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The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the musical journeys of five adult fiddle players, and to uncover the essence and meaning of learning to fiddle. Data were collected at the Swannanoa Gathering, a summer immersion camp for folk musicians, held at Warren Wilson College in North Carolina.

Analysis of participant interviews, researcher observations, and field notes revealed three main themes: (a) participants created and maintained personal learning curriculums that included using prior knowledge, noticing new or unfamiliar elements in fiddling communities, gaining insights from other fiddlers, and participating in jam sessions; (b) participants experienced fear, frustration, enjoyment, and excitement while on their personal learning pathways, and; (c) participants' experiences learning fiddle connect them to communities of practice.

The essence of learning for the five fiddlers in this study was the "Ah-Ha" moment, which was part of a larger cyclic model of community as curriculum. Further, the potential lifelong participation of fiddle players was conceptualized as a "ramble", which honors the personal agency of learners as they move through and between different communities over the course of a lifetime. Recommendations are provided for music educators and researchers pertaining to lifelong participation and the role of the teacher in fiddle learning.

PATHWAYS TO LEARNING: THE MUSICAL JOURNEYS  
OF FIVE ADULT FIDDLE PLAYERS

by

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all the past, present, and future members of the UNCG Old-Time Ensemble and the Piedmont Old-Time Society. Over eight years spent jamming, talking, camping, driving, laughing, crying, sharing, confiding, learning, teaching, and growing, I have learned more about myself and who I want to be than I ever thought possible. Without the constant support, encouragement, and friendship of these musicians, this dissertation would not be possible.

APPROVAL PAGE

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Epoche and Prologue**

In 2008, I was finishing a two-year master's degree in viola performance. It was my last semester, and I was registered for my degree recital on viola, a baroque ensemble, a chamber music ensemble, and viola ensemble. I needed one credit hour to meet the requirements for full-time enrollment, so I signed up for a small ensemble new to the university, the Old-Time Ensemble. I did not know anything about the music. I had played some fiddle before, but not in this style. Coming from immersion in the Western art music world, I really didn't know what to expect. What I definitely did not expect was, in making that one choice, I would begin my journey as an old-time fiddler.

The Old-Time Ensemble has three basic course requirements: (a) each student learns a tune from the Old-Time canon of tunes and songs by ear, without notation; (b) each student then teaches this tune to the ensemble, using whatever method they choose; and (c) students create their own arrangements of the tunes they teach, and perform these arrangements at the end-of-term recital. I had experience learning music by ear with my family, in church, and in rock and pop groups. I had completed my undergraduate degree in music education, and had a pretty good sense of how to teach tunes by rote. I had been in plenty of recitals. But somehow, the experiences I had learning and playing in the Old-Time Ensemble changed me in a very powerful way. I was graduating at the end of

the term, but did not want to stop playing and learning this music. I had gotten a taste of it, and I wanted more.

I began attending old-time jam sessions and learning tunes by ear on the fly with very experienced old-time players. I continued to attend the Old-Time Ensemble, where tunes were still broken down for me, and where I had people who were in approximately the same place as I was in their learning sequence. In both the Old-Time Ensemble and local and regional jam sessions, I found many like-minded peers who were interested in engaging deeply with the music and the traditions that I have come to love. In reflecting on my own journey, my personal music pathway, I wonder at how my choices have led me to where I am today, to writing this dissertation from my perspective as a classical musician, a fiddler, a career educator, and a developing researcher. In reflecting on what I have learned, it is more than tunes and techniques, more than related literature and research methods, more than pedagogy. What do we really learn when we set out to explore any musical style or genre, and what is the essence and meaning of learning as experienced by adults in situations like mine?

### **Purpose and Rationale**

The learning of musical styles and techniques can occur in many different contexts. From the school music program to the weekly pub jam, whether learning from a recording or reading from printed notation, fiddle players have myriad options for engaging in learning opportunities. Learning music is a journey, a path that can twist and turn in many different directions (Lamont, 2011). In a contemporary world, it seems likely that the journey of learning to play the fiddle, regardless of style, be informed by a

wealth of diverse musical experiences. What musical experiences contribute to the decision to learn to play fiddle? What experiences do adult fiddle players value in varied music learning and making contexts?

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to examine the musical journeys of five adult fiddle players, and to uncover the essence and meaning of learning to fiddle. Although these five fiddlers have different backgrounds and experiences with music making, they all chose to attend Fiddle Week at The Swannanoa Gathering in Asheville, North Carolina to enhance their skills. Fiddle Week offers a range of classes in many different styles, and as such, participants have the opportunity to enroll in classes related to old-time, bluegrass, Métis, swing, and Celtic fiddle traditions. By examining the personal music pathways of these five fiddlers, we can capture the essence of what it means to learn to play the fiddle. In addition, teachers of fiddle traditions and school music educators alike may benefit from understanding how experiences on our personal music pathways contribute to continued participation and enjoyment in music.

### **Research Questions**

Three research questions were developed to guide the inquiry in this dissertation.

- 1. What experiences constitute “learning” for adult fiddle players?*
- 2. How do adult learners of fiddle traditions view their learning experiences?*
- 3. What learning experiences contribute to meaningful experiences with music making for adult fiddle players?*

These questions are intentionally broad. The use of broad research questions that can account for the structures of the phenomenon as well as emotional responses to the

phenomenon is advocated by Moustakas (1994). These research questions aim to account for all the various experiences that involve learning. As I will demonstrate in the following chapters, historical and contemporary learning of fiddle traditions can include many and various experiences. I did not want my research questions to privilege certain learning contexts or types of learning at the expense of gaining broad insights into these five adults' lifelong engagement with music. Are there aspects of different learning contexts which lead to continued participation for adult fiddlers? Are certain contexts better suited for learning particular skills or gaining deeper understanding than others?

I was also interested in the music learning experiences that my participants might have had before learning to fiddle, and how these experiences may or may not relate to or inform fiddle learning. These questions also tie music learning experiences with music making experiences. Do these fiddlers enjoy performing and competing, or is jamming their preference? Do they enjoy playing music with others or performing by themselves? Do these fiddlers like playing with their peers, or with older musicians? By better understanding what participants value in music *making* experiences, we can glean information about what they value in *learning* experiences. I was also sensitive to the fact that *making* music and *learning* music will not always be separate experiences, and so understanding values associated with one will help me to understand the other.

### **Outline of Document**

In chapter two, I outline the theoretical framework used to examine the personal music pathways of adult fiddle learners. The interconnected theories of communities of practice, situated learning, and legitimate peripheral participation are integral to how I

examine and interpret the experience and essence of learning to fiddle. Chapter two also outlines areas of related literature that inform this dissertation, namely the concept and rhetoric of lifelong learning, formal and informal music learning experiences, adult music learning, and historical and contemporary fiddle learning. All of these areas of research are important starting points for my own research.

Chapter three outlines the phenomenological research methodology used in this dissertation. A phenomenological approach is appropriate for research that aims to describe the essence of an experience, in this case, the experience of learning to play the fiddle. The phenomenological approach is especially appropriate for a study concerning learning, because an in-depth examination of learning across different contexts and over a lifetime can be reduced, through description and significant statements, to the very essence of an experience (Creswell, 2013). Music learning is a phenomenon that informs our decision-making processes and value system as music participants and consumers, and helps us to form our personal and group identity.

Chapter four presents the findings of this research, gained from analysis of the interviews with and observations of the research participants. The voices and experiences of the participants are particularly prevalent in this chapter, as their words capture the essence of their experiences. While there are certain experiences that are common among all the participants, I will emphasize the common and the unique, the individual and the communal, to paint a picture of the participants' personal music pathways.

I provide a discussion of the results of this research in chapter six. Further, I propose two models for conceptualizing learning as experienced by the five adult fiddlers in this study. Some aspects of the results were surprising to me, and deserve further exploration than can be provided in this dissertation. As such, I provide suggestions for future research in the areas of lifelong learning and participation in music, and the role of trained music educators in the lives of adult music learners.

## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RELATED LITERATURE

#### **Theoretical Framework Overview**

The theoretical framework for this research is built upon Lave and Wenger and Wenger's (1991; 1998) concepts of *communities of practice*, *legitimate peripheral participation*, and *situated learning*. In these connected theories, learning is situated within the complex fabric of social life and is the byproduct of an individual's desire to participate in a community of practice. Individuals within a community of practice are all legitimate participants in social life, with some participants having more experience within the community (what Lave and Wenger call "old-timers" or "full" participants) and others who are new to the community and are not yet aware of the rules for participation (also known as "newcomers" or "peripheral" participants). If we are to view learning through this theory, we must also take personal and community identity development into account: "We conceive of identities as long-term, living relations between persons and their place and participation in communities of practice. Thus identity, knowing, and social membership entail one another" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, 53).

It is important here to stress that legitimate peripheral participation is not a pedagogical tool, nor is it only possible within specific educational contexts:

...this viewpoint makes a fundamental distinction between learning and intentional instruction. Such decoupling does not deny that learning can take place where there is teaching, but it does not take intentional instruction to be in itself the source or cause of learning. (Lave & Wenger, 1991, pp. 40-41)

This aspect of learning, viewed as legitimate peripheral participation, is especially crucial as it allows for examining, analyzing, and understanding learning in various contexts and as diverse experiences. These contexts can exist harmoniously, without putting each experience in an isolated box. By taking identity development into account, it becomes easier to see each participant as having a set of experiences that may (or may not) inform each other and impact how each participants' identity is located within various aspects of social life and contexts for participating and learning.

### **Communities of practice.**

Communities are created through shared development, continuation, and evolution of *practice*, an enterprise in which members of the community engage. Wenger states that "*Practice is about meaning as an experience of everyday life*" (1998, p. 52). Meaning is "negotiated" (Wenger, 1998, p. 52) through the dual processes of *participation* and *reification*. Participation is a fairly common term, and its usage within this theory is in line with the accepted understanding of the word. Participation, in this theory, is reliant upon lived experiences in the social world, and membership within a community where members can unite through "social enterprises" (Wenger, 1998, p. 55).

In other words, when I attend an old-time jam session or a fiddle workshop, I am participating in a social enterprise that focuses on the practice of old-time music.

Through participation, my inward and outward identity as a fiddler becomes attached to

the old-time fiddling community at large, and entwined with the individual identities of other participants. Through my participation, I negotiate my own personal meanings of what old-time fiddling is and how I fit into the old-time fiddling community at large. At the same time, the experiences and perspectives I bring to practice through participation diversifies the community, causing a negotiation of what fiddling is and means for the community. This negotiation of personal and communal identities within communities of practice is a dynamic process, and is not without its difficulties and tensions. To be sure, participation within communities of practice requires careful attention to implicit rules for participation. Fiddlers disagree about what behaviors and styles embody a master fiddler, and about the best or most authentic ways to engage in learning.

Certain accepted mores and folkways of communities are reified, which Wenger defines as "...the process of giving form to our experiences by producing objects that congeal this experience into 'thingness'..." (1998, p. 58). Practice is reified through the creation of tools, artifacts, stories, and language. For example, the fiddlers I interact with discuss common modifications to their instruments, such as flattening the bridge for ease in playing double stops and drones. They swap tunes learned from different players, or regional variants of tunes. They share stories about experiences at fiddle festivals, the lives of tradition bearers, and their feelings about the tradition and each other. All of these tools, artifacts, and stories serve to change practice through participation.

Conceptualizing participation and reification as a duality, as an interplay, is necessary: one does not and should not use participation and reification to classify artifacts or events. To do so would "...focus on surface features rather than on

fundamental processes” (Wenger, 1998, p. 69). These processes within communities of practice will most essentially contain use of explicit and tacit knowledge. For every tune that I have learned by ear in a jam session, there has been a tune that has been broken down for me to learn in workshops or classes. For every time that I have noticed the ways that fiddle and banjo players interact, a banjo player has told me what they listen for in a great fiddle player. The things we notice and pick up are tacit; the things we are told or taught are explicit. There may be an assumption that tacit knowledge is gained through participation, and explicit knowledge is gained through reification. However, the interplay between the two types of knowledge provides for the coexistence of participation and reification. In communities of practice, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts: the tacit, the explicit, the artifacts, tools, and language are all necessary components of practice, practice that is sustained through participation.

Communities of practice may not be able to reify their existence through delivering lengthy descriptions of bylaws, accepted practices for members, and the like. As such, Wenger (1998) outlines indicators of communities of practice. These may include:

...sustained mutual relationships-harmonious or conflictual; shared ways of engaging in doing things together; substantial overlap in participants’ descriptions of who belongs; knowing what others know, what they can do, and how they can contribute to an enterprise; the ability to assess the appropriateness of actions and products; specific tools, representations, and other artifacts; local lore, shared stories, inside jokes, knowing laughter; jargon and shortcuts to communication; a shared discourse reflecting a certain perspective on the world. (Wenger, 1998, pp. 125-126)

### **Situated learning through legitimate peripheral participation.**

I began playing old-time fiddle through a university course, the Old-Time Ensemble. With the encouragement of the director of the ensemble, I started going to a local old-time jam session. I did not know anyone at the jam; I did not know many of the tunes that they played. The tunes they played were not broken into phrases and taught call-and-response style, as they had been in the Old-Time Ensemble. I sat at the edge of a tight circle of musicians who, it seemed to me, had been playing this music all their lives. I tried to pick up parts of tunes as they flew by at lightening speed. I tried to play quietly and not let anyone notice that I did not know what I was doing. One of the fiddlers at the jam introduced himself to me. He was a friendly and jovial guy, and it seemed to me that he was sincere in telling me to come back next month. He sent me a list of the favored tunes played at the local jam session. After that, I found every recording of Tommy Jarrell, Benton Flippen, and Art Stamper that I could. I was determined to learn to play fiddle entirely by ear, as this seemed to be the accepted form of participation within the local jamming community.

When we first enter a community, we are newcomers: necessarily, if we are to participate more fully within the community we must learn what it means to participate in new and different ways. The concept of the periphery may conjure an image of a newcomer standing outside a tightly knit circle, looking in on the goings-on of a foreign entity that they have yet to understand. This image may even seem familiar to many of us. Though it may in some instances denote a physical space, Lave and Wenger conceptualize the periphery as a phase in identity construction. A peripheral identity is a

position of power: having an overview of the practice as a whole allows newcomers to make choices about how they will proceed towards “full” participation, a term that is, “...intended to do justice to the diversity of relations involved in varying forms of community membership” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 36-37). Participation of newcomers with a peripheral identity is legitimate, certainly just as legitimate as the full participation of old-timers. Lave and Wenger stress that, to a certain extent, even long time participants in communities of practice are at once old-timers and newcomers, based on what roles they play within the community. This is also the way in which identities are created, reinvented, and co-defined: through learning situated in practice.

Learning in communities of practice is not always a conscious, focused exercise in skill or knowledge acquisition. Wenger states:

Learning is not reified as an extraneous goal or as a special category of activity or membership. Their practice is not merely a context for learning something else. Engagement in practice-in its unfolding, multidimensional complexity-is both the stage and the object, the road and the destination. (Wenger, 1998, pp. 95)

### **Related Literature Overview**

The literature that informs this research is drawn from music education, ethnomusicology, and sociology. Several important areas of related literature are outlined and explored in the following section. The concept of lifelong learning is examined first, with consideration given to the ways in which school music programs can promote lifelong learning, and how the concept has been problematized in the literature. A discussion of formal and informal music learning follows, particularly how informal music learning practices have been adapted for school music structures, and how the field

of music education has struggled to provide operational definitions for formal and informal learning. Adult music learning is addressed next, followed by an examination of fiddle learning from both a historical and contemporary perspective.

There are overlapping themes across these areas of related literature. Much of the research on lifelong learning focuses on the learning experiences of adult participants. Studies about learning to fiddle often describe informal or formal learning practices. All of these research topics can be approached philosophically or practically. Philosophical research in these areas is extremely important, as this type of research tends to problematize the realities of everyday practice. However, more critical research in each of these areas is needed from a practical and descriptive standpoint, so that researchers and educators can understand the reality of how communities currently engage in practice. Research is also needed that attempts to disentangle these concepts from one another in order to better understand personal music pathways.

### **Lifelong learning.**

The topic of lifelong learning is fraught with lofty expectations, which can be difficult to reconcile in the minds of those trained to be music educators. We hope for the best in all situations, perhaps that our students will follow our calling to dedicate their lives to music. Our personal music pathways as music educators are typically the straight and narrow. We leave secondary schools, having found a passion for music through participation in school programs, and continue on to conservatories or teacher education programs. We learn to perform and teach music at the highest caliber, then pass on what

we know to others who will have largely the same experiences if they follow the paths that we did.

Many of our students will not follow this path. In order to serve them as best we can, and to honor the individuality and agency of their pathways, deconstructing what constitutes *lifelong* and what constitutes *learning*, is necessary. Lifelong may not mean continuous participation, but it could. Learning across the lifespan may involve a wilderness of opportunity for those who would venture the journey. Creating a personal music pathway, we craft our own meanings and understandings of music over the course of a lifetime, in whatever ways we see fit.

If we are to gain a better understanding of what it means to learn over a lifetime, we must understand how learning is different for adults than it is for children. Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) describe these differences in terms of the interplay between three domains: the learner, the context, and the learning process. Children are learning about and experiencing music for the first time, whereas adult learners of music bring all their musical experiences to the table as learners. Further, Merriam and colleagues emphasize that adult learners value appropriate pacing in teacher-led learning activities, and that adult learners are more likely than children to want to understand the meaning of learning activities in relation to their learning goals (Merriam et al., 2007).

Nazareth (1999) put forth a framework for lifelong music education that considers vertical coherence (music participation throughout life) and horizontal coherence (music participation which is related to life). She is one of the few researchers who has noted a specific lack of support of adults age 30-50 who are interested in music learning activities

(Nazareth, 1999, p. 17). In order to facilitate more entry and reentry points for adult music learners than are currently available, Nazareth also advocates for a framework that allows for "...the changing and expanding role of music providers in the learning process" (Nazareth, 1999, p. 18). This entails better teacher education focus on adult learners, but also widening the concept of who is a "teacher", and what makes someone a teacher. Further, Nazareth pushes music educators to look to their own local and regional communities for music education resources not provided in school music curriculums, saying, "...educators should take musical cues from the community by drawing from and contributing to its diversity, heritage, and common practice, and provide music learning opportunities accordingly" (Nazareth, 1999, p. 18). In this way, music education programs could serve as part of a larger curriculum, and the skills and knowledge gained through these programs can be put to use in real world practices.

Lamont "... challenge[s] the view that musical development and continued involvement with music across the lifespan can or should be ascribed to talent, motivation, or opportunity, and that the path of musical development needs to be continuous" (2011, p. 370). We in music education have all encountered that person who confesses that they have no talent for music. Sometimes this notion comes from negative experiences or feedback from irresponsible music educators. In other cases, society imposes professionalization on music making experiences, and there is only room for the talented in the business of music. In spite of this, community and social resources for interested adult music learners exist often touting that talent is not a prerequisite, such as the New Horizons International Music Association (Coffman, 2008, 2009; Dabback,

2008, 2010). Motivations for participating in music learning which may play a role for children simply may not apply for adults, such as the desire to please parents and teachers. Therefore, when examining the motivations of lifelong learners of music, we can trace various motivators over the lifespan, and in some cases, no motivators at all. Increasing access to music education opportunities has been a focus in school music programs, but for those who missed or opted out in childhood, inspiration to participate may present itself in unexpected ways or inopportune times. Even if motivation is present, other commitments, such as work or home life, homework and other activities, can take precedence.

Personal music pathways are not always continuous: circumstance can force people to cease participation only to resume later, what Lamont called “false starts” (2011, p. 379). Lamont insisted that false starts are not harmful to musical development or to lifelong music learning. She noted, “...the time away from music is necessary to get over earlier negative experiences” (p. 380). This can be especially important for adults, who have a wealth of musical experience (both positive and negative) on which to draw. Lamont urged that:

Some people have strong and continued musical trajectories from positive early experiences through later life, but many have more diverse pathways, changing direction, learning new instruments and genres, becoming involved in different kinds of music making, returning after considerable periods of time away or coming to music later in life. (Lamont, 2011, pp. 380)

Pitts, Robinson, and Goh (2015) noted that not only do adults return to music for myriad reasons, but they also withdraw from musical activities for a variety of reasons

that may be musical, personal, and social. It is through this lens that I view lifelong learning in the current research: unpredictable, circuitous paths on which different people intersect and make choices about their desire to participate in music.

When we allow for unpredictable, dynamic, and diverse ways of learning across the lifespan, we are able to examine learning in terms of participation in music. Ideally, this type of learning occurs in real world social practices. Mantie and Tucker (2008) provide an important viewpoint on lifelong learning, which is in line with the framework provided by Lave and Wenger (1991) for situated learning, and with the current research: "...we subscribe to the view that humans learn in order to participate" (Mantie & Tucker, 2008, p. 218). The social aspects of participation in school orchestra can be motivating, but I contend that the majority of students in school programs are not learning the violin to learn something new. They want to play the violin: they learn so that they can participate. This participation, however, is limited to Western Art music in many school music programs. This may be one of the reasons that participation drops dramatically upon graduation from high school: "students do not view their learning as co-participating in a real, 'in-the-world' social practice," (Mantie & Tucker, 2008, p. 220), or even worse, that "teachers do not view their teaching as leading toward the goal of lifelong participation" (Mantie & Tucker, 2008, p. 223).

Revolutionary philosophers in music education have called for the transformation of school music programs. This reconceived model would include diverse music experiences that relate to the real world of music practice outside of school curriculums. Meyers (2008) said that these new models would "free" music education from the status

quo: “we must transform school models that are based exclusively on self-perpetuating structures and that are inconsistent with the musical worlds most people participate in outside of school” (Meyers, 2008, p. 55). Meyers called for reforms in school music education that allow for the development of diverse and autonomous musical identities of students, which can evolve over the lifespan. He highlighted the musical and personal autonomy of adults who have aged out of school music programs, and emphasized that opportunities must exist for adults who did not get to participate in music in meaningful ways while in school. School music programs and structures certainly have a role to play in lifelong participation, but only if students learn skills that can “...grow with them into and through adulthood” (Meyers, 2008, p. 56). The expansion of the school music curriculum should include popular, folk, and world music options, and the local and regional community should be seen as a wellspring of opportunity for real world participation.

Many cultures around the world engage with music through participatory, as opposed to presentational, performance (Turino, 2008). We can argue that students enrolled in school orchestras are participating in music. However, Turino (2008) described the important distinction between the two types of performances.

“Participatory music is *not for listening apart from doing*; presentational music is prepared by musicians for others to listen to...” (Turino, 2008, p. 52). This emphasis on learning through participation has been explored in music education. Roulston (2010) borrowed from the work of Merriam and Kim (2008), and showed that music-learning activities in nonwestern cultures are communal, informal, and holistic. This nonwestern

view of music learning stands in stark contrast to American music education, where much learning is enacted privately in personal practice. When music learning is formalized through structural components of educational hierarchy, content is often presented in separate courses, without an attempt to unify violin lessons with ear training and music history.

The valuable concept of lifelong learning has been appropriated through rhetoric employed by political, educational, and social agencies. Mantie (2012) unpacked several troubling issues for music educators and community music leaders pertaining to the goals of the lifelong learning, both philosophical and practical. His work utilized concepts from Lave and Wenger (1991), and is typified by statements such as “Being a learner is favoured over being a participant. As a result, *focusing on learning changes practice from a social activity to an individual one*” (Mantie, 2012, p. 225). His main thesis was that, in our current discourse of lifelong learning, *learning* is privileged above *doing*: “Why, for example, should one assume that involvement in recreational music-making is driven by a desire for lifelong musical learning rather than other motivations, and why is learning implied as being a (or the) preferred motivation?” (Mantie, 2012, p. 223).

Such an emphasis on lifelong learning has the potential to downplay the importance of *context* in learning. Competent amateurs and apprentices within communities of practice would be doomed to learn everything there is to know about practice before they can really participate, transforming the important position of peripherality into a point of weakness instead of power. Mantie does not deny the value of music experiences across the lifespan, stating, “...handled carefully, lifelong learning

can be a useful concept-although I would counter that lifelong enjoyment, involvement, participation or engagement are more fruitful terms for adult music activities” (Mantie, 2012, p. 228). Mantie suggested that music educators and community music leaders be active in steering the discourse and rhetoric around lifelong learning towards enjoyment in participation, rather than viewing learning as an economic commodity.

### **Formal and informal learning.**

Enormous attention has been paid to the concepts of formal and informal music learning in recent years. The focus on informal learning experiences in music education has been well intentioned. If music educators are to engage students in real world practices that encourage lifelong participation, then introducing diverse music learning experiences into the curriculum makes good sense. Informal music learning practices have been assumed in nonwestern cultures, and explored by ethnomusicologists (Rice, 2003). Mark (1996) has long advocated for increased attention paid to informal learning practices and processes in the field of music education, especially in the case of adult music learners. He said, “A form of music education that’s been successful for thousands of years is certainly worthy of study by the music education scholarly community” (Mark, 1996, p. 120).

In the spirit of his challenge, scholars in music education have borrowed, both conceptually and methodologically, from the field of ethnomusicology, as exemplified by the work of Green (2002, 2008), Veblen (1996) and Waldron, (2009). As a result, informal music learning strategies have been incorporated into music curriculums and research with varying degrees of success. In spite of increased focus on informal music

learning practices from both philosophical and practical perspectives, concrete, meaningful definitions of formal and informal music learning continue to elude music educators.

### ***Informal music learning in the school.***

Pedagogies in informal music making for in-school learning purposes, as advocated by British music educator Lucy Green, usually revolve around student choice of repertoire, regardless of the technical difficulty of the music; the opportunity to choose friends to work with; and the synthesis of learning musical skills into a holistic experience (2002; 2008). Advocates of informal music learning in formal school settings have lamented the separation of skill acquisition from the music and musical context itself. Green endorses a more holistic approach to music learning, integrating the technical, theoretical, creative, and social aspects of musicianship. Through a combination of familiarity, personal choice, and authentic experience with music, even seemingly complex music can be learned. Cope (1999) advocates informal methods in the cultivation of competent amateurs through the school music program, as opposed to virtuosic soloists, to promote lifelong participation in music. Jaffurs (2004) highlights areas of formal and informal crossover in the school music curriculum, such as the constructivist approaches and democratic learning models found in some music classrooms. There are elements of the formal to be found in the informal, and vice-versa.

### ***The Internet as an informal learning resource.***

The prevalence of the Internet in modern informal learning practices has not gone unnoticed in music education research. Studies examined the content of YouTube

instructional videos in folk music styles (Kruse & Veblen, 2012), and the ability of Internet resources to recreate feelings of community or belonging for learners (Waldron & Veblen, 2008). Waldron (2009) found that online communities could actually constitute a community of practice, in that both formal and informal opportunities for engaging in practice exist. While this research is important in building a wealth of resources to better understand virtual teaching and learning, one has to question: how formal or informal is this process? Is learning from a video-recorded teacher really so different from learning from that same teacher in person? Is learning from YouTube considered informal because it is most likely self-directed and self-motivated? Where is the line between formal and informal? Does a distinction truly exist?

***Defining formal and informal learning.***

Several researchers and philosophers in music education have challenged the distinction between formal and informal learning as being oppositional (Folkestad, 2006; Jenkins, 2011; Schippers, 2010). Jenkins (2011) argues that both formal and informal learning are common in our lives in and out of school. Both are important and valuable for us, and that we must consider the contexts of learning to help us determine if activities are formal or informal. He states that informal learning is context-sensitive, meaning that how and what you learn informally will change based on the context of the activity, and experience-dependent, meaning that you cannot learn informally unless you are actively engaged in an experience (playing a violin, dancing, etc.).

Another main distinction that Jenkins makes between formal and informal learning is that formal learning begins with the end in mind, and the end dictates the

means by which learning occurs. In informal learning, the ends are the means, and in fact, they cannot be separated. Informal learning really occurs during activities that are not necessarily educational.

Folkestad (2006) argued that the main criteria to consider when evaluating informal and formal learning situations should be the mental focus of the learner.

In the formal learning situation, the minds of both the teacher and the students are directed towards *learning how to play music (learning how to make music)*, whereas in the informal learning practice the mind is directed towards *playing music (making music)*. (Folkestad, 2006, pp. 138)

Schippers' (2010) framework emphasizes formal and informal music learning as existing on a continuum. Purely formal learning anchors one end of this continuum, while purely informal learning anchors the other end. However, between these two anchors is a sea of grey area, where formal and informal intermingle. The majority of our learning experiences blend elements of formal and informal. As such, the separation of music learning practices into discrete categories is, at best, artificial, and at worst, does not honor the complexities of participation. Where do we learn, and with whom do we learn? Why do we learn, and why might we choose to learn in these ways? How do we choose to participate, and how much do we participate? It is truly difficult to operationalize these terms, especially when artificial value has been assigned to the authenticity of informal practices. For example, music is made and learned in school orchestras, a largely formal affair, which results in a presentational performance. Does the fact that learning occurs in school orchestras outweigh the value of the music made by students who are eager to participate? Are fiddle workshops less valuable than jam

sessions because participants enter into a workshop experience with an expectation that they will learn something? Though I still find these definitions somewhat problematic, I will utilize Jenkins' (2011) definitions of formal and informal music learning where necessary in this research. *Formal music learning* is defined as music learning where one begins with the end in mind, in contrast to *informal music learning*, in which the ends are the means (2011).

***Formal and informal learning: A word from Lave and Wenger.***

Despite the attempts of researchers and scholars to re-frame the formal/informal dichotomy as a continuum (Folkestad, 2006; Jenkins, 2011; Schippers, 2010), the field of music education continues to force square pegs into round holes. Lave and Wenger (1991) have specific feelings about learning as either a formal or informal enterprise:

In the recent past, the only means we have had for understanding the process by which these changes [in self- and community identity through skill acquisition] occur have come from conventional speculations about the nature of 'informal' learning: That is, apprentices are supposed to acquire the 'specifics' of practice through 'observation and imitation.' But this view is in all probability wrong in every particular, or right in particular circumstances, but for the wrong reasons. (Lave & Wenger, 1991, pp. 94-95)

Lave and Wenger assert that if we conceive of informal learning as learners absorbing information through observation and imitation, we ignore that fact that these learners are participants in a community of learners. Perhaps more damaging is the idea that the periphery is not a place of power, but a place from which we can only observe and imitate. On the contrary:

An extended period of legitimate peripherality provides learners with opportunities to make the culture of practice theirs. From a broadly peripheral perspective, apprentices gradually assemble a general idea of what constitutes the practice of the community. (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 95)

As such, learning is a reciprocal process of reinvention, for the individual and the community, as learners are "...both absorbing and being absorbed in the 'culture of practice'" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, 95). In short, the concepts of formal and informal learning do not do justice to the crucial role of newcomers within communities of practice.

Further, current trends and scholarship in music education tend to valorize informal learning opportunities and lament ways in which formal music learning is removed from the reality of learning in everyday life. However, as we will see, adult music learners, specifically, and fiddlers especially, value the learning that occurs within formal music learning contexts. These contexts can include: large ensembles such as concert bands or orchestras, private lessons, heterogeneous and homogeneous group instruction, summer camps, and workshops. Perhaps the atmosphere is relaxed, and the relationships that are developed are pleasant and meaningful, but if there is a teacher in the room, and students' minds are focused on learning, that situation is formal.

### **Adult music learning.**

Chelcy Bowles' (1991) study of adult music education interests and experiences is a crucial starting point in understanding what adults experience and value in music education activities. Results from her research showed that adults who have a positive orientation to music, usually gained through experiences in school music programs, were

more likely to pursue musical activities as adults. As such, an examination of links between school and community music making and learning is merited.

Results of Cavitt's (2005) survey of 401 community band members showed that 58.6% of participants were 36 years of age or older, with a mean age of 40.15. When asked to choose three people in their lives who were the greatest influences on their musical development, 75% of participants chose their high school ensemble director, and 55% chose a parent or guardian. Participants became aware of their community band from friends and family members (40%), community band director (17%), media sources, such as newspaper ads (14.4%), and school music teachers (13.5%). Community band members (26.5%) felt that school music educators should be providing more information about community bands to high school students, and that school music educators should encourage their students to continue to play their instrument beyond formal schooling (16.4%).

Serendipity has played a role in the decision for some adults to participate in music learning activities (Taylor, Kruse, Nickel, Lee, & Bowen, 2011, p. 15). Many of the adults in this study had played flute in school music programs, discontinued their participation upon graduation, and then resumed participation as adults, often through previously unforeseen invitations or circumstances. Likewise, Waldron and Veblen (2009) found that participants who had learned Celtic music informally discovered the music "...by accident or through serendipitous events" (Waldron & Veblen, 2009, p. 65). In terms of relating lifelong learning and participation to adult music learning, the concept of serendipity may be more important than we currently understand. An

invitation to participate is extended to someone, and for whatever reason, they may decide to try, or decide against trying. Being afforded the opportunity to decide, to turn left or right on the personal music pathway relies on serendipity, and on the autonomy of adult music participants. As such, the concept of serendipity deserves further exploration through research.

*Adult music ensembles.*

Much of the research pertaining to adult music learning experiences is conducted using large Western Art music ensembles, such as New Horizons ensembles (Carucci, 2012; Coffman, 2008, 2009; Dabback, 2008, 2010). These ensembles are teaching ensembles as well as performance ensembles, and are geared towards older adults. In Coffman's (2008) study, the mean age of participants who responded to an international survey of New Horizons members (N=1652) was 67.31, with the most often reported age of 72. Coffman noted that, "NHIMA [New Horizons International Music Association] used to suggest limiting membership to adults aged 50 and over, but this is no longer the case and some NHIMA groups include younger adults" (Coffman, 2008, p. 378). He did note that, of the participants in his study, "Approximately 95 per cent of the respondents were at least 50 years old" (Coffman, 2008, p. 378). In this same study, Coffman was able to outline the prior musical experiences of adults in NHIMA ensembles. Ninety-three percent of adults enrolled in NHIMA ensembles could read Western music notation; 62.5% had played in ensembles during high school, but only 48.1% continued to play their instrument after graduating (Coffman, 2008).

Several excellent examples of literature linking adult participation in music learning activities to “successful aging” (Rowe & Kahn, 1998) exist. However, this emphasis on researching retired or older adults presents a gap in the related literature. While this research is important, and necessary for gaining an understanding of the experiences of this demographic of adult learners, music learning experiences of post-graduate but pre-retiree adults have not received the same attention.

***Musical motivations and benefits for adult learners.***

Musical growth was highlighted as one of the motivating factors for adults to participate in music learning experiences (Taylor, Kruse, Nickel, Lee, & Bowen, 2011). Some adult beginners described their desire to learn a musical instrument in relation to their “bucket list,” something they had always wanted to do but were never able to pursue (Roulston, Jutras, & Kim, 2015, p. 329). Adult music learners were eager to gain musical and technical knowledge from a variety of sources, including teachers, conductors, and fellow ensemble members; however, if they felt they needed it, adults were equally as likely to engage in self-directed music learning activities, such as using method books or Internet resources (Roulston et al., 2015).

Adult musicians used prior experiences to inform their learning interests and choices pertaining to music learning. In one study, “...adult learners were strategic and informed in approaching repertoire selection, activities, and expectations of lessons and teachers” (Roulston et al., 2015, p. 328). Further, while recalling technical and musical skills from childhood was difficult for some adults, it was easier for others. Coffman (2009) highlighted creative ways in which adult learners of music get the most out their

experiences, and that creativity and the ability to be creative with music is a motivator for adult learners of music.

***Social motivations and benefits for adult learners.***

Social aspects of music learning activities were strong motivators for adult learners (Cavitt, 2005; Roulston et al., 2015). Social benefits for those participating in music learning activities have also been explored (Carucci, 2010; Coffman, 2008, 2009; Dabback, 2008; Taylor et al., 2011). Carucci (2010) found that increased time and length of membership in New Horizons ensembles was positively correlated with feelings of belonging and social support. Further, Taylor and colleagues (2011) found that feeling of social connectedness were felt more deeply in homogeneous ensembles, in this case a flute choir, than in heterogeneous ensembles that participants had experienced. Kruse (2009) also found that, similar to Pitts' (2005) and Pitts, Robinson, and Goh's (2015) studies, group dynamics and feelings of belonging were important in decisions to continue or discontinue participation in music learning activities.

***Challenges for adult learners.***

Adult music learners encountered challenges in their learning. For those adults learning in the context of a performing ensemble, frustration arose when challenges were not balanced with the satisfaction of making some sort of measureable progress (Pitts, Robinson, & Goh, 2015). This appropriate balance of challenge with satisfaction was explored in Csikszentmihalyi's examination of flow and optimal experience (1990). When the level of challenge is enough to push learners to a new level of skill and comprehension, great satisfaction is derived. Conversely, when challenges are too great

to result in measurable progress, frustration can arise. This suggests that an appropriate level of challenge is needed to learn, and to enjoy the process of learning.

Adults also struggled to find the time they knew was required to practice (Taylor et. al, 2011). Adults returning to music study became frustrated when their technical and musical facility did not return easily (Coffman, 2008; Taylor et. al, 2011). Results from Coffman (2008), Kruse (2009) and Roulston, Jutras, and Kim's (2015) research indicated that learning in groups was challenging for adults in that members had different skill levels, and some participants in large group learning settings did not progress quickly enough to keep the pace of learning stimulating for some individuals. Adults also became frustrated when teachers or conductors did not take them seriously, or if the methods of instruction were not suited for their specific learning goals (Roulston et al., 2015).

### ***Identity.***

Dabback (2008) noted that, especially for retired adults, participation in music learning and making activities can aid in the construction, reclamation, or revision of musical identity. For adults who construct a musical identity, they may be pursuing musical activity as a goal that they could not pursue before. They do not and have not identified as musicians, and therefore can build that identity from the ground up. Some adults returned to musical activities that they enjoyed in their youth, thus reclaiming a part of their identity they had lost. Adults also made a return to music later in life, but explored new ways to make music, and in so doing they revised the musical identity they once had. Regardless of whether they are constructing, reclaiming, or revising, adult

participants in music learning contexts do not always view themselves as ‘musicians’ (Kruse, 2009). In spite of this, adult music learners feel that participation in music is an important aspect of who they are (Taylor et. al, 2011).

Bi-musicality describes a dual musical identity, or intersections of identity within one person’s experience. Coined by Hood (1960), bi-musicality is developed through active engagement in more than one style of music, resulting in fluency in both musical style and execution. Jeff Todd Titon, the father of old-time fiddle ensembles in university settings, advocates the development of bi-musicality in students in university music programs. Titon commented on his experiences of “subject shift”, moments that revealed that insiders within a community identified him as a fellow member, which helped him to achieve bi-musicality (Titon, 1995, p. 289).

### ***The role of teachers.***

Adult music learners recognize authority in teachers and conductors (Kruse, 2009). Some value the encouraging and nurturing environment created by teachers and ensemble directors (Taylor et. al, 2011), while others do not feel the need to be coddled or treated like children. Adult music learners valued a balance between teacher-directed learning contexts and self-directed music learning activities (Kruse, 2009).

### **Learning to fiddle: Historical and contemporary perspectives.**

Several teaching and learning processes in folk and traditional music have been identified in previous studies in ethnomusicology and folklore. From a historical standpoint, Bayard’s (1956) ethnographic study of the habits of fiddlers in Western Pennsylvania described the learning processes of folk fiddlers. Historically, learning to

fiddle did not involve formal lessons, studies, or scales; rather, aspiring fiddlers learned tunes from being around the music, understanding the music aurally and culturally before acquiring any technical skills. Learners developed a repertoire of community- favored tunes, mostly in isolation, before being invited to participate in playing for dances or parties. The use of music notation was not uncommon, but tunes learned from notation often reflected local style preferences, and the player's own idiosyncratic style. Bayard (1956) also notes that the fiddlers interviewed in his research could not recall how they were taught, if they admitted to being "taught" at all: "Undoubtedly, many younger players watched and tried to imitate older players, who were certainly their teachers to some extent, but always in the most casual and informal manner" (p. 17).

Learning to fiddle was at once a social and an individual enterprise (Burman-Hall, 1974). Prospective fiddlers learned by absorbing the repertoire and style of their region as children. They would imitate the behaviors or musicians they saw at social events. Aspiring fiddlers could generally learn tunes quickly when they finally got an instrument in their hands, because the tunes were already familiar to them. The main focus for fiddlers was the acquisition of a personal collection of tunes. Stylistic elements that were either regionally significant or personally valuable were developed over many years, certainly many more years than it originally took to learn the tunes in their most basic, skeletal form. Learning would typically take place in isolation, where fiddlers would prepare for the day when they would be needed to play for community events, or sit in with older players. Music notation was not commonly used, and even if it were, tunes

learned from music notation systems would still resemble the regional or personal affectations of the fiddle player.

Quigley's (1995) biography of Newfoundland fiddler Emile Benoit further expounded on this process. As a child, Benoit played on a toy fiddle constructed from kindling, wood boards, and thread (Quigley, 1995). He imitated the movements of his father, uncle, and other community musicians. At the age of twelve, Benoit acquired a real violin, and quickly became an in-demand player for social events in the Port-Au-Port peninsula in western Newfoundland. West Virginia fiddler Melvin Wine was born into an unbroken familial heritage of male fiddlers. Community-oriented work, such as barn raisings or bean stringing, typically was followed by music and dance (Beisswenger, 2002). Wine "hungered" for fiddle music from a young age (Beisswenger, 2002, p. 33), sneaking into his father's room and secretly trying to play his favorite tunes without his father's knowledge. Wine's father became his main teacher, although he was greatly influenced by notable fiddlers in the region. Accompanied by his brother on the banjo, Wine began playing in fiddle contests, dances, and theaters all over West Virginia.

### ***Summer music camps.***

Research on summer music camps for folk and traditional music exist in the fields of music education (Dabczynski, 1991; Waldron, 2009) and ethnomusicology (Forsyth, 2011; Frisch, 1987). Today, summer music camps are a main place where aspiring fiddlers can go to learn from tradition bearers (Blanton, Dillon, & MacLeod, 2015). Swain (2010) points out that the teachers and instructors at summer music programs are highly respected performers of folk and traditional fiddle styles. However, tradition

bearer-participants in Blanton, et al. (2015) study were hesitant to self-assign the title of “teacher” to their activities at the Swannanoa Gathering. Waldron found that tradition bearers who accepted teaching positions at summer camps have to figure out how to teach traditional music as they are doing it, as the methods they used to learn from “mentors” (2008, p. 96) were not always appropriate for classroom settings.

Classes at these camps can be formatted in various ways; however, the learners desire to gain access to new tunes and ways of approaching tunes largely influences how classes are structured. Frisch (1987) found that his fiddle teacher at the Augusta Heritage Arts Workshop in West Virginia was focused on students producing a stylized shuffle pattern with the bow. Few tunes were covered in this class with the exception of tunes that would help students develop their shuffle bowing. Many beginner-level classes are geared towards getting students comfortable with aural learning, and there is a strong emphasis on learning tunes by ear (Cope, 2005; Waldron, 2008, 2009). Some camps emphasize that face-to-face aural transmission is the only authentic way of learning to fiddle. Swain (2010) found that the organizers of the Allegheny Echoes program:

...believe that old-time, traditional music and story are best passed from person to person, and in that manner it retains authenticity in a way that field recordings cannot achieve...Aural transmission forms the basis for the Allegheny Echoes programme, as well as the belief that personal one-on-one teaching and learning carries with it a meaning and value that even field recordings-an aural transmission method-cannot convey. (Swain, 2010, pp. 257)

As many adults have come to fiddle learning experiences with prior experiences in school music programs, it has become more common today to find classes where some form of notation is provided for learners (Forsyth, 2011; Waldron, 2009). However,

these are typically used as memory aids, and are not intended for performance usage (Veblen, 1994). Swain (2010) notes that instructors in the Allegheny Echoes Program develop their own types of tablature for students who do not read Western notation; however, much emphasis is placed on learning tunes by ear. Call-and-response of short phrases of tunes, teacher modeling followed by student imitation, and chaining together short musical phrases to create a complete tune are common teaching and learning activities in camp settings (Blanton et al., 2015; Dabczynski, 1991; Cope, 2005). Fiddlers and aspiring fiddlers are motivated to attend camps for various reasons, although more examination through research is needed in this area.

***Fiddling and jam sessions.***

Turino points out that "...it is the participatory aspect of old-time string-band music and dance that attracts people" (2008, p. 173). This type of participation is given life in the jam session. Jam sessions are a main social center for fiddlers. Regional and stylistic differences dictate how different jam sessions function. Old-time and Celtic sessions largely involve the playing of tunes, instrumental music without singing. The fiddle is the driving force of the old-time jam session: fiddlers select the tunes that will be played at a session, choose the tempo that tunes are played, and starts and ends the tune (Wooley, 2003). Tunes are structured in open or cyclical forms, typically with two sections, an A section and a B section, each of which is repeated, resulting in a form we can represent this way [:(A-A)-(B-B):] (Turino, 2008). Old-time and Celtic tunes are decorated with ornaments and rhythms, but the tunes are played heterophonically.

Bluegrass jam sessions, however, frequently involve singing in the “high lonesome” style: two or three singers, who are also playing instruments, create tight, nasal harmonies. In addition, bluegrass and jazz sessions require that fiddlers improvise melodic stylized solos over chord changes. While fiddlers are important players in the bluegrass scene, mandolin, banjo, and guitar players are equally as likely to select tunes. Individual virtuosity is highly valued by participants.

To be sure, there is a large amount of regional and personal variation to be found in each jam session. Fiddlers may downplay their own abilities in public sessions so others will not be intimidated to join in. Kisliuk (1988) calls this the “special kind of courtesy” found in fiddling jam sessions (p. 146). The jam session is a musical transaction between players, but it is also a social and educational transaction.

Jam sessions can occur in a variety of social contexts (Thomas, 2004). The appeal of private jam sessions, held in people’s homes for invited guests, is the comfort and intimacy created by playing music with friends. These friends may be more forgiving of silly mistakes. You also know the ins and outs of people you jam with regularly, and the result is a trance-like state created through making music together. Thomas (2004) interviewed John Hermann, well-known old-time banjo and fiddle player, who said that there is an ideal balance of instruments in an old-time jam session. This balance is most likely achieved in private sessions. However, jams can also take place in public spaces, such as pubs or restaurants, where this balance of two fiddles, one banjo, one guitar and potentially a bass, has to be negotiated. Public jam sessions, however,

raise the curtain on these private music-making affairs, and can serve as an important point of entry for newcomers.

Traditional music festivals and contests are one of the main locations where jam sessions occur. In fact, jam sessions and the possibilities of participating in jam sessions are one of the main reasons that fiddlers attend festivals. Gardner (2004) noted that attendees at bluegrass festivals endure all manner of difficulty in order to participate in jam sessions. Through co-participation in jam sessions and attendees seeing each other over and over again at different festivals, a “portable community” (Gardner, 2004, p. 155) is created through jamming. Woolf’s (1990) dissertation highlights how small communities are created through jamming and sustained through festival culture:

Outside of one’s campsite in our diagram is the neighborhood, a roughly defined area, on or two campsites in all directions, which may include the tents and vehicles of other people, friends, acquaintances, and strangers. One may get to know these people better than others who are camping farther away during the weekend, as the opportunity for visiting and jamming is more readily available. (Woolfe, 1990, pp. 47)

Researchers have described learning in a jam session as trying to play along with a tune as best you can. This is done “sketchily, joining in gradually as the tune is learned” (Wooley, 2003, p. 102). Turino, a skilled banjo player, still learns new tunes at jam sessions by “...grasping the basic skeleton of the piece during the first several repetitions” (2008, p. 182). There are various ways that people can participate, by playing fiddle or banjo, guitar or bass, as ways that jamming culture can keep participants interested. “...there is a constantly expanding ceiling of challenges that can be matched to increasing abilities, fundamental to experiencing flow” (Turino, 2008, p. 176).

Participation in jam sessions at fiddle festivals is a “musical cognitive experience of receiving and sharing traditional music lore, both the music itself, and knowledge about the music” (Woolf, 1990, p. 68). Not only are tunes learned and techniques tried out in jam sessions, but Woolf again emphasized community, saying that the fiddlers at festival jam sessions are “initiated into a general festival ethos of sharing—not only tunes, but physical and aural space, facilities, food, and talk” (1990, p. 68). Kisliuk stressed that “While much learning goes on in the jam session setting, the emphasis is on enjoying the music sociably” (Kisliuk, 1988, p. 141). As such, things we may learn or meanings we create may not become obvious while we jam, but in moments of reflection after the jam session has ended.

Learning certainly occurs in jam sessions, but the main purpose of the jam session is “to have transcendent or transformative experiences” (Wooley, 2003, p. 102). Participants in Thomas’ (2004) dissertation discussed this feeling attained in jam sessions as “the groove”, describing it as “the feeling of becoming one with the music” (p. 202). In my experiences playing fiddle at old-time jam sessions, this groove is most easily achieved when playing with friends in private sessions. The added variable of playing with new people in an open jam session makes it difficult to get into a groove. However, I again highlight Kisliuk’s (1988) “special kind of courtesy.” I was a newcomer once too, and was welcomed in by the people who were established in the jam session scene. They extended, and continue to extend, this courtesy to me, and it is my responsibility to extend it to others. After all, that’s really how I learned to play the fiddle: with a group of strangers who, over time, became my dearest and most trusted friends. Kisliuk (1988)

emphasizes: “If those who know the etiquette are rude, the basic values which allow jams to form in the first place are thrown into question. The ideas of equality and hospitality must be maintained, even if it means leaving a jam session open to ruin” (p. 153). Thus the music, the social values upheld by the community, and individual and group identity are constantly negotiated through participation in the jam session. There is certainly much to be learned, even if learning is not the main goal.

***Fiddling and community.***

The social context of music learning and music participation impacts students’ choice to engage in musical behaviors. Particularly for fiddlers, participation is privileged over expertise (Turino, 2008). In asking questions about musical participation and motivation, Feintuch (1983) comments:

Some traditional musicians...claim that their musicality is a gift; some musicologists claim that musicians are born, not made, but it seems much more accurate to say that even a born musician must be made by social factors, by musical enculturation...the answers-or at least the best answers we can supply-have not to do with the individual but with social life. (Feintuch, 1983, pp. 209-210)

Building a participatory community of musicians is one of the goals for those who engage in folk and traditional music. Previous studies of summer folk music camps have revealed that the desire to build community has been a main motivator for students who attend (Dabczynski, 1991; Forsyth, 2011; Waldron, 2009). Participants in Waldron and Veblen’s study (2009) of learning in a Celtic community expressed that summer camps and traditional music festivals play an important role in the creation of community through shared experiences. Forsyth (2011) emphasizes the whole experience of a

summer music camp on Prince Edward Island, and that learning tunes and technique are only a part of that larger experience. This can include weekly classes to continue learning tunes and techniques (Cope, 2005) or informal gatherings of friends at pubs or sessions (Veblen & Waldron, 2009). The desire for community can extend to cyberspace, as discussed in Dabback and Waldron's study (2012) of learning in an online community. Kruse and Veblen (2012) highlighted the availability of online resources for the teaching and learning of folk and traditional music. Feintuch (2001) asserts that this "longing for community" may be an invention of the participants' minds, and may never actually be achieved. Nevertheless, the desire for community has helped to sustain interest in fiddling cultures, and has led to further examination of how fiddling could be included in school music curriculums.

***Fiddling in school music curriculums.***

Although my research deals with adult learners of fiddle in contexts outside of the school music curriculum, a growing body of research on including fiddle styles in the school music curriculum cannot and should not be ignored. McMahon's (2014) dissertation examined the "extent [to which] scholarship on the transmission and learning of American fiddle music indicate[s] a need for implementing and propagating its aural tradition through music education" (p. 47). She found that fiddle scholars explored topics related to historical, educational, and biographical aspects of fiddling (p. 82), and concluded that "...the existing scholarship on American fiddling does appear to indicate a need to implement and propagate this aural tradition through music education" (McMahon, 2014, p. 83).

There are certainly success stories of including fiddling in the school music curriculum, most notably the Chelsea House Orchestra (Oare, 2005), and the Saline Fiddlers (Reel, 2004). Countless method books on various styles of fiddling have been created by school music professionals with a passion for fiddling, such as Dabczynski, Phillips, and Sabien's series of *Fiddler's Philharmonic* books (1996, 1996, 2000) and Lieberman's (2004) resources for school orchestra teachers interested in including what the American String Teachers Association calls "eclectic" strings. The recent arrival of a series of method books by famed fiddler Mark O'Connor, which he calls "A New American School of String Playing", (O'Connor, 2009) seems complementary to the pedagogies and goals of the Suzuki Method of Talent Education (Suzuki, 2012) by Suzuki (2012). However, O'Connor remains a controversial figure in music education and Suzuki pedagogy, due to his inflammatory comments relating to comparisons of his method to that of Suzuki (Cooper, 2014).

Riggs (1994) noted that, "There is a need for a fiddling method that includes authentic fiddle tunes and develops the students' aural playing skills..." (p. ii). As such, his dissertation outlined an old-time method book suitable for an in-school orchestra context. His project is informed by interviews with old-time fiddlers and teachers. His self-reported objective for students is "...to explore the old-time fiddle literature independently and as a member of the old-time fiddling community..." (Riggs, 1994, p. 43). However, his concerns center around organizing a method book for beginning old-time fiddlers, and while he emphasizes an aural approach to learning, his method relies

on teacher-led instruction in school orchestra contexts, and does not provide an outline for community resources for students or teachers.

In contrast, Rolland's (2011) method for including fiddling in orchestra classrooms relies heavily on the call-and-response method of aural instruction featured at many fiddle camps. Shiobara (2011) and Green (2008) raise problematic issues of implementation, such as the new role of the university-trained music teacher, the appropriateness of traditional teaching and learning techniques in an in-school context, and the use of community resources and tradition bearers in the music classroom. In any case, these developments may be too little, too late for adults who were not afforded the opportunity to explore fiddle styles in school orchestra programs. The sea change in school music programs of the inclusion of eclectic string styles and informal music learning may well lead to an increase in lifelong participation and enjoyment for adults, but at present, adults who have a passion for music must forge their own pathways for learning.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

This chapter outlines the methods and procedures used to carry out this research. First I provide an overview of the philosophical and historical underpinnings of phenomenology, followed by a justification for the use of a phenomenological research design in this study. A description of the research procedure follows, including data collection and analysis, and the delimitations and limitations of this study.

#### **Research Method and Design: A Phenomenological Approach**

Phenomenological methodologies are used to investigate the ways in which humans create meaning through experience. This meaning is the essence of the experience. We engage with the world around us through our consciousness and perceptions, and through purposeful actions and decisions (van Manen, 1990). Rooted in the work of Edmund Husserl, phenomenology aims to bring forth the essence and the meaning of our lived experiences. Husserl's shift from objectivity in the field of mathematics to the relativism and subjectivity of philosophy ultimately led him to question the objectivity necessary to scientific inquiry (Macann, 1993, p. 2). Because our objective and subjective judgments are mediated by consciousness, phenomenology examines the structures of consciousness (Macann, 1993). Husserl adopts a very broad concept of consciousness through "...refusing the presupposition of an objective reality and...by denying the legitimacy of the division of reality into two spheres, the external

and the internal” (Macann, 1993, p. 10). Through phenomenological inquiry, we come to understand that humans are both the object and the subject of experience. We put aside the body-mind dualism of the Cartesian description of reality. Our consciousness of experiences is intentional, “...the act of consciousness and the object of consciousness are intentionally related” (Moustakas, 1994, 28). Through the intentionality of our consciousness, we both act upon and are acted upon by circumstance through experiences.

Intentional consciousness of experiences results in feelings about and reactions to our experiences. For example, we may perceive a classroom as being organized or chaotic. These perceptions may result in feelings of satisfaction or discomfort. The classroom and our perception of it, whether organized or chaotic, is the phenomenon, the “noema” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 29). Responses to and feelings that arise from what we perceive, the satisfaction or the discomfort, help us to uncover the meaning and essence of the phenomenon: this is the “noesis” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 29). Through examination of both perceptions and feelings (noema and noesis), the phenomenological researcher can gain a better understanding of the textual and the structural aspects of a phenomenon, what is experienced and how it is experienced. Researchers do not seek to write about these components of lived experience without proper synthesis of perception and feeling, but to combine the two to capture the essence of the experience as a whole. The synthesized text affects the reader in such a way that they re-live the experiences of participants, and in the best cases, readers can feel something of their own experiences as well (van Manen, 1990). As such, I have retained large portions of each participant’s

descriptions of their learning experiences in the results of this research. While there may be common themes across each of the participants' experiences, "...phenomenology is, in a broad sense, a philosophy or *theory of the unique*: it is interested in what is essentially not replaceable" (van Manen, 1990, p. 7).

Phenomenology is an appropriate methodology for this inquiry because I am interested in examining individual experiences and how we learn to become members of communities of practice. Indeed, the language used by van Manen (1990) is reminiscent of Lave and Wenger's structural description of legitimate peripheral participation within communities of practice. For example, van Manen (1990) highlights that phenomenological research:

...is the curriculum of being and becoming...phenomenology is a philosophy of the personal...which we pursue against the background of an understanding of the evasive character of the *logos* of *other*, the *whole*, the *communal*, or the *social*.  
(van Manen, 1990, p. 7)

Through a phenomenological methodology, I can best capture the unique and the shared experiences of the participants, and analyze and interpret their experiences to provide a rich description of the essence of their pathways to learning for readers.

At this juncture, I provide an important caveat to understanding how phenomenological methods are used in this study. As Maxwell (2013) points out, "...you can lay out a *tentative* plan for some aspects of your study in considerable detail, but leave open the possibility of substantially revising this if necessary" (p. 89). This study, though it uses phenomenological methods of inquiry to capture the essence of the experiences of adults learning fiddle, also aims to provide a rich description of the

participants themselves. The results of this study, presented in chapters four and five, do not only represent and interpret the experiences of these participants. I propose two new theoretical models that encapsulate the rich and diverse experiences encountered by participants' on their personal music pathways. I did not anticipate this when I set out to conduct this study: rather, the model arose from the analysis of the data, data that were provided so generously from the participants, whom I consider co-researchers.

### **Research Procedure: Data Collection**

#### **Site of data collection.**

The data used in this research were collected at the Swannanoa Gathering in early August 2014. Hosted at Warren Wilson College in the mountains of western North Carolina, the Swannanoa Gathering provides a weeklong focus on various styles of folk and traditional music through workshops, classes, performances, and social music making opportunities. The founders of the Swannanoa Gathering, Doug Orr and Jim Magill, are both folk musicians; they envisioned a place where people could learn from and with tradition bearers. Their first programs were held in the summer of 1992, where a week focusing on Scottish and bluegrass music was followed by a week of old-time music and dance traditions. Today, the Swannanoa Gathering runs for five weeks, offering immersion study of traditional song, Celtic music, old-time music, and contemporary folk songs and composition. The preeminent folk music instruments are the focus of study as well. Guitar week overlaps with contemporary folk week; and fiddle, banjo, and mandolin week run concurrently (<http://www.swangathering.com/index.html>).

I chose to attend Fiddle Week for purposes of data collection, but also for the obvious personal learning benefits. Fiddle week offers a broad range of fiddle styles at beginner levels through advanced levels. In the summer of 2014, fiddle offerings included: old-time, Scottish, Irish, roots-groove (a cross-over style largely developed by fiddler Darol Anger, and perpetuated through graduates of the Berklee School of Music), Cajun and Creole fiddle, blues, swing, bluegrass, Huasteco (a style representative of the Huasteco region of Mexico), Klezmer (historically, a style of music typically practiced by Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe), Métis (a style played in the plains provinces of Canada, historically by people of mixed European and First Nations decent), and cowboy swing style. The wide availability of style offerings at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels was an important reason the participants chose to attend Fiddle Week. Some of the most well known performers of fiddle styles, including Michael Doucet, Darol Anger, Bruce Molsky, Jeremy Kittel, and Joe Craven, teach classes. Additionally, several participants were interested in banjo and mandolin, and because Banjo and Mandolin Week run concurrently with Fiddle Week, they could diversify their learning options.

### *Classes.*

Classes at the Swannanoa Gathering occur during four blocks of time. Each class lasts one hour and fifteen minutes. There is a half-hour coffee break between the first two blocks of classes; a one-hour lunch break follows the second block of classes. Afternoon classes occur back-to-back, with fifteen minutes for students to get from one class to the next. Students at the Swannanoa Gathering choose one class for each of the

four blocks. It can be difficult to choose classes, as seven different courses run concurrently. Classes are held in various classrooms on the Warren Wilson College campus, but it is not uncommon for instructors to bring classes outside on pleasant days (see Appendix A for an example of a typical Fiddle Week schedule).

Instructors structure their classes in various ways. The advanced old-time fiddle course in which I was enrolled focused on one tune each day. Class would begin with the instructor playing the tune that we would learn that day, and then breaking the tune down into small phrases for us to echo. There was particular emphasis on bowing in the advanced old-time fiddle course. After all the phrases were taught, the class played the complete tune together at a slow tempo. The instructor encouraged us to video or audio record classes, especially as the week progressed and fatigue set in. There was always time for questions at the end of class. Some questions could easily be answered during class, and some were reserved for discussion later in the week. For example, several students were interested in learning the complicated fiddle tune “Old Sledge” because the winner of the Appalachian String Band Music Festival (commonly called Clifftop) had played it in the finals. The instructor set up a separate time for interested students to learn the tune outside of class.

Other classes focus on concepts instead of tunes. A course called “Feelin’ the Blues” involved a variety of activities, including improvisation, stylized slides, and electronic effects. A big focus in this class was the development of “licks”, short musical ideas that can be played in a variety of keys. These licks can be combined in various ways to create solos. One of the most interesting and valuable aspects of the blues class

was listening to blues guitarists, and trying to make our violins sound like electric guitars. We did learn tunes in this class, but most of the tunes were easily accessible to the students. In this way, students could focus on the elements of blues style and creativity.

### ***Jam sessions.***

Jam sessions at the Swannanoa Gathering range from small groups of friends to very large circles of people vying for positions within and around a circle. Participation in jam sessions is also extremely fluid, with some participants playing a few tunes and then moving on to a new jam, and others staying in the same session for hours on end. Some participants will eagerly exchange a fiddle for a banjo, while others play the same instrument all night. Some participants are eager to sing in sessions, and others are not.

### ***Other activities.***

In addition to classes and jam sessions, the Swannanoa Gathering offers other events for students and the local community. Instructor concerts are held on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evening. The Old Farmer's Ball, a community dance is held on Thursday night. Instructors serve as the dance band and the callers for this event. This particular event draws community members from miles around, either for dancing or for the jam sessions that follow. Students can choose to enroll in bands and receive coaching from instructors. A Friday evening concert features these student bands.

### ***Participants.***

Five fiddlers served as participants in this study. These five were selected purposively to create a sample of maximum variation. Fiddlers in this study vary in age, with a range of 42 years between the youngest and the oldest. They also vary in

experience, with some being enrolled in beginning and intermediate classes, and others in advanced classes. The participants were enrolled in classes focusing on different fiddle styles, including old-time, Irish, Scottish, blues, bluegrass, swing, and Métis styles. Two participants were also enrolled in banjo and mandolin courses. The commonality that unites the five participants is an interest in old-time music, with all participants being enrolled in at least one course focusing on old-time music.

*Lisa.*

At the time of our initial interview, Lisa was 45 years old, and had been fiddling in various styles for ten years. She began playing violin in her school music program, and continued playing violin in classical groups through college. Upon graduation from university, Lisa stopped playing her violin. She also plays drum set in a rock band, and enjoys singing. She is an assistive technology facilitator at a Midwestern university.

*Joe.*

Joe is a professor of philosophy and ethics at a university in the southwestern United States. Joe was 45 years old during our initial interview, and had been playing fiddle for seven and a half years. He became interested in learning to play the fiddle because he is an avid contra dancer. As such, his fiddle learning focuses on participating in any activity that will compliment the Northern style of fiddle playing used for contra dancing. Like Lisa, he learned to play violin through a school music program, only to stop playing when he graduated high school. In addition to his fiddle study, Joe recently started learning the mandolin.

***Amelia.***

Like Joe and Lisa, Amelia learned to play violin in her youth, and stopped playing after high school. During our initial interview, Amelia was 29 years old, and had been learning to fiddle for about two years. Amelia has experience playing the piano, banjo, guitar, and singing and acting with a musical theater troupe. She is currently a counselor and therapist in the southeastern United States. She is most interested in old-time and Irish fiddle styles.

***JL.***

JL was 68 years old during our initial interview. He has experience playing the double bass, accordion, harmonica, guitar, and ukulele. JL remembers fondly the folk revival of the 1950s and 60s, and credits much of his curiosity about music to his participation in folk bands throughout his life in the Midwestern and southeastern United States. Since his retirement as a biostatistician five years ago, JL has been pursuing his fiddle studies in various styles. Unlike the other participants, JL did not learn to play the violin through a school music program, and does not have any experience with playing classical violin.

***Sally Ann.***

Though Sally Ann was the youngest of the research participants at 26 years old, she had the most experience playing and learning fiddle. Sally Ann has been fiddling for 18 years, and learned fiddle styles and classical styles concurrently in her native Australia. She has played in various fiddle styles, but she prefers old-time and bluegrass. As an early childhood music educator, Sally Ann has experience playing piano and

guitar, and singing. She currently plays fiddle in two touring folk bands in Australia, and is an in demand session player.

#### **Source of data-interviews.**

An interview protocol was developed to guide semi-structured interviews (see Appendix B). Interviews were conducted during Fiddle Week at the Swannanoa Gathering, August 3<sup>rd</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Interviews were conducted in various locations on the Warren Wilson College campus, including a dormitory room, a picnic shelter, the foyer of an auditorium, sitting on the lawn under the stars, under a jamming tent in the pouring rain, and in a gymnasium. Interviews were semi-structured out of necessity. Because the scope of this study is fairly broad, encompassing not only fiddle learning but also music learning experiences that led to fiddle learning, I diverted attention from the interview protocol if the participant was particularly animated about a topic. Because I asked questions about leaning experiences, I found myself asking many clarifying questions, such as “Why do you think that is?” and “How did you feel when you were doing that?” These clarifying questions allowed my participants to provide both their perceptions of experiences and the feelings that arose from their perceptions, both of which are necessary to capture the phenomenological essence of their experiences of learning.

#### **Source of data-observations.**

Observation data were collected through participant-observation methods. This method of observation was, again, necessary. As previously stated, I was enrolled in classes alongside the participants. The use of audio and video recording in classes is fairly common, and in fact, instructors encouraged us to record classes so that we had the

opportunity to go back and review information provided in class at a later time. So as to not interrupt my classmates during class time, I audio recorded my personal observations during the coffee and tea breaks between classes. I was also able to listen to and watch my personal recordings to gain insights into class structures and organization. These observations were used later as prompts in interviews to uncover participants' perceptions of classroom learning.

The uses of audio recording in social music making has been well documented, and can include aural memory tools, archival purposes, and active listening for learning purposes. Observations of jam sessions helped me to gain a better understanding of the structures of jamming with strangers. I was also interested in the talk and banter that occurs in between the music making. There is much information to be gleaned from how participants in communities of practice act and talk themselves into existence. How and where participants situate themselves within the jam session can also indicate their level of comfort and familiarity. Observational data were recorded through voice memos, and were later transcribed for analysis.

#### **Source of data-field notes and memos.**

Field notes were taken as part of an ongoing process of "bracketing" (Creswell, 2013, p. 80), a process which I outline below. I kept personal field notes about participation in classes and jam sessions, reflections on conversations with other fiddlers, and on the overall experience of being at the Swannanoa Gathering.

### **Research Procedure: Data Analysis**

As advocated by Moustakas (1994) and Creswell (2013), I used a modification of the Stevich-Colaizzi-Keen method of data analysis. This consists of several steps, including: 1) creation and analysis of the Epoche; 2) the identification of significant statements from transcribed interviews; 3) using significant, non-overlapping statements, construction of the “horizons” of the experience through horizontalization; 4) cluster related statements into themes; 5) use these themes to create both textual and structural descriptions of the experience; and 6) synthesize the textual and structural descriptions to present the meanings and essences of the experience as a whole.

#### **Epoche.**

As van Manen (1990) says, “The problem of phenomenological inquiry is not always that we know too little about the phenomenon we wish to investigate, but that we know too much.” (p. 46). Though the results of this study focus on the experiences of the five participants, I am also an adult who learns and plays the fiddle. In order to properly examine their experiences and not my own, I engaged in a “bracketing” process, (Creswell, 2013; p. 80) to separate my own experience and biases from those of the participants. Moustakas calls this the “Epoche”, which he describes as:

...a process of setting aside predilections, prejudices, predispositions, and allowing things, events, and people to enter anew into consciousness, and to look and see them again, as if for the first time. (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85)

Results from my own bracketing and epoche process have been woven into the first two chapters of this dissertation. This was done to provide examples of fiddlers

within communities of practice, but also to separate my own learning experiences from the experiences of the participants. As advocated by Creswell (2013) and Moustakas (1994), this was the first step in the data analysis process. In actual fact, my bracketing continued during the data collection process at the Swannanoa Gathering. This continued bracketing was a necessary step in the analysis, as I was a co-participant in many of the experiences presented in the following chapters. I sat in jam sessions with each of the participants, knees knocking together, bodies moving to the sounds we were creating together. Lisa and Amelia and I played in a student band together. Joe and I were both enrolled in a mandolin class together; JL and I took Métis fiddle classes together; Sally Ann and I sat next to each other in Bruce Molsky's fiddle class. This bracketing was especially crucial in limiting my own bias, and presenting a "trustworthy" account of the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2013).

#### **Identification of significant statements and horizontalization.**

Interviews with the five participants were transcribed verbatim. These interviews were read and re-read to extract significant statements, statements that describe elements of the experience. The horizontalization process consists of listing these statements out of context and testing them for their reductive possibilities (Moustakas, 1994, p. 120). To test the statements, the researcher asked two questions: Does the statement contain an essential element of the experience necessary for understanding the experience as a whole? Can the essence of the experience be labeled through an abstract concept? If these two conditions are met, then the statement is significant, and "it is a horizon of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121).

### **Identification of themes and creation of textual and structural descriptions.**

Through labeling the essence of each horizon experience contained in significant statements, these statements can be grouped and categorized. In this way, themes essential to the experience are identified. Themes are organized and into one of two prose-style descriptions of the experience. The first description generated is a textual, or what the participants experience in relation to the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Through “imaginative variation” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 97), the structural description is generated: that is, how or under what structures the participant was able to have the experience (Creswell, 2013). The synthesis of the textual and structural descriptions is the essence of the participants’ experiences, and the results and discussion that follow in chapters five and six outline and interpret this.

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

This study focuses on the learning experiences of adults, and specifically on their experiences learning fiddle styles. The results of this study are not intended to represent the experiences of adults learning other musical styles. More research will be needed to understand the diverse learning experiences of adults participating in other musical contexts. The results of this, or any qualitative inquiry, are not intended for generalizability. The essence of these participants’ experiences learning fiddle styles may not be the same as group of different participants. To be clear, the goal of this research is not a statistical measure of certainty that all experiences are the same. Rather, the goal is to capture the essence of these five fiddlers’ experiences of learning through rich and animated description and interpretation. The participants in this study will be

unique in that no other fiddler will have exactly the same experiences and values as any other. In this sense, the results cannot be generalized. However, music educators and researchers may find the results of this study applicable to areas of great concern in music education.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to examine the musical journeys of five adult fiddle players, and to uncover the essence of the experience of learning to fiddle. Analysis of the five participants' significant statements revealed three themes: (a) the creation of personal music learning curriculums; (b) emotional experiences learning and making music; and (c) community experiences learning and making music. Further, the emotional and community experiences of each participant were cross-referenced with personal music curriculums. This revealed the interplay between each of the participants' choices pertaining to the creation of personal music learning curriculums, the importance of context in learning experiences, and the emotional response to learning and participating. As you will see, the experiences of the participants were not so easily sorted into the "formal" or "informal" categories often used in music education research.

Although certain experiences of learning were common among the five participants in this study, each fiddler's experience was highly personal. One of the primary findings of this research was the importance that each participant placed on his or her personal music pathway. When asked about their motivations for learning to fiddle, participants were unable to separate their experiences learning to fiddle from their lifespan experiences with music. Amelia even noted in our initial interview that, "I guess you're going to hear my whole life story now..."

Other aspects of participants' personal music pathways included a variety of experiences, including: membership in musical theater groups, polka bands, dance groups, rock and folk bands, school music programs, and the bluegrass festival scene. These musical experiences provide a much needed context for understanding how adult music learners come to make musical decisions, set personal goals, and subsequently proceed further down their own personal music pathways. The ways in which these paths twist and turn speak to the fluidity of self-identity based on belonging to various communities of practice over time. For adults learning to play fiddle, and for those charged with guiding them along the way, labeling previous musical experience as irrelevant to their new learning path may result in overlooking a valuable connection.

### **The Creation of Personal Music Learning Curriculums**

Before an exploration of the common learning experiences of participants, a more focused look at situated learning for participants within communities of practice is required. Lave and Wenger (1991) differentiate between a *learning curriculum* and a *teaching curriculum*: "A learning curriculum is a field of learning resources in everyday practice viewed from the perspective of learners. A teaching curriculum, by contrast, is constructed for the instruction of newcomers" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, 97). Each participant in this study chose to take advantage of teaching curriculums to gain knowledge and experience. I will, however, emphasize that a teaching curriculum is but one option for gaining knowledge and experience through practice: the teaching curriculum is part of a larger constellation of learning opportunities that present themselves to learners through engaging in practice. In this way, the learning curriculum,

the personal music pathway, “unfolds” before us as we make choices, or “improvise” our way (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 93). The journey is negotiated along the way, and over a lifetime can be exploratory and focused, improvised and prioritized, communal and personal.

**“What do I want to explore? What’s limiting me now?”**

Joe’s learning curriculum was fairly focused and intentional. He described one priority in his current learning curriculum in this way. “The next thing I want to acquire is a better understanding of the inter-relations on the fingerboard so I can accompany, do double-stops, and work chords into what I’m doing” (Interview, 8/8/14). Joe’s sensitivity to and adherence to his own learning curriculum came from encountering a learning experience he knew he was not ready for.

I realized that I will close off a direction for learning because I’m not ready for it yet. I took a swing fiddle class, and it was a great class. But one of the things I learned is-I’m not ready for that. I need to be able to do basic chords before I can do all these sevens and nines and crazy things that swing fiddlers do.  
(Interview, 8/8/14)

When I asked Joe if he had a specific sequence in mind for what he was learning, he responded, “It’s probably just like, ‘what do I want to explore, and what do I need to explore next so I can become a more interesting fiddler? And what’s limiting me now?’ And at some point, the bowing didn’t limit me anymore. But chords are my limitation” (Interview, 8/8/14).

While the ability to make priorities for himself and adhere to his learning curriculum is fairly focused, Joe maintains that he can only make these priorities through exploration. Other participants' experiences learning fiddle are also exploratory. Lisa, for example, "dipped her toe in" by exploring many different fiddle styles.

As an adult I took like a year worth of Celtic lessons...then about two years of bluegrass. Then put it down again for six years or so, and then just picked it up about ten years ago, and that was when I started doing old-time and playing in a band. (Interview, 8/6/14)

Lisa explored several different fiddle styles while on her personal music pathway, but her most recent re-entry to fiddling came from a serendipitous invitation from friends. Her motivation for wanting to fiddle again was largely social. "Some female friends of mine, were forming a band for something fun to do. They said, 'Why don't you come play violin?' It was mostly just to have fun with my friends..." (Interview, 8/6/14).

As in other research on adult music learning (Taylor et al., 2011; Waldron & Veblen, 2009), fiddlers' opportunities to engage in practice often are serendipitous. JL counted learning to play the fiddle as a "...bucket list sort of thing." He wanted to learn to play the violin from a young age, "but I went to a different school in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and that opportunity seemed to go away" (Interview, 8/7/14). After moving to a new city and retiring, it seemed that JL would finally have an opportunity to learn to fiddle. He clarified that in his social music making experiences before retiring, there were other people around who played fiddle.

In the string band I played with, we had two guys that already played the fiddle so there wasn't any need for me to play the fiddle. After I moved, I wasn't in that band anymore, so that opened up my desire to play the fiddle. (Interview, 8/7/14)

That learning curriculums are largely “improvised” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 93)

by the learner is exemplified by Amelia's experience of beginning to learn to fiddle.

Though her story is lengthy, it makes an important point, in that learning curriculums, our personal music pathways, take us on journeys we don't always anticipate.

I grew up playing the violin. I played from about age five through high school, with less and less attachment and motivation as I got older. I put the violin away, [after high school] and didn't touch it for about ten years. Three years ago I found a banjo in my parents' basement, so I took up the banjo. I moved to Chicago and got tapped into the Old Town School of Folk Music. Played there for about a year in an Old Time Ensemble class. And as I was hearing those tunes and learning them on the banjo, I was like, “Maybe I should try bringing my violin.” I had no idea at that point if I would remember how to hold it: I mean I had no idea what I had retained. It really had been a decade since I had touched it. So, I got the violin out. I've reflected on this some but I should more, is that over the past year I've really largely gone towards the fiddle more than I have the banjo. That was really a surprise to me because I had felt what initially drew me to this kind of music was absolutely the banjo. I mean, I know other people who have been drawn to this music will know what I'm talking about, but it's just where...it feels like a pull. It feels like, in your core, and that was really very directly connected to the banjo for me. I really don't think I would have returned to “violin”, and thus fiddle, had it not been for finding the banjo. (Interview, 8/8/14)

Each participant's description of learning curriculums highlights the diversity of motivations for learning and opportunities for engagement available to adult fiddle learners. I will emphasize here the importance of choice and personal autonomy in the creation of learning curriculums. Whereas aspects of teaching curriculums are prescribed for learners to follow, learners create their own pathways through their personal

curriculums. In the section that follows, I outline the four learning curriculum contexts that were common among the five participants: use of prior knowledge, noticing through listening and watching, explicit instruction, and jam sessions.

**Learning curriculum context one: Use of prior knowledge.**

Because participants' fiddle learning is situated within a broad personal music pathway, each fiddler was able to use specific experiences from their musical past to guide their learning curriculum choices. These experiences include: classical violin skills, diverse participation within communities of practice, use of music notation, and non-musical experiences.

***Classical violin skills.***

Four of the five fiddlers were able to use experiences gained from learning classical violin. Joe, Lisa, and Amelia had all studied violin in school music programs, and discontinued their learning upon completion of high school. They reflected on how previous experience with learning violin impacted their learning curriculums. Lisa commented that, "I know where my fingers go, and I can make a good tone come out of the instrument. I think that has helped get me to where I am now" (Interview, 8/6/14). Joe admitted that he was "shocked" at how much technical skill he had retained. Amelia was also impressed with how much she remembered about the violin, but said that, "For about a year, I didn't know anything about the style explicitly" (Interview, 8/8/14). Lisa expressed that her experience was similar when she said, "Trying to play either bluegrass or old-time, and trying to add those styles in, that's what the hard part is for me coming from that background [classical music] I guess" (Interview, 8/6/14).

Sally Ann is the one fiddler in this study who can be considered “bi-musical” (Hood, 1960; Titon, 1995), having learned violin and fiddle styles concurrently from the age of ten. She said that in some ways, “my experience in both informs the other,” but that there were some similarities in how she learned classical and folk music. “I guess in both genres I would try really hard to listen to a lot of other musicians playing the same music and pick out stylistic things from those players” (Interview, 8/9/14). Sally Ann is very concerned with the cultivation of her own personal voice in folk and fiddle music, and feels that she would be more likely to “try and replicate how I’ve been told is the correct way to play a piece” in classical music (Interview, 8/9/14). She did recall one experience where learning folk music had informed her approach to learning classical music:

There was one performance course in university, and I played some Bach. My teacher, because she knew I played folk music as well, she said “I think that your folk background really makes this piece really work for you, because you have this dance energy in it.” (Interview, 10/4/14)

However, Sally Ann emphasized that:

...there’s obvious differences in how you learn them. Like, you learn from sheet music in classical, and I largely learn from CDs or YouTube or other people when I’m playing folk music. And I’m also largely playing *with* other people when I’m learning folk music. (Interview, 8/8/14)

***Diverse participation within communities of practice.***

Joe said he was “feeling disconnected” during his time in graduate school.

Through readings for an environmental ethics course, he became interested in the back-

to-the-land movement taken up by the counter-culture of the 1960s. Joe stated, "...one of the main issues in our current life is how disconnected we become from one another and from communities and from the landscape" (Interview, 8/8/14). He recalled: "I was at a party, and a young woman was there I found really fetching. She was talking about contra dance, and I thought, 'Hey, that sounds like just the thing!' " (Interview, 8/8/14). Joe became interested in contra dancing as the solution for his feelings of isolation. Contra dancing has since become "an anchor in the world" for Joe, and for the "really fetching" woman who he married twenty-three years ago. Upon moving to a new city, Joe discovered that "...there was some dissatisfaction..." with the music provided for local contra dances. This was Joe's inspiration to learn to fiddle, and to provide a "different voice" for the contra dances in his new city.

JL, the oldest participant in this study, has experience playing in many types of bands. He grew up during the folk song revival of the 1950s and 60s, and "Joan Baez was coming out. And so I just got into playing folk music" (Interview, 8/7/14). JL diversified his playing, moving from guitar to bass guitar, when "...some friends that were putting together a pop band and they had a good guitar player, so I thought I would maybe be the bass player" (Interview, 8/7/14). JL then moved from playing the bass guitar to the double bass when a friend wanted to put together a string band, where the use of electric bass guitar would not have been appropriate. Having grown up playing the accordion, JL was also able to play Irish and German polkas with that same string band, further diversifying his experiences.

Although Joe said he felt “just short of really good as a violinist” (Interview, 9/29/14), he did not have to struggle through understanding the Northern and contra dance fiddle style. He used his extensive experiences contra dancing to inform his fiddle decisions. “I’d been dancing long enough that I knew the cadence of the music: I knew how it should feel, and so I would try to get that” (Interview, 8/8/16). JL used his previous experience in string bands when he made the choice to learn to fiddle. “I knew a lot of old-time tunes just from having played with an old-time string band, so a lot of this was just recalling those tunes. And then, you know, trying a little shuffle” (Interview, 8/7/14). These diverse ways of participating, what Lave and Wenger would call “peripheral” participation (1991), were a huge advantage for Joe and JL when approaching the fiddle. They already had a wealth of experience that they could use to inform how they would proceed down their personal music pathways.

***Use of music notation.***

In addition to using his peripheral experiences in a string band to move forward with his fiddle learning, JL also drew upon previous musical learning gained from school music experiences, namely the use of music notation. “I do read music so I would write out a treble clef, and then put the open notes of the fiddle on there so that I would know that that’s where everything is” (Interview, 8/7/14). JL was not the only participant who used previous music learning experiences involving Western Art music notation as part of a learning curriculum for fiddle. All five of the participants had used or continued to use Western music notation as part of their learning curriculum. For some, using music notation was a valuable part of their local community of practice. JL commented that:

...the Folk Society has all of their sheet music online. So our jam sessions really involve most people having that sheet music in front of them. Some people are really good about just wanting to do everything by ear. But I haven't done everything by ear. (Interview, 10/17/14)

Joe, having had experiences playing classical violin, also stated that he "...started on paper, got some tune books" (Interview, 8/8/14). Lisa was very forthcoming about the result of learning tunes from notation:

I think one of our [band's] first songs was "Cluck Old Hen", and I just got out the *Fiddler's Fake Book*, and learned it from that. All I did was read it: I didn't spend the time trying to search out other things to listen to, to figure out what would be a more fun way to play that. So I had the most boring version of "Cluck Old Hen" ever! (Interview, 8/6/14)

### *Non-musical experiences.*

In addition to using knowledge gained from previous musical experiences, participants used non-musical experiences to inform their fiddle learning. I asked Amelia how she practiced getting comfortable with the fact that she would make mistakes learning tunes "on the fly" in jam sessions. She responded,

I think part of it is going to grad school for therapy. I've really connected to the idea that growth comes from being vulnerable, that there's power in being vulnerable. So that's been sort of a paradigm shift for me which I think has shown up then in musical settings. (Interview, 11/9/14)

**Learning curriculum context two: Noticing through listening and watching.*****Listening.***

Listening and learning by ear are techniques used by all the participants in this study. Learning by ear was not always a focused exercise in repetition. In Joe and JL's situations, learning by ear began years before it ever occurred to them that they might one day be fiddle players. Joe's extensive participation in contra dancing gave him a unique set of tools: he knew what the tunes were supposed to sound like, and he had access to fiddlers he admired through the contra dance community on whom he could model his sound. JL's experiences playing bass and guitar in string bands allowed him to participate in a different way, and gave him a peripheral perspective on the role of the fiddle player in a string band.

Participants all listened to recordings to learn tunes and techniques. Lisa's learning, with friends in her band, most closely resembles the informal music learning methods highlighted in the work of British music education researcher Lucy Green (2002; 2006; 2008). Lisa stated, "...somebody would bring a CD of something they wanted to cover, and I would just copy from whatever the fiddler was doing on there, because...there's a lot of stuff that I can just copy" (Interview, 8/6/14). Joe said that listening to and learning from recordings helped him to analyze music and "hear how things are put together and how things work in music" (Interview, 8/8/14). When asked what specifically she was listening for, Amelia replied: "I'm listening for pulse, and then the way the bowing relates to that. So thinking about breath, and urgency, and lilt, I think particularly as it relates to bowing, was something that was really useful for me"

(Interview, 8/8/14). For Sally Ann, recordings are an important link to the larger old-time community: “Apart from the Internet and recordings, there are really limited learning opportunities in Australia” (Interview, 8/9/14). Sally Ann uses recordings to better understand the personal styles of the players she admires. “I really got into old-time music through listening to Bruce Molsky and then Brittany Haas and that sort of really rhythmic cross-over style that I just really liked” (Interview, 8/9/14).

***Watching.***

When combined with listening, the ability to watch and observe other players is a valuable component of these fiddlers’ learning curriculums. Amelia said that watching other players execute skills, and the knowledge to be gained from watching, has become a “trope” for her throughout her learning experiences. Being able to watch other players helped these fiddlers make decisions about what they wanted to be able to learn and execute themselves. Joe said, “I’ll sit out and watch the band: watch them interact, watch what the fiddler’s doing, watch how the bow moves. And just notice those things, and again, I have questions in my mind all the time about how to do certain things” (Interview, 8/8/14).

***Noticing.***

All of the fiddlers I interviewed commented on “noticing” as an important step in learning by ear and by watching other players. Through the attention paid by listening and watching, the fiddlers in this study noticed new tunes, techniques, and ways of interacting with other musicians. By noticing some aspect of another fiddlers playing or mannerisms, they could make decisions about how to move forward acquiring that same

skill. Joe said, “I can’t even think of all the things I learned just from noticing, and certainly by deliberate instruction, but also just by noticing things. There are particular things I’m listening for” (Interview, 9/29/14). Sally Ann said that “noticing” happens most often when her mind is not focused specifically on learning, in social contexts such as a festivals, concerts, or jam sessions. “All of the sudden, you notice that there’s a different rhythm” (Interview, 8/9/14).

Noticing can happen in structured learning environments as well, either through careful attention to the instructor or the context, but also when the instructor calls attention to particular feature of the music. Amelia commented that a good amount of her learning occurred through “...just watching [the teacher] and trying to emulate that” (Interview, 8/8/14). She added that noticing can happen from listening, but that you do have to focus your attention on what you are watching or listening to in order to notice. Amelia feels that noticing is more difficult when listening. However, she added that sometimes things have to be brought to your attention in order to notice. In addition to noticing through watching and listening on her own, Amelia felt she could get a better sense of what to attend to through structured learning experiences. She favors balance in her learning of fiddle, where noticing is certainly an important step: “I guess my thinking is that you can’t actually explain entirely using words how to do this stuff. A lot of it is actually showing you and then you sort of trying to imitate it” (Interview, 8/8/14).

### **Learning curriculum context three: Explicit instruction.**

All five participants attend or had attended classes, workshops, and camps as part of their learning curriculum. Joe said of the fiddlers and teachers he admires: “They have

something I want: a particular skill, a particular sensibility, and a particular ease with the instrument that I would like to have. So I want to spend time with them and find out” (Interview, 8/8/14).

Participants felt that there were certain features to learning in classes, workshops, and camps that were more out of their control than other learning contexts. For example, they were reliant upon the teacher to be able to deliver instruction in a meaningful way, and they outlined what their expectations for classroom instruction were in a “best-case scenario” situation. Amelia preferred that “as much as can be controlled by the teacher that I don’t have to think about” (Interview, 8/8/14) be controlled for by the instructor. The call-and-response format accepted in classes at fiddle camps should be “very organized and controlled” because this format “has the potential to sort of fall apart into chaos” (Interview, 8/8/14). This is one of the “checks and balances” that instructors can use to prevent frustration in learners and derailing the class. Participants noted that, when breaking down tunes into short phrases, the teacher has to do it the same way every time, even if that is not the way that they would play the tune for fun.

For fiddle players, bowing, and how instructors guide them through learning style through bowing, plays a huge role in the consistency of delivery. Amelia commented:

[My fiddle instructor] plays the same bowing of these slowed down tunes. That’s the attention that you need, because it’s the consistency that makes the repetition work: if you’re playing a similar but slightly different version of a four measure piece of a tune to somebody who’s learning it for the first time, it’s like, “There’s an up bow there, or down?” Whereas, if it’s the same every single time, it makes the learning a lot easier. (Interview, 11/9/14)

Sally Ann also emphasized the importance of learning specific bowings for tunes, and not just the notes and left hand elements of a tune. She further related the importance of learning bowings to “how a player ends up with their own sound” (Interview, 8/9/14).

Joe enjoyed “artful”, and “attentive” classroom learning. In the best situations, he said that classroom learning should be “...like a practicum” (Interview, 8/8/14). In outlining his perception of effective instruction, he noted that the teacher should demonstrate the tune or technique, break it down into small manageable parts, and “then makes sure we can all do it.” Joe has a lot of experience with learning fiddle in classes and workshops, and as a teacher himself, he made it clear that he preferred “instructors who have a plan, who have a vision for what they’re going to accomplish, and they have objectives” (Interview, 8/8/14). One of Joe’s learning experiences, in a fiddle improvisation course, was so meaningful that it informed his own approach to teaching: “...if I can strip down a course to the few essential things I want my students to be able to do differently, cognitively, and I build the entire course around getting them to do those things, I might actually get somewhere in teaching” (Interview, 9/29/14). He called those learning experiences “liberating”:

...it changed my relationship to music in some kind of fundamental way, or it solidified, sort of pushed me further along the path that I was already headed down. Music has to be felt: music has to have some spontaneity and play to it, but it also has to be focused and deliberate. (Interview, 9/29/14)

Participants attended classes, workshops, and lessons to learn tunes and techniques, but they are also after understanding fiddling and music on a deeper level.

Joe explained what is lost in the learning experience when instructors only focus on teaching tunes and techniques:

...there's no real attempt to explain or to reveal the hidden truth of the bigger style. I think the stories can be good, if they give context to what we're learning. So when [our instructor] tells us stories about the fiddlers whose tunes we're learning, that's part of the music. That's part of the tradition. (Interview, 8/8/14)

Because she is Australian, having access to the history and culture of American fiddle music through being at an American fiddle camp was an important part of Sally Ann's learning experience. She reflected on this with me, and expressed that she was learning about notable and historically important fiddlers for the first time. "I know about some players, and some of the history, but someone will be like, 'You don't know about this person? And you don't know the history of this thing?' That kind of thing is important" (Interview, 8/9/14).

#### **Learning curriculum context four: Jam sessions.**

Sally Ann notes that, although it sounds "cliché", "...the real, and the most valuable learning happens outside of the classroom" (Interview, 8/9/14). Indeed, all the fiddlers I interviewed identified jam sessions as the most valuable part of their learning curriculums. Amelia noted that when she is participating in a jam session, "that's where the fire is" (Interview, 8/8/14). Joe stated that attending jam sessions helped him to better understand old-time music "because I could get inside it" (Interview, 8/8/14). JL felt that his ability to participate in jam sessions would "validate" him as a musician. Lisa's participation in jam sessions was the key to her enjoyment of fiddle playing:

I started going to a slow jam. And that's when I really started to like it [fiddle playing] a lot, because it's having twelve violins in the room and we're all playing this tune, and especially when it gets more lively, it just feels good. (Interview, 8/6/14)

Joe highlighted the importance of the jam sessions he attended as “like a lab” the practical extension of his isolated practice and of learning that takes place in other contexts. He may notice that a jam is going particularly well and reflect back on the experience, thinking, “I used what I learned really well” (Interview, 8/8/14). This does make the jam session sound like a lab, a context for putting classroom learning into practice. JL recognized his preference for isolated learning. He saw jam sessions as an opportunity to put what he had learned in isolation into action. “I like to get everything pieced together, but then the social aspect is the pay off, it's the outlet. I mean, music doesn't seem to make much sense as an isolated activity” (Interview, 10/17/14).

Conscious learning can occur in jam sessions, particularly if a participant is learning a tune “on the fly.” All the participants had their own methods of how to learn tunes “on the fly” in a jam session. In JL's method, “you just grab onto whatever notes you can recognize, and then play those every time they come around. Gradually you end up filling it in” (Interview, 8/7/14). Amelia also used this method for learning tunes in jam sessions, and added:

There are parts that just come to me, then there's the stuff that feels less immediately accessible, and that takes a couple times to listen to, and then I'll get that. Then there will be like the middle hard-ish stuff that will come after like maybe five or six rounds. (Interview, 8/8/14)

Sally Ann, the most seasoned fiddler in this study, was the one participant who did not use this method for learning tunes on the fly. She tends to focus more on rhythms than on pitches, and is most concerned with “locking in” with other people through rhythm. This may largely be because she has the most experience in jam sessions of all the participants, and because “the fiddle players I really admire play with a really rhythmic style” (Interview, 8/9/14).

Participants commented on structural features of jam sessions that helped them to learn in this way. Most traditional fiddle styles utilize tunes with cyclical, open forms, which allows for many repetitions of the tune; the participants took advantage of these open forms in their learning strategies. Large social jam sessions also allow for what Turino (2008) calls a “cloaking function” (p. 46) for learners: with so many people participating, it becomes difficult to discern what sounds are coming from where, and individual errors can get lost in the wall of sound. Lisa commented that she doesn’t always get every note, but that in a jam session, “Even if it doesn’t sound awesome, it just feels good” (Interview, 10/24/14).

Participants also commented on things you can learn in jam sessions other than tunes, through listening, watching, and noticing. Joe said, “You learn all those unspoken rules that have nothing to do with the music, but with the etiquette of the jam” (Interview, 8/8/14). Although there are many things to be learned through jam sessions, learning was generally not the goal of participating. Even when learning does occur, it is usually only recognized after the fact, upon reflection. Joe added, “It brings you together. But it

doesn't feel like learning. I mean when it's going really well I don't even notice it"

(Interview, 8/8/14).

More than learning or learning experiences, participants commented on the importance of jam sessions as interpersonal and connective experiences. They discussed the feeling of sitting in on a great jam, and highlighted the feelings of connectedness with other participants. Amelia, a relative newcomer to social jam sessions, states:

It's the people being together, it's almost trance-like. It's this very tightly, powerfully connecting thing. I think it's really cool that there are sort of all different sort of walks of life, levels of talent, you know? I don't know what half the people do in their real lives at this thing! But I know I love playing music with them. So, the end goal is not really to know the tune, right?

(Interview, 8/8/14)

## **Emotional Experiences**

### **Fear.**

Fear was an experience felt by most participants in relation to putting learning into practice in public or social situations, such as jam sessions or performances. "Fear", "nerves," "anxiety", and "vulnerability" were felt publically, but concealed by participants. The prevalence of experiencing fear in jamming situations as opposed to any other part of participants' learning curriculums was unique. Therefore, fear as an emotional experience of adults learning to fiddle will be given special consideration. Amelia, for example, admitted that her fear of making mistakes in jam sessions had prevented her from participating as fully as she would like to, which lead to "a big hole in the experience, because even though I love the music, I haven't been able to throw myself into it" (Interview, 8/8/14). The positive experiences she was having at

Swannanoa did lead to jam session participation, but Amelia said that her fear was something she had to “fight against.” When I asked her why, she responded, “Learning classical music, the implicit message is, ‘Until you can execute it, no one really wants to hear it.’ And you’ll just get judged or criticized” (Interview, 11/9/14).

In many cases, participants were able to use their fear as motivation to continue to learn. Lisa and Sally Ann both noted gaining confidence, the foil of fear, through learning. Lisa said that she wanted to be comfortable in jamming situations, because much of her social life revolves around jamming with friends and loose acquaintances gained through music circles. Lisa jokingly labeled this part of her motivation to overcome fear of social jamming as “embarrassment avoidance.” A seasoned jam session participant, Sally Ann did not feel the fear as strongly as she once did, but she admitted that initially she experienced anxiety over jam sessions “for the fear of being judged as inadequate.” Overcoming these inhibitions is part of a “psychological learning process” that results in “a better sense of your musical self-worth” (Interview, 8/9/14).

Joe commented on the intermingling of fear and anxiety with the excitement that comes from overcoming negative emotions. Joe’s fearful experiences were similar to other participants’, but were more prevalent in his early stages of playing fiddle for contra dances. “I was astonished and scared. I’d been playing for about a year and a half at that point, and never really at a dance. Suddenly, I was playing into a live microphone. That was scary” (Interview, 8/8/14). Joe noted that his fiddle mentors and instructors were responsible for creating an environment where he could try new things, things that scared him, but that resulted in a situation where “I first kind of got the excitement of

playing for dance, and I first started to understand why it's really compelling and exciting" (Interview, 9/29/14). Overcoming fear led to a more positive self-image as fiddler, and allows participants to engage more fully in practice.

### **Enjoyment and excitement.**

Enjoyment and excitement were emotions felt by participants in various settings. Joe contrasted the enjoyment he felt in practicing with the excitement of learning or solidifying something new. "I actually kind of enjoy it (practicing), I get into like trance with it. It's not the excitement of making a discovery, or the 'Ah-Ha' that you get when you've really learned something new" (Interview, 8/8/14). Amelia valued classroom-learning experiences and was working up the courage to participate more regularly in jam sessions. She noted that although there was less fear and vulnerability in the classroom setting than in a jam session, "I think what's lost in that setting [classroom learning] is that *joy* feeling. That connection to the *felt-ness* is always there in a jam setting in a really powerful way" (Interview, 8/8/14).

Although many fiddle traditions largely involve participatory performance, as opposed to presentational performance (Turino, 2008), several participants commented on the enjoyment that is derived from a well-received performance. Of a great performance with his band, Joe said, "That was the first time a crowd roared at me. I nearly dropped my fiddle. I almost couldn't play the second tunes in the set because the crowd just went, 'Yeahhhhhhhhhh!' And, oh man, I was like, 'That's why we do this!!' " (Interview, 9/29/14).

Lisa commented that “external praise” received after a performance with her band helped to give her more confidence in her identity as a fiddler. Sally Ann also reflected on the importance of her relationships with her band mates, and the enjoyment derived from creating mutually defined identities through playing gigs. “People know who the other people in the scene are because we all go out and play gigs, and it’s fun just getting to know the folks who play in these bands” (Interview, 10/4/14).

JL noted that his participation in music, generally, and fiddle, specifically, was a “pleasant past time.” For JL, enjoyment was found in the tunes themselves:

The tunes seem to say something, you know? Whether it’s going up or going down or, going around: some of the Celtic tunes seem to be like little knots that get all twisted up and then they come out with some sort of resolution.  
(Interview, 8/7/14)

Participants view the enjoyment derived from making and learning music as the “fuel” that sustains them through periods of plateau in their development, or any frustration or set-backs they may encounter. Amelia states: “when I start getting frustrated, what I have to go back to is that music: it’s a sensation, it’s a felt experience” (Interview, 8/8/14).

### **Frustration.**

The foil of enjoyment and excitement is frustration. Participants can feel frustration in a variety of contexts, and can result from structures which do not support learning for participants, an inability to focus on learning or participating due to external forces, or a disconnect between the participants’ skill level relative to the context. All of these factors prevent the participant from engaging to the fullest of their ability.

Joe feels frustration in classroom learning situations where "...there's just kind of a disconnection between the instructor and what I'm looking for. It's the noble laureate teaching chemistry, and it's a little bit removed from the needs of the class" (Interview, 8/8/14). Coming from academia, Joe refers to this as the "sage on the stage" approach. Amelia has also experienced this disconnect, especially when a master player could not provide the sort of structure in learning tunes that she feels she needs. "I think it's so fascinating because [some instructors] have so much knowledge to impart, but learning tunes from them was [very] difficult" (Interview, 8/8/14). Often, this has to do with the instructor's inability to provide musical phrases for the call-and-response class format with consistent bowings and pitches.

Lisa added that in a classroom context, while her mind may be focused on learning, she could not always rely on other students to be equally as focused: "There's this kid in the back row who's noodling around as Bruce Molsky is trying to show something. That really gets on my nerves" (Interview, 8/6/14). In summer fiddle camps, students self-assign themselves to "beginning", "intermediate", or "advanced" classes. While instructors provide outlines of what sort of skill level students should be at, the appeal of being in class with a genuine tradition bearer can lead to a mismatch between the students' skill and the minimum level of competency required. Lisa explained, "It's just like 'Come on! This is an intermediate class! Don't come in here if you can't play a basic scale' " (Interview, 8/6/14).

Amelia commented on frustration in jam settings:

There's such a frustrating feeling that happens [in a jam] when you've gotten that one time where you've gotten 90% of the notes, and then the fiddle player puts up a foot [signaling that the tune is over], and it's over. (Interview, 8/8/14)

Regardless of learning context, Amelia described learning experiences where she was not able to achieve a flow state (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). “When you put in the effort, and what's reflected back is a sense that you're just not getting anywhere close, that gets frustrating. And I think negatively impacts the motivation to learn” (Interview, 8/8/14). Amelia and several other fiddlers commented on pacing in classroom settings, and tempo and tune complexity in jam sessions, as the variables that helped them to stay motivated by avoiding frustration without getting bored. Amelia likened it to reaching for a bar over your head: “Maybe you don't grab it every time, but you grab it one out of every three times or five times. But one out of every 500 times ends up feeling really discouraging” (Interview, 8/8/14). This sense of frustration, the discouragement that arises from not feeling successful, can severely impact motivation and the sense of belonging so necessary in communities of practice.

### **Belonging, or wanting to belong.**

The conflicting feelings of belonging and not belonging within communities of practice are typically felt as members circle through the periphery and towards full participation. All the fiddlers I interviewed mentioned belonging and communal feelings as one of the main motivators for increasing their skills on the fiddle. Joe commented that, “Fiddle and contra dance connects me to a community, and I'm fairly introverted

normally, but when I have a fiddle in my hand, I can stand on stage and play my heart out” (Interview, 9/29/14). Joe also added that although the contra dance community is “...a weird community, and it has its’ internal divisions and its’ rifts...” it was “...something worth carrying on” (Interview, 9/29/14). JL echoed this sentiment, saying, “I think that folk music is worth preserving, so it’s good to be part of an organization that looks after that” (Interview, 10/17/14). These participants feel that through belonging, they are contributing to the sustained practice of music and dance traditions.

Amelia stated, “You can encounter, in this sort of culture, a lot of different takes on people being less skilled” (Interview, 8/8/14). Amelia was quick to discuss the feeling of belonging or not belonging a community based on her ability to participate in jam sessions:

I do think there are a lot of unspoken sort of dynamics. I’ve been at jams, playing along as best I could, but I didn’t feel like a member of the jam. It wasn’t like I was being told to stop, or that I was getting any negative feedback. It’s the difference between a negative response and the absence of a positive response, or the absence of an *inclusive* response. You’re not really aware of it, but you’re aware that you don’t belong completely. And I think that really impacts your motivation to learn, because if you don’t feel like you belong, then what’s the point of participating? (Interview, 8/8/14)

Amelia notes that having a certain type of personality within the community is essential for newcomers to begin to feel like they belong: “I think encountering a person...who is much better than me, but doesn’t ostracize or exclude as a result of that, but instead brings in and includes in the circle you know? I think that that’s the kind of thing where you learn” (Interview, 11/9/14).

One of Lisa's peak experiences of fiddle playing was a feeling of belonging to a fiddle community. Lisa's story captures the interplay between fear, excitement and belonging, and further emphasizes the importance of the jam session as the locus of the fiddle learning experience.

So my boyfriend, one of his friends that lives in Missouri invited us over to stay at his house for the weekend. He's a picker, he invites all his old picker-dude friends over. And I was like, "Uhhhh, can I do this? I don't know these guys, I might not know their tunes, they might not want me there. They've got their own thing going on." I was nervous, like it was an audition or something in classical world, and that I would fail. And it was exactly the opposite! They started playing: it was "Red Haired Boy", then "Soldier's Joy". And I was like, "Oh, I know that one. I know that one too!" And I was calling tunes that they knew, and that they really liked! We did that for like five hours on Saturday afternoon, and at the end of that I was like, "Oh my Gosh, I just played with total strangers, had a great time, and wasn't embarrassed." (Interview, 10/24/14)

### **Community and Social Experiences**

All participants reflected on their experiences within communities of practice, and the social structures so necessary for their learning. Communities of practice are comprised of practitioners, both "old-timers" and "newcomers" (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and those in between, the historical and contemporary knowledge of the practice generated by the community's members, and the artifacts and technology created by the community to sustain its' practice. Participants reflected on their experiences and interactions with "old-timers" or "masters", and "near-peers" in different ways.

#### **Access to masters.**

The presence of masters within fiddling communities helps to sustain regional styles and tune repertoires. As part of their learning curriculum, every aspiring fiddler

maintains a list of players whose styles they try to learn from, and emulate. This notoriety is perpetuated through appointments to teaching positions at camps and workshops, and increasingly through online mediums such as YouTube. Lave and Wenger (1991) make several important points about the role of masters within communities of practice. First, that masters exist within communities of practice whether they actively pursue teaching, self-identify as a teacher, or not: rather, "...they [masters] embody practice at its fullest in the community of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 85). This and previous research (Cope, 2005; Waldron & Veblen, 2009) has explored learner's preferences for how learning environments are structured. Conversely, research has also shown that when masters are invited to teach in a class or workshop setting, they are often expected to deliver instruction by using methods that are removed from their own personal learning experiences (Blanton et al., 2015; Waldron, 2008). However, "...in shaping the relation of masters to apprentices, the issue of conferring legitimacy is more important than the issue of providing teaching" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, 92).

Masters, access to masters, and the teaching curriculums they provide, can serve as bragging rights for fiddlers, a sign of a fiddler's pedigree. But to be clear, access to masters is only one avenue to learning. Masters, newcomers, and those in-between are all members of communities, and as such, "...mastery resides not in the master but in the organization of the community of practice of which the master is part..." (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 94). The master is but one of these learning resources.

All participants were drawn to attend the Swannanoa Gathering and other fiddle camps, workshops, and lessons because, through these teaching curriculums, they could

gain access to masters of varying fiddle traditions. JL commented, “I’m trying to get a sound that’s more like what the big players play. So I’ve come here and taken the course from Bruce Molsky and our Canadian instructor” (Interview, 8/7/14). JL added that observing the masters up close helped him to see the skills and techniques he wanted to put into his own playing. “Well a lot of times I’ll look at something, and I’ll do something, and I’ll think, ‘How can you get your fingers to do that?’” You know, it seems impossible to grip it that way, but then you see that people are actually doing it” (Interview, 8/7/14). Sally Ann came from Australia to gain access to the American old-time players she admired, and to get more perspective on the history of American old-time in the United States.

Players over here have different mentors. And I was trying to think of people that I could go and play with regularly in Australia, specifically for fiddle, and I couldn’t think of anybody. Whereas here, I could choose from 1,000 fiddle camps all across the states, and 1,000 fiddle players all in one county that I could learn from...and also, I really wanted to learn with Bruce Molsky. (Interview, 8/9/14)

Amelia valued the experiences and learning gained from taking lessons with a well-respected player in Chicago.

I sought those [lessons] out because I was like, “I’ve got to learn how to make this sound and make my bow arm look like yours.” And I remember he was like, “You’ve got to play more bouncily with your bow.” He was trying to get me to do this sort of circular motion with the bow. He told me, and this has really stuck with me, he was talking about the sort of shuffle, and dropping the wrist. (Interview, 8/8/14)

Amelia's instructor provided her with technical advice delivered through the context of a story. This story, gained from the personal experiences of the master, gave Amelia a historical reasoning for using a particular technique.

He was talking about how in dances, what the dancers can hear is the upbeat. When the downbeat's happening is when they're stepping, and so what taps them into the rhythm is the upbeat. So you want to emphasize the upbeat, and the way that you do that is not by pressing down on the string, but by moving the bow more quickly across the string. He [the teacher] said, "The way you do that is to drop your wrist when you do it." (Interview, 8/8/14)

Story telling plays an important role in the relationship between masters and newcomers. Lave and Wenger (1991) put forth that stories told by the masters play an important role in the decisions newcomers make in creating their personal learning curriculums. Masters all have different stories to tell, and those stories are told in the larger context of the community and how participants interact. This is part of the importance of diversified skills and knowledge of different members of communities: the stories, histories, and folklore of the community impacts the decisions made regarding learning curriculums. Amelia chose to modify her bowing technique because a respected master provided both the content she needed to learn (how to produce the technique), and a context that gave her learning meaning (why the technique is important).

Intense learning experiences with masters can be, as Lisa and Sally Ann said "overwhelming." Especially in the camp format, where fiddlers are taking multiple classes over the course of a week while jamming late into the night, it's easy for your brain to "reach saturation point." Even within the context of a single class or workshop, each participant described the feeling of not being able to keep up with all the

information being put out. JL noted that even if what the instructor was providing was beyond what he could do at that time, that contact was crucial because it gave him “something to shoot at.”

### **Access to near-peers.**

Communities of practice are comprised of members of varying skill and knowledge base. Lave and Wenger (1991) recognize that masters can have a profound impact on the creation and maintenance of learning curriculums. However, there is also much to be learned from co-participants within communities of practice who are not masters.

It seems typical of apprenticeship that apprentices learn mostly in relation with other apprentices. There is anecdotal evidence...that where the circulation of knowledge among peers and near-peers is possible, it spreads exceedingly rapidly and effectively. (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 93)

Learning from near-peers can be as simple as Joe describes: “Another musician would say, ‘Well, try this. Here’s something you can do,’ and it’s just sort of noticing the effect that it has” (Interview, 9/29/14). JL could find near-peers within his local community who could help him: “I’m in the Charlotte Folk Society and there were people around that could show me some things” (Interview, 8/7/14). Amelia commented that although sometimes near-peers cannot provide the same explanations as masters, near-peers could encourage you to “just do it.”

There was a guy who was in the class with me. I could tell he knew what he was doing, so I was watching him. There is this one tune where you have to rock the bow and I remember going home and trying to do it and just could not do it. I came back and I was like, “How do you do that?” And he was like, “I don’t know, just do it.” And I was like, “Oh shit, you just do it. OK, I’ve got to just do it.” Which eventually just ended up sort of clicking. (Interview, 11/9/14)

Sally Ann valued learning from peers and near-peers, especially in jam situations.

Sally Ann places a lot of value on rhythm in fiddling, and by jamming with peers and near-peers she can learn other people’s rhythm patterns and “how to slot in with other people.” She emphasized that, “...that’s a really enjoyable learning experience that you can’t get on your own” (Interview, 10/4/14). Because Sally Ann and I played in many jam sessions together at the Swannanoa Gathering, she reflected on our shared learning experiences. “...you have your own really distinctive rhythmic patterns, and it’s really cool because then we can lock in in different ways and get some really cool cross-rhythms going” (Interview, 8/9/14).

Learning from near-peers can be more deliberate and focused than in jamming situations. Lisa commented: “My fiddle buddy at home, he and I will work on things. To me that’s so much fun, sharing, and being like, ‘No I heard a C-sharp there!’ ‘No I heard C-natural!’ Just having that social time together to work on things, like, collaboratively” (Interview, 8/6/14). Lisa also learned a lot from her boyfriend’s experiences in the old-time community, and she felt that her training on violin helped him in turn: “Having us both playing, maybe he’s getting like the intonation from me or something, but I’m getting like some stylistic, like bowing, things from him” (Interview, 10/24/14).

The skill differentiation between peers and near-peers was what Amelia called the “range of better-ness.” “The only way you learn is by playing with people who are a little bit better. There’s a range of better-ness from which a person can really learn” (Interview, 8/8/14). Amelia described the difference between learning from masters and participating with peers and near-peers through a clever analogy about playing tennis, which emphasizes the important role that near-peers play:

It’s like when I was growing up playing tennis: the way you get better is observing and experiencing somebody who’s better than you. If I were playing Andres Agassi, it would not be motivating. It would be...depressing. Playing an 8<sup>th</sup> grade tennis player when I was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade: that stretches you.  
(Interview, 8/8/14)

Amelia also commented that the “range of better-ness” and its’ usefulness to newcomers was wrapped up in interpersonal relationships between members of communities of practice.

### **Legitimate participation.**

These fiddlers’ participation, whether peripheral, full, or somewhere in between, is key to their experiences within communities of practice. All of the learning, the enjoyment and frustration, the excitement and the fear, the relationships with masters and peers, are all possible because they participate. JL indicated that there are plenty of ways that he could spend his time other than fiddling. “Why not just watch TV, or watch the ball game or something, you know?” (Interview, 8/7/14). He also indicated that effort and risk is involved in participation when he said, “You’ve got to be able to get yourself

up and out and a little bit out of your comfort zone so to speak” (Interview, 8/7/14). JL admits that he has become much more active in his participation in the last year, largely due to a sense that he could contribute to the Folk Society:

Running that takes people’s time. I’ve been so active over the last year, because they’ve got an old-time slow jam, and a Celtic slow jam. I’m not the organizer, but at least the leader of those jams. Leader in the sense that I’ll sort of get things going and then pass things around the circle, you know? (Interview, 10/17/14)

JL’s hesitancy to call himself the “organizer” or “leader” places emphasis on the organization of his local folk music community instead of on guidance from one particular person, and in a way, does justice to the participation of everyone in the community.

Sally Ann felt that she had made great connections with other fiddlers and folk music communities, both in Australia and elsewhere, because of the “communal” and “social” aspects of fiddle playing. “I like that old-time music is really participatory and I really like that there is a common repertoire that you can keep building on” (8/9/14). Joe valued the contra dance community because it allowed for participation in many different ways at many different levels:

There’s a dance weekend here in Asheville that’s all pick-up bands and open-mic calling. It’s the most excellent, communitarian, warm, happy weekend in the whole year. Big name contra dance weekends are great fun, but they’re very different. They’re much more about, you know, ‘the buzz.’ This is about just making music together, making dance together. (Interview, 8/8/14)

Lisa contrasted participatory experiences through jam session with private lessons she had taken in bluegrass fiddling: “I never really played with anyone else so all I was

doing was going to lessons and playing “Red Haired Boy” in a very boring way, and so that’s why I sort of stopped for a while” (Interview, 8/6/14). Since becoming a more proficient fiddler, Lisa’s entire social life revolves around jam sessions:

My picker friends, we get together and, you know, I might hang out with the ladies and have some wine and then go into the living room and play some bluegrass with the guys. That’s pretty much the social life now, so we’ll grill burgers and play music. (Interview, 8/6/14)

### **Summary: The Road and the Destination**

Amelia, JL, Joe, Lisa, and Sally Ann have all begun their journeys as fiddle players, but their journeys are not yet complete. Each of these fiddlers has their own personal music pathway to create and follow. These paths have taken them to various contexts for learning and making music, even when learning is not their goal. Prior learning, noticing through watching and listening, explicit instruction, and jam sessions all resulted in different experiences for each of the five participants. Each had emotional reactions to their learning experiences. Fear and frustration, enjoyment and excitement were intertwined with their learning, helping to guide their future experiences and expectations. Navigating this path required the help and advice of both masters and near-peers. However, each fiddler ultimately blazes their own trail, making choices about how they will proceed based on their personal experiences within communities of practice.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Results of this dissertation point to the importance that fiddlers place on their personal music pathways, and on the creation of learning curriculums in order to move further down that path. Prior knowledge, noticing new or unfamiliar elements in fiddling communities through watching and listening, gaining insights from masters and near-peers, and participating in jam sessions were the common ways in which Amelia, JL, Joe, Lisa, and Sally Ann learned. This chapter relates the results of this study to previous studies in music education. An exploration of fiddler identity, and the participants' perceptions of behavioral identity markers of fiddlers, follows.

The essence of learning to fiddle, what Amelia, JL, Joe, Lisa, and Sally Ann referred to as the "Ah-Ha" moment, is described and discussed. The "Ah-Ha" moment is part of a larger cyclic process of learning to fiddle, which begins, ends, and begins again with communities of practice. A theoretical model for understanding this cyclic process in relation to each participant's personal music pathways captures the essence and the structures of lifelong participation for fiddle learners. This dissertation concludes with recommendations for music educators and researchers.

#### **Relating Results to Music Education Research**

As in previous research related to fiddle, participants valued learning that occurred in diverse settings (Cope, 2005; Dabczynski, 1994; Forsyth, 2011; Waldron,

2009). As the research setting for this dissertation is similar to the settings in other music education studies, it is not surprising that the class format and the reactions of participants to classroom learning are indeed similar. A strong desire on the part of the fiddlers in this study to participate in community with others was also consistent with previous research (Dabczynski, 1994; Waldron & Veblen, 2009). Whether or not this community is some imagined, romantic, sepia-toned invention of their own creation is secondary to the participants' desire to be a part of something bigger than one individual (Feintuch, 2001). As stated in chapter three, the participants' consciousness of community and their desire to be a part of it makes it real.

There are findings in this research that contradict results from earlier studies in music education (Coffman, 2008; Taylor et. al, 2011) in which participants became frustrated when returning to music study on an instrument they had played during their school years. As previously mentioned, the fiddlers in this study found it fairly easy to return to their instrument, and were impressed with the skills they retained. The discrepancies in these findings are most likely due to two variables. First, the age of the three participants who returned to violin through fiddle study was younger than the mean age of participants in music education research on adult learners (Coffman, 2008). There was less time for them to forget the technical skills necessary to play the violin. Second, the participants in this study did not feel that they needed to recall the advanced technical aspects of violin playing necessary for participation in classical music. They found rudimentary skills sufficient to begin fiddling.

In this research, participants' experiences in school music programs did lead to future participation in music as adults, as was seen in published research in the field of music education (Bowles, 1991; Cavitt, 2005; Coffman, 1996). However, Cavitt (2005) found that only 13.5% of adult amateur musicians surveyed reported that they had heard about community and participatory music-making opportunities from their high school music educator. Perhaps music educators are unaware of these opportunities, or do not assign value to music that is not taught in schools. Perhaps, as emphasized in Mantie and Tucker's (2008) research, the participants' school music teachers did not view lifelong participation as the "object" of their teaching. Perhaps they only understood music in relation to participation in Western Art music as opposed to the galaxy of other options for participation.

One must wonder, however, if the participants in this study ended up returning upon suggestions from friends, or sheer circumstance and serendipity, why does it matter how they ended up returning? Do music educators, by way of our professional calling, see the return to music participation as having less value if we are not somehow responsible? In any case, the participants' journeys lend strength to Lamont's (2011) argument that the path of lifelong musical learning is not the straight and narrow one that many music educators hope for: their journeys contain what Lamont calls "false starts" (2011, p. 379). However, "false" devalues the experiences that are gained from even brief explorations. Ideally, I would reframe these not as "false starts" but as "camping out" on a journey that is not yet complete.

Joe recently “camped out” by learning how to play the mandolin. As he explained his desire to include chords in his learning curriculum and playing, he noted that he did not gain an understanding of chords from his violin training because he just “played the melody on the sheet.” Joe had no aspirations to become a virtuosic mandolin player, and purposely steered himself away from bluegrass mandolin playing, where there is “a lot of pressure on you to sound just like someone else” (Interview, 9/29/14). He took up playing and learning the mandolin intentionally, as what he calls “chord therapy.” What Joe did not expect when he picked up playing the mandolin was that he would “discover” and “get inside” old-time music.

Through this one choice, Joe not only gained a better understanding of chords, but he learned to play a new instrument in a new style. Joe may never be a great mandolin player, and he may not play his mandolin regularly, but to call his learning experiences with the mandolin a “false start” is simply not accurate. Joe can now “camp out” with his mandolin and with old-time music when he wants, and because he spent time “camping out” with mandolin, he moved further down his own personal music pathway as a fiddler.

### **Fiddler Identity**

Four of the five participants had experiences learning to play classical violin before learning to play the fiddle. These participants discussed their classical violin training with me at length, later contrasting this learning with their experiences of learning to play the fiddle. I feel that an exploration of these experiences will provide some context for readers who come from classical or fiddle orientations. Of particular interest are two behavioral markers of fiddlers as perceived by violinists-turned-fiddlers:

bowing and creativity. To illustrate how fiddler identity is negotiated and intersects with other facets of identity, a discussion of Sally Ann's bi-musicality follows. Finally, I discuss the concept of a distinct part of fiddler identity, that of the "recovering violinist", in order to examine and unpack some of the experiences of the violinist-turned-fiddlers in this study.

### **Bowing.**

Bowing technique was perceived as a major stylistic difference between violin and fiddle playing. Joe encountered this difference early on while he was learning to fiddle, saying "Knowing that I was still bowing like a classical player, I called myself a 'recovering violinist' for a long time. I said, 'I want to be a fiddler, but I'm a recovering violinist' " (Interview, 8/8/14). Each participant emphasized something about right-hand technique that helped him or her to find their confidence as fiddlers. Amelia sought out guidance from her teacher at the Old Town School of Folk Music. Joe sought advice from a well-known contra dance fiddler: "She said, 'Stop thinking about fiddle as a melody instrument. Think of it as a rhythm instrument' " (Interview, 9/29/14). Sally Ann and Lisa began to understand the importance of bowing and rhythm in fiddle playing through playing in groups with friends. Sally Ann emphasized the importance of rhythmic drive in bands she plays in, especially because there is not a double bass player to mark the steady beat. "That's what makes it old-time: if you play those tunes without rhythm, it's really boring. And with no rhythm, you can't lock in with other people" (Interview, 10/4/14). Lisa contrasted the value she currently places on rhythm with her perspective on learning before she played music with other people: "Before, I would

learn something from notes, or I would listen to a recording and just get the notes and not even think about the rhythm” (Interview, 10/24/14). For all these fiddlers, the use of the bow was the biggest difference between playing “violin” and playing “fiddle”.

### **Creativity.**

Creativity is another behavioral identity marker of fiddle players as perceived by the violinists-turned-fiddlers in this study. The ability to improvise melodies and create musical ideas was highly valued by the participants who had previous experience in classical music. Likewise, the stylistic use of rhythms, and the ability to use the bow to create rhythmic drive was a creative priority for all participants. For those who play Celtic styles, making choices about where to include ornaments, such as cuts, rolls, and grace notes, also involves creativity. Lisa commented that learning to play the fiddle as opposed to the violin allowed her to explore her creativity:

Playing classical, I’m following the notes; I’m following the bowing. Then to do this [fiddle], there’s so much creativity that you can put into this kind of music. All the little variations you can make and do to add interest to it and make it fun to play and fun to listen to. (Interview, 8/6/14)

For Lisa, learning fiddle styles was more difficult than learning classical styles, because those creative instincts were not present in her experiences playing classical music, “...it’s like ‘Oh I have to think about being creative’ you know?” (Interview, 8/6/14). In contrast, Sally Ann’s training as a fiddler caused her to place very high musical and personal value on improvisation and rhythmic creativity. She found that the creative elements she valued so highly were not as present in her experiences making and learning classical music.

### **Bi-Musicality: Negotiating a dual musical identity.**

In contrast to Joe, Lisa, and Amelia, Sally Ann learned classical violin and fiddle styles concurrently. She began attending bluegrass and country music festivals around the age of eight, while she was still learning violin through the Suzuki Method. Even as she progressed through her school music program, she said, “I was still always kind of known as ‘the folk fiddler’, because I went to lots of folk festivals and tried to learn Irish tunes and gypsy tunes and Klezmer tunes” (Interview, 10/4/14). Sally Ann progressed through university, completing several of the exams for the Australian Music Education Board Method while still learning various fiddle styles, particularly old-time and bluegrass. She says, however, “I never really felt fully comfortable within the classical tradition” (Interview, 10/4/14). Sally Ann could not pinpoint exactly why she felt uncomfortable: the best answer she could give me was the distinction between *how* you get better at classical music. She said, “...if you want to be a classical player, you have to do a shit-load of practice *on your own*” (Interview, 10/4/14). This stands in stark contrast how she views improving in fiddle, saying that when she is learning fiddle she is learning “*with other people.*”

The concept of bi-musicality has not been properly explored in music education, with some recent exceptions (Thibeault, 2009). In understanding the experiences of fiddlers like Sally Ann, the field of music education must take seriously her assertion that she never felt “fully comfortable” in the classical world. Thanks to the availability of Internet groups and videos, summer fiddle camps, and other learning curriculum resources, more and more children have the opportunity to engage in multiple musical

styles and cultivate intersecting musical identities. How we examine and analyze learning curriculums may be the key to gaining a better understanding of dual-identity development. If identity development is the result of participation within communities, and someone is a member of communities with seemingly conflicting values regarding practice, this deserves special attention.

As to their current “fiddler identity” status, the participants in this study did not always readily identify as such. Joe stated:

I think I’m a fiddler now, but a fiddler in no fixed style. What I play is music for dance, and so I play whatever music works for dance. And I’ll borrow from any tradition and I’ll try to make it work for dance. I think that what I’m converging on in my style is much more like a New England style. In the way I use the bow. (Interview, 9/29/14)

More often than not, participants’ identities as fiddlers are wrapped up in their perceptions of their successes and failures. Lisa questions her fiddler identity “...if I feel inadequate because I can’t play like they’re expecting the fiddler to play.” She recognizes that “...even if they’re not feeling that, I’m thinking that they’re thinking that” (Interview, 8/6/14). This speaks to the power members of a community can hold, the power to accept or reject, the power to deny.

### **“Recovering” violinists.**

As outlined in the previous chapter, participants who had previous experience playing the violin did value their experiences in that context, and were pleased that they had retained technical elements that served as a foundation for moving towards fiddling. For example, although Amelia admits that her interest in playing and practicing her violin

declined through high school, picking it up again as a fiddle was “gratifying”: “It feels like sort of returning to something that I put a lot of time into” (Interview, 8/8/14). She also noted that her training through the Suzuki Method provided her with “really great ear training”, which translated into her experiences learning fiddle tunes by ear. However, because her ear training through the Suzuki Method was geared towards mastering the type of tone, articulation, and style associated with Western art music, Amelia’s initial attempts to learn fiddle tunes by ear yielded results that were not satisfactory. She says, “I was using vibrato, I was slurring, like I was playing classical, on what would be like Book 1 Suzuki tunes” (Interview, 8/8/14).

Lisa is also one of the fiddlers who had classical violin experience. She says of her life playing classical music: “...it was always just a hobby.” Lisa continued to play recreationally through college in a university-sponsored orchestra, and stopped playing after she graduated. Her decision to stop playing classical violin was a “realistic” one. Though her parents were supportive of her school music participation and encouraged her to practice, Lisa said, “...they only think in terms of classical stuff. They thought, ‘Well, she’s not going to be Itzhak Perlman’ ” (Interview, 10/24/14). Joe spoke to the feeling of being good at the violin, but not good enough to pursue a degree in music, even though he enjoyed playing the violin. “I was in the city-wide orchestra, I was fourth chair first violin. But that gap between third and fourth was immense, because third chair is conservatory material: and then there’s me” (Interview, 9/29/14). Both Lisa and Joe felt that because they were not the best of the best violinists, there was not a place for them to

participate. This speaks to the professionalization of classical music forms, the idea that classical music is reserved for a select few who will pursue classical music as a career.

So, from what experiences did these participants have to “recover” in order to move from a “violinist” identity towards a “fiddler” identity? Lisa’s comment that joining in on jam sessions with strangers felt like “an audition”, or Amelia saying that her thinking about jam sessions was “classically based” speaks to the power that formative experiences in classical music can have when a person wants to try a different style of music. If these participants had been exposed to learning contexts other than that of the school music program, or introduced to styles of music other than Western art music through the school music program, would their fears about making mistakes in jam sessions still be present? Instructors at summer music camps have noted that some learners come to them with scars (Blanton et al., 2014) they sustained from participating in school music programs, scars from being told they were not good enough to participate in band, choir or orchestra. This does not seem to be the case with these participants, as they recalled pleasant experiences in their school music programs, such as playing concerts and enjoying the beauty of playing classical music.

How, then, do we account for their fear of, not necessarily learning, but participating? Upon deciding to play the violin again in participatory as opposed to presentational contexts, Amelia, Lisa, and Joe experienced a mismatch between the expectations of the classical world and the fiddle world. They shared an implied understanding that, in Amelia’s words, “Until you can execute it, no one really wants to hear it” (Interview, 11/9/14). They imposed the rules of participation in the classical

world onto the fiddle world, and had to renegotiate their understanding of what it means to participate. To be fair, this imposition of what Turino (2008) calls the “politics of participation” is equally, if not more likely, to be found within the subsets of fiddling cultures. A bluegrass fiddler who is not fully aware of the implicit and explicit rules of participation in an old-time jam may try to take a solo break. A Celtic fiddler in a bluegrass jam session may feel inadequate when it comes time to take a solo break. These experiences are equally as likely to give rise to feelings of embarrassment, fear, and anxiety as the experience of a classical violinist entering any jam session.

Do I know enough? Am I good enough? Will I be viewed the way I want to be viewed? This *recovery* that participants make, while it does imply overcoming the obstacle of fear, is part of a larger process of learning where, through participation, our identities are constantly negotiated. Recovery, in this instance, could be replaced with reinvention, and the essence of the experience would be the same. I suggest that the fear these fiddlers feel is more deeply connected to wanting to belong to a *new* community of practice than resentment towards an *old* community of practice. After all, who has not asked themselves these same questions during moments of identity reinvention, on the first day of a new job, or the day you find out you will become a parent?

To be sure, there is work to be done in the field of music education relating to inclusion of diverse music and populations into school music programs, and providing resources that foster lifelong participation in the arts. My intention is not to give music education a free pass: music educators should critically examine the ways that we prepare students for positive musical experiences across the lifespan. What we provide for them

in school music contexts may end up being a useful point of entry into other music contexts, or re-entry back into classical music later in life. We must also recognize that, as in the case of the five fiddlers in this study, our students have the autonomy to make decisions about their own learning pathways, and to follow these paths, students must take on and adapt aspects of their identities.

### **“Ah-Ha” Moments: The Essence of Learning to Fiddle**

All five participants discussed moments when they described what learning feels like. These moments were most commonly the convergence of the explicit with the tacit, of theoretical understanding with physical capability. These moments occurred most often in relaxed or casual environments, and following learning that occurred in structured environments such as a class or a workshop. When Joe described his fascination with chords as an important part of his learning curriculum, he said of his current understanding, “I understand them theoretically, but not the mechanical production and the intuitive feel of them” (Interview, 8/8/14). Joe was waiting for his knowledge to become a lived experience.

The “Ah-Ha” moment, as described by these fiddlers, was a moment of deeper understanding of what it meant to be a fiddler, and to understand what fiddle playing is all about. These “Ah-Ha” moments were experiential, moments when the players moved from a conceptual or theoretical understanding to a lived experience. “Ah-Ha” moments typically involved progress being made relative to bowing technique, improvisation, and participating more fully in jam sessions. As such, changes in identity were implicated in each fiddler’s “Ah-Ha” moment. These fiddlers relied on their ability to “notice” through

listening and watching: they had to notice physical elements of what other fiddlers were doing. Through participation, they were also able to notice the effect that a musical element, a physical movement, or a particular way of engaging had on the experience of making music. These fiddlers moved from noticing, to conceptualizing, to fully experiencing what it felt like to play the fiddle, and to be a fiddler in a community of practice. For example, Joe explained:

At first, I could imitate what they [other fiddlers] were doing and get the bow working, but it was mechanical because I was thinking about it. But at some point I was playing a dance, and I found myself doing and getting that rhythm, and it was like, “Who is this New England Fiddler who just showed up here?!?” (Interview, 8/8/14)

Sally Anne crucially emphasizes the importance of participation and “just doing it” to achieve “Ah-Ha” moments. She felt that the more experience you have through jamming and playing with others, the more you are able to try and enact your learning:

...everything really just becomes incorporated into your body language. Rather than something that you have to consciously think about, it becomes more of an intuitive thing. And you can only really do that by just doing it, and doing it with people who you can learn from as well. (Interview, 11/9/14)

JL also noted that through the many repetitions and the transcendent atmosphere in jam sessions, “your body adapts to what you need to do.” For JL, the “Ah-Ha” moment is not only a moment of learning and achievement for himself: it was “a little kernel of knowledge that I can share with somebody” (Interview, 8/7/14). With the acquisition of new knowledge came the responsibility of sharing that knowledge within his local community of practice.

The feelings of achievement resulting from “Ah-Ha” moments were “exhilarating.” Amelia described these “Ah-Ha” moments as “fuel”; Lisa used her “Ah-Ha” moments as motivation, saying “maybe that’s like the drug that keeps me going, because I want to get that feeling as often as possible” (Interview, 8/6/14). Amelia also recognized that naming a felt experience, or reifying the tacit, could also in an “Ah-Ha” moment. Drawing on her therapy and counseling background, she says:

It’s the process of making the felt experience more explicit, then it recursively feeds back into the felt experience: you feel something, then you name it, and then that in turn enriches or informs or clarifies the feeling. (Interview, 11/9/14)

It is important here to emphasize that regardless of how the “Ah-Ha” moment arrives, it requires both implicit and explicit knowledge. This variety of knowledge is gained through a variety of learning contexts, from near-peers and masters. The “Ah-Ha” moment is the essence of the learning experience for these five fiddlers, and it is given life through participation within communities. As such, the “Ah-Ha” moment is one part of a system of learning, a system that, I propose, can account for learning within a community of practice over the course of a lifetime.

### **Community as Curriculum: A Cyclic Model of Learning to Fiddle**

It is worth reiterating in this discussion that while all five participants’ learning pathways had unique elements, their learning pathways began with, and were constantly leading towards, engagement within a community of practice. The initial draw towards fiddling was the music, or the very social and participatory nature of fiddle playing. These participants wanted access to the music, and by extension, the community. Their

paths diverge somewhat after that initial desire, as each participant had a unique set of tools to begin their journeys based on their personal learning experiences. However, certain parts of their journeys were held in common.

Each fiddler began their journey based on what they already knew, whether that was experience with the “violin”, or participating in some other way (dance, guitar, bass, accordion, banjo). For most, this meant learning by eye, reading fiddle music, and coming to understand that while reading notation was a helpful tool to get started, there was more to the music than could be captured through notation. So they expanded their learning curriculums to include learning in different ways, by watching and listening. They began to notice all of the elements of fiddling that cannot be notated, the tacit and implicit. They wanted to gain a better understanding of those things that they could not pick up by listening, or by observing and imitating. This led to a desire to include teaching curriculums as a part of their journeys. They gained access to masters and near-peers that could provide the explicit instruction they wanted, who could fill in the gaps.

Gaining these insights gave the participants more skills and knowledge to apply to their playing, giving them even more reason to try out their new skills in social settings, namely jam sessions. These are the contexts where the participants had their “Ah-Ha” moments, and where they got “fuel” for their fires. Through jam sessions and social music making, they are “absorbed” into the community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 95). And so, their journeys come full circle: they began with a desire for the music, for the community, and as they have these profound moments of learning and

deeper understanding, their community can watch them grow and change, and the community grows and changes in turn. Figure 1 outlines this model for learning.

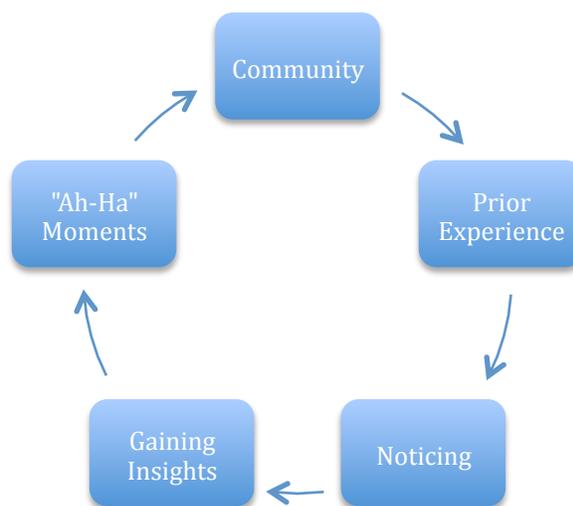


Figure 1. A Cyclical Model of Learning to Fiddle

This model is intended to account for the variety of each of the participants' highly personal music pathway. Further, I contend that this model can account for learning experiences for newcomers to communities, but also for even the most seasoned old-timer. A newcomer may seek to enter the community with little to no prior knowledge. Newcomers can also enter the community with knowledge gained through participation in other musical activities. Perhaps these other ways of participating have similar rules for participation as fiddling cultures, or perhaps they may not. The community provides the inspiration for new learning, and old-timers within the community simply start each cyclical journey with more and more a priori knowledge to draw upon. A newcomer may notice many things upon entering the community, but make choices as to what aspects to incorporate into their playing, as Joe did with

prioritizing chords in his learning curriculum. An old-timer or full participant may notice new and interesting rhythms in a jam session more readily than a newcomer, as in the case of Sally Ann listening for rhythms before pitches. At the same time, a seasoned player may take for granted or not notice things in a jam. Sally Ann admitted that she does not listen to or focus on other melodic instruments in a jam session, but recognizes that she should attend to them more so that she can notice what they are doing and adjust her playing accordingly.

Likewise, the time it takes to move from gaining insights to “Ah-Ha” moments may vary from person to person. For a newcomer, it may take more time to move from conceptual understanding to a lived experience because they do not yet have a repertoire of physical motions necessary to execute a new skill. On the other hand, they may be so motivated to be able to execute such a skill that they practice more, or attend more sessions where they can try out the skill, accelerating the time it takes to achieve their lived experience. Old-timers may be able to move from insights to “Ah-Ha” moments quickly because they can ‘walk the walk and talk the talk’ of fiddling. However, because they have more knowledge, experience, and skill, their “Ah-Ha” moments may be fewer and far between. I argue that, in fact, the entrance of new members into the community, bringing with them fresh eyes and different prior experiences, can be a source of learning for the old-timers, as they negotiate their identity and role in communities of practice. In this way, if we scrutinize what each individual brings to the community, notice how we are alike and different, discuss and learn from these differences, we all “become” together.

**Noticing: A crucial, but overlooked step.**

I have outlined the concepts involved in “Ah-Ha” moments and community for fiddlers. The use of prior experiences and insights gained from masters and near-peers has been discussed in related literature and in this research. However, the prevalence of “noticing” as an important step for the five participants in this research was unexpected, and prompted me to look into extant research on noticing as a cognitive phenomenon and a learning tool. Noticing is a result of both perception and consciousness: we cannot notice that which we do not perceive. Noticing can only occur when we are attending to something, some object, person, place, or concept (White, 1963). Noticing is not a sustained activity: rather, it hits us out of nowhere, and what we notice may be one out of many features. White describes it this way: “...we may notice the man’s clothes as against the general background, his tie rather than the clothes, the design on the tie rather than the tie” (1963, p. 122). Noticing as both a cognitive phenomenon and a learning tool has been examined in mathematics education (Lobato, Hohensee, & Rhodenhamel, 2013) and language acquisition (Robinson, 1995; Schmidt, 1990).

Noticing may be one of the critical features of learning that allows for diversity within communities of practice. Marton and Pang (2006) noted that:

...different people may notice, pay attention to, or focus on different features of the same situation. A way of seeing a situation, or a particular meaning of a situation, is thus defined in terms of the features that are noticed and focused on simultaneously. (Marton & Pang, 2006, pp. 198)

What we can notice as learners is dependent upon what we know already (prior knowledge) and what we can perceive and know about the context in which we learn.

Witkin (2000) highlights the importance of our relationships with others in the community, and their role in clarifying things a person may or may not notice: "...what we notice may not be clear until after we speak about it. We need others to help us make sense out of what we thought we saw. Thus, rather than being an individual activity, noticing is relational" (Witkin, 2000; p. 103).

Participating in musical activities and learning contexts can be a complete and utter assault on the senses. White (1963) puts forth that noticing is "a polymorphous concept" (p. 120). We notice through our senses. We feel the bow and the fiddle in our hands: we see how other musicians manipulate their instruments to create organized sound, the music, which we receive aurally. In social settings, we may become aware of the smell of the air on a hazy summer afternoon, we share food and drink between playing tunes with friends at a jam session. Musical participation and learning, therefore, seems like fertile territory for music education research, and should be explored to further our understanding of the role that noticing can play in music learning.

Noticing can add to the already long laundry list of things we should learn within communities of practice. Though the list of potential things to learn goes on and on, and can overwhelm, Amelia commented that noticing new things to pursue can serve to push us further down our personal music pathway: "...you have to keep finding new ways to fuel the fire, and that's exciting."

### **The Rambling Musician: A Conceptual Model of Lifelong Participation**

To be clear, there was never a moment when these five fiddlers were not participating within the community of practice. They have all circled around and through

experiences within their communities of practice, as we all do in our own. All of the skills and knowledge they have learned help them to become full members in some sense, but in others, they are still peripheral. All the participants articulated this in some sense: that while they recognized how far they had come, there was still much to be learned. Lisa commented that it was not daunting, but “pleasant” to know that she could continue on this journey for the rest of her life. That is the intention of the proposed cyclic model: over the course of a lifetime, we may skip, cartwheel, crawl, and do-si-do down personal music pathway. But if our lives with music *are* the pathway, both journey and destination, what sort of path are we on?

In conceptualizing these fiddlers’ personal music pathways, I struggled in designing a model that would do justice to their diverse experiences, their autonomy in making musical choices, and the range of emotions they felt while on this journey. A labyrinth was one of the proposed models, as the path of a labyrinth twists and turns in many directions. However, a labyrinth has only one entry point, and only one path to follow. This model does not honor the personal autonomy of participants. Further, as Amelia stated, “The goal isn’t really to know the tune”: once you get to the center of the labyrinth, the goal has been met and you exit the same way you came in. The fiddlers in this study have not completed their personal music pathways: their journeys continue on.

Another proposed model was a maze, as a maze allows for choice as to what path you will take. A maze also allows for multiple points of entry and exit. However, a maze is meant to be purposefully confusing and difficult to get anywhere without hitting dead ends. The idea of dead ends and false starts compartmentalizes sections of the

journey, as though there is nothing to be gained from starting something you will not complete. Joe's decision to learn the mandolin as "chord therapy" is only one example. Likewise, that learning can hit a dead end does not do justice to making an active choice in how you will proceed: instead, you are left with only one option, to start over again with no idea where to go. The fiddlers in this study did not start over from scratch, just as they did not start without any ideas as to how to proceed.

Through their participation and the co-participation of others in their communities of practice, the fiddlers in this study *ramble* down their personal music pathways. Used as a verb, to ramble means to "walk for pleasure, typically without a definite route" (Oxford English Dictionary, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>). Used as a noun, a ramble is defined as "A walk taken for pleasure, especially in the countryside" (Oxford English Dictionary, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>). In this way, a ramble, or to ramble, does justice to the agency and motivations of adults who pursue fiddle learning. Sometimes the path is laid out before them, but sometimes they must blaze a new path for themselves. They can choose to turn left or right, to stay on the straight-and-narrow, or to take the path less traveled. They may encounter others while they ramble, people who can give them advice about where they might go or what they might do. They may hear about a particularly skilled outdoorsman from other rambles, someone who can provide them with tools or skills that will get them further down their paths. Though the path is pleasant to be on, sometimes they encounter difficulties. The difficulties, the enjoyment, the things they see and learn, and the other people they meet: these experiences are all part of the ramble.

To conceptualize a fiddle learner as a rambler is in line with how fiddlers fit into historical and romantic imagery in folklore. As it happens, the imagery conjured by the fiddler or musician as a “rambler” or “rambling” is representative of the way this term is used in folk and fiddling traditions. Irish musicians Liam Clancey and Tommy Makem paint a picture of a fiddler who happily rambles down his own path in “The Rambles of Spring” (Makem, T., & Clancey, L., 1990).

I've a fine, felt hat  
 And a strong pair of brogues  
 I have rosin in my pocket for my bow  
 O my fiddle strings are new  
 And I've learned a tune or two  
 So, I'm well prepared to ramble and must go

That the fiddler is “well prepared to ramble” with only “a tune or two” implies that learning new tunes will be part of his ramblings. In later verses, the fiddler comments on his “friends in every town” that are most likely acquired through “making music at the markets and the fairs.”

Many ramblers in folk songs encounter difficulties during their journeys, things that may impede their progress, as in Charlie Poole and the North Carolina Ramblers’ song “He Rambled.” The rambler in this song, Buster, makes a series of choices as “he rambled all around, in and out of town.” Some of these choices get him in trouble, such as “gambling on the green”, where he loses his gold, his car, and nearly his life (Poole, C., 1994). As we have seen, rambling is not always easy. Participants struggled to make decisions about how to proceed in their learning. They encountered fear, doubt, and

frustration on their journeys. However, these emotions did not deter them from rambling on.

### **Conclusion: Implications for “Teachers”**

I will not concede that the pathways I outline in this research are not the only possible options for the personal, opportunistic, improvisatory practice that we call learning. There is not and could never be one set path for learning or moving towards new knowledge. Each actor within the social world has different motivations for participating, different aspirations and goals within the community, and actors vary in their identity development. As to the perceived homogeneity of what is held in common between these participants, I stress that there is difference to be found in the details of how they arrived at crucial moments on their journeys. It is in these differences that the complexity of communities of practice can be found, and celebrated.

I have chosen to use the term “teachers” here loosely, because in my view, and within communities of practice, we are all teachers and we are all learners to some extent. In the case of those who self-assign the identity of “teacher”, there are some points to be taken from this research. Firstly, that we can empower our students to take control of their learning curriculums, and to seek out opportunities to enhance their skill and knowledge through joyful participation. The choice will be ours alone if we limit opportunities for our students, either through ignorance of these opportunities, or the interference of a restrictive values system. Secondly, that we should be humbled in the understanding that our instruction alone will never be enough to truly transform our students into full participants within communities of practice. We are but one of many

options available in learning curriculums, and while we have much to offer, there is much to be gained from experiences we do not and cannot provide. Lastly, that there is value in, as Amelia says, "...*doing it* really messily and imperfectly and not even close to what it's supposed to look like..." (Interview, 8/8/14). It is not for the teacher to say what experiences will be most beneficial as learners move down their personal music pathway. As evidenced by this research, we in music education should not make assumptions about what learning experiences give meaning to practice until we have properly investigated all options. It is my most sincere hope that this research contributes to a growing body of music education literature that seeks to investigate the wide variety of opportunities for engagement on our personal music pathways.

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## APPENDIX A

### FIDDLE WEEK SCHEDULE

<b>Fiddle Week, August 3-9, 2014</b>									
7:30-8:30	Breakfast ( <i>Gladfelter</i> ); Yoga 7:15-8:00, (Fran Ross) ( <i>Pavilion</i> )								
9:00-10:15	Advanced Roots Groove Tour (Anger) (Jensen 217)	Intermediate Cajun & Creole Fiddle (Doucet) (Kittredge 20)	Advanced Old-Time Fiddle (Molsky) (Jensen 313)	Advanced Scottish Fiddle (Kittel) (Jensen 115)	Swing Fiddle for Non-Readers (Stein) (Kittredge 26)	Improvisation (Craven) (Jensen 317)	Intermediate Old-Time Fiddle (Ismerio) (Jensen 314)		
10:15-10:45	Coffee/Tea Break ( <i>Refreshment Tent</i> )								
10:45-12:00	Intermediate Roots Groove Tour (Anger) (Jensen 217)	Advanced Cajun & Creole Fiddle (Doucet) (Kittredge 20)	Intermediate Old-Time Fiddle B (Molsky) (Jensen 313)	Intermediate Scottish Fiddle (Kittel) (Jensen 115)	Swing Fiddle for Readers (Stein) (Kittredge 26)	Feelin' the Blues (Craven) (Jensen 317)	Intro to Old-Time Fiddle (Ismerio) (Jensen 314)	Cello: Part I (Weatherford) (Jensen 316)	
12:00-1:00	Lunch ( <i>Gladfelter</i> )								
1:15-2:30	Intermediate Cowboy Swing (Paul) (Jensen 217)	Advanced Huasteco Fiddle (Rivera) (Jensen 314)	Intermediate Bluegrass Fiddle (Lamb) (Kittredge 20)	Advanced Irish Fiddle (Knowles) (Jensen 313)	Intermediate Canadian Fiddle (Lederman) (Kittredge 26)	Advanced Klezmer Fiddle (Gutkin) (Jensen 317)	Fiddle from Scratch (Weinstein) (Jensen 115)	Intermediate Swing Guitar (Marcus) (Health Center)	Cello: Part II (Weatherford) (Jensen 316)
2:45-4:00	Advanced Cowboy Swing (Paul) (Jensen 217)	Intermediate Huasteco Fiddle (Rivera) (Jensen 314)	Advanced Bluegrass Fiddle (Lamb) (Kittredge 20)	Intermediate Irish Fiddle (Knowles) (Jensen 313)	Advanced Canadian Fiddle (Lederman) (Kittredge 26)	Intermediate Fiddle (Gutkin) (Jensen 317)	Backup Fiddle (Weinstein) (Jensen 115)	Advanced Swing Guitar (Marcus) (Health Center)	Intermediate Bass (Kehrberg) (Jensen 316)
4:15-5:15	<b>Band Sessions:</b> Irish, Scottish, Swing, Bluegrass, Old-Time, etc. as interest dictates. <b>Band Sign-ups 4:15 Monday</b> ( <i>Bryson</i> ) <b>Luthiers Exhibit</b> ( <i>Jensen Commons</i> ), <b>Daily Bluegrass Jam</b> ( <i>Dodson</i> ) ( <i>Pavilion</i> )								
5:00-6:30	Supper ( <i>Gladfelter</i> )								
7:30- ?	Evening Events (open mikes, concerts, dances, jam sessions, etc.) (see below)								

Evening Events					
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Weds.	Thurs.	Fri.
<b>ORIENTATION</b> Everyone: 7 pm ( <i>Pavilion</i> ) followed by <b>Jam Sessions:</b> <i>(Bryson Tent- Bluegrass, Sunderland Tent- Blues/Cajun, Pavilion- Old-Time, Lawn Tent- Celtic, Jam Hut- OPEN, Garden Tent- OPEN, Bryson Gym- Swing)</i>	<b>Fiddle/Mando &amp; Banjo Week Staff Concert I</b> 7:30 pm (Marshall, Knowles, Surette, Anger, Kittel, Flinner, Rivera, Lederman, Lichtenberg, Gutkin) <i>(Kittredge Theatre)</i>	<b>Fiddle/Mando &amp; Banjo Week Staff Concert II</b> 7:30 pm (Doucet, Lamb, Molsky, Craven, Tanner, Kehrberg, Baughman, Weatherford, Carlin, Ismerio, Weinstein) <i>(Kittredge Theatre)</i>	<b>Fiddle/Mando &amp; Banjo Week Staff Concert III</b> 7:30 pm (Woody Paul, Trischka, Lester, Reischman, Johnson, Stein, Dodson, Luberecki, Munde, Marcus, Stiernberg,) <i>(Kittredge Theatre)</i>	<b>The Old Farmer's Ball:</b> An Asheville Dance Tradition <b>Beginners:</b> 7:30 pm <b>All:</b> 8pm <i>(Bryson)</i>	<b>Fiddle/Mando &amp; Banjo Week Student Showcase:</b> 7 pm <i>(Bryson)</i>

**APPENDIX B**  
**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

Hi, my name is Christen Blanton, and I am PhD student in music education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. I am also an old-time musician and fiddle player. I am conducting a research study about fiddle players' experiences playing and learning fiddle, and I would like to interview you about your personal experiences. In this interview, I will ask you about your experiences making and learning music both here at the Swannanoa Gathering and in your every day life. I am primarily interested in your motivations for playing fiddle, and the different contexts in which you learn. I would like to audio record our interviews so they can be transcribed for analysis. Do I have your permission to audio record this and subsequent interviews? [Participant response] To protect your identity in any published research, you will be assigned a pseudonym; would you like to select your pseudonym?

**Demographic Questions**

1. Name
2. Age
3. Years playing fiddle
4. Other Instruments Played

**Interview Questions**

1. Why did you want to learn to play the fiddle?
2. Describe your experiences learning to play the fiddle. As best you can, go in chronological order.

3. In what circumstances is learning the most/least enjoyable, and why?
4. Why did you choose to attend/return to the Swannanoa Gathering to learn fiddle?
5. What is the most important thing you have learned at the Swannanoa Gathering? Please describe how you felt/what you were learning during this experience.
6. What are the factors that will keep you interested in continuing to learn and play the fiddle?