It is my pleasure and privilege to be here with you today. I extend my thanks to Don Hamann for the invitation to speak.

When I think about keynote addresses – the ones I’ve liked anyway – the presenter walks the line between being provocative and being offensive. I’m usually good at being one of those.

There are so many ways to go. I could offend the quantitative researchers and discuss pure historical research. I could offend the education faculty and discuss the fact that half of my teaching load is in applied music. I conduct a band and that is always offensive to the orchestral or choral folks. I could offend everyone and discuss MENC. Did you realize this august organization is celebrating its centennial anniversary this year?

Ultimately it led me to thinking about the large number of issues that currently divide our domain in music making, teaching, and learning. I call it a domain because there are some of us who believe we are a profession and some who believe we are a craft. I don’t want to tip my semantic preference either way at this stage. But my topic deals with some chasms and canyons that we could do well to minimize if not bridge.

As I go through these chasms, I’ll often use history as a backdrop. It comes naturally to me and maybe to all of us. In War and Peace Tolstoy wrote: “Man’s mind cannot always grasp the causes of events …, but the desire to find those causes is implanted in man’s soul.” I always find it safe to quote Tolstoy because he wrote long books, long ago. Has anyone here read War & Peace?

So follow me as I observe some areas around which there are opposing opinions, practices, ideas, whatever you want to call them. Some of these have developed recently but many have been with us for a long time. As I discuss what may seem like disjointed observations, these eventually point toward a theme urging a call for more and better collaborations at many levels.

To take a page from 60 Minutes’ Andy Rooney: Did you ever notice that: Music (perhaps the other arts as well) may be the only subject in the public schools for which a conventional high school education is inadequate if a student wishes to major in that subject in college. If students wish to major in physics in college, their school prepares them to the extent that they can be accepted at colleges and major in physics. The same goes for being an English major, a political science major, a math major or a biology major. It could be that even a physical education major who simply follows the high school requirements would qualify for entry into a phys ed major program because of many schools’ sophisticated extracurricular sports programs.

We are witnessing an increasing level of the performance skills necessary for success in colleges while high school applied music preparation has flat-lined or perhaps has even lost ground due to numerous pressures in scheduling and testing. One of the top wind ensemble conductors in the country confided in me. He said: “the public school band programs are not making my job any easier.” I believe this represents the opinions of most conductors at our nation’s top music schools.

There is an ever-widening canyon between what is happening in the rehearsal halls of the high schools and the rehearsal halls of the university. Allow me to speak specifically to bands for a moment because that is the area with which I am most familiar. However, I suspect this is happening in the choral and orchestral venues to a large degree as well.
Where once a common literature base prevailed (years ago high school bands would adopt the music Revelli and Fennell performed simply because it was good music), a quick comparison of concert programs reveals high schools of today are performing music by writers who are not recognized composers by anyone outside of the school band culture. Names like Smith, Swearingen, Saucedo, Shaffer, and Sheldon represent the highest music sales in high schools while Harbison, Daugherty, Colgrass and Larsen, names that frequent the college and professional scene, rarely merit a curious look by the typical high school band directors. It isn't because the music is too difficult.

So when our aforementioned top wind conductor bemoaned the preparation of high school musicians, what he was recognizing was the need for better players for his group; not more complete musicians as defined by MENC or anyone else who buys into the national standards as a yardstick that measures the complete musician. In the opinion of even those who wrote the standards, most teachers do not have the resources and time needed to accomplish them.

While many school music programs have faced reductions in contact time, the expectations for the programs' concert performances have not changed. So the stage is set: same concert expectations, less time, so shortchange the student with less artistic music that sounds good quickly but is musically vacuous. Is there a way to prepare our music teachers to educate the next generation of music consumers and producers when they have but 60-minutes of contact time or less every 6 days – especially when most research seems to be based on student-teacher contact time unmindful of today’s schedules? Is there some efficiency research out there that maximizes process? It is like asking is there a shortcut to appreciating Bach.

This is when we can pull back and apply big picture labels to the current landscape. Those who study history know there has always been a debate between field knowledge and academic knowledge, between practice and theory, between the apprenticeship and the laboratory school.

We in the academy tend to look down at those practice-driven traditionalists as hopelessly out of touch. I mean, what enlightened music education professor considers the top-down approach of many conductors and practitioners a useable teaching model in today’s constructivist world? On the other hand, the applied field tends to look at researchers and pedagogues simply as those who cannot do. I want to add that as one of the only members of CBDNA who also edits a scholarly educational journal that I live this content vs pedagogy dichotomy perhaps more than most. I am both alarmed and dismayed at how each side of the dichotomy complacently accepts this schism.

A century or so ago when George Bernard Shaw quipped “those who can, do; those who cannot, teach,” he represented the slow but eventual pendulum swing away from respect for pedagogical knowledge to preference toward those with exclusively content knowledge. To counter that, Lee Shulman, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching recently said, “those who can, do; but those who really know, teach.” Sorry to say that this quip will never reach Bartlett’s Book of Quotations. This attitude might bolster the pedagogues’ egos but it does little to bridge the chasm between the practice driven and the theory driven streams of inquiry.

Sorry if this is stating the obvious but there is a deep mistrust of pedagogic theory among most of our applied faculty. In my view the cause is clearly due to the amount of faculty position specialization that has evolved in our nation’s Division I schools during the second half of the 20th century. Activist poet John Ciardi once stated, “A university is what a college becomes when the faculty loses interest in students.” As the turf became more clearly and narrowly defined, distrust and protection of territory, usually in the guise of digging moats or constructing walls, has been on the increase. We seem willing to accept this.

Any thinking person realizes that our collective group (Music with a capital M) is too small a domain to subdivide ourselves and remain relevant in today’s society. Our cultural influence is shrinking as it is. Since I am speaking to music educators, we must heed what Gandhi said, “we must be the change we wish to see in the world.” Here are some things worth considering:
Let’s remind ourselves why the traditions die hard in the education world. There is almost no other enterprise that evolves more slowly. We have to remember why we chose teaching. Was it because you saw your director and said, “I’d like to do that.” If so, you probably, consciously or subconsciously, started to imitate him or her. “If it worked for so-and-so, it’ll work for me.”

In pursuing the quote-unquote better way, we should keep in mind that historically it was rarely the scholar who originated that better way. From our earliest civilizations, we know it was the tradesmen, artisans and craftsmen who initiated the developments while the intellectuals later improved on them.

For example, way back in 3100 BCE, traders and farmers of Sumeria devised the abstract symbol 8 to represent 8 units of grain to 1 token for tallying purposes. This invention in abstraction and counting was one of the most revolutionary advances in the history of math. Then the act of writing appears to have originated from the desire to keep a record of livestock. Literacy and arithmetic arose from farmers and traders, not elite mathematicians and academics.

The Greeks are often given the credit for inventing science and the scientific method. More correctly, the intellectual elite of Greece should receive the credit for organizing and disseminating the achievements originating from various tradesmen from Mesopotamia, Egypt and the Caucasus region.

We think about the Renaissance as the time when Newton, DaVinci, and Galileo dominated the scientific revolution. The cauldron for their undeniably great conclusions was the inaptly named the Dark Ages. The Renaissance was a time when guild secrets began to slip into the public domain. We know now that these great men codified many of their discoveries based on appropriating secrets well known by artisans and craftsmen who were often illiterate.

The physical laws of conservation and transformation of energy were not discovered by theoreticians motivated by sheer curiosity; they were the fruit of deliberate attempts by workmen, miners in fact, to increase the efficiency of their steam engines used to pump the water out of the coalmines.

I don’t want to give craftsmen exclusive credit for being the creative ones. As you know, Einstein and Copernicus devised theories and it took years for practice to prove them to be true. But, I can feel comfortable in borrowing Clifford Connor’s quote found in his People’s History of Science, “In the beginning was the deed, not the word.”

I am not suggesting we stop scholarly modes of inquiry and allow practitioners the exclusive rights and responsibilities for improving the status quo. However, it is clear that the research community does not have the attention of the current practitioner – those who have direct access to our children.

As a historian and an amateur sociologist, allow me to illustrate what happens when the research community attempts to force a method on our profession. Edwin Gordon is one of our pre-eminent researchers on how people learn music. He developed, over the course of several years, a research-based approach to teaching music. According to him, his research validates it is the best way to teach music. Going from sound to symbol, organizing a hierarchy of intervals and rhythms and teaching them in a sequence, critics aside, it is an impressive body of work by standards of both breadth and depth. There have been numerous publications in book form and monographs describing the process. The method book Individualized Instructor gave way to Do It! and then eventually Jump Right In as a student method book that represents the approach. It’s all in place and research suggests it really, really works.

So where is it? I spoke with Tim Lautzenheiser, who probably logs more miles than anyone in our field and Bruce Bush, who represents the largest music distributor in the country and asked them: What are the five best selling band method books out there? Well, they mentioned Essential Elements 2000, Accent on Achievement, Best in Class, etc. I asked well, where is Jump Right In. Their response was a headshake – “it’s not even on the radar.”
I bring this up only as a sociologist and historian observes the available data. The question remains why would method books with no research base whatsoever way outsell one with data showing positive learning correlations?

The answer is that Jump Right In involves more lesson time, more teacher preparation time, more home time and more student time than is available in today’s over-scheduled lives. It is research-based assistance based on an unreal environment.

It’s interesting to compare music with other teacher education programs across the curriculum. In 1991 researchers at the National Center for Research on Teacher Education at Michigan State University conducted detailed studies of a variety of teacher education programs relative to program impact on new teachers. The interviewers asked new teachers their general ideas about different issues related to subject matter, teaching and their students and asked them to respond to hypothetical classroom situations. The research found that new teacher responses did show movement toward new and reform-oriented practices. But, on follow-up direct observation, these new teachers were inclined to teach in the more traditional ways.

Since this is the centennial year of the first MENC convention, do you know what the world’s best attended music convention is year in and year out? According to NAMM, it is The Midwest Band and Orchestra clinic. It attracts over 14,000 registrants annually. Who presents their ideas there? Not researchers. Oh, once in a while a Bob Duke gets in there but it’s usually stuff like techniques to best teach your flutes vibrato in two weeks. This convention speaks to those who want to know what works. There’s no skepticism in just wanting to see how the practitioners got their favorable results.

The January, 2007 MEJ was a special focus issue on Music Teacher Preparation. Mark Campbell and my Ithaca College colleague Verna Brummett discuss the dichotomy between tradition-based programs and constructivist-based programs. I would suggest to you that, although it is important to identify differences, we should take the additional step necessary to get past these either/or dualisms. The top-down tradition-based program has its drawbacks and elitism is one. The constructivist-based approach has its drawbacks and time is its enemy. And, to accept whatever evolves complacently is irresponsible. I believe that there is a middle ground because neither is always correct in every teaching encounter. We must recognize the lessons we’re learning from Jump Right In and pursue improvement as it usually lies -- somewhere between the either and the or.

MENC recognized this gap when they introduced their publication Update. Practical applications to research findings are great but even more valuable would be research findings based on practical applications. We need more of that.

So we do have our chasms and canyons in music education. Because it is in our very nature to seek improvement, the dialectic between tradition and science, practice and theory, product and process will always be there. But I believe we must learn to work within that gap because it will never disappear.

In her book, Transforming Music Education, Estelle Jorgensen states, “bridging the divide between theory and practice is a tall order that requires revaluing practice, forging strong links between theory and practice, and providing extensive opportunities for teachers at all levels to . . . see the connection between the two.”

My recommendation for researchers is to make special and constant efforts to include teachers (meaning the trenchers and the turtleneckers) as active partners in dialogue. Music education has difficult challenges that are nearly impossible to accomplish on our own. So, then let’s examine what traditions work and substantiate them, refine them and expand on them before challenging the traditions outright. Collaboration is a way to marry our collective insufficiencies and like any marriage there will be periods of highs and lows. We have to realize that our efforts with dialogue might be interpreted as confrontational.
When I was in high school band I remember clearly my band director saying, “this band rehearsal is not about democracy.” I have since come to conclude that he likened democracy in rehearsal to anarchy while I thought: no democracy in rehearsal is tyranny. Perhaps in that utopian world of the middle ground, we could have agreed the band would work as a socialist institution. Is there a middle ground between tradition and change? As students of learning, we must be the arbiters. To repeat Gandhi’s quote: “we must be the change we wish to see in the world.”

We should focus our energies on pedagogical content knowledge that embodies the aspects most germane to it teachability. These are the ways of representing the subject in ways that make it comprehensible to others. How we explain, illustrate and emphasize represents the most profound understanding of the subject matter. It means the research community must know what the applied community uses for content, method and exposure time and work more from there rather than from the lab to the classroom.

So it is our responsibility to construct a laboratory that recognizes the wisdom of practice and melds it with theory. This is our traditional and centuries-old role. It is what scholars have done for centuries and I would venture that there are pockets of this very thing happening throughout the country.

Then, our scholars need to state their conclusions in a straightforward manner. Politics is not the only enterprise dependent on the slogan. The simple claim can guide us all. But, there is a difference between blatant commercialism and intelligent marketing. Many applied teachers and conductors I know lost respect for MENC and then indirectly for its constituency, we in music education, when high profile deals with Disney, VH-1, Yamaha, et al seemed to emphasize the activity of music over the discipline of music study. Let’s to maintain our purpose and integrity as the pressure of instant gratification through commercialism facilitates cutting corners for the short-term gain. We need to decide if participation truly outweighs the investment of in-depth inquiry.

I suggest we take to heart what Ernest Boyer stated in Scholarship Reconsidered: “the work of a scholar becomes consequential only as it is understood by others.” Let’s strive to become more skilled in communicating our investigations’ results and take on more research assignments that make a difference to the realities of today’s school environment. Estelle Jorgenson puts it best: “Pretentious jargon invoked by educational scientists and theorists often cloaks a paucity of … clear application. This research is frequently unintelligible to the teachers it is supposed to benefit, and few teachers read it.”

Just as the artisans and craftsmen of history developed the knowledge of the heavens for navigation, the properties of metals for forging tools, and the domestication of cats to protect their grain storage, the process of direct application and reliance of tradition in music education will not cease. The theorist and the scientist must accept their ages-old role to facilitate and improve on these developments and permeate our theoretically oriented music education courses with applications to practice. If most students admit they learn to teach more from their college ensemble teacher (citation?) than their methods teachers and there is little in common between hs bands and college bands, the result is what we are seeing and it is what we deserve. Poor quality music programmed in high school – Husa-lite -- poor music education in the long run.

That middle ground to which I refer can serve as a fertile garden where theory and practice can interact. In this garden, transfer must be considered a highly valued skill. In Experience and Education, Dewey supported this intermediate position and proved it in the establishment of his lab school. He argued that only theoretical learning situated in practice would be rich and meaningful. It harkens back to my student days when, after listening to numerous dissertation proposals in doctoral seminar, Charles Leonhard, ever the pragmatist, said, “yes and what difference would this make?!”

By now you are undoubtedly recognizing my challenge to our domain: to engage in more collaborative action research. I agree totally with Reinharz who is quoted in Studies in Art Education: “there is a need for more knowledgeable action, not just more knowledge of the problem.” While
understanding that there is always room for numerous and varying research strategies, approaches, and
goals, the time has come to “forge a more direct link” between the accumulating scholarship in music
education and action-connected projects within the context of the rehearsal or the music classroom.
Rehearsal or music classroom research collaborations between schools and universities are not new, but I
suggest we need to do more of it.

One such example of action research occurred quite by accident and an elementary band teacher
initiated it. She was taking a Band Materials course I taught and after a session on the national standards.
She said, “this is all good information but I only see my students once a week for 30 minutes in band and
once a week in a 4-5 student group lesson. I don’t have time to teach with the standards.” Through the
course of the semester, we worked on a strategy that included all of the national standards over the 3
years she taught the students. The net result was an almost nonexistent dropout rate and the students
played as well and yet had a comprehensive musical experience. I suspect there are numerous other
similar collaborations and in my mind, this is a reason to be optimistic about the future.

Here is another reason to be optimistic about the future. Next year’s Midwest Band and
Orchestra Clinic, the 61st, will be the first to feature a theme. Throughout the conference, the role of
mentoring in music education will be explored from a variety of perspectives, creating a forum where
opportunities for mentorship are identified and strengthened.

I see this as a significant development and a profound opportunity. Data show that teacher
dropout rather than retirement is the largest single determinant of demand for new teachers these days
according to the AERA. Teacher turnover is minimized when a competent mentor offers guidance.
There is a recent study that indicated a reduction of about 30% in teacher turnover when new teachers
had subject-matter concerned mentors. And at least 30 states have state or federal money for this on-site
professional development. When the tradition-bound culture of the Midwest Clinic Board of Directors
recognizes this need and there is good and current research on mentoring, let’s take this opportunity to
communicate the best practices soon and in plain English. It is our effort to minimize the chasm.

So we do have elements in our domain that I believe are the four horsemen of the music
education apocalypse: Elitism, Time, Complacency and Commercialism. Elitism in that we seem
unwilling to include all of the population as potential teachers and musicians. A lack of time forces
compromises in quality, depth and opportunities to learn. Complacency in that we seem willing to
accept this huge chasm between the practice-driven and the theory-driven modes of inquiry. Finally,
commercialism. Commercialism reinforces music’s entertainment value at the expense of its academic
and artistic values. In my view, the more we embrace Disney et al, the less we will be perceived as a core
subject in the schools.

It seems all of these elements are present and accounted for in our domain called music. And, I
am afraid they will persist without the continuous monitoring and action from the likes of the good and
concerned people at this symposium.

My fear in offering my presentation today is two-pronged: (1) That there are no questions or
comments, and (2) that there are too many questions and comments. The latter probably is the greater
fear of the two. Lest you think we are the only discipline with foibles, ambiguities and shortcomings, I
close with the words of an MD who recently wrote about the limitations of his work:
“We look for medicine to be an orderly field of knowledge and procedure. But it is not. It is an
imperfect science, an enterprise of constantly changing knowledge, uncertain information, fallible
individuals, and at the same time, lives on the line. There is science in what we do, yes, but also
habit, intuition, and sometimes plain old guessing. The gap between what we know and what
we aim for persists. And this gap complicates everything we do.”

Whether we are a craft or a profession doesn’t really matter. The either/or dichotomy may show
loyalty to a principle but keep the goal in view. We should all embrace this great and expressive art that
is such a huge part of our value system and seek that middle ground through collaborations and
mentoring for the most direct way toward diverting the four horsemen of the music education apocalypse and achieving our goals of a musically independent student and a vibrant and expressive musical culture.

I want to thank Don Hamann for the invitation to speak and thank you for listening.

Resources


America’s public schools: from the common school to ”No Child Left Behind”. William J. Reese. 2005.


Shaped-Note Singing: An American Legacy

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ABSTRACT
Shaped-note singing is the first form of American music, the result of frontier spirit and pioneer pragmatism. Founded on a simplified approach to solfege, shaped-note singing developed over two hundred years to become a musical system that has far-reaching, extra-musical influences. For musical, social, and religious reasons, shaped-note singing is a remarkable yet overlooked development in the history of music education. This unique form of American music is remarkable for three reasons: its musical characteristics, the singers’ shared social context, and its religious connections. Although unknown to many modern music educators, shaped-note singing offers an inventive solution to the challenging problem of sight-singing and promotes community values while encouraging participation. A timely reminder suggesting the importance of unifying social and pedagogical goals in music education, shaped-note singing remains an effective and engaging vehicle to encourage singing in America today.

Shaped-Note Singing: An American Legacy

Shaped-note singing is the original form of American music, the result of frontier spirit and pioneer pragmatism applied to singing familiar psalms from the British Isles (Cobb, 1978). Taking its name from the use of shaped note heads, shaped-note singing has encouraged community singing in American society since its introduction in the early nineteenth century. Although unknown to many modern music educators, shaped notation is the inventive solution to the challenging problem of sight-singing, which continues to vex singers and choir directors in the twenty-first century. Considering its composers, related social intents, musical complexity and accessibility, shaped-note singing is unique among all Western music (Gordon, 1995). Shaped-note compositions are not written for the church or commissioned by a wealthy patron, instead the music is composed by avocational singers who earned their primary livelihood from nonmusical pursuits. Shaped-note singing is intended for the immediate experience of community singers who would share in the joy of singing, not for highly-trained singers or select performance ensembles. Shaped-note singing has a contrapuntal complexity yet is immediately accessible to untrained singers, sophisticated theoretically yet not out of reach for avocational singers.

Founded on a simplified approach to solfege, shaped-note singing developed over two hundred years to become a musical system that has far-reaching, extra-musical influences. For musical, social, and religious reasons, shaped-note singing is a remarkable yet overlooked development in the history of music education. This unique form of American music is remarkable for three reasons: the musical characteristics of the shaped notation itself facilitate music literacy; shaped-note singing builds a community of singers based in a shared social context; and shaped-note singing is an expression of particular religious beliefs common to many protestant congregations in America.

A BRIEF HISTORY

William Law first introduced shaped notes into the singing schools during a religious revival known as the “Great Awakening” in the early nineteenth century, beginning the period of remarkable influence that shaped notation had in early music education (McGregory, 1997). Immediately popular and in widespread use by the middle of the eighteenth century, shaped notation is a four-syllable approach to singing that was introduced to America by British immigrants in the seventeenth century. First published at the turn of the eighteenth century by William Little and William Smith in The Easy Instructor (1798), shaped notation became known by a sobriquet based on the combination of its primary
syllables, “fasola singing.” Based on British choral music of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (Scholten, 1980), shaped-note singing reflected the early settlers’ interest in familiar music as well as their protestant religious beliefs.

Prior to shaped notation, many religious leaders were dissatisfied with the way congregations were singing hymns in the early eighteenth century. By 1720, there were growing objections to the excessive use of ornaments, embellishments, and a general departure from the original hymn tunes. In Boston, several ministers began teaching music literacy to their congregations to promote what they described as “regular singing,” singing by note, and singing by rule instead of “usual singing” or singing by ear (Keene, 1982). An Introduction to the Singing of Psalm-Tunes (Tufts), and The Grounds and Rules of Music Explained (Walters) were two texts published in 1721 which aided the effort for improved congregational singing. In these two eighteenth-century volumes, the letters f, s, l, or m appeared either on the note heads or beneath traditional notation to indicate the solfege syllables.

Shaped notation first appeared almost eighty years later in Little and Smith's first edition of The Easy Instructor (1798). This system was adopted in the singing schools of the early nineteenth century throughout New England. The practice of singing schools involved a traveling singing master who taught teenagers or young adults during the evenings for a period of several weeks. Following their term of study, the students presented their newly-acquired skills to the community in “singing lectures” or demonstrations, and invited the experienced singers to join with them.

The singing schools began in Boston and soon spread to New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, and Pennsylvania as demand increased. The interest and participation in singing schools was combined with a growing independence from English publications and an interest in native American composers. Between 1770 and 1810, several hundred different collections of shaped-note music were published in America, as well as dozens of revisions of The Easy Instructor between 1802 and 1831 (Lowens & Britton, 1953). The music of William Billings and Jeremiah Ingalls was common by the middle of the nineteenth century in such collections as Walker’s Southern Harmony (1835). Between 1798 and 1855, thirty-seven shaped-note tunebooks were published which served to spread interest in shaped-note singing to Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, western Pennsylvania, western Virginia, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri (Scholten, 1980).

The New England singing schools, often run by itinerant singing masters, were responsible for the spread of new psalm tunes, fuging melodies, and hymns set in a polyphonic style. The singing masters and their more accomplished students then began to write music that was more intricate and innovative. While the fuging style of hymn settings died out in England between 1780 and 1800, the polyphonic settings enjoyed a flourishing period in America; more than half of the 286 shaped-note collections published in America before 1810 devote at least a quarter of their volume to fuging tunes (Gordon, 1995).

In an effort to discredit the fasola system, critics such as Thomas Hastings referred to shaped-notes as “dunce notes” in an 1835 edition of the Musical Magazine (Lowens & Britton, 1953). Lowens and Britton speculated that Hastings and others suffered from an inferiority complex regarding any form of American culture in comparison to European art and music. By the mid-nineteenth century, choir directors in large urban centers became the first public school music directors and rejected shaped notation which they regarded as quaint, simplistic, and primitive. Furthermore, the itinerant musicians and teachers were frequently criticized by classically trained musicians; often, the only qualifications singing masters had were a knowledge of the music notation and an enthusiasm for singing.

Even though the original intent was to increase the level of congregational singing, in practice singing school training sometimes created a more select group of singers. The less accomplished singers reserved special “singer’s seats” for the more trained voices in some meeting houses. While this development led to some debate, it also led to the development of the volunteer church choir.
Even after the decline of shaped-note singing in the northeast, singing schools were popular in the southern states and western frontiers. Texts such as Davisson's *Kentucky Harmony* (1816) and Walker's *Southern Harmony* (1835) served to facilitate the spread of shaped-note singing. As the singing school tradition declined in the northeast, other publications such as *Virginia Harmony* (1831) and *Union Harmony* (1837) appeared in the south and enjoyed widespread popularity. The most widely-used volume, however, was *The Original Sacred Harp* (1844) published by B. F. White and E. J. King; this text continues to be used by shaped-note conventions and since the voice was known as the “sacred harp,” shaped-note singing is often known as “Sacred Harp Singing” (Gordon, 1995, p. xi).

Shaped-note singing is a living tradition with ties to the earliest native American composers and psalmists such as William Billings (1746-1800), Jeremiah Ingalls (1764-1836), and Daniel Read (1757-1836) (Bealle, 1997; Scholten, 1980). During the course of two hundred years, shaped-note singing has spread from its colonial beginnings in the northeast to churches, singing conventions, and folk festivals throughout the country. In the 1920’s, shaped-note singing was rediscovered as folk music, and the folk music revival aided the spread of sacred harp singing at the end of the twentieth century.

**MUSICAL CHARACTERISTICS**

In shaped-note singing, four different note heads replace the traditional round note heads and correspond to four solfege syllables: *fa* with a triangle, *sol* with an oval, *la* with a square, and *mi* (me) with a diamond. See Figure 1 for a display of the major scale in shapes (Gordon, Barrand, & Crompton, 1995, p. xiii). The use of shaped note heads facilitates reading for several reasons: anyone with a modicum of practice can learn the solfege for any melody quickly; untrained singers do not need to read the key signature; the fa or la indicates the modality of the song; and the half steps between notes is always indicated by either la or mi (me) leading to fa. Furthermore, once singers learn their parts, the syllables become unnecessary; frequently, however, singers will sing the parts on solfege to review the lines and to hear the combination of syllables sung against each other (Scholten, 1980).

![Figure 1. Major Scale in Shapes](image)

(Gordon, Barrand, & Crompton, 1995, p. xiii)

The music in the shaped-note tradition sounds distinctive; it is highly rhythmic, modal, and has open hollow harmonies. The style of the music is contrapuntal, instead of harmonic; each of the four lines moves independently, creating frequent dissonances between parts. At the same time, there are frequently open fifths and octaves instead of triads, creating a sound more like Renaissance music than that of the Classical or Baroque periods. The music follows the rhythm and accent patterns of the words, including melismatic phrases to highlight the expression of certain words. The sound of shaped-note tunes stems from its source in folk music. These melodies are often pentatonic or hexatonic, sounding tonally ambiguous and less diatonic. Furthermore, the minor melodies almost always have a raised sixth degree, placing them in the dorian mode. The arrangements themselves use unrestricted six-four chords, parallel octaves, parallel fifths, suggesting quartal harmony resulting in more tonal ambiguity (Scholten, 1980).
There are three categories of shaped-note pieces: plain tunes, fuging tunes, and anthems. The plain and fuguing tunes are strophic, allowing singers to sing as many verses of the hymn as they choose as well as singing any other hymn with the same meter to the same music. Anthems are through composed, having different music for each part of the text. The plain tunes are homophonic settings for three or four voices, most often with the melody in the tenor line. The melody of these pieces was most often a pre-existing folk melody, instrumental piece or dance tune passed down in the oral tradition.

Efforts to make the vocal parts interesting yet accessible encouraged singers’ participation and promoted their success. For example, in Davisson’s *Kentucky Harmony* (1816), the cumbersome tenor clef is abandoned in favor of the G clef for all parts except the bass (Oakley, 1978). He further simplified some musical concepts in the introduction to his text, eliminating overly-complicated explanations and placing the songs in order of increasing difficulty.

**SOCIAL CONTEXTS AND PRACTICES**

Making music is a social phenomenon, and learning music is fundamentally a social achievement. The music and musical practices of shaped-note singing are no exception. The organization, cooperation, and democratic approach of shaped-note conventions situate shaped-note singing in a socially-relevant context shared by singers participating in making music and finding meaning in music with other singers.

The music of colonial New England and later southern Appalachia was built on shared social values. While many of the singers in early New England gravitated to the shaped note singing for religious reasons, many New England singing masters and composers were agnostics or nonbelievers. Instead, they acknowledged the social fellowship and musical satisfaction they enjoyed from community singing (Gordon, 1995). Another example is Steven Levine, a Jew, who nonetheless participates in shaped-note singing of Christian odes and anthems. The emphasis on “shaped-note’s old-time values of simplicity, neighborly concern, and egalitarianism” focused his attention on the social importance of singing in addition to the religious overtones (Smith, 1996).

In singing conventions, which grew out of the southern shaped-note tradition, singers sat in sections by voice type, facing inward toward the leader. This configuration, known as a “hollow square,” emphasized the purpose of the singing for the singers, not for any audience, making the experience of singing communal and socially cooperative. As one singer reported at a singing convention, shaped-note singing is an antidote to the “it-must-be-perfect” approach to performance; it is a way to invite and facilitate singing that is enthusiastic, unrehearsed, and unapologetic (Smith, 1996).

Besides the religious function of singing during worship services, singing schools and conventions played an important role in the social fabric of nineteenth-century American communities (Keene, 1982). Shaped-note singing as practiced in contemporary singing conventions is democratic; any singer is allowed to lead a song, and all the songs are first sung through with syllables to acquaint all singers with the melodic line before adding the lyrics. As such, singing conventions are the only unbroken link with the music of the New England singing masters, providing a unique insight into the spirit of early American psalmody. Another aspect of musical democracy in action is the permission musicians enjoyed to write their own shaped-note music; new and original composition has been a part of the shaped-note since the beginning of the Sacred Harp tradition (McGregory, 1997).

While most of the singing masters, who were from rural central New England wrote shaped-note pieces, these itinerant teachers were not full-time musicians. As avocational musicians, singing masters had responsibilities as tradesmen or farmers yet taught music and wrote arrangements as an expression of their musical passion (Gordon, 1995). Results of community singing included a sense of musical familiarity, belonging within the community, and consolidating a way of life (McGregory, 1997). Other composers such as Judge Jackson, H. Webster Woods, and W. E. Glanton actively organized and promoted shaped-note music in southern Sacred Harp conventions in the shaped-note tradition.

Sacred Harp singing is a democratic and participatory music tradition. Singing conventions were major community activities and served many functions, especially in rural areas, to honor a prominent singer or composer in the community, for a particular holiday such as May Day, or as a matter of course on a regular schedule.
(McGregory, 1997). People would gather for information, for political purposes, and for religious fellowship. Apart from the obvious religious connotations that hymns imply to Sacred Harp singing, there were communal connections among people of different denominations within the Christian community of singers. Their shared values and musical expression made for a remarkable experience of fellowship and harmony. For example, in a letter to the editor of The National Sacred Harp Newsletter, one participant commented on his experience at a singing convention:

At a singing I heard someone make a beautiful and moving statement. He said in part, “Sacred Harp Singers love one another. They love each other better than they do in the churches a lot of the time.” (McGregory, 1997, p. 57)

Shaped-note singing has been practiced an intergenerational activity, uniting young and old singers alike in a common celebration of faith. Although many teenagers abandon shaped-note singing, they typically remember the rudiments of music literacy and return to participate in shaped-note singing as young adults (McGregory, 1997). In shaped-note singing, there are no auditions and no room for soloists. Instead, the focus is on group participation, the approach is joyous, and the goal is to resound with an ancient-sounding joy. Shaped-note singing is unrestrained singing, passionate and unrehearsed, giving voice to the natural convictions and nobility of the singing.

Begun as informal meetings of enthusiastic singers, singing conventions evolved into semiformal musical organizations. During the nineteenth century, singing schools and conventions were held for two to four week periods in July and August. Known as the “lay-by time,” these months were the time when the crops were planted but not ready for harvest, and reflected the values of the agrarian Southern society (Scholten, 1980). In the twentieth century, there were more than 700 singing conventions held annually. These gatherings lasted from one to three days and were as much social gatherings as they are a musical experiences. At the conventions, opening and closing prayers as well as grace is sung. The atmosphere at a singing convention is like a family reunion; indeed, at many sacred harp conventions, family gather annually to sing and be with each other.

RELIGIOUS CONNECTIONS

One important tenet of the reformed congregational churches of New England was that music should be sung by the whole congregation instead of being entrusted to a separate group of trained singers. The congregations in these churches sang from a psalm book which contained single-line melodies in the back of the book. These melodies fit multiple texts, also contained in the psalm book. As some congregants were illiterate, the pastor would intone or “line out” the melody which the congregation would repeat, as is still practiced in some parts of southern Appalachia. Shaped-note singing helped spread music literacy in the nineteenth century and eliminated the need for “lining out” melodies. Typically, attendants at singing conventions maintained a strong connection to the religious beliefs of the congregational and other protestant denominations in America.

By about 1720, church reformers began the community singing schools, a movement which by the turn of the century had taken on a life of its own. In the twentieth century, faithful singers identify themselves as loyal followers who frequently organize their travels around scheduled conventions. These committed participants find shaped-note singing, this “indescribable expression of faith, praise, and ecstasy,” particularly rewarding (Bealle, 1997, p. xi). Although neglected by the mainstream American music education in the mid-nineteenth century, shaped-note singing survives with the publication of The Sacred Harp in 1844 in Philadelphia and is now practiced widely in church-based singing conventions.

The shaped-note tune books were the first music education texts used in America. As such, the tune books offer an understanding of the close connection between religious and educational music. During the nineteenth century, people learned to sing primarily for the purpose of singing in church; the practices of singing schools and religious purposes are closely connected (Keene, 1982). As Keene described in A History of Music Education in the United States, an early nineteenth-century resident of Bennington, Vermont explained the close connection between schools and religion:

only the lower room of the old academy was used for school purposes, and in the upper room were held the prayer-meetings of the First Church. Singing-schools and choir rehearsals were also held here, and how enjoyable they were. (John & Merrill, 1911, p. 57)
Plain tunes, fuguing tunes, and anthems were written by American composers between 1770 and 1810. This music was written for the community singing groups of the time, a vigorous and energetic movement popular in rural New England. Sacred music by modern standards, these compositions were actually the combination of popular poetry of the day set to music fitting the community singing movement. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was not an obvious distinction between sacred and secular practice; while this music was intended for singing schools and community singing groups, it was also appropriate for church services.

Choral singing and singing in general is a spiritual activity and implies a particular form of communication among believers in a common faith. As articulated by Gordon (1995), “this singing school and shape-note music, with its resonant musical and poetic language, and its fierce and devout expressiveness, is one of the best mediums each of us has yet found for this kind of fellowship” (p. xiii). The themes of life, death, grace, and salvation so prominent in the lyrics of shaped-note songs have powerful religious and metaphorical meanings. As Bealle describes in his book, Public Worship, Private Faith (1997), the Sacred Harp sings and singing conventions were less about a particular faith than they were nondenominational religious exercises. Bealle (1997) wrote, “Together, singers strive to attain praise of the highest order without confronting or compromising the ecclesiastical or personal sources of religious faith” (p. xiii).

One of the leading authors of shaped-note texts was Isaac Watts (1674-1748). Immigrants brought two of his publications, Hymns and Spiritual Songs (1707) and The Psalms of David Imitate in the Language of the New Testament (1719), from England to America during the tide of religious fervor between 1736 and 1745. Next to the Bible, Watts's texts had become the most popular books for the literate and semiliterate by the end of the nineteenth century (Gordon, 1995). The success of these collections lies in Watts's use of powerful language that resonated with the New England evangelical denominations. Central among the themes are a subjective, personal relationship with God, mercy and grace associated with a “new birth,” and salvation expressed as a personal inward religious experience. These sentiments resonated with Congregationalists, Baptists, and Presbyterians in the eighteenth century as well as other protestant denominations. For example, the lyrics to “Fleeting Days” (1707) express Watts's melancholy yet determined attitude: “Our life is ever on the wing, And death is ever nigh; The moment when our lives begin, We all begin to die” (McGraw, 1991, p. 348).

CONCLUSIONS

Shaped-note singing developed from its inception in colonial New England where singing schools held great social and religious importance (Keene, 1982). Combining the practical system of fasola solemnization, shaped-note singing grew to become a widespread movement of passionate Sacred Harp singers promoting four-part harmonization with social cooperation, and religious fellowship. Current singing conventions across the country reinforce music literacy and community spirit by removing obstacles to participation in a socially and religiously based celebration of music for all to sing. The texts of Christian-based psalms and anthems promote a spirit of egalitarianism, simplicity, and neighborly concern among the singers. Pitched in the key of convenience, shaped-note singing is sung with enthusiasm and unrestrained voice, emphasizing participation, the spiritual messages of the text, and the joy of singing.

In the twenty-first century, singing conventions continue on a regular schedule in Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Tennessee, Texas, and Mississippi, where there may be as many as three or four “sings” on any given weekend during the summer months. However, Hugh McGraw, the director of a shaped-note publishing company, reported that shaped-note singing was in serious decline (McGregory, 1997). As quoted in the National Sacred Harp Newsletter, McGraw also said, “At the turn of the century, there were thousands of Sacred Harp singers in Georgia alone. Today [in 1989], there are, at the most, 4,000 to 5,000 fa-sol-la singers left in America. We aim to preserve it” (McGregory, 1997). Despite the decline in shaped-note singing, enclaves of shaped-note singing exist, especially with affiliations to Sacred Harp conventions. For example, the Chattahoochee Sacred Harp Music Convention has been held every year since 1852 (Scholten, 1980).

The social and cultural climate of the twenty-first century may provide reasons for the decline in shaped-note singing cited by McGraw and others. Some other shaped-note singers speculated that the association of shaped-note singing with country simplicity and naïveté is also a deterrent. According to Buell Cobb, author of The Sacred Harp, would-be community singers often avoid an old, country lifestyle, yet the virtues of simplicity and
cooperation are appealing. Cobb remarked, to people who “often live in metro areas in a very frantic, rapid pace of life, they can come to this [shaped-note singing] and say, ‘Wow! This is wonderful!’” (Smith, 1996). Appreciative singers admire the roots and history that are reflected in shaped-note singing; as Cobb commented, not only does this music have relevance in contemporary society, “it goes back… it’s old… [and] it sounds old” (Smith, 1996).

**IMPLICATIONS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION**

The practices of shaped-note singing and its origins offer insights and implications for music education and contemporary musicians. America was once known as a singing nation; in fact, the first book printed in the English colonies of North America was the *Bay Psalm Book* in 1640 (Elliott, 1990). In the intervening 350 years, vocal music in communities has declined. Elliott reported that although group singing was the primary activity in American public music education for more than one hundred years, America as a nation does not celebrate its national heritage in song, and has become “a nation of nonsingers” (Elliott, 1990, p. 25).

In summary, the decline of shaped-note singing signaled a missed opportunity in music education. Lowens and Britton suggested that if Lowell Mason had accepted shaped-note singing, “we might have been more successful in developing skilled music readers and enthusiastic amateur choral singers in the public schools” (1953, p. 32). Similarly, Gordon (1995) speculated that if more music educators had adopted shaped-notation, Americans might be more skilled singers. Elliott (1990) suggested that even though it is important to have students understand the fundamentals of music notation and history, the priorities for music education should include imparting a positive attitude toward music and preparing students with skills to participate as community musicians.

Shaped-note singing offers a direct and practical approach to sight-singing, a challenge facing musicians and music educators since the first chant notation in medieval times. Kyme (1960) compared instruction based on numbers and traditional solfege with the shaped-note system to teach music literacy to fifth-grade students. He found shaped notation was significantly more effective than the other approaches and concluded that, “one can justify the use of this [shaped-note] notational system even in those situations where the teacher is committed to one or another ‘system’ of teaching music reading” (p. 8). Twenty years after Kyme’s experimental study, Scholten (1980) concluded that “… the shaped-note system still remains a viable, practical method for teaching vocal music reading skills” (p. 37).

Shaped-note singing offers contemporary music educators an effective avenue not only for teaching students sight-singing skills but also for promoting community values and encouraging participation. A timely reminder suggesting the importance of unifying social and pedagogical goals in music education, shaped-note singing remains an effective and engaging vehicle to encourage singing in America today.
REFERENCES


Motivational Factors Contributing to Adult Participation in Community Bands

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to determine the degree to which specified motivational factors contribute to adult participation in community bands. A researcher-designed survey was distributed to volunteer community band members \((N = 270)\). Three-way ANOVAS were used to determine the role of age, gender, and educational level on sources of motivation. While improving musical skills contributed most toward adult participation in community bands, older musicians were motivated by the reputation of the conductor \((p < .01)\), and younger musicians were motivated by the escape from daily living \((p < .05)\). Additionally, older males placed more value in gaining public recognition than younger males \((p < .05)\). Finally, subjects with advanced degrees were motivated less by social interaction than those without advanced degrees \((p < .05)\). The results indicate that a variety of factors affect motivation, which positions music educators to encourage and facilitate musical growth at any stage in life.
intensity, on the other hand, requires attention to detail and focus. A deeper indication of motivation lies in persistence, or the degree to which an individual persists in a choice and acquires an extended learning opportunity. Finally, the quality of engagement is especially important when measuring motivation behavior in individuals. This is perhaps the most sophisticated level in learning, as the qualities that determine how a person learns may also determine achievement.

Although an individual’s actions may be indicative of motivation, two additional, more intrinsic indicators, cognition and affect, have been noted as contributing significantly to motivational processes in individuals (Graham & Weiner, 1996; Maehr et al., 2002; Pintrick & Schunk, 2002). Determining how students think (cognition) and feel (affect) may, in fact, lead to a better understanding of motivational processes.

Cognition refers “not only to how a person’s thoughts impact his or her motivation but also to the type of thoughts that result based on various motivational processes” (Maehr et al., 2002). In other words, an appreciation for the learning process itself and a desire to seek educational opportunities are two cognitive functions that shape an individual’s investment in learning. Thus, Maehr et al. suggested that educators find creative ways to elicit in students a desire for lifelong learning following high school education. This could be important to musical andragogy, or the teaching and learning strategies associated with adult learners in music.

Affect has been thought by some psychologists and theorists to influence the way people respond to feedback and motivation (Maehr et al., 2002). While many believe that emotions drive human behavioral characteristics, others conversely believe that human behavior results in an emotional conclusion. Anxiety, fear, delight, and interest are emotional affects that not only play an important role in motivation itself, but also in performance products.

Related literature on motivation suggests that the way music educators enhance student expectancies may not only improve student achievement and the perceived value placed on selected musical activities, but may also prepare students for making future choices to participate in similar musical activities. Csikszentmihalyi’s (1975) beliefs of flow and intrinsic motivation, that is, behavioral modifications governed by both intrinsic and extrinsic forces, has also been an important feature in musical motivation theory. Woody (2004) echoed these sentiments, and added that music educators can raise the level of motivation in students by drawing upon and generating inspiration, developing a support network of peer musicians, and establishing a classroom environment that is conducive to the creation of musical rewards.

Because there has historically been a general lack of concern for theories of adult learning, Knowles (1984), Brookfield (1986), and Sloboda (1984) identified characteristics unique to adult education and investigated ways to further the development of an adult-driven philosophy. An instructor of adult education curriculum, Knowles (1984) was one of the first to coin the term andragogy in describing the learning tendencies among adults. Brookfield (1986) identified six characteristics of successful adult learning, which purported that adults 1) learn throughout life as they adjust to life changes, 2) display a variety of learning styles, 3) prefer problem-centered learning that directly applies to specific personal concerns, 4) are influenced by prior experiences, 5) need to view themselves as learners if learning is to occur, and 6) tend to be self-directed learners. While Smith and Haack (2000) defined lifelong learning as stretching from the “cradle to the grave” (pg. 28), Sloboda (1984) proposed a three-stage model of musical development that began with pleasure, led to commitment, and culminated with achievement. In addition, Sloboda (1984) observed that many non-performers appeared to have missed out on the first stage of musical experience, thus stifling any further musical curiosity.

Because much of the research on adult musicians analyzed their participation in community music organizations, Coffman (2002) outlined three varieties of motivation for participation in these groups: personal motivations, including self-expression, leisure, self-improvement, and recreation; musical motivations, including professed love of music, learning more about music, and performing for one’s self
and others; and social motivations, including meeting new people, being with friends, and having a sense of belonging (p. 202). Of the three motivations, no single reason emerged as the leading reason for community music participation, although more successful performers reported that personal and musical motivations were important than less able performers (Coffman, 2002).

Gates (1991) studied the public at large and classified a person's musical involvement into three separate categories: participants, spectators, or not involved. In addition, he delineated the participant category into six sub-types: dabblers, recreationalists, hobbyists, amateurs, apprentices, and professionals. Gates concluded that community music ensembles overwhelmingly consisted of amateurs, apprentices, and professionals, as these categories tended to view musical performance as accomplishment. He also concluded that participation in adult music ensembles would only increase to the extent that music educators would explore avenues in which to attract the dabblers, recreationalists, and hobbyists; these groups tended to view music as entertainment.

While adults experience diverse and independent levels of physical, cognitive, and emotional development within their lifetime, adults learn differently according to their maturity level (Coffman, 2002). Some of the contributing factors toward adult maturity include biological tendencies, physiological influences, and cultural environments. According to Darkenwald (1992), adult education has been defined as “those systematic processes used to foster changes in the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of persons whose dominant social roles are characteristics of adulthood,” (p. 30) and it is through adult education programs that many adults find solace and meaning in their lives. Myers (1992) echoed these sentiments when he concluded that adults experience high levels of satisfaction when learning fulfills expressive needs. While Bowles (1991) concluded that several significant positive relationships existed between prior experience in music and current interest in music, the researcher later contended that the responsibility of creating an adult population who participates in and supports the arts remains a challenge (Bowles, 1999). Finally, MacLean (1981) ultimately offered that motivation for lifelong learning “encompasses those experiences in any setting nurtured by any motivation, which improves capabilities for developing one’s own personality and for integrating one’s lifestyle with the human, natural, and social environments in which one chooses to live” (p. 1, abstract).

The aforementioned research has several implications for improving classroom instruction and raising adults’ self-awareness and self-realization regarding specific motivational factors. Of particular interest to this study on adult motivation are the roles that age, gender, and education/degree level play in determining the values placed on adult community band participation. The purpose of this research was to determine the degree to which selected motivational factors contribute to adult participation in community bands. The specific problems of the study were 1) to determine what motivational factors contribute most toward adult participation in community bands, 2) to determine how age effects adults’ motivation for participating in community bands, 3) to determine how gender effects adults’ motivation for participating in community bands, and 4) to determine how education/degree level effects adults’ motivation for participating in community bands.

METHOD

Subjects

Subjects in this study were adult members of seven different volunteer community bands in the state of Michigan. Two-hundred seventy adults (147 females and 123 males) between the ages of 19 and 83 participated in the study and consisted of woodwind (n=133), brass (n=119), and percussion (n=18) players. Each band participated in weekly rehearsals and regularly presented up to fifteen public performances per year. All the band members were volunteers; no one was paid for the services. While many band members had been consistently playing their instruments since high school or college, many others had recently taken up their instruments after a significant hiatus.
Preparation of Materials

Using models set forth by Coffman and Adamek (1999), Flanagan (1982), and Pitts (2005), the researcher constructed a survey based on motivational factors for adult participation in music and the effect of participation on the quality of life. The researcher-designed survey was intended for community musicians age 19 and over, and consisted of three sections. The first section contained eight questions that solicited demographic information such as age, instrument, gender, number of years spent performing with the present community band, total number of years spent performing with community bands, highest degree earned, and present occupation.

The second section of the survey contained eighteen five-point scales and asked the band members to rate the degree to which each factor had motivated them to participate in the band (“0” = “No opinion or not applicable”, “1” = “Not at all motivated,” “2” = “Slightly motivated,” “3” = “Fairly motivated,” and “4” = “Very motivated”). The third section contained an open-ended, optional response prompt: “Additional comments you may be compelled to share regarding your motivation for participation in this community band.” This qualitative data was used to identify salient attributes and themes in the informants’ assessment of community band participation. Two university faculty experts in music education research reviewed the survey and provided suggestions for modifications to improve the instrument’s clarity.

Design and Procedures

The project was designed to include rehearsal visitations over a three-week time period. For five of the community bands, surveys were distributed, then completed and collected during one of the rehearsal periods in March 2006. For the remaining two community bands, whose memberships were located at further distances, the surveys were mailed to and from the respective ensemble conductor. Two-hundred eighty-six surveys were returned, but 16 were excluded from the study because the respondents did not meet the minimum age requirement of 19. Also, individuals who participated in more than one community ensemble were instructed to complete only one survey. This may have had a slight influence on the return rate. The overall return rate of the surveys was 86%. Data were compiled and analyzed.

RESULTS

The sample used in this study was comprised of slightly more females than males (54% female, 46% male). Woodwind players made up nearly half of the informants, followed by brass players, then percussionists. The mean age was 47, and ages ranged from 19 to 83. Respondents were highly educated (13% high school, 16% post-secondary schooling, 41% Bachelors degree, 22% Masters degree, and 8% Doctorate/professional degree). Employment security was extremely high across the entire sample (21% administrative/ business, 20% retired, 17% education/ teacher, 14% other/ medicine/ student/ engineering, 10% government, 7% skilled labor, 7% self-employed, and 4% work at home), and less than 1% were unemployed.
Table 1
Categorized Responses – Observed Means and Standard Deviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving musical performance skills/acquiring dexterity</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing yourself in a creative manner</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional well-being</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving musical understanding</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancement of daily living</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing in concerts</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation/personality of the conductor</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing friendships</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socializing with others</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure time</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in neighborhood/community activities</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding self/knowing assets and limitations</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escape from daily living</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping and encouraging others</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence/autonomy</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining public recognition</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion/spiritual fulfillment</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with relatives</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results are organized according to the four main research problems. The first problem was to determine what motivational factors contributed most toward adult participation in community bands. Table 1 provides the means, standard deviations, and a ranking of the composite questionnaire items. The theoretical mean for each questionnaire item is 2. Items identified as being the most motivating toward community band participation included Improving musical performance skills/acquiring dexterity, Expressing yourself in a creative manner, and Emotional well-being. Enhancement of daily living, Performing in concerts, Socializing with others, Reputation/personality of the conductor, Developing friendships, Leisure time, Involvement with neighborhood/community activities, and Understanding self/knowing assets and limitations received moderately high ratings, while Escape from daily living, Independence/autonomy, Gaining public recognition, Religion/spiritual fulfillment, and Relationships with relatives received the lowest ratings in terms of motivational influence.

Table 2
Main Effects – Statistical Significance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>Main Effect</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing friendships</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socializing with others</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation/personality of the conductor</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>p &lt; .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escape from daily living</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing in concerts</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining public recognition</td>
<td>Gender*Age</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second and third research problems sought to determine how age and gender, respectively, affects adults’ motivation for participating in community bands. In order to analyze the second research problem, subjects were divided into ten-year chronological increments according to age (19-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-83). To control for balanced groupings, all but two age categories, 19-29 and 70-83, contained marked ten-year increments. Three-way ANOVAS were used to determine the relationship between the main effects and the questionnaire items. Table 2 shows the six results that were found to be statistically significant. Reputation/personality of the conductor was found to be significant in terms of age; the higher the age of the participant, the higher the value placed on the personality and reputation of the community band conductor. Contrarily, the younger the community musician, the more likely that musician viewed music participation as an Escape from daily living. In terms of gender, males had a
tendency over females to be motivated by *Performing in concerts*, and older males were motivated by *Gaining public recognition*. This was the only significant interaction found in this study. All other significant findings were a result of one of the main effects. Although not a significant finding, females had a tendency ($p > .05$) to identify *Emotional well-being* as something they sought through community band participation.

The final research problem sought to determine how the highest degree earned affects adults’ motivation for participating in community bands. Consequently, this became a significant contributor to two motivational categories: *Developing friendships* and *Socializing with others*. Both social constructs, these categories were deemed more important by musicians with a high school, post-secondary, or Bachelor’s degree than by informants receiving Masters or Doctoral/Professional degrees. To this extent, these results suggest that subjects with advanced degrees were motivated less by social interaction than those without advanced degrees.

**DISCUSSION**

Several of the demographic results stated in this study were similar to the findings reported by Coffman and Adamek (1999). While the latter report primarily included retired senior adults, many of the demographic trends were mirrored in the present study, as employed, well-educated subjects regularly participated in community band activities.

Improving musical skills/dexterity was the most important motivational factor that contributed to adult participation in community bands, and the least important factor was relationships with relatives. The trend in these ratings suggest that, according to this sample, internal issues of improving self may be more motivational in determining community band participation than external issues of interacting with others, especially family. While older community musicians were motivated by the reputation of the conductor, younger musicians were motivated by the escape music offered from daily living. Emotional well-being tended to be a stronger motivator for female musicians than for male musicians, although not significantly so, and male musicians were motivated by performing in concerts; furthermore, older males found value in gaining public recognition through their participation in community ensembles. Finally, the highest degree earned by the participants affected the importance placed on developing friendships and socializing with others. For those with high school, post-Bachelor, and Bachelor’s degrees, this was a significant motivator for participating in community bands. Consequently, the notion of older adults needing and benefiting from social engagement should not be dismissed. Coffman and Adamek (2001) reported that social support among senior adults promoted companionship, social interaction, and a sense of belonging.

The aforementioned categories speak to the personal, musical, and social motivations set forth by Coffman (2002) and reinforce the notion that there is no single motivation for community music participation. The results of this study also support Coffman’s (2002) idea that personal and musical motivations may be valued more among more successful performers, and in the case of the current study, were valued more among older musicians as well. While the results indicate that expressive needs are strong motivators for music participation, it stands to reason that the learning needs of a majority of the study’s participants are being met through their self-selected participation in a community band. Myers (1992) addressed this when he surmised that adults experience high levels of satisfaction when learning fulfills expressive needs.

Sloboda’s (1984) cumulative model of pleasure, commitment, and cultivated achievement may also be applied to the results found in this study, as gender, age, and level of education played a role in the degree to which certain motivational tendencies became the dominant attribute that contributed to music participation. For example, *Escape from daily living* possessed a different set of motivational values and meanings for younger musicians that it did for older musicians; accordingly, the
Reputation/personality of the conductor was valued more by older musicians than younger musicians who were motivated by other factors, such as sociability or creating friendships. Subjects’ choice to perform, the intensity of their involvement, the persistence with which they participate, and the quality of their efforts and achievements (Maehr, Pintrich, & Linnenbrink, 2002) emphasize the multifaceted social, musical, expressive, and recreational components found in adult ensembles and positions music educators to manage, encourage, and facilitate members’ personal and musical growth at any stage in life.

Community music practices are global phenomena that can assume many forms and include all ages. Although the impetus for participating in a community band may stem from any number of variables, there remains one common denominator: individuals in this study were motivated to experience music not only as a creative outlet, but to improve individual performance skills. Because Small (1998) emphasized that the organized sound we call music possesses a prearranged set of associations that model the relationships we experience in our world, music reflects our acquired cultural schemas, our society, and the people in it. With this in mind, it may be helpful for music educators to teach the adult within the child by making a case for lifelong learning (Bowles, 1999).

A concluding component in adult music education is the preparation of teachers for this age group. While adults may be more likely than children to recognize their need for learning, music educators themselves have historically failed to acknowledge the need for music learning past twelfth grade (Myers, 1992). To this extent, it may be important to urge music educators to reconsider the definition of music education by including a broader population than the archetypal P-12 student. Additionally, “school-based strategies” and “intuition” are perhaps the foundation for many music educators’ teaching styles, rather than teaching lifetime learning habits (Myers, 1992). Undergraduate teaching programs might also consider assigning students to additional fieldwork among adult learners, and infusing into the existing curriculum instruction in adult learning principles and tenets of motivation. Because adults have traditionally possessed the ability to independently conceptualize their own educational needs, it is through educating teachers in adult learning theories that musical instruction effectiveness may be enhanced. This, then, affords music teachers with a framework for suit ing the needs of a growing population of adult learners whose artistic and creative needs may be fulfilled through music participation.
REFERENCES


Ethnography and Music Teacher Observations: Facilitating New Perspectives on Learning and Reflection

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Abstract

Based on research by Frank and Uy (2004), a team of four university instructors (Miranda, Cooper, Stauffer, & Hancock, 2005) conducted an investigation of the use of ethnographic techniques in preservice music teacher observations. Each instructor utilized a comparative model based on varied degrees of ethnographic applications (e.g., number and type of observations, journal reflections, and preservice teacher research identity).

The purpose of this report is to present findings based on data from two of the researchers, who engaged their methods students as co-researchers and applied parallel ethnographic data collection techniques in their field observations. Schwab’s (1983) four commonplaces of schooling (Milieu, Subject Matter, Teachers, and Students) served as a framework for peer discussions, coding of data, and researcher analysis. Presentation of findings focuses on preservice teacher recognition of multifaceted classroom dynamics framed within a preliminary model of preservice teacher understandings and perspectives on teaching and learning in the elementary general music classroom.

Ethnography and Music Teacher Observations: Facilitating New Perspectives on Learning and Reflection

The preparation of music educators is often comprised of a rich and varied mixture of coursework designed to introduce the field, focus on musicianship, explore methods, and develop a theoretical understanding of teaching and learning practices. Concurrently, university instructors recognize the importance of providing opportunities for “real-life” application through observations, practicum teaching assignments, and the student teaching experience.

While the need for classroom experience is clear, implementation of field experience can be problematic. As Eisner (1996) observes, what preservice teachers may understand about what they see and hear during observational experiences is dependent on “both sensibility and the contextual resources” and it is this combination that creates Dewey’s (1938) “experiential continuum.” Time restraints, however, may result in a single or limited set of classroom visits that hinder students’ development of sensibilities and contextual knowledge.

Educational researchers recognize that a mere “snapshot glimpse” during a one-time observation experience is not likely to portray an accurate picture. In addition, Meske (1985) cautions against field experiences where the college student observes a class with little guidance toward what to observe. Meske asks, “Is it possible to control the components of the experience . . . making it possible for the student teacher to acquire appropriate concepts?” (p. 72).

Preservice teachers often make rash assumptions or hasty conclusions when involved in surface-skimming observations during field experiences. Barret and Rasmussen (1996) comment:

A common response . . . [during observations] . . . is the rush to judgment, in which the viewer feels compelled to make a rather quick, summative evaluation of the goodness or effectiveness of the teacher or quality of the ensemble or class. This rapid judgment often inhibits any further productive contemplation about the case. (pp. 79-80)
Frank and Uy (2004) concur, recognizing it is the multifaceted context of a classroom that makes it "vulnerable to criticism by those who do not understand the complexity of what is occurring" (Frank & Uy, 2004, p. 269).

Perhaps the roots of a “rush to judgment” mentality can be attributed to preservice teachers’ attitudes and beliefs whose viewpoints—grounded in experience—often remain resistant to change (Block & Hazelip, 1995; Kagan, 1992; Richardson, 1996). Some researchers argue that preservice teachers’ “intellectual histories as learners” provide the framework upon which they formulate music teaching and learning theories. Therefore, Thiessen & Barrett (2002) encourage music teacher educators to utilize “…a variety of narrative and observational strategies to help preservice teachers articulate these assumptions and beliefs that often enable or inhibit perception thinking about the complex array of actions and interactions within classrooms” (p. 777).

The problem is further complicated by the individuality of cooperating teachers and school environments. Schwartz (1984) observes, “Each school is a unique culture sharing only some common elements with all other schools” (p. 438). As methods instructors we recognize that a music classroom is not merely a place, it is a situation and one that needs to be experienced to be understood. Methods instructors recognize their inability to adequately prescribe teaching environments, and grapple with the critical challenge of preparing preservice teachers to “see” and “interpret” varied teaching environments. Eisner (1991) labels the ability to “read the scene” as connoisseurship. Such a connoisseurship would involve designing observation experiences specifically designed to aid preservice teachers in rich descriptions that lead to reasoned interpretation (Barrett & Rasmussen, 1996; Frank & Uy, 2004; Miranda, Robbins, & Stauffer, 2007).

Theoretical Framework

Researchers have examined the use of observational experiences. In their handbook chapter, “Observation as Inquiry and Method,” Evertson and Green (1986) provide an historical perspective on observational approaches designed to study educational experiences. The authors identify four overlapping or parallel time periods:

Phase One (1939-1963) – focus on exploration of the feasibility of identification of teacher-student interactions and instructional behaviors
Phase Two (1958-1973) – period of instrument development; descriptive, experimental, and training studies
Phase Three (1973 to present) – time of investigation of relationship between teacher effects and student behaviors; descriptive, correlational, experimental methods
Phase Four (1972 to present) – advancement of theory and method, exploration of alternative approaches

When designing this study, we chose to investigate the use of an “alternative” approach, with the intent of narrowing the gap between theories of teaching and learning—based on research, experimentation, and observation—to current practice (Meske, 1985).

Schwab’s four commonplaces of education, based upon Aristotle and Dewey, supply a successful framework for the transfer of theory to practice. “…Schwab provided another vision of what competent curriculum planning required. That vision had its roots in Aristotle’s tripartite division of the theoretical, practical, and productive forms of knowledge and John Dewey’s love affair with the concept of inquiry” (Eisner, 1984, p. 202). Schwab, within his curriculum model, stressed the equality of the four commonplaces as well as their content and interrelationships. We determined that Schwab’s four commonplaces of schooling directly resonated with our research, as were interested in the people, processes, musics, perspectives, and contexts of each observation classroom.
Preservice teachers need to synthesize their concept of the function of teaching with their role as a future teacher, and Wegener (1986) recognized that commonplaces could be used as a tool for comparing various “functional conceptions” within teaching and education (p. 229). Concurring with Fox’s (1985) belief that “Commonplaces enable us to map a field and to compare different theories in one discipline to see how they treat a specific subject matter” (p. 67), we used the commonplaces as a map to guide our analysis.

Barrett & Rasmussen (1996) examined preservice general education teacher’s perceptions of the teacher, the students, the subject content, and the educational context within the school environment. Through a 4-day series of varied music education experiences, “[p]articipants’ responses revealed emerging theories and personal understandings about the purposes and practices of music education.” (Barrett & Rasmussen, 1996, p. 75).

Given the importance of field experience in teacher preparation programs, we chose to conduct an investigation in which we viewed preservice teachers’ observational experiences through the lens of the Schwab (1987) commonplaces.

Methodology

In the fall of 2004, four university instructors conducted an initial investigation into the use of ethnographic techniques in preservice teacher observations in general music methods courses and an instrumental conducting course (Miranda, et al., 2005). The focus of the initial investigation was to determine the efficacy of employing ethnographic techniques with preservice students. Research questions explored the readiness of preservice students to become ethnographers, use ethnographic techniques, and move beyond criticism to a contextual understanding of the elementary general music classroom. Findings supported the preservice teachers’ capabilities as researchers, emergence of a multidimensional view of the general music classroom, and the emergence of a balanced understanding of teaching and learning in their site.

The purpose of this report is to further examine the nature of the preservice teachers reflections on the multi-dimensional view of the elementary general music classroom based on two of the original researchers’ data. While the initial study utilized a comparative model based on varied degrees of ethnographic applications (e.g., number and type of observations, journal reflections, and preservice teacher participant-observer roles) appropriate to the varied course requirements, we engaged our methods students as co-researchers and applied parallel ethnographic data collection techniques (Glesne, 1999).

Participants included undergraduate and certification students enrolled in two elementary methods courses, representing two university settings (see Table 1). Utilizing similar procedures to Frank and Uy (2004), we introduced ethnographic practices and terms to the participants. Instructional time included guided practice for taking field notes, discussion of observations, sharing of ideas for conducting informal interviews, writing memos, and collecting artifacts. In each university setting, students completed a minimum of four observations (single class) in an elementary general music classroom over the course of one academic semester. The number of observations varied due to course requirements and available observation sites (e.g. 4-6 observations with a single class, 1-2 observations with other classes/grade levels as needed for a total of 6 site visits; 4 observations with a single class in each of 2 sites for a total of 8 site visits). Data consisted of field notes and summary reflections (as compiled in the form of a final project), researcher notes on classroom discussions or peer interviews, and researcher memos on the process.

Schwab’s (1973) four commonplaces of schooling (Milieu, Subject Matter, Teachers, and Students) served as an initial framework for data coding (Letts, 2005; Wong, 2003). However, having explored the use of ethnography and the Schwab model in the initial study, we chose to focus analysis for this report
on one of our critical findings, namely, preservice teachers’ abilities to recognize and reflect on the multi-dimensional nature of the elementary general music classroom. Our guiding research question was, “How might we characterize the ‘contextual picture’ of music teaching and learning developed by the preservice teachers through this approach?” Based on that question, we used an emergent coding system (Bogden & Biklen, 2003), resulting in a preliminary model of preservice teacher understandings and perspectives as related to the elementary general music environment.

Discussion

During data analysis, we determined that our students’ comments—written and oral—could not clearly be delineated through the utilization of Schwab’s four commonplaces. In fact, the accuracy of Schwab’s curricular framework has been questioned. Hookey (1999) posits a five-dimensional model (people, processes, perspectives, musics, and contexts) that addresses the integrated nature of the music classroom. Fox (1985) concurs with the difficulty in separation of the commonplaces, “especially when one attempts to deal with problems of the structure of knowledge without invading areas which rightfully belong to the learner, the teacher and the milieu” (p. 69).

Wegener (1986) identifies the aim of reflective thinking as “. . . to distinguish ways of thinking . . .” and defines reflective thinking as “. . . that kind in which what is thought about and that for the sake of which we think is not what is universal but what is situational, concrete, individual, and optional” (p. 220). Reflective activities and assignments assist preservice teachers in learning to distinguish between the theoretical and the practical. Our students used their field notes to facilitate their reflective thinking.

We organized the data into the two categories of “functional conceptions” and “insightful understanding.” Operational definitions are as follows: 1) functional conceptions: the process of recognizing practical applications or basic understandings and 2) insightful understanding: the process of recognizing the rationale(s) behind actions, thoughts, behaviors, and self-knowledge. Functional conceptions represent ideas at rudimentary or practical levels, as opposed to sophisticated theoretical or philosophical viewpoints (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Emergent Model of Preservice Teacher Perspectives on Teaching and Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functional Conceptions</th>
<th>Insightful Understanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of:</td>
<td>Awareness of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Functions of space and classroom environment</td>
<td>• Child behavior and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sequential learning processes</td>
<td>• Global influences on learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Influence of teacher behaviors</td>
<td>• Growing self-confidence in teacher role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Individuality of teachers and students</td>
<td>• Theoretical connections to methods course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Emergent teacher identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “How to” connections to methods course</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A majority of our students’ remarks addressed functional conceptions with only a few individuals progressing to the insightful understanding stage during their field notes, memos, and reflections.
Functional Conceptions

Functional conceptions included such items as the functions of space and classroom environment, sequential learning processes, influence of teacher behaviors, individuality of teachers and students, emerging teacher identity, and connections to the college methods class on a “how to” basis. Students preoccupied with the functions of space often included classroom diagrams and detailed descriptions of equipment, the posters and decorations on the walls, the directions and/or class activities as outlined on the board, and of the children’s seating arrangements.

It is important to notice the classroom setup teachers have because it says so much about their program and both their philosophy of music and of teaching.
(Abby, Final Project Section 3)

Learning seems to be easier in an organized environment. The preparation and readiness to teach has a small to large impact on the children’s readiness to learn.
(Gerry, Final Reflection)

Classroom environment comments often included management strategies.

By taking good notes about the classroom management techniques I observed I will be able to refer back to my notes and see what worked and what did not work. I definitely observed some of both. (Lily, Field Note Analysis)

The chairs were always arranged in a semi-circle so that all of the children could always see Mrs. Gardner. (Alex, Summary of Descriptive Field Notes)

Sequential learning process comments indicated surprise at how much the students remembered from previous class meetings. Other items included the teachers’ use of review techniques to match student recall.

I liked the way she helped them to retrieve what happened a week ago. Surprisingly, many of the kids remembered the song . . . (Sadie, Memo 2)

Because these students demonstrated their ability to retain information from week to week, I believe they would benefit from learning more challenging music skills in addition to what they learn in class. (Heather, Final Reflection)

Many students, through this observation process, came to the realization that teacher behaviors can student behaviors.

The thing that I realize [now] is that you learn the most by watching others. It’s not enough to just study how to teach, you also have to see how other people teach. (Sam, Final Project Section 7)

Overall, the transitions between each activity were smooth, she used more than one type of activity to reinforce a single concept and she also gave clear, yet concise instructions before certain activities. (Carol, Memo 5)

Others noted the consistency in reinforcing classroom behavior and various types of motivational strategies.

She spends a lot of time reinforcing classroom behavior, as a first-year teacher I’m sure she wants to be sure she is in control. (Rudy, Memo 6)
In addition to impact on behavior and motivation, preservice observers stated high commendations for engaging teachers who employed multiple strategies for introducing and reinforcing concepts.

The best teachers I observed were engaging and had many different planned activities for the students. The less than great teachers I observed had the students all in one place nearly the entire time and did not seem to take responsibility for the children’s behavior. (Marty, Final Project Section 3)

While previous student reflections did not recognize the children as individuals or make allowances for a cooperating teacher’s individual style, data analysis from this ethnography project indicated another aspect of functional conceptions—the ability to recognize teacher and student individuality.

The most interesting thing about taking field notes and observing is seeing the different approaches to teaching. . . . You can always pick out experienced teachers because they are always able to identify problems, and have at least three ways of correcting them. (Sam, Final Project Section 3)

There were a few times when I noticed how much more advanced she [Ruth] was in the subject matter. There was this one instance . . . where the children were having a hard time trying to figure out the duration of different notes. In my opinion it seems that Ruth was not having any trouble identifying rhythm, knowing the duration, and even clapping different rhythms. (Derek, Description of Two Children)

The ethnography process is a great way for the future music educator to get an idea of what to expect in music classes. What we need to remember is that we are not going to be teaching music, we will be teaching children. We need to find the best ways to relate to the students and that means being a part of their lives as much as they are a part of ours, if not more. There will always be students that need more attention, that are exceptionally well behaved, or have special needs. Along those same lines, we need to recognize the children who are quiet and do not misbehave or offer their insight to the class. (Marty, Final Project Section 7)

Student comments that illustrated emerging teacher identity commonly consisted of three items: realizations of what they would do in their classrooms, what they liked or disliked, and areas where they still felt inadequate.

I am realizing that success is not going to be found in how many activities/songs that you get through or how much you aid your students with difficulties. Success will germinate from the ability of the teacher to control the environment in which each student participates. (David, Final Project Section 7)

It is important for me to realize that I tend not to notice the visual aspects of teaching. This may be an area that I will struggle with as a teacher. I do have a hard time watching everybody all the time. I have not yet developed the “eyes in the back of my head.” (Bart, Summary of Descriptive Field Notes)

Our students commonly made connections to the college methods class, but primarily on a “how to” basis. Comments consisted of noting the similarities between their college practicum teacher and their observation teacher in areas such as teacher behaviors, classroom activities, and pedagogical and management strategies.
This lesson seemed to be planned out exactly like a lesson I would plan for elementary education class. Ms. M used several methods we learned about to help the students match pitch. (Lily, Memo 10)

The connections I made between the class I observed and Elementary Music Methods never ceased to intrigue me. Each time I read through my descriptive field notes I had more questions and comments about the classroom, the teacher, and the students. (Jane, Summary of Interpretive Field Notes)

Insightful Understanding

Insightful understanding included such items as understanding of children and child development, emerging awareness of the influence of global influences on learning, developing self-confidence as a future teacher, and connections to the college methods class on a “theoretical application” level.

Preservice student comments indicated attention to the children and their development. These observations ranged from recognition of learning experiences that resonated with the child’s developmental strengths to experiences that did not attend to a lack of understanding or confusion.

A large portion of the time the children were sitting in their chairs listening and answering questions. When they did an activity, the children were very enthusiastic. (Frank, Summary of Descriptive Field Notes)

One other quality I noted while observing was that of the 5th graders reading out of full scores. The boys at my table that particular day seemed flabbergasted and actually were saying things like “This confuses me!”, “whatever”, and pushing the book aside . . . the whole class remained thoroughly confused when presented with a score and confusing terminology all at once. (Nancy, Summary of Interpretive Field Notes)

Some students came to recognize that all aspects of the classroom environment are affected by the variety of individual personalities and other factors. Their emerging awareness of global influences on learning can be viewed in comments identifying factors inside and outside the classroom, those within the teachers’ control and those beyond.

The level of preparation needed to make a classroom run smoothly and effectively was far greater than I expected and this was a big wake up call for me. We as students of education really have no way of knowing what is truly in store for us until we get into a classroom situation and observe or teach. (Shawn, Final Project Section 7)

I’m worried that I will not know how to deal with personalities and attitudes (from adults and programmed consciousness) out there in the world of teaching children. How will I keep the simplicity and innocence of children and help that to grow? (Sadie, Memo 2)

Developing self-confidence as a future teacher differs from the functional conceptions’ emerging teacher identity in that these students not only wrote about their future classrooms but their comments displayed self-confidence in their abilities to be successful, competent teachers.

This process has been very beneficial in helping me do a number of things such as gain ideas for lessons, shape my philosophy of music education and decipher which teaching and management strategies will fit and work best for me . . . By observing other people’s mistakes and successes I have gained an immense and irreplaceable amount of knowledge that I will take with me on my career path. (Bart, Personal Reflection)

As I imagined being the teacher, I could see myself doing about the same thing, with a few changes . . . This is the most confident I have felt that I could teach a beginning choir. (Sadie, Memo 5)
A majority of students would often identify strategies utilized in the classroom as identical with those discussed in their college methods class. Connections at a “theoretical application” level were not as prevalent and only noted by a few students.

I feel observations such as these are vital to future music educators. If we only take notes on that our professors tell us, we will only [be] processing information in one way. If we go out and observe other teachers, however, we will be able to see the information we’ve taken notes on be put into use as well as observe teaching styles/techniques that differ from our professors. It gives us another opportunity to really learn the information and open our minds to other possibilities. (Abby, Final Project Section 7)

While I had read about various teaching theories prior to this project, actually being able to witness and analyze how these teaching methods work in the classroom has given me a much deeper understanding of how these theories work when actually applied. (Carol, Personal Reflection)

Even though our Elementary Music Methods class talked about how 6th and 7th grade students are capable of learning sonata allegro form, I know that I was still surprised . . . The seemingly complicated questions she [cooperating teacher] asks are immediately answered by the students. I think that a lot of times, elementary school teachers misjudge the intelligence that their students have, and in this way stunt the intellectual growth of their students. (Jane, Summary of Interpretive Field Notes)

Implications

Methods teachers—within their teaching situations—constantly battle to balance their students’ theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge. “As methods teachers, we attempt to attend to our students’ understanding by choosing appropriate tools and salient questions, and by capturing the normally fleeting manifestations of understanding during class activities in forms that can be examined and contemplated outside of the classroom” (Barrett & Rasmussen, 1996, p. 87). We aimed for our students to engage in systematic intellectual activity and for them to construct grounded “defensible decisions.” Rather than basing decisions on deductive or inductive reasoning, preservice teachers constantly need to engage in competent deliberative processes. Preservice teachers frequently hold an arrogant naiveté—which acts as a filter clouding their viewing lens—keeping them from accurately and objectively identifying the classroom context’s multi-faceted nature.

Teachers, current and future, need to “reflect on their circumstances critically and construct appropriate strategies accordingly” (Jorgensen, 1997, p. xiv). Many of our students were able to form stronger personal beliefs through the critical reflection process required for their final project.

Being impartial and not having to make any judgments placed me in a neutral position to assess my own personal goals and how I would attain them. . . . This process is an excellent way to objectively and subjectively get to know ourselves in an effort to be more prepared for application. (Sadie, Final Project Section 7)

My memos mainly consisted of a summary of the lesson, things I liked/didn’t like about the teacher’s teaching style, things I liked/didn’t like about their classroom management and discipline strategies, and statements regarding what I would like to imitate and what I would do differently. I used them as a way to reflect upon the lesson and process everything I had seen. This way, I was able to pull out things I’d like to use in the future and come up with alternative ways to do things. (Abby, Final Project Section 4)
Through this ethnography project, we aimed to transport preservice teachers beyond the often casual and disconnected observations we have noted in the past. Using ethnographic processes and strategies with preservice teachers can be a transformative experience as they watch not only the adults, but also the children in the milieu. Many begin to question formulaic strategies in hopes for finding strategies that meet their personal needs, strengths, and beliefs.

We were surprised to learn that for some of our students, their university experience had fostered an “ivory tower” mentality. For example, when discussing an observation experience, one preservice teacher reflects:

The main asset to this observation program was that I was able to see all of the tactics and situations that we talked about in class played out in the actual elementary classroom. It sounds crazy, but it really did help me to understand that the strategies we talk about in class really do work in practice. Believe me, I have been in plenty of classrooms that taught me approaches that would never work in application. (Jane, Final Reflection)

As instructors, we recognize that while we might demonstrate an effective strategy during a methods class, some preservice students bring a level of skepticism to the university setting regardless of our use of examples from personal teaching experiences or our ability to communicate.

The importance of successful observations remains a key element for preservice teacher development. “If initial experiences result in the formation of an inappropriate or inaccurate concept, inappropriate and inaccurate behavior will occur unless/until a new set of experiences intervenes at one of the subsequent stages which is powerful enough to enable the individual to revise the original concept and thereby alter the inappropriate behavior” (Meske, 1985, p. 67).

It is a constant struggle—in all aspects of teacher education—to determine “…what we should encourage these students to think about and what was sufficiently compelling to bring students to more sophisticated and thoughtful conceptions of the field” (Wing, 1993, p. 57). When provided pedagogical tools, adequate time for off-campus observations, and effective teacher models, students can develop functional conceptions and insightful understanding.

The relationship between these categories may indicate an emergent model of preservice conceptual development. Based on the findings of data analysis from this study, we are not in a position to specify a model that may contain additional categories, or that may be identified or linked in a linear or continuum design. What we can identify, in this study, is a distinction between categories that indicates a difference in depth and application. We also found that most of our preservice teachers had entry-level or emerging ideas about what encompasses general music teaching. The big question remaining is how to facilitate students’ transitions from functional conceptions to insightful understandings, where they gain more sophisticated perspectives and are subsequently able to make connections from theory to practice.

Preservice teachers need ample time in subsequent field experiences to gain further classroom experience and hone their own developing viewpoints and teaching philosophies. We encourage further research to explore ways to enhance not only preservice observational experiences, but most important, the understanding and application that results from a comprehensive view of teaching and learning in music classrooms.
Table 1: Data Collection in Two Settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Course Title</strong></td>
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<td>Teaching General Music I</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Credits</strong></td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Students</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Status</strong></td>
<td>• Junior and senior music education majors&lt;br&gt;• Mix of Instrumental and Vocal majors</td>
<td>• 18 sophomore music education&lt;br&gt;• 1 graduate licensure student&lt;br&gt;• Mix of Instrumental and Vocal majors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Required Field Experience</strong></td>
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