy through choice.

Multi-faceted learning environment. A number of factors contributing to student descriptions of the learning environment as messy, relevant, and social arose from the data.

Students reported that sound, the act of learning, and learning activities contributed to the description of the learning environment as "messy." A cacophony of learning sounds frequently emanated from the orchestra room, sometimes even spilling out into the hallway as students worked in pairs or small groups. Students regularly worked together, assisting each other informally and in more formally developed peer learning activities.

Researchers and educational theorists have long recommended experience-based and interactive learning activities like those used in Mrs. Peterson's orchestra classroom (Allsup, 2003; Dewey, 1919; Goodrich, 2007; Green, 2001; Jaffurs, 2006; and Vygotsky, 1978). The structure of the class itself included unstructured time for students to experiment with new material, work independently or collaborate with a peer. Mrs. Peterson structured the learning environment to include formal instruction, informal learning in the forms of peer- and self-directed learning, and large and small group interactions.

In this study, students noted individual differences in learning and achievement, and the issues that arose from having multiple levels and personalities in one class. Students accepted this diversity as a natural part of the learning environment, which also lent to the feeling of messiness of learning. More informal peer learning tended to happen "behind the stand," when students were provided the space to think, experiment, and share. The transfer of knowledge between students in these informal learning moments reinforced the knowledge and skills taught in class as well as provided opportunities for discovery learning. During one of these informal peer-learning moments, Hunter had discovered and developed a roll of his right wrist that allowed him to play with a full bow and characteristic tone. The technique of rolling the wrist had not yet been formally introduced in class. The development of student knowledge and skills in these informal learning episodes supports the research regarding the importance of peer

learning and student development (Campbell, 1998; Goodrich, 2007; Jaffurs, 2006; MacDonald & Miell, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978; Wiggins, 1999/2000).

Mrs. Peterson encouraged students to work and learn together in this manner, which allowed students opportunities to self-regulate their learning, progressing at a pace and in a way that suited their individual learning needs. Because students were able to recognize and act upon their own learning needs, students reported feelings of satisfaction with their learning, enjoyment in the music making process, and autonomy. The students were taking an active role in their learning, which is supported in the literature addressing self-determination (Legutki, 2010), autonomy (Green, 2005; Reeve, 2006), motivation (Ames, 1992; Sandene, 1997), and democracy in education (Allsup, 2003; Dewey, 1916; Hanzlik, 2010; Kratus, 2012; Lewin, 1938, 1999a, 1999b).

Incorporating teaching and learning elements that are relevant to the students is also supported by the literature (Barrett & Smiegiel, 2007; Campbell, 1995; Dodd, 2001; Finnegan, 1989; Hurley, 1992; Jaffurs, 2004; Thibeault, 2007). Students made connections to the content, skills, and activities they were learning and doing in orchestra class from their familial backgrounds, current interests – musical and non-musical, and their own development and interactions with others. Some elements of traditional ensemble music-making practice were still present in Mrs. Peterson's classroom including the use of large group rehearsal techniques and the use of educational string ensemble literature. Relevancy to the students was accomplished in part by the incorporation of facilitated musical critique, encouraging student participation in musical decision-making, developing a sense of community and identity among the orchestra members, and regular development and incorporation of student creativity and composition. These practices support the "Learning and Innovation Skills" identified by The Partnership for

21st Century Skills (2009), and currently evolving music education teaching and learning paradigms (Jorgensen, 2003; Kratus, 2007, 2012; Legutki, 2010; MacDonald & Miell, 2000; Palmer & de Quadros, 2012; Wiggins, 2007).

The final descriptor of the learning environment that emerged from the data was the importance of the social element of the class. Throughout the transcripts, participants spoke of the interactive nature of the learning that occurred in orchestra as well as the nature and strength of relationships that had developed in orchestra. This corroborates research suggesting that the social climate in a music classroom is one of the most important aspects of participation in an ensemble, providing a place where students find identity-like individuals, camaraderie, and support (Adderley, Kennedy, & Berz, 2003; Campbell, Connell, & Beegle, 2007). Studies looking at chamber music settings also support the nature of the social interactions as they relate to those that occurred in the small group peer-learning situations (Berg, 1997; Jaffurs, 2004; MacDonald & Miell, 2000; Shouldice, 2013; Swanwick, 1999).

Researchers also suggest that children in early adolescence are experiencing changes in the development of their identity (Kroger, 2000) and that music as related to self-expression is central to developing a musical identity (Davidson & Burland, 2006). In the focus group interviews, students discussed factors identified in the research as associated with identity development: (a) coping with conflict, (b) external support in friendships and from family, (c) identification of and with role models, (d) using music for self-expression, and (e) the trying on of roles (Davidson & Burland, 2006; Kroger, 2000). The safe, supportive, and social atmosphere, as developed by Mrs. Peterson and her students, may have contributed to the students' displays of their emerging musical identities. The students' descriptions of the learning environment

provide the lens through which the reader may frame the second overarching theme from this study: Facilitated democratic practices.

Facilitated democratic practices. As discussed in Chapter 5, students had the opportunity and were encouraged to provide input and share opinions with regard to a number of elements related to the orchestra program. Mrs. Peterson had incorporated a variety of teaching and learning modes to help students develop the skills needed to be able to respectfully interact when given the opportunity, which occurred often. These modes centered on modeling. Mrs. Peterson modeled ways in which to listen, give critique, ask questions, assist others, and solve problems. She then provided opportunities for students to try the modeled ideas or develop their own. Students regularly modeled for each other and requested peer modeling. Democratic activities observed by the researcher and related by the students included: (a) discussions on a variety of topics related to music and learning, (b) creativity, (c) composition, (d) decision-making, (e) small group learning, (f) providing choices, and (g) empowering students. Mrs. Peterson incorporated these strategies as they fit her learning objectives, as students demonstrated a need for the use of a strategy, and as regularly occurring components of the class structure.

Students more often composed by playing first, as opposed to writing first. Composition is naturally an aural endeavor (Campbell, 1995; Green, 2001; Gordon, 2003; Kratus, 1989, 1994). Campbell's and Green's research investigated the music acquisition and composition processes of garage band and rock band musicians, who tended to learn informally and by ear. Children with a more developed sense of audiation tend to create more cohesive and developed compositions than those who are still developing their audiation skills (Gordon, 2003; Kratus, 1989, 1994). The students reported that their ears were the dominant evaluative tools when

117

practicing and creating, and when composing, they used experimentation to find the notes that sounded right. The process reported by these students mirrors the research of Kratus (1989) in which he analyzed the processes used by children to compose a song.

The students made use of notation to record their creativity, or Mrs. Peterson would notate on the board what students created in class. Students seemed less concerned with writing down their ideas and more interested in the process or act of creating, along with the recognition of their creative contribution. Students liked to "doodle," as they called it. The many variations of the tune Perpetual Motion serves as evidence of students' creativity facilitated by Mrs. Peterson and recognized in class and for parents at a concert.

Mrs. Peterson would lead group discussions by presenting an idea, demonstrating the idea in practice with the help of the students, and moderating discussion to keep it on topic and inclusive. These facilitated group discussions usually centered on facets of music learning, but also generally included tangents regarding respectful interactions and insight into learning processes. Mrs. Peterson used this guided interaction to assist students with decision-making as students were provided with choices. The ideas generated by the students were rarely dismissed, generally explored, and many times adopted. Examples include use of student ideas for warm-ups, class organization, literature choice, and conflict resolution. Students felt valued and empowered by the realization that their input mattered. Mrs. Peterson encouraged students to ask questions to clarify their understandings and she purposefully solicited student ideas as a means to help them develop their musicianship, understanding, and engagement.

This purposeful use of dialogue to generate ideas, inclusion and implementation of these student-generated ideas, and willingness to adjust the class structure to accommodate the needs and interests of the students suggest that Mrs. Peterson used a democratic leadership style as

defined in Chapter 1 and supported by educational research (Kratus, 2012; Lewin, 1938; Woodford, 2005). One regular classroom activity utilized by Mrs. Peterson to encourage relevant and active participation in the music-making process incorporated the use of creativity and/or composition. Using an aural tradition common to vernacular music-making (Campbell, 1995; Dabczynski, 1994; Finnegan, 1989; Green, 2005) and based in research (Gordon, 2003; Jaffurs, 2006), Mrs. Peterson modeled the process of creating, sharing and learning music by ear while simultaneously working to develop students' executive and musical knowledge and skills. Students in this study articulated the need for written notation as documentation and as a benchmark of musicianship. At the time of this study, the students were still learning to translate what they were seeing to what they would do to create the sound. By the end of the school year, however, the sixth grade students self-reported progress in reading musical notation, including the compilation of 50 student-generated variations of Perpetual Motion, two of which they performed on a concert in March. Guided by Mrs. Peterson in the process of composing and arranging, students had also created and notated ostinatos for another tune they knew and had developed an arrangement to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of a number of musical elements used, including layering and dynamics.

What the students appreciated about this type of interaction was that Mrs. Peterson not only asked for their ideas, she acted upon them. Mrs. Peterson led by example, engaged in music-making processes with the students, embraced diverse viewpoints and learning tangents, and worked to create a classroom atmosphere of participation, autonomy, and belonging. She retained a sense of authority in that she guided instruction so that students learning would progress or provided parameters within which the students could be creative. The underlying premise, however, was that she regularly created opportunities for students in which the students

had options and felt that their ideas and opinions were valued. They had agency in their learning. The modes and activities used to incorporate student input included creativity exercises, composition, small group interactions, teacher provided options from which students could choose, inclusion in decision-making processes, and student empowerment.

Addressing the Research Questions

The following questions were addressed as they pertained to the perceptions and beliefs of the participants in the study. Each question will be summarized briefly. Because of the nature of this study, any findings and suggestions contained herein are limited to the participant sample and therefore are not fully generalizable, but rather are provided as an exemplar of democratically engaged practice in an ensemble setting.

Research Question 1: How do students perceive what and how they are learning in an environment in which they are asked to contribute creatively and critically?

"We should have, like, creativity in each class." (Waterfall, 6AG3)

"It feels like we have a say in like what we're playing and stuff, like it actually matters what we want to play and stuff." (Paige, 6BG1)

The participants spoke of enjoying the challenge and valuing the uniqueness and manipulation of the content they were learning. The amount of interaction that occurred in class was also noteworthy and of great value to the participants. Most of all, the students appreciated and put value on their ability to influence various outcomes in string class, including varying the warm up, composing, having a say in what was or was not performed, and performing their creative works in concerts. Their ideas mattered. They felt they had ownership and agency in their learning. This supports the work of Garrison (2007), Koops (2006) and Shouldice (2013) who suggest providing a learning environment that promotes student agency is beneficial.

120

Students commented on their awareness of their musical and technical progress since beginning to play as well as their progress over the course of a few months. They were keen on playing in the ensemble at the time of the interviews because of the increased number of independent parts. Each section, including two sections of violins, had parts that were different from those of the others. Participants commented on enjoying the individuality of their parts, recognizing that this added a level of sophistication and difficulty to what they were learning, and how that affected the overall sound of the ensemble. Students also were cognizant of many aspects of the learning process. Individual contributions supported the overall progress of the group and the nature of the learning environment.

Research Question 2: How does this learning environment influence students' perception of personal musical meaning?

"It's your own song, you made it, and… then people like it and people play it." (Hiram, 6AB4)

"...while we were in the middle of it, just the feeling of togetherness." (Walt, 6BB2)

Participants regularly referenced their familial models as influential in their initial decisions to make music with string instruments and the enjoyment they got from making music with the group. What recurred most frequently, however, was the ownership they felt with regards to their playing and creating in orchestra. Many spoke of the opportunities to be creative within class and of their creative activities outside of class. Hunter and Hiram spoke of composing tunes for others, and many of the participants enjoyed doodling time and using their skills and knowledge in new ways. Other participants spoke of the creative process as very personal and would be selective when sharing their creativity with others. This sense of ownership and control over their creativity was important to these students as was the sense of enjoyment and success they felt when making music either independently or with others.

For these students, orchestra provided one class in which they could experiment, make mistakes without penalty, and enjoy the learning process. They reported feeling in more control of various aspects of their learning and their environment, which was in direct contrast to the learning environment of their academic classrooms.

Research Question 3: How does participation in this learning environment influence students' musical decision making?

"[Mrs. Peterson], she'll like, if you have an idea or opinion and you tell it to her, we may do that certain one." (Blossom, 6AG3)

"Because you went from pizzicato to arco. It's pretty hard to transition." (A.J., 6AG2)

"If it doesn't sound right, you want to change it…" (Cap, 6AB3)

Students easily used the "language" of strings and music in their discussions. They talked of technique when describing the issues that they associated with learning to play a string instrument as well as musical descriptions of how and what they were playing and creating. Students also expressed a comfort level in being allowed to share or withhold their ideas regarding decisions. They felt that their opinions were valued, and that they had ownership of their ideas along with the dissemination rights.

Processes for making musical decisions included listening, experimentation, small group discussions, full ensemble discussions and votes, taking on teacher-modeled processes, and using learned material. Participants related their use of learned material and processes in their practice time to keep things interesting. Experimentation was the most recurrent idea when students spoke of making musical decisions. Students related trying out ideas and then deciding what worked best. The use of critique in class and then in individual or small groups led to more informed musical decisions. Student preference for self-assessment by ear, rather than by printed

122

material may be a by-product of the modes of teaching presented in this classroom. These individual and small group practices of creativity, experimentation, and evaluation illustrate the ability of these students to solve problems independently. The teacher and the students had provided models and suggestions for evaluating and solving practice problems or issues. At the same time, the value placed on student ideas may have contributed to the freedom students felt to be innovative in their learning and creativity.

Research Question 4: How does participation in this learning environment influence student development of musical identity?

I like being able to say I can play an instrument. (Alex – 6BB3)

I know that I can do more things in my life than just one. (Blossom – 6AG5)

I've improved, 'cause now I know how to play more than just a few things. (Violet – 6AG5)

Data indicated that the students in the Greene Intermediate School orchestra had the opportunity develop facets of their musical identities. Participants described each other as musicians and themselves as creators and members of the ensemble. When identifying 'good' musicians, students related *goodness* to length of study, practice, posture, facility, and number of memorized pieces. Students who had more time on the instrument, with or without lessons or activities outside of school, were usually deemed more accomplished musicians. Students mentioned feeling special when they received praise or applause from parents, friends, and Mrs. Peterson after having played a solo or a group piece, both in class and in a concert. They also recognized their own accomplishments in relation to their past performances and to those of others. Composition and creativity provided outlets for musical self-expression. As related in Chapter 5, students composed and "doodled" regularly as part of the class and in their outside

music making. The students owned their musicianship, their strengths and weaknesses, as well as their musicality.

Individuals attributed part of their musical identity to outside influences, including familial music making and personal listening practices, listening "24/7" to music of various popular styles. At the conclusion of the interviews, I asked participants to draw or list activities or things that were important to whom they were as a person. These external factors included music, sports, and games, but only a few included an instrument. See Appendix F for examples of these identity representations.

Implications for the Music Teaching Profession

While the results from this study are not fully generalizable, reflecting upon the environment of teaching and learning that Mrs. Peterson and her students created may yield promising avenues for continued growth and development in music teaching and music teacher preparation.

Re-envision the music ensemble teacher as a participatory democratic leader. Based on the perceptions and attitudes of the students in this study, teachers might do well to incorporate more creativity and peer-to-peer learning experiences into their curriculum, balancing efficiency with developing socio-cultural creative experiences for students. As suggested by the research of Lewin (1938) and MacDonald and Miell (2000), a democratically engaged classroom can be efficient in the overall learning process as well as provide superior quality of the results. It also tends to be less tension-filled, which may inhibit creativity and risk-taking. Autocratic ensemble teaching can be incredibly efficient depending on the educational and musical goals of the director, but teachers may find increased student motivation, interest,

and productivity in a more student-centered, democratically engaged, and creativity focused approach as illustrated in this study.

School instrumental ensemble music has developed from the notion that music teachers can direct the musical learning of large numbers of students at the same time. At issue with this is the reduced ability to assess and support individual learning when a teacher has large student populations. Mrs. Peterson did not view the large ensemble as a deterrent of small group interaction, as evidenced by the modes of teaching and learning that occurred in her classroom. Balancing efficient rehearsals, during which the teacher directs and the students respond, with experiences in which students apply their learning in student-directed meaningful ways, may encourage students to take a more active role in their learning as well as be more likely to contribute to the larger goals of the full ensemble.

Use critical listening, problem-solving, and creativity to enhance student self-evaluation and note reading. Teachers who ask their students to use their ear to evaluate their playing and the performances of others are encouraging students to develop critical listening skills. In partnership with problem solving activities, teachers would be providing the students with tools they could employ to continue to improve outside of the classroom. A few of the participants in this study mentioned the ability to self-evaluate and correct at home based on critical listening activities and facilitated discussions in their orchestra class. These activities also led to more developed compositions and ensemble playing, especially as it pertained to hearing individual parts in relation to others.

A string player has physical checkpoints that she can use to provide reference points for intonation, such as the neck block of the instrument, the nut at the end of the fingerboard, and the relationship of the fingers to each other. Even with these physical checkpoints, a string player

must use her ears, listening for pitch relationships, harmonic overtones, and timbre to evaluate personal and ensemble intonation. This is a skill that is addressed by many if not all string pedagogues (for example, Galamian, 1962; Green, 1966; Hamann & Gillespie, 2012; Havas, 1961; Rolland, 2010; Suzuki, 1983; Young, 1978). The aural mode of musical evaluation and learning seemed to be more efficient and preferable for these students. As stated previously, students indicated that "good" musicians were able to play many pieces without the use of musical notation, by memory. Most of these students, who were only in their second year of instruction, were still learning to translate notation through physical skill to sound. Their playing skills were more developed than their note reading skills, as these skills may develop at different rates (Gordon, 1993; Suzuki, 1983). The students recognized the value of being able to read music, however, and continued to work on this skill behind the stand in addition to note reading activities led by Mrs. Peterson. Students were solving their own problems, or requesting assistance from their trusted peers. They did not demonstrate frustration as much as they illustrated their ability to use their knowledge and experiences to figure out the answers to their questions.

Using an aural approach, teachers can assist students with identification, translation, realization, and creation of written notation. Learning to read musical notation is important for realizing music written by others, and for documenting musical creativity to be shared over time. Acquisition of executive skills and knowledge may occur at different rates than the acquisition of note reading skills. Facilitated by the teacher, students could create aurally and then translate what they had played into written notation. At first the translation would be modeled by the teacher, then in peer learning groups for support and facilitated learning. Incorporating these

steps before requiring individual to read and notate music provides scaffolding that may enhance the students' abilities to do this on their own.

Empower student music making for life-long learning. Given music educators' increased interest in providing skills for life-long learning as indicated by such movements as New Horizons Bands and Orchestras, providing opportunities for students to make music relevant to their current and future interests may encourage students to persist in their musical studies. Students who make little connection between what they learn in the music classroom with the music making that occurs outside of the classroom may be less likely to continue using the skills they have learned once they leave the school, as discussed by Kratus (2007). Providing musical experiences that provide a frame of reference for music making outside of the school ensemble classroom may encourage continued engagement in music making.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study contributes to a body of research that examines the nature of musical experience in school settings. Findings suggest that these music students valued the learning opportunities provided in this democratically engaged environment. They were involved in their own learning and felt empowered to use newly learned knowledge and skills. This supports Vygotsky's (1978) theory that collaborative work results in higher levels of thinking and product quality. Providing these students with opportunities to assert agency over their own learning empowered them to then seek additional learning, playing, and musically interactive possibilities. Like the violinist Hunter in this study, many of the students were creating their own music and sharing it with classmates, or even writing it specifically for a friend. It is important to continue to seek understanding of the impact of teaching and learning environments on the

quality of the learning and the musical outcomes. With that in mind, I provide the following suggestions for further research.

Researchers have illustrated the impact of democratically engaged classrooms on students in defined classes within the period of a teaching unit or year of study. Because music teachers have the opportunity to maintain class contact with their students over multiple years, they have the unique opportunity to investigate the impact of teaching and learning strategies over time. This impact might be examined in a longitudinal study that investigates students' practices and learning in democratically engaged environments over several years.

Creativity and critical thinking skills have become valued goals for student learning, as evidenced by their inclusion in the 21st Century Essential Skills adopted by many states and their inclusion in research by educational theorists (Greene, 1995; Jorgensen, 2003; Kratus 2012). Learning in a democratically engaged environment, as suggested by this study, may assist in cultivating music teaching and learning practices that embrace these two valued skills and that are responsive to the changing interests, values, and influences of music students. Additional research may affirm the usefulness of and strategies for cultivating these valued characteristics.

Considering the relatively small number of studies that focus on the student's perception of learning in instrumental settings, researchers might consider developing additional studies that investigate teaching and learning environments from the students' perspective, taking into account differences in learning styles and contexts. Student perspectives of learning in varying contexts (i.e. large or small ensemble, intermediate school or high school) may shed more light on effective teaching and learning strategies. Students at various stages of development may respond differently in similar settings, while those in different ensemble contexts may respond similarly given the same experiences. Studies investigating the student perspective at various age

levels and ensemble settings would contribute to our understanding of student learning and engagement in each context.

Broader quantitative studies with a larger participant pool might reveal generalizable information with regard to retention, engagement, skill development, and further music making as related to learning in a democratically engaged classroom. Surveys of teacher practices and student perceptions may bring to light additional methods for teaching and learning that support the development of critical thinking and creativity skills.

In addition, the learning environment experienced in the formative years may also impact life-long music making and adult reentry to ensemble settings. Adults who engage in music-making might provide insight into how their early learning environments may have influenced their motivation to continue. Research examining learning environments and continued music-making may suggest a relationship between the reasons to continue with certain modes of learning.

Concluding Thoughts

Adopting the ideals of democratic society as outlined by Kratus (2012) and using a democratic leadership style (Lewin, 1938), Mrs. Peterson provided an engaging learning environment in which students developed musical and interpersonal skills. Students were engaged, thoughtful, and inquisitive. Interactions between peers were valued and supportive of the learning facilitated by the teacher. The students learned from their mistakes and displayed high levels of musicianship in class, in concert, and on their own. In short, the students seemed to enjoy the process of learning and felt empowered to continue making music whether or not they were under the guidance of a teacher.

The results of this study affirmed my suspicions regarding involving students in their learning and the manner in which this can be incorporated into the ensemble setting. What struck me the most in this study, as well in my own teaching, was that the students were making music, meaningful music, alone and with others, and they were enjoying the process of building on their skills and knowledge without fear of mistakes. All of this affirms my belief that the development of a democratically engaging learning environment is the foundation of and a necessity for life-long music making.

APPENDICES

Questions for the Student-Participant Focus Group Interviews

Please take a look through the questions below. During our first few lunch interviews, I will be asking you for your answers to these questions. Remember that if you do not feel comfortable answering a question, you do not have to answer. See you at lunch on *Friday* in the *conference room* across from the office.

A. General
1. When did you start learning to play a string instrument?
2. Do you play any other instruments or sing?
3. Do you take private lessons, and if so, with whom?
4. Do you make music at home with your family?
5. How many string teachers have you had since you started?
6. Please tell me why you chose to take orchestra.

B. Environment
1. What words would you use to describe orchestra class?
2. Describe an average day in orchestra class.
    a. What kinds of activities do you do?
    b. What kinds of things do you focus on or talk about?
2. What makes a rehearsal "good" or "bad"?
3. Talk to me about how the students in the class get along with each other.
    a. Is everyone generally friendly?
    b. Are students more competitive or supportive of each other?
4. What do you like most/least about being in orchestra?
5. Please describe how decisions are made or how problems are resolved in orchestra.
    a. What are your feelings about these processes?
6. Do you feel comfortable asking for help?
7. Describe how your teacher creates the classroom environment in orchestra.
8. How does the classroom environment in orchestra compare with other classes you are in?
9. What is the best/worst part of learning in this kind of an environment?
10. If you could change one thing in other classes to make them more like orchestra class, what would it be?
11. If you could change one thing in orchestra class to make it more like other classes, what would it be?

C. Learning/Transfer
1. Describe the easiest/hardest part of learning to play a string instrument.
2. Describe how you worked with other students during the Practice-a-thon.
    a. Do you have other opportunities to work with other students in class?
    b. If yes, please describe.
3. Describe the easiest/hardest part of learning to play an instrument in a big class.
4. What is your favorite thing to do in orchestra?

5. What kinds of activities or ideas from orchestra class do you find yourself using outside of orchestra? In other classes? At home? During practice? In other ensembles?
6. How or what do you learn from other students or friends in orchestra?
7. How has what you do in orchestra helped you work with other students in class? Out of class?
8. What happens in class that makes you feel successful?

D. Creativity/Critique
1. Do you have an opportunity to be creative in orchestra class?
2. Describe activities in which you are asked to come up with and/or use your own ideas.
        Do you share all your ideas? Why or why not?
3. In what way(s) do you feel a part of the process of making music in orchestra?
4. When playing or practicing, how do you decide how something should sound?

E. Meaning/Value
1. Describe how much music, in general, is a part of your life.
2. What is your favorite kind of music to listen to? To play? To sing?
3. How important is learning to play an instrument to you? Now? For the future?
4. How is orchestra class helping you become better in music? school? life?
5. If you could change anything about orchestra class to make it a better experience for you, what would it be?
6. If you could change anything about orchestra class to make it a better experience for other students in the class, what would it be?

F. Musicianship
1. Do you know a "good" musician?
2. Can you describe what makes him or her "good?"
3. How have you improved your playing since January?
4. How do you feel about your own musical abilities? Are you pleased, unhappy, or somewhere in between?
5. How does the music you play help you become a better musician?
6. How do your friends, parents, or teachers make you feel about your musical abilities?
7. What do you now know about music because of orchestra class?
8. Describe what you like most about making music.
9. What would you like to learn about music?

G. Identity
1. If you were to list or draw all the things that make you who you are or are important to you, would music be a part of the list or drawing? In what way?
2. Is there anything else you would like to share, think I should know, or would like to ask me?

APPENDIX B: Teacher Interview Questions

Questions for the Teacher-Participant

1. Please describe your musical background, including where you are from and your instrumental education.

2. Describe your education/preparation to be a string music educator.

3. Why did you become a string music educator?

4. What is your philosophy regarding teaching orchestra to first and second year students? Orchestra in general?

5. Tell me about people or experiences that were or are influential in shaping your philosophy and teaching practices.

6. How do you choose activities and repertoire?

7. What do you want your students to know/be able to do after their second year of orchestra?

8. What do you want your students to take with them beyond the orchestra classroom, if anything?

9. Describe the philosophy underlying the learning environment you create in orchestra. How do you create this learning environment?

10. Describe the school district in which you are teaching in comparison to other places you have observed and/or taught.

11. Describe your students in these two classes that I am observing.

12. Describe the music department at your school. Support? Collaboration? Communication? Regularity of interaction?

13. Describe your school and administration. Support? Collaboration? Communication? Regularity of interaction?

14. How do these two groups of people contribute to your effectiveness as a teacher? Your teaching in general?

15. Describe your ideal orchestral environment at this grade level. Is it different from what exists? What would you change?

16. Is there anything else you would like to share, think I should know, or would like to ask me?

APPENDIX C: Transcript Location Coding and Interview Dates

Interviews were first transcribed using Microsoft Word in a prose format. The finished transcripts were then transferred to an Excel worksheet for coding. Each line of the transcript was given a code to facilitate retrieval.

Example: 6AB1-3
6	Grade level
A	Class session – A or B – the A class met earlier in the day
B	Gender: B for boys, G for girls
1	Number indicating which interview of 5
-3	Number referring to the page of the original transcript in document form

Observation dates:
February: 20 and 27, 2009
March: 20, 25 (Concert), and 27, 2009
April: 15, 22, and 24, 2009
May: 4, 13 (Concert), 18, 22, and 27, 2009

Focus Group Interview dates by location code:

Boys Interviews
6AB1 May 7, 2009
6AB2 May 13, 2009
6AB3 May 19, 2009
6AB4 May 21, 2009
6AB5 May 26, 2009

6BB1 May 7, 2009
6BB2 May 13, 2009
6BB3 May 19, 2009
6BB4 May 21, 2009
6BB5 May 26, 2009

Girls Interviews
6AG1 May 8, 2009
6AG2 May 11, 2009
6AG3 May 18, 2009
6AG4 May 20, 2009
6AG5 May 27, 2009

6BG1 May 8, 2009
6BG2 May 11, 2009
6BG3 May 18, 2009
6BG4 May 20, 2009
* This group finished all the questions in 4 sessions.

Teacher Participant Interview dates:
May 18, 2009   Post-class Informal Interview
May 22, 2009   Formal Interview 1
May 26, 2009   Formal Interview 2

APPENDIX D: Themes and Codes

1. **Influences**
    a. Familial
        i. Decision making
        ii. Transfer
        iii. Modeling
            1. Active music making
            2. Listening
            3. Aural
            4. Practice help
        iv. Culture
        v. Value of learning
        vi. Support
        vii. Recognition
        viii. Availability of family instruments

    b. Teacher
        i. Teacher reaction to mistakes
        ii. Encourages persistence
        iii. Recognition
        iv. "Good" musician
    c. Others
        i. Recognition from peers
        ii. Media models
        iii. "Cool" factor
        iv. Videos of other students
        v. Popular culture
        vi. Opportunities given
        vii. Physical requirements
        viii. Prior knowledge/experiences
        ix. Musical interests
2. **Identity**
    a. Relating to music
    b. Relating to ensemble affiliation
    c. Positive self efficacy
        i. Related to length of study
    d. Positive self-esteem
3. **Value of**
    a. Learning
        i. Enjoyment of process
            1. Ease of learning
            2. Ease of application
            3. Skill acquisition
            4. Freedoms
        ii. Aural learning

        iii. Creativity/creating
        iv. Context driven learning/teaching
        v. Challenges
        vi. Experimentation
- b. Connections
    - i. Knowledge and meaning
    - ii. Knowledge for success
- c. Interactions
    - i. Group dynamics
    - ii. Demonstrated skill of peers
    - iii. Working together
- d. Teaching style
- e. Environment
    - i. Making decisions – "Cool" factor
    - ii. Choice
    - iii. Control
    - iv. Freedoms
    - v. Flexibility
    - vi. Energy
    - vii. Impact on enjoyment and achievement
    - viii. Sound
        1. Volume
        2. Multiple parts
- f. Democratic activities
    - i. Opinions valued
    - ii. Opportunities
    - iii. Idea sharing
- g. Class
    - i. Uniqueness
    - ii. Sound and sight
    - iii. Newness
    - iv. Class structure/organization
    - v. Influence of popular media
    - vi. Opportunity
    - vii. Fairness
- h. Results from class
    - i. Recognition of advancement
    - ii. Positive self-efficacy

4. Creativity
- a. Manipulation
- b. Experimentation
- c. With given material
- d. Music play
- e. Idea development
- f. As a class
- g. Student proposed

       h. Variety
       i. Interest
       j. Motivation
       k. Self-directed music making

5. Life Relevance
       a. Familial models
       b. Music making outside of school
           i. With family members
           ii. Church
           iii. Composition
       c. Music in the environment
           i. Cultural
           ii. Hobby
           iii. Connections
               1. Recording artists
               2. Experiences
               3. Lifestyle
               4. Authentic ensembles
               5. Economics
               6. Sound
       d. Music consumption
           i. Time
           ii. Volume
           iii. Technology
           iv. Earworms
       e. Practicality of participation
           i. Immediate
           ii. Long term

6. Learning Environment
       a. Physical
       b. Teacher influenced
       c. Structure
           i. Flexible
           ii. Autocratic moments
           iii. Balanced
           iv. Relaxed
           v. Freedoms
           vi. Fairness
           vii. Known expectations/parameters
           viii. Messy
       d. Social dynamics
           i. Class relationships
           ii. Effect of individuals
           iii. Ratios of instrumentation
           iv. Continuity
           v. Social skills

      vi. Support
           1. Helping others succeed
           2. Familial
     vii. Competition
   viii. Awareness of others' talents/skills
     ix. Accommodations for others

e. Class dynamics
       i. Interaction
           1. Positive
               a. Similar experiences
               b. Similar values
               c. Sense of community
               d. Existing relationships
               e. Less competition
           2. Negative
               a. Focus
               b. Sound level
               c. Distractions
      ii. With teacher
           1. Individualized instruction
           2. Small group
                a. Benefits
     iii. Structure is fluid
      iv. Peer assistance
           1. Encouraged
           2. Teacher initiated
           3. Positive interaction
           4. Recognition
           5. Regulation
           6. Unstructured
           7. Competition
           8. Tutoring
       v. Navigation of environmental change
           1. Sound
           2. Space
           3. Routine
           4. Social dynamics
      vi. Awareness
           1. Of others
           2. Of differences
           3. Comfort in numbers
           4. Friendly competition
     vii. Personal responsibility
           1. Self regulation of behavior
           2. Remembering items
           3. Home practice

  f. Comparison with academic classes
    i. Structure
    ii. Freedoms, lack thereof
    iii. Noise level
    iv. Consequences for behavior
    v. Content vs. skill driven
    vi. Homework
    vii. Lack of input
    viii. Lack of ownership
    ix. Aural vs. book
  g. Advantages to orchestral classroom
    i. Anonymity of mistakes
    ii. Sound
    iii. Social dynamic
    iv. Quantity of learning
    v. Support

7. Democratic activities
  a. Overarching ideas
    i. Learning allowed
    ii. Peer learning encouraged
    iii. Peer responses
    iv. Active learning
    v. Interaction
    vi. Idea sharing
  b. Music Play
    i. Creativity
    ii. Experiential learning time
    iii. Experimentation
  c. Non-autocratic teacher
    i. Teacher use of student developed terminology
    ii. Adopting student input
    iii. Requesting student input
    iv. Acts on student input
    v. Involvement of students in process
    vi. Honors student decisions
    vii. Use of student for demonstrations
    viii. Makes final decisions
      1. Based on student choice
      2. As needed
  d. Empowerment
    i. Knowledge of evaluation criteria
    ii. Use of learned material
    iii. ZPD
    iv. Motivation for input
    v. Self-directed learning
    vi. Student ownership of strategies

      vii. Decision making
1. Aural process
2. Group process
3. Voting
4. Fairness
5. Random draw
6. Limitations
7. Acceptance
8. Class discussion
9. Teacher modeled
10. Incentives
11. With knowledge

     viii. Choice
1. Knowledge begets choice
2. Experience based
3. Influences
     a. Peer model
     b. Familial model
     c. Respected adult model
4. Informed process
5. Content of concert
6. With parameters/options
7. Process of elimination
8. Acknowledged lack of choice
9. Selection of partners for small group work
10. Structure

      ix. Critique

8. Learning Modes
  a. Aural
  b. Repetition
  c. Active learning
  d. Small group learning
  e. Questioning/clarification
  f. Goal setting
  g. Contextual
  h. Experimentation
     i. Doodling time
  i. Social skills/group dynamics
  j. Tools for learning

APPENDIX E: Coded Transcript Excerpts

BA = BettyAnne Gottlieb, researcher

Table 3. Transcript Excerpt: Boys

Location code	Interview question code	Speaker	Transcribed material	Codes
6BB2-16	B10	BA	What's the best part of learning in the environment that's in orchestra?	
6BB2-16	B10	Alex	We all have the same interest.	common interests
6BB2-17	B10	Walt	um, Mrs. P usually isn't very, um, angry if we don't play it right the first time. She always is just "well how can we improve that" or "I think we should play that again."	Mistakes allowed, mistakes for learning
6BB2-17	B10	Mark	yeah.	
6BB2-17	B10	Walt	There's a lot less punishment for, uh, doing something wrong, not like public, behavioral wise, but like learning wise.	Mistakes as learning opportunities
6BB2-17	B10	Mark	mmhmm. You can make mistakes, basically.	Mistakes allowed, mistakes for learning
6BB2-17	B10	Walt	Or at least more mistakes.	Mistakes allowed, mistakes for learning
6BB2-17	B10	Mark	More mistakes. Yeah.	Mistakes allowed, mistakes for learning
6BB2-17	B10	Alex	I like that it doesn't like, if you make a mistake in the class, like miss a note, it doesn't affect your report card, which is nice. But if you get an F on a test, then that could affect your grade.	Mistakes allowed, relation to assessment
6BB2-17	B10	Walt	Yeah, really like the only way for your grade to go down is to like not ever	Assessment
6BB2-17	B10	Alex	not show up.	Assessment, known expectations
6BB2-17	B10	Mark	not having your instrument, uh, not go to concerts	Assessment, known expectations

Table 3. (Cont'd)

6BB2-17	B10	Walt	the practice card, which I hate, but which is required.	Assessment, known expectations, attitude
6BB2-17	B10	Fred	Yeah. I agree with them.	
6BB2-17	B10	BA	So what's the worst part of learning in that kind of environment?	
6BB2-17	B10	Walt	The, just the amount of kids and how you can't really ask for individual help, like you said, we just kind of have to learn on our own, which is why the practice cards are there I think.	Drawbacks - class size, lack of individualized instruction, self directed learning
6BB2-17	B10	Fred	Yeah, and like, lots of talking, lots of noise, lots of things falling down, like sometimes a stand falls down or sometimes (trails off)	Drawbacks - sound level, distractions

Table 4. Transcript Excerpt: Girls

Location code	Interview question code	Speaker	Transcribed material	Codes
6AG4-1	D1	BA	Ok, talk to me about when you have the opportunity to be creative in orchestra.	
6AG4-1	D1	Blossom	About all the time. We always get to do really cool um pieces like Sahara Crossing, which are really fun. And Entry of the Tumblers	Value - literature, creativity
6AG4-1	D1	Waterfall	We try to come up with new ways to play the same song. different ways to play the same song.	Class creativity
6AG4-1	D1	BA	Anything else that you're creative with?	
6AG4-1	D1	AJ	when she lets us doodle.	Teacher encouraged creativity
6AG4-1	D1	BA	What do you mean by doodle? Can you describe what doodle is? I've heard people talk about that a lot.	
6AG4-1	D1	AJ	Doodling is like…	Teacher encouraged creativity
6AG4-1	D1	Roxy	Messing around.	Teacher encouraged creativity

Table 4. (Cont'd)

6AG4-1	D1	AJ	… not playing your music. It's like you just make up your own things. It's just playing…	Free creativity
6AG4-1	D1	Violet	Like when you are playing and you're not supposed to.	Free creativity
6AG4-1	D1	Roxy	Yeah, you're playing when you're not supposed to play. Like instead of like playing as a group, like if she's on the phone or she has to talk to somebody in the hall sometimes she'll be like "ok, you guys can doodle until I get back" and then we'll just play whatever. We can do whatever.	Free creativity, timing
6AG4-1	D1	AJ	Or talk	
6AG4-1	D1	Victoria	Like if you're in say you're in math class and math class is like all boring so then you draw on paper that's like *inaudible*, but basically the opposite with your instrument	Creativity with relevant material
6AG4-1	D1	Skya	It's kind of like practicing as a group.	Creativity with relevant material
6AG4-1	D1	Blossom	Yeah. I do that a lot.	Creativity with relevant material
6AG4-1	D2	BA	Activities in which you are asked to come up with or use your own ideas.	
6AG4-1	D2	Roxy	Like… Oh, um for the hundred ways to play Perpetual Motion.	Structured creativity
6AG4-2	D2	Violet	and for Land of the Silver Birch when we got to make up our own ostinatos	Creativity with given material
6AG4-2	D2	BA	How did you come up with those ostinatos?	
6AG4-2	D2	Violet	Um, kind of just like some parts, some of them were out of the song as parts out of the song, and others they kinda just sounded good with the song	Creativity - aural
6AG4-2	D2	AJ	It was kind of like doodling but for something we were supposed to do like at a concert.	Creativity with purpose
6AG4-2	D2	*vocalization*		music making
6AG4-2	D2	BA	Do you share all your ideas?	
6AG4-2	D2	Skya	MmHmm. Most of the time	Sharing of ideas
6AG4-2	D2	Roxy	*shakes her head "no"*	Sharing of ideas

Table 4. (Cont'd)

6AG4-2	D2	BA	I see some yeses, a most of the time and some nos. If you do, yes, why?	
6AG4-2	D2	Blossom	Like if we have a stand partner, we'll try to see if they like it too and see if they will like fix anything around like could happen like to make it better.	Sharing of ideas, ZPD, critique, idea development
6AG4-2	D2	BA	Roxy, I saw you shaking your head no. Why no?	
6AG4-2	D2	Roxy	Because like sometimes there's ones that you think of but you don't think that they're that good and so you don't want to share 'em. And, um, another reason is, like somebody else might take yours and… and you might make up another one and you just like that one better.	Sharing of ideas, critique, idea development
6AG4-2	D2	Violet	And sometimes, and maybe because sometimes I think that they're good and I share 'em, but then others cause sometimes I just want to keep them to myself.	Sharing of ideas
6AG4-2	D2	Skya	Yeah. Basically the same thing. Like if you have an idea and don't think it's that good then sometimes you don't share it.	Sharing of ideas, critique

APPENDIX F: Student Identity Representations

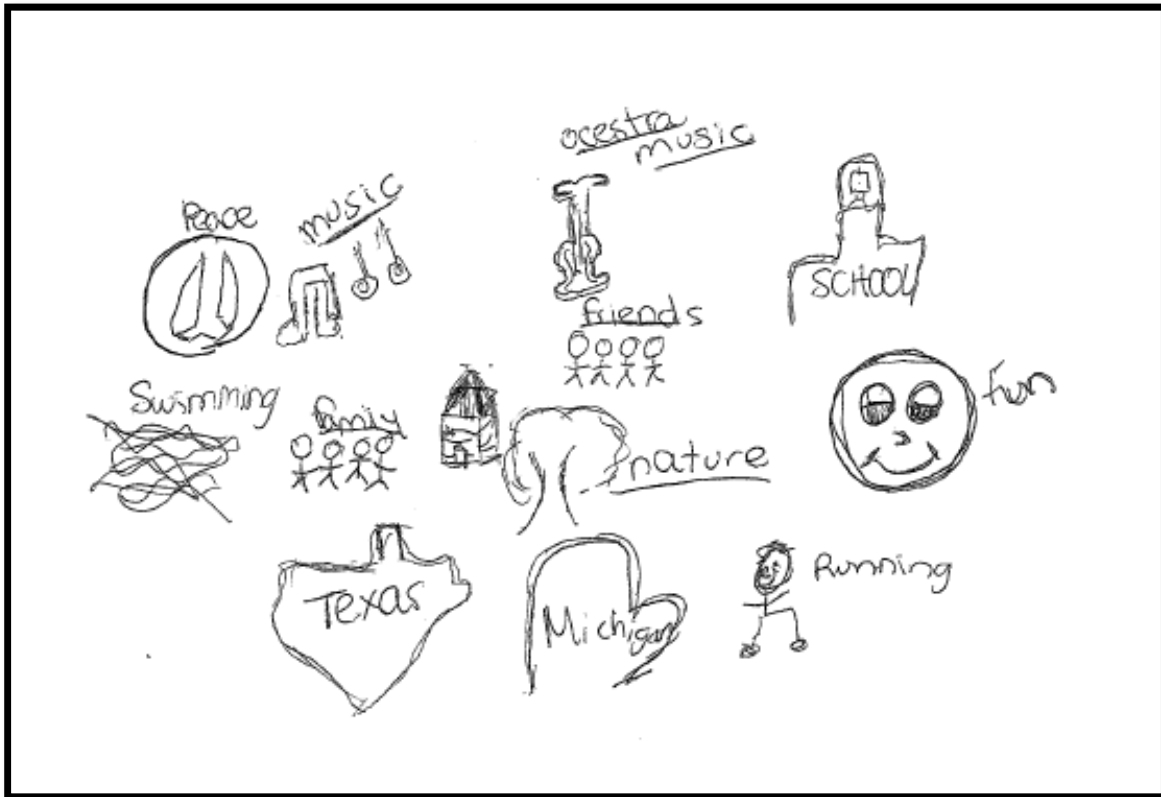Figure 1. Student Identity Representation: Alex

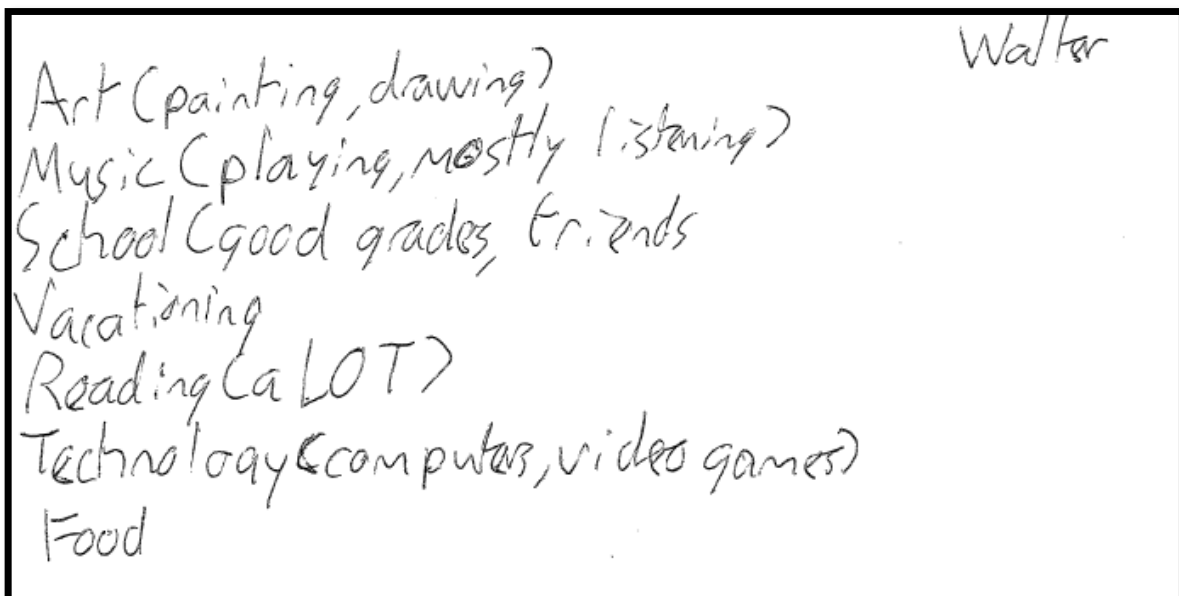Figure 2. Student Identity Representation: Walt
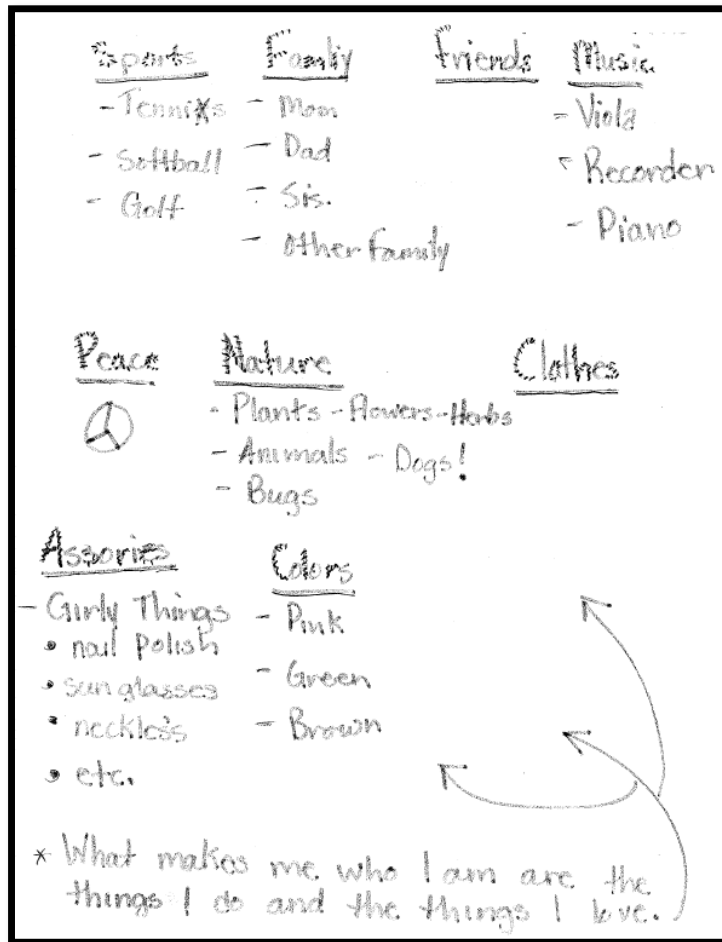
Figure 3. Student Identity Representation: Victoria

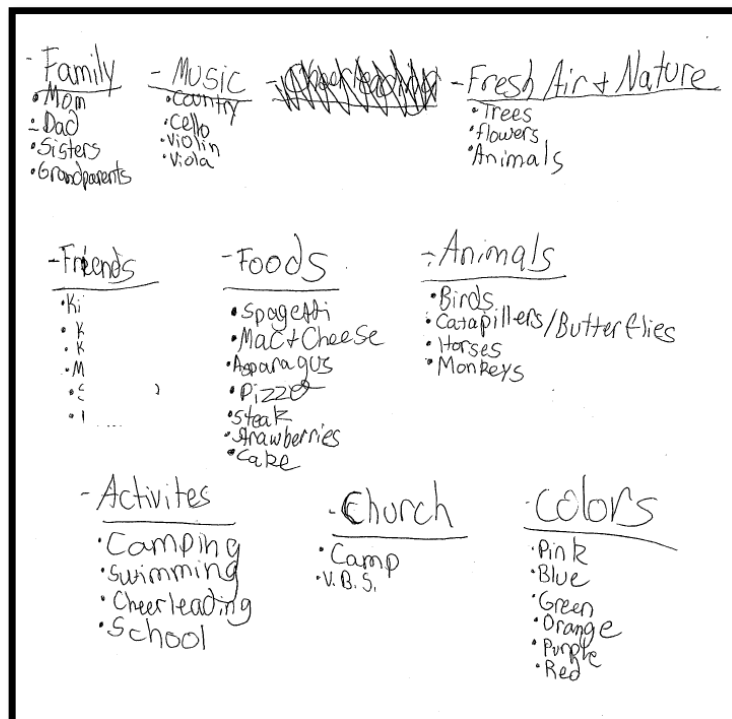

Figure 4. Student Identity Representation: Violet

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

Adderly, C., Kennedy, M., & Berz, W. (2003). "A home away from home": The world of the high school music classroom. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 51*(3), 190-205.

Allsup, R. E. (2003). Mutual learning and democratic action in instrumental music education. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 51*(1), 24.

Ames, C. (1992). Classrooms: Goals, structures, and student motivation. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 84*(3), 261-271.

Asmus, E. P. (1986a). Achievement motivation characteristics of music education and music therapy students as identified by Attribution Theory. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 85*, 1-13

Asmus, E. P. (1986b). Student beliefs about the causes of success and failure in music: A study of achievement motivation. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 34*(4), 262-278.

Austin, J. R. (1988). The effect of music contest format on self-concept, motivation, achievement, and attitude of elementary band students. *Journal of Research in Music Educaiton, 36*(2), 95-107.

Austin, J. R. (1991). Competitive and non-competitive goal structures: An analysis of motivation and achievement among elementary band students. *Psychology of Music, 19*(2), 142-158.

Barrett, M. S., & Smigiel, H. M. (2007). Children's perspectives of participation in music youth arts settings: Meaning, value and participation. *Research Studies in Music Education, 28*(1), 39-50.

Berg, M. H. (1997). *Social construction of musical experience in two high school chamber music ensembles.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 9731212)

Bononi, R. A. (2000). *Student learning in a chamber music ensemble: A study of transfer.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 9978964)

Buell, D. S. (1990). *Effective rehearsing with the instrumental music ensemble: A case study.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 9025698)

Busch, M. R. (2005). *Predictors of lifelong learning in music: A survey of individuals participating in performing ensembles at community colleges in Illinois.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3182229)

Campbell, P. S. (1989). Music learning and song acquisition among Native Americans. *International Journal of Music Education, 14*(1), 24-31.

Campbell, P. S. (1995). Of garage bands and song-getting: The musical development of young rock musicians. *Research Studies in Music Education, 4*(1), 12-20.

Campbell, P. S. (1998). The musical cultures of children. *Research Studies in Music Education, 11*(1), 42-51.

Campbell, P.S., Connell, C., & Beegle, A. (2007). Adolescents' expressed meanings of music in and out of school. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 55*(3), 220-236.

Chiodo, P. A. (1997). *The development of lifelong commitment: A qualitative study of adult instrumental music participation.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 9801280)

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention.* New York: Harper Collins.

Dabczynski, A. H. (1994). *Northern Week at Ashokan, 1991: Fiddle tunes, motivation and community at a fiddle and dance camp.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 9423169)

Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). Securing the right to learn: Policy and practice for powerful teaching and learning. *Educational Researcher, 35*(7), 13-24.

David, G. H. (2001). The Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra: A case study of intercultural music transmission. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 49*(3), 212.

Davidson, J. W. & Burland, K. (2006) Musician identity formation. In McPherson, G. E. (Ed.). *The child as musician: A handbook of musical development.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 475-490.

Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and Education*. New York: The Free Press.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and Education*. New York: The Free Press.

Dodd, J. C. (2001). *Playing mariachi music: Its influence in students' lives. An ethnographic study of mariachi MECA.* (Masters thesis). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 1407147)

Elam, K. G., & Duckenfield, M. (Eds.). (2000). *Creating a community of learners: Using the teacher as facilitator model*. Clemson, SC: National Dropout Prevention Center.

Elliott, D. J. (1995). *Music matters: A new philosophy of music education*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Fine, G. A., & Sandstrom, K. L. (1988). *Knowing children: Participant observation with minors*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Finnegan, R. (1989). *The hidden musicians: Music-making in an English town*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Galamian, I. (1962). *Principles of violin playing and teaching.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Gembris, H., & Davidson, J. W. (2002). Environmental influences. In R. Parncutt & G. E. McPherson (Eds.), *The science and psychology of music performance: Creative strategies for teaching and learning* (pp. 17-30). New York: Oxford University Press.

Goodrich, A. M. (2005). *Inside a high school jazz band.* (D.M.A. Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3166103)

Goodrich, A. M. (2007). Peer mentoring in a high school jazz ensemble. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 55*(2), 94-114.

Gordon, E. E. (1993). *Learning sequences in music: Skill, content, and patterns: A music learning theory*. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications.

Gordon, E. E. (2003). *Improvisation in the music classroom*. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications.

Green, E. A. H. (1966). *Teaching stringed instruments in classes.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Green, L. (2001). *How popular musicians learn: A way ahead for music education*. New York: Ashgate Press.

Green, L. (2005). *Meaning, autonomy and authenticity in the music classroom.* London: Institute of Education, University of London.

Green, L. (2008). *Music, informal learning and the school: A new classroom pedagogy.* Aldershot, England: Ashgate.

Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts, and social change.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Hamann, D. L. & Gillespie, R. (2012). *Strategies for teaching strings: Building successful string and orchestra programs.* (3rd edition). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Hanzlik, L. R. (2010). *Fostering citizenship and democracy through chamber music coaching.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 34424968)

Havas, K. (1961). *A new approach to violin playing* (5th ed.). London: Bosworth & Co.

Hurley, C. G. (1992). *Student motivations for beginning and continuing/discontinuing string music education: A preliminary investigation.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 9224155)

Hursh, D. (2007). Assessing No Child Left Behind and the rise of neoliberal education policies. *American Education Research Journal, 44*(3), 493-518.

Jaffurs, S. E. (2004). The impact of informal music learning practices in the classroom, or how I learned to teach from a garage band. *International Journal of Music Education, 22*(3), 189-200.

Jaffurs, S. E. (2006). *Lessons from a garage band: Informal venues for music making.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3248556)

Johnson, E. A. (2013). *The effect of asymmetrical peer-assisted structures on music achievement and learner engagement in the secondary large ensemble.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3561981)

Johnson, R. (2000). The accidental theorist: Constructivist foundations and applications in a teacher's odyssey. In K. G. Elam & M. Duckenfield (Eds.), *Creating a community of learners: Using the teacher as facilitator model* (pp. 12-21). Clemson, SC: National Dropout Prevention Center.

Jorgensen, E. R. (2003). *Transforming music education.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

King, E. C. (2006). The roles of student musicians in quartet rehearsals. *Psychology of Music, 34*(2), 262-282.

Koops, L. H. (2006). *Children's music making in The Gambia: Pathways to culturally informed music pedagogy.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3216143)

Kratus, J. (1989). A time analysis of the compositional processes used by children ages 7 to 11. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 37*(1), 5-20.

Kratus, J. (1994). Relationships among children's music audiation and their compositional processes and products. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 42*(2), 115-130.

Kratus, J. (2007). Music education at the tipping point. *Music Educators Journal, 94*(2), 42-48.

Kratus, J. (2012). Consider democracy: An ideal in music learning. In A. J. Palmer & A. de Quadros (Eds.), *Tanglewood II: Summoning the future of music education* (pp. 95-111). Chicago, IL: GIA Publications.

Kraus, B. N. (2003). *Musicians in flow: Optimal experience in the wind ensemble rehearsal.* (D.M.A. Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3084646)

Kroger, J. (2000). Ego identity status research in the new millennium. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 24,* 145-148. doi: 10.1080/016502500383250

Kruse, N. B. (2007). *Andragogy and music: Canadian and American models of music learning among adults.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3264178)

Legutki, A. R. (2010). *Self-determined music participation: The role of psychological needs satisfaction, intrinsic motivation, and self-regulation in the high school band experience.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3452091)

Lewin, K. & Lippitt, R. (1938). An experimental approach to the study of autocracy and democracy: A preliminary note. *Sociometry 1,* 292-300. doi: 10.2307/2785585

Lewin, K. (1999a). Democracy and the school. In M. Gold (Ed.) *The complete social scientist: A Kurt Lewin reader* (pp. 321-325). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Lewin, K. (1999b). The dynamics of group action. In M. Gold (Ed.) *The complete social scientist: A Kurt Lewin reader* (pp. 285-291). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

MacDonald, R. A. R. & Miell, D. (2000). Creativity and music education: The impact of social variables. *International Journal of Music Education, 36*, 58-68.

Macdonald, R., & Wilson, G. (2005). Musical identities of professional jazz musicians: A focus group investigation. *Psychology of Music, 33*(4), 395-417.

McCarthy, M. (2002). Social and cultural contexts of music teaching and learning: An introduction. In R. Colwell & C. Richardson (Eds.), *The new handbook of research on music teaching and learning* (pp. 563-565). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McPherson, G. E. (Ed.). (2006). *The child as musician: A handbook of musical development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mowery, W. F. (1993). *An investigation of the relationship between selected personality variables and retention of students in the string orchestra program.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 9412026)

Mursell, J. L. (1956). *Music education principles and programs*. New York, NY: Silver Burdett Company.

Parker, J. M. (2001). *The motivation techniques of an exemplary orchestra teacher: A case study.* (Masters thesis). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 1405977)

Partnership for 21st Century Skills. (2009). *P21 Framework Defintitions*. Retrieved from http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/P21_Framework_Definitions.pdf

Paul, S. J., & Ballantine, J. H. (2002). The sociology of education and connections to music education research. In R. Colwell & C. Richardson (Eds.), *The new handbook of research on music teaching and learning* (pp. 566-583). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Perkins, D. L. (1998). *Factors relating to student participation in public school string programs.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 9914293)

Print, M., Ørnstrøm, S., & Nielsen, H. S. (2002). Education for democratic processes in schools and classrooms. *European Journal of Education, 37*(2), 193-210.

Radocy, R. E. (1994). Qualitative research in music education: Why the fuss? *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 122*(Fall), 94-103.

Reeve, J. (2006). Teachers as facilitators: What autonomy-supportive teachers do and why their students benefit. *The Elementary School Journal, 106*(3), 225-236. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. doi: 10.1086/501484

Reimer, B. (2003). *A philosophy of music education: Advancing the vision* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Rolland, P. (2010). *Basic principles of violin playing*. Los Angeles, CA: Alfred Publishing.

Rolland, P. (1974). *The teaching of action in string playing*. Urbana, IL: Illinois String Research Associates.

Runco, M. A. (1999). Tension, adaptability, and creativity. In S. W. Russ (Ed.), *Affect, creative experience, and psychological adjustment* (pp. 165-194). Ann Arbor, MI: Braun-Blumfield.

Sandene, B. A. (1997). *An investigation of variables related to student motivation in instrumental music.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 9811178)

Scruggs, B. B. (2009). *Learning outcomes in two divergent middle school string orchestra classroom environments: A comparison of a learner-centered and a teacher-centered approach*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3371516)

Scruggs, B. B., Freer, P. K., & Myers, D. E. (2009). Constructivist practices to increase student engagement in the orchestra classroom. *Music Educators Journal, 95*(4), 53-59.

Schilf, P. R. (2001). *An analysis of interactions between teenagers and their parents in an intergenerational concert band.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3009633)

Shouldice, H. N. (2013). *One elementary music teacher's beliefs about musical ability: Connections to teaching practice and classroom culture.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3600989)

Silva, W. M. (2007). *Urban music: A case study of communities of learning in a music school.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3270029)

Snead, T. E. (2010). *Dichotomous musical worlds, Interactions between the musical lives of adolescents and school music-learning culture.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3411032)

St. John, P. A. (2006). Finding and making meaning: young children as musical collaborators. *Psychology of Music, 34*(2), 238-261.

Stabley, N. C. (2000). *The effects of involvement in chamber music on the intonation and attitude of 6th and 7th grade string orchestra players*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3000625)

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Stubley, E. V. (1992). Philosophical foundations. In R. Colwell (Ed.), *Handbook of research on music teaching and learning* (pp. 3-20). New York: Schirmer Books.

Suzuki, S. (1983). *Nurtured by love: The classic approach to Talent Education* (W. Suzuki, Trans.). Secaucus, NJ: Summy-Birchard Inc.

Swanwick, K. (1999). *Teaching music musically*. London: Routledge.

Szego, C. K. (2002). Music transmission and learning: A conspectus of ethnographic research in ethnomusicology and music education. In R. Colwell & C. Richardson (Eds.), *The new handbook of research on music teaching and learning* (pp. 707-729). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thibeault, M. D. (2007). *Music making lives: Score and setting in the musical experiences of high school students.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3282032)

United States Census Bureau. (2010). 2010 Census. Retrieved from: www.census.gov/2010census/, April 17, 2014.

Veblen, K. K. (1996). Truth, perceptions, and cultural constructs in ethnographic research: Music teaching and learning in Ireland. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 129*(Summer), 37-52.

Veblen, K. K., & Olsson, B. (2002). Community music: Toward an international overview. In R. Colwell & C. Richardson (Eds.), *The new handbook of research on music teaching and learning* (pp. 730-753). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Waldron, J. L. (2006). *Adult and student perceptions of music teaching and learning at the Goderich Celtic College, Goderich, Ontario, Canada: An ethnographic study.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3298124)

Wiggins, J. (1999/2000). The nature of shared musical understanding and its role in empowering independent musical thinking. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 143*(Winter), 65-90.

Wiggins, J. (2007). Authentic practice and process in music teacher education. *Music Educators Journal, 93*(3), 36.

Woodford, P. G. (2005). *Democracy and music education*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed. Vol. 5). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Young, P. (1978). *Playing the string game: Strategies for teaching cello and strings*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.