

EXPLORING INFORMAL MUSIC PEDAGOGY IN A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
COMMUNITY OF ELEMENTARY MUSIC TEACHERS

By

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ABSTRACT

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With the intent of understanding the music teacher's experience in informal music pedagogy, the purpose of this study was to explore the processes, perceptions, and practices of music teachers as they participated in a professional development community (PDC) to discuss and implement informal music learning practices. This study also investigated the nature of the teachers' participation within the PDC. While many studies have explored the characteristics and processes of students engaged in informal music learning, little research has focused specifically on the experience of music teachers who may have little or no experience with informal music learning practices. There is a need for research that explores how music teachers respond to exploring and implementing informal music pedagogy with their students and the role that a professional development community with other music teachers can play in this process.

This study was an instrumental case study using ethnographic techniques. In this study, the case was a professional development group (PDC) of four elementary general and choral music teachers who read research articles about, discussed, and implemented informal music learning. Data forms included video-recordings of PDC meetings, audio-recordings of semi-structured individual interviews, observations of music classes, comments from a private Facebook group, and collected artifacts. Data were coded and analyzed for emerging themes and trustworthiness was ensured through member checks, peer review, and data triangulation.

Themes emerged in four main areas: (1) “Applications and Perspectives,” (2) “Pedagogical Practices Supporting Informal Music Learning,” (3) “New Windows into Students’ Musicianship,” and (4) “The Professional Development Community.” The participants developed a variety of applications of informal music learning activities that they implemented in their classrooms, and they began to value the engagement, motivation, and independent musicianship that they saw blossoming in students, although they were concerned about the activities’ logistics and the perceptions of others. They employed several pedagogical strategies in implementing informal music learning activities; these strategies fell along a continuum ranging from having more teacher control to more student freedom. The teachers recognized the change in their practice and appreciated how their classrooms were becoming more democratic. As they stepped back to observe students’ “messy” processes, they valued the new windows they gained into students’ musicianship, including the development of unexpected student performers and leaders. Finally, in the PDC, the teachers developed a collaborative community, felt validated and encouraged by reading research articles, and enjoyed having autonomy in their professional development experience.

Based on the results, I recommended that informal music learning may serve as an approach for music teachers to support independent musicianship and develop a more democratic classroom, but they need support and validation when implementing these concepts. Music teacher education should continue to introduce informal music learning to undergraduates and find ways to help practicing music teachers explore these ideas, and PDCs may serve as a way for music teachers to have autonomy in their professional development, leading to more effective and long-lasting teaching change. Ideas for future research are also discussed.

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*Dedicated to Derek
for his unconditional and unwavering support.*

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To Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore!

Amen. (Jude 1: 24-25)

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INTRODUCTION

Kendra: There's so many things that you can tell them and tell them and tell them, but until they actually do it themselves, they don't even realize what—you know I mean? They don't even realize what they're doing or how to do it. Even just to realize, like, "Oh, I can take the melody of 'Dynamite,' and I can play it on the xylophone." And then they hear other groups doing it, and then they can try it. You know, I probably could've told 'em that they could do that, but they wouldn't actually do it unless they were experimenting on their own.

Diana: Maybe, too, the confidence that they could sing that song. That it wasn't just the artist. That they could perform it, too. And that it didn't happen (snaps fingers) so fast. They had to actually, many of them, go home and practice it to learn all the words.

Kendra: I think giving them permission to mess with it, and [that] it's okay. Like, (puts hands to chest) I need that permission still, as well. . . . And once they're confident, they'll [be] like the girl who went home and started playing it at home.

Cara: My kids were really proud of themselves. The process was cool to see. It was cool to see them working things out in a way, kind of like how they talked about in the article, like, "That sounds cool," or "Let's add that." That process was really fun to watch, but I think that what they came up with, they had ownership of it in a way that they wouldn't have had if I would've been like, "Play the drum part like this." So that ownership piece, I think, was huge for my kids, and the permission to experiment and to take ownership of it. (PDC meeting #4, 01/29/12)

This study was an instrumental case study of four music teachers who met regularly as part of a professional development community in which they explored, developed activities, and implemented new pedagogical strategies in their classroom based on the topic of informal music learning. The conversation above took place during the fourth of eight group meetings that occurred nearly every other week over the course of five months. In particular, these music teachers had just implemented one of their first activities using informal music learning practices in which their students tried to recreate a popular music song using classroom instruments. The teachers' enthusiasm bounced from one to another as they shared the responses of their students. They recognized that, although their students needed permission to experiment and explore music making on their own, their students were developing confidence and ownership in their abilities. The teachers appreciated how the processes their students were using aligned with the processes they had read in several research articles on informal music learning in the professional development community, and recognized the relevant connections students were making that bridged the gap between school music and the music they heard and experienced outside of school.

While research has shown that children's music-making inside of school may differ from their music-making outside of school (Griffin, 2009), with more formal learning taking place within school, the curricular content and pedagogical processes of both formal and informal music learning have a place in school music education, including in elementary general music. However, because music education in the schools and music teacher education traditionally has focused primarily on formal learning, music teachers may lack the training and experience to

implement informal music-learning processes in their classrooms. For example, Allsup (2003), as a teacher and researcher in his study working with adolescent garage band students after school, realized the need for a shift in his teaching in this setting, stating, “I needed to teach *with* my students, rather than *to* my students” (p. 34, italics in original). Similarly, in her large-scale project to implement informal music learning in schools in the United Kingdom, Green (2008) described how the teachers felt a sense of anxiety in using informal music learning practices. One of the teachers from the study stated his difficulty:

I’m a control freak, really. And I’ve hated standing back. I’ve found that very difficult. Mainly because I felt I haven’t earned my money. Mainly because I like things to be at my fingertips and at my control. And I’ve had to learn to stand back and let the pupils in a sense, decide their own learning, informally.... (Green, 2008, p. Chapter. 2, section. 3, para. 4).

In considering how formally-trained music teachers might begin to use informal practices with students, several questions arise: How do music teachers perceive informal music learning in their teaching and their students’ learning? What pedagogical, philosophical, and procedural changes do music teachers have to make? Are there any struggles or barriers that influence if, when, and how music teachers include informal learning? How does informal music learning fit in with, and possibly complement, their formal practices? This research study began exploring some of these questions by describing the experiences and perceptions of a group of practicing elementary general and choral music teachers who met in a professional development community that focused on using informal music learning practices in the music classroom.

CHAPTER 1: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Music education is at a tipping point (Kratus, 2007). Several scholars in music education have commented on the gap between school music and the music that children and adolescents choose to listen to, perform, and create outside of school (Bowman, 2004; Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2006; Griffin, 2009; Harwood, 1998; Kratus, 2007; Waldron & Veblen, 2009). Kratus (2007) compared the qualities that typically characterize in- and outside-of-school music and stated that, while in-school music tends to include primarily classical repertoire created by others, focuses on meeting curricular objectives through large-ensemble performances, and makes limited use of technology, outside-of-school music tends to include primarily non-classical repertoire frequently created or arranged by the performers, focuses on meeting the goals of the performers through individual choice, and often utilizes technology to aid in the musical experience. Based on this comparison, Kratus recommended changing music education so that it is more relevant for how children and adolescents experience music outside of school.

Rideout (2005) suggested that music educators consider the following question: “Whose music?” meaning that the music selected for study and performance should not only consider the goals of the teacher but should ideally strike a practical balance between teacher goals and the students’ culture. Others have also taken this position and promoted the use of popular and other vernacular musics in school (O’Flynn, 2006). However, rather than focusing on the structural content and stylistic categorizations that belong in school music, music educators need to look at the processes and practices that are typically associated with these outside-of-school genres (Bowman, 2004; Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2008). Since these practices are typically learned

outside of the classroom and outside of the formal instruction found in large ensembles and studio lessons, they are typically labelled “informal music learning” (Green, 2001; 2008).

Folkestad (2006) warned that informal music learning should not be equated with popular music, nor should informal music be equated with out-of-school music, limiting all in-school music to the formal realm. In this section, I will review literature related to informal music learning by highlighting the characteristics of informal music learning described in research primarily with adolescents, ethnographies of young children’s independent music making, and the rationale given for the use of informal music learning in educational settings. Then, based on this literature, I will demonstrate that informal music learning has unique characteristics that promotes the development of valuable musical and social skills for learners, but also calls upon a need for new pedagogies, perceptions, and practices for music teachers.

Characteristics of Informal Music Learning

Researchers have explored the use of informal music learning outside of school, in after-school programs, and in school music classrooms. In attempt to provide clarity to the distinction between formal and informal learning, Folkestad (2006) developed four aspects in which these two learning types differ: *situation*, *learning style*, *ownership*, and *intentionality* (pp. 141-142). Folkestad explained that the *situation* referred to the setting in which the learning occurred, *learning style* to the characteristics of the learning process, *ownership* to the individuals with power and ability to make decisions in their learning, and *intentionality* in the ultimate goal of the learning. Using Folkestad’s categories proves useful in understanding the characteristics of the students’ experience in informal music learning. I will begin by describing each study

individually according to the *situations* in which they occur, and then summarize the studies by comparing them across Folkestad's other three categories. Even though the purpose of this study is to explore the experience of music teachers in a professional learning community implementing informal music processes in the classroom, by exploring students' learning in these various contexts, I hope to illuminate the characteristics of informal music processes that music teachers may want to provide in their own settings.

Out-of-School Contexts

One of the first studies to explore the processes used by students in an informal learning context outside of school was Campbell's (1995) seminal study of adolescents, aged 14 to 16, who were members of two garage bands in Seattle. Campbell described the boys as friends "who were gathering to go beyond the point of mere listening" (p. 14), which is frequently the end point for many social musical experiences outside of school. The band members met in the basements and garages of the members and had similar instrumentations of electric and acoustic guitars, drum set, and bass (played on an electric guitar), and they rotated responsibilities of singing melody and harmony. Musicians said that they were influenced by a variety of sources: their family members and neighbors who listened to rock music and also played or sang the music, media from recordings and music videos that provided exposure to their preferred music, and school music instruction that provided lessons playing wind instruments and in reading notation. However, the musicians described a dislike and dissatisfaction with their school music experiences.

In documenting the bands' informal music learning processes, Campbell (1995) stated that band members learned music primarily by ear. Typically, one musician served as a leader

who had the best understanding of the music or playing technique and guided the other band members “to draw the others toward greater musical accuracy” (p. 18), but band members also worked on song material independently outside of rehearsals. Learning the songs was a difficult process and took place over several weeks of rehearsals; however, according to Campbell, the learning in this informal context was not unstructured. Instead, it required deep “immersion” in the material, peer-teaching, and a commitment to the group. Ultimately, Campbell did not necessarily recommend for garage bands to become a part of the school curriculum, but suggested that music teachers should look to the processes used by garage band musicians to inform pedagogical processes and decisions.

Similarly, Jaffurs (2004) used ethnography to explore the practices and musicality of children in a garage band who met outside of school. Jaffurs chose to conduct the study after being surprised to discover that one of her students from school participated in and composed for a garage band. Jaffurs was the current or former music teacher for three of the five participants, which included two girls and three boys, all of whom had all received some prior private lessons. After observing, video-taping, and interviewing the band members and their rehearsals, as well as interviewing the members’ parents, Jaffurs found that descriptions of music making related to both formal and informal learning processes, in that they sometimes referred to concepts learned in school music classes, and they also described how they informally learned the songs on their own by ear. However, it is unclear whether Jaffurs was referring to formal and informal according to the learning context or processes. Other findings of the study revealed that the musicians taught each other and critiqued each other using sophisticated musical skills, and they frequently engaged in “doodling,” which she defined as “the sporadic and intermittent playing of

musical ‘licks’ and ideas that had nothing to do with the music that the musicians were rehearsing” (Jaffurs, 2004, p. 196). Similar to Campbell (1995), the musicians were influenced by musical family members, and one member served as the leader, which she labeled the “on-site transmitter” (Jaffurs, 2004, p. 197). In applying her findings in this study to her own teaching, Jaffurs (2004) stated simply, “My garage band taught me how to teach” (p. 198), in that they taught her to be sensitive to the desires of her students, to ask her students what kind of music and musical activities they enjoyed, and to use students’ input in her curricular and pedagogical decisions.

Davis (2005) followed the music making processes as well as the social interactions of a three-member band. Davis (2005) had an even closer relationship with the participants than Jaffurs (2004), as one of the musicians was her son. One member was in high school, and the other two were college freshmen. While only two of the members were friends prior to forming the band, Davis stated that the friendship grew between all three as a result of their time together. Further, their participation in the band allowed for personal expression of meaning and emotion, which played a role in their individual identity construction. In their process of learning and composing music, the musicians fell into a “cyclical pattern of listening, experimenting, featuring, and ‘backing off’ when others were soloing” (p. 13). Davis described the band’s “journey for a song” (p. 13), in which they would jam for long periods of time over repetitive progressions or ostinato patterns as a part of their creative process. In learning their material, the members used a “mnemonic process” (Davis, 2005, p. 14), since they did not write down their compositions, but Davis did not describe this with much detail. The musicians also worked on their material individually outside of rehearsals and used peer teaching within rehearsals.

Finally, technology was an important feature of the group's focus, and they spent a great deal of time to develop the right "sound" using digital audio sequencing software and recording software.

After-School Contexts

Two studies examined characteristics of music making in rock bands that met in the school, but were not a part of the official school curriculum (Allsup, 2003; Abramo, 2011). Instead, the band members were students in the teacher-researchers' respective schools; thus, the bands were formed specifically as a part of these research studies. While it could be argued that the bands had a forced or contrived membership, since they began through the invitation of their teacher, this context is useful to consider because it could provide a model for other music teachers who may not be able to implement these types of learning contexts during school hours. Regardless, the students who chose to participate in these studies did so voluntarily, and they formed bands based on peer groupings rather than teacher assignments.

In an early study of informal music learning, Allsup (2003) ethnographically described the social interactions and the democratic processes used by himself—the facilitator and researcher—and nine concert band students in two self-composed groups. Unlike the outside-of-school contexts, which had similar instrumentation (combinations of guitar, bass, keyboard, percussion, and technology), these musicians were allowed to use either their own band instruments, percussion from the band room, or an instrument brought from home.

The two groups in Allsup's (2003) study functioned quite differently. One group learned primarily through experimenting and "jamming," which resulted in all group members contributing to the compositions. The second group, which seemed to have more prior formal

experience, discussed all of their ideas prior to making any music and was “more conceptual than exploratory” (Allsup, 2003, p. 32). This led to difficulties in their decision-making, and, ultimately, the second group chose to compose independently using notation. However, Allsup (2003) felt that the use of notation did not benefit the second group: “On paper, musical ideas tended to become fixed and self-conscious. This in turn seemed to inhibit not only the work’s evolution, but the group’s development” (p. 32). Both of the groups did use peer teaching, though, which resulted in the creation of new friendships and the expression of new musical roles within the groups.

Abramo (2011) also studied the characteristics of musicians in garage bands after school, but looked specifically at the difference in compositional processes according to the musicians’ gender. The students, after accepting invitations from Abramo to participate in the after-school program, self-selected their groups, with some individuals participating in multiple groups. The bands included one all-male group, one all-female group, and two mixed-gender groups. Abramo argued that, while other studies of informal music learning considered all musicians’ compositional processes as the same, the boys and girls in his study exhibited different practices during composing. The males tended to communicate primarily through “musical gestures” (Abramo, 2011, p. 29), with limited talking in between playing, and they frequently played during their own and each other’s comments. Abramo (2011) also described the boys as being “reluctant” to compose lyrics, and, when they did, they wrote them independently (p. 30). The girls used more verbal communication, which had a more structured role in the rehearsals. They frequently would play for a period and then discuss their playing, which Abramo (2011) described as “compartmentalized verbal and musical acts” (p. 31). The girls placed greater

importance on writing the lyrics, which often served as a catalyst for their musical composing. In the mixed-gender group, the girls and the boy could sense the difference in their creative processes, which occasionally led to frustration and conflict among band members. Based on these findings, Abramo (2011) recommended that music educators adopt a more “pluralistic definition of popular music practices” (p. 36) that recognizes the informal processes and practices of both genders.

In-School Contexts

Researchers have also explored students’ responses to informal music processes in the music classroom (Davis, 2010; Green, 2006, 2008; Tobias, 2010). More specifically, studies have taken place in multiple middle general music classes in the United Kingdom, in an elementary-school beginning band, and in a music technology and songwriting high school class. These studies provide a unique glimpse into the use of informal music learning in a school context and its implications for students.

Lucy Green (2006, 2008) pioneered the use of informal music learning in schools in the United Kingdom using a seven-stage project and documented the perspectives of students and teachers in her book, *Music, Informal Learning and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy* (2008). Green developed the project’s pedagogy and activities based on her prior research with popular musicians (Green, 2001). In this research, Green interviewed several self-taught, informally-trained musicians and found that the popular musicians acquired their musical knowledge and expertise through different types of processes than are commonly used in formal music learning. The popular musicians learned the musical content knowledge and cultural practices primarily through enculturation and featured five main characteristics: (a) aural

copying of recordings using “purposive listening,” (b) “peer-directed learning” and “group learning,” (c) haphazard learning of skills and knowledge, (d) personal enjoyment and motivation, and (e) an emphasis on expressive qualities, as opposed to only technical skills (Green, 2008, Chapter 1, section. 2, para. 6-7).

Green (2008) argued for the need for her approach by stating that many students are not reached through traditional formal music instruction, nor have music educators been welcoming toward the skills and processes employed by popular musicians. By applying the practices of popular musicians in the school music classroom, Green explored how this would affect students’ developing musicality and musical identity:

Through this, the approaches could, I believed, help to demystify the world of music, including its commercial manifestations, making pupils more confident of their own musicality in relation to notions of musical value and musical ability, more discerning, or more ‘musically critical’. (Green, 2008, Chapter 1, section 1, para. 8)

The project, called “Musical Futures” (Green, 2008), took place in 21 secondary schools in the United Kingdom and included around 1,500 13- and 14-year-old students and 32 music teachers over the course of four years. As students and teachers participated in the project, Green collected data through classroom observations, interviews with peer groups, teacher interviews, anonymous teacher surveys, and hidden audio recordings of student rehearsals (with permission gained after the fact). As mentioned above, the project took place in seven stages, as summarized below, with each stage lasting for four to six classroom periods.

Table 1. *Green's (2008) Popular Music Pedagogical Stages for Informal Learning*

	Green's Name for Pedagogical Stage	Summary of Stage
Stage 1	"The heart of the project – dropping pupils into the deep end"	Students chose peer groups and selected a song to learn. Then they listened and copied the recording with almost no adult guidance. This resulted in peer-teaching, haphazard learning, and integrated performing, listening, and some improvising.
Stage 2	"Modelling aural learning with popular music"	Students still selected their peer group and used peer-teaching, haphazard and integrated learning. However, the students were given more initial guidance from the teacher and were provided with a CD with split tracks of the same song.
Stage 3	"The deep end revisited"	This stage replicated the initial stage, but the students approached the task with greater confidence and musical sophistication.
Stage 4	"Informal composing"	Students created their own compositions in peer groups.
Stage 5	"Modelling composing"	A visiting band demonstrated their song-writing process for students and then provided mentoring as peer groups composed again.
Stage 6	"Informal learning with classical music"	This stage replicated the initial stage, but the students selected their choice of song from pre-selected classical pieces from well-known television advertisements.
Stage 7	"Modelling aural learning with classical music"	In this stage, the students selected and aurally copied a classical piece from a pre-selected set of more unfamiliar pieces.

The results of the project revealed that students became highly motivated to participate in music class (Green, 2008). Teachers observed that some of the students who had previously been the most disengaged in music class became the most participatory, with some demonstrating unseen musical and/or leadership qualities. The learning took place rather haphazardly, with students commonly going for long stretches of time with what seemed to be a

cacophonous mess and only a few snippets of music making, only to result with a reasonably successful musical product when they finally put all of the parts together. Also, rather than delving into their parts directly, students often sang and danced along to the recording, performing first the melodic rhythm on their instruments, before separating out their distinct parts. Additionally, the teachers recognized an improvement in students' "critical musicality," which was evidenced primarily in students' listening skills (Green, 2008). The students had a much more sophisticated ability to hear the layers of sound within pieces they heard and describe it with greater precision. They attained skills in performing and composing using their instruments, although Green felt that more research needed to delve into the composing phases of the project.

Finally, these skills transferred to the classical music examples. Originally, the teachers were concerned that the students would resist copying the classical music, because the students had previously expressed extremely negative attitudes toward this genre in their formal music lessons (Green, 2008). However, in applying the informal process with classical music, the students developed a new appreciation for the sound of the music, as well as the sophistication needed to perform and compose that style of music. In this way, Green (2008) achieved her hope that students would develop a "critical musicality" in that, as a result of these stages, students exhibited "increasing aural musical understanding and appreciation concerning inter-sonic musical properties and relationships" with multiple musical genres, as well as a "greater awareness of how the music industry works" (Chapter 4, section 7, para. 2). The students appreciated the experience, describing their enjoyment to work with peers, and having autonomy in their musical selections and rehearsals (Green, 2008).

Overall, the significance of Green's (2008) project in implementing informal music in the school lies in the size and scope of the project. Green not only documented the successes but also the negative perspectives of students and teachers. However, the overwhelming response from all was positive. Also, because the project included so many participants, Green was able to support her findings through multiple perspectives and situations, adding to the possible generalizability and transferability of the results. Another strength of the study included the underlying pedagogical structure. The stages of the project were created through thoughtful research and consideration of informal music processes from Green's (2001) investigation of popular musicians. Green (2008) cautioned against considering the project as a curriculum, but rather stressed the pedagogical processes of informal music learning. Ultimately, the success of Green's project can be seen in the continued implementation of the Musical Futures project beyond the data collection period, as many of the schools opted to use informal music practices beyond the frame of the research project. This indicated that not only students and teachers, but also administrators and parents, recognized the value of the program and chose to adopt the project on their own accord.

In one of the few studies to examine informal music learning with elementary-aged students, Davis (2010) served as a teacher and researcher to explore the use of informal music processes in a fifth-grade beginning band classroom. Davis found that, through making decisions and expressing themselves, the students' sense of musical identity developed, and the students created aural images and used metaphorical processes to develop their knowledge of music. Similar to Jaffurs' (2004) concept of "doodling," Davis (2010) documented the use of "fiddling" as a common strategy used in the following ways:

(a) to secure fingering for an immediate musical passage, (b) as a challenge and for enjoyment, and (c) as an exploratory device to connect to and facilitate aural processes and as a precursor to metaphorical processes. (Davis, 2010, p. 7)

For example, students used “fiddling” to aurally compare songs heard in music class with songs remembered from prior experiences outside the music room. Davis (2010) explained that “fiddling” led to “scaffolding, discussion, peer mentoring, and, most importantly, time for student to learn through their fingers” (p. 14). Through their metaphorical processes, Davis argued, students could not only transfer and develop their understandings of musical concepts, but also the exert agency in their personalization of the musical experience.

Set in an alternative type of school music setting, Tobias (2010) studied the informal music processes of high school students in a songwriting and technology class. Because of the software programs used in the school music technology lab, the students had to learn to operate these systems parallel to implementing their informal music processes. However, through the use of technology, the students could enact many different roles, including “songwriters, performers, sound engineers, recordists, mix engineers, and producers” (Tobias, 2010, p. 528). Many of the processes they employed matched those identified in other studies of informal music learning, such as having a choice of repertoire and groups, listening to music, and using multiple forms of communication—verbal, musical, and gestural. The students had to develop their aural skills in order to express their ideas in order to compose, record, and digitally manipulate their songs, and they were often influenced by popular music in their musical decisions. Unlike Green (2008), who found that students’ informal music making occurred haphazardly, Tobias (2010) found that students’ “roles and processes can sometimes take place sequentially and at other

times simultaneously and recursively” (p. 534). Two differences between Green’s (2008) and Tobias’ (2010) studies may account for this discrepancy. First, the age difference between the populations studied may have been a contributing factor. Second, Tobias included both roles and processes in his conclusion, rather than just processes like Green. Regardless, more research is needed to determine whether informal learning occurs through more haphazard or sequential means, or perhaps a combination of the two.

Additional Perspectives for Understanding Informal Music Learning

While examining informal music learning according to its context—outside of school, after school, and in school—provides insights into the quality of this experience for students, this categorization only provides one perspective for understanding informal learning: the physical location, or the “situation” of learning (Folkestad, 2006, p. 141). As stated in the beginning of this section, Folkestad (2006) created four categories for explaining the difference between informal and formal music learning: *situation*, *learning style*, *ownership*, and *intentionality* (pp. 141-142). By summarizing the studies of informal learning described above through the remaining three aspects, we can gain a clearer understanding of students’ informal music learning experiences.

Learning style. According to Folkestad (2006), the learning situation refers to “the character, nature and quality of the learning process” (p. 141). Qualities of the informal learning style include the influence of outside experiences from home and popular music that affected the musicians’ choices, but school music experiences were also found as influences (Campbell, 2010; Davis, 1995; Green, 2008; Jaffurs, 2004; Tobias, 2010). Musicians frequently experimented with sounds (Allsup, 2003; Campbell, 1995; Davis, 2005; Green, 2008; Jaffurs,

2004) in both learning repertoire and composing. Often the experimental process was described using words like “doodling” (Jaffurs, 2004, p. 196) and “fiddling” (Davis, 2005, para. 25). The learning process was integrated holistically with multiple forms of doing, including listening, performing, improvising, and composing (Davis, 2005; Green, 2006; 2008), although Tobias (2010) found that these processes, along with various musical roles, sometimes occurred simultaneously and other times sequentially.

The musicians often played for long periods of time without breaks (Davis, 2005; Green, 2006, 2008), and they often repeated complete songs or small pieces of the songs numerous times. In sharing their ideas, musicians communicated using verbal, gestural, or musical forms (Allsup, 2002; Jaffurs, 2006; Tobias, 2010). However, Abramo (2011) found that these processes and primary forms of communication may differ for boys and girls, with girls implementing greater structure in rehearsing a greater amount of collaboration and language to communicate ideas.

Perhaps one of the most prominent *learning style* features is the use of copying by ear. In giving his definition of *learning styles*, Folkestad (2006) specifically listed aural transmission as an informal process, just as learning music from notation would be a more formal process. All of the studies described above featured aural learning of music as an important characteristic of informal music learning (Abramo, 2011; Allsup, 2003; Campbell, 1995; Davis, 2005, 2010; Green, 2008; Jaffurs, 2004; Tobias, 2010). While the teaching of “aural skills” has been a mainstay in music theory, the type of aural learning in informal music is used holistically by students and involves experimenting with sounds and copying songs (Green, 2001, 2006, 2008; Davis, 2005, 2010; Jaffurs, 2004).

Research is beginning to indicate that the processes used by musicians from a “vernacular” or informal music background may be different than those of formally trained musicians (Woody & Lehman, 2010). In a study comparing the skills of these two types of musicians, 24 college music majors listened to melodies and then were rated on their singing and instrumental performance of those melodies. The vernacular musicians performed both tasks better than those who had only formal training. In describing their process, the vernacular musicians considered the underlying harmonic structure much more frequently than the formal musicians, and they described the melodies as “predictable” (Woody & Lehman, 2010, p. 108), which suggested that they could comprehend and predict the flow of the melody based on its structure. Conversely, the formal musicians described the melodies as “unpredictable” (p. 108) and most frequently thought about instrumental fingerings. The researchers attributed part of the vernacular musicians’ success to their stated prior experience in completing similar musical tasks, like improvising in an ensemble and copying recordings and familiar songs. Based on the results, Woody and Lehman recommended the greater use of aural learning in school music.

Ownership. Folkestad’s (2006) conception of the term *ownership* related to the autonomy and agency given to musicians in the learning situation; in other words, “who ‘owns’ the decisions of the activity; *what* to do as well as *how*, *where*, and *when*?” (p. 142, italics in original). Thus, *ownership* refers to the opportunities for choice and decision-making in learning activities, a continuum between “didactic teaching versus open and self-regulated learning” (Folkestad, 2006, p. 142). All of the studies of informal music learning included in this review of literature demonstrated opportunities for musicians to make decisions in several aspects of their learning, rather than participating in teacher-directed instruction. All of the

musicians selected their peer groupings for their ensembles, whether these friendships and acquaintances were from outside of school or relationships made in the band room. This also meant that group sizes could vary widely, as Green (2008) reported that group sizes ranged from two to eight students, but students were given freedom to work independently, if they chose.

Also, musicians had choice in their instruments and song selections, allowing for them to select music that held personal meaning and was in a style in which they were often already acculturated. Even in the stages of learning classical music in Green's (2008) study, students were provided with multiple examples from which to choose. Interestingly, Green (2008) documented that, by these later stages, the students did not necessarily choose their classical piece based on preference but listened critically and thought about which piece would be the most manageable for their particular skills as a group. While the studies in school and after school had predetermined rehearsal times, the studies of informal music learning out of school revealed that the musicians also exerted choice in when they rehearsed; Jaffurs (2004) reported having to wait several weeks before the garage band she observed met to rehearse. Green (2008) described how students enjoyed having choice in terms of their rehearsal pacing, structure, and progress.

In particular, Allsup (2003) stressed the importance of democracy in the informal music process because it helped build personal meaning and community simultaneously along with musical skills, and he also recognized that these processes may be at odds with traditional teaching methods. The musicians' learning took place primarily through self-direction, peer-teaching, and group learning (Green, 2008). Of their own initiative, many of the garage band musicians practiced separately, so that they had some readiness within the group rehearsals

(Campbell, 2005; Davis, 2005). Within rehearsals, the “fiddling” (Davis, 2005) may have also facilitated this self-direction through exploration. Several of the studies described the frequency of peer-teaching (Allsup, 2003; Campbell, 1995; Davis, 2005; Green, 2008; Jaffurs, 2004). Campbell (1995), Allsup (2003), and Green (2008) all noted the emergence of an “expert player” (Campbell, 1995, p. 17) or leader, who stepped forward to provide musical knowledge. Other individuals became leaders to navigate the social relationships within peer groups. Green (2008) described the peer-teaching as “peer-directed learning” because it occurred as a result of peers “watching, listening, and [participating in] imitation” (Chapter 6, section 2, para. 3), and she also indicated that group learning took place unconsciously as they made music together, which was a more indirect form of learning from each other. However, in studies in which a music teacher was present, the teacher had to embody a different kind of role that allowed for students to engage in peer teaching and learning; this role will be described in greater detail in Chapter 2.

Intentionality. In the final category comparing formal and informal learning, *intentionality* referred to the focus or overarching goal of the learning (Folkestad, 2006). Folkestad (2006) defined this term, stating, “toward what is the mind directed: toward learning how to play or towards playing....? Within a pedagogical or a musical framework?” (p. 142). In formal pedagogical approaches, the teacher often breaks down songs into various components or musical elements and instrumental performances into playing technique. While this may be useful in isolating and developing skills, it results in separating the aesthetic music experience into a learning experience that *prepares* students for an aesthetic musical experience. However, in informal learning processes, the musicians’ learning of musical concepts and instrumental

techniques more often is integrated with simply playing the music. Thus, the aesthetic experience is not separated from the learning experience.

Because the informal musicians had greater control over the *when* and *how* of their learning, they had to be both error detectors and fixers, determining solutions for problems that arose in their rehearsals, leading students to have to “think through their fingers” (Davis, 2010, p. 351). Green (2008) documented that this *intentionality* allowed for the development of autonomy, but also, a non-sequential progression of learning. The musicians sometimes sounded worse before they improved, but she argued that, if teachers offer too much help, it could be “detrimental to their learning” (Green, 2008, Chapter 3, section 8, para. 7), which suggests that the problem-solving skills students employed in the absence of teacher guidance may be a necessary component of developing their critical musicality. Also, because the problem solving occurred as a direct result of the *intentional* goal of their playing (i.e., performing their selected piece), the “learning to play” was an holistic part of the “playing” (Folkestad, 2006, p. 142).

Informal Learning in Children’s Musicking

Although informal music learning is frequently associated with adolescents and garage bands, a plethora of ethnographic research has documented the informal learning practices of children’s music making. Looking at ethnographic studies of children’s music making can inform school-focused research in informal music learning, because understanding how young children informally make music on their own outside of school will inform an understanding of informal music processes, as they are considered in schools.

One of the first studies to describe children's music making ethnographically was Blacking's (1967) seminal study of the Venda children from South Africa. Blacking (1967) stated that the "essential meaning" of Venda children's music was found in the social "context" (p. 6). He observed that Venda children had a separate musical culture from adults, both in content and context, and that children rarely attempted to perform the music of adults. Blacking recognized the importance of social interactions and peer learning among the Venda children. Additionally, he described several types of children's songs, including boys' and girls' songs, play songs, and the Venda national dance. Most notably, Blacking observed that children did not learn songs in a progression from easiest to most complicated, and that learning the songs could function as a form of social capital for the children. Blacking stated that the Venda children "have no formal training" (p. 29), and thus, it can be presumed, based on his descriptions, that children learned through informal means as they taught each other and learned music through enculturation. Blacking was the first to recognize these social behaviors of children's music making, whereas previous ethnographers had focused primarily on the structural content of music. Thus, Blacking changed the way in which children's music was understood in ethnomusicological research.

Following Blacking's lead, music educators began to use ethnographic methods to study children's music making in out-of-school contexts. Three studies (Campbell, 1991; Harwood, 1987; Riddell, 1990) comparatively analyzed the song content and processes of children's music making on the playground. Riddell (1990) collected and analyzed the musical content and bodily movements in sixteen hand clapping, jumprope, and ring games of fifth grade children from an elementary school in Los Angeles, California, analyzing them in comparison to

historical folk song collections. Similarly, Harwood (1987) created a song collection of memorized songs of fourth- and fifth-grade students from Champaign, Illinois. However, rather than collecting the songs in the field, Harwood met with each child individually, prompting them to remember as many songs as they could from any context that they could remember, which was, unfortunately, removed from the original musical context. Campbell (1991) collected children's songs from a playground in Indiana and compared them to known children songs from Western and non-Western cultures.

These three studies revealed that children made music that demonstrated rhythmic sophistication, including syncopation and two-versus-three beat movements (Campbell, 1991; Harwood, 1987; Riddell, 1990). All three studies described influences and references to popular culture and media in the content of the children's songs. In comparing the "songs *by* children" with the "songs *for* children," Campbell (1991) found that the "songs *by* children" had a smaller singing range. Additionally, the children frequently included movements like hand clapping and dancing in a social context as they performed (Campbell, 1991; Harwood, 1987; Riddell, 1990).

While the previous ethnographies focused primarily on comparing the structural components of children's music, more recent studies have focused on the social interactions and sonic environments that serve as the context for children's musicking. Dzansi (2004) studied the music making of Ghanaian children on the playground during school recess time and after school at a community playground. Similar to Blacking (1967), Dzansi found that the children did not necessarily perform simple music, but instead found that the children "performed complicated games without realizing it" (p. 87). Dzansi also found that the children constantly were in

“active participation” (p. 85), in which they were constantly watching, practicing, and doing the activities in a holistic manner.

Griffin (2009) used narrative inquiry to describe the musical experiences of 20 second and third grade children both inside and outside of school. In comparing the experiences of the children, Griffin stated that, in both settings, children made music through spontaneous singing and humming. However, outside of school, children’s music making did not have as much structure. The children seemed to be aware of the difference between the music making in both settings, and Griffin concluded that the characteristics of the more formal experiences in school did not necessarily relate to those outside of school.

Two studies (Lum, 2008; Lum & Campbell, 2007) used the framework of “soundscapes” to explore children’s musical worlds. Based upon the anthropological theory of “*scapes*” (Appadurai, 1990) to understand multiple areas of influence, the authors developed the idea of “soundscapes” to explain the multiple types and layers of influence affecting children’s musical enculturation. Lum (2008) described the musical home environments of first-grade children in Singapore, while Lum & Campbell (2007) described the sonic environment of an American elementary school. Like several of the ethnographies listed above, the children in both studies had a great deal of exposure to music from popular culture. In particular, the Singapore children had a great deal of exposure to popular music through television and radio, which was primarily selected by their parents (Lum, 2008).

In an American elementary school, children often made music spontaneously, frequently in the form of musical utterances, and these expressions often added to the expression in their play (Lum & Campbell, 2007). Additionally, the children engaged in peer teaching and

movement as a part of their music learning and music making. Lum and Campbell found that the amount of music making, particularly through social interactions, was extensive, and they wrote that, “The open-ended sociability of music was at times startling, and its pervasiveness at play and in learning was a reminder of how music serves human functions and finds its way into private spaces and social interactions” (p. 46). Based on these observations, they went on to suggest the increased use of movement, as well as opportunities for spontaneous and creative music making, in music classrooms.

Using the concept of “situated learning” by Lave and Wenger (1991), Harwood justified the playground as an appropriate context for studying children’s musicking with useful applications for music education. Harwood described how the children utilized peer-teaching of the music through aural and visual processes in groups, with frequent commentary from those not actively musicking but participating as a part of the social group. Thus, the learning process included a rotating process of performing, listening, and critiquing. As students learned songs, they stood outside of the active participants, performing snippets of the songs as they caught on. As these members gained enough skill, they became the active performers, while more experienced performers shared their spots. These experienced performers then stood outside the group to provide comments on the musicking. This process occurred through frequent and numerous repetitions of the whole song, giving the students “independent access to the song, on their own time and in a sequence” (Harwood, 1998, p. 56). However, when asked how they learned the songs, the children told Harwood (1998), “We just play,” (p. 57) which suggested that the students viewed their learning as fun, rather than work.

Koops (2006, 2010) studied the informal music practices of children from a community in The Gambia with the specific goal of applying these children's practices in American music pedagogy. Koops found that the children's musical culture was different than the school music culture, and that, on their own, the children exerted agency in the choices and expressions of their music-making and movement. Additionally, the children commonly engaged in a process of music learning that included "listening, observing, and doing," similar to Harwood's (1998) study described above. Finally, Koops called for the incorporation of these concepts into a "culturally informed pedagogy," and she specifically recommended that music teachers recognize the agency of children in their musical choices and become familiar with a specific musical genre and the musical culture associated with it, so that students can develop a deeper understanding of the unfamiliar music. Although Koops was most likely speaking primarily to the idea of teaching and learning a non-Western culture, these ideas can certainly apply to any genre of music, including student-selected styles.

Finally, in one of the most comprehensive texts on the topic, Campbell's (2010) book, *Songs in their Heads*, provided many insights into the nature of children's music making. Campbell studied the musical play of children in a large American city, and she divided the book into three main sections. The first section consisted of ethnographic observations of children making music in a variety of settings, including music classrooms, general classrooms, elementary and preschool playgrounds, a school bus, and even a toy store. From these settings, Campbell described the natural and consistent flow of music, which occurred both consciously and unconsciously. The children created musical utterances to accompany their play, and they

also performed “rhythmicking behaviors,” in which the children’s energy bubbled over into a continuous performance of music and movement:

In various settings and under a host of circumstances, children tapped, slapped, and played their rhythms on themselves, on tables, chairs, desks, and floors, and on real instruments. They also bounced, nodded, and “grooved” to the sounds they made or heard, gesturing with their hands and arms or moving their entire bodies rhythmically to some external or internal pulse or pattern. Rarely were children silent and still....

(Campbell, 2010, p. 99)

Based on this experience of observing, Campbell reflected that music teachers should take greater care to understand students’ prior musical knowledge, experience, and abilities, which are often displayed in many public places.

In the second section of the text, Campbell (2010) interviewed 20 children about their musical preferences and experiences. The children described the meaning of music to them, how music was a part of their lives, and how their family members, peers, and cultural associations influenced their perceptions and preferences of music. In terms of their thoughts about music in school, the children responded positively, but they also occasionally expressed some frustrations with the types of music, the learning processes, and the lack of choices afforded them. Finally, Campbell (2010) summarized all of her findings from the observations and interviews and then looked critically at what these findings might mean for music education.

In summary, many of the ethnographies of young children’s informal music-making reported similar findings. This reveals that, children, regardless of their setting, engage in music making using similar processes and that results in similar products. First, in regards to the

musical products, or the structural content of young children's music, these ethnographies found that the music children make on their own differs from the music of adults (Blacking, 1967) and from school music (Campbell, 2010; Dzansi, 2004; Griffin, 2009; Koops, 2006, 2010; Lum, 2008; Lum & Campbell, 2007; Merrill-Mirsky, 1986), and the children seemed aware, at least on a certain level, of these differences. Children are also influenced by popular music and media (Campbell, 2010; Griffin, 2009; Harwood, 1987, 1998; Lum, 2007; Marsh, 2008; Merrill-Mirsky, 1986), and the music they perform and create is sophisticated and complex (Campbell, 1991; Harwood, 1998).

Second, children's process for learning and creating music also held several common characteristics. Children made music almost exclusively through aural processes. They learned their songs through overlapping stages of listening, observing, performing/doing, and critiquing (Harwood, 1998; Koops, 2006, 2010). However, visual and kinesthetic elements were involved in the musicking as children observed and performed movements, dances, hand clapping, and jumprope games (Campbell, 1991; Campbell, 2010; Dzansi, 2004; Harwood, 1987, 1991; Koops, 2006, 2010; Riddell, 1990). Rather than learning the song in parts, the children learn through holistic repetition (Dzansi, 2004; Harwood, 1998). Children frequently learned and performed music through peer-teaching and group learning; social interactions played a key role in their transmission process. Also, unlike in adult-directed contexts, the children had their choice in both the repertoire and in the nature of their participation, a feature that recognized the children's agency (Harwood, 1998; Koops, 2010).

Although I described the children's characteristics as common findings, Campbell (2010) cautions against the urge to "'lump' children into one musical culture" (p. 236). This is an

important caveat. Children exhibit a variety of differences in their musicking according to their age, ethnicity, race, and gender. For example, girls have been described as participating in more hand clapping and jump rope games than boys (Campbell, 1991, 2010; Harwood, 1998). Also, different racial groups within the United States have been documented as having different types of preferences, with European-American and Asian children performing more pitched songs and African-American children performing more chants (Campbell, 2010; Merrill-Mirsky, 1988).

Regardless, the strength of the similarities documented in children from multiple countries, contexts, and ages cannot be denied. Children's informal music-making has broad commonalities concerning its social nature, the importance of listening and watching in learning, and the integrated processes involved in learning music through holistic repetition. Understanding these concepts can have clear implications for music education. While the playground, school yard, and other children's contexts should not completely replace the practices traditionally included in formal music education, knowledge of children's informal processes may change the perceptions of children as learners, the pedagogical approaches employed by teachers, and their expectations for students' learning outcomes:

Given the apparent differences in learning style on playgrounds and in traditional classrooms..., one may well ask whether we as teachers are not putting unnecessary obstacles in the way of our students' progress for the sake of order in the classroom....

The goal is not to try to recreate the conditions of playground learning in the classroom, but rather to use the study of learning in this context to inform our pedagogy, and to

widen our understanding of the verbal and musical sophistication our students demonstrate in this context. (Harwood, 1998, p. 58)

Thus, in considering the use of informal music learning in music education, music educators need to take into account all that young children know prior to entering the classroom (Campbell, 2010). Then, with this knowledge, along with an understanding of their natural (and possibly preferred) music-making processes, music educators can design and tailor instruction that both meets students' musical needs, and also empower them to further develop their musical skills and creativity.

Summary and Comparisons with Informal Music Learning

In comparing children's natural learning processes described in ethnographies with those described in studies of informal music learning, several similarities arise. First, in the context, or situation, in which musicking took place, the children and adolescents were cognizant of the difference between music performed by adults and that performed by children, as well as the difference between music performed in-school and outside of school (Blacking, 1967; Campbell, 1995; Davis, 2010; Dzansi (2004); Griffin, 2009; Jaffurs, 2004; Koops, 2006). However, in performing and rehearsing through informal practices, adolescents sometimes applied the content and skills they had acquired through formal lessons into their music-making (Abramo, 2011; Campbell, 1995; Jaffurs, 2004).

At first, the content of musicking in informal music learning and children's natural music learning appeared to have greater differences. While the young children performed primarily using voice, body movements, hand clapping, and dance, the adolescents primarily used instruments, particularly those found in a garage band ensemble. Campbell (2010) and Harwood

(1995) both stated that the majority of literature concerning children's independent music-making, particularly that which includes singing games and hand clapping, refers almost exclusively to girls. Harwood (1998) wrote that, "although boys are familiar with the genre [of hand clapping], they do not generally perform it themselves (p. 59, footnote). For the adolescents, boys were frequently documented as singing, which may be due to the fact that singing is an accepted part of the garage band and popular music culture. However, Abramo (2011) documented that the boys often were reticent to write lyrics, whereas the girls used them as a starting point for developing their songs. Unlike the younger children, though, the adolescents did not appear to connect their music-making with movement, which may be a result of the physical changes and increase in social awareness that develop at that age. Regardless of the differences, though, both children and adolescents were greatly influenced by popular music and technology, which further emphasized their musical selections as a form of social capital (Blacking, 1967).

In their processes of learning music without the guidance of an adult or teacher to structure their learning, the children and adolescents relied on similar approaches and roles. With both groups, learning tunes took place aurally, rather than visually. Children in ethnographic studies were documented enacting roles in various combinations of watching and listening, performing or "doing," and critiquing each others' performances (Dzansi, 2004; Koops, 2010; Harwood, 1998). Similarly, adolescents underwent periods of extended listening, experimenting, performing, and critiquing or problem solving (Davis, 2005; Green, 2008). In particular, many adolescents engaged in "doodling" (Jaffurs, 2004) as they experimented with musical sounds, which resembles the "musical utterances" described by Campbell (2010) and

Lum and Campbell (2007) in children's individual musical play. Thus, having opportunities for individuals to "mess around with" and manipulate musical sounds may be an important part of the informal learning process, allowing them to hear themselves, take musical risks, and make musical choices. Also, in rehearsals of songs together, children and adolescents frequently performed the songs straight through, rather than breaking it into pieces, and relied on complete, numerous repetitions of these songs in order to develop mastery in their performance.

One of the differences between younger children and adolescents is the use of watching and observing others as a part of the process, which was not described in the literature pertaining to informal music learning. This may be due to the fact that, in the garage band setting, which was the most common setting in the studies reviewed here, individuals tend to each play different instruments, and thus, would not be able to learn visually in the same way that a child learning a hand clapping game might. However, given the role of music videos in popular music culture, it is possible adolescents may have visually "learned" informally about playing through this context, rather than in their rehearsals.

Finally, with both children in ethnographic studies and studies of informal music learning, music-making included an emphasis on the social components of music. Children and adolescents taught each other directly and learned from each other indirectly, as a result of their participation in the social group (Blacking, 1967; Campbell, 1995; Green, 2008; Harwood, 1998; Koops, 2010). At times, an older child or more advanced musician would take on the role of the leader within the group, helping others to figure out their parts or guiding them in musical decisions (Campbell, 1995; Green, 2008; Harwood, 1998). Also, by making their own choices in

the *what*, *when*, and *how* of their music-making, the children and adolescents could exert agency and autonomy, which may have increased the motivation or satisfaction in their musicking.

In summary, young people's music play and informal musicking reveal a great deal into the context, content, process, and social components of their musical development. While many of these studies have taken place outside of the classroom, a few studies have documented the use of informal processes and its benefits for students inside the music classroom or in after-school situations (Abramo, 2011; Allsup, 2003; Davis, 2010; Green, 2008; Tobias, 2010). Rather than being in conflict with the aims of formal music curricula, the processes described in informal music learning align with many of the traditional goals in music education and result in the development of "critical musicality" (Green, 2008).

However, given the tradition of formal music learning in American music classrooms, some of the changes that need to be made to include informal music learning processes may be challenging for music teachers. Since informal music practices frequently become equated with merely performing popular music, informal music pedagogy must similarly steer away from the same potential assumption. As Green (2010) wrote, "Although popular music soon entered the school curriculum, teachers tended to approach it with pedagogies that were fundamentally not very different from the approaches they used for classical music" (p. 90).

For music teachers to implement informal music learning processes in their classrooms, they must begin to consider making changes in the physical spaces, learning processes, social interactions, and the functions of music making used by their students, which may be a daunting task. Thus, more research is needed in understanding the music teacher's experience in considering and implementing these changes, their perspective as to the ways in which these

changes can be made, and ways in which they can receive support from others, like music teacher educators, other music teachers, and musicians.

Rationale for Informal Music Practices in Education

A variety of philosophical perspectives have been used to justify or rationalize the use of informal practices in the classroom, drawing from historical heavyweights in general education philosophy to more modern critical perspectives of education. Bowman (2004) rationalized three ultimate aims for education:

1. [E]ducation is concerned with the development of skills, understandings, and dispositions that do not follow easily or naturally from the socialization process alone.
2. [E]ducation is concerned with developing and transmitting skills, understandings, and dispositions that are deemed important by society.
3. Educational aim. . . involves preparing students for life by giving them skills that will serve them well. Significant among these in capitalistic democracies are such attributes as empowerment, independence, self-reliance, critical skills, and the inclination to use them. (Bowman, 2004, p. 38-39)

Jaffurs (2006) then adapted and applied these three aims to examine the relationship between informal and formal music learning. She stated that the first aim related to musicality and its development, the second to the transmission of culture in education, and the third to democracy in education. She described how these aims could be found within specific ethnographic studies of informal music learning in both music education and ethnomusicology, and, based on this evidence, she concluded that informal music learning had positive benefits within the music

classroom. By looking at these aims within practical applications of informal music learning in classrooms, philosophical frameworks used in informal music research, and even within criticisms of informal music learning in the classroom, we can further examine their efficacy as a rationale for the inclusion of informal music learning in education.

Practical Applications of Informal Music Learning

Outside of the United States, several European countries have already been using informal music learning, popular music, and/or garage band models in the music classroom since as early as the 1960s (Vakeva, 2006). The countries that have the most documented histories with the use of informal and popular music approaches are Finland (Vakeva, 2006; Westerlund, 2006), Sweden (Lindgren & Ericsson, 2010), and the United Kingdom (Green, 2006, 2008). In Finland, Vakeva (2006) stated that popular music “crept in by the back door” (p. 127), as music teachers from the 1960s began to include popular music within the curriculum. Vakeva asserted that the use of this music was due more to the beliefs of democratic ideals that were common in educational theories of the time, and today, these practices continue to represent the liberal perspectives of Finnish society.

Similarly, Westerlund (2006) criticized the “apprenticeship tradition” (p. 120) typical of Western music education, in which the “master teacher” holds the knowledge of music and the student must develop skills according to the directions and modeling of the teacher. Instead, Westerlund argued that, through the garage-band model¹, the environment is a “knowledge-

¹Some writers, such as Westerlund (2006), advocate for specific types of informal music learning, such as through garage bands or popular music genres. However, I support Folkestad’s (2006) position that informal music, while it may be frequently found in garage bands and popular music, is a broader theory of music learning. Thus, throughout this document, I will explore these writings similar to how Folkestad (2006) and Green (2008) have conceived of it more broadly.

building community” (p. 122) in which the students have more control over their learning. In this environment, students learn through peer and group learning and rely on teamwork. Both Vakeva’s (2006) and Westerlund’s (2006) descriptions of Finnish music education and the argument in favor of informal music pedagogy harken back to both the second and third aims of culture transmission and democracy in education put forth by Bowman (2004).

In her description of a growing model within the United Kingdom that uses informal music learning, Green (2006, 2008) described the development of “inherent” and “delineated” meanings (2006, p. 102) that result in informal music processes. According to Green (2006), “inherent” meanings are the sonic properties that exist naturally in music, apart from any cultural or social situations. “Delineated” meanings are the notions applied to the music from outside personal histories and cultural contexts. Green argued that students who have opportunities to listen to, perform, and create music autonomously on their own terms can, regardless of the genre, develop positive inherent and delineated meanings toward the music. After first being given opportunities to recreate popular music of their own choosing, students then were given classical pieces to copy. Green argued that, because of the skills they had developed in copying the popular music, the students were better equipped to analyze and perform the given Classical pieces, which then resulted in greater positive feelings by the students of inherent and delineated meanings toward them. Based on Green’s descriptions, informal music practices aided in the development of musical skills, which aligns with the first of Bowman’s (2004) Jaffurs’ (2006) first aims of education.

However, all three of these authors concluded that the types of music teaching in informal music required a shift from the traditional models. Vakeva (2006) stated that the role of the

general music teacher has had to change into one of a “critical guide,” in order to help students become well-informed producers and consumers of popular music, while Westerlund (2006) described the teacher as a “participator and co-learner” (p. 122) in the learning community. Rather than focusing on the specific actions of the music teacher, Green (2006) argued for a shift in the classroom processes:

Perhaps we should aim, not for the authenticity of the musical *product*, but for the authenticity of the musical learning *practice*; in other words, not for ‘musical authenticity’ but more for music-learning authenticity’. In the case of popular music, this would involve changing pedagogy so as to approach popular music’s inherent meanings in ways that are more authentic to how music is actually created. (Green, 2006, p. 114)

Thus, based on the real-life applications in European models, there is evidence to suggest that informal music and popular music pedagogies meet the three educational aims described by both Bowman (2004) and Jaffurs (2006). However, based on these writings that describe these practical applications of informal music learning in the music classroom, more work is still needed to help music teachers develop the skills they need to embody these new types of roles and provide authentic learning experiences for students.

Philosophical Frameworks

Multiple philosophies have been described as the conceptual frameworks within research of informal music learning. The most common frameworks include Elliott’s praxial music education, social constructivism, John Dewey’s vision of democracy in education, and more recently, critical pedagogy. First, a “praxial” music education refers to musicing that occurs within a specific setting and with specific intentions. Elliott (1995) argued that music should be

viewed as “a particular form of action that is purposeful and situated and, therefore, revealing of one’s self and one’s relationship with others in a community” (p. 14). Thus, Elliott felt that, by focusing on the personally-directed and active “doing” of music, which he called “musicing,” as well as calling attention to the cultural and social contexts in which it occurs, a praxial music education should not only develop musicality, but also result in experiences of “flow” (p. 114). This notion of “flow” comes from Csikszentmihalyi (1997) and refers to an idea of being totally engrossed in activity that has balance between the ability of the person and the challenge of the activity. Thus, Elliott believed that “musicing” within a praxial education should lead to music learning experiences that are stimulating, challenging, motivating, and fulfilling.

Other philosophies from general education have been applied as frameworks for conceptualizing informal music learning, including social constructivism and John Dewey’s democratic ideals. Constructivism can be viewed as both a learning theory and a type of pedagogy, although the former has a longer history in general education literature (Richardson, 2003). Constructivist theory is defined as the following:

The general sense of constructivism is that it is a theory of learning or meaning making, that individuals create their own new understandings on the basis of an interaction between what they already know and believe and ideas and knowledge with which they come into contact. (Richardson, 2003, p. 1624)

This theory began as an outgrowth of progressivism beginning with Dewey that focused on “child-centered education” (Windschitl, 2002, p. 134).

More specifically, social constructivism (as opposed to cognitive constructivism) considers the “micro- and macro-cultural influences” of learning (Windschitl, 2002, p. 141),

which draws from the work of Vygotsky (1978). Vygotsky's theory of the *zone of proximal development* described the learners' relationship with others in the learning process. As Vygotsky defined his theory as "the distance between the 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" (p. 86). Thus, in social constructivism, learners need varying levels of support from others with more experience as they participate in the activity.

Considering this focus on relationships between individuals as a part of the learning process, social constructivism viewed schools as "learning communities" (Windschitl, 2002, p. 141) or a "community of practice" (Cobb, 2005, p. 400). Characteristics of this environment often include small group work, personal inquiry, and individual responsibility (Cobb, 2005; Windschitl, 2002), but one must recognize that politics and the economy also can influence learners' experiences. Thus, social constructivism is a multi-faceted theory acknowledging a variety of factors and influences for learners.

While John Dewey's writings are cited in support of social constructivism, Dewey also wrote about the value of democracy in education. In his seminal text, *Democracy and Education*, Dewey (1956) warned against focusing so heavily on formal instruction in schools that is removed from students' experience and practice. He wrote that, "one of the weightiest problems with which the philosophy of education has to cope is the method of keeping a proper balance between the informal and the formal, the incidental and the intentional, modes of education" (Dewey, 1956, Chapter 1, section 3, para. 8). Dewey made this claim on the grounds of a new conception of literacy, stating that the purpose of a formal education in reading and

writing must relate to social interactions. However, this does not necessarily mean that students should focus on learning note reading in music; rather, it would be more appropriate to focus on aural processes for learning music, as those are the most common ways in which children experience music outside of school. More specifically, students would need experiences through critical listening, aural copying, and integrative forms of musicking, which are more common in informal music.

Critical pedagogy has also been used as a rationale for informal music learning. Frequently based on the writings of Paulo Freire, critical pedagogy posits that education should allow autonomy and agency in the roles of the learners. The traditional model of education is typically described in critical pedagogy as the “banking concept of education” (Freire, 2000, p. 72) and refers to the idea that teachers deposit knowledge in the minds of the students so that the students can draw upon that knowledge when they need it. This perspective fails to take into consideration the needs, interests, and backgrounds of the students, and, Freire (2000) argued, results in oppression of the learners. As an alternative, critical pedagogy promotes a “problem-solving education” as a “humanist and liberating praxis” in which the learners are transformed through the act of discovering the solutions themselves (Freire, 2000, p. 86).

Overall, these philosophical perspectives are concerned mainly with the second and third aims of Bowman’s (2004) and Jaffurs’ (2006) rationale for the use of informal music pedagogy—the transmission of musical culture and democratic ideals. The first aim, the development of music skills, is less frequently stressed as an important consideration in the philosophical frameworks in literature of informal music learning. However, since music education is not merely a social or democratic enterprise, but one charged with helping students develop skills

that they could not develop on their own, research in music education needs to find firmer philosophical ground to support the musicality found in informal music learning.

Critiques of Informal Pedagogy

Informal music pedagogy has been criticized by some within music education. Allsup (2008), who had himself conducted a seminal research study exploring the democratic principles utilized by high school students in self-directed after-school ensembles, criticized the perception that all informal music learning occurs with popular music, similar to Folkestad (2006). He also stated that informal music learning leaves the music teacher in a dubious position in which “quality” teaching is unclear and that the hands-off strategy typically used is unethical. Rather than promoting informal music learning, he instead promoted the use of democratic ideals in the classroom. However, Allsup’s (2008) position seems rather contradictory, considering his statements promoting the use of informal practices in his own research (Allsup, 2003).

Rodriguez (2009) also disputed the use of informal music practices, stating that it was not as informal as often described: “The more familiar I become with informal learning, the more I see formal qualities in it” (p. 37). Basing his opinion on both his experience working with formally-trained high school musicians in a garage band ensemble and with preservice music teachers, Rodriguez felt that the activities suggested in informal music practices are “naturally” included in activities by “experienced” and presumably skilled music teachers. He found himself struggling to find his role in teaching the high school group, as in when or how much advice to give. He stated that this type of teaching “requires more flexibility and intensiveness” (Rodriguez, 2009, p. 44). Ultimately, Rodriguez did not completely dismiss the

use of informal music pedagogy, but he acknowledged some of the challenges associated with it and called for future research in how it is implemented in the music classroom.

Finally, in the harshest critique of informal music pedagogy, Lindgren and Ericsson (2010) described a study of Swedish secondary music education. According to the authors, in Sweden, the majority of music classes for adolescents include popular musics, but did not necessarily include informal learning processes. For example, rather than letting students select the pieces, the authors found that the music teachers were selecting the music, and frequently the teachers selected older classic rock styles with which they felt more comfortable. Lindgren and Ericsson (2010) stated that most of the learning was done through student groups, but these groups were not always successful: “The learning outcomes involved various types of skills that appear to have more to do with self-discipline and norm formation than with music” (p. 42). Thus, if the students were not organized and motivated, their groups failed to produce quality products, which then led some music teachers to heavily edit student products. However, Lindgren and Ericsson found that, if the music teacher required the groups to state their progress at the end of each class, the groups made greater progress.

The biggest obstacle to the success of informal music learning, though, was the lack of musical skill development needed for students to be able to succeed on their own. Lindgren and Ericsson do not define their qualifications for quality musical products, nor do they give much detail into the specific musical skills the students lacked (Lindgren & Ericsson, 2010). Thus, while Lindgren and Ericsson felt the informal music learning was not completely successful in Swedish music classrooms, the reasons for its failure may be due to lack of quality instruction on teaching using informal music learning practices on the part of the music teachers. Had the

music teachers better facilitated and supported their students' processes by requiring greater accountability, some students may have been more successful. Similarly, had they provided greater guidance in modeling and presenting musical skills, the students may have had enough support to develop proficiently. Thus, music teachers may need different types of professional development to support their use of informal music pedagogy in the classroom to prevent future pitfalls like these in other settings.

Summary

Several rationale and critiques have been given to support or refute the use of informal music learning in schools. Based on her notion that music education should have three aims—development of musical skills, transmission of culture, and promotion of democratic ideals, Jaffurs (2006) found that informal music learning does have a place in the music classroom. Using this rationale to evaluate programs that use informal music learning processes in schools, philosophical perspectives and theories in education, and critiques of informal music learning revealed that the majority of writings and research have demonstrated benefits relating to the second and third of Jaffurs' aims, which suggests that more research needs to explore how musicality is practically and philosophically enacted through informal music learning. This issue of musicality in informal music learning will be described further in the remaining sections of this chapter. Regardless, if and when informal music practices become implemented in school music programs, music teachers will need to make adjustments to many aspects of their teaching, and they may need support from other teachers in order to be successful in this endeavor.

Need for the Study

Several scholars in music education research have identified the change in music teacher roles and instruction when utilizing informal music practices and identified a need for professional development in this area:

The emerging pedagogical models have characterised music facilitation over instruction, co-construction of the curriculum over ‘delivery’. This demands new skills, knowledge and understandings (both pedagogical and musical) and as a consequence questions arise about the development of music teachers and the ways in which they learn how to teach.

(Finney & Philpott, 2010, p. 7, *sic*)

A few studies have explored professional development of informal learning pedagogy for preservice music teachers in undergraduate methods courses (Davis & Blair, 2011; Finney & Philpott, 2010; Wright & Kanellopoulos, 2010). These studies, which will be described in more detail in Chapter 2, frequently included opportunities for the undergraduates to perform and improvise music with classmates using informal music practices, create lesson plans that used popular music (Davis & Blair, 2011), and improvise with or observe children participating in informal music learning in cooperating schools (Finney & Philpott, 2010; Wright & Kanellopoulos, 2010). These experiences, particularly those in which they participated in informal musicking, led many of the undergraduates to reframe their understanding of musical meaning, the role of autonomy, and the teacher-student relationship. Wright and Kanellopoulos (2010) explained that these experiences “provide[d] a way for re-searching foundational aspects of what it means to create music, with important consequences for personal development and for building an open attitude toward children’s musical potential” (p. 84). Thus, the results revealed

that informal musicking in undergraduate music education courses created new perspectives and understandings that affected both their musician-selves and their teacher-selves.

However, these studies focused on professional development of future, rather than experienced, music teachers. Other studies of informal music pedagogy described how the teacher-researcher or teacher participants had to modify their teaching (Allsup, 2003; Davis, 2010; Green, 2008; Jaffurs, 2006). While these studies provided valuable insights of teachers in informal music pedagogy, this was not usually a specific purpose of the research. Instead, these studies focused on the learning outcomes for students, rather than the professional growth and development of these teachers. Thus, more research is needed to describe how experienced music teachers begin to incorporate informal music learning and to explore music teachers' perceptions and beliefs concerning this experience.

Professional Development

Professional development allows for experienced music teachers to grow and mature in their pedagogical skills and personal orientation to teaching music, and it may provide insight for music teachers to progress in their understanding and ability to realize informal music processes in their classrooms. While in general education, the line of professional development research has been established through many studies, fewer studies have explored this topic in music education (Bauer, 2007). Yet, a more recent line of research in the professional development needs and experiences of music educators has provided new insights. Research in professional development in both general education and music education has revealed several characteristics that have clear implications for the professional development of informal music pedagogy (Bauer, 2007; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Resnick, 2005).

Resnick (2005) described two waves of professional development research in general education. The first phase of research took place in the 1960s and focused on building “generic” skills related to modeling, assessing, and use of instructional time. The second phase occurred in the 1990s and looked more deeply at how teachers’ professional development can improve student achievement in areas like “reasoning and problem-solving potentials” (Resnick, 2005, p. 1). In his model of the “Aspects of Teacher Professional Development and their Relationship to Better Instruction,” Resnick (2005) identified various factors that lead to “enhanced [teacher] knowledge and skills” that then lead to a “change in instructional practice” (p. 3). The greatest factors influencing those two goals in teachers’ professional development were (a) “focus on content knowledge,” (b) number of “contact hours” in professional development, and (c) “coherence,” referring to the level in which learning built off of prior knowledge (p. 3). The length of time was listed as having a “medium influence,” while “active learning” and “collective participation,” were listed as having the least amount of influence on teachers’ practice in the classroom (p. 3). Overall, Resnick supported the use of professional development, but focused on the use of professional development to enhance student achievement.

Similar to Resnick’s (2005) description of “two waves” of research (p. 1), Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) stated that, over 20 years ago, professional development research was characterized by a “drive-by” approach that focused on single workshops unconnected to teachers’ knowledge and experience (p. 1). Darling-Hammond and Richardson then outlined a list of characteristics for effective teacher professional development found in research:

- Deepens teachers’ knowledge of content and how to teach it to students

- Helps teachers understand how students learn specific content
- Provides opportunities for active, hands-on learning
- Enables teachers to acquire new knowledge, apply it to practice, and reflect on the results with colleagues
- Is part of a school reform effort that links curriculum, assessment, and standards to professional learning
- Is collaborative and collegial
- Is sustained over time. (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009, p. 6)

In a review of literature for the professional development of music educators, Bauer (2007) divided the types of studies in this area into three main categories: “professional development preferences and needs,” “effectiveness of professional development,” and “professional development experiences and practices.” The “professional development preferences and needs” were demonstrated through the use of surveys. However, these studies had only taken place in a small number of states and yielded small return rates, which limits the validity of the results (Bauer, 2007). Bauer concluded that music teachers prefer professional development opportunities that relate to teachers’ specific area of music teaching rather than more generic types of professional development, but he felt that more research was needed in this area.

In research relating to the “effectiveness of professional development” of music teachers, Bauer (2007) found that the few studies in this area raised more questions than answers. In particular, Bauer questioned the length of time needed for professional development to be effective, the role of mentors for experienced teachers, the effect of practical application in

learning new strategies, and the impact of professional development on the career span of music teachers. Studies in the third category of “professional development experiences and practices,” included both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. These studies revealed that music teachers’ professional development experiences and motivations may change throughout their career. Also, several common professional development experiences, such as attendance at conferences and membership in professional organizations, were perceived by teachers as having varying amounts of effectiveness and meaning (Bauer, 2007). In conclusion, Bauer (2007) stressed the importance of professional development for music teachers, writing, “Ultimately, for the professional development of music educators to be considered a success, it should positively impact the learning of students” (p. 20).

Summary

Informal music learning processes and the natural characteristics of children’s musicking have revealed many common features in the ways that children approach music making and music learning. These characteristics, taken through the lens of critical pedagogy (Freire, 2000), suggest a need for a radical shift in the music classroom, in order to help students develop “critical musicality” (Green, 2008), as well as autonomy and agency to help them become proficient musicians. However, little research in informal music learning has looked specifically at the experience of music teachers who may have little or no personal experience with informal music themselves, received formal music instruction and teacher training, and may be accustomed to using primarily formal teaching processes in their own classrooms.

Thus, there is a need for research that explores how music teachers respond to exploring and implementing informal music pedagogy with their students as they participate with other

music teachers in a professional learning community. Research in professional development has revealed the importance of teachers working collaboratively with peers, in a context-specific environment, and over an extended period of time (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Resnick, 2005), and professional development using these characteristics may prove beneficial for exploring informal music pedagogy. Ultimately, this study hopes to add to the line of research in informal music pedagogy that is “grounded in the practicalities of music-teaching and learning, and/or in our intellectual needs to educate ourselves” (Green, 2010, p. 89).

Purpose and Problems

With the intent of understanding the music teacher’s experience in informal music pedagogy, the purpose of this study was to explore the processes, perceptions, and practices of music teachers as they participated in a professional learning community to discuss and explore implementing informal music learning in the classroom. The following questions guided this investigation:

1. In what ways and to what extent does the learning in this professional development group manifest itself in classroom practice?
2. How do music teachers’ philosophical beliefs and pedagogical practices evolve throughout their participation in the professional development community?
3. What professional, personal, pedagogical, and musical characteristics of the music teachers contribute to their implementation of informal music pedagogical strategies in their classrooms?

4. How does the exploration of informal music learning characteristics interact with the practices in which teachers are already engaging in their classrooms?

In addition, one question emerged as a part of the data collection and analysis process. While this study initially sought to explore the experience of music teachers' in implementing informal music learning, new insights emerged that related to the music teachers' professional development within the context of this PDC. Thus, the following research question was added:

5. What was the nature of the teachers' participation within this professional development community?

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

As this study delves into the worlds of both informal music learning and music teacher professional development, the literature reviewed for this study explores research from both realms. In Chapter 1, the literature revealed the characteristics of informal music learning, as well as the practices and processes documented for student learners. Since none of the studies focused specifically on the music teacher in informal music learning, in this chapter, I will turn toward the music teachers within those studies, in order to develop a clearer understanding of the roles, pedagogical strategies, classroom environments, and student-teacher relationships described in the literature.

Later in this chapter, I will focus on research within music teacher professional development. Studies of professional development for music teachers have used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, with more recent studies exploring the experience of music teachers in professional learning communities and collaborative teacher study groups. These studies provide insights into the preferences of music teachers in their professional development, as well as the characteristics that made teacher learning groups successful. Finally, a smaller number of studies have explored professional development focused on informal music learning with preservice teachers in undergraduate courses. Although the context of these studies differ from the current study through the age and experience of the participants, as well as the setting and application of the professional development itself, these studies still reveal findings that may be relevant for the professional development of informal music practices with experienced music teachers.

Teacher Characteristics within Informal Music Learning

At the time of this writing, few studies have focused exclusively on the role of the music teacher in informal music learning in the classroom context. Thus, in reviewing the related research concerning the teacher, rather than the learner, the understandings gleaned from the studies are not always a direct result of the researchers' intended purpose and problems, but from the information researchers chose to include to describe interactions, settings, and situations with students. In this review of literature, I divided the studies used to document informal music processes in the music classroom into two types: studies conducted by an outside researcher and studies conducted by a teacher-researcher.

Studies with an Outside Researcher

Studies of informal music learning with an outside researcher took place in contexts in which the researcher was not directly affiliated with the daily classroom environment, but, rather, came in as an observer to collect data qualitatively and analyze the situation. In a study of the shared understandings of students developed through creative processes in an elementary music class, Wiggins (1999/2000) analyzed data collected from a prior study conducted by one of her students as a teacher-researcher and from videotapes of Wiggins' guest teaching at an elementary school. Due to Wiggins' separation from the actual data collection and the disjunct nature in which the data were collected, her analysis of the results should be considered with caution. Of the examples that included direct discussion of the teacher, the teacher was documented in a whole-class composition activity trying to listen to students' melodic ideas and guide the students into composing a class song. The teacher allowed the students to express their musical ideas freely, in what Wiggins (1999/2000) termed a "group think-aloud" (p. 75). In another

instance, Wiggins analyzed her own exchange with a first-grade student in which they passed musical phrases back and forth on xylophones. In this case, Wiggins took on a role of co-creator in their dialogic exchange. In conclusion, Wiggins stressed the value of shared understandings in children's musical developments as a foundation for more complex musicianship, and she stated that music teachers should not only provide opportunities for creative thinking but opportunities for students to construct their own musical knowledge.

Jaffurs (2006) investigated the experiences and meaning of adolescents in a garage band that met outside of school, as described in Chapter 1. However, during the time in which Jaffurs collected data as an observer, the participants chose to attend a summer rock camp, which Jaffurs described as lying midway between informal and formal experiences. The instructors at the rock camp were in bands themselves, and, thus, had "practical knowledge about performing in a band and creating original music" (Jaffurs, 2006, p. 133), but they used a variety of different teaching practices. Jaffurs found that some of the practices were formal, including the hierarchical structure of the camp, and the way in which the instructors lectured. However, other elements used by the instructors were more informal. For example, the instructors frequently let the musicians make their own decisions, even if, as Jaffurs (2006) noticed, this went against their better judgment, which "blur[red] the line between the teacher and band members/learners" (p. 138). At times, the instructor joined in the musicking with the bands, which made them more like peers than in a position of power, further "blurring" the student and teacher roles. Overall, Jaffurs found that the instructors at the rock camp tended to function more in the role of a facilitator than a teacher.

While Wiggins (1999/2000) and Jaffurs (2006) did not plan to focus specifically on teachers, in conducting their studies, they recognized the influence of teachers in the students' informal learning. Two other studies explored the roles of music teachers in informal music learning more specifically. First, in Green's (2008) large-scale study (described in detail in Chapter 1) of informal music pedagogy in the United Kingdom, the teachers were included as valuable participants and informants for understanding students' musical developments and processes. Data collected from the teachers included observations and interviews with the teachers, as well as quantitative surveys to collect more anonymous opinions about their perceptions of the project.

Initially, the teachers in Green's (2008) study described their hesitations concerning the project, as described in the quote included in the Introduction. In this study, the teachers were given a sequence of stages, which required different pedagogical strategies that they largely did not choose for themselves. In particular, the music teachers' main pedagogical technique was that of stepping back to let students work independently. At the beginning of the project, the music teachers gave almost no input or guidance into students' musical decisions, and others have criticized this technique as being unethical (Allsup, 2008). In later stages, the music teachers were permitted to diagnose students' needs and goals for their work, make suggestions, and model musical examples. Yet, Green (2008) distinguished the teachers' seemingly common techniques from formal music instruction, saying:

This approach was different from the usual instructional role, partly because it was based on the diagnosis of and response to learner-perceived, immediate need, rather than on pre-established teacher-set aims or objectives with long-term trajectories in mind. It

involved teaching in a responsive, rather than directive way, metaphorically taking the learner by the hand.... (Green, 2008, Chapter 2, section 3, para. 9)

In other words, the music teachers had to take a reflexive role, being sensitive and flexible to the needs of the students, rather than following a set list of curricular goals and objectives. At the same time, Green (2008) found that, through the project's stages, nearly all of the required standards were met.

In terms of the music teachers' perceptions of their role and of the students' musical development in the study, Green (2008) found that the teachers initially were wary about participating, because they feared that supervisors and government representatives (who regularly inspect UK classrooms to ensure that the curriculum is being followed using acceptable practices) would charge them as deficient in their teaching, which could have detrimental consequences for their careers. However, as the study progressed, the teachers described considerable growth in students' musical skills, knowledge, and motivation. Overall, the teachers reported satisfaction in their participation in the project on the questionnaire, although the responses were slightly less positive in the survey than in the interviews. All of the 17 teachers in the original set of schools to implement the program stated that informal music pedagogy had ““changed their approaches to teaching for the better”” (Green, 2008, Chap. 1, section 7, para. 4).

A second study by Ruthmann (2006) looked at the informal music learning experiences of a music teacher and her sixth grade students within a 10-week exploratory music technology course set in a technology lab. Data collection for this study included observations, audio and video recordings, fieldnotes, interviews, focus groups, and artifacts. Ruthmann found that the

music teacher, “Marj,” based her decisions within the classroom on her own personal experiences with music from both in and outside of school, including her extensive history as a professional performer in popular music settings. However, Marj’s decisions resulted in tensions that resulted in both positive and negative consequences for students. Ruthmann found the following tensions in Marj’s classroom:

- Teacher control vs. learner agency
- Formal learning vs. informal learning
- Isolated skills vs. creative experiences
- Endurance vs. expression
- Learning as banking vs. learning as constructing
- Learning as individual vs. learner as social (Ruthmann, 2006).

As a result, Ruthmann found that Marj’s teaching was “shaped by a continual navigation between the two banks of her experiential river governed by tradition and innovation” (p. 243). Other music teachers may have similar difficulty finding a balance between several of the tensions listed above as they implement informal music learning in their classrooms. However, through the mediation of a professional development community, music teachers may find and an outlet to problem-solve similar tensions in a general music classroom setting.

Finally, a third study used narrative inquiry to explore the perceptions of a mid-career instrumental music teacher as he began teaching a high-school composition class using informal music learning practices (Abramo & Austin, 2012). This narrative study was co-authored by a university professor and a music teacher who was also the participant; thus, this paper includes both a teacher-researcher and an outside researcher, bridging both categories presented here. In

this study, the authors found that Austin's trumpet became a metaphor for the challenges he faced in using these new informal and social-constructivist-based pedagogies in his teaching. More specifically, Austin stated that his trumpet was an "extension" of himself, but tended to be the "loudest thing around" (p. 3), which resembled his style of teaching in the band setting, where he was more teacher-directed and exerted greater control.

More specifically, as Austin changed his pedagogical practices in the composition classroom, he felt a tension in relationship in four areas: "identity," "musical process," "pedagogy," and "growth" (p. 13). In his "identity," Austin identified as a classical musician and trumpet player with few experiences using informal music practices, which in turn affected his "musical process" in which he placed a great emphasis on accurate recreation and the use of notation. In his "pedagogy" in composition class, he began using non-sequential practices that challenged his beliefs about teaching, and he experienced professional "growth" as he tried to adapt his teaching by learning the students' colloquial terms for musical concepts and developed great value for the students' creative abilities.

Studies with a Teacher-Researcher

In other studies that explored informal music pedagogy in the music classroom, researchers also served as teachers or facilitators. In this way, they took a more active role in student learning, rather than functioning as a detached observer. Of the two studies that fall into this category, one took place in a high school (Allsup, 2003) and another was set in an elementary band classroom (Davis, 2008).

Allsup (2003) investigated the meaning and experience of high school musicians as they participated in an after-school program for student-led ensembles, as described in Chapter 1.

More specifically, Allsup sought to describe the shared learning and democratic principles enacted by students as they created music for themselves and by themselves. Data collection included recordings of musical interactions, discussions, and multiple interviews, with Allsup as both as the group facilitator and researcher. He described the struggle he had to face as a teacher in determining when to offer advice and when to stay quiet, as well as how to deal with situations in which his advice was dismissed by the students. Additionally, some of the participants picked up on Allsup's (2003) new role; at the beginning of the data collection, one of his participants even referred to him as a "coat" (p. 34), in reference to Allsup's observing them like a researcher in a laboratory coat. They also commented on Allsup's role as being more of "a friend, a coach, a peer, a teacher" (p. 35). Finally, Allsup (2003) stressed the importance of providing "space" for students to be themselves:

Often in this article, I speak about creating or opening spaces for students to express themselves through music. The term space refers to physical places, time slots, and access to facilities and equipment. Yet, it is also a philosophical notion. Metaphorically, space can be seen as a place where ideas and opinions can be shared and debated—where students come together and community is made. (Allsup, 2003, p. 35, footnote)

Thus, for Allsup (2003), democracy blossomed among participants as they were given freedom in the physical space and in their social and musical choices, and this notion became an essential, underlying cornerstone of the entire project.

While Allsup conducted his study in an after-school program with high school instrumentalists, Davis (2008, 2010) set the context of her study within the beginning band room of an elementary school. Since Davis also was the students' music teacher, and thus responsible

for fulfilling certain requirements like meeting curricular standards and putting on concerts, the setting of this study may have more immediate applications for practicing music teachers in similar situations. With the goal of helping her students develop a “musical say” (Davis, 2008, p. 36), Davis posed research questions that related to both her students and herself. More specifically, Davis asked how she could connect to students’ musical experiences, promote aural music learning while maintaining the development of music reading, and support their musical identities.

In the results of her study, Davis (2008) found that three themes emerged in regards to the interactions between her and her students: pedagogy, musical rationality, and transformative meanings. In her pedagogy, Davis had to be sensitive to what her students could learn and wanted to learn, and she had to be flexible in her teaching when students expressed their interests in unexpected moments. Musical rationality developed in the formal classroom through informal means, meaning that the students brought in musical ideas from outside of the classroom, and Davis accepted them and used them to build musical understandings. For example, when a student felt as though part of the Christmas song, “We Three Kings,” sounded like a popular music song heard on the radio, she spontaneously adapted her teaching so that all of the students could try to figure out that familiar melody by ear (Davis, 2010). In acknowledging the musical rationality of her students, Davis (2008) also recognized that learning sometimes occurs “non-sequential[ly],” and this required her to use “informed teacher scaffolding” to support this learning (p. 351). Finally, Davis found that, through informal learning in the classroom, her students could develop transformative meanings of their musical understandings that related both

to their common experience in the band room and also to their unique personal and cultural backgrounds.

As Davis (2011) discovered more about informal music learning, she changed her pedagogical approach to teaching. In a personal correspondence with me, she stated, “The most radical change was learning almost all of the music by ear, for all of my students grades 1-5” (Davis, 2011). She stated that, by using more aural processes, including the music that the students already know and enjoy, she allows them to “join forces” in the classroom; she gives the students more autonomy in the music-making they do in her formal music classroom. In terms of the obstacles she has faced in implementing informal music practices, Davis shared three issues: (1) having students work in small groups creates a great deal of noise, (2) challenging students to aurally copy rock songs on elementary classroom instruments that differed from the instruments in the recordings, and (3) negotiating her new pedagogy with her administrator and other teachers to gain their support and acceptance (Davis, 2011). Davis’ (2008, 2010) study revealed that informal music practices can be implemented in the formal music classroom without replacing the traditional formal curriculum entirely, but this transformation required flexibility and sensitivity to allow her students opportunities for creativity and autonomy in the music-making.

Summary of Teacher Characteristics

Studies that specifically described the role of the teacher using informal music pedagogy in the classroom were conducted by outside researchers unconnected with the setting and by researchers who were also the teachers and facilitators of the musicking. In looking at the similarities between these studies, three areas reveal the unique characteristics teachers must

provide and employ in order to foster informal music learning: pedagogical strategies, environment, and teacher-student relationship. First, the teachers had to utilize different pedagogical strategies, such as being sensitive to students' choices of music, flexible in the sequencing and pacing of the learning, and at times, stepping back to allow students to construct their own understandings individually and collectively. The teacher sometimes had to communicate musically, rather than only verbally, as Wiggins (1999/2000) did in her musical conversation with a first-grade student. In their classroom environments, the music teachers had to provide spaces for students to work in small groups. Further, Allsup (2003) argued that teachers must also provide a "metaphorical space" (p. 35) for students to participate in informal music practices. Finally, the studies that included characteristics of the teachers using informal music had to adapt their relationships with their students. Rather than making all of the decisions in the groupings, repertoire, and processes of the musicking, the music teachers had to stand back as facilitators, and sometimes even collaborate with their students, allowing for the development of shared musical understandings (Wiggins, 1999/2000). Ultimately, this allowed for democratic choices to be made on the behalf of the students (Allsup, 2003) and allowed for greater autonomy, agency, and personal motivation in the students' musicking.

Professional Development and Teacher Education

Professional Development in Music Education

Professional development in music education, as described in Chapter 1, has focused on three main concerns: "professional development preferences and needs," "effectiveness of professional development," and "professional development experiences and practices" (Bauer,

2007). This research has taken place in two main types of studies: quantitative studies of music teacher preferences, needs, and experiences and case studies of music teacher professional development groups. While research in music educators' professional development is fairly young, these initial studies provide valuable perspectives for the current study.

Quantitative studies of professional development. Several researchers have conducted surveys in order to discover what music teachers like in their professional development, as well as the types of professional development in which they actually participate (Avery, 2001; Bernard, 2009; Bowles, 2002; Ferrara, 2009; Friedrichs, 2001; Hesterman, 2011; Tarnowski & Murphy, 2002). Two of the earliest surveys of music teacher professional development took place in Midwest states (Bowles, 2002; Tarnowski & Murphy, 2002). Bowles (2002) analyzed survey responses from 456 music teachers from various areas (general, chorus, band, etc.) and age groups who were members of their state organization. She had a return rate of 29.6%. The respondents described that the top three most-interesting topics for music teacher professional development included technology (66%), assessment (57%), and instrument/choral literature (53%). Although, when looking at general music teachers alone, Bowles found that these teachers' top choice was general-music specific. In the scheduling of professional development opportunities, the respondents stated that they preferred university-sponsored events (54%) and workshops held by a music organization (37%). Also, 72% would rather attend professional development over consecutive days during summer months, and 49% would prefer workshops lasting over the weekends during the school year. In addition, the respondents indicated that they would prefer to stay within 100 miles of home.

Tarnowski and Murphy (2002) conducted a survey in two states—Minnesota and Wisconsin—to explore a variety of issues, including recruitment, retention, retraining, and revitalization; the final two issues have relevance to professional development. However, unlike Bowles, the survey was submitted to a random selection (816) elementary general music teachers who were members of their state organization. Tarnowski and Murphy had 281 surveys returned, resulting in a response rate of 34.44%. In regards to the questions about retraining and revitalization, more than half of the respondents cited having retraining in Orff or Kodaly approaches. Over half of the respondents stated that they were incorporating a new teaching strategy, such as standards-based or interdisciplinary approaches. Finally, 61.21% of respondents stated a preference to have future training in Orff, 60.50% with technology, and 55.88% with music assessments.

More recent surveys of professional development have taken place in additional states, including California (Friedrichs, 2001), Nebraska (Hesterman, 2011), New Jersey (Ferrara, 2009), Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee (Bernard, 2009). Like Bowles (2002), Ferrara (2009) and Hesterman (2011) submitted a survey to music teachers in all areas, but while Ferrara only mailed the survey to a random sample teachers who were members of a state organization, Hesterman submitted the survey through email to all public and parochial music teachers in the state. Ferrara received 167 responses (40.53% response rate) from New Jersey music teachers, and Hesterman received 456 responses (no total response rate found reported). The respondents in Ferrara's study reported that the majority of their professional development took place in the form of workshops (22.79%) and conferences (19.94%), and these types of professional development also received the highest level of

perceived benefits, with 31.28% and 21.8%, respectively. However, a majority (66.87%) also stated that less than half of their professional development was devoted to music, and 46.71% stated a desire for more musical content. Over 52% also said that they do not have sufficient input into their professional development selection, but despite this, 57.49% stated that their professional development had a positive impact. Nearly 87% preferred more autonomy, and 76.65% wanted to change the structure and content of their professional development plan (Ferrara, 2009).

Meanwhile, Hesterman (2011) found that most music teachers participate in the following professional growth activities: continuing education (90.3%), local school district inservices (89.2%), professional conferences (84.1%), and being observed by an administrator or another teacher or colleague (79.5%). Most participated in these activities to increase their salary (67.9%) or to earn an advanced degree (64.3%). The teachers in this study preferred attending professional conferences (42.5%) and in continuing education opportunities (36.4%), and the teachers with the least amount of teaching experience were more likely to participate in professional development.

In a study limited to elementary music teachers, Bernard (2009) surveyed music teachers in five different states—Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee—through an email survey. The survey resulted in a 479 responses from 3023 submitted, yielding a very low response rate. Thus, the generalizability of the findings is limited. Unlike Hesterman's (2011) finding that music teachers sought professional development for financial and career security, the respondents in Bernard's study most strongly stated that their purpose in participating was to increase their knowledge and skills as music teachers. Within the

types of professional development in which they participated, 70.1% engaged in professional development focusing on teaching curriculum and standards, and 69.1% studied Orff methods. Multicultural topics and technology fell in third and fourth place. In scheduling professional development courses, most elementary teachers preferred a one-week summer course. The least popular response was for a weekly session that met once a week.

Case studies of professional development. In addition to quantitative studies, several researchers have looked at specific cases of music teacher professional development. Duling (1992) explored the important factors in the development of two exemplary middle school general music teachers' pedagogical-content knowledge. In looking at these teachers' careers, he found that both had a variety of different types mentors that they had found for themselves, rather than being assigned these mentors. These teachers also exhibited tendencies to critique their own teaching, pursue workshops that would help them develop new knowledge, and ask questions of themselves and their teaching. Thus, in order for these music teachers to become the exemplary models that Duling described, they sought out, attended, and applied professional development opportunities to improve their teaching.

Similarly, Conway (2005) used narrative inquiry to describe the types of professional development experiences of three music teachers, including an elementary general music teacher, a middle school instrumental teacher, and a high school instrumental and vocal teacher. The two secondary ensemble music teachers found their state music organization and working with experienced mentor teachers and peer teachers to be beneficial. However, the elementary general music teacher described the importance of developing relationships with non-music peer teachers in her school building, but also felt frustrated because she felt as though she needed

individual, music-specific professional development opportunities that were not being met or understood by her administrators. She also stated the importance of having professional development that influenced her classroom practices.

Other studies of professional development focused on teacher study groups or professional development communities. In these studies, the music teachers met in small groups, facilitated by the researchers, to discuss issues related to music teaching. Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) promoted this format because it can frequently meet many of the necessary characteristics for effective professional development described in Chapter 1, such as having active participation, opportunities to reflect with other teachers, connections to curriculum and standards, group collaborations, and sustained meetings over time. Since music teachers may be in isolation from other music teachers in their school building, they may also need other opportunities to connect with other music teachers from other buildings (Conway, 2005). Thus, professional development communities and teacher study groups may provide a setting and context that is appropriate for experienced music teachers.

Junda (1994) implemented and studied a professional development group that took place as two consecutive university graduate courses for elementary general music teachers teaching kindergarten through third grade. Junda (1994) divided the course into “musicianship, methodology, and materials” (p. 7) with a Kodaly emphasis. The instructor then made observations in the participants’ schools to see their progress, and the participants also viewed each others’ videotapes during class. Junda found that music teachers developed skills and made changes over time. They stated that the videotapes should only serve as a supplement of the

instructor visits, which may suggest that the teachers valued the opinion of the instructor more than that their peers.

Gruenhagen (2007) studied and facilitated a professional learning community for early childhood music teachers at a community music school. The group met monthly over a year, meeting eleven times. The size of the group varied considerably at each meeting, with five to 12 teachers attending. In addition to the meetings, Gruenhagen conducted interviews to gain the participants' perspectives. To her surprise, the music teachers first started talking about themselves and their personal backgrounds before delving into topics about early childhood, and considerable time passed before the teachers would begin to talk directly about their teaching practices. Not all of the participants actively contributed to the group in the same way, but the members of the professional learning community who felt more open about their teaching practices became a core group that resulted in developing and producing a collaborative project. As a result of the experience, the teachers described feeling connections with the other teachers, and "the autonomy they experienced in guiding their own profession development resulted in transformation and empowerment" (Gruenhagen, 2007, p. 175).

In another study of a professional development group, specifically labeled a "collaborative teacher study group" (p. 290), Stanley (2009) looked at the experiences and collaboration of elementary general music teachers. One of the key activities in this group was the use of videotapes of the participants' teaching episodes, which they shared with the group and then discussed. The group used a formalized "collaborative consultancy protocol" adapted for the study by Stanley to guide the video analysis and discussion. The protocol states the purpose of the activity, a summary of the steps taken during the activity, and the role of the

facilitator throughout the activity. Stanley found that the protocol, as well as the unique personal characteristics of the participants, led to the success of the group, which led to teacher changes in the classroom and a shared understanding of their collaboration.

Professional Development for Preservice Music Teachers

Three studies have explored the experience of informal music learning with preservice music teachers in undergraduate courses. Wright and Kanellopoulos (2010) conducted an extended narrative research study with 91 preservice music teachers over multiple years (2003-2007) at two universities in Greece. The students participated in a free improvisation course that was included in their undergraduate music education course load, although it was unclear as to whether this was a required course or one among several selections for music education majors. Students in the course participated in a variety of experiences, including:

free small and whole group improvisations, semi-structured improvisations, group improvisational composing based on a variety of ideas and stimuli..., reading and discussion of relevant literature, as well as in ongoing group discussions of the work developed and the issues that emerged. (Wright & Kanellopoulos, 2010, p. 76)

Additionally, the course instructors had arranged for children to occasionally come to classes to improvise with the preservice teachers, allowing these future teachers opportunities to make more concrete connections to their future classrooms.

Data collection for the study included reflective writing that was also a required part of the course used in students' assessments and recordings of student musical events from class. Within the reflective writings, students were encouraged to consider not only their own experience as musicians, but how it would affect them as music teachers. The data revealed

three themes: “Autonomy: in search of foundations,” “Developing the (musical) self,” and “Developing an open attitude toward children and music” (Wright & Kanellopoulos, 2010, p. 77).

In the first theme of developing autonomy, the preservice teachers expressed growth in their personal identities, as well as in the identity of the group, as they began to consider their musical experience beyond just musical mastery and toward musical expression. The act of improvisation with others also caused them to be more cognizant of their relationships with others and contributed to what Wright and Kanellopoulos (2010) called the “development of critical consciousness” in some students (pp. 77-78). In the second theme of “developing the (musical) self,” the students had to be patient with themselves and vulnerable with the group as they expressed themselves musically in this new way, causing many students to critique their formal training prior to this. Ultimately, though, some students resulted in having greater self-confidence on their instrument through the skills they developed in improvising. For the final theme, “Developing an open attitude toward children and music,” the students began to consider and question the inherent beliefs in their formal musical education and seek new understandings of the role and purpose of music education. The preservice teachers described a sense of respect for their students and considered using improvisation with their future students. In conclusion, the authors stated the following:

Intensive and prolonged engagement of the participants of the present study with improvisation should be seen as a case of practicing spontaneity, which is regarded as a vital source of knowledge of the workings of musical spontaneity and as a ‘tool’ for

student teacher engagement in musical dialogues with their future students. (Wright & Kanellopoulos, 2010, p. 83)

Thus, Wright and Kanellopoulos (2010) found that, through improvising in a music teacher education course, the preservice teachers became better prepared to incorporate informal learning practices in the classroom, and it also increased their sensitivity and respect for children and the learning process.

In the United Kingdom, Finney and Philpott (2010) conducted a similar study with student teachers in a university course. Finney and Philpott focused on a “meta-pedagogy,” or a “pedagogy for learning pedagogy” of informal music learning (p. 7). The course took place over one school year (36 weeks) and included 20 participants. However, the background of the participants is unclear; the authors stated that the students were all music graduates, but then referred to them as student teachers. This suggests that the participants were not yet beginning teachers, but were still student teachers, in that they were still receiving training from the university. In the course, the students participated in several typical informal music practices, such as aurally copying a song in self-selected groups. However, the students were not given their choice of song.

Data were collected from observations, recordings, and interviews with a selected case of one student group. In their analysis, Finney and Philpott (2010) stated that, “it became possible to evaluate patterns of (i) unresolvable dissonances; (ii) adaption (including epiphanic moments)” (p. 13). The dissonances refer not to qualities of sound, but the cognitive discomfort that the students expressed in learning and musicking using new and different processes. Then, in taking risks with the other musicians in their group, the selected case students experienced

epiphanies in their understanding of teaching and learning and made changes in their perceptions of themselves as teachers.

As a result of this experience, Finney and Philpott created a set of four guidelines that should underpin the meta-pedagogy for informal music learning in music teacher education.

These characteristics are:

1. a meta-pedagogy which ‘lives’ musical learning and in particular informal learning; the most effective professional development in informal learning and pedagogy is that which employs informal learning itself;
2. a meta-pedagogy which promotes a reflexive awareness and understanding of the material nature of musical learning; a means to ‘excavating’ the habitus of musicians and music teachers;
3. a meta-pedagogy which in making explicit the material nature of musical learning provides a productive dissonance to the habitus of musicians and music teachers;
4. a meta-pedagogy which develops music teachers who emerge from teacher education programmes as a force for change in schools; a force for a more inclusive school music.

(Finney & Philpott, 2010, p. 18, *sic*)

While the authors’ conclusions provide an initial model for the professional development of music teachers in informal music pedagogy, the evidence presented in the article that led to these conclusions was short and without much descriptive elements to provide evidence supporting their themes. Thus, future research is still needed to determine whether these findings might ring true in other settings.

In a third study of informal music pedagogy in an undergraduate music methods course, Davis and Blair (2011) investigated the experience of American music education majors enrolled in a secondary general music course in which the primary author was also the instructor. Rather than focusing exclusively on informal music learning, Davis and Blair explored the use of popular music through informal music learning. Data came from classroom conversations, performances, online postings, and student journals. The authors were careful to comment on their own teaching the course, acknowledging inconsistencies and struggles they experienced. For example, the instructor chose the song for the students to aurally copy, which contradicted a characteristic of informal music pedagogy in which students select their own repertoire. As a result, the activity was difficult for the students, and not as successful as they would have liked.

Despite this, Davis and Blair (2011) noticed a progression in the students that represented what they understood and valued about music education. This progression shifted from “disequilibrium,” to “breaking down the barriers,” to “student transformation: constructing and reconstructing ideas, understandings, [and] empathies,” to “realized implications.” In “disequilibrium,” the students felt uncomfortable with this new learning and feared that they might fail in front of their peers. Yet, they also encouraged each other and provided “peer scaffolding” (p. 130). Next, in “breaking down the barriers,” the students began to make connections in a formal class discussion between their informal musicking experience and their formal knowledge of music theory, which the authors stated allowed them to “operate within a familiar comfort zone” (p. 132). This experience of informal music learning, along with readings and discussions, appeared to cause a change in the students’ beliefs about the value of popular music and informal music processes. In particular, the students began to recognize the meaning

that this type of experience might have for their future students. This led to the final theme, “realized implications,” in which the students began to see the role of popular music in “shaping personal and emotional identity” in their future students (p. 135).

Davis and Blair’s (2011) study is unique, in that it took place in a secondary general methods course in the United States, and that one of the researchers was also the instructor. The results revealed changes in the preservice teachers’ abilities with, perceptions of, and beliefs concerning popular music and informal music pedagogy. However, these transformations took place over a relatively short period of time and within a unit of a course. More research is needed to see the lasting impact that this course will have on these students and whether knowledge gained in a methods course results in changes in music teaching in the future. Additionally, another limitation of the study includes the primary author’s considerable experience with teaching undergraduate courses. For example, Davis stated that, “she has found three main reasons why teachers are reticent to approach popular music in the classroom...” (p. 128), and she seemed to draw from her prior teaching experience when explaining the results. While all qualitative research has the influence of researcher bias, Davis and Blair (2011) do not seem to state these limitations. Thus, Davis’ role as both instructor and researcher, as well as the filtered lens of her prior college teaching, may have limited her ability to function as an unbiased researcher. Thus, more research is needed to study this population, as well as populations of experienced teachers in informal music processes.

Summary of Professional Development and Teacher Education Literature

Experienced music teachers have stated that they participate in professional development activities, although this may partially be due to state and local requirements (Hesterman, 2009).

The majority of music teachers currently attend professional development in the form of workshops and conferences and school in-services (Bernard, 2009; Bowles, 2002; Ferrara, 2009; Hesterman, 2011). While there seemed to be some discrepancies among surveys in the topics that music teachers preferred, elementary general music teachers tended to prefer general music-specific content and focus on specific teaching methodologies, such as Orff and Kodaly. This suggests that music teachers may not only prefer professional development that is subject-specific, but also area-specific. This may mean that the elementary general music teachers may benefit most from professional development opportunities with other elementary general music teachers.

In qualitative studies of music teacher professional development, music teachers need to develop feelings of trust and community as a group before they could successfully feel comfortable being open about their teaching (Gruenhagen, 2007; Stanley, 2009). The use of a protocol in viewing and analyzing videotapes of group members' teaching facilitated a safe environment, as well as helped group members to retain their focus (Stanley, 2009). Finally, in reflecting on their group experiences, music teachers who stayed through the entire professional group time frame perceived that the experience was beneficial and resulted in their co-construction of shared meanings and understandings (Gruenhagen, 2007; Stanley, 2009).

In the professional development of informal music learning, studies have, at the time of this writing, only taken place in undergraduate music teacher education methods and improvisation courses (Davis & Blair, 2011; Finney & Philpott, 2010; Wright and Kanellopoulos, 2010). In these courses, preservice music teachers frequently had opportunities to make music using informal practices like aural copying and performing popular music, although Davis and

Blair (2011) discovered that even adults need opportunities to select their own repertoire in order for informal practices to be successful. In some settings, preservice teachers musicked informally with children, which helped them gain new perspectives of children's learning processes. Through participation in these courses, many of the preservice teachers began to reflect on their own formal and informal backgrounds with music, as well as consider ways to incorporate these practices into their own future teaching.

Summary of Related Research

Informal music learning has revealed several characteristics that are typically exhibited by music teachers, although these characteristics were not always the direct purpose of the research studies. More specifically, these common characteristics included utilizing different pedagogical strategies, such as being flexible allowing student independence and choice; classroom environments with both the physical and metaphorical space for students to copy and create their own music; and student-teacher relationships in which the music teacher functioned more as a guide, peer learner, or facilitator than a teacher or director in charge (Abramo & Austin, 2012; Allsup, 2003; Davis, 2008, 2011; Green, 2008; Jaffurs, 2006; Ruthmann, 2006). However, several of the studies of informal music learning in the classroom were conducted by music teachers who were also the researchers, and in both roles, they acted independently (Allsup, 2003; Davis, 2008, 2011). They had to figure out these roles in isolation, without any known help from other music teacher colleagues.

In professional development, music teachers both value and benefit from opportunities to connect with other music teachers. In particular professional learning communities and teacher

study groups allow for music teachers to collaborate with other like-minded individuals, discuss important and relevant topics related to their teaching, and work toward a common goal in a safe environment (Gruenhagen, 2007; Stanley, 2009). Since the only studies that have looked at the professional development of informal music learning at this time have taken place in music education courses for undergraduates (Davis & Blair, 2011; Finney & Philpott, 2010; Wright and Kanellopoulos, 2010), more research is needed to determine whether a professional development community would be an appropriate environment for experienced music teachers to consider the issues related to informal music pedagogy. In particular, more research is needed to investigate elementary general music teachers as they discuss informal music learning in a professional learning community and integrate it into their formal music teaching.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Based on the stated purpose and problems stated in the first chapter, this chapter will focus on the specific characteristics of the design and procedures that will be used in conducting this study. It will include descriptions of the design, participants, procedures, data analysis and trustworthiness, limitations, and the researcher lens.

Design

This study used an instrumental case study design. According to Stake (1995), an instrumental case study is used in order to advance understanding beyond one particular case. In this study, the case was a professional development community (PDC) of elementary- and intermediate-level general and choral music teachers who explored and implemented informal music learning practices in their own classrooms. I used ethnographic techniques in collecting and analyzing data in order to explore the teachers' perceptions, understandings, and interactions in a naturalistic setting using participant-observation, in the hope that this would reveal greater insights from the participants. Data forms included in-depth observations and fieldnotes of participants in their music classrooms, video-recordings of PDC meetings, audio-recordings of semi-structured individual interviews, researcher and teacher comments in a private Facebook group, and collected artifacts (i.e., participant emails and written reflections, anonymous student written work) (Creswell, 2007). I collected ethnographic data and then analyzed for emerging themes. For a more detailed description of procedures and analysis, see below.

Participant Selection

Participants included four elementary music teachers who taught general music and/or choir, although one teacher taught at an intermediate school with only fifth and sixth grades. They came from school districts surrounding a large Midwestern university. I used a maximum variation strategy for sampling, with the goal of finding “diverse variations” among participants (Creswell, 2007, p. 126). According to Creswell (2007) this type of sampling strategy allows for greater opportunities to hear from a variety of different perspectives, which adds to the richness of the qualitative data.

Selection of participants was bound to include currently practicing music teachers who teach at least half of their classes in elementary general settings. Using advice from university faculty members, I sought out elementary general music teachers who were highly skilled and reflective teachers interested in their students as individuals, known to have interest in learning about progressive issues in music education, and believed to work well with others. Additionally, I sought participants with diversity in their gender, amount of teaching experience, methodological trainings, and musical backgrounds. Participants meeting the necessary criteria were invited and asked for their consent to participate in the study.

Given the time and travel commitment needed by participants to attend group meetings, participant selection was somewhat limited to music teachers within a given radius of the university, similar to a sample of convenience (Creswell, 2007). The proximity to PDC meetings became one of the greatest factors in participant selection. Several potential participants declined to participate, citing the hour-long drive to and from meetings as their reason. Five participants agreed to participate, and all of these participants except one lived within 45 minutes

of the PDC meeting place. The other member lived around two hours away, but traveled to the same city as the meetings to visit his fiancé on the weekends (the group met on Sundays), so the travel fit into his existing schedule. Finally, of these five participants, one participant chose to withdraw after attending one PDC meeting. She stated this was due to having too many commitments and not enough time. Data she provided was not considered in the analysis. However, the issues of time and location are both additional factors important considerations in understanding the strengths and limitations of PDCs.

Procedures

University human subjects approval was received on November 3, 2011, after which I began contacting potential participants. After selecting participants and gaining their consent for participation (Appendix A), the PDC began meeting November, 2011. Data collection took place over six months from November through mid-April.

The PDC

PDC meetings took place bi-weekly on Sunday evenings for approximately two hours at the researcher's home. However, due to the Thanksgiving holiday and winter break, the PDC only met once per month in November and December. Prior to each meeting, I selected a reading related to informal music learning, based on the previous PDC discussion and the expressed interests of group members (see Appendix B for a complete list). For example, when the participants wanted to see research related specifically to elementary-aged students, I suggested reading an article focused on that age, or when they wanted to read more information from a specific author, I shared additional readings from that scholar. As the group continued, I

also allowed participants to select among two to three readings, according to what suited their interests. In this way, I hoped the PDC would function less as a class with assigned readings, and more like a study group in which the members had greater autonomy. Additionally, because the topics were not pre-planned, participants could focus on aspects of the readings that were the most poignant to themselves and to the group, allowing for the discussions to unfold naturally over time. Readings were discussed at all of the meetings except for the final one, in which the participants instead reflected on their experience in the PDC.

Each PDC meeting began with a casual social time for approximately 30 minutes, accompanied by food and drinks, in order to build rapport among group members. Then, we began to discuss issues more specifically related to informal music learning. During this time, I acted as a facilitator and participant. As facilitator, I introduced the reading, prompted questions when needed, and ensured that the conversations took place in a supportive environment. However, I attempted to spend an equal amount of time as a group participant, drawing from my own experiences and values as a music teacher. In this way, I hoped to function in the role of a peer and co-creator of knowledge within the group rather than an instructor. This aligns not only with prior models of teacher study groups (Stanley, 2009), but also with characteristics found in informal music learning (Allsup, 2003; Jaffurs, 2006; Finney & Philpott, 2010). Ultimately, the purpose of the group was for the participants to co-construct their understandings of informal music learning and consider its practical applications in their classrooms.

After having a casual time at the beginning of the PDC, the second 30 minutes included time for participants to share how they implemented informal music learning characteristics in their classroom since the previous meeting. The participants were not required to share, nor were

they required to implement an informal music learning activity in between each PDC meeting. Thus, the time spent in this segment of the group varied according to the number of people sharing and the amount they wanted to say. The teachers, without prompting, often brought in video clips or written student work to show what their students had done. This became a highlight of the group and added to the success of the PDC, which will be discussed further in the results. However, the video recordings the teachers brought in to the PDC were not used in the data analysis, but the teachers' responses to the videos were included.

Next, discussions of readings lasted approximately 30 minutes. Participants were free to comment on aspects of the readings that they found to be most interesting. Finally, the participants spent the remainder of the time developing ideas they were interested in implementing in their own classrooms. This time frequently included brainstorming new ideas among each other, stating which ideas they wanted to take from other group members, and talking about the logistics of setting up the activities in their classrooms, which will be further described in the results section. The participants had no requirements for if and how they chose to apply the ideas and activities discussed in the PDC, in the hope that participants would feel a sense of personal independence in the group and further distinguishing the group from being a "course" with "requirements." My hope was that this would allow the participants to tailor the knowledge and perceptions they developed in the PDC to their unique teaching styles and settings. Because the sequence of readings and events were flexible, rather than rigid, my goal was to both promote the agency of PDC members to be responsible for their own experiences, but also to limit the amount of influence I might have had over the outcomes of the group.

Data Collection

Data collection included the following forms: video recordings, audio recordings, journal entries, observations, fieldnotes, and artifacts, which resulted in 403 single-spaced pages of data. First, I video-recorded all PDC meetings using a Canon FS200 digital video camcorder. Making a video recording allowed me to observe clearly which of the participants was talking, whereas an audio recording may have impeded identification of the speaker. The video recording also allowed for the documentation of facial expressions, body language, and interactions, which aided in the analysis (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). I transcribed each video recording as soon as possible following each PDC meeting. In reviewing the videotape and transcription, I sought to gain additional understanding distinct from my experience as a participant during the meetings. However, because a recording and its resulting transcription are “but a slice of ongoing social life” (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 9), my prolonged experience as a participant in the PDC served as a benefit, rather than a liability, in understanding the nuances of participants’ experiences.

Second, I conducted individual interviews with each participant. Each interview was recorded using Garageband software on my MacBook laptop. Two semi-structured interviews took place (see Appendix C). An initial interview at the beginning of the data collection period served to gain understanding of participants’ background information, views of independent musicianship, knowledge of their students, and general teaching philosophies. An exit interview was used to investigate the participants’ experiences as group members, their understanding and perspective of informal music learning practices in their classrooms, what informal practices they had learned and/or applied, their beliefs concerning the value of including informal learning

processes, and whether they believed that they would continue pursuing informal learning practices in the future. Both interviews were scheduled at a time and place convenient for each individual teacher, with interviews taking place either at participants' homes or at a quiet cafe. Having semi-structured interviews allowed me to prepare a set of questions consistent across each of the individual interviews but still provided me with the flexibility to ask follow-up questions or clarify in the participants' responses (Appendix D) (Creswell, 2007).

Third, I observed each of the participants in their classrooms. I originally intended to observe each participant at the beginning and end of the period in which the PDC met. However, I discovered that the teachers did not initially let me know the dates of when they intended to implement informal music learning activities in their classrooms, so, unfortunately, I missed some of the participants' initial applications. After I realized this, I began asking the participants more directly in PDC meetings to let me know when they were implementing informal music learning activities. Also, I had originally hoped to observe each participant twice, but because I did not always know in advance about the teachers plans to implement activities that used informal music practices, I missed opportunities to observe two of the teachers more than once.

Out of the four participants, I observed two participants one time, with one of those being after the end of the PDC meetings. Another I observed two times on back-to-back days. I observed a third participant three times throughout the data collection period. This participant, Diana, was the most forthcoming about when she planned to include informal music learning activities, and she also included more applications than some of the teachers, which is why I had additional observations with her. In total, I made seven observations. During these observations, I took rich fieldnotes to describe the class (Creswell, 2007; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). By

observing the music teachers in their classrooms, I sought to examine their teaching in action, with the goal that this would support or contradict the teachers' statements in group meetings and interviews. Additionally, I also took notes of the students in informal music learning, to capture the essence of their experience in these informal music learning activities.

Finally, I journaled and collected artifacts throughout the data collection period. I journaled after the PDC meetings in order to capture my perceptions and observations as a group member discussing informal music learning and as a facilitator of a professional learning group. Additionally, I collected artifacts from group meetings, including student written reflections and lyrics from student compositions. Throughout the data collection period, the participants suggested the formation of a private Facebook group, so that they could continue to dialogue in between the bi-weekly face-to-face meetings, and I set up a Dropbox folder—an online file-sharing software—at their request to share song notations and lesson plans. The comments and documents posted on Facebook and in Dropbox were included as part of the data.

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Data analysis was on-going. While the procedures were underway, I monitored the data in order to “rethink,” “reflect,” “re-plan,” and “understand” the progress of the group (Mills, 2007, p. 16). Not only did this help me in following and facilitating the progress of the PDC and choosing readings for each meeting, but it also allowed me to begin to make comparisons, reflect on the data, organize the data, and begin to develop initial codes (Creswell, 2007). In particular, memoing served as an important part throughout data collection and during coding and analysis.

As I began to see relationships and patterns within the data, I would write memos, which later became useful in developing more concrete understandings (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995).

After data collection ended, I re-read and coded all of the data using HyperResearch, a download qualitative software program. The codes were my own interpretations of the data, based on “hunches, insights, and intuition” (Creswell, 2007, p. 154) through my researcher lens. HyperResearch also functioned as an aid in the analysis process by allowing me to see the prevalence of each code and the relationships between codes, which helped me discover emerging themes. In analyzing the data, I sought to meet the four criteria given in Whittemore, Chase, and Mandle’s (2001) analysis of qualitative validations: credibility, authenticity, criticality, and integrity. In order to establish credibility, I sought to represent the participants and their voices accurately. I provided authenticity through the diversity of the participants and their backgrounds. I looked critically at my research methods throughout all stages of the process, in order to consider any potential limitations, and I sought integrity in my own actions as a researcher through being transparent and reflexive of myself and the data.

I ensured trustworthiness through four means: prolonged engagement, data triangulation, member checks, and peer review (Creswell, 2007). By participating in the PDC for an extended period of time and by interacting with the participants both in the group meetings and in individual settings, I tried to establish a rapport with the participants and understand their perspectives, as well as the culture of the group itself. Data triangulation took place by supporting each emergent theme through multiple forms of data. In member checks, participants had the opportunity to review interview transcripts in order to determine the accuracy of their

accounts. I also shared preliminary codes and themes with the participants in order to confirm, refine, or dispute my analysis.

Finally, I put the data through multiple stages of peer review. First, I gave excerpts of various data sources and codes to two experienced music education researchers, whose feedback confirmed and helped me refine my existing codes. Second, I shared a detailed summary of my emergent themes and codes with two additional experienced music education researchers, along with examples of data to support each, which helped me further refine my analysis. Finally, I shared full chapters of my results with a music education researcher to determine whether my results rang true in comparing the data to my written descriptions and analysis. By completing these additional phases of peer review and member checks, I hoped to provided additional grounds for ensuring trustworthiness in my results.

Limitations

I initially wanted to describe informal music pedagogy as it was already being implemented in elementary schools. However, since I did not know any elementary music teachers in my area who were using informal music pedagogy regularly to allow for the prolonged engagement I felt necessary to adequately understand this topic, I had to find new alternatives to answer similar questions. Other research had described the transformation that had taken place with undergraduate music education majors as they learned about and tried using informal music learning in their courses, but, in reading the literature on professional development for experienced teachers, I found that teacher study groups and professional development communities could serve as an appropriate setting for working with practicing

teachers, which led to the current study. I acknowledge that I had a more active role as a participant and facilitator of this PDC. Thus, my interpretations of the data have been influenced by participating in this PDC, as well as my interest and experience in informal music learning that are a part of my unique researcher lens. Also, since this study is of a particular set of individuals in a particular teacher study group, the findings may not be generalizable to all elementary music teachers, as is the case with all qualitative research. However, the findings may have transferability to other music teachers in similar settings and, I hope, will add to the body of knowledge concerning both informal music learning and professional development communities.

Researcher Lens

Both informal and formal music learning have been a part of my life since childhood. Music filled my home as a child, whether we were dancing to records in the living room, singing together on long car rides, or playing the piano and simple percussion instruments. In preparing this document, I talked with my mother, and she reminded me of the times in which we would gather in the “piano room,” aptly named because it held the piano and our other musical instruments, like recorders, a log drum, and bongos, for us to sing, play, and improvise together. Singing together is still an important part of our lives, even though I am the only “musician” in the family. In addition to these casual times of music-making, my parents also signed up me and my older brothers for formal piano lessons. After a few years, my brothers’ interest in the piano waned in favor of other pursuits, but I never lost my passion for piano and continue playing today. I experimented with composing in sixth grade, but after receiving only apathetic

responses from my first piano teacher, I decided that maybe I was not supposed to write my own music, and did not write any more music until I began writing songs for my elementary and early childhood students. Overall, the majority of my music learning from elementary school through college as a music education major consisted of formal learning experiences. My music teachers and ensemble directors selected the repertoire and learning sequences, they made most of the choices concerning the expression of the performances, and they provided critical feedback as trained experts. These experiences have been essential in my growth as a musician, and taught me innumerable musical skills.

However, it was mainly through informal music experiences as an adult that I discovered my true musical identity. After beginning my career as an elementary general music teacher in Virginia, I sought out professional development to help me grow as a teacher and performance opportunities to continue enriching my personal musicianship. To further my professional development, I took my first level of Orff-Schulwerk, during which we were encouraged to create our own songs and arrangements to use with students and activities for improvisation and composition for students in the classroom. While these learning experiences took place in a structured, formal workshop, I felt alive through the creative affordances given to me in playfully creating and experiencing music.

I also began playing keyboards in a contemporary worship service, under the direction of Eric Robertson. Eric was a former music education student who chose to pursue a life in music ministry instead. Eric remains the most talented musician I have ever known, and I credit him with making me a better musician and person. Because of his formal training, Eric understood my primarily formal musical background, but as the leader of a band with mostly informally

trained musicians, Eric knew how to communicate with the other members, too. We learned music by listening to recordings of pieces and trying to copy them exactly or only copy certain elements, such as a certain groove that Eric wanted us to capture. Through listening and copying the music, Eric taught me how to listen, which I had never really been taught before. “Don’t you *hear* that piano part in there?” he would ask me, trying to get me to learn my part. Although we were aided by the use of call charts, the majority of learning happened aurally. Eric was the group leader, but he also invited our input into song selections, interpretations, and arrangements.

Through these experiences, I distinctly remember a moment when I felt, “I *am* a musician.” Although I had taken formal piano lessons, participated in formal ensembles, and even became a professional in a musical career, I did not realize my full musical identity until I began creating and improvising music in an Orff-Schulwerk workshop and participating in music listening, copying, and arranging in a worship band. Unfortunately, I did not make the connection that the informal music experiences I had received as a child with my family and my personal music making my as an adult could translate into my music pedagogy at school, and I provided few opportunities for informal music learning in my own teaching. However, upon learning about informal music learning, I became hooked and wanted to find out all that I could about this topic, realizing how important informal music learning has been in my own life. While I cannot go back and implement informal music learning in my previous elementary general music classrooms, I am still curious to find out what this experiences is like, and I hope that this study will illuminate some of the possibilities.

CHAPTER 4: PARTICIPANTS

This chapter includes an introduction to each of the participants in this PDC. As mentioned in Chapter 3, I sought a maximum sampling strategy, in order to have greater diversity among participants, but, due to the challenge of having everyone meet at one location for the PDC meetings, the participant selection was influenced somewhat by convenience (Creswell, 2007). The four participants were Tyler Watkins, Kendra Gibbons, Cara Cartwright, and Diana Gardner. I am presenting the participants in order of their years of teaching experience, and I hope to highlight the unique characteristics, backgrounds, and approaches to teaching that each participant brought to this study. All names of individuals and places are pseudonyms.

Tyler Watkins

Tyler Watkins was in his second year as an elementary general music teacher. He had grown up in the suburbs of a large city, where he started his path in music by beginning on trombone in elementary school band. He continued playing throughout school, but he spoke appreciatively about taking an Advanced Placement music theory class, because it gave him a greater understanding of music beyond playing his trombone. This shaped Tyler's belief as a teacher, because, even though he taught elementary music, he believed in providing opportunities for students to do more than perform. He greatly valued helping students to have "audiatonal development" in which they could think musically without teacher guidance, and he sought to include as many creative activities as possible, so his students had multiple opportunities to

compose and improvise (Tyler, Interview #1, 11/20/11). Tyler had been certified in Music Learning Theory (MLT), which also shaped many of his perspectives about students' music learning.

Tyler made the decision to teach elementary general music because it provided him with greater opportunities to teach the things that he valued philosophically in ways he agreed with pedagogically. He explained that he preferred teaching elementary music, as opposed to secondary music, because he was more interested in supporting his students than in putting on a performance. As he put it, he stated that he was “not a glory person,” or a conductor who stood at the front of the classroom and instructed students about “what they’re doing wrong” (Tyler, Interview #1, 11/20/11). Rather, he said that he wanted the musicking in his classroom to “be more of a community experience.”

Tyler also enjoyed working with young children, which developed from his babysitting children in his neighborhood as teenager, and he still continued babysitting occasionally, despite his full-time teaching position. In his undergraduate experience, he was introduced to early childhood music education, and he taught early childhood music classes in a local community music school. In describing his love for children, he said:

It’s the energy, you know, the innocence, the blank slate. It was just really appealing. I love to babysit. I babysat my friends’ five-month-old on Friday and the whole day, I sang to him, and I was smiling. It just the whole thing of getting to be kid myself again, to understand the mind of a child. I just love it! (Tyler, Interview #1, 11/20/11)

Tyler’s interest of and enjoyment with working with young children was evident in his teaching. I had known Tyler since he was earning his undergraduate degree, and I had observed him teach

early childhood music classes. Although he came across as shy and reserved in adult conversations, with young children his playful side emerged, and he had a silly yet genuine demeanor that children loved.

In addition, Tyler felt passionate about learning new technologies, and he was interested in developing new applications for using technology in the music classroom. Tyler consistently used an interactive white board, various forms of digital sound files, GarageBand to manipulate these sound files for students, notation software, PowerPoint presentations, and his iPad as part of his teaching. He had also begun using VoiceThread, an online program that allowed for students to interact with classroom materials at home through a secured website. Tyler shared that he did not always think this way, saying he initially had an “egocentric view of technology” (Interview #1, 11/20/11). Tyler felt that, since his students were all digital natives in terms of using technology for their whole lives, by integrating technology into the classroom, he had an additional “window into what they’re doing.”

Tyler taught in a fairly affluent school district about 90 minutes from the PDC meeting location. However, he came to the same city as the meeting location every weekend to visit his fiancé. Thus, he was able to attend PDC meetings before driving back home before starting school on Monday. In participating in the PDC, Tyler wanted to continue getting more ideas from other teachers, since he was only in his second year of teaching. He also felt confident in his abilities as a second year teacher, and he shared that he also wanted to receive “encouragement or vindication that what I’m doing is good for my students” (Tyler, Interview #1, 11/20/11), and he appreciated having a place where he could discuss ideas with other teachers.

Kendra Gibbons

Of all of the participants, Kendra was the only teacher with whom I had no prior interactions before this research study. However, her warm, genuine demeanor and quick-on-the-draw smile made it easy for me and the other PDC members to connect with her. Kendra was in her seventh year of teaching, and she was recommended for participation in this study by faculty members because of the thoughtful work she had demonstrated when completing her master's degree. Prior to this, Kendra had received her undergraduate degree at a small Christian university.

Kendra knew that she wanted to be a teacher first, before deciding to teach music. Both of Kendra's parents were teachers, and, after considering several different options, she decided to focus on music. At first, she did not want to become a music teacher because she had a negative experience in her high school band, but she later discovered how much she enjoyed teaching music in the elementary setting, because she loved working with young children. Kendra described her teaching as "focused" (Kendra, Interview #1, 12/05/12). She valued having goals and a structured learning sequence for her students, because she felt as though this allowed her to help students reach their potential. She described her value of assessing students individually so that she could remediate their weaknesses musically, while still supporting their strengths.

Kendra's interest in having a focused learning sequence stemmed from her recent certification in Music Learning Theory. Kendra felt as though, prior to taking this certification, her teaching was a pastiche of random activities. As she explained:

My undergrad was just kind of a mishmash of, well, “Here’s a bit of everything.” I felt really lost my first couple of years of teaching. I felt like I was trying to pull activities, trying to almost kill time. And it felt horrible. (Kendra, Interview #1, 12/05/11)

However, she felt that her MLT training provided her with a means to sequence her activities, which she believed guided her teaching in a valuable way.

Kendra taught in a lower socio-economic school district about 45 minutes away from the PDC meeting location, and she shared that she and her husband intentionally chose to live near the school so that they could be a part of the community and hopefully have a greater impact there. Kendra believed, because many of her students came from low socio-economic backgrounds, that it was important for her to provide musical experiences that students would find relevant to their lives. As she stated, “[I]f it can be relevant, and they can say, ‘Yeah, I see the connection, and I can take this home and use it,’ then they tend to gravitate toward it” (Kendra, Interview #1, 12/05/11). Thus, Kendra wanted to provide relevant musical experiences as a way to connect with her students.

Cara Cartwright

Unlike the other participants, Cara Cartwright was the only teacher who did not teach general music for kindergarten through fifth grade in the traditional elementary school setting. Rather, Cara taught in a school district that separated its students so only a few grades were together in each building. Cara taught in a fifth- and sixth-grade intermediate school. She taught compulsory general music to the fifth grade students and choir as an elective to the sixth graders. However, the sixth graders were required to choose one music class among band and choir, so

many of the students in her sixth grade choirs selected that class not necessarily because they wanted to sing, but because they had to choose a music class. Cara seemed to feel that it was a struggle to motivate some of these students who felt forced to take a music class.

Prior to teaching at the intermediate school, she had taught secondary choir for grades seventh through twelve in the same school district, and “started the choral program here,” as she explained it (Cara, Interview #1, 11/22/11). However, she felt “exhausted” by all of the time and effort she expended in building a secondary choral program, so when a “music and movement” position opened up at the district’s kindergarten building, Cara switched from teaching the oldest to the youngest students in the district. Finally, after four years of teaching at that building, she chose to move into her current position because it allowed her to teach both elementary general and choral music. As she explained it, “This is a good balance for me. I can do the elementary general stuff, I can do the secondary choral stuff, and I actually really love this age level” (Cara, Interview #1, 11/22/11). As a result of her position changes, Cara had taught nearly all of her current students when they were in kindergarten, which provided her with unique perspectives of her students that she tried to use to her advantage. When individual students would not perform to the level at which she felt they were capable, Cara would call out her students and remind them about their musical achievements in kindergarten.

Cara had an easy-going, energetic personality. Due to a schedule conflict, Cara missed the first PDC meeting, and I was concerned at how her joining would affect the group’s dynamic. However, Cara’s friendly manner melded perfectly with the group and actually added a sense of energy and fun that might not otherwise have been present. I had known Cara from observing student teachers in her classroom, but I had not really seen her teach. Cara described her

teaching as “interactive, passionate, and methodological” (Cara, Interview #1, 11/22/11). She valued her students’ participation, and she constantly sought to share her love of music with students. “I want my students to see what music can do. And so I try to inspire them by just sheer joy.” She approached her teaching in a methodological way, using her MLT training to undergird her approach, but she felt challenged by not having taught her students in third- and fourth-grades. She felt as though she had to do some remedial work, because the students did not have a comprehensive musical experience with their third- and fourth-grade music teacher.

Diana Gardner

Diana Gardner was the most veteran teacher in the PDC; she had taught for over 20 years. Also, out of all the teachers within the PDC, I was most familiar with her teaching. I had observed her teaching several times and had visited her classroom while observing student teachers. She and I also had received our MLT early childhood certification in the same workshop and had worked together throughout that workshop, sharing lesson plans and teaching ideas. Diana had a diverse teaching background, as well. She had taught in multiple states and in multiple school buildings within her current school district, where she had been for the last 10 years, and she had both MLT and Orff certifications that influenced her teaching. Although she had taught for over 20 years, Diana still approached her teaching as though she had more to learn; she continuously sought to improve her teaching for the betterment of her students.

Diana was in her second year in her current school building. Her previous building had been closed, and she had been transferred to a new school building. Also, the district had been restructured so that all sixth grade students were now in elementary buildings, rather than middle

school, and teaching sixth grade students was a new venture for her. Diana explained how she had tried to continue playing the recorder with her sixth graders but found that it was difficult to continue motivating them to play it. In response, she had requested funding and purchased a classroom set of ukuleles and was teaching that instrument for the first time; her students loved it.

Diana described her teaching as both “well-planned” and “evolving,” and she commented on the discrepancy between those two ideas. Diana believed it was important to think carefully about her teaching, saying, “I think I spend maybe more time than the average bear thinking about what I’m going to do” (Diana, Interview #1, 12/01/11). At the same time, she then described her constantly-changing nature, “[I]ronically, after I thought well-planned, I also thought, . . . I kind of am *evolving* all the time.” She then explained that, although she taught some things from year to year, she also changed things about every lesson as her students and their needs changed. As she explained, “I get bored if I don’t.”

This example shows Diana’s willingness to grow and change in her teaching, which also came through in her participation in the PDC. Diana was more likely to ask questions about others’ teaching than to offer her own ideas, even from the teachers with the least amount of experience. She had a self-deprecating sense of humor that helped her relate to other members of the group, and she was open to taking risks in her teaching. Diana also was more politically aware of the changes happening within the educational system, such as in the new teacher evaluations. Although Diana had some professional development experiences with the other elementary general music teachers in her district, she still was excited to participate in the PDC so that she could be “mentally stimulated” and learn new ideas from others.

Summary

The four teachers in this study had many similarities but also many differences. Three of the participants were female and one was male. The participants all taught in different school districts. Three of the participants had earned a degree in music education at the same institution, with two earning bachelor's and one earning a master's degree. However, none of the participants attended any classes together while working toward their degrees. All of the participants were members of the same local Music Learning Theory (MLT) chapter, and all held at least one MLT certification.

The participants ranged in their levels of teaching experience from two to 22 years of teaching, and all of them but one had earned a master's degree, although the fourth had already begun to take master's courses. They also came from differing instrumental and vocal backgrounds, and all had differing personalities and interests. When asked if they could think of any informal experiences in learning music, none of them could recall anything, revealing that they all had primarily formal musical training. Overall, although the participants had some similarities, they also were a diverse group of individual teachers who all came together to form this PDC.

CHAPTER 5: “TAKING THE TRAINING WHEELS OFF”: APPLICATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES OF INFORMAL MUSIC LEARNING

Throughout the data collection period, the participants incorporated applications of informal music learning practices and ideas from the PDC in their classrooms in the form of teaching units, which they commonly referred to as “*Experiments*.” This chapter will detail the specific applications of these practices and describe how they changed over time. Additionally, this chapter will describe the teachers’ perceptions of informal music learning, including a section on “*Finding Value*,” in which the teachers recognized the congruencies between their experiments and their personal teaching philosophies, ultimately leading them to see the value in their students’ engagement, motivation, ownership, and musical independence. In particular, Kendra described how informal music learning was like “taking the training wheels off” of the students learning; all of the teachers valued seeing their students’ musical independence blossom through these activities. The final section, “*Concerns and Challenges*,” focuses on the philosophical and logistical issues the teachers faced in implementing informal music learning. To begin, the following vignette was taken from my first classroom observation of a teacher incorporating informal music learning and includes elements of all three of the sections from this chapter.

Observation #1 with Diana – January 12, 2011

Diana had posted on the wall of our Facebook group that she was going to try the “experiment” in her class this week, so I emailed her and asked to

come visit. On Thursday, January 12, 2012, I observed four of her 5th grade classes from 9:00-11:00 am. It was a truly eye-opening experience. On that day, the weather was starting to turn from the unusually warm weather we had been having to a cloudy, cold, and wet day more typical of a Michigan January.

As I walked in, Diana and her student teacher greeted me warmly.

Diana immediately began giving me some of the background information on the activity I was to observe. Diana had said in her email that she was going to do the same activity that Tyler had done, but with a few changes. She said that she had selected four songs, and she was going to let the students choose which song they were going to do and then copy it using classroom instruments. She said that her original plan was to let the students choose from among the four pre-determined selections (“Whip My Hair” by Willow Smith, “Stereo Hearts” by Gym Class Heroes, “Good Life” by OneRepublic, and “Tonight Tonight” by Hot Chelle Rae), but she found that she had to modify her plans. In the first 5th grade class prior to my visit, the groups had taken the entire time to select their songs, but no one had really chosen their pieces yet. So Diana and her student teacher, in the remaining three classes, chose to have each class vote on a song to recreate. Then all of the groups would have to recreate that same song in the class. Interestingly, all of the classes chose the same song, “Stereo Hearts” by Gym Class Heroes.

Diana made a passing comment just before the class was about to begin. I think I had asked her whether she was ready for the class, and she said something about how she felt guilty about doing this activity; she had her coffee

mug and that was it—“No real lesson plan.” Throughout my observation, Diana made several comments indicating her apprehension. With her words about doing the “experiment” rather than leading or teaching the class and her comments that she was glad I was there to see her because it gave her “permission” to step outside of the box and try something new, I think she was trying to rationalize her new role in the situation: to tell herself that it was okay what she was trying to do. She had even compared what her students were doing to the research we had read, as though she was continually trying to justify the activity. I think there was some uncertainty in her teaching, but she was still willing to put herself out there and try it. For this, I have tremendous respect for her.

After giving the students their directions, Diana told the class to begin their group work. A scurry of movement began as the students got up, picked out their instruments, and got their laptops, earphones, and earphone splitters. The room seemed to be buzzing immediately in a structured cacophony. All of the groups went straight to work. I picked up the voice of one girl confidently stating to her group, “Okay, I’ve already got ‘Stereo Hearts’ memorized,” and indicated her desire to be a singer in her group. In other groups, I caught students tapping the beat while listening, snippets of the song playing off of the laptops (as many groups did not use their headphones), and lots of doodling on the recorder and barred instruments.

I ended up standing near Diana as we both watched a group in the center of the room. A boy in the group, wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt with the

school initials and football printed on it, was trying to figure out part of the melody to the song. After several tries, he started to get closer to getting the part right. Diana and I gave each other a look with raised eyebrows in surprise and excitement at this achievement. While I was still thinking in amazement at how well this boy had figured out the melody by ear, Diana softly commented, "He doesn't know how to play F. That's going to be a problem." Although I tried to dismiss the problem, saying that it didn't really matter and, "Who's it going to bother anyway," Diana laughed and said that it was going to bother her.

At one point, I wrote in my notes, "I can see how this would be frustrating." Even though the kids were all engaged, it was at varying levels of achievement. As a teacher and self-professed control freak, I understood how many teachers would struggle with just standing back, but I had no idea how hard this was until actually seeing it in action. The strange thing was, even though it looked like a raging mess, all of the students were actually engaged. Even the students who did not seem to be as focused still actively participated in their groups. At one point, I noticed a girl trying to convince another boy to sing, saying, "Yes! You gotta get over your fear!"

Later when the class lined up, I asked the students how they enjoyed the project. Nearly everyone said that they really enjoyed this activity. In the first class, a short young man wearing a hockey jersey shared that it was "fun doing new songs, not old songs," and then he glanced at Diana and began to blush. Diana and I couldn't help but laugh at his candid reaction. As they left, Diana told me that, "They're always loud at the end [after doing informal music

learning], because they're excited." She indicated that their excitement at this project seemed to continue beyond the classroom door and that several students could be heard singing their melodies down the hallway coming to or from music class. It was sweet to hear that the boys and girls were thinking about their music-making while going out into the rest of their day. (Observation, Diana, 01/12/12)

Experimentation

The teachers developed several applications of informal music learning activities as they implemented ideas discussed in the PDC. After briefly introducing all of the five different types of informal music learning activities the teachers created, I will present them in more detail according to the type of modifications the teachers used in developing their activities. Rather than creating the activities independently or copying lessons verbatim, the teachers approached their development of the activities through three types of modifications: adapting activities from ideas in research studies that we read in the PDC, from their prior teaching, and in the moment to meet students' interests and needs.

In several group meetings and during my classroom observations, I heard the teachers refer to these applications of informal music learning practices as "experiments" or as "the project." For example, when Cara began brainstorming her first informal music learning activity, she exclaimed, "[T]his could be a total social experiment! Who knows what's going to happen!" (Cara, PDC #4, 01/29/12). Similarly, Diana wrote in the Facebook group, "I'm going to try the experiment tomorrow" (Facebook, 01/08/12), and described the activity as an

“experiment” when I came to observe, as written in the above vignette. In another instance, Diana pondered the idea of implementing a true experimental research design:

My student teacher is going to be in charge of the recorder composition, and it would be interesting to do two classes, [and] give them the instruction that we would normally give. And give the other classes (doesn’t finish her sentence but raises her hands in a “hands-off” gesture). (PDC #4, 01/29/12)

The participants’ view of their informal music learning applications from the PDC as “experiments” may have been due to their view of trying new ideas in their teaching as part of this research project.

The participants’ “experiments” or applications of informal music learning practices fell into several different categories as the teachers each developed, adapted, and personalized ideas shared in the PDC to match who they were as teachers and to fit with what they believed would be best for their students. The following five planned “experiments” were developed within the PDC: 1) Music Share Day, 2) playing popular melodies on the recorder, 3) small group cover songs with classroom instruments, 4) small group cover songs with voices, and 5) rock compositions (See Table 2).

The teachers first developed the idea of Music Share Day at the end of the first PDC meeting, based on an idea suggested by Diana. For Music Share Day, the teachers invited students to perform songs they had learned outside of school for the class. Any songs were permissible as long as they had lyrics that were appropriate for school. In the second application, the teachers had students play the melodies of popular songs on their recorders. In the third and fourth applications, the teachers had students create a “cover song” in which small groups of

students tried to recreate—or “cover”—popular songs using classroom instruments and/or their voices based primarily on the ideas suggested by Green (2006, 2008). For the fourth application, the teachers asked the students to create a cappella covers of the songs without using any instruments, even though the songs they were recreating had instruments. Finally, one teacher shared a rock composition activity in which students were asked to create their own rock songs using classroom instruments, rather than recreating popular songs they had heard before. While these activities, or “experiments” as the participants sometimes referred to them, were not the only applications of informal music learning practices took away from the PDC, they represent the most direct applications because they resulted in planned, intentional activities in the classroom. The participants also made other more subtle changes in their teaching that were not represented by a multi-class-period unit; these are described in more detail in the next chapter.

Since participants could autonomously choose when and how they wanted to implement ideas in their own classrooms, not all teachers attempted the same ideas, as indicated in Table 2. Additionally, teachers choose to implement similar ideas during different weeks, causing them to adapt and change ideas as they heard feedback from their peers (to be described further in Chapter 8). Thus, although they are presented as five distinct “experiments,” in reality, each teacher uniquely implemented them in his or her classroom, varying aspects of the activity such as the number of class periods, songs used, and amount of student choice.

Table 2. Types of Informal Music Learning “Experiments” Implemented by Teachers

Type of PDC “Experiment”	Description	Teachers Who Implemented
Music Share Day	Teachers invited students to perform songs from outside of school for the class. Students could perform vocally or instrumentally, although the teachers reported that virtually all students performed vocally. Many teachers did this in both lower and upper elementary grades. All of the teachers completed this between weeks one and two of the PDC.	Cara Diana Kendra Tyler
Popular Song Melodies on the Recorder	Teachers allowed students to learn popular music melodies without teacher guidance on their recorders. Usually the teachers chose the songs in this activity.	Diana Kendra Tyler
Small Group Covers with Classroom Instruments and Voice	Teachers had students work in small groups to perform a cover of a popular music song learned aurally and played on a combination of voice and classroom instruments (recorders, various types of drums, barred instruments).	Diana Kendra Tyler
Small Group a Cappella Covers	Teachers had students work in small groups to perform a cover of a popular music song learned aurally and performed only with voices on all melody, harmony, and accompaniment parts.	Cara Diana
Rock Compositions	Teacher had students compose and notate their own rock songs in small groups using a combination of classroom instruments (recorders, various types of drums, barred instruments).	Tyler

The teachers developed the applications of informal music learning practices listed above using three different approaches: 1) modifying informal music learning using practices reported in the research literature explored in the PDC, 2) modifying their own prior activities to incorporate informal music learning, and 3) modifying in the moment to meet students’ interests

and needs. Thus, rather than describing the above applications individually, I will describe them according to the type of modifications the teachers used in creating them. By examining the applications of informal music learning in these categories, I hope to illuminate the perspectives and interests of the teachers more clearly, thus, keeping the focus on the point of view of the teachers, rather than on the activities.

Modifying Informal Music Learning from Research

The applications that the teachers implemented in their classrooms were most frequently developed out of the research literature they read and the discussions they had together in the PDC. Frequently, these ideas developed as teachers thought about how informal music learning would fit within the settings and situations at their own schools. The primary example of this can be seen in the cover songs created using classroom instruments and voice. Many of the readings discussed in the PDC included the covering of songs but took place in settings and contexts that differed from the participants' classrooms and the instruments to which they had access. For example, although the participants had read articles about students in a garage band (Jaffurs, 2004), playing popular instruments like guitar, keyboard, and drum kit in a middle school music class (Green, 2006, 2008), and elementary students playing concert band instruments (Davis, 2010), these participants needed to determine how to take ideas from those settings and make them work in their elementary general and choral classrooms with only general music classroom instruments and voices.

In one early example, Tyler modified an activity to use with his students. In the following excerpt from the second PDC meeting, the participants began considering how to implement informal ideas they had read about in Green's (2006) article, "Popular Music

Education in and for Itself, and for ‘Other’ Music: Current Research in the Classroom.” Tyler shared that his students had just finished a unit on recorders in which he included several popular music selections. In each class, they voted as a class for which song they wanted to rehearse for that day, and in the PDC he began to brainstorm how he would extend the activity using these new ideas, leading to a discussion with the other teachers:

Tyler: The wheels are turning in my head. . . . I think I’ll get them into groups again, and I’ll let them decide what they wanna do. They’ll have to designate which one or two students are going to be on recorder, but they’ll probably pick the strongest recorder players, and let the others choose if they wanna do xylophone or drum. Then I’ll let them have at it, and if I can, I’ll try and videotape it for the next time.

(Undetermined): Yeah! That would be awesome!

Tyler: I can’t guarantee any miracles, but I think I’m gonna try that!

Kendra: I like that they’re figuring out how to play the melody first, because I feel like for the younger kids, it might be too overwhelming to say, “These are all the parts go at it.”

Julie: Sure, sure!

Kendra: But that might be a better way to go at it.

Diana: Even to take the songs that they’ve already learned on the recorder, you’re cutting out all of that learning. They can just focus on listening to the other parts.

Kendra: Yeah. That’s true.

Julie: Now, are you going to have them just create their own part on the other instruments?

Tyler: Right. Like, the xylophone part can come up with their own version of a harmony. . . . So I'll probably just see what kind of harmonies they come up with, or if they just come up with a counter melody and all that in the drums. I'll just let them have it.

Cara: And you have enough instruments so they can all—

Tyler: I do! (Laughter from group.)

Diana: Well, and that's the other thing. How do I get a drum kit and guitar for each group of five students? (PDC Meeting #2, 12/16/2011)

In this case, Tyler was developing a new activity, as evidenced by his statement that the “wheels are turning,” but he was using prior repertoire that the students had learned on their recorders. As he made plans for the students to get into groups and divvy up their parts between recorder, xylophone, and drums, he also began to predict how the students would make their decisions, presuming that the students would choose the strongest recorder players to perform that part. He then stated that he would “let them have it,” recognizing the informal music process of giving student opportunities to work independently. After this, several other teachers considered aspects of Tyler's modified activity. Kendra and Diana reflected on how the modification Tyler suggested fit developmentally with these elementary-aged students in comparison with the middle school-aged children described in Green's (2006) article. They felt if younger students had already learned the melody, they might have greater success with figuring out the other parts.

Then, the discussion shifted from comments about the age of the students to modifications relating to instruments. While Cara questioned whether Tyler had enough

classroom instruments for all the students, Diana recognized that she could not duplicate the activity exactly from the Green (2006) article because she did not have popular instruments for students to use in her classroom. Overall, this excerpt demonstrates how the teachers began to consider multiple aspects of informal music learning as it had been presented in research in order to make modifications suitable for their own settings.

I observed similar modifications in practice in Diana's classroom, described in the vignette at the beginning of this chapter, as well as in Kendra's and Cara's classrooms. In an observation in Kendra's classroom, she had students choose a pop song to play on the recorder, including "Dynamite" by Taio Cruz (2010), "Grenade" by Bruno Mars (Mars, et al., 2010), "Fireflies" by Owl City (Young, 2009), and "If I Die Young" by The Band Perry (Perry, 2010). Kendra modeled playing each melody for students on the recorder, causing a buzz of excitement among the students as they smiled, sang along, and whispered to their friends about which song their group should play. Then, Kendra indicated to the students that they should pick up the notation for their song choice (Kendra, Observation #1, 02/02/2012). In doing so, Kendra made two modifications from the readings and ideas discussed in the PDC: using general music instruments—similar to Tyler—and providing notation. Her choice to include notation may have been an effort to reinforce that particular curricular objective through the activity rather than having students play the melodies by ear, or perhaps provide additional scaffolding. This also connects to her statement that she had made in the December PDC meeting described in the example above, in which she postulated that it may be more developmentally appropriate to have students learn the melody first.

Cara began to consider modifying the ideas discussed and read in the PDC—all of the readings had students playing instruments during informal music learning activities—to develop an activity suitable for use with her sixth grade choir. Cara mentioned in more than one PDC meeting that she was considering making this modification, but she turned to the other PDC members for help: “So I’m needing some advice, because I seriously wanna go here with my choir, but I’m not going to have instruments for them. So I’m thinking of doing sort of an a cappella arrangement,” and, “So I was wondering, how can I take this leap with them? How much a cappella exposure do they have? Like, some of them watch *Glee*” (PDC meeting #4, 01/29/2012). Cara knew that her students may have had some knowledge and awareness of a cappella singing through the television show *Glee* (Murphy, et al., 2009)—a television program about a fictitious high school show choir featuring many a cappella arrangements of popular tunes—but she was still uncertain as to whether her students would have enough familiarity with hearing a cappella music to be successful. Despite her uncertainty, Cara explained her reasoning for making this modification, saying:

It could be really cool, or it could be, it could be really insane. But I wanna see what those guys can do, and I don’t have enough instruments to say, “Okay, you can take my bongos,” or whatever. So I think it’s the only logical thing. (PDC meeting #4, 01/29/2012).

Cara chose to make these modifications in part because of her curiosity in her students’ abilities, but also due to her practical realization that she did not have enough classroom instruments for the activity to be successful. Cara ended up implementing this activity with her sixth grade chorus, but unlike Tyler and Kendra, selected songs she felt would be attainable for students to

transform into an a cappella arrangement, including “Someone Like You” by Adele (Adkins & Wilson, 2010), “Blow” by Ke\$ha (Sebert, et al., 2011), “Stereo Hearts” by Gym Class Heroes (McCoy, et al., 2011), “Love You Like a Love Song” by Selena Gomez (Armato & James, 2011), and “Don’t Stop Believin’,” which was originally by Journey (Cain, Perry, & Schon, 1981a) but recently covered by the television show *Glee* (Cain, Perry, & Schon, 1981b).

Diana followed in Cara’s footsteps and made a similar modification, having her sixth graders create a cappella arrangements. She implemented this activity after she had also modified a prior activity in which her fifth graders created covers with classroom instruments. Diana initially expressed her support and interest in Cara’s a cappella modification, saying, “I’d be interested to know what you come up with. . .” (PDC #4, 01/29/12), and she went on to use the a cappella cover activity with her sixth general music classes (Diana, Observation #3, 03/23/2012).

Finally, in addition to modifying the performance modality of the informal music learning activities, Tyler modified an informal music learning activity out of his concern to play popular music in the classroom:

I didn’t let them listen to the recording, because I didn’t think any of those recordings had swear words in them, but I didn’t want to take the chance that a parent would call [and say], “You let them listen to that!” (Several people laugh). I figured they were just the melodies, so they didn’t have words, so they could learn the melody, but if they heard it on the radio, then the parents could blame themselves, and so, they just had the notation. But most of them had heard all the songs. (PDC meeting #3, 01/15/2012)

Here, Tyler did not make this modification because of he lacked the necessary instruments in order to fit with his classroom context. Rather, he choose to make this modification to only have the students see the notation and use their memory out of concerns of the appropriateness of the lyrics and potential parental disapproval.

Modifying Prior Activities to Incorporate Informal Music Learning

The teachers also modified activities they had taught previously in order to turn these activities into informal music learning activities or incorporate processes relating to informal music learning. Frequently, rather than modifying an entire activity they had taught before, the teachers would change aspects of the activity or their teaching approach in an activity to incorporate ideas they garnered from the PDC. More specifically, the teachers changed the way they chose student groups, their timeline for completing an objective, the repertoire used, or the way they interacted with their students.

For example, Diana took an idea from one student and then brought it into the classroom, as a way to teach the fingering for F# on the recorder. While Diana typically included the teaching of this fingering in her music classes, after considering the ideas discussed in the PDC, she modified her regular activity. Diana shared in the PDC how some of her students came in to her classroom during their recess time to practice their recorders. One student in particular liked to play the melody to the 1970s song now featured in many kids' movies, "Kung Fu Fighting" (Douglas, 1974) and began teaching it to his friends (PDC #7, 03/11/12). However, Diana stated that he was playing one of the pitches incorrectly:

But he wasn't—we didn't know F# yet. So I used that [song] to teach F#. I said, "Many of you have heard [student] play this." (PDC members laugh.) "I'm going to reveal the

secret!” And we all learned how to play that little riff from “Kung Fu Fighting.” And then we had some kids sing, (she sings and pretends to finger the melody on the recorder) “Everybody was kung fu fighting, na na na na naa naa naa naa naaa.” So we learned the F#, but we used somebody’s [the student’s] music. (PDC #6, 02/26/12)

Diana also shared that she turned the song into an in-class performance, in which some students sang the lyrics (brought in by an excited student) while the rest of the class played the recorder riff to “Kung Fu Fighting” (PDC #7, 03/11/12). Diana modified her typical approach to teaching that recorder fingering in order to incorporate several aspects of informal music learning. First, and perhaps most importantly, she demonstrated a sensitivity to one of her student’s interests in a popular song and capitalized on it to support her curricular goals to teach F# on the recorder. She also used popular music in the classroom and encouraged student peer teaching and aural copying, resulting in increased student motivation in their recorder playing.

Tyler often made modifications to activities he had taught in the previous year. In the final PDCs, Tyler shared that he was going to implement a rock composition activity that he had taught before. When I asked him what modifications he had made based on the discussions in the group meetings, Tyler shared that he had changed the way student small groups were assembled, allowing students to choose their groups. Tyler shared that he had taken this idea from other members in the PDC (Tyler, Interview #2, 04/16/12). While Tyler did not make modifications in the content of the activity, he changed his approach to making student groups and his teaching role to include elements of informal music learning. He then explained how he was intentionally trying to step back and have the students figure things out for themselves. He

even told the students to ask their peers before asking him, reinforcing the idea that that they could teach themselves.

Similarly, Kendra chose to give her students more choice in their recorder playing before beginning their fifth grade recorder compositions. She explained how, although playing melodies on the recorders was something she normally included in her curriculum, she adapted it to include a popular song choice, an idea she took from PDC meetings:

Normally I start it [recorder compositions] around this time, but . . . I'm gonna give them at least one more round. This time, I'm going to give them some song choice. They can pick the song for their group. (PDC meeting #4, 01/29/2012)

Kendra modified her recorder unit, giving students additional time to practice their recorder fingerings before beginning their recorder compositions, and she ended up providing pop songs with notation from which students could select. In this way, Kendra modified several aspects of her previous teaching. She adapted her curricular timeline, the musical content and repertoire to which her students were exposed, and her teaching approach by providing student choice.

In another instance, when her fourth grade students caught wind that the fifth graders were playing popular music on their recorders, Kendra allowed them to the same opportunity:

So I'm doing Hot Cross Buns on D Do, because I want them to do that. They decided they wanted to do the same thing that the fifth graders were doing. So I decided that this would be the level one "mastery" (makes air quotes with fingers), and if they passed it I would give them the music for "Dynamite." It was like a firestorm with it. (PDC #5, 02/12/12)

In this case, although Kendra was including this opportunity as a reward for achieving proficiency on a formal assignment, this modification allowed some students the opportunity to play a popular song and work independently to learn it.

Tyler implemented a similar modification using the song “Dynamite.” In Tyler’s curriculum plan, he typically would teach several simple folk songs on recorder centered in the key of G. Then he would teach the students how to play low D, E, and F# on the recorder and then would have them transpose the same folk songs by ear into the key of D. However, in this instance, he accomplished the same curricular goal using popular music:

So I said, “Okay, now you know [the fingerings for] D through B. Here’s how you play ‘Dynamite,’” and I played it for them, and I didn’t give them any notation. And I let them play for five minutes. . . . And kids who were having trouble playing a D before, came back (demonstrating a D fingering) and were just perfectly there. (PDC #7, 03/11/12)

Tyler modified his prior lesson to include not only the popular music piece, but also to include some of the informal music learning strategies that had been discussed in the PDC. For example, in addition to allowing students to play a popular song, Tyler had them figure out how to play the melody by ear and provided opportunities for them to work on the piece independently. He also provided guidance by telling students the pitch range they should use to play the song and he provided encouragement for them to discover the melody for themselves. The modification Tyler made from the lesson he had taught before resulted in a positive and motivating learning experience for the students, and he was both impressed and pleased.

Modifying in the Moment

In addition to developing informal music learning activities that modified ideas found in research literature and aspects of their prior lessons, the teachers made modifications that happened spontaneously as they responded to their students' needs in the moment. Only three of the teachers described making these kind of modifications: Diana, Kendra, and Cara. Also, the teachers shared fewer examples of "modifying in the moment," which suggests that they may have had fewer instances of this type of modification. However, while these occurred less frequently, these examples reveal an informal-ness in the teachers' practice that resembles the informal music learning of their students.

One of the modifications in the moment occurred when Diana recognized that many students indicated some hesitancy about performing their small group instrumental covers for the class. Rather than finding fault, Diana looked to her own teaching as part of the problem, saying:

I felt like after the first time [I asked students to perform] that maybe I skewed it somehow, because there were a lot of groups where no one wanted to sing. I thought that [singing] was the easiest thing, if you were going to recreate this, and it's a singing song, and they don't have any problems singing. (PDC #3, 01/15/12)

However, rather than forcing her students to sing for their peers, which could have led to negative feelings among students, Diana described how she had made a quick decision to change the students' performance requirements. She told the students, "You don't have to perform. You have to perform for me if I come by, but you don't have to perform [for the class]" (PDC #3, 01/15/12). By making this change, Diana was able to have requirements for students to complete their work, but she took away the social pressure. She described the modification as being "more

successful,” even though fewer groups chose to perform for the class. Diana continued to use this modification later in her vocal small group covers, telling students that they had the choice to perform for her in the hallway or for their peers (Observation #3, 03/23/12).

Kendra made an impromptu modification as she observed how her students were doodling on classroom instruments. In the activity, fifth grade students were given the instructions to recreate a popular music choice. However, when some students had trouble recreating the pop songs, they began to compose rather than create a cover:

[A] couple of the groups had stopped working on the cover song and said, “Okay, we made up our own melody on the xylophone,” and then they would play it for me. And I just said, “Well, why don’t you just turn that into your own song.” So I had a couple groups do that. . . . (PDC #5, 02/12/12)

Kendra’s modification in the moment was in response to her students’ musicking. Although they did not complete the assignment as intended, Kendra felt as though her students were still being productive musically, and she later described how they were including motives from their chosen song within the compositions. However, there may have been an underlying cause leading the students to abandon their aural copying. While Kendra had provided the notation for the melody, she did not provide a recording of the songs for the students to listen to, and so they may have struggled to recreate the other parts without it.

In one of her first attempts at implementing informal music learning in her classroom, Cara made multiple modifications to fit the social needs of her students. For example, in one of her classes, she gave small groups the opportunity to choose which song they wanted to work on among of a set of pre-determined choices. When all of the groups chose to work on the same

song, Cara modified the format of the performances. “So we ended up doing a jam session at the end of the class and they ended up playing along with each other. They just thought that was the cat’s meow” (PDC #3, 01/15/2012). Thus, Cara’s modification resulted in an event that brought her students together and allowed her to make music informally with her students, resulting in a joyful musical moment.

Summary

The participants took several ideas from the PDC, implementing ideas they referred to as “experiments” using informal music learning processes and concepts. However, rather than taking ideas in a direct or formulaic way, the teachers made several different kinds of modifications in order to make the ideas work in their own settings and situations. The teachers modified ideas that they found in the research they had read, particularly to make informal music learning activities work in their type of classroom and with the types of instruments and resources they had available. They also modified activities they had taught previously, adapting things such as the activities’ timelines and repertoire. In addition, the participants changed their teaching approaches by providing opportunities for students to copy aurally and work independently, and they incorporated student ideas for song choices into their activities. In this way, the teachers recognized that they could make small changes while still working on the same curricular goals.

Finally, as the teachers implemented informal music learning activities, they occasionally made changes in the moment according to the needs of their students. They changed the performance format and their expectations for students’ products, following their teaching instincts to provide what they felt was the best possible experience for their students. Some of

the modifications incorporated aspects of informal music learning on a more superficial level, such as when Kendra used the popular music as a reward without including any of the accompanying informal processes. Other modifications revealed a more substantial change, as when Diana took student doodles and incorporated them into her teaching of curricular ideas using informal processes, allowing students to play by ear, work together independently, and exert ownership over their learning.

Overall, the teachers created five different types of “experiments” based on their participation in the PDC, including Music Share Day, playing popular music on recorders, instrumental cover songs, a cappella cover songs, and a rock composition. However, the types of modifications perhaps provide more revealing insights into the teachers’ thinking than the specific activities themselves. The teachers took the knowledge they were gaining about informal music learning through their participation in the PDC and adapted it to fit not only their unique types of classrooms, settings, and students, but also their distinct, personal approaches to teaching. Their ability to develop, create, adapt, and adopt these ideas about informal music learning, particularly in a relatively short period of time was truly remarkable, and in this active application of these “experiments,” the teachers began to develop an appreciation for the benefits of informal music learning.

Finding Value

As the teachers continued to read about, discuss, and try out informal music learning, they began to find value in informal music learning as a valid approach in the classroom, as Cara explained after completing a small group cover with her students:

So all in all, it's definitely worth it. Definitely worth my time. I felt like. . . when they weren't performing, it was good to hear the feedback of how hard it was for them to hear the other parts and how hard it was for them to emulate vocally the other parts. And they also felt that they were now able to do that, which is cool. (PDC #6, 02/26/12)

The teachers described thinking about informal music learning all the time, which I termed “mindfulness.” Additionally, the participants began to find value as they discovered that informal music learning was relevant to their methodological backgrounds, their curriculum, and in their students' lives beyond the classroom. Over time, the teachers recognized how important it was for them to provide opportunities for student ownership and musical independence, which were two of the most valuable things that they took away from implementing informal music learning activities.

Engagement and Motivation

One of the most prevalent areas in which the teachers found value in informal music learning was in their observations of students' increased levels of engagement and motivation in informal music learning activities. As described in the opening vignette with Diana at the beginning of the chapter, I observed students' engagement in all of my classroom observations. I wrote about this in my fieldnotes, saying, “I was completely blown away by the level of engagement, musicality, collegiality, and joyfulness!” (Diana, Observation #3, 03/23/12). In Cara's classroom, I observed a group of around 10 students who stayed late after class, asking to show Cara their performances live or to watch the video recordings of their performances with her on her iPad. They huddled around Cara holding the iPad stretched out far in front of her so that they could all have a view. Their faces lit up with excitement as they watched their own and

their peers' performances, and Cara praised their efforts and laughed with joy (Cara, Observation #1, 02/10/12) .

The teachers' comments in the PDC and in their individual interviews corroborated my observations and revealed the value they found in this phenomenon. All of the participants commented on the high levels of students' engagement, saying things like the following:

- Cara: [T]hey're already asking, "When is Music Share Day?," "When is the next one?," and, "When do we get to pick our own songs?" So they're definitely motivated by it. Especially the kids who are not necessarily motivated by other stuff. So it's reaching more students (Cara, Interview #2, 04/06/12),
- Diana: So the principal came in, [and] I was like, "Oh gosh! Look at how he's looking at me!," and I said, "Look how engaged the students are." I told him about our study, [and] about how really, the kids do better in group work when you remove yourself, and he agreed with me! (Diana, Interview #2, 04/14/12),
- Kendra: There are many positives to using this approach. One of the biggest factors is the level of student engagement. All students were actively engaged in the music-making process in their groups and everyone was contributing (Kendra, email, 02/26/12), and
- Tyler: And compared to last year, they were so excited! And they came back and said, "I tried to play "Dynamite" all night!" (PDC #7, 03/11/12)

Cara, Kendra, and Tyler all reflected on the high level of engagement from their students. Diana related how she had shared this observation with her principal, who agreed that the type of small group, independent work used in informal music learning lead to greater engagement from students.

Other times, the teachers observed the enhanced engagement and motivation of their students as they compared their participation in formal and informal activities. Cara and Kendra described how informal learning had been particularly motivating for her students who did not plan on continuing in music. Cara told me in my observation that all students at her school are required to take music in sixth grade in either band or chorus, but they are not required to do so in seventh grade. She had noticed that, in the spring of their sixth grade year, many students who do not plan to take music after this grade level were “checking out” of music class and not participating as much. Cara commented that she loved how informal music learning was motivating everyone, and she planned to include some informal music learning activities later in the spring toward the end of the school year to keep them engaged (Cara, Observation #1, 02/10/12).

While Cara’s example related to her students as a whole, the participants also described the engagement of individuals. Diana had a student who was a selective mute; he rarely spoke, let alone participated in music class. However, he began to participate during informal music learning activities after pressure from the other members in his group.

This little guy, [names student], when we first started the project—even making a sound on an instrument, he goes like this (covers her mouth with her hands). He won’t make a sound (removes hands). And his group kinda got on him, [saying] “You have to be a part of this. Because it’s not fair if you don’t participate.” And for him to be filmed while doing it! I was just—it was really interesting. (PDC #4, 01/29/12)

Similarly, Kendra commented about a student who always was moving around the classroom, saying, “Yeah, I’ve been surprised by the boy that’s always spinning on the floor in circles, I just haven’t had that at all, and I’m just always shocked” (PDC #4, 01/29/12).

In another instance, Diana described two boys who had “rebelled in choir” (Diana, Interview #2, 04/14/12). She said, “[O]ne boy confessed to me last year. . ., ‘Yeah, I don’t like to sing,’ but on this, they both took a turn singing on this. Singing their one part!” She then shared that, although she had thought they “might try to get out of it by singing some background parts,” they ended up singing the melody in an accurate performance. Thus, not only were these reluctant singers willing to participate, but they were able to do so with a certain level of musical achievement.

Diana even commented about how the parents of her students recognized the level of engagement after having students perform their pieces that they had covered from an informal music learning activity on a concert. She shared this as a final post on the Facebook group after the PDC had finished meeting.

My choir performed at our big all-district concert. I told you how one group did Adele and one did Bruno Mars. The interesting result was the parents. I don't usually get any emails or comments after a concert and I got 4 emails, plus people stopping me at school. They all mentioned the song choice as being what made our group stand out, and how that related to the kids being more enthusiastic singers. (Facebook, 04/30/12)

More specifically, the participants noticed a change in the engagement of boys and their willingness to sing in informal music learning activities, as opposed to their resistance to participate in formal learning. In the seventh PDC meeting, Kendra described how the day

before, she had attended a conference about reading and literacy, which was part of a requirement from her school. She commented on how she was making several connections from what was said concerning encouraging students to read and what she was discovering about informal music learning:

Talking to a lot of people [at the conference], they were like, let them read whatever.

Comic books, joke books, it doesn't matter. It's the same idea here. Whatever music they wanna start from, that's like the first step to get them to do it independently. (PDC #7, 03/11/12)

She then noticed the similarities between what had been stated at the conference with her use popular music, and, more specifically, how the song, "Dynamite" was something "that they can grab on to, and that's how they're going to become independent." Thus, Kendra began to find value in informal music learning through seeing her students' engagement and through the validation she was finding in connections with new ideas in students' literacy.

In the following PDC, the participants brought up what Kendra had shared about the reading conference. This time, Diana focused in specifically on the engagement of boys in informal music learning:

Diana: I keep thinking about something you brought up about the comparison between the boys and reading.

Kendra: Yeah!

Diana: And between boys and singing. I just think that's a huge thing, and I think so many people struggle with it, and like, we have on video [that we have shared here], boys who are singing. Solos or whatever.

Kendra: Right!

Diana: And they're engaged.

Cara: What was the reading thing?

Kendra: Oh, it was, a couple of weeks ago, I went to the Michigan Reading Conference with my school. They talked a lot about engaging boys in reading, and who cares what they're reading, and about graphic novels. Like, who cares? Whatever it takes to get them engaged. And what you [Tyler] said about it being purposeful. Another thing they talked about, and I didn't go to this session, but about reading and writing with a purpose, and about how students are more engaged when they're doing something that's more purposeful. And I think they feel like when they're creating stuff like that, it's just more purposeful.

Julie: Because it relates?

Kendra: Because it relates, because they've chosen it. They're gonna have to perform it, and they have to put it together. It's all on them.

Diana: Because usually, it's all on us. So I think that's why they can skip the concert, because it was really my goal. It was really my goal—

Cara: Yeah!

Diana: And my plan. It was not theirs, so they didn't really feel invested. (PDC #8, 03/25/12)

In this exchange, the teachers recognized the importance of engaging their students, particularly boys, in learning, and they saw how informal music learning provided a way for them to encourage the participation of boys and other students who did not normally participate. Kendra

decided that, like was suggested at the reading conference she attended, she was less concerned about the type of music with which her students were engaging, so long as they were engaged.

Finally, Diana commented on how some of the boys in her sixth grade choir showed considerable motivation in performing their best during their small group performance in class, when these same boys had chosen not to attend their choir concert a few weeks prior to participating in the vocal a cappella activity. As she explained:

I think it's funny, because one of the groups I videoed [sic] is all boys except for one girl. That group at my concert three weeks ago, 11 of the 13 boys didn't come because of peer pressure. They had no problem letting the whole class down (pauses to laugh) during the concert, but they were really worried that their [informal music] performance wouldn't be good enough without one person coming! (PDC #8, 03/25/12)

As she stated in the above discussion, Diana attributed her students' increased motivation and engagement to the fact that they had more control over the who, what, and how of their informal music learning projects, leading them to have a greater level of investment, especially as compared to some of their more formal music experiences like their choir concert.

Mindfulness

As the teachers met in the PDC, read and discussed literature about informal music learning, and applied these ideas in their own practice, they began to exhibit a mindfulness about informal music learning. "Mindfulness" is the term I used to describe when teachers commented on how the concepts of informal music learning continually permeated and percolated in their thinking during the study. Mindfulness serves as evidence of the participants' valuing of and appreciation for informal music learning. If they had felt apathetic about informal music

learning, the participants would not have described thinking about it outside of the PDC.

Similarly, if they had not found value in informal music learning, the participants would not have described feelings of excitement about trying out these new ideas or about the results they were seeing from their students.

The teachers exhibited a mindfulness about informal music learning as they reflected on their teaching practices. By the fourth PDC meeting, the teachers shared how they had been thinking about informal music learning and ideas discussed in the PDC. As the group facilitator, I wanted to see if I needed to make changes in the workings of the group, so I asked them what they were thinking about informal music learning and the group at this point (PDC #4, 01/29/12). Diana commented first, saying:

Diana: Well, I find myself thinking about it all the time. (Kendra nods in agreement.)

Not always about music education, but about education in general. About how kids learn. And I think other places in education are talking about the same thing.

Julie: Oh, interesting!

Diana: So I kinda feel like we're current.

Julie: Oh, that's cool.

Diana: Yeah, I kinda feel like the group gives me permission to—I think I said that before, but—

Kendra: I find that it's in the forefront of my mind, too, to find the tangents that are valuable and okay to go on. You know? And I don't know if I'm more cognizant of this now that we're doing this group, but when kids share with me what we're doing. I don't know if it's because we did Music Share Day, and the kids feel like it's okay now to share

more with me. Even the other day, a little girl ran up to me after school and gave me a hug, and said, “Yeah, Rachel’s gonna come over, and we’re gonna sing into the microphone, and we’re gonna jam on guitar.” (Laughter from group members.)

Information like that that’s like, “Okay! That’s great!” (PDC #4, 01/29/12)

Kendra and Diana both mentioned how these ideas were prevalent in their thinking. Kendra was not sure whether her students were now telling her these things more often or if she is merely more aware when they did, but regardless, she still valued the information in a new way.

Later in that meeting, Cara also shared that she had been mindful of informal music learning. However, her mindfulness concerned her anxiety at applying informal music learning in a modified activity making an a cappella cover in small groups, which was something that had not been read about in the literature or tried by any other group members.

I’ve wanted to try it with them this whole time, but like you (indicates Diana) were saying, it’s always in the front of my mind, in the back of my mind, I’m trying to process what we could do, what it will be like. (Cara, PDC #4, 01/29/12)

Thus, although all of these teachers described being mindful of informal music learning outside of the PDC meetings, they each thought about different aspects outside of the group. While Diana considered informal music learning in relationship to general education and how children learn, Kendra considered how to take advantage of information from students in her teaching, and Cara tried to figure out how to adapt it to best suit students’ needs in her classroom.

Similarly, in the final PDC, Kendra shared how her mindfulness of informal music learning not only continued throughout the data collection period, but also changed her teaching as a whole.

[I]t's bled into all aspects of my teaching. . . . I can't even think of all the examples that were popping into my head earlier, but now it's a constant [thing]. Maybe it's because I'm more aware of the kind of music they like, or I don't know. I find then that it just comes to mind more often. . . (PDC #8, 03/25/12)

At this point, I interrupted Kendra and asked her whether her mindfulness was in reference to popular music examples or in her interactions with students. She responded,

The way that I'm interacting [with students], and the way that I'm choosing what to do. Thinking about what's going to come next. I think before, it's not that I didn't want to do it, it's just, where do you start with that? (PDC #8, 03/25/12)

As she indicated before, Kendra's mindfulness changed the way in which she approached her teaching so that she was more aware and sensitive of her students' interests and of how she interacted with them. She also revealed how this change was a result of the ideas and discussions from the PDC and how informal music learning gave her a place to start this change.

Later, Diana made connections as she mindfully considered informal music learning in relationship to her own teaching and to colleagues in her building. First she recognized that her students in informal music learning learned through listening to and playing a piece as a whole, rather than in parts, and she connected this process to her own teaching practices:

So, I've thought about this a lot ever since. Every time I do those hand clapping songs in music, I try not to break them down as much any more. Her thing [Harwood] about the whole song. . . I've also thought about that a lot. And I think I tend to teach—I don't teach rote songs the way I used to anymore, and I almost never do now. I make them listen to it and gradually as they know it join me now. (PDC #5, 02/12/12)

The connection Diana made between her own students and what she read in Harwood's (1998) article gave her validation of how she had already approached her teaching. As she stated in her final interview:

Well, one thing that our group brought to mind was that I already did some things. . . I think I will give them a little piece of information and then send them off to learn things on their own. I did that independent recorder thing where they could pick their own song [and] figure out how to play it on their own. So I had already done some of those things, but like I said, I think I'm trying to find more time when I just leave it up to them. I think I have more confidence that they can do more than I thought they could. And also, that I feel less guilty about it. . . . [N]ow, I find myself thinking about that in all different tasks. In what way can I make this a bit more their responsibility and less of mine?" (Diana, Interview #2, 04/14/12).

Diana indicated her perception of the value of helping students become independent musicians as she continued to consider and question how she could further adapt her teaching to allow for this.

Relevance

The teachers also began to find value as they recognized the relevance of informal music learning to three different aspects of their music teaching: 1) their methodological training, 2) their formal curriculum, and 3) their students' personal lives beyond the music classroom.

Methodological training. All four of the participants had received training in Music Learning Theory (Gordon, 2007). Music Learning Theory promotes students developing the ability to audiate, or think musically, through pattern instruction and the application of the skills learned in pattern instruction to holistic music making. Students learn to identify various musical

concepts, such as harmonic and rhythmic functions, by learning to discriminate between different patterns and then apply their learning through generalization to their repertoire.

When asked what skills a teacher needed to have in order to be successful implementing informal music learning, Kendra made connections to Music Learning Theory.

[H]aving a foundation in Music Learning Theory. . . .[J]ust having some of those things [rhythmic and tonal skills] in place really translates well to informal music learning theory. I felt that, too, when they did their recorder compositions this year. For the first time, I felt like they were writing things down, a lot of times independently. They would go home and write things down, and it would make sense. . . . Yeah, and I think it's that piece of independence. Knowing that Music Learning Theory helps make them

independent, I feel like it just kind of ties it all together. (Kendra, Interview #2, 04/15/12)

Kendra found that, just as the goal in the Music Learning Theory approach to teaching was to help students become independent, so also was the goal in informal music learning. Because she could make these connections, Kendra found greater value in informal music learning. She described this connection further in a PDC meeting that discussed an article on vernacular musicianship by Woody and Lehman (2010), “[W]hen they talked about having to recognize the patterns along with the melody, that applied a lot to what we do, [to] Music Learning Theory” (PDC #7, 03/11/12). Diana agreed, responding to Kendra’s comment by saying, “I thought this was a place where we could have an impact in students. And I mean, talk about MLT, because that’s an MLT connection.” Ultimately, the participants could continue to find value in informal music learning because they could see similarities in and connections between informal music learning and their methodological backgrounds.

Curriculum. In addition to finding relevance between informal music learning and their methodological training, the participants explored how informal music learning fit within their curricula. Kendra found connections between her required curriculum and informal music learning, but she needed time to develop this perspective: “I enjoy watching the kids come up with things [in informal music learning], but I still feel like I’m throwing things up against the wall and seeing what kinda sticks!” (PDC #5, 02/12/12). Similarly, when I asked the participants to think specifically about how informal music learning fit in their curricula, Cara struggled to determine its place, even though she felt it was valuable: “So, [for] the technical curriculum, no. But I think in my classroom, yeah. I mean, well, it probably does fit in the technical curriculum, too, but I’d have to think about how to word it, you know?” (PDC #6, 02/26/12).

Later, the participants began to find more specific ways to fit the goals and learning from informal music learning projects into the curriculum. Diana suggested that it could fit with the objective for singing harmony. Then, Kendra found the following benchmark for the state that was found in every grade level, “Discuss the basic rationales for using music in everyday life” (PDC #7, 03/11/12). In an email, Kendra elaborated on how this objective intersected with informal music learning, saying, “Students making music informally in small groups was a great springboard into a discussion about how students can continue to make music outside of the music classroom” (Kendra, email, 02/26/12).

Diana also shared how informal music learning would fit in with her curriculum, saying, with her “fifth and sixth graders, I would have done group creative projects. So in that way, I feel like it fit into my normal curriculum” (Diana, Interview #2, 04/14/12). Yet, although she

saw it fitting in as a creative activity, she also viewed it as a form of creativity that she had not appreciated as much before:

That whole arranging thing. You know. . . arranging is. . . on our list of things to teach.

But other than having them do it as a class, I never really saw students doing it themselves. And there was one group that wanted to do a mash-up. They used “Eye of the Tiger,” and “Stronger” by Kelly Clarkson. (PDC #8, 03/25/12)

Diana shared this example of a mash-up, in which a small group created an arrangement taking motives from more than one popular song and putting it together. In this case, she described how two girls in her music class had taken the introduction to the song “Eye of the Tiger” (Sullivan & Peterik, 1982) and used it as a connecting motive at the beginning and before the refrain of the song “Stronger” (Elofsson, Tamposi, Gamson & Kurstin, 2012). When Diana described this example to the PDC and sang a part of what her students had done, the other participants responded with enthusiasm. Kendra even said, “That would actually sound good!” Thus, all of the participants acknowledged that this example of creating an arrangement, was something that fulfilled curricular goals.

Students’ lives. The participants also found value in informal music learning as they recognized the connections that they could make between their students’ lives outside of the classroom and what they were learning about music inside the classroom. Many of them expressed this goal of student relevance in their initial interviews. For example, Kendra felt that relevance was important for her to consider, especially since she taught in a low socio-economic school district.

I feel like, especially in a low income school, that relevancy is even more important than anywhere else, because they [students] don't feel like their education is relevant or important. . . .So if it can be relevant, if they can say, "Yeah, I can see the connection, and I can take this home and use it," then they tend to gravitate toward it. (Kendra, Interview #1, 12/05/11)

Later, after participating in the PDC and implementing informal music learning, Kendra stated that informal music learning's relevance for students was a positive characteristic:

The real-world application piece is another obvious positive. In today's culture, students idolize pop singers and rock bands. Having the opportunity to become the "rock band" was very appealing to all of them. The chance to play music that felt relevant was exciting. I think that the link between the music classroom and music-making after the general music classroom is invaluable in 5th grade as well. The experience students had in class will hopefully be a springboard into future informal music-making. (Kendra, email, 02/26/12)

Kendra found that having musical activities that her students found to be relevant increased their motivation, as described earlier, and she hoped it would lead to further music-making experiences beyond her classroom. More specifically, Kendra described how using informal music learning at the end of the school year was a "good hook" to keep her fifth grade students engaged in music class, when normally they began questioning the relevance of music class (Kendra, Observation #1, 02/02/12).

Cara found value in having relevant experiences to build connections between what she was trying to teach and what interested her students. As she explained, "I like the connection

piece, because I was able to bridge with my students a little bit. Because they could see that I valued them and what they do outside of class. . . . I think that's a huge positive" (PDC #6, 02/26/12). Similarly, Tyler found that he could make connections for students as they saw the relevance in their music-making, which he called having "purpose." "Once they see and figure out how it relates to other stuff and how it ends up being purposeful" (PDC #8, 03/25/12).

Independent Musicianship

As the teachers observed the engagement and motivation of their students, mindfully reflected on their teaching, and recognized how informal music learning was relevant with their students' lives and their own teaching, they also began to discover how informal music learning promoted the development of independent musicianship. I asked the participants to define independent musicianship in both their initial and exit interviews, and I was surprised how their answers had changed; they viewed their students' independence in new ways by the second interview. The teachers also described how the students needed permission and developed a sense of ownership and that these were important components for independent musicianship. Thus, as the participants began to observe and understand how their students were becoming more independent musically, their value of informal music learning became further solidified.

In their initial interviews, all of the participants indicated that they wanted their students to develop independent musicianship, particularly by the time they transitioned into middle school at the end of fifth or sixth grade. Kendra focused on having knowledge and tools:

I think it's the ability to engage with music however they choose to. So whether they're knowledgeable about the music they choose to listen to, or being a person that is just

taking it in, or if they want to play an instrument, just having some of the tools to be able to do that. (Kendra, Interview #1, 12/05/11)

Tyler listed multiple forms of music-making and that he also wanted students have a foundation of skills:

[B]eing able to take something in your head and put it into a comprehensive performance, either through performance vocally, instrumentally, on paper, through improvisation. Just to have enough of a foundation built to explore and comprehend and understand their own music making without needing the guidance of a teacher there to tell them what's right and wrong. (Tyler, Interview #1, 11/20/11)

Cara and Diana made reference to informal music learning specifically in relationship to the music classroom. Cara hoped that her students would take what they had learned in music class and apply it on their own, saying, "That my students are able to take what we do in class and take it outside the classroom and have just a basic understanding of what music can do for them [and] what they can do with it" (Cara, Interview #1, 11/22/11). At first Diana considered independent musicianship as something outside of the music classroom but then refined her answer as she began to consider her efforts to support independent musicianship through her teaching: "I thought learning without teacher help, but not necessarily outside of school. [When] I do Recorder Karate, I try to disengage as much as I can and let them figure out the songs by helping each other or using those strategies that they know. So I think that it can be in school" (Diana, Interview #1, 12/01/11).

Initially, all of the teachers also mentioned a few basic skills that they hoped that students would have by the time they left their classrooms, like singing in tune, being beat competent,

understanding notation, being able to audiate in duple and triple meters and in major and minor tonality, and hearing and understanding basic harmonic functions within music. Thus, the essence of the teachers' view of independent musicianship focused on students having the ability to listen to, perform, and even create music without guidance from a teacher: a skills-based orientation to musical independence.

Then, at the end of the data collection period, three participants described how their experiences in the PDC and their understanding of informal music learning changed their perception of independent musicianship. Although they continued to believe in the importance of helping students develop independent musicianship, they seemed to have a modified understanding of this term so that it went beyond a skills-based orientation to a more holistic, person-based orientation. They still wanted to their students to have the skills and knowledge they described before, but they now placed value in the personal aspects of independent musicianship. They now had a greater value of students' interest and motivation, and they began to understand how students' autonomy was a part of musical independence. They also had a clearer perception of how to support this in their own classrooms. Cara stated how her understanding of independent musicianship had expanded as a result of using informal music learning practices:

I would define independent musicianship as. . .[when] I step back, and I am not necessarily needed for the students to create music, write music, perform music, do whatever they need to do with it. It's kinda where the informal music learning expanded my definition of it. Before, where it would be simply, like, when I was a teacher in college, I had to take a piece of music and do it myself, like for the jury. That was them

[my professors] making sure I could do it as an independent musician. But that's a pretty narrow view of it, I think. (Cara, Interview #2, 04/06/12)

Cara came to believe that her experience of preparing a piece by herself in college, which had prior been her experience demonstrating independence for herself as a student, was a limited understanding of musical independence. I asked her to elaborate, and she replied:

My lens is wider. . . . Because of the project. It is. In the fall [before the PDC], I would have said [independent musicianship is when] they can look at a piece of recorder music and play it without me. But now I would say that they can do things that I hadn't thought about before. (Cara, Interview #2, 04/06/12)

Cara attributed the change in her perception of independent musicianship to her participation in the PDC, and now her understanding included more than learning a classical piece to perform for a college-level jury. She then described an anecdote about an inquisitive student as evidence of independent musicianship.

Cara: Now I see it [independent musicianship] as my little buddy, [student name], who played guitar for my concert last week.

Julie: Oh, he did! That's cool!

Cara: Yeah, he did. Now. . . he'll just come in, and he'll be like—I was noodling at the piano, and he was like, “Mrs. C., can you teach me how to do that!” (Laughs.) Like, right now! “Can you teach me how to do that!” (We laugh.) (Cara, Interview #2, 04/06/12)

Cara seemed to view independent musicianship for her students as having the ability to learn music well enough without the help of a teacher to perform it for others, but also having motivation and curiosity to learn new things. As Cara summarized, “Yeah, so basically, I believe

that independent musicians come in different forms now. They can hear it, they can jam, or they can interpret musical scores. It's just different [than before]" (Cara, Interview #2, 04/06/12).

Diana reflected on how her role had changed in promoting students' independent musicianship, something she had described in her initial interview as an important goal. She compared her approach both before and after implementing informal music learning:

Well, it's funny, because before I did this independent recorder project, where I let them choose from so many songs what level they wanted [to achieve], and then they were to learn it on their own. But now I'm thinking it's not that independent. I somehow still had so much control over it. And [during] the last [informal music learning] project, I was thinking about how little control I really had. They chose their own group, they chose their own song, they chose which part of the song they were going to recreate, how they were gonna do it. Then they had a choice of how they would perform it and how they would share it with other people. I mean, there was very little that had to do with me. (Diana, Interview #2, 04/14/12)

Diana began by describing an activity from her teaching that she had formerly considered to be an example of independent learning, in which students chose a song among several choices she provided and then worked on it by themselves. Then, in comparing that to the small group covers that she had implemented as a result of discussions in the PDC, she found that her prior activity was not as independent as she had originally thought. In this way, she found that through informal music learning, she could provide more opportunities for students to be truly independent and to make a even more musical decisions on their own.

Kendra compared the relationship between formal instruction and informal musical learning, as she thought about the place of both in her teaching:

We need to give students the tools they need to become independent musicians. I think we need to do this through both formal and informal music learning experiences. Formal music learning ensures that we cover all the bases. Students are given information and practice the skills they need in order to apply that information. We can assess, create, improvise, play, sing, experiment—but it is almost always guided by the teacher and there is always a structure in place. Informal music learning feels a little bit like taking the training wheels off the bike. Students have a base knowledge and skills, but it is an opportunity to let go and let them experiment on their own. Informal music learning has more to do with self-motivation, flow, and enjoyment--all key components for deep learning to take place. (Kendra, email, 02/26/12)

Kendra recognized that, through formal instruction, she as the teacher could give students a foundation of musical skills and knowledge—a skills-based orientation—which she had stated was important in her initial interview. However, she also recognized that informal music learning could be an approach that allowed students to be motivated and enjoy their music-making—a holistic, person-based orientation. She recognized the importance of these two characteristics in the learning process, and even referenced Csikszentmihalyi's (1997) concept of flow, which she read about in an article for the PDC. Not only that, but her metaphor of informal music learning as “taking the training wheels off the bike” indicated how she saw informal music learning as a way for students to take their musicianship to the next level without the support of a teacher or director.

Tyler, on the other hand, felt that his definition of independent musicianship had not changed as a result of participating in the PDC and implementing informal music learning. When I asked Tyler about independent musicianship in his final interview, he gave the following response:

I've always thought that my whole goal as a music teacher is not to produce, you know, the best musicians, or to make sure that everyone's going to be the best music maker, it's to make sure that they understand music in a way that's relevant, applicable, and important to them. So independent musicianship is being able to achieve in music on your own interest, your own skills, and your own understanding. (Tyler, Interview #2, 04/16/12)

Tyler's statement that he had "always thought" independent musicianship was important indicated to me that his perception had not changed, unlike the other participants. When I asked him whether his definition of independent musicianship had changed, he said, "Not necessarily." He then explained that he already felt as though his role as a teacher was to "make sure that the tools are there to understand stuff that's important to them." As a second-year teacher, Tyler was the youngest teacher in the PDC who had been a part of an undergraduate music education program that promoted independent musicianship and introduced him to more progressive forms of music education. Thus, his view of independent musicianship was already an established part of his personal philosophy of music teaching. Overall, Tyler seemed to find that the independent musicianship promoted informal music learning practices supported the beliefs he already held.

Student Ownership

As the teachers continued to observe their students in informal music learning activities, they began to see the students' musical independence taking place in front of their very eyes. The teachers were impressed by how well the students were embracing their work and the musical products they were developing, and they frequently referred to this phenomenon as "student ownership." In describing the benefits of informal music learning, Tyler believed that student ownership was an important outcome:

I'd say the ownership of what they're doing is another huge positive. Whether they compose by themselves, or whether they took what you gave them and they give it back, they might do it themselves once they've got a grasp of it and they've got control of it and it's theirs. That's a huge positive. (PDC #6, 02/26/12)

Tyler felt that the student ownership he observed in his students in music class through informal music learning activities could result in more musicking beyond the music classroom, as indicated by his statement that "they might do it themselves."

Diana described the ownership she saw in her choir students, although she did not use the term directly. At the beginning of the PDC, Diana described how, in the previous school year, she had tried using a popular music song, "Firework," by Katy Perry, but the song was not well received, particularly because the piano accompaniment did not sound like the background track in the song. She used this example, almost as a way to express her concern with using popular music in school. However, after implementing informal music learning, she felt as though her students were exhibiting more ownership over their singing in choir, particularly in making their

own arrangement of a popular song for their choir to sing. She explained that the students told her about listening to the pieces at home, and then made suggestions in class:

Anyway, I'm finding them to take a more active role, and [they are] also more positive about our own version of it. Whereas last year, when it didn't sound exactly like Katy Perry's exact rendition, we just weren't satisfied with it all. Like, we could not think of another way of listening to that song. (Diana, Interview #2, 04/14/12)

Diana believed that, because these same students had begun to think about popular music in music class in more complex ways, they now had a greater sense of ownership in creating their own arrangements.

In particular, Cara described several instances of the student ownership she saw in her students as a result of their informal music learning activities. During one PDC meeting, Cara had explained how her sixth-grade students had participated in a small group a cappella cover activity, and she was impressed with the level of engagement and musical independence, as well as the progress they had made musically. She summarized her observation of the students' experience; "They really did feel that ownership. They really do. They're gonna be excited [in Monday's performances]" (PDC #5, 02/12/12). Cara believed that her in providing an opportunity for student musical independence through the informal music learning, her students had responded by taking responsibility for their work.

Summary of Finding Value

As the participants implemented informal music learning in their classrooms and discussed ideas in the PDC, they began to find value in this new approach to learning. One of the first and most prevalent aspects they valued was the engagement and motivation they saw in

their students. They remarked on seeing increased levels of engagement and motivation from their whole classes and in individual students who had previously resisted participating in music class. They also found informal music learning to be particularly motivating in encouraging older boys to sing. As time progressed, the participants revealed their interest in informal music learning by describing their mindfulness about it, and how it was always, as Cara put it, in the “back of my mind” (PDC #4, 01/29/12). This mindfulness was evidence that the participants were continuing to consider informal music learning and how they were finding value in this new approach to student learning. Along with being mindful of informal music learning, the participants began to state their value of informal music learning in more specific ways, such as in the relevance they saw in it in relationship to their own methodological training, their formal curriculums, and in the lives of their students.

Finally, the participants began to appreciate informal music learning because they saw how informal music learning promoted independent musicianship and student ownership, which was already in agreement with their personal teaching philosophies. At the beginning of the data collection, the participants expressed a more skills-based orientation to their students’ musical independence, believing that musical independence was based primarily on being proficient in specific musical skills, like keeping a steady beat, singing in tune, and hearing harmonic chord changes. Over time, though the participants’ view of musical independence expanded to a more holistic orientation, in which they valued not only the musical skills needed, but also the role of personal motivation and relevance in musical independence.

Overall, the participants were able to find value in implementing informal music learning—this new approach to teaching and learning. Originally, they appreciated it merely

because their students were on-task and excited in their class assignments, but over time, the participants began to see the deeper value in helping students develop life-long skills as independent musicianship. As Cara summarized about her own perspective, along with the perspective of her students, “I’m glad that we can agree that it has value” (Cara, Observation #1, 02/10/12).

Concerns and Challenges

In the vignette at the beginning of this chapter, Diana shared her uncertainty about informal music learning by saying that she “had her coffee mug and that’s it” (Diana FN #1, 01/12/12). As the participants read about, discussed, and implemented these new informal music learning practices in their classrooms, they expressed several concerns and challenges. While their response to implementing informal music learning was mostly positive, they faced some struggles as they implemented these new, unfamiliar practices. Implementing teaching changes can be challenging for any teacher, but in this section, I hope to illuminate the specific types of concerns expressed by the participants during data collection. Although the participants described many concerns and challenges, the PDC served as a safe place where they could hear similar reflections, supportive comments and helpful advice. The teachers expressed some concerns and challenges in two more specific types. Of these, one type related to the teachers’ feelings about teaching and others’ perceptions of their teaching, and the other related to practical and logistical details involved in implementing informal music learning.

Concerns about Their Teaching and Teaching Role

The participants' concern about their teaching and their role as teachers related both to the legitimacy of informal music learning in the classroom and to others' perceptions of their teaching. Throughout the data collection period, even after implementing several informal music learning activities, the participants expressed concerns about the legitimacy of informal music learning. However, toward the end, their concern manifested itself primarily as guilt about this new type of teaching in which they did not provide direct, formal instruction. The participants also expressed concerns about how their principals, music teacher colleagues, and their students' parents would view informal music learning.

Legitimacy and guilt. Participants questioned both the process of informal music learning and the legitimacy of the use of popular and vernacular musics that are typically associated with informal music learning. For example, Kendra stated, "[I]t could be really surface-y and anything-goes," to which Diana agreed, saying, "I think in the beginning, I was afraid there wouldn't be any substance" (PDC #8, 03/25/12). While that conversation occurred toward the end of the PDC, the participants had made these statements from the beginning. In one of the first PDC meetings, Cara and Kendra shared their uncertainties:

Cara: It sounds like it goes from chaos to something that's not chaos. So, I...I have a hard time kind of envisioning what that would look like in my classroom. . . .

[B]ut some of this seems sort of hard for me to conceptualize how it would work with the classes I teach.

Kendra: That's what I wonder. I see my fourth and fifth grade once a week for 50 minutes. How much would they remember? That's what I worry, when they have to go

back and figure it out again. Would they be able to start where they left off? (PDC #2, 12/11/11)

Cara then went on to add, “But is the musical goal just for the kids to mess with the music and figure it out?” (PDC #2, 12/11/11). Cara’s use of words like “chaos,” and “mess with the music” reveals that she did not yet see informal music learning as a legitimate process in the classroom, while Kendra worried about her students’ recall ability, considering that an important factor for success. However, perhaps the most powerful statement here is Cara’s statement that she could not “envision” informal music learning in her classroom. Because she had taught for many years using structured, formal activities, these new ideas about students’ learning and ways of teaching challenged her. Even after successfully implementing informal music learning activities in her classes, Cara continued to feel challenged by this new type of teaching, as she stated in her exit interview:

So I don’t know why I have to take a deep breath each time. I don’t know. I guess you just get used to teaching a certain way for ten to twelve years, so you have to look at that. . . . And I want to make more room for it, I just have to take that—that leap of faith each time until it becomes more natural for me. (Cara, Interview #2, 04/06/12)

Kendra shared that she wanted more validation for using informal music learning in her classroom. She wanted to know the reasons why it worked, the process for students, and what she should expect from students in informal music learning (Kendra, Observation #1, 02/02/12). Kendra’s anxiety about taking this new role in her teaching was not only founded on trying something new, but also was based on prior teaching experiences from earlier in her career:

Kendra: My first year of teaching, I let the kids do Stomp in fifth grade. You know, like their own little Stomp composition. And I just felt like it was just chaos. I did it my second year, too, and after that I was like, “Oh, we’re done.” (Laughs.) You know? Because I just felt like—I don’t know, I just didn’t feel comfortable with it, I guess.

JK: Yeah. I don’t know. Maybe it’s part of your process as a teacher. Maybe you have to learn to be structured and then—

Kendra: You have to take the structure and unlearn it a little bit. (Kendra, Interview #2, 04/15/12)

Previously, Kendra had used unstructured teaching practices when she had students create compositions using non-musical instruments (brooms, trash cans, etc.), similar to Stomp, the British percussion group, and she felt that these were unsuccessful. Yet, Kendra instead attributed her past failures to her career stage, rather than to the practices themselves. Now that she had taught for several years and could teach using structured plans successfully, she appreciated being able to let go and “unlearn” some of the structure in order to provide informal learning opportunities.

Another concern that the participants shared about the legitimacy of their teaching role in informal music learning was expressed in statements of guilt in not providing direct instruction. One of the clearest examples of this occurred toward the end of data collection in the second-to-last PDC meeting. Diana joked that teaching in informal music learning was similar to, “The Emperor’s New Clothes where we’re presenting about nothing. Or like Seinfeld! It’s like a Seinfeld episode in which it’s anti-teaching!” (PDC #7, 03/11/12). When Diana made this comment, we were discussing whether we were interested in submitting a conference proposal

based on ideas developed in the group. Diana felt as though teaching using informal music learning practices could not be considered as real teaching, because it was not direct instruction. She compared it to the Hans Christian Anderson fairy tale about two weavers who convince an emperor that he is wearing a finely detailed garment, when in reality, he is not wearing any clothes. Diana implied that a presentation on teaching using informal learning practices would similarly be duping other music teachers. Similarly, Seinfeld was a television show considered to be about nothing, because of its random story lines. Diana felt that, by not providing direct teaching instruction, their teaching was “nothing,” or as she put it: “anti-teaching.”

One example of the participants’ feelings of guilt regarding their new teaching role occurred in a passing moment during an observation with Diana (Diana, Observation #2, 03/14/12). As one of Diana’s sixth grade classes got started working on their small group vocal covers, I picked up my coffee mug to have a sip, leaving a little spot of coffee on the table next to the door where I had left my it. Diana came over to where I was and, without saying a word, wiped up the spill with a tissue. I quickly apologized for making a mess. Diana told me not to worry about it and then jokingly quipped, “I’m bored. I have nothing to do but clean up messes!” She then remarked that she felt like a teacher’s aid who complains that they have nothing to do all day. Based on her body language and the other comments she made to me in her observations, rather than truly feeling “bored,” this statement indirectly revealed Diana’s deeper discomfort at stepping back and letting her students have opportunities to construct their own understandings.

In addition to questioning the legitimacy of their teaching role in informal music learning, the participants also felt concern about the legitimacy of using popular music in the classroom.

Surprisingly, the participants did not reveal these concerns until the end of the data collection period. This may have been because the participants felt unsure about expressing these earlier or perhaps they had not come to this understanding until later. Cara shared that, prior to participating in the PDC, she did not feel that popular music had a legitimate place in school music: “I always felt a little guilty allowing pop music into my class. That the big bad rule of music teachers was gonna come down on me! (Chuckles.)” (Cara, Interview #2, 04/06/12).

Diana held similar views about including popular music in the classroom, but, rather than questioning its legitimacy, she felt that popular music was simply not something that was a part of her teaching identity:

Diana: Well, because informal music, rock band making, [and] pop music, is not really my thing.

Julie: It’s not mine either!

Diana: It’s only since I came to [school district]. People did a pop song for sixth grade recognition, [and so] I was kinda forced to [use popular music]. And I found myself thinking, “I really can figure out these chords.” You know? I had actually built up confidence, but still, when you called the [PDC] group together, I thought, “I don’t know.” Tyler was much more current on what was popular than I am. He’s closer to it. I’m old. So maybe that was another thing.

Julie: What made it okay for you to go ahead and do the popular music thing?

Diana: Well, I didn’t go into it happily. At first, it was pressure from the students because they’d done it before. And then, one of my colleagues, also started—

Julie: The person before you?

Diana: Uh huh. She started doing karaoke, and I took her job. Before she left, her choir did a really current pop song, and then I was forced to. I was used to my choir doing choral literature, not a pop song, and I wasn't really that happy about it. (Pause.) Because it's hard. Because of Cara['s suggestion], I had to get online—I had never really thought about a cutting-edge song being arranged online, and I didn't know I could even do that.

(Diana, Interview #2, 04/14/12)

Partly because of the culture and tradition at her new school, and also because of the PDC, Diana began to incorporate the use of popular music into her teaching. Diana recognized that she had the musical ability to hear and perform the chord changes found in popular music songs, but she still felt hesitant to include them. She was concerned that she did not have a good understanding of current popular music due to her age, but learned from her peers in the PDC how to find arrangements of pop songs on the internet.

Others' perceptions of their teaching. The participants felt concerned not only about the legitimacy of their new role as teachers, but also in how others might perceive their teaching. More specifically, the participants made comments regarding their concern about the perceptions primarily of their principals and of their music teacher colleagues. After completing Music Share Day, in which the students performed songs of their choice for their peers, Diana wondered what others would have thought if they had come into her classroom that day: "I felt a little guilty, because I didn't write a lesson plan; I had nothing to do with this. If anybody came in, they would think this was so lame. But, (pause) there's so much merit to it" (PDC #2, 12/11/12).

Cara made a comparable statement as she reflected on both her own teaching and on reading a chapter from Green's (2008) book for the PDC. Cara first explained how she noticed a "spectrum" of teaching attitudes ranging from wanting to have control over students to being more easygoing in the classroom. She then described her having those same feelings:

I don't know how I would be judged if someone would come in and see my classroom.

Both those feelings I have had, and also I was just feeling really, especially with the sixth grade, I was able to step back and just. . . watch. And be amazed at what the kids could kind of do. (PDC #5, 02/12/12)

Like Diana, Cara also worried about how others would view this different type of instruction in the classroom. Yet, despite her concern, Cara still felt amazement at what her students achieved.

Other times, the participants expressed concerns relating specifically to their principals. Kendra shared an instance in which her principal came in to observe her:

One of my principals came in, and I always feel like I need to explain it. Although, my one principal, she thinks everything is wonderful, so it was fine. I wasn't nervous about her coming in, but I explained to her what we were doing, and she said (holding hand out in front of her body with fingers spread wide), "Look how engaged everyone is." Like, she noticed, you know? "They're all so engaged." I'm not sure the other principal would have appreciated it as much, but she could see it. And it's amazing! (PDC #4, 01/29/12)

Kendra felt that, although one principal's observation ended up positively, she still was concerned that her other principal might not appreciate the informal music learning activities.

At other times, the participants voiced concerns regarding parents' perceptions of the use of popular music in the classroom. As described in the section on modifying informal music

learning in the PDC, Tyler chose not to allow students to have access to the lyrics of popular songs, because he feared parents' responses. Diana also was concerned about how some parents, particularly those with more conservative perspectives, would respond to having their children listen to or perform popular music in school. "I have this very conservative family, and I'm wondering, when she gets to fifth and sixth grade, how they'll react" (PDC #1, 11/19/11).

However, Diana balanced this concern with her own perspective as a parent. She described how her son had come home from riding the school bus singing a song with lyrics about alcohol, and then she implied that this experience changed her views so that she worried less about popular music, "I feel like most kids, they're hearing it everywhere" (PDC #1, 11/19/11).

The participants additionally expressed some concerns about how their teaching with informal music learning practices could affect their teaching evaluations from their principals. This state had recently decided to apply for federal funding call "Race to the Top," and some of the requirements included more stringent annual teaching evaluations for all teachers. So, as the teachers implemented informal music learning activities, they made some remarks that indicated their concerns about these teaching evaluations. For example, Diana noticed that the use of goals and objectives in informal music learning differed from their expected use on the teaching evaluations, which required that the teachers post their objectives for each class on the board. After reading about a student "finding" goals for himself in informal music learning (Green, 2006), Diana talked about how that would not work under the current teaching evaluations:

That's the thing! You've got to write a goal for each and every class. And have it posted.

And refer to it during your class! (Gestures toward an imaginary chalkboard.) I might

have to put that somewhere in my room so that I can remember it! “You’ve got to find some for yourself!” (PDC #2, 12/11/11)

Then when I asked how her principal might respond to that type of teaching goal, she remarked that it would be “interesting” with a hint of sarcasm in her voice. In general, the teachers were wary of doing any type of activities that might be viewed negatively by their principals and result in lower marks on their teaching evaluations.

Logistical Concerns and Challenges with Informal Music Learning

In addition to concerns about their new teaching roles, the participants also expressed more practical and logistical concerns as they figured out ways to implement informal music learning in their classrooms. As Kendra shared, “For me, the negatives were more about the logistics than anything” (Kendra, email, 02/26/12). The main concern the participants expressed was about the amount of time they spent on a project, but they also expressed concerns about how they took care of the details in things such as choosing groups, selecting appropriate music, using technology, and helping students with special needs, since they would not be controlling these things as much when implementing informal music learning practices.

Taking Time. From the very beginning, the teachers expressed concern about taking the time to fit new projects into what they felt was already a jam-packed curriculum. When I first asked Kendra if she had any concerns about participating in the PDC, she voiced that kind of concern.

One thing I was thinking about today was that, it’s not really a concern about the group, but thinking about implementing anything new. Doing anything new. It’s always hard

for me to think about the breadth that I'm teaching and then the depth. (Kendra, Interview #1, 12/05/11)

Kendra's concern lay in the fact that she felt challenged to teach all of the concepts that she needed to teach and to cover them with sufficient depth. She was not sure that she would have the time to include more projects into her curricular plan. Other participants made similar comments throughout the PDC:

- I can't imagine having that kind of extra time (Kendra, Interview #1, 12/05/11),
- I don't know if I can take the time (Cara, PDC #4, 01/29/12), and
- I feel like I can't take it as far as I kinda want to (Cara, PDC #6, 02/26/12).

Tyler described his struggle in balancing formal instruction with providing informal learning opportunities. "As time gets more limited, and there's the stuff that you need to teach, so that you can get the building blocks in there, that you can't give them as much informal time" (PDC #6, 02/26/12). Later in that same discussion, Cara and Diana, in thinking about the amount of time it takes to provide informal music learning opportunities, compared the amount of time they have in school music with the time that professional rock musicians dedicate to their craft:

Cara: We need to spoon-feed some things, so that they can be successful. But I would say that, probably pop musicians and rock musicians, they have some building blocks or skills that they bring from school, but a lot of that, it somehow just flows [out of them].

Diana: That's a good point. Because think about how many hours someone who gets a guitar puts in before they get to that point. And we can't even touch that. (PDC #6, 02/26/12)

Thus, the teachers felt concern and pressure to teach what they felt were essential skills, or “building blocks” of their students’ music learning, and still make time for informal music learning experiences.

Informal music learning projects took extended time to complete in the classroom. In my own observations, I frequently was surprised at how long it took students to make progress in their informal music learning projects, as they seemed to struggle in making decisions as a group, listen repeatedly to their songs, and then figure out their parts. As Diana explained:

When I did the fifth grade project, I thought it was gonna be quick, and we were actually going to get it done in a couple of classes. This [reading] actually made me feel better, because they spent a lot of class periods on stage one. So you’ve got to give all this time, and yet, we’ve got 30 minutes (snaps fingers), and we have a concert, and we have all these constrictions. It makes you kind of sad. (PDC #5, 02/12/12)

Diana appreciated reading that children described in research also took a long time on projects, because she felt as though her own students had taken longer than she had expected. She then connected it back to her concern about fitting informal music learning within all that she needed to teach and also with putting on performances, and ended by describing her negative feelings about this conflict.

Other participants related the students’ processes in informal music learning to “wasting time.” When Diana felt as though her students were not choosing their songs in their small groups quickly enough, she said “I just didn’t want to waste my time [with that], leading her to modify her lesson so that classes voted as a whole which piece they would cover (PDC #3, 01/15/12). Later, though, Diana remarked about giving students more time than was necessary,

saying, “So you don’t wanna give them too much time, because then you’ll have too many people with nothing to do” (PDC #8, 03/25/12).

Kendra, on the other hand, felt as though the doodling phase (Jaffurs, 2006) during which students were messing around with the music was “wasting time” (PDC #7, 03/11/12). This caused the participants to consider how they could plan for the number of lessons a project would take, and they discussed giving lyrics to the students as a way to move things along.

Cara: I wonder how long it will take. (Chuckles.) You know?

Kendra: That is the hard thing.

Julie: It seems like giving students the lyrics might shorten things.

Cara: Yeah, that will help.

Kendra: I think one class period for them to mess around, and then the next period, they’ll be ready to start having input. That’s about how long [I gave them], and I think I gave them two of them [the classes] with the song initially with the first class I did it with.

Cara: So maybe I’ll give them Thursday and Friday. (PDC #4, 01/29/12)

Over the course of the PDC, the participants seemed to accept how much time these projects would take as they described their timelines with each other, commiserated about their concerns regarding time, and discussed similar accounts from the readings. They began to realize that while these projects took longer than other types of activities they typically taught using formal instruction, the benefits were worth the taking the time to include them.

Choosing groups. The participants held concerns about the students self-selecting their groups. In particular, they worried that some students would end up being left without a group or

that students would have their feelings hurt. Kendra hesitated to try informal music learning with younger grades, fearing that they would struggle to work in small groups, saying, “I think the younger you go, though, the harder time that the younger kids have with working with people” (PDC #4, 01/29/12). Tyler never allowed his students to completely choose their groups on their own, but instead, faced this challenge by considering both students’ aptitudes and their dispositions in choosing groups.

In one particular PDC meeting, Diana and Cara found that some students did feel left out in choosing groups. First, Diana reflected her concern about a new student, saying that “he’s not socially interacting much with the other kids” (PDC #6, 02/26/12). Then she went on to her express her concern: “I do wonder how it will work with them picking their own groups. Because it will work out great for some, but there will be some kids left out.” Then, Cara shared comments from her students that she had brought confirming these concerns. After completing a small group vocal cover activity, Cara had students anonymously fill out a form in which they stated the aspects of the project they did and did not like. Then, Cara shared the following comments:

The kids that were writing about it [choosing groups] were all in a particular group that were having trouble and were breaking out into separate groups. They could not work together. . . . But for the most part, they did okay with it. I mean, for sixth grade (PDC #6, 02/26/12).

Cara then went on to read a quote from a student in which she felt as though she was treated poorly by other students during the process of choosing groups. In response, Cara said, “Breaks my heart.” While Cara believed that most students were successful in choosing their groups, she,

along with the other group members, had concerns about students who were on the fringes socially. The teachers felt concerned, because they wanted everyone to have a successful experience. Also, because they were giving up control, they were limiting how much they could do to step in and prevent these students from feeling excluded. Later on, I describe how some of the teachers circumvent this issue by helping certain students, who would normally have trouble socially, find their way into a group. However, this still remained a concern and a challenge faced by many of the teachers.

Using technology. From the very beginning, Tyler impressed the other PDC members with his knowledge and application of technology in his teaching. He shared in his initial interview that he was passionate about using technology in the classroom and tried to infuse it into his teaching as much as possible (Tyler, Interview #1, 11/20/11). He wove the use of a Smartboard, iPad, Powerpoint, Dropbox, and other programs as essential tools in his instruction (Tyler, Observation #1, 04/16/12). However, for Diana and Cara, using technology with their students made them nervous because of the time it would take for them to set up and use the technology, and because of their concerns about whether their students would have access to inappropriate materials from the internet.

Cara struggled to decide whether to use technology to allow students to listen to the examples they were to cover:

I just need to figure out the technology piece. Am I gonna allow them to have a recording and listen to it all the time? Should I use this little program I've found or should I burn CDs or do I just assume they know it? I guess I can't assume that. I don't wanna give the notation. I just want them to use their ears. (PDC #4, 01/29/12)

Ultimately, Cara had her students use school laptops—one per group—so that they could listen to the songs as an aid in making their covers. However, she felt as though her experience in using the laptops was only partially successful. “You know, the technology piece is always buggin’ me. I mean the speakers were like so (pinches fingers and bends ear down as though she is straining to hear). My room’s really echo-y” (PDC #5, 02/12/12). The laptops had speakers that were not very loud; thus, the students had trouble hearing all of the parts adequately, particularly when the sound got lost in her large classroom. In another instance, Cara shared that she had trouble getting the programs to work correctly with the school’s network:

I was having technology issues. . . . I downloaded Spotify on it, but anytime that the netbooks weren’t being used, they would go offline. Then the Spotify program had to be rebooted. So I spent a lot of time with the computers, I think. (PDC #3, 01/15/12)

In implementing the technology with students, the teachers frequently spent several minutes at the beginning of each class giving directions for using the computers, passing out the computers, and dealing with issues students had in using the technology.

Diana also used laptops so that students could listen to the music that they were trying to cover in music class. However, because Diana had a much smaller classroom than the other teachers, she provided headphone splitters for all of the groups (Diana, Observation #2, 03/14/12). This allowed students to plug in multiple headphones into one headphone jack, so that different groups would not have trouble hearing their own song over the sound of neighboring groups, and she shared the challenges she faced in accessing programs over the school’s server. “We are allowed to get stuff from YouTube, but...I can’t always access [it], so I need to purchase it from iTunes.” Diana also made other comments indicating her frustration

with the speed and usability of her school building's internet, which made her worried about using it in the classroom. "I'm really frustrated, because we got a note [at school] that there's not enough bandwidth. . . so I get the spinning disk" (PDC #2, 12/11/11). Overall, the teachers seemed concerned by these technological issues because they did not want these to interfere with the flow of the lesson or students' ability to use these as a tool to support their music-making.

A third concern involving technology concerned the specific use of the website, YouTube. YouTube is a website in which users can upload, view, and comment on videos. Students seemed to be familiar with YouTube, and it was perhaps an even more familiar form of music transmission for students than radio, CDs, or mp3s. In conducting Music Share Day with her students, Kendra asked her students how they listened to music, and shared her students' response:

I was surprised by how they were getting the music they were listening to. I told them they could bring in recordings of the music they listen to, you know, .mp3s or whatever, and most of them were like, "I don't have an .mp3 player." So I said, "Okay, let me throw this out there. How many of you listen to the radio?" No one raised their hands. Then I asked [about] CDs, [from] which I got chuckles and snickers, like, who uses CDs anymore! (We both laugh.). . . Then, a few had mp3 players. Most of them listen to music on YouTube. I mean, everybody. (Kendra, Interview #1, 1205/11)

Despite the students' professed familiarity with using YouTube outside of school, the participants expressed some concerns with bringing it into the classroom. Even though they could check to make sure the lyrics of the pop songs were appropriate in advance, they could not ensure the same for all of the comments posted by YouTube users. Cara made several comments revealing

her concern about YouTube, such as, “YouTube is scary. It scares me” (PDC #4, 01/29/12), “I was scared to use YouTube because sometimes the user comments are way too inappropriate” (PDC #3, 01/15/12), and that she felt “guilty” about letting her students go on YouTube (PDC #5, 02/12/12).

Diana had allowed her students to use YouTube for listening to songs when implementing the small group covers on classroom instruments. In order to prevent her students from doing anything inappropriate, she revealed her concerns to students in the classroom when giving them directions to get started on their project. She explained that YouTube should already be open and ready on the laptops. However, she told the students that she had to put in her own personal code and that she had promised the school district that nothing inappropriate would be seen on the computers. In the first class, she said, “If you want independence, then you will be sure to stay only on YouTube on the permitted songs.” I appreciated how she put the responsibility in the students’ court, sharing her expectations that they make good choices (Diana, Observation #2, 03/14/12).

However, in her final application of informal music learning in which she had the students create a cappella small group covers, Diana changed her approach and had students use a different software. This website allowed Diana to download the students’ selected pieces off of YouTube into iTunes for free. Diana shared that this program, which she had heard about from her student teacher, was illegal, because it probably infringed upon copyright laws. As she said, “It feels wrong, because I’m sure that it’s illegal, but oops!” (PDC #8, 03/25/12) Yet, Diana rationalized using this website because she felt that it allowed her to ensure appropriate material in the classroom:

I used that website to download mp3s and put ‘em in iTunes. That way, I didn’t have to worry about being on the web anymore, because it really did make me nervous to have them on the web. Plus, now they’re not looking at it, they’re just listening. (PDC #8, 03/25/12)

Thus, for Diana and Cara, some of the most important concerns about using technology were to find ways to ensure that students were exposed only to appropriate materials, and they had to figure out how to overcome this challenge by finding new ways, like alternative programs and websites, for students to access these songs in the classroom.

Students with special needs. The final challenge the participants faced involved supporting students with special needs in informal music learning. This was not a concern for all of the participants, nor for all of the students with special needs who participated in informal music learning activities. In fact, I observed several instances in which students with special needs had successful experiences. The teachers most frequently held concerns for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or students not diagnosed with ASD but exhibiting similar characteristics. Diana’s school had a special program for servicing students with ASD, and Diana told me that that teachers and teaching aids (who often attended music class) received specialized training for working with students with ASD. Students without ASD were also encouraged to interact with and help students with ASD.

In one of my observations in Diana’s classroom, I observed a particularly touching experience between a student with ASD and his other group members. In this group, a boy with ASD was in a group with all girls, and they had selected to cover “Rolling in the Deep” by Adele (Adkins & Epworth, 2011). Diana had told me that the boy had perfect pitch, but for this piece,

he wanted to have a part beat boxing, even though the original recording by Adele was a melodic ballad. Rather than dissuading the boy from his idea, the girls worked with the boy to make their own arrangement in which they sang a verse a cappella and then they would point to the boy so that he could begin beat boxing on the second verse. Seeing the kindness between these students brought tears to my eyes. In situations like this, all of the students, regardless of their unique characteristics, worked together to have a positive experience. In fact, Kendra described her surprise with one of her classes that included several mainstreamed students, saying, “[T]hey took off with it” (PDC #3, 01/15/12).

Diana talked about how one of her students, whom she believed had symptoms of ASD, struggled to become a part of a group, which aligns with one of the earlier concerns included in this section. Diana described the situation, saying:

It seemed that the kids who were were left out are kids with extreme emotional problems. I have this one kid who is autistic, but isn’t diagnosed. I said, “[Name], is there a group [for you to join?]? I’ll invite you.” And he said (in a low, growly voice), “None of these groups look good to me!” (Laughter from group.) Well, there’s not much I can do for you! (PDC #3, 01/15/12)

Diana’s humorous retelling of this event suggests that, perhaps she felt as though the situation was resolved positively with the student finding a group. In other situations, Diana continued to be sensitive to students with special needs. In my first observation in her classroom, Diana pointed out a fifth grade boy with neon green glasses, indicating that he had ASD. As I observed the class, I noticed that Diana spent extra time monitoring that group, as though checking in to make sure that the boy was doing okay. The boys performed for her, and, as she listened, she

rocked her body from side to side, and she told me that she was pleased with this group's participation and focus (Diana, Observation #1, 01/12/12). These examples illuminate several instances in which teachers both observed successful participation of students with special needs and also provided support to those students when needed.

Unfortunately, sometimes the teachers faced struggles with students with special needs as these students adjusted to the new type of learning practices and less structured format that was a part of the informal music learning activities. In one particularly challenging instance, Cara had trouble in helping a sixth grade student work with his group. This student seemed to feel very upset at the lack of specific steps involved in creating a small group cover with his group, saying repeatedly that he did not know what he was supposed to do (Cara, Observation, 01/12/12). Cara explained how she had tried to give him a very specific task to focus on in his group. In the following PDC meeting, she explained the directions she gave him, "I walked back with him [to his group]. I said, 'You're going to sing all these words'" (PDC #6, 02/26/12), indicating that she expected him to sing all of the lyrics on the word sheet the students had been given. Cara also stated that his group members were also trying to include him and that this student exhibited characteristics similar to ASD, but he was not specifically diagnosed with that syndrome. This may have added an additional challenge for Cara in trying to deal with this student.

Cara had another challenge in dealing with a student with special needs in an informal music learning activity. After the PDC had ended, Cara shared one final post on the Facebook group wall, resulting in the following exchange:

Cara: I redid the a Capella activity with my choir. Some groups were successful, others were not, and this activity is NOT for kids with ASD...too unstructured.

Diana: I'm sorry it didn't go well. I had an ASD kid melt down in this project, too. Any new insights? (Facebook, 04/30/12-05/01/12)

I asked both Cara and Diana over email if they could share any further details about what had happened. Cara never responded. However, Diana wrote back with more details:

The ASD students with an aide worked OK with their groups because they had constant encouragement and monitoring. The other students in their groups also accepted them and adapted the project for them. [Student], who is autistic but not labeled (parents won't allow it) really melted down over the choice of song. He really had trouble sharing control of the project and when he didn't like how it turned out, he had a tantrum. His team tried to find ways to compromise and he just wouldn't have it. Now, [Student] did the same thing when we did our computer project, and I chose those groups and had much more control over that project. (Diana, email, 05/18/12)

Diana's comments show that her student had difficulty in sharing responsibility over the decision-making in his small group; however with support and encouragement from adults and peers, they were able to participate in the activity. In the end, both Cara and Diana faced a challenge in supporting students with special needs during informal music learning. While these two examples were the only two from the data indicating difficulties for students with special needs, they are worthy of note. In observing this take place first-hand, I saw how, even though for some children, the lack of structure causes them to shine, for some, this might be a difficult hurdle. Both Diana and Cara handled the situations as well as they could. However, music teachers may need to consider other modifications in informal music learning activities to further support students with special needs.

Summary of Concerns and Challenges

The participants felt several concerns and faced many challenges as they implemented these new informal music learning ideas into their teaching. Some of these characteristics related to their new roles in their teaching and to their perceptions of principals, parents, and others. They indicated concerns in these new roles by making comments about what others, particularly their principals might think, and they joked about their guilt in not having a formal lesson plan with known student outcomes. In particular, Diana's quote about informal music learning being like "the Emperor's New Clothes" and "anti-teaching," that took place in the second-to-last PDC meeting shows how the participants held these concerns up until the end.

The participants' concerns that others would view them as not doing a good job in their teaching should not be taken lightly, particularly since this study took place in a time and location in which teacher evaluations and teacher cuts were a constant threat. Also, the participants' concerns about feeling guilty reveals their commitment to teaching. Although they were willing to try new practices, the teachers held a high standard for their teaching that they did not want to compromise. Since the teachers were beginning to change in how they viewed student independence and their roles as music teachers, these perspectives are understandable. Thus, implementing informal music learning may require several attempts and a longer amount of time for music teachers to feel comfortable with this type of teaching, especially experienced teachers who have previously established practices and habits.

While Cara, Diana, and Kendra all expressed some concerns and challenges about informal music learning and their new role in this type of teaching, Tyler did not reveal any similar statements. This may be due to Tyler's personality; perhaps Tyler did not like to reveal

these types of concerns to others or intentionally kept them hidden from the others. Another possibility might be due to Tyler's career stage. As a novice teacher, it is possible that Tyler may not have noticed as much of a change in his teaching identity, or his understanding of his role as a teacher may not have been as formed as the more experienced teachers.

Not surprisingly, while the first concerns related more to the overarching concept of teaching, the logistical concerns related more to the nitty-gritty details the teachers faced as they brought informal music learning into their classrooms, including time, choosing student groups, using technology, and supporting students with special needs. All of these characteristics are issues that elementary general music teachers might face in a variety of formal teaching situations, but in this study, the teachers identified them as specific challenges to their implementation of informal music learning. These concerns reveal how the participants were dedicated to providing a great musical experience for their students, down to minute details, and may be useful for other music teachers to consider before implementing informal music learning.

In two cases, students with special needs had difficulties participating in informal music learning activities. The music teachers tried to provide support to these students by giving specific, structured directions and by providing additional encouragement and monitoring. Diana also benefited from being in a school with special resources for supporting students with ASD. However, the difficulties the teachers encountered may have been due to the unstructured nature of informal music learning itself, as well as the shared control in the small groups. Other music teachers may need to consider how to support similar students in their own settings.

Summary

The participants developed several different types of applications in informal music learning based on their participation in the PDC, including Music Share Day, playing popular songs on the recorder, and small group covers of popular music with instruments and a cappella voices. The participants also applied other aspects of informal music learning into their teaching; they modified activities they read about in the PDC in order to best accommodate their unique programs and teaching styles. More specifically, they modified informal music learning activities described in research articles to include the use of general music classroom instruments (xylophone, hand drums, and recorder), a cappella voices, and music notation. They also modified prior activities they had previously taught to include aspects of informal music learning, and they modified in the moment to incorporate students ideas into their teaching, such as when Diana used her student's playing of "Kung Fu Fighting" to teach all of her recorder students how to play F#.

As they implemented and discussed informal music learning, the participants expressed several different types of concerns. Their primary concern had to do with the legitimacy of informal music learning in their classrooms, which may have been due to their changing in how they were viewing their teaching role. They were concerned about trying these new ideas because they were uncertain of the outcome, and they were also unsure about using popular music in their classrooms, because as Cara explained, that went against the "big bad rule" of music teaching (Cara, Interview #2, 04/06/12). While they also were concerned about their principals' perceptions of their teaching and how this new style of teaching might affect their teaching evaluations, the participants were most concerned about being hands-off with their

students, which Diana felt was like, “The Emperor’s New Clothes” (PDC #7, 03/11/12). The participants also expressed more logistical concerns about the amount of time informal music learning took, choosing groups, using technology, and supporting students with special needs.

Yet, even though the participants felt concerned about various aspects of informal music learning they began to value using it in their classrooms. They first valued it as they observed the increased motivation and engagement of their students. However, this could be considered to be a somewhat superficial benefit to informal music learning, because it did not relate to students’ musical achievements. Over time, the participants began to recognize more concrete examples of the value of informal music learning. They recognized the congruence between informal music learning and their methodological training, curriculum, and philosophical beliefs, and they began to see how informal music related to their students’ lives outside of school.

Most importantly, though, the participants began to see informal music learning as a way to promote students’ musical independence, which was something they had already deeply valued as general music and choral teachers. While at the beginning of the study, they stated their belief in student musical independence, this was originally a skills-based orientation, in which they hoped students would develop proficiency in musical skills like singing in tune and keeping a steady beat. By the end of the data collection, the participants’ view of musical independence expanded into a more holistic orientation, which included a hope that students would have the motivation and autonomy to pursue music making on their own. Overall, the participants made a variety of applications in informal music learning in their classrooms, and these experiences, despite some concerns, led to positive perceptions of informal music learning and their plan to continue its use in their classrooms.

CHAPTER 6: PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES SUPPORTING INFORMAL LEARNING

Throughout the data collection period, the teachers not only developed applications, or “experiments,” that included informal music learning, but they also implemented these applications in their classrooms using a variety of pedagogical practices. Ultimately, their goal in using these practices was to ensure that their students would have a positive experience resulting in musical growth. The pedagogical practices employed by the teachers existed on one of two continua: 1) a *Continuum of Teacher and Student Control*, and 2) a *Continuum of Teacher Scaffolding*. The *Continuum of Control* involved, at one end, the teachers retaining control over students’ independent musicking by making choices for students and setting narrower parameters over the students’ song selections and group memberships. On the other end of the continuum, the teachers provided students with more freedom to make decisions independently. The *Continuum of Teacher Scaffolding* includes several different pedagogical practices: providing lyrics and/or notation, teacher modeling, giving permission, and being hands-off. These practices range on the continuum from more explicit teacher involvement to little teacher involvement in students’ informal music processes.

The teachers moved along varying points of the continua throughout the data collection period. For example, a teacher might have had greater control over students’ song choice but allowed them complete freedom in their group choice and mostly let the students work independently. In general, though, the teachers tended to move toward providing greater freedom and having less control over students’ processes and decisions by the end of the data collection period, as well as moving from greater to less teacher scaffolding. This suggests that,

as they became familiar with informal learning processes and activities, the teachers also grew more comfortable with giving students greater control and having less involvement in student processes. Additionally, as they were exploring this new approach to their music teaching, the teachers occasionally exhibited some missteps that served as impediments to students' informal music learning; these impediments will also be described. Finally, the chapter will conclude with the teachers' own reflections on how their teaching practice had changed, and how this change resulted in a more democratic classroom for the participants.

Continuum of Control for Informal Learning in the Classroom

The teachers used several approaches involving the selection of songs and group members in the informal music learning activities. These approaches were employed by all of the teachers throughout the data collection period in a variety of ways, but they varied on the amount of student control. Each pedagogical practice will be introduced with a vignette to present it in context, followed by further descriptions and explanations. The teachers, in recognizing their professional responsibility over their students' music learning and wanting to provide an emotionally and socially safe place for musicking, developed these practices based on their experience and knowledge as skilled music teachers, but also through PDC discussions as they shared with and learned from each other.

Song Selection

As I peeked into the window of Kendra's classroom and entered, I heard her giving directions to her fifth grade students, who were sitting in two rows on the first and third steps of the risers. On a long wall opposite the risers, there

was a white board with objectives written for all of the grade levels, as well as hanging charts with reminders about rules and procedures. These were today's fifth grade objectives:

LSA Rhythm

song composition -> groups

** reveal mystery composer*

duple rhythm patterns

Kendra told the class that she was worried about their use of time in working on the cover songs, and said that she wanted them to think about a few things before beginning their work. They were going to have their choice of song, but she wanted them to pick their songs quickly. Then she played through their four choices on recorder, including "Dynamite," which they had already played in previous classes, "Grenade" by Bruno Mars, "Fireflies" by Owl City, and "If I Die Young" by The Band Perry. After she played each one, there was a buzz among the students as they smiled, sang along, and whispered to their friends about which song their group should play.

She told them that she had made copies of all of the songs and gestured to piles of songs at the front of the room underneath the white board. She had told me after the first class that she had transcribed all of the songs by hand. She had done "Grenade" first and said that it had taken her the longest, because it was highly syncopated and because she hadn't done it in a while. She then explained that it had gotten easier with the other songs, indicating that she got better with the later transcriptions, as though the skill was like riding a bike. I

thought about how being able to transcribe popular songs by ear might be an important skill for a music teacher to have.

As Kendra wrapped up her directions, a student asked if they could do it again. I thought this was an interesting question, because they hadn't even begun the project yet! She told him that they could possibly come back to this project at the end of the year. She then paused momentarily, shifting her voice to one that sounded genuine, yet tired at the same time, saying, "I'll be honest. It takes me a lot of time to put these together." She then explained that it was challenging to prepare the song selections for them in these activities. (Kendra, Observation #1, 02/02/12)

In selecting the songs used in the informal music learning activities, the teachers ranged from choosing songs for the students to play, to choosing a set of songs from which student groups could make a selection, to letting students have complete freedom over their song choice. Song selection for some activities tended naturally toward a certain point on the continuum of teacher to student control. For example, during the Music Share Day activity, since the premise of the activity was for students to perform a song they had learned outside of school, the students had control over what they performed. Regardless of who selected the songs, though, virtually all of the songs used in the informal music learning activities were popular music selections, indicating the students' preference toward this genre and, when chosen by the teachers, their sensitivity toward students' musical interests.

Teacher-selected songs. There were few examples in which the teachers selected the exact piece that all students would perform. In the PDC, the teachers frequently discussed which

songs would make appropriate selections for music class or could be played on the recorder. The song that teachers most frequently chose to use was “Dynamite,” by Taio Cruz (2010), because all of the teachers found it to be both appropriate and relevant. Tyler already had decided to have his students play this on the recorder before the beginning of the PDC. Diana recognized in one of the first PDC meetings that the song could be played on the recorder, saying, “Dynamite, I think, works well,” and then she began to sing and “air-finger” the pitches of the tune on an imaginary recorder (PDC #2, 12/11/11). Later, Kendra and Cara also decided to have their students play this piece on the recorder. Additionally, one of the teachers uploaded her version of the recorder notation into the group’s Dropbox folder, an online file-sharing software, so that everyone in the PDC could have access to it.

The teachers found that “Dynamite” (Cruz, 2010) was motivating for all students, and thus, their decision to use this piece worked well. They discussed the virtues of this song in one of the final PDC meetings:

Kendra: That song is the key to informal music learning! (Laughter from group.)

Tyler: I know!

Kendra: I mean, seriously! It is the key to all motivation on the recorder! (More laughter.)

Diana: I hope they all still know it in a few years! (Laughter.)

Kendra: I know! I hope it’s still popular, or we’ll have to find a new one! (Laughter.)

Julie: One that works well on the recorder!

Kendra: And they’ll try to sneak off to the corner and try to play it! That’s just the funny thing about it!

Julie: Still?

Kendra: Yeah, still! I mean, they come in and get out their recorders, and if I give them a second break, that's all I hear, is "Dynamite." (PDC #7, 03/11/12)

The teachers all agreed that the song, "Dynamite" (Cruz, 2010), was an example of a pop song that they could bring into the classroom, have students perform on classroom instruments, and use to engage all of their students. The comments about finding a replacement once "Dynamite" had lost its popularity reveals that the teachers felt responsible for finding and selecting popular music for students to play that was accessible, relevant, and enjoyable.

Teacher-mediated songs. Other times, rather than choosing the songs for the students, the teachers would give students some choice in the songs for their informal music learning projects by letting students vote as a class or providing a set of teacher-selected songs from which they could choose. These teacher-mediated choices represent a mid-point on the continuum between teacher control and student control. The teachers had pre-approved four or five songs as having appropriate lyrical content and being "playable" for students on the recorder or barred instruments, which gave the teachers some control over the students' repertoire.

In the vignette at the beginning of this section, Kendra had selected four songs, and, of these songs, three were pop and one was country (Kendra, Observation #1, 02/02/12). Kendra taught in a location where country music was part of her students' lives outside of school, and this may have been why she chose the song "If I Die Young" (Perry, 2010). Also, Kendra had spent time outside of school transcribing these so that she could provide notation for the students and provide additional support for their cover songs, showing her interest in providing a successful informal music learning activity.

In Kendra's classroom, one of the groups was having a disagreement over picking a song among the choices Kendra had provided for their instrumental cover. They sat sprawled out on the risers in Kendra's room and seemed to be lagging behind the other groups who were already playing their instruments. After a while, Kendra noticed that this group was still talking and not playing, so she went over and sat down on the risers for several minutes. I could not hear what Kendra was saying to them, but she seemed to be trying to mediate the situation to help these students agree on a song, pointing back and forth to the notation of both songs as she spoke. Finally, the decision was settled, and Kendra got stood up. As she did, one of the students, whose choice did not get selected, folded up the notation of that song and put it in his pocket to take home and try it on his own. Kendra may or may not have made this suggestion to the young man, but regardless, her negotiation was successful, and the group began to work (Kendra, Observation #1, 02/02/12).

Similarly, Diana originally had planned to give her students a set of songs for their small group instrumental covers, but, after the first class took too much time choosing their songs, she ended up mediating the situation by having the class vote on one song for the whole class (Diana, Observation #1, 01/12/12). Diana still allowed the students to work in small groups, but felt as though having a vote saved valuable class time. She was surprised when all three classes voted to perform the same song: "Stereo Hearts" by Gym Class Heroes featuring Adam Levine (McCoy, T., et al., 2011). She did not indicate that any of the students expressed frustration or disappointment at having to all perform the same song. Thus, Diana's mediation of the song choice worked in this situation, and it indicates the popularity of that song among her students at that time.

Tyler also described having his class vote for their pieces. He had transcribed five popular songs for the students to play on the recorder. Since Tyler had planned to use these pieces as a whole-class activity, rather than having them work in small groups, his plan to let the class vote for which song they would play at the beginning of each class served as a way to provide students with some voice in what they were learning. Tyler chose to include the following popular songs: “Stereo Hearts” by Gym Class Heroes, featuring Adam Levine (McCoy, T., et al., 2011), “Fireflies” by Owl City (Young, 2009), “Whip My Hair” by Willow Smith (Jackson & Rockwell, 2010), “Good Life” by OneRepublic [sic] (Tedder, et al., 2010), and the “Darth Vader” theme from the movie Star Wars (Williams, 1997) (PDC #2, 12/11/11).

Although Tyler shared this example in the PDC because he thought it fit with the group discussion topic, he had already been planning to do this unit before participating in this study (Tyler, Interview #1, 11/20/11). He explained how he had thought about the pieces he wanted to share with students by going to the Billboard Top 100 song list online (Comer, 2011). The only exception was including the Darth Vader theme, which was not on Billboard’s list. Tyler explained his reason for picking this song by saying:

When I looked at the Billboard Top 100, I started looking for songs in minor, and I couldn’t find one! They’re all in major! I’m like, okay, well, I’ve gotta have something other than major. What’s in minor that’s pop-y that the kids would like. Oh! “Darth Vader” theme! So I did that. (Tyler, Interview #1, 11/20/11)

Thus, Tyler had selected the songs for his recorder cover song activity carefully by considering not only which songs the students would like, but also the musical content of those songs and how they might be beneficial for students.

In describing her plan for an a cappella cover with her fifth graders, Cara stated how she would provide a few song choices. “Yeah, limit their song choices, allow them decision-making with music. That’s kind of my goal. We’ll see what happens with that” (PDC #4, 01/29/12). She provided the following choices for her students: “Someone Like You” by Adele (Adkins & Wilson, 2011), “Don’t Stop Believin’” by Journey (Cain, Perry & Schon, 1981a), “Blow” by Ke\$ha (Sebert, et al., 2011), “Stereo Hearts” by Gym Class Heroes featuring Adam Levine (McCoy, T., et al., 2011), and “Love You Like a Love Song” by Selena Gomez (Armato & James, 2011).

However, after the project had finished, Cara looked at the reflection forms that she had her students fill out, and she was interested in how much the students liked having a choice of songs: “[T]hey really liked picking their own songs, and they really wanted to choose, so the next time I do this, I will just let them pick. As long as the lyrics are appropriate!” (PDC #6, 02/26/12). In the end, although Cara had provided her students’ song choices for their small group covers, after hearing their thoughts about the activity, she began to feel more comfortable with the idea of letting them choose their own songs without her mediation in future activities.

Negotiated song choices. At the other end of the continuum, the teachers provided students with the opportunity to choose their own songs. The teachers frequently allowed students to choose their own songs in the small group instrumental and vocal cover song activities. Letting the students choose was a specifically-determined pedagogical practice the teachers used in order to let their students have greater musical freedom in their informal music activities. In this practice, the teachers functioned more as facilitators of the students’ musical experience, because they were not providing direct instruction but supporting and approving

students' decisions. As a result, the teachers frequently had to negotiate when conflicts arose among students or give permission to students when they felt insecure or undecided about moving forward.

Diana negotiated problems several times, using a respectful, yet understanding, demeanor. In one class, a group of boys insisted on using an Eminem song she had deemed inappropriate. Previously, the students had thought about songs that they wanted to do and wrote them down on a sheet of notebook paper, one for each group. Diana had taken the sheets home and looked the videos and lyrics up on YouTube. She explained to me that she had worked with her son to "figure out teen music." They had looked at the lyrics and videos together to determine whether they were appropriate for school. Diana described how, when a student had written down a song by Eminem, her son said, "No way, Mom!" Then, in class, Diana explained which songs the students were allowed to use, but did not give permission for the Eminem song. If a song was permissible, she had put a red check next to it on the sheet, but if a song was not school appropriate, then she wrote the word "No" and circled it. The students were free to cover any song that was checked (Diana, Observation #2, 03/14/12).

At first, Diana tried to reason with the group that wanted to choose the Eminem song. She first complimented the song, showing the boys that she could see its value, but she quickly followed by explaining why the song was inappropriate for school. "I love that Eminem chorus and think it would have been cool, but for a school project, it's not appropriate" (Diana, Observation #2, 03/14/12). When the boys continued to press her, she did not lose her cool or force her way. Rather, she seemed to recognize that the most important part of the activity was not which song her students chose but that they would have a song that motivated them to begin

musicking. It was the process that mattered most. Finally, Diana ended up striking a compromise with that group by agreeing to edit the song herself, so that they would only cover the chorus of the song, which cut out the inappropriate lyrics (Diana, Observation #2, 03/14/12).

In another situation, Diana was able to negotiate with a group who wanted to perform the song, “Sexy and I Know It” (Gordy, Listenbee, Beck, Robertson, & Oliver, 2011). Instead, Diana was able to direct them toward a parody of the song that could be used in school called, “Elmo and I Know It” based off of the children’s show “Sesame Street” (PAFilmsdotcom, 2012). While the “Elmo” version of the song was not an age-appropriate selection, considering that character is intended for preschool-aged children, Diana took a chance, thinking that the boys might find humor and amusement in this of their chosen song, and her chance worked. The boys were greatly amused by Elmo’s singing and dancing, and the boys were still motivated by the song because it so closely resembled the original. Diana was correct when she called the song, “the best of both worlds” (Diana, Observation #2, 03/14/12).

Kendra allowed her students permission to go in a new direction when they were having trouble with the song they were trying to cover, and asked whether they could make up their own song instead. She described how she gave students permission to continue their creating, rather than requiring them to complete the assignment as she had intended:

[T]hey didn’t know what to do with it [their song], so, they said, “I just made this up.” A lot of groups were doing this, too. It wasn’t just that group. So that’s when I just said, “Well go ahead. If you can make something out of it. Go ahead.” (PDC #5, 02/12/12)

In this way, Kendra gave her students permission to move forward with their choice. While the outcome of the activity resulted in choosing to create a *new* song, rather than choosing a song,

Kendra served an important role as a teacher-facilitator, encouraging her students to explore new possibilities.

Group Membership

In the final class [of four I observed], Diana shared that this was her most difficult of the sixth grade classes and that there were some social issues in this class. The student teacher told me that there were only four groups in this class—two large and two small. One group had 10 students, one had eight, one had two, and one had four. The group members seemed to be divided among social groups within the class, with the “cool kids” being in the 2 largest groups. One young man with ASD was having trouble finding a group. It sounded as though he had joined a group last time, but he didn’t seem pleased with staying in the group today. Rather than making a big deal out of it, Diana first tried to calmly convince him to stay with his original group, but ended up moving him to a different group. She told him, “Everyone in this class is nice and would be happy to invite you into their group” Sure enough, I soon saw that young man fitting in with a new group, even contributing ideas as they chose their song, saying, “Yeah, this song is much easier for the beat.” (Diana, Observation #2, 03/14/12)

Following processes that were similar to those used in the song selections, the teachers provided varied degrees of control in how students were divided into groups. On one end of the continuum, teachers chose the groups or had the classes work as a whole, while on the other end, the teachers allowed students to choose their own groups, regardless of the size, gender, or

abilities of the members. In one instance, Tyler provided a teacher-mediated model in which he allowed students to pick a partner, and then he selected pairs to put together into larger groups.

Teacher-selected groups. Based on the readings in the PDC, the teachers recognized that students in informal music learning outside of school frequently work with their peers of their own choosing, but they felt wary of letting students pick their own groups in the classroom. Tyler frequently chose groups for students in order to pair students with lower aptitude and achievement with those who had higher aptitude and achievement, in an effort to provide greater support for those students in their groups. As he explained, “I split them up into groups of three, because it was based more on aptitude and achievement and what they did, and [I] made sure a lower achieving student was paired with a higher achieving student” (PDC #2, 12/11/11).

Tyler used this tactic in several of his activities, viewing this as important to doing small group work. When I asked him what skills music teachers needed to have in order to successfully implement informal music learning, he selected this teacher-directed practice of choosing groups: “I’d say, [the] skills you need to have is definitely being able to spot the groups that children choose, because sometimes they will get all together as just friends, and it’s not really the most productive thing” (Tyler, Interview #2, 04/16/12). Thus, Tyler felt that students choosing their own groups might result in groupings in which students would be more likely to get off-task in their assignments.

In my first observation with Diana, she also had selected the groups for their small group instrumental covers. However, Diana said that she had chosen the groups “based on convenience” by looking at her seating chart and putting students in groups according to whom they sat near (Diana, Observation #1, 01/12/12). Diana laughed apologetically as she told me

this, and then said then compared her process for selecting groups to what Tyler had shared in the previous PDC meeting. She said that, if she could do it again, she would have spent more time selecting the groups and used more systematic processes like Tyler. However, in the future informal music learning activities she implemented, Diana instead allowed students to choose their own groups, using a more teacher-facilitator practice.

Teacher-mediated groups. Tyler demonstrated a teacher-mediated practice in the way he set up the groups for his rock song composition project by letting the students choose a partner, and then he put the pairs together into groups of four. In his other informal projects, Tyler had selected the groups for his students, based on their aptitude and achievement, but for this project, he took a new direction that he had learned from another teacher in the PDC.

I think it may have been...uh...it might've been Diana's or Cara's idea to let them pick one partner and then let them put it together. Because before, I did it all based on aptitude, and I chose the groups, and it worked out well, but I thought this year, they've already done a similar composition project, so they kinda already know the outlines and the rules, and so I can let them work with a partner, and then I can put those partners into groups based on aptitude or on social interaction. (Tyler, Interview #2, 04/16/12)

The idea did not come from Diana or Cara, but from the participant who had dropped out of the study, which may have been why Tyler was unsure about the source of the idea. Regardless, he took this idea shared at the PDC to give his students more freedom, while still maintaining some control over the student groups.

With Kendra, I observed a group of girls who seemed to want to work together. Four of the girls wanted to work together, and then a fifth girl who did not have a group seemed

interested in joining them. Kendra noticed the girls having trouble finalizing their groups, so she approached them. When she saw me watching, she turned to me and explained, “I’m trying to decide if I’m going to have a group of five, or a group of two and a group of three” (Kendra, Observation #2, 02/03/12). She then asked them whether everyone would have a job in their group if they had a group of five. After a very short pause in which the students failed to respond, Kendra said, “Sounds like no,” and she split the girls into two separate groups. In my fieldnotes, I made the following note, “I found this interaction to be interesting, because she really took charge and made decisions for these students” (Kendra, Observation #2, 02/03/12). Kendra’s quick response may have been related to her desire for them to not waste time in deciding their groups, but instead to get to music-making, the intended goal of the activity.

Negotiated student groups. In addition to negotiating song choices, the teachers occasionally had to negotiate in the selection of group members in order to make sure that all students were included. Cara described how she had helped one student find a group, although she had let other students figure it out for themselves. “There was only one girl that I really helped find a group” (PDC #5, 02/12/12). While Cara described having to help only one student, in the student reflections she had them complete, several comments indicated that the students wished that she had selected the groups for them, leading to a discussion in the PDC about how to protect students from having their feelings hurt. Cara shared the student reflections in one of the PDC meetings, so that the other teachers could hear the responses from students. Later, Diana shared that she had learned from Cara’s experience, and, as a result, she had revised her directions for how the students formed their groups, “‘You can make the groups,’ I said, ‘But everyone has to be included, or I’ll choose. . . . Because I don’t want anyone to be

excluded” (PDC #8, 03/25/12). Thus, Diana tried to head off potential conflicts before they occurred.

In the vignette at the beginning of this section, Diana had to negotiate on behalf of a student with ASD who was no longer satisfied with his group. Rather than trying to make that student stay in his group, she recognized that it was more important for him to be in a group in which he was happy. She walked with him to another group, and, with her hands on his shoulders, she asked the group on his behalf if he could join the group. This worked out well for that student, and I later saw him participating successfully with his peers (Diana, Observation #2, 03/14/12). Overall, the teachers who used this practice of negotiation were flexible and showed an awareness of the feelings for all of the students involved. In using this teacher-facilitated practice, the teachers were able to prevent conflicts among group members and insure that all students had a group in which they could feel safe and productive.

Continuum of Teacher Scaffolding

[Diana is giving directions to her students to prepare them for their small group instrumental covers, including how they were to use the computers to listen to their song choices.] Diana explained the guidelines for using the computers and YouTube. She explained that YouTube should already be open and ready on the computers. However, she said that she had to put in her own personal code, and she had agreed that she had promised the school district that nothing inappropriate would be seen on the computers. In the first class, she told the students, “If you want independence, then you will be sure to stay only on YouTube on the permitted songs.” I appreciated how she put the

responsibility in the students' court, sharing her expectations that they make good choices.

At another point, both she and I stepped to the side of the classroom, taking it all in while the students worked independently. She mentioned that the some students were "looking for approval," before they could make any progress. She pointed out a student in a red sweatshirt who had already asked her which of the songs from their list they should do. I'm not sure what she said to this student, but I overheard Diana tell another group that they had made some "really interesting choices" in their songs without directing them toward a particular song. (Diana, Observation #2, 03/14/12)

Teachers exhibited varying degrees of teacher scaffolding over the student learning process as they were engaged in informal music learning activities. The pedagogical practices they used to scaffold students' learning in informal music activities included techniques such as providing lyrics and notation, modeling examples, giving permission, and being hands-off. On the continuum of teacher scaffolding, these practices ranged from more explicit examples of teacher involvement to more diminished teacher involvement. Overall, these types of teacher input reveal the ways in which the teachers sought to support their students in their informal music learning projects.

Providing lyrics and notation. The teachers frequently provided sheets with song lyrics and/or notation for students to use in many of their informal music learning activities. They used these as a way to provide scaffolding for the students as they engaged in their informal music learning activities, without providing formal instruction. When I observed in both Diana's and

Cara's classrooms, I saw the students carrying sheets of paper with the lyrics on them. The teachers did not provide lyrics in some of their first applications of informal music learning, but then described how they wished they had. As Diana said, "I think the other thing I would do [differently] is I'm going to give them the lyrics, too. Because then that kinda takes the reason to listen—they already know the main melody. It's not that complex" (PDC #4, 01/29/12). Diana indicated that some students were spending a lot of their time focusing on the melody of the pieces, partly because they were trying to memorize the lyrics. She gave her students the lyrics in the next informal music learning activity she implemented, after she had checked them to make sure they were appropriate to use in school. So, she was exerting some control in the process, but as a way of helping the students save time. By making this change in providing the lyrics, Diana was trying to encourage the students to consider the other parts in the music other than the melody.

Kendra came to a similar conclusion after implementing her first activity in which she did not provide lyrics. A couple of her students approached her with the notation she had provided, unsure of where her notation was in the whole of the song. To answer them, she sang the lyrics to help them find their place (Kendra, Observation #1, 02/02/12). In Cara's classroom, I observed that the students were given a packet with song lyrics for all of the choices for their a cappella covers. However, Cara decided to only give her students a portion of the song, in order to influence how much time they took:

Diana: Yeah. Did you give them the lyrics?

Cara: Yeah, but I didn't give them the whole song because I didn't want 'em to take forever. So I told 'em, if you wanna do more, go ahead, but I just gave them the first verse and the chorus of the song.

Julie: That was a good idea.

Diana: That was a good idea. I'm copying that one. I'll be emailing you before I start it!

(Laughs.) What else do I need to do? (PDC #7, 03/11/12)

Overall, the participants' decision to provide the lyrics, or a part of the lyrics, of the songs covered in their informal music learning applications seemed to be an effort to shorten the length of time students took on a project—a concern described in the previous chapter—and to take away the need to “practice” the words so that students would pay attention to musical features other than the melody.

In addition to providing students with lyrics sheets, sometimes they provided notation for the melodies of the popular music songs. Similar to providing the lyrics, this may have been a way for the teachers to provide scaffolding to support the students in making their cover songs, as well as prevent the students from focusing exclusively on the melody. As Tyler explained,

They all put the recorder part in front of them in case they needed it, but most of them chose to memorize it. But I kinda put it there because I wanted them to use it if they needed it, but I didn't want them to use it as a crutch. (PDC #3, 01/15/12)

Kendra told me in her interview that she was glad she had provided the notation, because she felt as though it gave students a starting point (Kendra, Interview #2, 04/15/12). She also felt that, as a result of the instrumental cover project, students began to make the connection that the notes on the page could be played on many different instruments or be sung. Kendra believed

that this was an important transfer for students to make that would change how they viewed music in general and would support their music-making outside of school (Kendra, Observation #1, 02/02/12).

Ultimately, Kendra decided to move away from providing notation in informal music learning activities:

Well, and the first part of class, we just kinda reviewed how you play the recorder and all that kinda stuff. Then I gave them the music and the notation. I played it for them once before they went into their groups. So I think [next time] I'm gonna do less talking and just say, "Go." Yeah, because I tried to structure everything, and we'll see if that just works better. (PDC #3, 01/15/12)

Kendra recognized that providing the notation and giving directions created a structure that did not necessarily help her students succeed in informal music learning. Thus, Kendra felt that this form of scaffolding was no longer needed for her students in their informal processes. After reflecting on this, she decided to give provide additional opportunities for student independence. Perhaps like Cara's shift to allow her students more freedom in choosing their songs, Kendra may have gained confidence from seeing her students' reactions to the project to encourage her to modify her pedagogical approach in future informal activities.

Modeling examples. All of the participants provided input in students' informal musicking through the pedagogical practice of modeling—a common practice used in a variety of teaching settings. As with providing the lyrics and/or notation, modeling was teacher intervention that provided some scaffolding before or during the activity. However, the teachers frequently used modeling as teacher-facilitators to provide representative examples of possible

ideas, rather than as a model students were meant to copy. In the a cappella cover song activity, Cara and Diana recognized that students first needed to understand how different parts within the music could be copied by adapting the sounds of their voices. So they demonstrated how the students could do this in music classes prior to beginning the a cappella projects by modeling different instrumental parts with their voices. This idea sprung up in the PDC when Cara was still brainstorming how she would accomplish the project.

Cara: If I get a beat box and some kind of bass line, anything, anything, besides the melody, I'll be happy. If I get three parts, I'll be thrilled.

Kendra: You'll definitely have the melody, and you'll probably have some kids who will beat box.

Cara: Oh, for sure. That will probably be the most popular part.

Julie: Do they know that? Like, will you demonstrate that, or tell them how they can do that? Or are you gonna try and let them figure out how they can do that on their own?

Cara: Well, that's a good question! If I show them, you know, a YouTube video of something. Probably the "Sing Off" would have some stuff, if I could find that. (PDC #4, 01/29/12)

At first, Cara was considering the musical products that her students would end up creating, and she and Kendra agreed about the popularity of beat boxing. However, I wondered whether all of the students would know how to beat box, which led Cara to think of finding a video clip on YouTube. In particular, she planned to find a video from a television show called the "Sing Off," in which a cappella groups from all over the United States competed for a prize (Gallen,

Weisman & Newmeyer, 2009). Cara believed that the “Sing Off” would provide some good examples to get her students started.

Cara followed through with this plan, and, prior to beginning their a cappella covers, she showed some YouTube videos that differed from the songs students would later be covering, and she explained the different vocal parts they were hearing (Cara, Observation #1, 02/10/12). In one of the PDC meetings, she described what she had done for the other group members:

[S]tarting about a week ago, I started pulling up YouTube videos like Pentatonix. That is a five-member a cappella group that won the “Sing Off” this year. So they’d just hear it. I’d try to draw their attention to all of the different parts and stuff. [I’d say,] “Listen. Oh, that’s really good!” or “Listen to that beat!” or draw their attention to all of the background stuff. So we listened to a couple of those. (PDC #5, 02/12/12)

More specifically, Cara pointed out elements of the performance that were unique. She also stated that she had gotten the students into small groups to try out some of the vocal sounds they had heard. This approach seemed to work, for when I observed the students at the beginning of their cover song projects, the students were attempting to make the sounds of these different parts found in their own song choices. As I wrote in my fieldnotes, “Nearly every group was working on performing this, or were at least trying to figure these parts out, with varying degrees of success” (Cara, Observation #1, 02/10/12).

Similarly, prior to beginning the vocal a cappella covers with her sixth graders, Diana had provided some example videos. However, rather than presenting these herself, Diana had passed this task to her student teacher. The student teacher told me that she had played some videos from a college a cappella ensemble and one by an artist named Sam Tsui (2012), who does mash-

up arrangements in which he combines several popular songs and sings all of the parts himself (Diana, Observation #2, 03/14/12). While Diana had her student teacher present this material, she was still responsible for making the decision to provide examples for her students. In Diana's class, like in Cara's, the students seemed to learn from the examples provided, and I observed them discussing how they would divide the parts and deciding who would be on each part (Diana, Observation #2, 03/14/12).

Overall, the difference between the type of modeling typically provided in formal instruction and the type of modeling done by the teachers in these informal music learning projects was that, in this situation, the teachers modeled representative examples. They showed videos of other groups and ensembles doing the type of music making the students would be doing, rather than modeling the exact songs. In this way, they were acting as teacher-facilitators by guiding their students in the process of informal music learning, particularly in a task and a type of singing that was unfamiliar to the students. As Cara explained her goal in modeling these examples, she said, "It was like, how can I guide the students to hear some of these things, rather than show them how to do it" (Cara, Interview #2, 04/06/12). In this way, modeling provided valuable scaffolding to help the students be successful.

Giving permission. Another type of teacher intervention that seemed to be needed in informal music learning activities was to give students permission to make their own decisions. The participants found that, when given the opportunity to work independently in informal music learning activities, some students balked at the idea. Some students felt uncomfortable or unsure about this new task presented to them without the teacher providing instruction for every step. Perhaps they were so used to being told what to do and how to do it in school settings that they

had difficulty believing that they could figure things out without direct teacher guidance. Thus, one of the teacher-facilitator practices the teachers adopted was that of giving permission to students to try things on their own.

In the opening vignette, Diana described students who were “looking for approval,” or, in other words, they wanted permission and authorization from Diana that they should move forward with their choice. Rather than telling them which song they should choose, Diana would tell groups that that they had several good choices from which to choose, and, in this way, she was authorizing all of their choices. In one of the PDC meetings, Diana described how another student had asked her a similar question at the beginning of class, saying, “Already there was a girl, first five minutes [who asked], ‘We’ve got these five tunes. Which one do you think we should do?’ It was interesting!” (PDC #7, 03/11/12). She then went on to explain how she had encouraged the student to make the choice on her own.

Cara expressed the value of giving students permission and found that her students had ownership of their musicking that was a direct result of participating in informal music learning activities, as described in the introduction of this research study. Cara said that, by not telling the students exactly how to perform, her students developed a sense of ownership and permission to try new things (PDC #4, 01/29/12). However, although Cara saw the value in giving her students permission, she did not directly acknowledge her role as the one who granted them permission to explore and gave them opportunities to be independent.

Kendra also recognized this concept of giving permission to students, and she commented on this many times throughout the data collection during observations, interviews, and PDC meetings. She described this as a positive aspect of informal music learning:

On the first day, many students would raise their hands and tell me that they didn't know what to do. After being reassured that there was no "wrong way" of playing the song or experimenting, they began to gain confidence in their ability to create. (Kendra, Email, 02/26/12)

Kendra gave permission by telling her students that they could not make a mistake in the activity, and she then observed an increase in her students' level of confidence as a result. After one of my observations with Kendra, she shared that students' uncertainty in informal music learning was one of the biggest problems students encountered in this type of experience, and she told me that the students frequently asked her, "Where do I start?" (Kendra, Observation #1, 02/02/12). When I asked her how she would respond to this question, she said, "You can't be wrong right now." She then shared that she would encourage them to play anything, and then stated, "They need permission to just play around." We then discussed how the students may need permission to explore and be independent because it was in contrast with what students might typically experience throughout the school day (Kendra, Observation #1, 02/02/12).

Hands-off. Often, informal music activities involved a *lack* of input from the teachers as they tried to give up their involvement in the learning processes, placing this pedagogical practice on the end of the teacher scaffolding curriculum. Being hands-off resulted in diminished teacher involvement in students' informal music learning. As described in the previous chapter, the participants felt some concern and guilt as a result of their new teaching role in implementing informal music learning activities, with Diana likening it to "The Emperor's New Clothes" and calling it "anti-teaching" (PDC #7, 03/11/12). Conversely, the participants seemed to recognize the importance of stepping back and letting their students figure things out for themselves, in a

practice I labeled, being “hands-off.” In my observations, I would see them float between groups as they would monitor and check in with the groups to see how they were progressing, but they would not offer direction or tell them how they should be working unless students directly asked for guidance.

In the opening vignette, Diana was clear in her directions to the students about how they would be using computers and working independently. As I stated in my fieldnotes, I found that this statement made her expectations clear for her students and also hinted at her role as being hands-off (Diana, Observation #2, 03/14/12). Similarly, in giving her instructions to sixth graders before they began to work on their a cappella cover songs, Cara told her students, “I’m gonna sorta stay outta this,” and then told them that this was “an opportunity for them to be creative and work together” (Cara, Observation #1, 01/12/12). In this way, Cara also announced her new teaching practice of being hands-off, which set the expectation for her students to figure things out for themselves. In reflecting on giving students more expectations, Diana felt that it caused the students to work together more successfully:

I thought about, too, . . . how when you compare how kids bicker when we’re doing our usual controlled project in groups to this, where it was sort of like the goal was outside.

There was something else outside of themselves that was in charge. And it wasn’t me, and it wasn’t any of them. And they got along better. (Diana, Interview #2, 04/14/12)

In talking about the “outside goal,” Diana recognized that her role in being hands-off resulted in a better working relationship among her students.

In observing Tyler, I found that being hands-off was manifested physically in how he carried himself around the room. As the students worked independently, Tyler walked around

the room monitoring their progress, and, as he walked, he clasped his hands behind his back, as though reminding himself and the students that it was their turn to work independently (Tyler, Observation #1, 04/16/12). He also tried to encourage this independence further by telling his students to ask each other questions before coming to him. He explained his new teaching approach in informal music learning activities, saying, “I’m gonna try my best to just stay back and, if they come to me with a question, to say, ‘Ask three others before you ask me,’ and to really let them guide it all” (Tyler, Interview #2, 04/16/12). With all of the teachers, I saw them give physical cues of encouragement through their body language. As they would listen to students’ performances, they would bob their heads, sway their bodies, or move along to the beat, rather than give verbal critiques. This was a supportive act that conveyed encouragement to the students and also revealed the teachers’ genuine interest in their students’ projects.

Other times, the teachers would describe being hands-off by explaining the way they allowed students to work, sometimes using almost “haphazard” statements (Green, 2008):

- Kendra: “[S]o for the first couple of classes, they just let loose” (PDC #4, 01/29/12),
- Tyler: “I let them have at it” (PDC #2, 12/11/11)
- Cara: “I felt kind of good that the teacher got to step back a bit and let the kids figure it out” (PDC #2, 12/11/11), and
- Kendra: I just gave them the xylophone, and I said, “Just go do it” (PDC #4, 01/29/12).

Tyler described a recorder project in which he was hands-off with his students, and he recognized how little guidance he was providing:

I didn't do much to hardly guide them at all. I let them guide each other, and if they had a question, I'd answer it, but I didn't come around and say, "Okay, let me get you more on task" very often. (PDC #2, 12/11/11)

Here, Tyler points out an important part of being hands-off. The teachers made a choice to let the students work without providing unnecessary input, but they remained available to the students for guidance, support, and encouragement when needed.

Summary of the Continua of Control and Teacher Scaffolding

The teachers used several different types of pedagogical practices when implementing their informal learning activities, which fell along two continua: a continuum of teacher and student control and a continuum of teacher scaffolding. In the continuum of control, the teachers provided more or less freedom to students in their song selections and group memberships. In selecting songs, the teachers sometimes selected songs for students, while other times, they mediated the students' choices by providing a set of pre-approved songs. The teachers provided the most freedom for students when they allowed them to bring in songs of their choice from outside of school. In those situations, the teachers served to monitor whether the songs were school appropriate, negotiate with students when conflicts arose, and encourage students by providing permission. In one case, when Kendra's students wanted permission to create a new song, rather than continue covering the song in their assignment, she allowed them to make that choice.

Similarly, when forming groups, the teachers played a role in how small groups were formed for informal learning activities. In some cases, the teachers exerted more control by choosing the small groups, but they frequently considered things like the students' musical

aptitude and achievement in order to make differentiated groupings. Sometimes the teachers mediated the process of group formation. They allowed students to choose a partner and then they formed groups based on sets of partners, in a way that allowed the students to have some freedom while the teachers still maintained some control. Occasionally, the teachers had to negotiate with students to make sure that all students found a group in which they could be successful, as Diana did with the student ASD.

In the other continuum, the continuum of teacher scaffolding, the participants used a variety of pedagogical practices that ranged from more explicit to more diminished teacher involvement. The pedagogical practices used to provide this teacher scaffolding including providing lyrics and/or notation, modeling examples, giving permission, and being hands-off. By providing lyrics and notation, the teachers tried to speed up or provide structure to students' processes, in the hopes that students would focus on the underlying parts of the pieces they were covering, rather than the melody. Similarly, by modeling representative examples of a cappella covers, the teachers showed students how they could manipulate their voices to perform and layer instrumental parts, which helped the students have clearer expectations for their independent work. Sometimes the students expressed uncertainty or discomfort at having to make all of their own decisions, and the teachers provided support in the form of "giving permission," a unique form of encouragement in which the teachers assured the students that they could figure things out on their own. Other times, the teachers tried to have a more diminished presence in students' processes by being "hands-off" and refraining from providing too much directions or input into the informal music projects.

“Stepping In”: Impediments to Informal Learning

While the teachers adopted many pedagogical practices that, overall, resulted in effective informal activities, they occasionally employed some practices that tended to limit students' success in informal music learning. In particular, the teachers tended to impede informal music learning when they “stepped in” to provide unsolicited comments or tried to exert control over the students' processes that contrasted with the informal music learning characteristics described in readings from the PDC. While “stepping in” to provide feedback to students may be seen as a typical and useful pedagogical strategy in formal instruction, in the informal activities, it seemed to stop the students' flow and progress on their projects.

In one case, two of Tyler's students were working in their groups; these two boys had been designated to play the tubanos and compose a drum part for their rock compositions. The tubano players began doodling the riff of the song, “We Will Rock You” (May, 1977)—a trope I have heard enthusiastically and informally performed by my own students (Tyler, Observation #1, 04/16/12). These two boys had been less focused than other students, and I had earlier seen them lying on the floor next to their tubanos. When I observed them, they were singing the words of the song as they faced each other and beat out the rhythm, and they were performing the piece accurately. At this time, Tyler stepped in and asked them what they were playing, and then he asked them if they had planned to play this pattern for their whole composition. When the students said, “No,” he got down on his knees and began clapping different suggestions they could use, chanting the corresponding rhythm syllables as he clapped. He then told them to write down what they wanted to play on their paper once they had decided. At this point, the

demeanor of the boys changed, as though their doodling had been extinguished.² By interrupting them, Tyler seemed to have the goal of helping them move forward with their composition assignment, but it seemed to remind the boys that this was merely a task that must be completed (Tyler, Observation #1, 04/16/12).

Similarly, Kendra also approached a group of fifth graders who were working to create instrumental covers. She knelt down by the students who were sitting on the floor, and the students asked Kendra whether they could have multiple people playing the same part. Kendra responded by saying, “If you can find a way to tie it in. I’m afraid you will have too much going on all at once” (Kendra, Observation #1, 02/02/12). Rather than encouraging the students to figure this out for themselves, Kendra stepped in to provide an answer and steer them in the direction in which she had originally intended for the assignment, with one person on each part.

Cara stepped in to separate students when a conflict arose in their groups. She described breaking apart a group of students who could not decide which song to perform. She had noticed that students with more formal training had more trouble working with their peers:

I found it really curious that the students that I know are in [a local community choir] or take piano lessons or take guitar lessons seemed to be the ones that were more inflexible, and they wanted it their way. Those were the groups having conflicts. The ones with the kids who were “musicians” [makes quotation marks in the air with her fingers]. . . . The musicians [with private lessons] were always going toward that “Don’t Stop Believing”

²This event reminded me of the concept of Berger and Cooper’s (2003) early childhood study exploring young children’s musical play. In this study, when children’s musical play was interrupted by an adult, they stopped playing, which the authors labeled as “extinguishing play.”

tune, and the others wanted to sing “Firework” and “Grenade.” So I was like, “Fine.”

I’m gonna pull those kids out of the groups and have them do solos. (PDC #3, 01/15/12)

Rather than negotiating with those students, Cara stepped in and separated the students with private lessons from their groups to have them work individually. In doing so, all of the students from those groups missed out on the opportunity to work through their disagreement, as well as contribute musically in the small groups.

In another instance, Diana stepped in to her students’ group to encourage them in picking a song for their a cappella cover. One of the students in the group was new to the school and had told Diana that he like rapping, and she wanted to encourage them to pick a song that had a rap part as a way to include that student: “And I was thinking, ‘Pick something with a rapping part for him’” (PDC #8, 03/25/12). When the group chose a song without a rapping part, she went to the group and suggested a song with a rap part in it: “So I brought them the song, and they were like, ‘No, we’re not gonna do it,’ and I was like (in a half-whisper), ‘Oh, come on!’” (PDC #8, 03/25/12). At this point, Diana decided not to step in any more and let the students continue with their song pick, stating that she was trying to follow the principles of informal music learning: “I wasn’t gonna step in, because I’m not supposed to involve myself.”

Recognizing the “Role Shifts”

Diana: (Answering a question in which I had asked the participants to describe informal music learning in three words.) Well, I had free and improvisatory, but I don’t have a third one. I could say boring.

Julie: (Laughs, thinking that Diana is joking.)

Diana: For me.

Cara: As the teacher.

Diana: No, that sounds bad. Erase that! (Spoken to the camera. Laughter.) No, I don't know if I can find one word, but it's kind of that giving up of control.

Kendra: Yeah!

Cara: Well, your role shifts. And it did, I was kinda walking around going (rolls eyes as though looking for something to do)

Diana: I had coffee! (Laughs.)

Kendra: Yeah, I felt lazy!

Julie: Well, I was talking with [name] and [name] about how classroom teachers can step back and observe while all the students are working, and it's almost like a badge of honor that we don't do that [as music teachers]. That we're working all the time. You know, we never get to sit down for one second with the kids, which is true, and it's in a lot of ways a good thing–

Kendra: But it's also part of the problem! (Laughter.)

Diana: Yes.

Julie: Right!

Diana: And as our schedules get more filled, we need more time, and maybe it's important for us too. Maybe that's when our creative juices will get flowing.

(PDC #8, 03/25/12)

Over the course of the five months of the PDC, the teachers used several different pedagogical practices on the continua of control and teacher scaffolding. Over time, the teachers tended to allow more student freedom, and they also began to find value in their students'

developing musical independence, as described in Chapter 5. However, as they reflected on their teaching in their informal music learning applications, they began to recognize that their teaching practices had changed. In the vignette above, the teachers were discussing how they had noticed a change in their teaching, which Diana described as a change in control. Similarly, Cara stated that in informal music learning, her “role shifts” (PDC #8, 03/25/12). Up until the last PDC, I still felt somewhat unsure about whether the teachers had noticed any change in their teaching—changes I had noticed as an outside observer—but, as they began to reflect with each other and in my final interviews with them, they began articulating these revelations.

The teachers each described changing in unique ways, ranging from having a new respect for popular music in the classroom to trying to talk less, but all centered around an idea of being open-minded toward their students’ interests and ideas. They also shared their definitions of what informal music learning meant for them and how they saw it fit in their classroom, particularly in the balance with their formal instruction. Ultimately, the teachers realized that, through learning about and implementing informal music learning in their classroom, their teaching became more student-centered and democratic.

Becoming Open-Minded

As a result of their applications of informal music learning, the teachers stated that they were becoming more open-minded toward popular music in their classrooms and toward their students’ musical choices. In the different pedagogical practices they employed, particularly in being hands-off and allowing student choice, the teachers were introduced to new musics and musical processes, and, in response, they found themselves accepting all of these discoveries. Diana found that she was more open-minded toward popular music in her classroom. She had

told me previously that popular music was not a part of her teaching persona (Diana, Interview #2, 04/14/12). Also, she was concerned about using popular music, but after letting her students bring in their own choices, her opinions changed:

[It] was funny how the kids, they all knew! It's safe. It's totally clean. So the worry shouldn't be about [whether] they're going to pick a song that. . . is appropriate. And it wasn't just throwing them a bone. . . . I started thinking about why can't we use this music? It made me think, what is our goal? I want kids to sing; I want them to be engaged. I want them be composers and arrangers. When they perform, I want them to be able to critique their own work, and be independent! I mean, that is the goal in the end! So, what difference does it make if they sing American folk songs? Yes, in the early grades, I want them to have a bit of a literature about that. But music today has interesting rhythms and tonalities right there! And they're listening to it. And why not, if that's what they're going to listen to for the rest of their lives, why not teach them how to listen to it better and in a different way? And recreate it? And write their own? (Diana, Interview #2, 04/14/12)

This statement reveals the shift in Diana's thinking. Although she still believed in the value of teaching American folk songs, she began to see a larger goal for her students. She came to recognize that her students might always listen to popular music, and, thus, her role as a teacher could be to give them the skills to be competent musicians with it. She pointed out several characteristics of popular music that had educational value and that she focused on in her teaching. Tyler expressed a similar statement about popular music, saying, "[Y]ou gotta kinda gauge what they want first" (PDC #7, 03/11/12).

Similarly, Cara also described feeling more open toward using popular music in music class:

I feel more open to their music choices. Their listening choices in their own lives, and what they like to play in their own lives. . . . But now, if we can have that dialogue with music and learn from it, why feel guilty about it? There's no reason. I feel like if we all value. . . what we're doing, we're gonna be more productive, it's gonna be more fun. So, yeah, I don't need to feel guilty about that. (Cara, Interview #2, 04/06/12)

While before, Cara had felt guilty about using popular music, she now found that it was something that both she and her students could value, and she was open to all of the ways her students could learn from making their own choices.

In addition to being open to using popular music in their classrooms, the teachers also expressed being open-minded to students' ability to make musical decisions. As Kendra explained:

[I]t's made me more conscious of student choice into my classroom. . . . I think by just starting with that music share day, just that little piece helps students to feel like you're hearing them. Even if you thought that you were before, it's not that much time to give up to let them share. (Kendra, Interview #2, 04/15/12)

Kendra began to feel that, by allowing student choice in her teaching, her students felt more investment in her music class. Diana also talked about being open to musical choices and having respect for students' interests:

I think also teachers should respect the musical choices of students and that they are open to [things]. . . . I think that comes back the other way (gestures toward self), because if I

am respectful of their music, then I think they're a little bit more willing to perform what

I give them. I don't know if it's "my" music, but my choices. (PDC #7, 03/11/12)

Diana likened being open-minded to having respect for student choices. Moreover, she also recognized that, by respecting her students' musical choices, they would be more likely to respect her own, and she broadened her scope to include being open-minded not only to the type of music students preferred, but also to all of their musical choices.

Tyler found that, in order to be open-minded to students' choices, he needed to limit his talking in the classroom. He discovered this after implementing his first informal music learning application in which students created accompaniments to go with their popular song melodies played on the recorder. As he explained:

It just blew my mind! That I need to shut up sometimes! I'm one of those people that if I don't articulate every single line of instructions that [I think] no one's going to get it (Kendra and Cara smile and nod understandingly). And it's my own stupid fault. I realized that I didn't have to give them every single line of instruction (pinches fingers together), they can come up with this stuff on their own, and even better than if I oversimplify it. If I oversimplify things, it gives too much structure. It takes away from their creativity. (PDC #3, 01/15/12)

Toward the end of the PDC, as he reflected on his entire experience in the group, he continued to reflect similar thoughts. "So it's really kinda helped me to be aware that I just really need to shut up more, and that has helped a ton" (PDC #8, 03/25/12). Tyler recognized that, in implementing informal music learning activities, he was required to take a step back and let his students work

without his guidance. In his teacher talk, Tyler wanted to set up every student for success, but he found that, when he was quiet, he was open to his students' true capabilities.

Balance Between Formal and Informal Learning

After seeing the teachers implement informal music learning several times and hearing them find value in that type of learning, I began to wonder how the teachers viewed informal music learning in relationship to their formal teaching. I posed this question in one of the PDC meetings, and this topic came up naturally in several other meetings and discussions. Cara explained how, in stepping back in her role as the teacher, her students could develop greater ownership of their music making:

I believe, with my own fifth and sixth grade students, if they had a really solid foundation in their music education thus far, they would benefit from a strong minority of informal activities. This age group really values learning that they have ownership of. . . . I just want to get out of the way as much as possible. (Cara, Email, 03/10/12)

Some expressed this balance more in the needs of their students, rather than describing the change in their teaching. However, underlying these thoughts was the belief that they need to shift their role and approach their teaching in a new way. As Tyler explained:

Give them the building blocks and the necessary structure, and see if you can give them some time on their own to do something with it, because like in math class, you read something on the board, and then you have to do problem after problem after problem to practice it. So if you're going to teach them something in the classroom, then you've got to give them time to work through it on their own, have ownership of it, which is where the informal music learning comes in, because otherwise they'd be going and doing it and

you don't know [what they have learned], because you wouldn't have a window or an insight into what they're doing in the classroom. That's my opinion, at least. (PDC #6, 02/26/12)

Tyler's connection between math problems and informal music learning revealed how he now saw his role as a teacher to not only provide "building blocks" through formal instruction, but to also facilitate opportunities in which he was more hands-off. As a result of striking this balance, Tyler believed that he would have better insights into his students' musical knowledge and his students would have a greater sense of ownership.

Diana described how she began to see her role shifting so that she was not only providing informal music learning opportunities in large projects, like small group covers. Rather, she began to see how she could incorporate aspects of informal music learning, such as peer teaching, into her everyday role as a teacher.

I've done this before, but when you talk about structuring time for recorder into every class, where the partners review things with each other. I've been thinking about that more, and maybe it's something that isn't a big amount of time. So if you give them the starting note, maybe to give them the building blocks, like you're saying, and then send them off, it's not a huge time-waster, but it should give them the confidence to see that they can work together, and they can do what they want. I think that's pretty powerful, but it's not a big investment of time. It's not using popular music, necessarily, but it could be. (PDC #7, 03/11/12)

Diana began to recognize how she could modify her teaching in small ways to provide more opportunities for student independence. She recognized that she as the teacher could change her practice without sacrificing much valuable class time.

Towards a Democratic Classroom

Ultimately, as a result of teachers' applications of informal music learning and the changes in their teaching practice to include more teacher-mediated and teacher-facilitated roles, the teachers began to see their classrooms as becoming more student-centered and democratic. Some of these realizations happened when teachers defined informal music learning in their own words, as Cara explained here:

I would define informal music learning as student-directed, versus teacher-directed. It's sort of a creative approach to music learning, students use methods to create and compose. It's a little bit self-directed. They're responsible to pick they're own stuff. They're responsible for the product themselves, and the teacher just sort of steps back and lets them do that. (Cara, Interview #2, 04/06/12)

Cara acknowledged that, through informal music learning, she let her students take control of their learning, specifically the repertoire they chose and the product they created. Diana defined informal music learning similarly, but also felt that her understanding had changed over time:

I would say for me that this [my definition] has changed since the beginning. . . . Now I think it's about students really [being] in charge and making all the decisions about where to start and not being influenced by adults. Whereas before, it [informal music learning] was about how they would learn, like in their bedroom when nobody else was around.

But I was thinking about it in school now. Before, I wasn't thinking about it in school.

(Diana, Interview #2, 04/14/12)

Like Cara, Diana also identified informal music learning as something in which she allowed her students more control. She also noticed a shift in her thinking by acknowledging how informal music learning had a place in school, in her classroom, rather than something students just did on their own. Similarly, Tyler felt that informal music learning involved letting students be in control of their music learning, but he also more directly identified his role in scaffolding the process:

I would say informal music learning, after everything we've gone through, I'd say, it's giving students the tools and letting them build the structure themselves. Letting them teach themselves based on the knowledge that they know. So, informal music learning would be [like if] I give them a very simple instruction, they figure out how to do it themselves. (Tyler, Interview #2, 04/16/12)

Cara noticed that making this change is not always easy for teachers to make, but that can also be valuable for the students to see:

Teachers need to be able to let go of some control and an openness to experiment along with their students. I believe that teachers can guide their students even if they are a little uncomfortable with the process. Students appreciate when their teachers seem human and appear to learn along with the students. (Cara, Email, 03/10/12)

Cara believed that teachers needed to be open and willing to make mistakes or try new things with their students. She then called upon teachers to have the role of a "guide" rather than an

instructor, which more closely resembles the teacher-facilitated practices she demonstrated in her implementation of informal music learning practices.

At other times, the teachers made more specific connections between their teaching in informal music learning and having a more democratic classroom. In some cases, they now found that using informal music learning made their classrooms more democratic, even though they had already presumed their classrooms to be so. As Kendra stated, “I’ve always considered my classroom to be democratic and that I give my students choice, but they’re all choices that I picked ahead of time. It’s like, look at me [I’m being so democratic], but really it’s not” (PDC #8, 03/25/12).

Just as she felt that having respect for student choices would lead students to have more respect for their choices as teachers, Diana also recognized that this reciprocal relationship supported a democratic classroom:

I think all of the stuff we’re doing. . .[is] about having a more democratic classroom. I think overall that it shows them that we’re willing to let that music into class, and that we’re interested. When they—they obviously know that we value it when we play that music from home, so we’re making that connection, too. A collaborative learning environment! (PDC #4, 01/29/12)

The teachers realized that, in becoming more student-centered and democratic in their applications of informal music learning, they hoped to make deeper connections with their students. For Cara, she hoped that involved sharing her passion about music and helping her students to feel that, too:

I wish that my students could see and understand how I got to where I am and why I chose to do what I do. So that they could understand a little bit about the passion I have for what I do. So it's not so me-driven. So I think that this is a way for them to feel that a little bit. It's more them-driven, so they can bring that to that space, and maybe it will help build community. (PDC #4, 01/29/12)

In one final comment, one of the participants shared his/her perspective on the student-centered nature of informal music learning in an anonymously written note at the last PDC:

I think one of the biggest impacts the group had is. . . allowing the process (particularly in upper elementary) to become more student-led. Student interest helped drive the teaching process. I looked at my teaching in a different way—knowing the skills and concepts I wanted to teach, but using student interest and choice to be the vehicle through which I teach those skills and concepts. It requires me to be more creative and flexible, but the students were so engaged, it is well worth it. (Anonymous, 03/25/12)

Although I do not know who shared this comment, it seemed to sum up how all of the teachers felt regarding the change in their teaching. In implementing informal music learning in their classrooms and realizing the change in their teaching that resulted, the teachers also saw how their classrooms became more student-centered and democratic, and, thus, how their students could blossom because of it.

Summary

In implementing informal music learning, the teachers used a variety of pedagogical practices, which fell into two types of continua: a continuum of control between teachers and

students and a continuum of teacher scaffolding. In the continuum of control, the teachers ranged in their responses from having more control as teachers, to giving up control to allow students the freedom to make their own choices in their song selections and group membership. By selecting songs and choosing student groups, the teachers sometimes exerted greater control over the informal projects by choosing songs or small groups for the students. As a result, they took away some of the “informal-ness” of these activities in order to help the teachers feel as though they were providing a learning environment they felt was appropriate. Other times, the teachers mediated the students’ choices by providing students with some amount of choice in their songs and peer groupings. Toward the end of the data collection period, however, the teachers began to let the students have control over which songs they selected, as well as control over the size and membership of their small groups.

In the continuum of teacher scaffolding, the teachers demonstrated a variety of activities that ranged from more explicit to more diminished teacher involvement, including the following: providing lyrics and/or notation, modeling representative examples of songs and performing techniques, giving students “permission” to make their own decisions, and being hands-off while students worked. As the teachers used these different types of teacher scaffolding, they were able to provide an expanding zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) in which students could work independently and successfully with little to no teacher guidance.

While the majority of the teachers’ pedagogical practices supported students’ learning in informal activities in the classroom, the teachers occasionally “stepped in” and disrupted the flow of the students’ processes. This occurred when the teachers would provide unsolicited commentary on the students’ processes, interrupted their doodling, or tried to convince students

to pick a particular song. The teachers always approached these situations with good intentions, but in these few examples, did not help the students in their informal music learning projects.

Ultimately, the teachers found that, through the new pedagogical practices that they had embraced in implementing informal music learning, their teaching was more student-centered and democratic. They found themselves focusing more on what their students wanted to learn and found ways to incorporate that into their teaching. In providing students with the opportunity to make their own musical decisions, the students felt more valued and respected, which the teachers believed was reciprocated back toward them and the objectives they needed to teach in formal instruction. Finally, just as Cara expressed that she hoped informal music learning showed students more of her passion for music, through informal music learning, the participants' teaching seemed to become less about achieving standards or completing objectives, but exemplified a renewed focus on teaching *children* about something they loved: music.

CHAPTER 7: NEW WINDOWS INTO STUDENTS' MUSICIANSHIP

As a result of providing informal music learning opportunities to their students, the teachers were able to step back and observe their students' musicking in new ways, and, thus, they experienced new windows into their students' musicianship. This chapter provides further evidence in support of the more student-centered, democratic environment that the teachers developed through implementing informal music learning activities. If the teachers had not been providing a more democratic classroom environment resulting from the informal music learning activities and their new pedagogical practices, they would not likely have shared all of these new insights into their students' musicianship.

While Chapter 5 described how the teachers viewed and valued informal music learning and Chapter 6 explored their teaching practices, this chapter reveals the observations the teachers made about their students as a result of implementing informal music learning. This chapter is divided into three main sections, starting with "*Messy Processes*," a section on the descriptions the teachers made about students' unstructured processes in informal music learning, followed by "*Finding the Unexpected*," describing the surprising characteristics teachers discovered about their students as individuals. Finally, in "*Exceeding My Expectations*," the teachers found that their students' participation and success in informal music learning exceeded the expectations they had previously had for their students in these activities. Also, the teachers were thrilled when students began taking their informal music learning projects beyond the music classroom to work on them at home.

“Messy” Processes

In their informal music learning activities, the teachers observed new insights in regards to students’ musical processes, which they often described as “messy” because they did not necessarily follow a sequence or logical steps. While in Chapter 5, the teachers described the “experiments,” or applications they developed to implement informal music learning, the processes described here concern those the teachers observed in letting students make music independently. The teachers described informal processes in which students interacted with and critiqued each other in small groups and made their own musical choices, and they described how the students figured out multiple parts and harmonies as they put together their pieces. Ultimately, the teachers viewed these processes and products as valuable windows into students’ learning that they may not have seen apart from these informal music experiences.

The teachers recognized that the learning processes students were using in informal music learning activities did not follow the more structured, systematic learning theories in which the teachers had been trained. In describing these processes, the teachers sometimes reflected on the students’ processes more generically, which are presented first in this section. Other times, the teachers reflected on the doodling (Jaffurs, 2006) used by the students or the students’ peer critiques and peer teaching.

General Observations

When I asked Kendra to tell me what she thought other teachers needed to know about informal music learning, she shared that music teachers need to accept that students’ learning processes will be different, and in her words, “messy”:

Teachers definitely need to understand the process students will go through when making music informally. They need to know that it can be messy, it might be noisy, but that something productive WILL come out of it at the end. (Kendra, email, 02/26/12)

Kendra seemed to want to reassure other music teachers that the students will be able to come up with a musical product, even if the process they take to get there is not direct and looks chaotic, which was a concern she felt herself when she began to implement informal music learning.

Throughout the PDC, the teachers both directly and indirectly commented on the “messiness” of students’ work in informal music learning, and, when I observed in the classrooms, I experienced a similar reaction.

Although the teachers felt some discomfort at the messiness of students’ processes, they also realized how it was important for the students to experience these challenges and work out the solution for themselves, as they discussed in one of the PDC meetings:

Kendra: It’s important that she could outline the process that they go through. Sometimes we forget that that’s the process that they have to go through, and they have to come to that, you know. Like those things you just assume—

Diana: Right, it seems so obvious.

Kendra: —and you go back and it’s like, no, they all need to realize this before moving on.

It’s just funny how that happens. (PDC #2, 12/11/11)

In addition to accepting the indirect way in which the students were learning how to cover their songs in informal music learning, Tyler connected personally to his students’ process:

I’ve always found that if you figured it out yourself, you’re X times more likely to retain that information and use it in the future than if you say, had to regurgitate stuff given to

you by a teacher. Then you forget it later, because you didn't construct any meaning to it.

(PDC #2, 12/11/11)

Thus, for Tyler, he recognized that, in his own learning, he needed to construct his own meaning by figuring things out for himself or else he did not have as much retention of the information.

While he was referring primarily to his own experience, he made this comment in the PDC as a part of the discussion of students' learning processes, which suggests that he had made this connection in regards to his own students.

Doodling

The participants first read about "doodling" in Jaffurs' (2006) article describing her ethnographic study of a middle school garage band, of which her current and former students were members. Jaffurs defined "doodling" as the unplanned musical motives that musicians made spontaneously throughout their rehearsals that did not necessarily have any connections with the planned material. The participants quickly responded to this idea and began to comment on the doodling that they observed from their students. Kendra explained how she used the article to explain and accept the doodling she observed from her own students:

Yeah, if we wouldn't have just read the article about the musical doodling (laughter from group), I would've been like (sits up and spreads arms wide dramatically with big open eyes), "Ahh! You're not playing the right part!" (More laughter.) So that's just still really hard for me, but I think I'm getting a feel for about how long they need. And then saying, "Okay now you need to start putting it together (interlaces fingers). (PDC #4, 01/29/12)

Diana questioned whether the doodling she observed qualified as improvisation, as though trying to make sense of what she was observing in her students. Ultimately, though, she decided that doodling was better classified as exploration, referring to a prior study she had read by Kratus (1995)³ about children's creative processes. As she said, "But the rest of it, I don't think it was improvising, I think it was trying to recreate something. . . . Unless you could say while they were doodling, but even that we would call doodling exploration, not improvisation" (PDC #6, 02/26/12). Similarly, in describing his students' work on the first day of their rock-n-roll compositions, Tyler described how he only expected for the day to be "mostly about exploration" (Tyler, Observation #1, 04/16/12). In my fieldnotes, I also noted how Tyler seemed accepting of this, and that he seemed to view this as part of students' natural learning process. Although, in the quote above, Tyler did not refer to the word, "doodling" specifically, he seemed to imply the same idea.

In one PDC conversation, the teachers discussed their observations of doodling in greater detail. The discussion began with Kendra observing how one student figured out how to play a small motive from the song, "Dynamite," in octaves on the barred instruments, and then several other students from different groups began playing the same riff, as though they had picked it up from each other:

Kendra: I would find that I would hear something and that would catch on. I don't know—

³Diana never specified the article by Kratus to which she was referring, and since Kratus has written many articles on children's musical creativity, I am unable to determine the exact reference. However, based on the content of Diana's comments, she was possibly referring to Kratus's article on a developmental process for musical improvisation (1995).

Julie: Actually, I noticed that in your classes!

Kendra: The octaves. (Singing a motive from “Dynamite.”) “Dun-dun dun dun dun.”

They all started doing that.

Julie: They did!

Kendra: It was weird how a couple of different parts of that song, where they would start, like, I don’t know if that was a negative, having that close proximity and not having their own space, but—

Julie: That’s probably a positive!

Diana: Yeah, they’re learning from each other. (PDC #7, 03/11/12)

Kendra attributed this phenomenon of students’ copying each other’s doodling to the close proximity in which the groups were placed in her small classroom. At first, she did not seem sure as to whether this type of doodling was good or bad, but Diana and I assured her how valuable it was that the students were learning from each other.

Eventually, the teachers began to see the place of doodling within the larger context of implementing informal music learning. In reflecting on what skills other teachers would need to have in implementing informal music learning, Tyler referred to the way in which he believed teachers should respond to doodling by having a calm demeanor.

. . .[H]aving a calming characteristic would be another great thing when you’re implementing it, because you know. . . they were all exploring, and had anyone else come into the room and looked, they would’ve seen nothing’s on paper; it seems like they’re just playing around on the instruments. . . But I know that starting tomorrow, the first class will probably have that first line [figured out]. . . So you’ve kinda just got to be able

to relax, and know that even though it seems chaotic, something will come out of nothing. (Tyler, Interview #2, 04/16/12)

As I described in Chapter 5, the teachers felt concerned about how others would respond if they saw the unstructured productivity in informal music learning, Tyler's statement reveals how he had come to accept the doodling as part of students' process, and he went further to suggest how teachers should respond in that situation.

Finally, Kendra and Diana reflected on the concept of doodling, and then considered many of its benefits, which led to the following exchange:

Kendra: [I was] just thinking about the time that students take when they're messing around in their groups and not getting anything accomplished, and that's probably when they're constructing their ideas.

Diana: I heard that, and I was thinking about my life—

Kendra: Yeah!

Diana: —and how I'm supposed to be creative all the time, but I'm so busy I hardly have any time, just down time, for myself, but I totally see how that relates to the students.

Kendra: And I was thinking that, too, when they're wanting to take it home and work on it. That's huge, because they can come back to it and brainstorm during the evening.

You know, that's a big thing! That's a big thing. (PDC #8, 03/25/12)

While Kendra appreciated how students' doodling in class may encourage them to continue the learning process outside of music class, Diana began to reflect on doodling in relationship to her own creativity. Diana's statement shows how she connected having time for doodling in informal music learning as something that aids in creative thought, which was something she

longed to have more of in her own life. Thus, over time, the teachers became more accepting of the doodling they observed in their students. While at first, they felt more concern at what they viewed as students being unproductive, they began to see how they could respond to the doodling as teachers, accept it as a valuable part of the process, and even see a need for similar opportunities in their own lives.

Peer Critiques and Peer Teaching

The majority of the informal music learning activities that the teachers developed required that the students work in groups. Typically, the groups included three to five students, but, in some cases, the groups included up to 10 individuals. Within these groups, the students frequently provided peer critiques of their interactions and their progress in completing a their informal music projects. They also worked together, peer teaching each other to ensure that everyone in their groups learned a part.

Peer critiques. In Chapter 6, I described how one end of the continuum of teacher and student control included the teachers' negotiating with the students when they disagreed in making their song choice and group choice. In other instances, the teachers described some of these moments in the PDC, revealing how they were monitoring the students as they worked out disagreements among themselves. Cara explained the disagreements among some of her students:

The groups took a while to pick their songs. So that first day way a lot of conflict within the groups. I noticed some fighting [and] tears, but I told them I was not going to solve their problems for them. (PDC #5, 02/12/12)

Cara seemed frustrated when she shared this story with the group, but she had come to the conclusion on her own to have her students work through their disagreements independently.

Similarly, Diana observed a disagreement among her students, which she shared with the PDC. Diana described an instance in which, toward the end of a particular informal music learning activity, she noticed one girl was not participating very much with her group, even though she had been a leader within the group earlier. Diana believed that there were two factors contributing to the shift in the girl's participation. First, Diana explained that the girl had wanted to play a part on the metallophone, but the other group members did not like that timbre for the part she wanted to play. Then, Diana stated her belief that the girl had been somewhat bossy in sharing her ideas, leading the group to "shut her down" (PDC #4, 01/29/12).

In this situation, as well as throughout the data collection period, the teachers felt sympathetic toward students who seemed left out in the peer groups, and it seemed as though the teachers felt some sort of responsibility to make sure that everyone felt safe in their classrooms. However, they also began to feel that some of the negative student interactions were simply the students' learning how to critique each other. In my final observation, Diana told me about some of the surprising comments she heard students telling each other, implying that they were being rather hard on each other (Diana, Observation #3, 03/23/12). However, she then said, "I was not as upset as I would have been," about the students' critiques as she would have been in a formal learning activity. "If I had been more controlling" in this activity, she explained, she would have more concerned about the students' behavior to each other. We then discussed how, since this was the students' project, these types of critiques and interactions were an important part of their informal learning process.

Peer teaching. The teachers observed several instances in which the students used peer teaching in order to figure out their parts in the songs they were covering. Cara put it simply when she observed, “They learn extremely well from each other” (Cara, Email, 03/10/12). Tyler, in explaining how he had learned to limit his teacher talk in informal music learning, revealed how he trusted in his students’ peer teaching, even though he was providing less structure.

So it really has made me more aware that I need to give the instructions, trust that I did them okay, and if everyone crashes and burns, then I know what I did wrong with the instructions and how to fix that in the future. But as long as one student got it, they can help the other students in the group to do it. (Tyler, Interview #2, 04/16/12)

Kendra described an instance in which one of her students was motivated to learn “Dynamite” on her recorder. This student explained to Kendra that she had called her friend on the phone, and then friend had described how to play the song one note at a time. As Kendra told the story: “I had the one girl talking to the other girl over the phone. There’s such a determination to get it done! It was the whole concept of ‘flow’” (PDC #7, 03/11/12). As she shared this story, Kendra sounded genuinely impressed in her students’ motivation to teach and learn from each other, and that their enthusiasm extended outside of the classroom. Kendra then reflected on how this example of motivation from these two girls could be applied more generally in her classroom. She shared that informal music learning activities could be used to at “humps” or learning challenges for students “that are going to be bumps in the road” (PDC #7, 03/11/12).

In addition to teaching each other, the students also would share in the performance of different parts with each other, even with peers who had lower levels of musical achievement.

Some examples of this can be seen in the section on students with special needs, such as when the student with ASD was encouraged by his group members to add a beat boxing part to a song, even though that was not originally found in the song. In another case, Diana compared what she had observed in students' peer interactions in their small group work with the descriptions from readings within the PDC and noticed several similarities:

I thought it was interesting [in the reading] when they talked about the different ability levels, and how when the kids felt like they had more ability, they felt like they had more responsibility, to the group. You know, we're supposed to differentiate instruction, and make sure that every level is covered, and they sort of had that little differentiation rule covered. It was all in their own decision in the group. (PDC #4, 01/29/12)

While Diana had worried that students would not include the kind of differentiated instruction that she typically included in her teaching, she found that her students were figuring this out on their own in their small group work.

Later on, Diana shared an actual example of this from her class in the PDC (PDC #8, 03/25/12). She was showing videos of small group, a cappella cover songs that her students had performed. One group included four boys, and, in of them, one boy emerged as the clear leader. He performed both with accuracy and a natural stage presence that impressed all of the teachers in the PDC. In their performance, the boys staged themselves so the charismatic performer and another boy stood in front to perform the lead, and the two "background" beat boxers stood in the back. At one point during the video, the second lead performer was supposed to take over. When he missed a beat, the charismatic student gave him a look, waved his hand, and said, "Come on" to his partner. The boy then started on his own part. Although he made a few

mistakes, he seemed to be fairly accurate in his part, but not as confident as his peer. After watching the video, the teachers discussed this interaction between the boys:

Cara: It's funny, because he was like, "Come on!" (to the other kid on the video)

Diana: But [names the charismatic student] told me later that that plan wasn't for him [the other lead performer] to take the melody. I don't know if he just made that up in the middle, and if he had just taken over the melody in that part. I also know that he could've just done that whole melody by himself. They could've let him be the only singer. I thought it was interesting that they shared the limelight. (PDC #8, 03/25/12)

Thus, Diana noticed the students' willingness to share parts amongst each other, even in situations in which other students might be better at a part. Overall, the teachers found that, in their peer interactions, the students taught each other, spoke frankly about each other's work, and differentiated musical parts according to their abilities. Seeing the students interact in this way revealed new windows into students' peer teaching and peer critiques. While the teachers had to monitor to ensure that students were interacting appropriately, the teachers were impressed with the ways in which, overall, students helped and supported each other on their own.

Peering In the Windows

In reflecting on the students' experiences in informal music learning, the teachers recognized the unique opportunity that they had to peer into students' musical processes. The teachers seemed to view the students' musical processes as a window into all the students had learned in music class. Kendra described how the observations she made of her students in informal music activities showed how much her students had learned as a result of having her as their music teacher for multiple years. "I really liked doing it with the fifth graders, because I

did feel it was like a culmination of everything they've learned" (Kendra, Interview, #2, 04/06/12) Kendra then went on to explain how she could see how the students she had taught for multiple years were more successful in informal music learning activities than new students whom she had not taught before this year. She said that comparing these students was a way she could "measure" her teaching effectiveness.

Tyler described how observing his students during the informal music learning activities had made it easier to understand his students, particularly after another teacher suggested that informal music learning made it difficult to "gauge the learning process." As he explained:

I don't know if I necessarily agree with that idea about it being more difficult to gauge the learning process. Because when I did the one [activity] in the videos where I had the students improvise and come with something together, I had students who barely ever wanted to participate on their own, and during LSA's [Learning Sequence Activities]⁴ would hardly use their singing voices or anything. I had students really shine through, and they were using beat competency, and they were singing with their groups, and they were demonstrating what they wanted and the other one would play it. It actually gave me more of a musical window into their music making because I could see more of where they were going. (PDC #6, 02/26/12)

Thus, for Tyler, stepping back and allowing his students to work independently in informal music learning showed him musical skills and served as another way to assess his students' musical achievements, especially for students who did not exhibit their skills in formal pattern instruction

⁴LSAs are a type of activity used as a part of the Music Learning Theory methodology. Teachers use LSAs to provide an intense, isolated focus on differentiated tonal and rhythm patterns found in music and to individually assess students' musical achievement.

during LSAs. Had he not been providing this type of student-centered, informal activity, those students may never have had the same motivation to demonstrate those musical skills in class, which is why he viewed this activity as a window revealing what his students could do. Kendra also shared a similar statement, saying, “I still felt blown away, though, when I watched that first group. . . . [T]he fact that you could listen to it. I think that’s the best window into where they’re at” (PDC #8, 03/25/12).

Diana stated that observing her students work on these popular songs was “educational for my students and for me” (Diana, Interview #2, 04/14/12). She then described how her students were making new connections and engaging in a more complex way of thinking as a result of the informal music learning activities when they were creating an accompaniment for a choir piece. Finally, Tyler recognized that the observations he made in students’ processes and products were a valuable source of information for him as the teacher. In describing what informal music learning meant to him, he said that it was:

[I]nsightful. . . , because, as the teacher, we see the music-making that we maybe never would have thought would have been there. . . This gave us the chance to see what they were doing, what they were thinking, how they put it together and all that. (PDC #8, 03/25/12)

Tyler observed that informal music learning activities, in which students worked independently, provided a window into what students could do musically. Overall, the observations made by the teachers regarding their students’ processes and products in informal music learning further demonstrated the changes in their teaching and how they not only discussed informal music learning in the PDC, but put it into practice in their classrooms.

Finding the Unexpected

The teachers not only discovered new windows about the students' learning processes in informal music learning, but they also found unexpected insights into their students as individuals, particularly by learning what music the students listened to on their own and discovering those who emerged as leaders and performers. At the beginning of the study, I asked the teachers what they knew about their students' musical backgrounds and interests. In general, the teachers seemed to know little, beyond the genres and local radio stations to which they presumed the students had exposure. As Diana stated,

I'm really limited to what they share with me, or what accidentally I find out. Sometimes it's at Music Share Day, or I find out on the[ir] way out [of the classroom], they might tell me something about their [music making]. Or the older students who have more independence as they walk through the school will sometimes stop by and tell me a song that they're playing or play a song on the piano for me. (Diana, Interview #1, 12/01/11)

The other teachers expressed similar statements and said that, while they knew which of their students took private music lessons outside of school, they had little awareness of the musicking their students took part in on their own.

However, after implementing informal music learning activities, the teachers expressed their new-found knowledge about their students as a benefit of this approach. Diana explained how she now felt that knowing what students enjoyed listening to was a way to build a respectful relationship with her students:

I think if you close yourself down to anything that they come to you with, you're gonna break that respect barrier, and it's all about being respectful. I can think of some people,

some music teachers who might not be able to do that, and it doesn't hurt to listen to the radio and know what they are listening to. I think the Music Share Day was one way of opening up what they are listening to, and I thought it was so interesting, they all could pick their own song and there was no repeat. (Diana, Interview #2, 04/14/12)

After completing Music Share Day with their students, for which the students chose the songs they wanted to perform that had been learned outside of school, the teachers began to learn valuable insights about what their students liked to listen to and perform, as well as the format in which they typically listened to music. Kendra was surprised to discover, as a result of doing Music Share Day, that her students primarily listened to music through YouTube, rather than by listening to CDs, mp3s, or the radio (see Chapter 5). She continued to reflect on this new knowledge, saying that it made her more aware of her students' preferences, "That was really big. And I kind of felt like that opened the door to other musical activities that we did" (Kendra, Interview #2, 04/15/12).

In a discussion in the PDC, the teachers expressed their surprise at how many of their students were influenced musically by television shows and commercials. The discussion began with Cara sharing that her students performed television jingles during Music Share Day. "I found a lot of my kids were doing a lot of things from t.v. commercials. Did you notice that?" (PDC #2, 12/11/11). The teachers all agreed and then began naming several different television shows, commercials, and YouTube videos that were common among their students, which they shared with both surprise and amusement at their students' choices.

Unexpected Leaders and Performers

Over time, the teachers began to describe students who had previously shown little interest or participation in formal music activities but were emerging as skilled performers or leaders in their groups for the informal music learning. As Cara stated, “I feel just a little bit more aware of where my students are coming from” (PDC #8, 03/25/12). For Music Share Day, Diana and Kendra both shared their surprise in the performances of two boys who had chosen the same song:

Diana: I found that, like, little, meek kids that barely sang stood up and sang solos.

Julie: Wow!

Diana: This one sixth grade boy did a Bruno Mars piece, unaccompanied. Perfect pitch; hit the high notes. It was really well done.

Kendra: Which one did he sing? I had a little boy do a Bruno Mars song. I never really—I looked back on his singing assessment. He’s really high this fall, but then last year [he wasn’t]. I do a one through five [singing rating] scale. I was just looking, and he was, like, a one or a two. So, I don’t know what clicked, but he just belted it out, and it was really cool to see.

Julie: That’s cool!

Kendra: I was like, “Oh, that’s really awesome! Where did you find your singing voice?” (PDC #2, 12/11/11)

Both of these students had, for unknown reasons, not made an impression on their music teachers as skilled singers, yet ended up showing their singing abilities through the same pop song. In particular, Kendra even went back to review her previous singing assessment, finding that she

had rated that student with low scores in the previous year. Diana, though, attributed this new insight to the Music Share Day activity, by recognizing that it encouraged students who normally did not seek attention in typical classroom activities to perform.

After doing the instrumental and vocal covers, the teachers described students who had previously been more reserved in their participation taking on leadership roles. More than the other teachers in the PDC, Diana shared many individual observations of students, stating that she enjoyed “seeing the kids take on different roles” (Diana, Observation #1, 01/12/12), and these her new insights may have been a result of the new student-centered practices she was employing. It is also possible, since this was only her second year in this school building, that Diana was still learning about her students. Regardless, Diana noticed several students who had unexpectedly emerged in their groups as leaders, which she described below:

I thought it was interesting the different groups [that formed]. Kids that normally don’t kinda blend—they’re not active participants, or maybe think they don’t make music so much, those were the ones that kind of stood out. There was this one girl. I didn’t get her on video, but she’s not a singer. She’s a real tom boy, and she went home and learned the whole rapping section of “Stereo Hearts,” and had it memorized, and pretty much blew the whole class away. She was teamed with this cheerleader-type girl. I really thought that the cheerleader-type girl was gonna be the leader, and that she was gonna kinda like half-heartedly participate. And it was actually the other way around. (PDC #4, 01/29/12)

After watching a video of a small group from Diana’s class performing an instrumental cover of a popular song, Diana described a group of two boys and two girls. When the two boys were absent during one of the days of the project, the two girls took control of the group’s

arrangement. Diana described her impression of a new student, who had been somewhat reserved prior to participating in making a small group cover song, saying, “She is so shy. She is such a nice girl, but she never—I was shocked that she was singing out. This girl moved here from Haiti just a year ago, so she also, is an unexpected [singer]” (PDC #4, 01/29/12). In general, Diana felt that many unexpected singers and leaders emerged in the informal music learning activities, saying that “some of my kids that are normally more outgoing took a back seat, and the ones that normally aren’t came forward” (PDC #6, 02/26/12).

Diana also felt surprised at some of the choices students made in their group membership, particularly in regards to gender. Diana commented that many groups were mixed gender in her classroom, and, in those groups, there would frequently be a group of all boys with only one girl, or vice versa. When I came to observe her classroom, she pointed this out to me, and I, too, was surprised by the students’ group choices. As she explained, “I never, never would have seen that coming. . . . I mean, you never put one girl with a group. You’d always put a second girl” (Diana, Interview #2, 04/14/12). When sharing this revelation with the PDC, she reflected on how this mirrored many popular music ensembles the students may have seen, saying, “That’s how a lot of bands are!” (PDC #8, 03/25/12); the other group members agreed.

Adding Parts and Harmonies

The teachers commented most frequently when students added multiple layers of parts or complex rhythms and harmonies. While in their formal instruction, the teachers had given other creative assignments in which their students composed or improvised; however, in these informal music learning activities, the teachers were observing whether the students could hear, copy, or create these without guidance. Because the teachers viewed this as both an important part of

activities, like the small group cover songs and the rock composition, and also a skill they wanted their students to develop, they were thrilled when students figured this out independently.

Frequently, these discussions sprung up in the PDC when the teachers showed videos of their students' performances. Tyler was the first teacher to bring in videos of his students, which occurred in the third PDC meeting. He brought in three video clips after he had his students create instrumental accompaniments to go with melodies of popular songs the students had played on the recorder. As he played the examples, Tyler began providing his own commentary on the performances, like, "What I love about that one is that even though all three of them were kind of going to their own beat, they stuck to it. None of them got messed up, and it ended up fitting [together]" (PDC #3, 01/15/12). While playing two other video clips, Tyler excitedly stated how he was impressed with many other qualities of the students' musical performances, including syncopation, consistent steady beat, use of melodic ostinato patterns, and even a countermelody. Tyler's enthusiasm about his students' musical products in these video clips was nearly tangible and seemed to be a motivating factor for other teachers in the PDC to try out informal music learning in their own classrooms.

Other teachers in the PDC observed that some students had successfully put together multiple parts. This did not happen in all of the groups, though, and when the students did not pick out multiple parts, the teachers were disappointed but felt as though the students would find these parts in time. As Kendra stated, "So I want to do it one more time to see if they can come up, instead of all playing the melodic rhythm on the xylophone to see if they start to pick up the other parts" (PDC #4, 01/29/12).

Even when the students were not perfectly accurate in their attempts, the teachers continued to remark on students' achievements. For the teachers, even an attempt to recreate multiple parts independently was a sign of more complex musical thinking. After showing a video of a small group instrumental cover of "Dynamite," Kendra remarked that the students' multiple parts were "interesting." However, she questioned whether this product was accidental, saying:

They were spending so much time figuring it out that, I don't know if they were just trying to figure it out and just naturally started trying to make up something that sounded like it? So I don't know if they were trying or if it was a natural. (PDC #5, 02/12/12)

Cara compared the musical products of her students' fifth-grade instrumental covers and sixth-grade vocal covers, finding her sixth-grade students to be more successful.

The difference with the sixth graders is that they were able to mimic a lot more of the different parts than the fifth graders were, because they were just able to do it with their voice and copy it, versus having to copy it and figure out the notes were [on the instruments]. So, the fifth graders might have done a lot more with the melodic rhythm and all that kind of stuff, while the sixth graders were actually singing the harmonies.

(PDC #5, 02/12/12)

Many of the teachers agreed with this idea and found that, when covering pop songs, the students were able to figure out more of the parts with their voices than they were with the classroom instruments. This may be a result of the amount of technical ability these students had on the classroom instruments; perhaps these students needed more practice and experience in playing these instruments in order to copy popular songs with success. Another possibility may have

been the timbral differences between the classroom instruments and the sounds heard on their popular music recording. It may have simply been easier for the students to recreate the sounds from the popular songs by manipulating their voices, rather than by trying to play those parts. However, whenever a student or group of students were able to include multiple parts or harmonies in their final products, the teachers responded enthusiastically.

Overall, the teachers took note of various characteristics of students' informal learning processes, especially as they differed from what the teachers were accustomed to seeing during formal learning activities. Specifically, the teachers observed the students' doodling and recognized its role in helping students learn their parts, and they noticed the peer teaching and peer critiques that took place among students in their small groups. The students taught each other, differentiated and shared parts according to their various interests and abilities, and they provided critical feedback as they worked on their informal music learning projects. The teachers also celebrated when students were able to figure out multiple parts and harmonies on their own. Thus, even though the teachers viewed the students' processes as "messy," they gained many new insights in how their students could make music independently.

"Exceeded My Expectations"

As the teachers learned more about their students, the students began to reveal ways in which they exceeded the teacher's expectations, made music outside of school, and demonstrated ownership over their musicking in school. The teachers found that examples like this, along with many other revelations about the students' participation in- and outside of music class, exceeded their expectations for both students' behaviors and musical achievements. When implementing

informal music learning activities, the teachers seemed to have trouble knowing what to expect. While they did not express low expectations prior to including these activities, the teachers had expressed several concerns in wondering how their students would participate (see Chapter 5). By the end of the data collection period, however, the teachers began to express how the students achieved much more than had anticipated. “[T]hey sort of exceeded my expectations with it!” (Cara, Interview #2, 04/06/12).

Beyond the Music Room

The teachers described several instances in which the students worked on the songs from their informal music learning activities outside of music class. While the teachers never said so directly, they implied that this was a new phenomenon, and that, normally, their students did not seem to practice outside of music class. Diana described an instance in which one group had arrived at music class with their lyric sheets, fully prepared for their small group cover:

They were excited about it. That first group I played [I played the video clip for]. . . , they all came in with their lyrics sheet (hold hands out in front like she’s carrying the lyrics). Everyone had a printed out sheet. One of the other groups asked my student teacher if it was okay that they practiced outside of the classroom. They thought it was cheating! (Laughter from group.) (PDC #8, 03/25/12)

While the group members all laughed, because the comment was funny, in another respect, the comment was rather revealing. The teachers were beginning to recognize that the motivation and engagement that they had observed from their students in working on these informal music learning projects in music class was beginning to extend beyond the music room.

Kendra shared another example in which the students had worked on their piece from an informal music learning activity outside of school.

I don't know if it's because we did Music Share Day, but the kids feel like it's okay now to share more with me. Even the other day, a little girl ran up to me after school and gave me a hug, and [said], "Yeah, Rachel's gonna come over and we're gonna sing into the microphone and we're gonna jam on guitar." (Laughter from group.) Information like that that's like, "Okay! That's great!" (PDC #4, 01/29/12)

In reflecting on this event in the PDC, the teachers attributed the change in their students to the new confidence resulting from giving students permission. Kendra had just shared the story above and also how students were beginning to realize that they could play popular melodies like, "Dynamite" on the xylophone or other classroom instruments.

Diana: Maybe, too, [they develop] the confidence that they could sing that song, too.

That it wasn't just the artist. That they could perform it, too, and that it didn't happen (snaps fingers) so fast. They had to actually, many of them, to go home and practice it to learn all the words.

Kendra: I think giving them permission to mess with it, and it's okay. Like, (puts hands to chest) I need that permission, too, still, as well. . . . And once they're confident, they'll [be] like the girl who went home and started playing it at home. (PDC #4, 01/29/12)

As described earlier, Kendra felt that it was important for students to have permission to explore and try these new ideas. By aurally copying popular music in school, the teachers observed how the students had begun to discover that they had the skills to make music independently, both inside and outside of the music classroom.

Similarly, Cara found that her students were thinking about their informal music learning projects outside of class. Both Diana and Cara had chosen to tell the students about the upcoming projects a week or two in advance, and they had shared some of the details of the project, such as how the students would be permitted to choose their groups and/or their songs to cover. Cara described how the students' excitement was bubbling over into their free time at home. In this case, Cara had decided to use a song set from which the students would choose, but she did not reveal that aspect of the assignment to the students. As a result, some students had gone ahead and selected their own song:

Because they had had some warning, like a week, to think about it, some kids had worked on it before we had even started [in class], and they said, "We've been working on this other song for the past four days!" I said, "Okay! That's fine!" So they had those groups, who had already started doing it, and a lot of groups worked on it at night between Thursday and Friday, so I know they were processing it outside of class, which I know they don't [normally] do! (Several people laugh.) (PDC #5, 02/12/12)

Thus, Cara found that, not only were students making decisions about their groups and song choice prior to beginning the activity in class, she also heard from several students that they "worked on" the project at home. While Cara did not detail what the students actually did outside of music class, her statement revealed the new insight she had in about her students' interest. The students may have "worked on" the project in any number of ways, from listening to the song, to practicing their parts, to even discussing and rehearsing with other members from their group. Any of these actions, though, seemed to Cara to go beyond what she understood to be typical of her students. Ultimately, the students' work on their informal music learning in-

class assignments showed that they both were making connections between music in school and outside of school and also that they felt confident and motivated to think about and practice their music at home. As Diana stated, “They learned more. They were enthusiastic. They practiced outside, [and] they couldn’t wait to get in” (Diana, Interview #2, 04/14/12). Thus, the teachers observed how, through informal music learning, their students’ engagement in in-class music projects extended beyond the music room in new ways that exceeded their prior hopes and expectations.

Exceeded Expectations

Sometimes, the participants seemed to have low expectations for student behavior and then found that students exceeded those expectations. Diana stated her appreciation for how her students worked together in their groups and respected each others’ performances. In one of her students’ group performances, one of the members had made a mistake and “forgot their cue” while Diana had recorded them. Diana then expressed her surprise at how these students “made arrangements to come another time, so they could get a better recording of themselves,” because they were not satisfied with their performance (Diana, Interview #2, 04/14/12). Diana also was impressed by how her sixth grade students treated each other respectfully when sharing their final products:

This is interesting, but when they played their songs for each other, it would be like, “Wow!” They really complimented each other, and I would think, “Wow!” For sixth grade, it is (pause) wow, because they were all really embarrassed to share, but I think they all got some props out of it. [They would say things] like, “Wow! That’s really

good! Who is that singer? That's a really good singer! Which one of you was that!" (Diana, Interview #2, 04/14/12)

Diana implied that her sixth grade students did not normally compliment each other or give each other "props" the way that they had in sharing their informal music learning activities. Their behavior during the activity seemed to exceed her behavioral expectations for how her students normally behaved.

Other times, the teachers described how the students exceeded their expectations musically. After having his students create an accompaniment on classroom instruments to correspond with a popular song played on the recorder, Tyler found that his students did better than he had anticipated.

I had just divided them up into groups, and I let them choose, and they worked for about 20 minutes. . . I remember the first day, I was thinking, this is probably gonna sound like they'll get the first note, and then they'll sound kinda like mush and then they'll get the end, but hopefully they'll have fun. . . . Then at the end of the 20 minutes, for every day we did this activity in class, they were so accurate for what I had written up there for the song. . . . It was incredible! I couldn't believe how accurate they were with some of these songs, especially since we didn't go over the fingering. . . , but it turned out to be past my expectations. (PDC #2, 12/11/11)

Tyler's comparison between his low assumptions and his excited reaction to their musical achievements reveal his satisfaction with the activity, and he went on to describe how the students were making aural connections with the complex notation he had provided them.

When I observed her students for the final time, Diana described a comment from one of the student groups. Diana had been monitoring the groups, when one group asked her about the expectations for the assignment. She told me that the group felt “guilty that they don’t have all of the instruments [covered] with their voices,” a concern that was expressed by more than one group (Diana, Observation #3, 03/23/12). Rather than being disappointed that her students were not representing all of the instrument parts in the recording, Diana actually seemed pleased. She remarked how that statement revealed that the students were listening in a more complex way to the music and comparing the sounds they heard to those they were producing. She felt that this acknowledgement provided a powerful insight, or window, into the students’ thinking. She then ended the anecdote saying with genuine enthusiasm: “I love my students! They’re singing! They’re exceeding my expectations!” (Diana, Observation #3, 03/23/12).

Summary

As a result of stepping back and letting the students make music independently in informal music learning, the teachers were able to observe through new windows into their students’ musicianship, providing many valuable insights. The teachers observed how, when left to work independently, students’ processes appeared to be messy and unproductive. After trusting what they had read and discussed in the PDC meetings, the teachers discovered that, in doodling, the students were exploring and figuring things out for themselves. The teachers also observed that in their small group work, students’ peer interactions included disagreements and tough critiques, but they also found that the students would work together and teach each other necessary parts. In seeing these processes and the performances the students created, the teachers

were able to assess their students' musical achievements. They also evaluated their effectiveness in teaching their students musical skills over multiple years by comparing them with newer students, appreciating these new insights into their students' musicianship.

The teachers also gained new insights into their students as individuals. They discovered students emerging as unexpected performers and leaders in the informal music learning activities, who had previously shown little interest or participation in music class, and frequently, the teachers found that students exceeded their expectations. The teachers were impressed with what the students were able to develop, particularly when students added layers of texture and made attempts to include harmony. Finally, the teachers found that the music-making from informal music learning activities began to extend beyond the music room. The teachers described how the students would work on their popular music songs from the informal music learning projects outside of school. The students shared stories of choosing group members and songs, printing out and memorizing lyrics, practicing their parts, listening to recordings, and even teaching each other parts outside of school. Rather than providing direct instruction in which the teachers controlled the processes and products of students' music-making, they instead opened the door for student ownership to develop, and, as a result, the teachers were able to view in and see more about their students and their music-making.

CHAPTER 8: THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

In the PDC, the group members interacted in a way that resulted in a successful professional development experience for all of the participants. While studying the characteristics of professional development communities was not the primary focus of the study, themes that emerged in the data analysis process revealed new understandings about music teacher professional development within the context of a PDC such as this. Since few other studies in music education focus on music teacher professional development in these types of groups, these findings add to that literature.

This chapter includes three sections. The first section, “*Collaborative Community*,” describes the group interactions among the participants. They shared lesson and song ideas, pedagogical strategies, technological tips, and student work; brainstormed new ideas; and they encouraged each other. Their productive and supportive conversations resulted in a safe community of teachers and learners who, although focused on a central topic, had the opportunity to grow and adapt their teaching practices individually and independently. The second section, “*Reading and Relating to Research*,” explores the role of scholarly research in the PDC. The research readings helped the teachers develop shared language and understandings of informal music learning and provided validation and permission for them to experiment with this new approach in their classrooms, even though the readings took time and effort to read. In the final section, “*Getting Fed Professionally*,” the teachers revealed the value and limitations of the professional development they received as a result of this experience. They compared the PDC to professional development experiences they had in their school buildings and districts,

and found that this type of professional development provided the teachers with more autonomy, leading to greater opportunities for the teachers to make a lasting change in their teaching practice.

A Collaborative Community

The teachers all participated in the PDC in various ways that brought them together and connected them into a collaborative community. This community developed rather quickly, and may have been due to their shared MLT training, which served as a foundation of respect. The first section, “Sharing with Each Other” includes descriptions of different types of information, ideas, and student products that the teachers brought to the PDC. The teachers shared lesson and song ideas, pedagogical strategies, technological programs and processes, and student work, and they also brainstormed potential ideas to implement in their classrooms. The next section, “A Nurturing Community” includes descriptions of the interactions between teachers within the PDC meetings. Through making personal connections with the discussion topic, sympathizing and encouraging each other, and providing humorous commentary, the teachers created a developed a supportive community centered around a central purpose. The combination of group interactions and sharing of ideas resulted in a productive environment, encouraging the teachers to have ownership over their own professional development and allowing them to explore new avenues in their teaching. This section begins with a vignette of an extended excerpt from one of the PDC meetings showing how the teachers interacted with each other. Kendra had just shared about an application of informal music learning practices she had implemented in which she had her students informally learn how to play “Dynamite” on their recorders.

Kendra: Then, I wanna do one more [day], because it went really well. So this week, I'm going to give them a choice of [songs]. I'm gonna transcribe "If I Die Young," and "Fireflies," and I haven't been able to choose. . . another one.

There's a girl in the Latch Key program after school, and they take their recorders to Latch Key. And I've heard "Dynamite" in the hall, you know, for the past three days! (Chuckles.) So she was carrying around her recorder in the hallway after school, and I had just finished transcribing "If I Die Young," and I said, "Hey, do you want something to play this afternoon?" and I handed it to her, and it was like Christmas! She was like (in an exaggerated voice), "Oh, thank you!" and ran off with her recorder. (Laughter from others.) She ran off with her recorder. It's just funny to see them so excited about it.

Cara: So you literally transcribed the melody?

Kendra: Yeah. Do you want—

Diana: You could probably put it in Drop Box.

Kendra: Yeah, sure! Yeah, I can do that. (Chuckles.) The rhythms might not all be perfect, but it's close enough.

(Several overlapping comments about transcribing, but are indistinguishable.)

Kendra: You're right! You're right! So they're really excited. So I want to do it one more time to see if they can come up, instead of all playing the melodic rhythm on the xylophone to see if they start to pick up the other parts.

Diana: Well, I think it's interesting, because my kids did not. They had a xylophone, and they did not—

Kendra: Well, I think it's because—

Diana: —they did not gravitate to the—

Kendra: —they got stuck on the—

Diana: —xylophones.

Kendra: —lyrics, right?

Diana: Maybe.

Cara: Did you give them the actual notation?

Diana: No, and I think the other thing I would do [differently] is I'm going to give them the lyrics, too. Because then that kinda takes the reason to listen—they already know the main melody. It's not that complex.

Julie: You know what I was wondering, too. Is that since they have the whole song to listen to—

Kendra: Yeah, I just gave the chorus of "Dynamite."

Julie: Maybe if it was just that smaller chunk of something.

Kendra: But I like that. I like that you did it that way, too.

Cara: Right! It's totally different.

Kendra: Yeah, I don't—

Julie: Yeah, one's not right or wrong; they're just getting different things out of it.

Diana: I think I need to write this down. (Opens laptop.) Because then, even though it's like each project is the same, it's a little different. You're taking a different track. (PDC #4, 01/29/12)

Sharing with Each Other

Sharing with each other refers to the collected discussions related to specific teaching applications within the PDC. The teachers shared lesson and song ideas and pedagogical strategies. They also brainstormed new ideas as they considered how to modify ideas to work in their own classrooms, and they shared examples of students' work from their classes. In the vignette above, Kendra had shared what she had already implemented, commented on her student's reaction, and then brainstormed her next step. Throughout the PDC, the participants shared ideas about their practice or stated their intentions to use an idea shared from one of the other group members. The teachers would sometimes write down the ideas they liked from other teachers. As described in the opening vignette, Diana frequently had her laptop out so that she could write down any useful ideas. This give and take of ideas proved important for the teachers in the PDC because it gave them practical and applicable ideas to use, adding purpose to the group.

Sharing lesson plans and songs. One of the most common types of interactions within the group was in sharing lesson and song ideas. This may have been due to the way I had intentionally structured the time within each PDC meeting. At each meeting, the second thirty minutes in the two-hour time were allotted to sharing applications the teachers had tried in their own classrooms. However, sharing lesson ideas was not limited to this time, and as teachers discussed the readings and dialogued with each other, they often would intersperse ideas they had tried and shared with the group.

In sharing their lesson plan ideas, the teachers would frequently give a brief overview of their objectives. They would also share the song or songs they selected, or state whether they

had allowed the students to choose the songs. They also indicated whether they had provided notation, classroom instruments, recordings, lyrics, and a laptop or tablet to listen to the recordings. In the fourth PDC, after asking if anyone had any informal music learning activities they had implemented, Diana introduced her activity by saying, “Well, I finished my project that took forever” (PDC #4, 01/29/12). She then dove into her description of the lesson she had designed, focusing first on the amount of classroom time:

Well, I don’t know. I figured because of Tyler’s, like, (snaps fingers) happenin’ class, I assumed it was gonna be quick, and I shouldn’t have assumed that. I should’ve known better. I had one more final time with them and took the suggestions here. . . . I let them choose [their instrumentation]. If everyone wanted to play a drum, then have at it. And I think there was one other change that I made, but it was surprising when I went to film them, the performance was getting in the way initially, but in the end, they all wanted to perform. (PDC #4, 01/29/12)

Diana then went on to give her perception of the students’ achievement within the activity, and she specifically described the participation of one student who had emerged as an unexpected leader. Afterward, the teachers asked for more details so that they could understand better how she implemented this lesson.

Cara: Is this the same as your Finale Notepad thing?

Diana: No. It’s different. This is the one I started with, I tried to recreate what they had done in the research, like what Tyler did. Kind like where they chose a song, and most of them chose “Stereo Hearts” and they were supposed to recreate.

Julie: But you did it differently than Tyler.

Diana: Yeah, well mine hadn't played it on the recorder. That would've made it completely—

Kendra: That's hard!

Diana: —completely different.

Kendra: Yeah.

Julie: And you didn't give them any notation.

Kendra: Oh!

Julie: They listened to the recording, and then they—

Diana: The listened a lot, and they were kinda focused on that. Do you wanna hear 'em?

(Enthusiastic responses from everyone.) (PDC #4, 01/29/12)

Cara's first question indicated how she was trying to make sense of Diana's lesson and place it in context with the other lessons that Cara knows she's done. When Diana compared it to Tyler's lesson, I clarified how Diana's and Tyler's lessons differed, while Kendra commented on the difficulty level of the lesson objective. Many of the "experiments" described in Chapter 5 were from quotes used by teachers as they shared examples of lessons they had implemented. For example, Tyler had described how he gave all of the students the notation for "Dynamite," and then allowed them to figure out how to play the song using informal practices, and Cara had explained her process for implementing the activity in which students created a cappella covers.

Sometimes, the teachers also would include a summary of the directions they had given to the students, saying things like, "I told them to. . ." or "I said for them to. . ." In describing a composition activity he had taught in the previous year, Tyler explained, "Last year, I wanted to do it [compose] with words, . . . and I said, 'You've got your copy, you've got your recording. If

you want to add lyrics on your own, you're free to'" (PDC #6, 02/26/12). At times, the participants would even slip into a "teacher voice," in which their tone sounded as though it would have when speaking to their students. For example, in Cara's explanation of her a cappella activity, she said, "I'd try to draw their attention to all of the different parts and stuff. [I'd say,] 'Listen. Oh, that's really good!' or 'Listen to that beat!' or draw their attention to all of the background stuff" (PDC #5, 02/12/12).

Another time, the teachers were reviewing all of the different types of informal music learning applications that they had implemented in their classrooms. After listing several of the ideas, a pause crept into the conversation. Kendra filled the silence by telling the group how she had used an idea presented by Diana in the prior meeting. Previously, Diana had taken a students' doodle of "Kung Fu Fighting" and brought it into her lessons, using it to teach all of her students how to play F# on the recorder. Diana had been pleased with how the lesson worked out and had excitedly shared her idea with the group. Here, Kendra described how her students responded to the same lesson:

Kendra: I didn't tell, you but I did that Kung Fu Fighting thing, just to get them—
(Diana and Julie simultaneously interrupt her.)

Diana: Did they like it?

Julie: Oh, did they like it?

Kendra: They did! They were like—they just went crazy. (Laughter from group.) They were all playing F# within three to four minutes. I mean, just to have that in the back of my mind, to pull that out when they need to know that note! I mean, to know that they

can struggle for a month, or they can learn it in three minutes. (Sounds of agreement from others.)

Cara: Is it the, (sings melody) Na na na na naa naa na na na? (Giggles.) I did that for high C and high D in my class. That's how I did high C and high D.

Kendra: Oh! So you see, I could do that for either one now!

Diana: I think I might just be pulling that one out tomorrow! (Laughter.)

Kendra: I mean, yeah! But that kind of stuff is just invaluable. Like, anyway you can save time like that, that's huge.

Tyler: You know what I found works? For F#, have the kids turn their right hand into a llama (shows his hand in a llama shape). So, make the kids take their llama, wiggle their ears, drink some water, eat some grass (shows each step with his hand). Okay, now put the llama on your recorder, and then they've got it. (PDC #8, 03/25/12)

In the example above, the teachers began sharing how they had used the song, "Kung Fu Fighting" to teach fingerings for F#, high C, and high D on the recorder. Kendra had taken that idea from Diana, and then Cara revealed that she had used that same song, but in a different key, and they all seemed to agree that the song was effective at motivating the students while completing the objective of teaching recorder fingerings.

Other times, the teachers shared suggestions for popular song ideas and transcriptions that would be good for using in class. In the vignette, when Kendra shared that she had given her students a transcription of several songs, the other teachers responded by asking whether she could share the files electronically in the PDC's DropBox folder. Kendra had earlier asked Tyler

to do the same for her when she was preparing for the activity. She had asked him on Facebook, saying:

Tyler--

Is there any way you could upload your recorder transcriptions of Stereo Hearts and Fireflies tonight to dropbox? I was planning on carving out a few hours tonight to transcribe them, but if I can "steal" from you, I would really appreciate it! (Facebook, 02/15/12)

Toward the beginning of the PDC, Tyler listed all of the songs he had selected for his students to play on the recorder, while Diana diligently wrote them down. After being asked how he was aware of what was on the radio, Tyler responded by explaining that he listened to the radio and went to Billboard Magazine's website (Comer, 2011) to see the top 10 popular songs at that time (PDC #2, 12/11/11). Then in one of the last PDC meetings, Tyler shared his perspective on selecting pop songs and asserting the importance of knowing students' interests, which led to a discussion about other television songs students enjoyed:

Tyler: It's very important to know what the students are in to. Because students aren't even sometimes going to be in to what's on the radio. So, you gotta kinda gauge what they want first.

Kendra: That's true.

Diana: And from year to year. Last year, they were really in to Sponge Bob, and this year's sixth grade they're--(interrupted)

Kendra: Have you ever done (singing the theme song from Sponge Bob) Da da da daa da daa on the recorder?

Diana: Oh, no!

Kendra: I should figure that one out. That would be fun! (Chuckles.) (PDC #7, 03/11/12)

Throughout the PDC, the teachers shared many song ideas and several transcriptions of popular song melodies from the radio, Billboard Top 100 (Comer, 2011), and television shows, because, as Tyler pointed out, they all wanted include music that would interest their students.

Sharing pedagogical strategies. In addition to sharing lesson and song ideas, the teachers shared pedagogical strategies they used when implementing informal music learning in the classroom. As Tyler described about his llama trick to teach students how to do the fingering for F# on the recorder, the teachers shared other tips and strategies that they had tried in their classrooms, both in informal music learning activities and in other types of activities. For example, in a discussion about using informal music learning activities with lower elementary grades, Diana shared one of the strategies she had used, and how she believed it could work with younger grades:

I mean, for fourth grade, because they're doing recorder, I threw out the "Dynamite" song, and I think I said this before, I'll say, "Here's this song, and it uses these notes and go figure it out on your own." So I think, the same strategies are involved in this. Like you said, break it down into smaller chunks. (PDC #6, 02/26/12)

To share her strategy, Diana described what she had done with her fourth grade students, shared the directions she would have used with the students, and then summarized the essence of the activity that could be used with younger children, which she stated was "breaking it down into smaller chunks."

Cara shared how she chose to give students lyrics for a part of the pop songs, rather than for the whole song, which was a strategy that helped students better manage their time. Cara had described this strategy, saying, “. . . I didn’t give them the whole song because I didn’t want ‘em to take forever” (PDC #7, 03/11/12). Diana chimed in at her approval of the idea, and then stated how she was going to copy it in her own classroom. Then, Cara told Diana that she would send her a file of the typed instructions she had provided to the students. These instructions were an additional plan of action that Cara had developed, and she felt that it helped make the activity more successful.

Tyler and Kendra also shared pedagogical strategies during PDC meetings. In a discussion about boys’ singing and their voice change, Tyler offered his pedagogical strategy:

Last year, it happened a lot at the beginning of the year that they were singing with voices a lot lower than they should, and I’d have to say, (in a very high-pitched voice) “Does it sound silly when I sing up here like this?” And then I’d say, (in a goofy low voice while swinging his arms side to side) “Well I think it’s silly when you sing down low like this.” I’d emphasize that right now your voice is where it’s at and eventually it’ll change, but enjoy where it is for now. (PDC #5, 02/12/12)

Tyler used his model of adult male singing to compare it to the children’s singing, and he shared this strategy in the PDC as a way to share with the other teachers something that had worked well in his own teaching.

Kendra shared a strategy that she had used to encourage her students’ musicking outside of school. This idea of making connections between in-school and outside-of-school music-making was important for Kendra. She had shared her identification of the state music standard

in which teachers were expected to describe music-making in “everyday life” (see Chapter 5), and then she began to include this in her informal music learning activities. In the PDC, Kendra shared how she had actively incorporated this standard into her cover song activity with students:

Then we had a little discussion about what you can do with this on your own. [I told them,] “This is what people do who write songs. Would you be comfortable doing this?” I should’ve videoed every group with the flip camera, but [I also said,] “Would you feel comfortable to do this on your own?” They had some really good responses for this. It seemed really well thought-out. (PDC #5, 02/12/12)

Overall, the strategies the teachers shared were frequently short, simple ideas that they had used successfully in their classrooms. Some of the strategies they shared developed during their implementation of informal music learning activities, while others were from other activities, but related to the current discussion. Frequently, the teachers expressed their appreciation when one of their peers shared a strategy in the PDC, saying things like “That’s awesome!” (Cara, PDC, #5, 02/12/12), or writing down the strategies to use later.

Sharing technology ideas. In the PDC, the teachers also shared applications of and strategies for using technology. Some ideas applied to the use of technology in the classroom to support instruction and learning activities, while others related to its use for classroom organization, file sharing within the PDC, and recording student work. I was surprised when this emerged as an important aspect of group interactions within the PDC, but the participants seemed to appreciate having an opportunity to hear about how others used technology and being introduced to new programs. Because participants had varying levels of technological skills, certain individuals shared more ideas than others. Tyler demonstrated the most technological

savvy, and he shared with me in his initial interview that it was an area about which he felt passionate (Tyler, Interview #1, 11/20/11). On the other hand, Cara seemed to have less knowledge about technology, and both she and Diana also expressed a lack of confidence about being able to use some of the ideas in her classroom, as described in the section on Concerns and Challenges (see Chapter 5). However, throughout the PDC, discussing programs and tech strategies developed as a beneficial topic for teacher sharing. Some of the tech ideas shared in the group related specifically to informal music learning activities, while others related more broadly to teaching and learning, as in the example below.

The teachers would often share a program they had used to support their informal music learning applications. For example, Tyler shared how he had used a program called Voice Thread to upload content like recorder melodies so that students could practice at home and record themselves (PDC #2, 12/11/11). He also described another program he had used to get around the block that his school district had put on YouTube. Since Tyler could not use YouTube content in his class during the school day because it was blocked, he found another program to use, called KeepVid (2012).

Tyler: In our district, actually, they block YouTube from 8 am to 3 pm, so I have to know what I wanna watch ahead of time. I have to go to KeepVid and turn it into .mp4 video and put that into my PowerPoint as a link.

Diana: What was that? Keep?

Tyler: KeepVid, V - I - D dot com. If you copy and paste the URL for the YouTube video, they'll transform [it] into an .mp4 video. (PDC #2, 12/11/11)

Tyler shared his strategy after Diana had described her frustration at using YouTube in music class. Even though the site was not blocked in her school building, as it was in Tyler's, her school's internet provider was not fast enough for streaming the videos. Thus, Tyler's sharing of the program provided a useful tip that Diana could use to solve her problem.

Kendra talked about a program she had learned about from the reading conference she attended. "At the reading conference this weekend, there's this person launching this new thing called "Classroom Connect," and it's kind of like Dropbox, only you can have categories that your students can access at home" (PDC #7, 03/11/12) (Simons, 2012). However, when someone in the PDC tried looking up the website, they could not find it. Later, Kendra followed up by posting the link on the Facebook page, writing, "I have yet to try this, but it looks like it has great potential for sharing files with students and fellow teachers!

www.classconnect.com" (Facebook, 03/15/12)⁵. Overall, these examples of technology sharing included both processes for altering and adapting files to use in the classroom, as well as products, such as websites and software programs that they could use as aides in their instruction. While the discussion of technology did not always relate to informal music learning, it provided information for the teachers to help them explore and grow in confidence as they used new technologies. Since technology changes and evolves so rapidly, the teachers appreciated being able to learn about new technologies being used by other music teachers to build upon the now-outdated programs they had learned in their teacher-education programs.

Sharing student work. While the other types of sharing in the PDC were useful, one of the most beneficial sources of information for the teachers was examples of student work shared

⁵This website has since changed names to "Claco" and can be found at <http://www.claco.com/>.

in PDC meetings. As stated earlier, the beginning of each PDC meeting included time for the teachers to discuss any applications that they had made using informal music learning between meetings, but the teachers, unsolicited, began to bring in video clips of students to share with the group and to add to their explanations. While these videos were not included in the data analysis, the teachers' reactions to the videos in the PDC were included. The participants seemed to benefit from viewing the video clips because they allowed them to see what real students were doing with informal music learning, the levels of musical achievement, and the amount of student enthusiasm. Kendra shared that this was an important part of the PDC meeting, saying, "I think the videos are really powerful" (PDC #8, 03/25/12).

Prior to the third PDC meeting, Tyler shared a post about an informal music learning application he had done in his classroom on Facebook:

Sooooo much information to give you all next time we meet! I let my fifth grade class just "have at" music making in groups with a drum, recorder, and xylophone, and pretty much no instruction on what to do other than create a song. All I will say it to just wait for the videos! It made me smile all day! (Facebook, 12/13/11)

Then, when Tyler arrived for the next meeting, he brought along several videos of his students, which he presented on his iPad (PDC #3, 01/15/12). The teachers sat riveted as they watched the videos, seeing what students could do in music class using informal music processes. In my fieldnotes of the transcriptions, I recorded that the teachers were all nodding their heads enthusiastically to the music and that everyone seemed to be enjoying the videos. Before showing the videos, Tyler provided some contextual information about what he had done in the activity, and then, afterward, he answered questions from the other teachers about specific details

of the lessons or the students, such as how many lessons the students had been given, the grade level of the students, and whether the students used notation.

Tyler's video clips were inspirational to the other teachers. After that meeting, all of the teachers attempted some kind of small group cover song activity in their classes, and within the PDC, the group seemed more enthusiastic and excited to try informal music learning. Diana reflected on the impact of this moment in the final PDC:

You [Tyler] were so excited about that first project. (Lots of agreement from others). I remember you wrote about it on the Facebook page, and I couldn't wait to come see what it sounded like! (Laughter and sounds of agreement). And then you have to try it, because you're like, "Oh!" (PDC #8, 03/25/12)

Thus, Tyler's enthusiasm and the videos he shared of his students became a turning point within the PDC, encouraging everyone to take a chance in trying informal music learning activities.

In future PDC meetings, the participants began to bring laptops and tablets to share their students' work, which seemed to be a direct result of seeing Tyler's videos. Kendra seemed apologetic as she shared some of her first videos, saying, "[I]t's not awesome, but this is one of the groups," as she turned her computer around to show everyone the video (PDC #5, 02/12/12).

In contrast, when Diana showed video clips of some of her students' work, she felt more positively about the results. In the meeting, she showed the video, and when it ended, we all looked up at each other, laughed, and smiled (Fieldnotes, PDC #4, 01/29/12). Diana then said, "None of them were [excellent]. I felt better when I read the article for today, because the researcher was, like, it's not about the performance, and that's kinda how I thought about this. It's not about the performance" (PDC #4, 01/29/12). So, even though Diana felt as though the

students' performance lacked accuracy, she still commented that she had still felt there was value to the experience.

When Cara shared some of the first video clips of her students, she seemed excited, saying, "So, I wanted to show you a couple of groups I recorded, because they crack me up, and you can sorta see what they came up with. They were very proud of what they came up with, those groups" (PDC #5, 02/12/12). Thus, each of the teachers presented his or her video clips with different attitudes. While Kendra and Diana seemed as though they had to apologize or qualified their students' work, it may have been due to feelings of vulnerability and anxiety at sharing their students' work with others. In contrast, Tyler and Cara seemed pleased with their students' work and proud to share it in the PDC meeting.

In one other instance, Cara shared student reflections that she had solicited from her students. While these were not examples of student musical products, Cara shared them in conjunction with the videos she had brought. They added to the teachers' understanding because, as described in the previous chapter, they not only learned about student processes through informal music learning, but they also learned about their students as individuals. She had the students fill out a form in which they answered three questions about their experience in making a cappella covers in small groups, and she brought them to the group in a small manilla envelope. In the PDC meeting, the teachers passed around small stacks of the responses, and we took turns reading through some of the student comments. The teachers read various types of comments aloud, ranging from positive reflections from students who enjoyed the project, negative reactions from students who struggled socially to find a group, and humorous comments from a few others. These comments provided a student voice in this professional development

group of teachers. The teachers did not seem surprised by any of the comments, although they did express concern for the students who had struggled socially.

Brainstorming. Finally, in addition to sharing lesson plan and song ideas, pedagogical strategies, technological applications, and student work, the teachers shared with each other by brainstorming new ideas they were considering using. Frequently, the teachers would preface these types of brainstorming statements by saying, “I think. . .” or “I’m thinking about. . .” For example, Kendra brainstormed whether to use some of the informal learning practices with younger grade levels:

I’m trying just to think of a way to do this at a younger grade level. If I could incorporate informal music making into it. I was thinking about if we could incorporate something into it in terms of them creating something. Like, we just finished the song “Love Somebody,” looking at the major tonic pattern in it. I haven’t shown them yet, I mean, I showed them what it looks like on the staff, but what it looks like on the xylophone and have them try and recreate [it]. So I’m thinking about that song, but I’m not sure if that ties in exactly to what we’re talking about here. (PDC #5, 02/12/12)

Part of Kendra’s brainstorming involved her working out verbally whether her idea to have students aurally explore major tonic triads on the xylophone and then perform in the context of a children’s song fit with what she understood as the principals of informal music learning. She seemed to be presenting this at the end of the quote, almost as though she was posing a question to the rest of the group. Kendra also seemed to be brainstorming the process she might use in the activity by explaining what she had done to prepare them and what she intended to do next. In

this example, Kendra ended up trying out this idea with her students, and later reported back to the PDC the successes and challenges she had faced in implementing it.

Similarly, Cara had brainstormed for several weeks about how she was going to implement informal music learning activities in her sixth grade choir. She had wanted to incorporate the activity with this group by having them create a cappella vocal covers, rather than using classroom instruments, as she had read about and heard described by other participants. As described earlier, Cara asked the group for advice and told the teachers how she was trying to figure out how she would make the activity work (see Chapter 5). For Cara, brainstorming in the group not only seemed to help her work out the details for setting up and giving instructions to the students, but it also seemed to give her time to develop confidence to go forth with her idea.

In other cases, the teachers' brainstormed ideas that did not necessarily get implemented, or at least were not implemented during the data collection period. Diana considered using informal music learning activities with her sixth grade students by having them perform them using her classroom ukuleles. "I was thinking about doing something with the ukulele like that, where, now that they know the chords, having them write their own chord progression. I just can't decide how I'm going to put the rest together" (PDC #2, 12/11/11). However, although she brainstormed this idea, she did not end up using it with her students during the study period.

Cara brainstormed the idea of having "music buddies." In her school building, there were only fifth and sixth grades, whereas most American school buildings have elementary schools that are from kindergarten through fifth or sixth grade. Cara said:

I wonder if we could do music buddies. You know how they have reading buddies?

They were saying it's such a cross-generational thing, how they [the students in the article] just did it? And the kids really caught on to it. (PDC #5, 02/12/12)

In a discussion of peer mentoring from older to younger grades, Cara seemed to brainstorm this idea as a way to provide that same type of cross-age peer modeling for her students.

Kendra brainstormed how she would use informal music learning activities again with her fifth graders at the end of the school year. In my observations in her classroom, Kendra's students asked her when they would be able to do similar types of music activities again, sometimes before they had even tried the informal music learning activity in the first place. In sharing her activity with the PDC, she looked toward her next one, saying, "I said that maybe I'll come back to it. Maybe I'll do a vocal version in the last part of the school year" (PDC #5, 02/12/12).

In one case, Diana brainstormed an idea that would intentionally connect her students' musicking in and outside of school. She viewed this as a possible culminating activity for her sixth grade students as a motivational challenge resulting in a song to be used at their graduation ceremony:

It would be interesting to see if any of them did it outside of class. . . . So I wonder if, after my sixth graders do this, maybe [I could] open up the challenge in the same way. . . . What we do at the end of school for graduation, I usually do a pop song, so maybe that would be the challenge. Have them choose a pop song they think would be good and see if they would do it outside of school. (PDC #6, 02/26/12)

Since the data collection ended before the end of school year, it is unknown whether Diana ended up implementing this idea. However, she did end up having her students perform vocal cover songs at a district-wide concert (Facebook, 04/30/12).

Although the teachers shared many different types of ideas, from sharing lesson and song ideas, pedagogical strategies, and tech programs, brainstorming was a different type of sharing. Rather than stating something they had already done, brainstorming was an external processing of new applications for the teachers among and with the help of understanding peers. Brainstorming helped them to develop ideas in a safe place, to hear the thoughts and suggestions of others, and gave them confidence and encouragement to try out the ideas. For example, when Kendra brainstormed her activity with the younger grades and Cara her activity of the a cappella covers, they both received considerable encouragement from the other group members, which may have contributed to their willingness to actually implement them, taking them from a brainstormed idea into reality.

A Nurturing Community

When the participants were not sharing information and ideas with the other participants, they also participated in other ways, including reading research (discussed in the next section), encouraging and sympathizing with each other, asking questions, and sharing personal connections to discussion ideas unrelated to their teaching. As described above, Cara and Kendra had received encouragement from the other PDC members in trying some of the new ideas they had brainstormed in the meetings. The teachers would make comments like, “Try it!” to show their support for the others’ ideas. When Cara suggested her a cappella vocal idea, Diana encouraged her to try the idea and then report back to the group, so that she could try it

with her own students, which she did end up implementing toward the end of data collection. Diana told Cara, “If it happens between now and the next session, write about it so I can learn from you! Because I’m scared of it!” (PDC #4, 01/29/12).

The participants also made supportive comments like, “Awesome!” (Cara, PDC #4, 01/29/12). Cara, in particular, frequently would offer statements praising other teachers’ thoughts and ideas, or comment after someone had shared video clips of student work. After Kendra brainstormed adding a composition part to an informal music learning activity, Cara told her, “You should just make that the next step. Say, ‘Okay, make up something with what you know’” (PDC #5, 02/12/12).

When a teacher shared about an event that did not go well or did not go as planned, the others would offer sympathetic comments. After doing Music Share Day with her students—an idea which she had also suggested—Diana joked sympathetically about how the activity had worked out, saying, “It went well knowing you all were suffering along with me” (PDC #2, 12/11/11). In another example, when Cara expressed her concern at implementing informal music learning with her choir because of the number of students involved, Kendra sympathized, saying, “Yeah, it’s just so hard to know what’s gonna happen. You just throw it out there and what’s gonna happen?” (PDC #4, 01/29/12).

The sympathetic comments carried onto Facebook. After the final meeting, Cara had shared on Facebook how her students with ASD had struggled in her informal music learning activity (see p. 143), she vented on Facebook, saying that the activity was “too unstructured” (Facebook, 04/30/12). In response, Diana shared her sympathy for Cara’s struggles. Diana’s sympathetic comments reveals several support on several levels. First,

expressed sympathy that Cara had to face that situation. Next, she shared a similar struggle she faced in her own teaching of informal music learning. Finally, she asked if Cara had learned anything from the experience, trying to turn what had happened into something from which everyone in the group could learn.

The participants also would ask each other questions to better understand what others were talking about, particularly when they were sharing their lesson ideas. Sometimes the questions were intended to gain greater understanding of the details and context. For example, Kendra asked Tyler about the intention behind a student creative performance: “Did they just come up with the idea to do ostinatos on [their arrangement], or did you prompt them to do that?” (PDC #3, 01/15/12). Similarly, Cara asked how Kendra had set up her recorder composition activity, “How do you structure the recorder compositions? You just let ‘em go?” (PDC #4, 01/29/12). Other questions concerned the teachers’ interest in students’ reactions to informal music learning activities; however, these questions came up less frequently than others. For example, Tyler asked, “When they were practicing, did you see a lot more, like bodily movement, than when they performed?” (PDC #8, 03/25/12). He asked this after watching Diana’s students and went on to speculate whether the students may have been nervous to perform, because they were hiding their hands and exhibiting more reserved body language.

In addition to encouraging and sympathizing with each other and asking questions about others’ sharing of projects and ideas, the participants offered personal connections to the discussions. These personal connections were comments that the participants made that were related to the topic, but drawn from memories of their past experiences or situations with their

families. Diana shared a story about her sons' piano teacher as an example of an experienced teacher with a traditional background being open to something new:

I went to my kids' piano master class, and he's, like 10 years older than me, and he's just getting into the computer. But he's letting the kids know that he's open to their kind of music, and he's got a huge studio of boys, which is unusual in piano. Even the girls that were in there, almost every one had brought him a song that they found on the internet that they wanted to play, and he has helped them figure it out. . . . I'm thinking, all he did was be open to it. So the work part is hard, but on the other hand, he's not having to look for the perfect piece that's gonna inspire the kid. The kid found the piece and brought it to him. (PDC #4, 01/29/12)

Although this story related to teaching private piano lessons and Diana knew of it from her sons' experience, she recognized the connections between this private teacher's ability to be open minded and the attitude needed for general music teachers in informal music learning. Thus, Diana felt that the story could have relevance and value for other teachers in the PDC.

Rather than sharing a story about her own children, Cara remembered how she was herself as a child. In the following discussion, the teachers considered students' learning process and their desire to play a whole song:

Kendra: I think you probably saw them do that in the classroom. They have to start all the way at the beginning if they have to fix something (chuckles).

Diana: Yeah.

Julie: That's how I was as a kid!

Kendra: Yeah, that's just it! That's just a natural part of the process.

Cara: You just wanna do the song!

Kendra: Yeah!

Cara: In fact, I remember my mom getting mad at me for it! She's like, "You always mess that same part up! Why don't you practice it?" (In a child-like voice.) "I just wanna play the song!" (PDC #5, 02/12/12)

Cara's memory may have been triggered by my own comment about acting similarly as a child, but her story was a narration of the type of conversations she used to have with her mother, adding more depth and reality to the discussions in the PDC.

Similarly, Tyler reflected on his own experience on the playground as a child. After reading an article about children's informal music-making on the playground (Harwood, 1998), a discussion arose regarding the difference between boys' and girls' singing. The article noted how the majority of singing on the playground was performed by girls. At one point in the discussion, the attention seemed to turn toward Tyler; as the only male in the group, the other members seemed to want his personal insights.

. . . I'm just thinking back to my own experience in elementary school, that the girls would do hand clapping games over by the brick wall, and all the boys would play sports. Just through the years and everything, it kinda makes me wonder, like when I took the job last year, a lot of boys weren't in singing voice, and I wonder if it's because they had a female teacher and they were getting older, and singing wasn't a guy thing to do anymore. (PDC #5, 02/12/12)

Tyler's personal descriptions about playing sports on the playground with other boys may have provided insights into what other boys might have done on the playground instead of singing.

However, he directed the story back toward the PDC discussion of teaching. He began to postulate whether his own perception of playing on the playground as a boy may provide keys to his own male students' inhibitions in singing.

Summary

Overall, a collaborative community developed among PDC members through their sharing of ideas and nurturing interactions and built on their shared methodological training in MLT. While the first section described sharing related specifically to teaching informal music learning activities, all of their interactions were crucial in helping the individuals come together. Asking questions, encouraging one another, and sympathizing with each other revealed the participants' interest in the other members as peers, colleagues, and friends. Also, the examples of personal sharing allowed the participants to add to the discussion and reveal valuable insights into the discussions. These personal stories also helped the participants get to know each other better, resulting in a sense of trust and belonging. Thus, the group interactions between members in the PDC allowed for them to come together and build a supportive community where they could explore new ideas and develop new teaching strategies.

Reading and Relating to Research

Reading research was an integral part of the PDC. Prior to each meeting, the participants read a research article selected based on the previous week's discussion that related to the participants' interest or a specific idea that emerged in the previous weeks (see Appendix B). Toward the end of the PDC, the participants were given choices of articles to read, so that they could read things that related to their personal interests. In one case, the participants requested to

read additional materials by Lucy Green, because they had connected to the idea of her stages of activities in her book *Music, Informal Music, and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy* (2008). Discussing the readings was structured into the time frame of the PDC meetings, after the teachers had shared their applications and before developing their next ideas. In this way, the goal of the readings within the PDC was to provide examples and inspiration for the teachers to take back to their own classrooms. While the participants' comments about the readings related to the group interactions described above, their unique contributions to the participants' understanding and confidence in using informal music learning warranted a separate section. In reading research, the participants related the research to prior studies and classes, and they used the articles as validation for trying something new in their classrooms, particularly in being hands-off and letting the students work independently.

Taking Time for Readings

In beginning this PDC group, I initially was concerned that the readings would be too much work. Since I was already asking the teachers to give up two hours of their time every other week, adding time reading the articles felt like overstepping; I was not sure whether they would be willing to do this without feeling overburdened. However, in reflecting on the PDC in the final meeting, the participants reflected on the benefits of reading the research articles.

Julie: So the readings weren't too much?

Kendra: They were perfect.

[Unknown]: No.

Kendra: I would read more, actually.

Julie: I was worried they would be overwhelming.

Diana: I always think, “Oh, I should read that!” And I would write things down, “I should read that,” and I never do, because maybe I’m not forced. Not that you forced us, because you just put it out there, but, knowing we were going to talk about it motivated you to read it.

Kendra: It kinda (unintelligible) a little bit. Yeah.

Diana: And I think you said something, Cara, [like] “I had to put my master’s degree hat on” in order to read it. I felt that way, too! Like, “Oh my gosh! This is what professional reading is like!”

(Several overlapping comments and jokes)

Diana: But that part of our brain doesn’t really get used.

Cara: Yeah, I know! It was kinda nice!

Diana: I would think about that as we’d sit here. All the time! (PDC #8, 03/25/12)

In this reflection, the participants stated that, instead of viewing the readings as a burden, they appreciated having a setting in which they felt some accountability to complete them. As Diana stated, on her own, she never made time to read research articles, even though she wanted to do so, because no one “forced” her, but participating in the group gave her a reason to make time and delve into the research.

The participants also felt that the readings required them to use a level of deep thinking that they had not been expected to use in their careers since working on their master’s degrees. On the other hand, Diana felt as though reading research as a part of the PDC motivated her in a way that she had not felt in earning her master’s degree, saying, “I’m sorry, but it’s more exciting for me to have to read and discuss stuff, than somebody who has to do it as a part of their

master's" (PDC #1, 11/19/11). Thus, the participants appreciated the readings in the PDC. The next sections will describe more specifically how the participants created their own understandings through the readings and felt validated by them.

Relating to the Readings

The participants related to the readings in a variety of ways as they discussed them, making sense of them in relationship to their own teaching and constructing an understanding of informal music learning. Because the participants read and discussed the same, or nearly the same, readings as one another each week, they developed a common language and observed similar processes in their students' informal musicking. This added to the community and provided an additional way for the participants to interact and explore informal music learning.

The participants would frequently comment on the readings and compare what was described in them to their own students and teaching. In one early comparison, the teachers commented how students' processes differed in informal music learning from the processes they used in their formal instruction:

Kendra: I liked when they talked about the group doing the listening, how the drummer was first playing the melody—

Julie: Yeah!

Kendra: —and after a certain number of repetitions, there all of a sudden was an underlying beat. I thought that was really interesting.

Diana: I did, too, because don't we go the opposite way—

Kendra: We do, we do.

Diana: –when we teach something? We always start with the beat. Like, we play the beat before we can even sing the song, and that’s the last thing that they learned. I thought that was fascinating.

Kendra: Does she [Green], in her book, talk a lot more about the process? Are there a lot of similarities in the processes that they go through? I thought that would be interesting.

(PDC #2, 12/11/11)

Kendra and Diana remarked with surprise at how the readings described students playing the melodic rhythm first, because, in their own teaching, they frequently had students find the steady beat before attending to any other musical features. This led to Kendra’s further curiosity about whether Green (2006) further elaborated on students’ learning process in informal music learning.

Green’s descriptions of student informal music learning processes continued to be an interesting topic for the teachers, which may be why she was the only author whom the participants asked to read for more than one meeting. They described how, after reading an article and a chapter by Green (2006; 2008), they began to see similar behaviors in their own students, which they found to be surprising:

Kendra: [I]t was always amazing to see, in the Lucy Green articles, how you could see that.

Cara: Yeah!

Kendra: And I don’t know why I didn’t expect it. I think because it was a little different setting, maybe. I didn’t expect to see it flesh out in the way that it did. I don’t know.

Cara: It really was pretty accurate!

Kendra: I know! It really was. (PDC #8, 03/25/12)

Diana made a similar connection to her fifth and sixth grade students, visualizing how her students would resemble those described in Green's (2006) article, saying, "When I was reading, I was imagining my fifth and sixth grade students and thinking, 'What would that look like?' and I could see them, just based on having watched them do group things before. . ." (PDC #2, 12/11/11). Similarly, in another PDC meeting, Kendra explained more specifically what she had seen in her students' informal music learning process that matched what she had read:

Kendra: Yeah. Just being floored, though, [because] it was the same exact process.

There were parts that I didn't even record or think in my mind that just was in the exact order. It was amazing!

Julie: Do you remember anything in particular?

Kendra: Well, just first being more comfortable on the drum, and then they'd be adding lyrics if they were singing, and then picking out the note. It's the pitches on the instruments, you know. It was exactly in that order. (PDC #7, 03/11/12)

This connection served as a powerful indicator for Kendra of the validity of informal music learning. Kendra not only made the connection, but she could share the behaviors that she had observed in her students and their relationship to the descriptions in that article. In particular, the participants consistently noticed the use of playing the melodic rhythm on classroom instruments in their instrumental covers. Kendra, Cara, and Diana all commented on this phenomenon when I observed them, and it came up several times in PDC discussions, as in the following quotes:

- Cara: "So fifth graders might have done a lot more with the melodic rhythm, and the sixth graders were actually singing the harmonies" (PDC #5, 02/12/12),

- Diana: “They had a rhythm [ostinato], as opposed to the melodic rhythm. (We watch more of a video of two girls.) This was unusual, because everyone else did the melodic rhythm” (PDC #4, 01/29/12), and
- Kendra: “I want to do it [the activity] one more time to see if they can come up—instead of all playing the melodic rhythm on the xylophone—to see if they start to pick up the other parts” (PDC #4, 01/29/12).

This musical behavior became such a commonly acknowledged characteristic that the participants eventually stopped referring back to the readings as a justification for what they had observed. Rather, this practice became accepted as an initial part of students’ informal learning process.

Cara also connected with the articles written by Green (2006; 2008). In this case, Cara felt that her students had been successful with their first informal music learning experience, and she wondered whether her students, like those described by Green (2008), would struggle with their next attempts.

My question, too, is that all the articles, well, at least the Lucy Green articles, she keeps talking about how they do really well at first and then they drop off, and then they level off. It was almost like a beginner’s luck kind of thing. I’m thinking about my class, and when we do this again, if we ever do this again, and it will be a long time away, and whether they’ll be back to that beginner’s luck or what. (PDC #6, 02/26/12)

In this way, Cara connected the reading more as a way of considering how her students would behave in future informal music learning situations, rather than comparing what they had already

done. However, her statement in the PDC still revealed a comparison between her students and the students described in Green's (2008) chapter.

The majority of comparisons made by the teachers related to the two readings written by Green (2006; 2008). However, the participants also made comments about other readings. For example, they had an in-depth discussion about boys' and girls' singing in their own classrooms, compared to the descriptions of girls in Harwood's (1998) study of singing on the playground, as described earlier. In another example, they remarked on Woody and Lehman's article (2010) on vernacular musicianship skills. The article includes a list of skills used by college-aged musicians from either formal or a combination of formal and vernacular backgrounds. The study revealed that the students from a more vernacular background were not only more effective in copying a melody by ear, but they also provided a list of different skills they used in the process (Woody & Lehman, 2010). Diana commented on the article:

We're talking about how the whole point of the [PDC] group is to figure out how we can bring what vernacular musicians do in the classroom. These are skills (gesturing to list)—musical skills—that they use, or employ, or whatever. If we do more of that in school music, we are doing more of what will be useful to them. That's where MLT meets that.

(PDC #6, 02/26/12)

Diana connected the list of skills used by the vernacular musicians and compared it to the skills she valued as a part of her methodological training. She believed that the skills she was trying to teach as a part of the MLT methodology she used were similar to those used by vernacular musicians, which provided support for her to continue using informal music learning.

Sometimes the participants would quote the readings directly, emphasizing the points that they found most interesting. When stating one of the points she liked, Kendra read, “Yeah, because (looking down and quoting one of the readings) “children need time to contemplate and composer and consider and practice” (PDC #5, 02/12/12). Cara chimed in with her agreement, as though reading along with Kendra, saying, ““And practice.’ I love that.” Then Kendra elaborated on how the quote related to her own teaching, saying, “We need to practice that. We need a lot of time to do that, but we don’t have time.” For Kendra, the quote resonated with her in that she felt as though she did not have time in her classes to give children enough thinking and exploration time. In another instance, Diana shared her favorite quote from an article by Green (2004), as she said, “[M]y favorite quote was from the student [who said], ‘I learned that if you haven’t got any goals set for you, you’ve got to find some yourself’” (PDC #2, 12/11/11). In general, the participants made several connections between the readings to observations they had made of their students and in comparisons with their own teaching practices. These reflections helped the participants develop deeper understandings of the meaning of informal music learning.

Feeling Validated

Because the participants were trying a new approach in their music teaching, one that required them to adopt new teaching roles and practices to facilitate rather than provide instruction for student learning, the teachers felt both guilty and concerned. However, as a result of reading and discussing the research in the PDC, the participants began to feel as though they had validation from the readings to implement informal music learning in their teaching. As described in the section on doodling under “Student Processes,” Kendra described how she might

have viewed the students as being off-task with their playing, had she not just read about doodling in a research article. This gave Kendra valuable confirmation that her students were responding appropriately in informal music learning, even though it challenged her beliefs about in-school musicking. She described this later in an email, saying:

When I first turned the students loose, my gut reaction was the desire to walk around and tell students that they weren't accomplishing anything and that they weren't on task.

Luckily, I had read Lucy Green's article that discusses the music "doodling" stage and I let the students work through the process on their own.” (Kendra, email, 02/26/12)

After discussing the stages described by Green (2006), the participants wanted to read more about the process Green described, leading the group to choose to read a chapter from Green’s (2008) book on informal music learning. For Cara, she wanted to read more to find further validation regarding the curriculum objectives being met through informal music learning:

Cara: I think I wanna read more of this book, because I wanna see, like, the curricular validation.

Kendra: Mm hmm.

Cara: I wanna hear what she discovered about that.

Julie: Mm hmm.

Cara: ‘Cause seriously, there is that other side of it where you need to be sure they’re learning, that you can assess what they’re learning. Granted, I can videotape things as “Here’s the proof.” But what curricular goals are we actually accomplishing? (PDC #5, 02/12/12)

Although Cara was concerned about how informal music learning accomplished her required curricular objectives, rather than looking to other places or people, she wanted to look to the research. This example shows the faith and value that Cara and the other participants placed in the research they read. Tyler never stated how the readings validated his use of informal music learning, but he did find them valuable, particularly in understanding informal music learning as an approach. “The readings really helped in understanding about informal instruction” (Tyler, Interview #2, 04/14/12).

Then, at the end of the PDC group, the teachers chose to submit a proposal at the state music teacher conference (to be described later in this chapter). In planning the session, the teachers felt it important to include the research basis for informal music learning at the beginning of their session, in order to provide their audience with support for what they had in their classrooms. Specifically, Diana wanted to include some of the findings they had discussed in the PDC from Green’s research (2006; 2008). “Well, what I was thinking was [we could say], “These are the things from Lucy Green that you might wanna know before you start your project” (PDC #7, 03/11/12). She then went on to suggest that they find aspects from Green’s research that matched what they had observed in their own implementation of informal music learning and include them in the presentation as important considerations. Similarly, Kendra shared, “I think it would be really validating just if we started off with some of the research. Just to back it up. To say what it is and explain it” (PDC #8, 03/25/12).

Summary

Reading research was an essential part of the PDC; it introduced the participants to some of the scholarly descriptions regarding informal music learning, provided a common language

and understanding, and provided validation for the teachers to experiment with this new approach to student learning in their classrooms. While the research did require time outside of the PDC meetings to read, the participants did not seem to mind the extra work. Rather, many of them felt as though it gave them a chance to look at current research in music education. The PDC motivated them to read the research because it provided some accountability that they might not have otherwise have had.

Within their conversations at each of the PDC meetings, the participants would compare the descriptions found in the research with what they had seen in their own students and they would quote segments of the readings they found especially meaningful or interesting. In particular, the participants were surprised both by the similarities between their own students and both the student learning processes (Green 2006; 2008) and musical doodling (Jaffurs, 2004) found in the reading. Prior to reading these articles, the teachers implied how they might have dismissed some student behaviors as being off-task or unimportant before reading these descriptions in the research. Finally, the teachers, after feeling uncertain about this new approach in their teaching, began to view the readings as a form of validation for informal music learning. The teachers believed that the readings provided legitimacy for informal music learning and a deeper understanding of the student learning processes and objectives. In particular, the participants found the writings by Green (2006; 2008) to be useful because they described a process of learning resembling what they had observed in their own students. Thus, the research studies rang true for the teachers in their own experiences in implementing them in their own classrooms, and, in doing so, they unexpectedly provided additional support for the findings found in those studies.

Getting Fed Professionally

The teachers initially were concerned about the time and work required for participation in the PDC, but many of them came to value the PDC as a different form of professional development because of the growth and change they experienced, which was described as “getting fed professionally” (Cara, Interview #2, 04/06/12). The first section includes the teachers’ evaluation of the PDC and their comparisons of it to other forms of professional development they had experienced. In their school- or district-provided professional development, the teachers commented that their experiences were not always relevant to what they were teaching in the classroom (i.e., music-specific or area-specific), or they felt that the time in their music professional development was not as productive or deep.

The second section describes the final outcomes of the PDC, in which the teachers chose to share their work in the PDC with other teachers by submitting a proposal for a session at the state’s music teacher annual conference. In the final section, the teachers explain what they liked about this PDC, including its format, the opportunities to read research, and the autonomy to try out ideas in their own time and way. Additionally, the teachers felt as though the PDC gave them permission to implement activities and approach their teaching in ways outside of their comfort zone. Thus, through this PDC, the teachers discovered about informal music learning together in a community of like-minded teachers and experienced an opportunity for meaningful, lasting change to occur in their teaching.

Evaluating the PDC

The participants all had very positive things to say about the PDC. The only negative comment about participation was from Cara, who was concerned about the time commitment of attending the PDC.

[A]t first, I was, like anything, any time I have some sort of new commitment, I'm like, ugh. You know? But, that lasted maybe two sessions, and then it was awesome, because I was getting fed professionally. Because it was nice, because everyone could relate, could understand, had good ideas. It was a little break from. . ., you know, because we weren't sitting at school doing our professional development. (Cara, Interview #2, 04/06/12)

While Cara initially felt ambivalent toward the group, she came to value it because she was growing as a teacher, which she described as “getting fed professionally.” She then went on to describe several positive attributes of the PDC, including her appreciation for meeting in a location other than her school building.

Their comments were so positive that I began to wonder whether the participants felt pressure to hide their criticisms of the PDC with me as the researcher and facilitator. In response, for the final PDC meeting, I invited the participants to anonymously type any concerns or negative comments they had and place them in a box outside. Three participants chose to write anonymous comments; these were also positive. It is possible the participants still felt as though they could not voice their concerns, even anonymously, or perhaps they did not realize the negative aspects of the PDC until after the group adjourned. However, since the participants

never voiced any negative comments to me, this evaluation only includes their positive sentiments.

Some of the participants shared their appreciation for the group during PDC meetings. For example, Cara shared, “I love [getting] new ideas, because I tend to kind of stagnate, get bored” (PDC #4, 01/29/12). Later, Cara and Diana stated a similar positive sentiment:

Cara: Yeah, I’ve definitely—I’ve personally gotten a lot out of it, out of the group. I look forward to it.

Diana: I was thinking, too, on my way over here that the last time I participated in something like this, there was one person who kind of took over. I like how I feel like it’s a team effort. (PDC #6, 02/26/12)

While Cara stated her enjoyment of the group in more general terms, Diana identified that she specifically liked the group of people in the group and how they all got along. Diana later elaborated on this thought:

Well, I don’t know how you picked us. But I’m not sure for me, if it would have been as good if—because usually in every group there’s somebody who dominates, or someone who doesn’t contribute. And I felt like it was a really good group. We were all interested. (PDC #8, 03/25/12)

For Diana, one of the positive aspects of the PDC was in the combination of individuals. She enjoyed how everyone actively participated and was interested, and no one in the group acted in a domineering way. In choosing participants for the group, I was primarily concerned with their qualities as teachers and living in a close proximity to the meeting location and only viewed the teachers’ dispositions as a secondary consideration. However, Diana’s perceptions about the

quality of the group interactions may have also been related to each participants' choice in he or she they participated within the group. One of the aspects of the PDC was that everyone had the autonomy to comment on the readings and implement them in their own way and according to their own time frame. Also, they attended this professional development of their own volition, rather than because they were required to do so. Thus, the group existed to support their individualized teaching. Because the group members were not in competition with each other, nor required to develop a single group product, they could interact symbiotically and with mutual respect for each other. This may have added to the combination of dispositions to result in the productive community.

Permission. The participants also described a sense of permission they felt they received as a result of their participation in the PDC. This permission resembles the permission the teachers provided their students as teacher-facilitators; however, in this case, the teachers viewed the permission as coming from the community that developed in the PDC. Kendra was among the first to mention this idea of permission to me in one of her observations and to the group in one of the early PDC meetings. After this, the use of the term seemed to become adopted by several others in the group.

Kendra first acknowledged the permission that she felt as though she need to give her students, before recognizing that need in herself. "I think giving them permission to mess with it, and it's okay. Like (puts hands to chest), I need that permission still, too" (PDC #4, 01/29/12). Similarly, in that same PDC meeting, Diana shared, "Yeah, I kinda feel like the group gives me permission to—," but she was unfortunately cut off by another teacher before she could finish her thought. However, just before making this statement, Diana shared how she had been thinking

about informal music learning “all the time,” as was described in the section on mindfulness.

Thus, it is likely that Diana felt permission from either the research or the PDC.

While never using the word “permission” directly, Cara implied a similar sentiment. In describing her experience in three words, Cara used the words “freeing” and “fun.” As she stated, “One word I would say was freeing. I found it freeing as a teacher, but for the kids, too, because they’re allowed to go where they wanna go! I think it’s fun, too. Should I do another ‘F’ word?” (Laughter from group) (PDC #8, 03/25/12). After participating in the PDC, Cara felt a new permission to incorporate her students’ interests. “I feel that the biggest thing was to allow myself to go there with the kids. Allow myself to feel okay about talking about popular music and working with the music they listen to.” By saying that she was “allowing” herself to include popular music as a result of the PDC, Cara indicated that she felt that taking that course of action was permissible, similar to the permission described by the other teachers.

Finally, Kendra held such a high regard for the permission she received from participating in the PDC that she used the idea to summarize her entire experience in the group. In answering how her teaching practices had changed after participating in the PDC, Kendra compared her prior teaching, in which she felt she was more structured, to her teaching now. Kendra felt that, as a beginning teacher, she was less structured, but in a way that was not positive; she had worked hard to develop a classroom that was planned and structured in a way to promote student learning (Kendra, Interview #2, 04/15/12). However, she felt that informal music learning provided a way for her to back off and let her students develop independently. She then explained how the PDC gave her the permission she needed to promote that type of learning environment in her classroom: “So I think [I needed] permission to do it, having the

research to see that it's valid; it's valuable, and then brainstorming with other people for how to put it in place was helpful" (Kendra, Interview #2, 04/15/12).

“This Was about Me”: Comparing their Professional Development

The participants all had participated in various forms of professional development during their years of teaching. These professional development experiences ranged from those within their school building to those at the district level and at state conferences. Kendra had attended a reading conference with other teachers from her school as a form of school-required professional development. Although she had not expected to learn anything about music, Kendra made valuable connections between the ways that the conference presenters suggested to motivate students to read and the practices she had been learning about and implementing with informal music learning. In Kendra's case, she was able to make connections across the professional development from both disciplines. In other situations, the teachers did not describe having as much success in their professional development.

In their final interviews, I asked the participants to reflect specifically on how this PDC had compared to other types of professional development. Their statements revealed their frustration in the expectations, group interactions, and lack of autonomy in their required professional development. Earlier in the data collection period, Cara had expressed her frustration in trying to meet with other music teachers in her district.

You know, I get taken out of my classroom quite often to do reading comprehension stuff, and . . . to go to a professional development where I'll actually discuss what I am teaching. That's what I love about this group is that we can just talk about this stuff as [music] teachers. (PDC #5, 02/12/12)

Cara felt that the PDC was a place where she could experience professional development related specifically to teaching music, which she lacked in her district. She went on to discuss how she had to “beg” her principals to let the general music teachers in her district meet to work on their required music curriculum mapping. The frustration in her voice filled the room as she shared this story. Cara had a desire to connect with other music teachers and discuss topics related to general music teachers and the things she was actually teaching, and the PDC provided her with an opportunity to do this. For Cara, she valued her professional development in this setting because of this opportunity. She explained, “Because when music teachers do get together, we just love it. (Smiles)” (PDC #2, 12/11/11).

Tyler and Diana also compared their district professional development experiences to the PDC. Tyler enjoyed the PDC more than his district’s professional development opportunities. According to Tyler, the music teachers in his district attended two full-day workshops. The beginning of the day included all music teachers meeting together, regardless of teaching area, while the afternoon had only elementary general music teachers meet together. However, Tyler felt as though these professional development days were not productive. “[E]very one of those PD days has just been spent arguing about our curriculum and our report card” (Tyler, Interview #2, 04/16/12). In describing his professional development further, Tyler said that this PDC was “a lot more productive,” because in his district,

[T]he way we do it there is kinda just round table discussion, but it’s not really as guided, and maybe if our department chair did give us a reading, no one really did it, and all of us really just argue. (Tyler, Interview #2, 04/15/12)

Tyler believed that the disagreements among music teachers in his district were due to differences in their methodological backgrounds. In this PDC, all of the teachers had training in MLT. However, even though the topic of informal music learning did not directly relate to MLT, the teachers found common ground through their methodological backgrounds, and this may have played a role in the community they formed.

At the beginning of the PDC, I had specifically asked Diana to think about how her district's professional development related to her experience in this PD. In Diana's district, she had a strong working relationship with other general music teachers. These teachers met regularly and communicated frequently through email to provide information about other students, share lesson ideas, and plan for district events. Diana had described feeling "de-valued" in her school district because of her broader vision for her students that extended beyond performing in secondary ensembles and how this was a negative aspect of the interactions she had with the other teachers in her district. She then described how she felt "stretched" in the PDC.

When we do professional development at school, it's never about what I do, and I try to make it fit, but it's not the same. I'm reading it, trying to squeeze myself in between the lines. This was about me, and I could totally engage in what was going on. . . (Diana #2, 04/14/12)

Similar to Tyler, Diana did not have positive things to say about her district professional development. Although she was allotted time provided by their districts to meet with other elementary general music teachers, Diana felt as though the PDC provided her with better opportunities to grow in a way that was motivating and engaging for her personally.

“Sharing What We’ve Learned”

Finally, in the sixth PDC meeting, I asked whether the participants wanted to develop some sort of final project or goal with which to end our time together. At first, the teachers seemed uncertain about developing a final “product;” they could not seem to envision how to summarize their experience. Then after a long pause, Diana quietly suggested, “I feel like I want to share what we’ve learned, but our whole study is going to do that” (PDC #6, 02/26/12). Diana wanted to share about her experience, but she felt as though, since the PDC took place as a part of this research project, that she could not share beyond the group. In response, I suggested that they share their experience at a local MLT chapter meeting, which was an idea that everyone came to like, as Cara explained:

I think that would be good. I’ve been trying to explain it to other people, just to process it myself when I’m not here. Some people are really open to it. And some people are, I think, not understanding because, you know, they’re from the other side, so it’s just hard to envision it. (PDC #6, 02/26/12)

Cara realized that she already had been attempting to describe her experience in implementing informal music learning with other teachers, both for her own learning and to share what she had learned with others. However, she had run into difficulty in making herself clear.

Tyler also agreed with the idea and suggested connecting it more directly to MLT if that was the intended audience. Diana, on the other hand, felt concerned about sharing, and described informal music learning as the “Emperor’s New Clothes,” as though they would be presenting an idea without merit (PDC #7, 03/11/12). However, within the next two weeks, after implementing another informal music learning activity, Diana’s opinion changed, and she began

to realize that she had numerous tips and strategies to share with other teachers. Although Kendra was on board with the idea of presenting, she acknowledged quickly that she would not be able to participate in any presentations in the following school year because she was moving far away. However, she still participated by helping to brainstorm ideas for the potential session.

A large portion of the final PDC was dedicated to brainstorming what should be included in a presentation to other teachers about what they had learned. This ended up being an informative demonstration about what the teachers understood and valued about informal music. The group chose to put together a submission for the state music teacher conference, as well as ask the local MLT chapter if they could be considered for a presentation. In this discussion, they outlined all of the different types of activities that they had implemented that related to informal music learning. They discussed the importance of opening with a discussion of prior research in informal music learning and how that had informed their thinking, and they then described how they wanted to use video clips they had taken of their students to share with other teachers. In the end, I took notes and then compiled the participants' ideas into the required format to submit the session. I then emailed the draft to all of the teachers for their approval and submitted it. I informed the teachers on numerous occasions that they were not required to share and that, in presenting at a conference, they may lose their anonymity as participants in this study. However, the teachers all shared a desire to participate and wanted to make sure that other knew about what they had learned about and implemented with informal music learning.

Summary

Several themes emerged that related directly to the PDC and warranted examination, including the collaborative community, the role of reading research in music teacher professional, and the value of the group according to the participants' experiences. In their group interactions, the teachers shared many different types of ideas and information, including lessons, songs, pedagogical strategies, technological ideas. The teachers encouraged each other, and they also brainstormed new ideas in a trusting environment in which they felt safe to explore new ideas. The teachers also looked beyond their own classrooms and made connections from their pasts and with other individuals in their lives, giving the discussions a personal dimension.

Reading research played an important role in the PDC because it helped the teachers to understand concepts of informal music learning and discover the processes that students use when learning by themselves. The teachers appreciated discovering these processes, particularly those outlined by Green (2006;2008), and they felt as though this research validated their experiments in the classroom. The research made it acceptable for them to approach their students' music learning in new ways.

Finally, the teachers felt as though the PDC "fed them professionally," finding many positive aspects in this form of professional development. The PDC provided a place for the teachers to connect with other music teachers on a regular basis, which they did not necessarily receive in their school districts. They appreciated having a place to discuss ideas with other music teachers from similar backgrounds and having the opportunity to focus on topics that were both motivating and engaging for them as teachers. As a final ending to their time together in the PDC, rather than choosing to say goodbye, the teachers developed a conference proposal

summarizing what they had learned about informal music learning in order to share these ideas and strategies with other music teachers. The teachers' desire to share what they had learned outside of the context of the PDC reveals several important underlying ideas. First, the teachers felt as though the others in the group were people with whom they would want to work with in the future to develop a conference session. This indicates that they had genuine feelings of respect and connection with these individuals, so much so that they would be willing to spend additional time with them. Second, they felt as though their experiences in the PDC were important enough to share with other teachers.

Overall, this PDC, although it began as a group of individual teachers, came together over time and developed into a community. Part of the success of this group lay in the autonomy of the teachers. Rather than having requirements to fulfill, the teachers had the freedom to implement ideas as they chose and in a way that suited them and their students, much like the independence their students experienced in informal music learning. Yet, despite the amount of personal freedom the teachers had within the group, they still were able to come together as a community of elementary general music teachers. Focused on a single topic, the teachers became connected as they mutually desired the best for each other and each other's students. This mutualism extended into a final community project to share their learning with other teachers, so that others might be able to share what they had learned and experience some of the valuable changes they had undergone.

CHAPTER 9: LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

In my final observation with Diana, her enthusiasm for her students' work using informal music learning processes was nearly palpable. At one point, she leaned toward me quickly and said, "This is a goosepimple-y project!" her face lighting up with genuine excitement (Diana, Observation #3, 03/23/12). I, too, agree with Diana's sentiment. I learned so much from working with these teachers, seeing them develop these new activities, engaging with their students, and delving into deep discussions about teaching and learning. This chapter will seek to illuminate the bigger picture of this study within music education and to explain what made this project so "goosepimple-y" for the participants involved, myself included.

In this chapter, I will draw connections between the multiple branches of my results and show their common roots in individualized, autonomous learning. The chapter starts with a summary of the project, beginning with the purpose, problems and methods, and ending with a summary of the results and their relationship to prior research. Then, I discuss the larger meaning of this study within the epistemology of informal music learning, music teacher professional development, and democratic learning environments. I also consider this study's implications for future teaching practices. Finally, I will make suggestions for future research. In summarizing this project in this way, I hope to shed light on the practices and perspectives and the challenges and successes of these participants in implementing informal music processes in their classrooms.

Since this is a case study of four music teachers in a single professional development community (PDC), the findings cannot be generalized. This study represents the experiences of

a few individuals, making the results time- and context-dependent. However, others in similar contexts may find the results useful, as it adds to the existing knowledge about informal music learning and music teachers' professional development. Additionally, in these conclusions and implications, as in the rest of this document, I have attempted to take a reflexive stance, in order to present any real or potential biases that may have influenced my interpretation (Creswell, 2007; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). I hope this will add to the trustworthiness of my conclusions and implications.

I am a proponent of the use of informal music learning in schools, which is a bias that led me to this study. However, the ideas and perceptions of the teachers in this study are entirely their own. Also, while I had a more active role in facilitating and participating in the PDC, I tried to limit my involvement, so that the teachers would not feel any undue pressure act or speak in a certain way. Almost certainly, as in all research studies, I failed at this in some way. Yet at the same time, my deep involvement and interactions with these teachers through dialogue and observations in multiple settings gave me unique insights into some of the subtleties of their characters. These insights invariably added to my interpretations.

Project Summary

The purpose of this study, was to explore the processes, perceptions, and practices of music teachers as they participated in a PDC to read research about, discuss, and implement informal music learning in their music classrooms. Specifically, this study sought to investigate the following questions:

1. In what ways and to what extent does the learning in this PDC manifest itself in classroom practice?
2. How do music teachers' philosophical beliefs and pedagogical practices evolve throughout their participation in the PDC?
3. What professional, personal, pedagogical, and musical characteristics of the music teachers contribute to their implementation of informal music pedagogical strategies in their classrooms?
4. How does the exploration of informal music learning characteristics interact with the practices in which teachers are already engaging in their classrooms?

Additionally, an emic fifth question emerged from the data in regards to the teachers' participation and interactions in the PDC:

5. What was the nature of the teachers' participation within this professional development community?

Methods

This study was an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) of four music teachers participating in a PDC focused on the topic of informal music learning activities. Ethnographic methodological techniques were used in data collection and analysis in an attempt to reveal insights by observing, listening to, and talking with the participants (Creswell, 2007). In order to establish trustworthiness of the data, I employed data triangulation, member checks, and peer review of the data (Creswell, 2007).

The participants included four music teachers—Cara, Diana, Kendra, and Tyler—with varying ages, backgrounds, and experiences, although all had been certified in Music Learning

Theory, a elementary general music teaching methodology. The participants were selected primarily based on their interest and proximity to the PDC meeting location, but with some consideration given to their dispositions and how these individuals might work together. Three of the participants taught elementary general music for grades kindergarten through five or six, and one taught fifth grade general music and sixth grade choir in an intermediate school. The participants had taught music in varying years ranging from two to over 20 years.

The teachers met in the PDC bi-monthly for two hours in a private residence from November, 2011, through March, 2012. However, due to the holidays, the PDC met only once in both November and December, for a total of 8 meetings. The PDC meetings were broken into segments of socializing and eating, sharing applications from the previous meeting, discussing scholarly literature about informal music learning, and developing new activities to try in their classrooms. These meetings were videotaped, and the videotapes were later transcribed. Other data included transcriptions of two semi-structured individual interviews with each of the participants, one at the beginning and one at the end of the study, fieldnotes from one to three classroom observations of each teachers as they implemented informal music learning, and written data from emails and comments on the PDC's private Facebook page.

Summary of Results

Themes emerged relating to four main areas: (1) "Applications and Perspectives": the teachers' applications of informal music learning and their perspectives of students' experience, (2) "Pedagogical Practices Supporting Informal Music Learning": the practices the teachers used to support their students during informal music learning activities that fell into continua of teacher-student control and of teacher scaffolding, (3) "New Windows into Students'

Musicianship”: the unexpected insights and observations teachers made about their students’ informal musicking, and (4) “The Professional Development Community”: the collaborative community that developed in the PDC, and the professional growth the participants experienced.

“Applications and Perspectives.” The “Applications and Perspectives” theme described the activities that the participants developed and implemented using informal music learning ideas from the PDC and their evaluation of both the benefits for students and also the challenges they faced. These activities, which the participants frequently referred to as “experiments,” were developed out of modifications from the readings, prior lessons they had taught, or adaptations made in the moment to accommodate student needs. Frequently, they had to make these kinds of modifications in order to accommodate differences in their specific music classroom settings. Since most of the articles they had read about informal music learning took place with middle school or high school students, the participants had to make modifications to incorporate informal music learning with their elementary general music and choir students. More specifically, the participants developed the following types of informal music learning activities during the data collection period:

1. Music Share Day: Teachers invited students to perform songs of their choice that they had learned outside of music class.
2. Popular Song Melodies on the Recorder: Teachers had students learn to play melodies from popular songs on their recorders from notation and/or aural copying.
3. Small Group Covers with Instruments: Teachers had small groups of students to try to recreate a popular music song using voice and classroom instruments like barred instruments, recorders, and drums.

4. Small Group a Cappella Covers: Teachers had students in small groups try to recreate a popular music song using only their voices to perform both melody and accompaniment parts.

5. Rock Compositions: One teacher had students compose a rock song using classroom instruments like barred instruments, recorders, and drums.

Over time, as the participants implemented several different applications of informal music learning in their classrooms, they began to think about and reflect on it constantly, which I called, “mindfulness.” They recognized how the practices used by students in informal music learning resulted in a type of musicianship that was congruent with their teaching philosophies, curriculum, and methodological training. The music teachers began to value the use of informal music learning as they observed the levels of engagement, motivation, student ownership, and student independence in their students.

As a result of implementing informal music learning practices, the teachers began to have an expanded view of independent musicianship. While they had previously had a skills-based orientation to musical independence in which they wanted students to develop proficiency on specific musical skills, by the end of the data collection period, the participants began to believe in a more holistic, student-based orientation to musical independence. They still wanted their students to have musical skills, but they now also wanted them to have motivation and ownership in their musicking. Overall, Kendra described informal music learning as “taking the training wheels off” in students’ learning to see what they had learned and could achieve on their own. Likewise, the teachers all began to value informal music learning because it supported students’ development of life-long, independent musicianship.

However, even though the participants felt that informal music learning was beneficial, they also faced several concerns and challenges relating to the legitimacy of informal music learning, their new teaching roles, and the logistics of implementing informal music practices. The teachers were concerned about how their principals, students' parents, and their peers would view these activities. Because they were letting the students work independently, they were frequently standing back and monitoring, and they were concerned that others would perceive their teaching in these activities as "lazy" or that they were not adequately fulfilling their professional responsibilities. Diana had even labeled their teaching in informal music learning as "The Emperor's New Clothes," as though their teaching was a farce. The teachers felt especially concerned about their principals' reactions because, during the time of this study, teacher evaluations were becoming used more frequently to determine whether teachers were effective and should be retained. Additionally, the participants felt concerned about the legitimacy of using popular music, as well as the logistical concerns relating to the amount of time informal music projects took, using technology, and supporting students with special needs. In particular, the teachers found that some students with special needs like ASD struggled with the lack of structure, and they found that they needed to provide additional guidance for these students.

"Pedagogical Practices Supporting Informal Music Learning." The theme regarding pedagogical practices revealed that the strategies teachers used fell into two separate continua: a continuum of teacher-student control and one of teacher scaffolding. On the continuum of control, the teachers used practices relating to the song selections and group membership in informal music learning activities that ranged from having more control in student behaviors to giving up control in order to give students greater autonomy in their informal processes. In both

the song selection and group memberships, the teachers ranged from making selections for students to letting students choose for themselves. However, sometimes the teachers also provided a mediated choice in which they selected a set of pre-determined songs from which students could choose or put student-selected pairs together.

Pertaining to the continuum of teacher scaffolding, the teachers implemented pedagogical practices ranging from the teachers providing more explicit and direct involvement to having a more diminished involvement in students' informal music learning processes. More specifically, the practices found on this continuum were providing lyrics and/or notation, modeling examples, giving permission, and being hands-off. In providing the lyrics and/or notation and modeling examples, the teachers provided greater involvement by trying to steer the students' processes in a certain direction. For example, in providing the lyrics and/or notation, the teachers were trying to direct the students toward listening to multiple parts in the recording, rather than taking time to perform the melody. On the other end of the continuum, in giving students permission to work independently when they expressed uncertainty in doing so or in being hands-off to let the students work independently, the teachers were providing less scaffolding.

Occasionally, the teachers demonstrated some practices that impeded students' informal music learning processes, such as when they stepped in to provide unsolicited comments while students were working, interrupted their doodling, or tried to convince students of a particular song choice. While these impediments were offered with good intentions, they did not always help and sometimes hindered students in their informal music learning projects.

Over time, the teachers recognized that, in using these pedagogical practices during informal music learning, their teaching was becoming more student-centered and democratic. In

being open-minded toward students' interests and providing more opportunities for students to make decisions about their own learning, the teachers found that their students felt more valued as individual learners, which resulted in greater focus and respect for the teachers in both their informal learning and while participating in formal instruction. Thus, the teachers found that they wanted to continue including informal activities in their classes and to find a balance between formal and informal activities, and they sought to continue working toward having a democratic classroom and an environment in which they could communicate and spread their personal passion for music with their students.

“New Windows into Students’ Musicianship.” In implementing new activities and pedagogical practices in informal music learning, the participants began to remark on the new insights they were gaining into their students’ musicianship and personalities. The teachers discovered that students’ processes appeared to be very “messy,” with little focus and a lot of chatter. However, the teachers began recognizing that in doodling (Jaffurs, 2004), the students were beginning to figure things out for themselves. The teachers also observed their students teaching and supporting each other and providing thoughtful, sometimes extremely frank, critiques of their work. The teachers felt as though these musical processes allowed them to assess their students musical achievements in a holistic way, as well as examine the results of their teaching over multiple years.

The teachers found that the informal music learning activities served as windows into who their students were as individuals. They found that some students emerged as unexpected performers and leaders, when these same students had exhibited little interest or participation in

music class. The teachers also were impressed when students began adding musical features like multiple layers and attempts at harmony in their informal projects.

Many students began to share details about the musicking they were doing beyond school. Some students even asked whether working on their songs for the informal music activities at home would be “cheating,” and they shared stories about choosing songs and groups, practicing their parts, and even teaching each other outside of school. The teachers appreciated these new insights from their students and felt as though the students’ participation and musical achievements exceeded their expectations for the informal music learning activities. Overall, the teachers’ observations and insights into new aspects of their students’ musicianship provided further evidence to the change in their teaching and that they were providing a more democratic and student-centered learning environment during informal music learning activities.

“The Professional Development Community.” In addition to the participants’ applications, perceptions, and observations of informal music learning in their classrooms, the data revealed findings related to the professional development community. These teachers came together in a collaborative community by sharing different types of ideas, like lesson and song ideas, pedagogical strategies, and useful technologies and computer programs. However, they may have initially connected because of their common background in MLT served as a foundation for respect. By providing personal stories, asking each other questions, brainstorming new ideas, and in encouraging and supporting one another, the teachers created a safe and nurturing environment for them to explore informal music learning. In addition, reading research articles played an important role in the PDC in introducing teachers to the ideas and processes found in informal music learning research and building a common set of

understandings between them. In particular, the teachers felt as though the descriptions provided in the research regarding what students did during informal music learning and how other teachers reacted gave them validation for what they were seeing themselves. In receiving this validation, the teachers felt more confident in including informal music learning activities.

Finally, in comparing the PDC to their previous professional development experiences, the teachers felt as though they were being “fed professionally,” in that the PDC allowed them to connect with other music teachers and discuss topics that were important to them. The teachers appreciated the connections formed with the other teachers in the PDC, which were made more easily because of their similar backgrounds and common teaching methodology. Although the teachers had personal autonomy to implement informal music learning according to their own way and time frame, they felt a mutual desire to contribute and participate in the group. This mutualism led to the participants developing a proposal for a conference proposal with the hope that they would be able to share what they had learned with other music teachers.

Conclusions

The four participating music teachers in this study had positive experiences within the PDC and with implementing informal music learning practices in their classrooms. While previous studies have explored characteristics of informal music learning and their effects on student understandings (Abramo, 2011; Allsup, 2003; Davis, 2008, 2010; Green, 2006, 2008; Jaffurs, 2006; Tobias, 2011), and scholars have promoted the use of informal music learning in school music settings (Davis, 2008; Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2006, 2008; Jaffurs, 2004, 2006; Vakeva, 2006; Westerlund, 2006), few studies have explored informal music learning from the

teacher's perspective (Abramo & Austin, 2012; Ruthmann, 2006). Based on the results of this study, several conclusions can be made in regards to the teacher's experience in implementing informal music learning, particularly experienced teachers discovering this approach for the first time. These conclusions are included below.

Informal music learning provided a new avenue for the music teachers to support their goals of having a democratic classroom and developing their students' independent musicianship.

The music teachers in this study all held a belief in the importance of helping students develop into independent musicians prior to beginning their participation in this study and had sought to provide this through their formal instruction. As a result of implementing informal music learning practices in their classrooms, the participants found that they now had a different set of pedagogical practices and learning activities to help their students develop independent musicianship. Prior to implementing informal music learning, the teachers stated their understanding of independent musicianship in skills-based terms, like teaching their students to keep a steady beat and sing in tune. However, after discovering how to be hands-off in their teaching, the participants could step back and observe as their students were developing this musical independence themselves, and they recognized how their classrooms were becoming more democratic and student-centered in the process. The participants became more open-minded to students' interests and natural learning processes, similar to findings with undergraduate music education students who experienced informal music learning (Wright & Kanellopoulos, 2010). In this way, the independent musicianship and democratic classrooms

that developed were both a catalyst for and a result of the modified activities and teacher-facilitator practices used in the informal music learning.

Many of the themes in this study relate to characteristics described in previous literature on informal music learning, such as student musical independence, doodling, and peer teaching (Allsup, 2003; Campbell, 1995; Davis, 2005; Green, 2008; Jaffurs, 2004; Tobias, 2010). Thus, this study provides additional indirect confirmation of those studies. However, by implementing informal music learning, the music teachers in this study were able to see these characteristics first-hand in their classrooms and second-hand in the sharing of student work in the PDC, as they discussed and confirmed their experiences and practices with peers. This first- and second-hand knowledge was an essential component leading to the teachers' adoption and acceptance of informal music learning as a valid approach to teaching and learning music.

While none of the teachers in this study was a "doubting Thomas" who needed to see in order to believe, seeing the processes and products from the literature mirrored in their own students provided important validation and added to the richness of the teachers' transformations. It is possible that, since they were exposed to these characteristics and ideas in the readings from the PDC, the participants simply saw what they expected to see. In response to this, I would argue first, the teachers *believed* they were seeing these qualities in their students, and thus, this study presents their perceptions of implementing informal music learning. However, in my own observations, I also saw examples supporting these informal characteristics. Second, I would argue that it is less important *where* or *how* the teachers became aware of these characteristics of informal music learning, but more important that they did discover them and that it resulted in a change in their approach to students and their teaching practices. In this way, the teachers'

changes embodied many of the rationale for both music education and informal music learning (Bowman, 2004; Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2006, 2008; Jaffurs, 2004, 2006; Vakeva, 2006; Westerlund, 2006; Wright & Kanellopoulos, 2010).

Music teachers' employed pedagogical strategies in informal music learning activities that lay on continua of teacher-student control and of teacher scaffolding.

In implementing informal music learning activities, the teachers had to employ several different teaching practices than those that they were accustomed to using regularly in their formal instruction in regards to the song selection, group membership, and types of teacher scaffolding. Regarding choices of songs and group members, these practices lay on a continuum ranging from having more teacher control, such as when the teachers selected the songs and groups or tried to direct the students' informal processes, to more teacher-mediated practices, like providing a set of teacher-approved songs or assembling groups from student-chosen pairs, to being hands-off and giving students permission and freedom to make their own choices. This continuum resembles those described by Ruthmann (2006), who described the teaching practices of the participant in his case study as being continua of "formal vs. informal learning" (p. 234), "teacher control vs. learner agency" (p. 235).

In the continuum of teacher scaffolding, the teachers ranged from being more involved in student processes by providing lyrics and/or notation and modeling, to being less involved by giving permission and being hands-off. These resemble Ruthman's continua of "isolated skills vs. creative experiences" (p. 238), "learning as banking vs. learning as constructing" (p. 240), and "learner as individual vs. learner as social" (p. 241). Like "Marj," the teacher in Ruthmann's

study, the participants in this study faced negotiations and navigations in these pedagogical practices, but unlike “Marj,” these participants did not report having any informal music learning experiences in their personal backgrounds that influenced these teaching practices. Rather, Cara’s, Diana’s, Kendra’s, and Tyler’s pedagogical changes were adopted as a result of learning about informal music learning in the PDC, learning about the strategies used by each other, and modifying their pedagogical practices as they needed to accommodate student learning in the informal music learning projects. Similarly, Davis (2008) recommended the use of an “informed teacher scaffolding” in which teachers develop “recognition of the sometimes non-sequential nature of learning and depth of students’ musical thinking through metaphorical processes” (pp. 15-16), but the types of teacher scaffolding described in this study differ from those Davis described.

Over time, after implementing informal music activities and receiving support and validation from research and their peers in the PDC, the teachers began to implement more teacher-mediated and teacher-facilitated practices that promoted student choice. The teacher-mediated practices were a sort of stepping stone away from having teacher control as they began to have the confidence to give students more independence. Finally, some teachers began to exhibit teacher-facilitated practices, such as being hands-off in the classroom, modeling examples of potential processes, and giving permission for students to try things on their own. In particular, in being “hands-off,” the teachers seemed to be providing the “metaphorical space” described by Allsup (2003) that is necessarily in the development of a democratic learning community.

As their pedagogical practices changed, so did the music teachers' attitudes toward informal music learning. Initially, they described many challenges and concerns, such as fearing the perceptions and evaluations of their principals, the legitimacy of the approach, and their guilt in being hands-off with their students, which resembles the challenges and "cognitive discomfort" described by preservice teachers when studying informal music learning in methods classes (Davis & Blair, 2011; Finney & Philpott, 2010; Wright & Kanellopoulos, 2010) and by other teachers implementing informal music learning for the first time (Abramo & Austin, 2012; Davis, 2008; Green 2008). Eventually, they came to value informal music learning because it allowed them to support their students' musical independence, and they became aware of how their teaching had changed to include these teacher-facilitated practices and to be more open-minded to their students' processes and interests.

Music teachers discovered, in being hands-off in their teaching, new windows into student processes and new insights into their students as individuals.

Music teachers learned new insights about their students' interests, musical abilities, and motivations as a result of watching them work independently. The teachers noticed the "messiness" of students' processes and the prevalence of doodling performed by their students (Green, 2006, 2008; Jaffurs, 2006). The teachers also were impressed with the interactions between students, including how they worked together, taught each other, supported each others' strengths and weaknesses, and allowed for new leaders and performers to emerge (Davis, 2008; Green, 2008; Jaffurs, 2006). These insights provide further evidence of how the teachers had changed. Had their teaching not changed as result of implementing informal music learning,

these teachers probably would not have made these observations, which they viewed as “windows” into their students’ minds. Thus, these insights were the manifestations of the teachers’ new approach, which developed through their implementation of informal music learning.

Music teachers valued the PDC as a community in which they could share and develop ideas, receive permission and validation from research and each other, and interact with others.

The music teachers appreciated having the PDC as a time during which they could focus on the development of their own teaching, without any outside pressures or distractions. They appreciated the format of the PDC, because it provided some structure to guide the discussions, but they also enjoyed being able to divert from topics occasionally to discuss ideas that interested them. They shared a variety of different types of ideas and information with each other. First, they shared lesson plan ideas and activities. Their applications were modifications from what they had read in research, of prior activities modified to include more informal learning characteristics, and ideas they developed in the moment, such as when Diana chose to include a student’s doodling of “Eye of the Tiger” (Sullivan & Peterik, 1982) to teach all of the students a new recorder fingering, similar to the “reflexive pedagogy” described by Davis (2008). They shared song ideas and even notations for songs in the group’s Dropbox site. They also shared pedagogical strategies and technological tips. In addition to sharing things that they had already done, they used the PDC as a place to brainstorm new ideas and connect with the discussion topics in both personal and professional ways. Thus, the PDC was a place in which the music

teachers could freely explore informal music learning prior to applying it to their own unique teaching context.

The music teachers learned about informal music learning by reading and discussing research articles about informal music learning. The teachers viewed the articles as providing validation for what they were doing, particularly when it required them to go beyond their comfort zones. In particular, they seemed to gravitate toward Green's (2008) study about informal music learning, because it provided many student examples as well as a sequential approach they could implement in their own classrooms. Green cautioned against using these stages as a "curriculum," and, although the music teachers in this study did not view it as such, they appreciated having a clear description of potential activities they could implement, which may have implications in the writing of other research that is accessible for practicing teachers. While other studies had sought to expose preservice teachers to informal music learning in undergraduate methods classes (Davis & Blair, 2011; Finney & Philpott, 2010; Wright & Kanellopoulos, 2010), the current study involved the introduction of this topic to practicing teachers. Also, although the teachers remarked that they were having to think as they had when taking graduate courses, they also recognized that, unlike a class, they could develop their own agenda and implement the ideas individually.

Additionally, the use of videotapes was instrumental in helping the music teachers have "permission" to try these new ideas. Although the teachers in other studies of professional development group used videotapes in order to dissect their teaching and work toward developing better teaching practices (Gruenhagen, 2007; Stanley, 2009), the music teachers in this study used videotapes of their students as evidence of the effectiveness of informal music

learning. Arguably, there was little “teaching” on the videotapes teachers shared in the PDC.

However, in sharing what their students did and describing how they facilitated their students in getting there, the teachers were able to develop their teaching practice to be more student-centered.

The PDC mirrored many of the practices of informal music learning, in that it allowed teachers to work autonomously, pursue the topic according to their own timeline and interests, and teach each other through sharing ideas, lesson plans, and examples of student work.

Unlike the professional development they received from their school districts, the music teachers appreciated the PDC because it allowed them to connect with other music teachers and discuss new ideas that mattered to them. While other studies of professional development groups followed a protocol for when and how the participants were expected to respond (Stanley, 2009), the music teachers in this study had the freedom to explore and implement ideas at their own pace and in their own way, without any competition or comparisons from others within the group. Thus, the music teachers had a mutualistic approach to the PDC; rather than attending the PDC in order to develop and benefit the PDC, the PDC functioned to support the teachers’ individualistic and autonomous efforts. This idea of promoting teaching independence and autonomy mirrors an essential characteristic of informal music learning. This was intentional in my facilitation of the group but never overtly stated; however, the participants seemed to pick up on this, and they seemed to thrive as a result.

Also, as in informal music learning, the participants learned from each other. Through hearing descriptions of their activities, song selections, perspectives, and values, the music teachers' changed in ways that may have been more effective than if they had approached this endeavor alone, as the band teacher in Abramo and Austin's (2012) study did in trying to modify his teaching for a high school composition class. At the end of the PDC, as a way to bring the PDC to a close, the teachers came up with the idea to share their ideas with others, similar to the collaborative project developed by other music teachers in a similar professional development group (Gruenhagen, 2009). Their decision to develop a conference proposal and their willingness to share the lessons, song choices, literature they had read, and student outcomes from implementing informal music learning further reveal the impact that this professional development experience had on these teachers. This is evidence that the pride and excitement the teachers felt about their experience was so strong that they felt it worthy of sharing publicly with peers.

Implications

Overall, the music teachers who participated in this PDC and implemented informal music learning in their classrooms viewed this experience as a rewarding and enriching one that resulted in changed perspectives of student musical independence and in using teaching practices that supported a more democratic classroom. While research often serves to move knowledge, in music education, this knowledge has the potential of becoming irrelevant unless it results in a change in the teaching and learning of students. This study provided an example of how a progressive idea in music education could be introduced to practicing music teachers, and this

may be applied as a model for music teachers in other areas (instrumental, choral, music production classes, etc.) and with other topics. With this in mind, the following implications and recommendations for practice should be considered:

1. Teachers can implement informal music learning as an approach to develop independent student musicianship, enhanced student engagement, and a more democratic classroom.

In education, scholars have long promoted the ideal of the democratic classroom (Allsup, 2002, 2003; Bowman, 2004; Dewey, 1956; Freire, 2000; Jaffurs, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978), but often, this remains a lofty ideal. In this study, I was surprised to see democracy adopted in such a practical, concrete way. In implementing the characteristics of informal music learning, the teachers first viewed them as activities to “try,” rather than considering them as little more than that. However, in observing their students work together in small groups with little direction or input from the teachers, the teachers began to see their students blossom into independent musicians, with some students showing more motivation and engagement than the teachers had previously seen.

Over time, the teachers continued modifying their practice to facilitate that type of learning they were observing in their students, and only after these events did the teachers begin to recognize their classrooms as having more democratic qualities. This could have meant that the teachers found themselves to be irrelevant, similar to Diana’s initial view of informal music learning being like the “Emperor’s New Clothes.” However, the teachers rationalized their position by recognizing the role of formal instruction in helping students develop the basic skills they needed to make their informal learning experiences successful, which they frequently

expressed in metaphors in comparing formal instruction to providing “building blocks” or informal instruction as “taking off the training wheels.” As in riding a bike, children need someone there when taking off the training wheels to encourage them to keep pedaling, to keep them from falling when they wobble, or to pick them up when they fall; the music teachers in this study were able to provide this for their students through teacher scaffolding, while still promoting their independence and engagement.

Thus, informal music learning may serve as an approach to teaching and learning music that can provide a path for helping teachers achieve democracy in the classrooms and make their learning in the classroom more relevant to their students’ lives. In particular, Dewey (1956) promoted that education should not be divorced from students’ real lives. By allowing students to choose their songs, groups, learning processes, and create musical products that were both meaningful and relevant, the teachers discovered a way to make democracy more present in their classrooms. Thus, music education may continue to view this as a valid and important approach that supports this ideal.

2. Informal music learning practices can support the music learning of upper elementary-aged children, but may need to be modified according to students’ technical abilities on classroom instruments or to accommodate some students with special needs.

While the music teachers in this study read several articles about informal music learning, few specifically discussed its use with primarily upper elementary-aged students, rather than students at the secondary level. However, those took place in a band setting or on the playground, rather than a general music or choral setting (Davis, 2010; Harwood, 1998). The

music teachers in this study found ways to adapt the activities to make them practically and meaningfully applied with their students in grades five and six. While the music teachers found that the students sometimes struggled to cover the sounds of the popular songs using classroom instruments, Diana and Cara believed they had greater success in having students copy the sounds vocally, because students could recreate the sounds without having to match pitch or learn instrument fingerings and techniques. Nearly all of the other studies on informal music learning used instruments, usually those found in popular music (Abramo, 2011; Allsup, 2003; Davis, 2008, 2010; Green, 2006, 2008; Jaffurs, 2006; Tobias, 2010), but this study revealed how music teachers could apply these practices in a general music and choral setting. Additionally, due to the popularity of a cappella singing and arranging in television shows and the internet, this jump was not difficult, because many students already had some familiarity with this vocal style.

Two of the teachers experienced challenges related to implementing informal music learning with students with special needs. Cara and Diana both had trouble with students who had ASD or displayed characteristics similar to children with ASD. Each described students having “meltdowns” as a result of the lack of structure and sequence in informal music learning processes, and this issue was not completely resolved by the end of the data collection period. Currently, no research seems to provide any other descriptions of students with ASD or other special needs having similar struggles. While criticisms have been expressed regarding the use of informal music learning in schools (Allsup, 2008; Lindgren & Ericsson, 2010), none have specifically related to issues for students with special needs. Thus, informal music learning practices may need to be adapted, or music teachers may need to develop specific practices for

supporting special needs students who need a more structured learning environment in order to succeed.

3. Music teachers may need support, permission, and validation when implementing informal music learning and other new concepts.

In this study, the music teachers both learned about and implemented new activities and teaching practices. This caused several concerns and challenges for the music teachers, ranging from their feelings of guilt and concerns about perceptions of others, to struggles in supporting students with special needs. Having a place where they could discuss these ideas with other music teachers who were employing similar strategies and experiencing similar student reactions allowed them receive the support and permission they needed for encouragement to continue in this new endeavor, similar to findings of other studies of professional development groups (Gruenhagen, 2007; Stanley, 2009). Professional development communities may be especially valuable for music teachers, who may be isolated from other music teachers in their school buildings. The participants felt as though they needed permission to try these ideas, which they then extended to students by encouraging them to think independently. Thus, professional development experiences may benefit from providing structures like those developed by the teachers in this PDC that support them in their adoption of informal music learning and other new teaching and learning concepts.

4. Music teacher educators can continue to introduce informal music learning and other approaches supporting vernacular musicianship in methods classes and might seek ways to share these ideas with experienced and practicing music teachers.

Undergraduate music education methods courses are beginning to introduce informal music learning, and studies have begun to document the changes preservice teachers undergo as they begin to accept these ideas (Davis & Blair, 2011; Finney & Philpott, 2010; Wright & Kanellopoulos, 2010). The teachers in this study who were introduced to informal music learning were practicing, experienced teachers. More currently practicing music teachers can be introduced to informal music learning characteristics. Practicing music teachers might benefit from being given examples of activities they can use and ways in which they can modify their teaching practices to support the inclusion of informal music learning practices in their classrooms. Music teacher educators may need to find additional ways to share about informal music learning with practicing teachers through state conferences, presentations at local music teacher Orff, Kodaly, and Music Learning Theory chapters or choral and band director chapters, in graduate courses, or in PDCs like the one in this study. Also, as more preservice music teachers begin to learn about these ideas in undergraduate methods courses and try them in their student teaching placements, music teacher educators may be able to provide support and validation for informal music learning to the cooperating teachers, which may further encourage experienced teachers to adopt these practices for themselves.

5. Professional development for music teachers can include opportunities for autonomy and a collaborative community, similar to the model used in this PDC.

Professional development is essential for music teachers to develop their teaching qualities and move forward in their teaching practices. The teachers in this study all expressed some dissatisfaction with their district-provided professional development or bemoaned the lack of professional development provided by their principals. This finding resembles that from prior studies in which music teachers stated preferences for individualized, music-specific professional development opportunities provided by university music departments or regional and state music organizations (Bowles, 2006; Conway, 2005). While it may be that these teachers happened to teach in districts with unsuccessful or unproductive professional development for music teachers, the participants in this PDC appreciated having the opportunity to come together with other music teachers. Other music teachers may benefit from similar opportunities. In particular, the teachers in this study seemed to recognize the similarities among their peers in their philosophical beliefs and MLT methodological training. Thus, music teachers may feel more comfortable in professional development experiences that offer opportunities to interact with like-minded individuals, similar to the preference for and prevalence of elementary general music teachers to participate in methodology-focused professional development like Orff and Kodaly workshops (Bernard, 2009; Tarnowski & Murphey, 2002).

This PDC group had several characteristics that may be beneficial to other teacher professional groups. The group meetings met outside of school, and incorporated a time for socializing and eating (Gruenhagen, 2007; Stanley, 2009). This time was important to help the teachers feel comfortable and to get connected. Next, the group spent time reflecting on applications that teachers had implemented in their teaching since the previous meeting, which allowed the teachers to talk about the successes and challenges they had faced. The group then

discussed the assigned research article they had read prior to the meeting in order to further their understandings of informal music learning. Finally, the group brainstormed new ideas for activities and their practice based on the group discussions. Rather than making these segments in the PDC rigid in their time and content, the group functioned more fluidly, sometimes weaving in and out of the various sections. However, having these components provided some structure to sequence the flow of the discussions. Other professional development groups, workshops, presentations, or university partnerships may consider using all or some of these characteristics in providing music teacher professional development.

In particular, this professional development community was unique in its incorporation of reading music education research articles as part of the group. The participants in this study all described this as a valuable aspect that aided in their success in implementing informal music learning activities. In particular, reading research articles gave the participants both permission to try new ideas and also validation for attempting a new approach to student music learning. The participants responded with particular interest to the writings of Lucy Green (2006, 2008), saying that they appreciated the clearly defined pedagogical stages used in schools and the detailed descriptions of both student processes and teacher reactions that they could immediately and easily relate to their own experiences. Thus, including high-quality, accessible research in music teacher professional development may be an effective practice that could help support the growth of teachers in other settings. However, music teacher educators may need to take a more active role in participating in or providing support to professional development groups in order to help in the selection of appropriate, current, and relevant research studies.

Also, like other studies of professional development communities, the music teachers in this study worked toward a final goal (Gruenhagen, 2007), which in this case involved sharing their ideas with other teachers. The music teachers developed this idea, along with their informal music learning applications, autonomously, which not only mirrored the practices found in informal music learning, but also added to the success of the group (Gruenhagen, 2007). Thus, other professional development models, whether provided through schools, districts, or universities, should consider recognizing the importance of allowing the teachers to be independent learners. Independent and autonomous learning in music teacher professional development may be essential for more meaningful or lasting teaching change.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research from this study relates to both informal music learning and to professional development in music education. This study revealed that, as a result of implementing informal music learning, teachers found that their teaching became more student-centered and democratic. More support is needed to determine whether other teachers in similar and different settings would report similar findings. Also, this study took place with primarily elementary general music teachers, although two teachers also taught sixth grade choir, which in some settings is considered to be a middle school grade level. Thus, more research is needed to explore the applications of informal music learning pedagogical practices and perceptions of music teachers as they implement them at various age levels (primary and secondary), and in various types of classrooms (general music, choral, instrumental, music technology and production, etc.).

Since two participants experienced difficulties in supporting informal music learning practices with students with special needs, more research is needed to focus on whether this approach and the lack of structure typically associated with informal music learning may pose cognitive or emotional challenges for some learners, particularly those with ASD. Also, studies could explore what types of teaching practices can be implemented to support students facing these challenges. More research is needed with various types of music teachers. All of the teachers in this study had a common methodological training, which served as a uniting factor for developing the nurturing community within the PDC. This calls into question whether music teachers from different methodological backgrounds can develop a similar sense of community in PDCs. The majority of studies using PDCs have had participants from early childhood and elementary general backgrounds. More research is needed to discover the interactions and perceptions of music teachers from choral and instrumental backgrounds and from teachers at the same career stage.

One participant had a student teacher during the time of this study who was not a part of the data collection or analysis. Future research also could explore the processes and perceptions of student teachers as they explore informal music learning in classrooms for the first time and then follow up to determine whether they attempt to implement informal music learning and teacher-facilitated practices as beginning teachers. The teachers in this study all received support and permission from others in the PDC who were implementing informal music learning. Further research is needed to examine the effectiveness of teachers who implement informal music learning without this support system, and future studies could explore whether the teacher changes that developed from this experience result in long-term change. Also, given the current

educational climate and the push for value-added models in teacher evaluations, more research is needed to consider whether these pressures for teachers affect their willingness or ability to try out new types of activities and pedagogical practices.

In regards to the professional development community, this study found that it provided a nurturing, collaborative community in which teachers could discuss new ideas and share student work in an autonomous environment. In particular, reading research played an important role in validating the teachers' views and practices. Thus, more research is needed to determine how music teachers can use scholarly literature as the focus of their professional development and as a catalyst for change in their teaching practices. Can research-based PDCs result in lasting teaching change? Also, are university partnerships necessary in order to help in the selection research articles and in the dissemination of progressive topics in research-based professional development groups? What role should university faculty play in these groups and other research-based professional development groups? More research needs to explore the role of autonomy in teacher professional development and whether the four segments of this professional development—socializing, past applications, reading research, and brainstorming new applications—can result in lasting and effective teacher change.

A Final Note

To close, I leave you with words from the introduction of this dissertation that sum up the experience of these teachers who participated in this professional development community better than I ever could:

My kids were really proud of themselves. The process was cool to see. It was cool to see them working things out in a way, kind of like how they talked about

in the article, like, “That sounds cool,” or “Let’s add that.” That process was really fun to watch, but I think that what they came up with, they had ownership of it in a way that they wouldn’t have had if I would’ve been like, “Play the drum part like this.” So that ownership piece, I think, was huge for my kids, and the permission to experiment and to take ownership of it. (Cara, PDC meeting #4, 01/29/12)

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Research Participant Information and Consent Form

You are being asked to participate in a research project for elementary general music teachers entitled, “Informal Music Pedagogy in a Professional Learning Community of Elementary General Music Teachers,” conducted by Julie Kastner. Researchers are required to provide a consent form to inform you about the study, to convey that participation is voluntary, to explain risks and benefits of participation, and to empower you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to ask the researcher any questions you may have.

1. Purpose of Research: You are being asked to participate in a research study on the processes, perceptions, and practices of elementary general music teachers as they participate in a professional learning community to discuss and implement informal music practices. You have been selected as a possible participant because you are an elementary general music teacher who might be interested in discussing this topic and meeting with other music teachers.

2. What You Will Do: You will become a member of a professional learning group facilitated by Julie with other elementary general music teachers from late October 2011 through early March, 2012. The group will meet bi-weekly for approximately two hours at a time and location that is agreed upon by the group members. The group meetings will be documented through videotapes, note-taking, and photographs. For the meetings, you will be asked to read and participate in discussions on topics related to informal music learning, develop ideas for use in your classroom, and share any artifacts produced by the group. Outside of the group meetings, you will be asked to journal, participate in two audio-taped individual interviews, and allow for two video-taped classroom visits by Julie.

3. Potential Benefits and Risks: You will not directly benefit from your participation in this study, although you may benefit from an increased understanding of educational theories regarding children’s autonomy and musical identity. Also, your participation in this study may contribute to the understanding of elementary general music teachers’ perceptions of informal music practices and participation in professional development groups. There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study. You will not be compensated for your participation, but Julie will give you a \$25 gift card to a bookstore as a token of gratitude.

4. Privacy and Confidentiality: The data for this project will be kept confidential. The hard copies of the files and electronic files generated as part of this study will be confidential and stored in a locked file cabinet (with only Julie Kastner possessing the key) and password-protected computers. The course instructor will not have access to identifiable data from the surveys or interviews. The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but pseudonyms will be used for all research participants.

5. Your Rights to Participate, Say No, or Withdraw: Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no. You may change your mind at any time and withdraw. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.

6. Contact Information for Questions and Concerns: If you have concerns or questions about this study, or how to do any part of it, please contact the primary investigator, Dr. Cynthia Taggart, or the secondary investigator, Julie Kastner, at the contact info below. For questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, you may also contact Michigan State University’s Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 207 Olds Hall, MSU.

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7. Documentation of Informed Consent: By signing and dating below, you consent to participation in this study; collection of data through audio-tape, video-tape, notes, journals, and photographs; and the sharing of results from this study at future presentations and publications.

Name (printed) _____ Name (signed) _____ Date _____

Appendix B: Readings in PDC Meetings

The following were used as the readings in the PDC meetings:

- “Mutual Learning and Democratic Action in Instrumental Music Education” (Allsup, 2003)
- “Metaphorical Process and the Birth of Meaningful Musical Rationality in Beginning Instrumentalists (Davis, 2010)
- “Popular Music Education in and for Itself, and for ‘Other’ Music: Current Research in the Classroom (Green, 2006)
- *Music, Informal Learning and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy* (Green, 2008)
- “Music Learning in Context: A Playground Tale” (Harwood, 1998)
- “The Impact of Informal Music Learning Practices in the Classroom, Or How I Learned How to Teach from a Garage Band” (Jaffurs, 2004)
- “Student Musicians’ Ear-Playing Ability as a Function of Vernacular Music Experiences” (Woody & Lehman, 2010)

Appendix C: Questions for Semi-Structured Individual Interviews

Initial Interview

1. Why did you become an elementary general music teacher?
2. Choose three words that best describe your music teaching.
3. What do you believe or value in teaching music?
4. How do you define independent musicianship for students?
5. What do you know about your students' music-making outside of school?
6. What is your goal for your students once they leave your classroom?
7. What do you hope to get out of this professional learning group with other teachers?
8. Do you have any concerns about being in the professional learning group?

Exit Interview

1. Choose three words that best describe your experience in the professional learning group.
2. How would you describe your participation during the group meetings?
3. What characteristics about yourself affected your participation in the group?
4. How has the professional learning group affected you and your music teaching? Has it changed or supported any of your classroom practices?
5. What characteristics about yourself affected how you included topics and ideas from the group into your music teaching?
6. How would you define independent musicianship for students?
7. How would you define informal music learning?
8. What would you like other teachers to know about this professional learning group and about informal music learning?

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