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The primary purpose of this case study was to understand what motivated members of UNCG Ukes, a community ukulele group, to participate in and continue to be a part of the ukulele group. The secondary purpose was to understand how participants of UNCG Ukes learned to make music, specifically in relationship to informal music learning approaches. Participants in this study were members of UNCG Ukes, an intergenerational ukulele group that met on the campus of the University of North Carolina Greensboro during the Spring semester of 2015. Lucy Green's informal music learning components (2002; 2008) were used as the theoretical framework guiding the investigation. Using case study methodology, several forms of data were collected, including video-recorded observations, audio-recorded individual interviews, field notes, memos, analysis of lead sheets and music notation, and artifacts including photos and drawings of the space.

Results based on observation and interview data indicated that participants were motivated to participate in UNCG Ukes because they enjoyed learning to sing, and play ukulele with others. The approach participants used to learn music within this context largely aligned with Green's informal music learning components. Whereas Green suggested that an aural-only approach was preferred in informal music learning (2002; 2008), participants of UNCG Ukes used a pragmatic “whatever works” approach to learning tunes, including using aural and visual methods, such as YouTube videos and lead sheets.

INFORMAL MUSIC LEARNING

IN UNCG UKES

by

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Approved by

_____
Committee Chair

I dedicate this dissertation to my middle school students who inspired this research. I also dedicate it to the participants of this study. I could not have asked for a more open, gracious, kind, and fun group of people with which to work. I hope you enjoy reading your experiences as much as I enjoyed collecting and writing about them.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation written by JACQUELINE JOY RITORTO SECOY has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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I had an immense amount of support from so many people that I am sure to miss someone, though certainly not intentionally. I have had some wonderful teachers in my lifetime but my first music teachers were my family members. My dad, Larry Secoy, showed me my first song on the piano at my grandmother's house. My mother, Judy Secoy, encouraged and listening to me practice for hours on a variety of instruments that I lugged home from school. I watched my older brothers, Christopher and Spencer, practice their instruments and I "borrowed" excessively from their record, tape, and CD collections. Both my parents and brothers have been supportive of my decisions to follow music as a career and passion and have listened while I have talked about the ideas posed in this study. As a family, we have been able to grow together through music and those experiences are never far from my thoughts. Carol and Joe Ritorto have always encouraged and cheered me on and I am grateful to be a part of their supportive and loving family.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Situating the Study

Prior to returning to college to work on my PhD in music education, I taught music in a public school in central Ohio for ten years. The majority of my work was teaching general music to students in grades four through eight. Students in grades four and five took a general music class as part of their standard curriculum. The middle school students in grades six through eight were required to take a music class. Three music classes were offered: band, choir and general music. If students did not voluntarily enroll in choir or band, they were involuntarily placed in general music. I began to notice that many students were not interested in school, or formal, music making. However, many students showed an interest in informal music making, such as playing musical instruments or singing music of their choice outside of school. Some students had highly-developed musical skills that were different from or beyond that which was taught in school. I started wondering why so many students were showing an interest in making music outside of school rather than making music inside of school. What interested them about informal music making? Almost all of my musical training and experiences had taken place in a school setting, so making music outside of school was mostly foreign to me. Often, I struggled to connect with and offer musical experiences to my students that I felt were relevant, engaging, or meaningful. To better understand how students learn how

to make music outside of a formal setting, I have focused on learning more about informal music learning. It is my hope that by developing a better understanding of this type of learning, I will become a better music educator, connect more often with my students, increase motivation to participate in school music activities, and offer engaging musical experiences to students of any age. I also hope that this study will help spark that same interest in other music educators.

When I arrived at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in the Fall semester of 2012 to pursue my doctoral degree in music education, I had the opportunity to learn about the ukulele. I had used guitar to help teach music in my general music classes and found students responded to it in positive ways. However, I noticed that the size and complexity of the guitar could be intimidating and overwhelming to some of my students. With performers like Jake Shimabukuro, James Hill, and Eddie Vedder, the ukulele had become popular in music education, as well as popular culture with performers. These musicians showed that the ukulele was an instrument of virtuosic playing and capable of complex musical expression. The ukulele, and its place in our current society, offered a unique avenue for investigating informal music learning.

My first experience with the ukulele was a class and research study that Dr. Sandra Teglas and I created in the Spring of 2013 called Ukulele for Two. This class was created for parents and children to engage in music instruction simultaneously using ukulele. The children who participated ranged in age from eight to ten years old. We used James Hill and Chalmers Doane's *Ukulele in the Classroom, Book 1* (2009) as the foundation of our curriculum. Through this class, I noticed how the ukulele was

accessible to young children and adults, facilitated music literacy, and how much fun people seemed to have while playing the ukulele.

In the Spring of 2013, a community member saw an article in the Greensboro News and Record (Essenfeld 2013) about the parent-child class, Ukulele for Two. She inquired about whether adult classes were offered at UNCG for the ukulele. Because of staffing and time constraints, we were unable to offer a class, but decided to create a ukulele jam group. This type of group would not require us to create and follow lesson plans, which meant that preparation time was minimal. The group would be open to UNCG faculty, students, and staff and to community members. Based on the inquiry, we started the ukulele group in Fall semester 2013 and called it UNCG Ukes. The purpose of this group was to provide participants an opportunity to learn how to sing and play ukulele with other people. Through participation in the group, I began to notice that people were learning about music via what I had come to know as informal music learning approaches. However, some aspects of the group were formal, such as meeting in a classroom of a university music building. I became interested in learning how informal music learning approaches functioned for participants in UNCG Ukes, why people were motivated to participate in the group, and what meaning they made of their musical experiences.

In recent years, ukulele groups have been forming around the world, but I was only able to find one scholarly study (Kruse 2013) relating to them. Research has been published relating to informal music learning (Folkestad, 2006; Green 2002, 2008, 2011;

Jaffurs, 2004; Jenkins 2011), but not specifically relating to ukulele groups. I felt that UNCG Ukes offered a unique perspective into informal music learning.

Problem

In recent years, the typical traditional approach some music educators use to teach music in the music classroom has come into question by researchers (Campbell, Myers, Sarath, Chattah, Higgins, Rudge & Rice, 2014; Green 2002, 2008; Jaffurs, 2004; Jenkins, 2011; Kratus, 2007; Resnick, 1987; Veblen, 2008; Wright, 2011). Witchell noted that "for the last 30 years or so, music teachers in secondary schools have been trying to make their music lessons relevant to the pupils they teach" (Green & Walmsley, n.d.). Many issues are at play; topics of interest include motivation, teachers being able to connect with students, the disproportionate number of students who participate in school music offerings, and how music is taught in schools. Although schools may offer many music experiences, such as band, choir and orchestra, only a minority of students is participating in those options (Price, 2005).

Why is it that students have a rich musical life outside of the school, but music educators may struggle to connect with them in the school setting? Why has music education become disconnected from students? Researchers have noticed that there is a "disconnect" between the style of music learning that is offered in schools and the interests of the students being taught. Thomas Turino (2008) stated that "school . . . is a common context for music making, but unfortunately this does not prove to be compelling experiences for many kids" (p. 158). I noticed the same issue when I was teaching middle school general music classes.

Lucy Green's research with popular musicians in England (2002) brought forth insight as to how popular musicians were learning music outside of the formal school setting. She noticed that "alongside or instead of formal music education there are always, in every society, other ways of passing on and acquiring musical skills and knowledge" which she referred to as "informal learning practices"(Chapter 1, para.9). These practices include watching and imitating musicians and using recordings or performances to learn music. Through her study, Green found five main components to informal music learning:

1. Informal learning always starts with music the learners choose for themselves.
2. The main method of skill-acquisition in the informal realm involves copying recordings by ear.
3. Informal learning takes place alone as well as alongside friends, through self-directed learning, peer-directed learning and group learning.
4. Skills and knowledge in the informal realm . . . tend to be assimilated in haphazard, idiosyncratic and holistic ways.
5. Informal approaches usually involve a deep integration of listening, performing, improvising and composing throughout the learning process, with an emphasis on personal creativity. (Green, 2008, Chapter 1, Underlying Principles of the Project, para. 2-6).

Green's components of informal music learning were adapted and implemented in formal school settings (Green 2008; musicalfutures.org) with compelling findings, such

as increased student motivation and engagement, and changes in the role of a music teacher in the classroom (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, 2006). Because of Green's prior work with informal music learning in a formal setting, I used her components of informal music learning as the conceptual framework for this study. During my participation in UNCG Ukes, I observed informal music learning approaches as outlined by Green, such as participants playing music of choice, haphazard rather than sequential learning, and integration of listening, performing, improvising and composing, were present in UNCG Ukes and I wanted to take a closer look with the current study. However, there also were formal aspects to the case presented in this study, such as the formal school classroom setting and the use of music notation (which is used in formal music instruction in schools). Because of these components, I thought UNCG Ukes was a unique setting in which to further investigate informal music learning.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this case study was to better understand how participants of UNCG Ukes in the Spring semester of 2015 experienced the components of informal music learning as outlined by Lucy Green (2002; 2008). The secondary purpose was to better understand what motivated participants to become and continue to be a part of the group. Having a better understanding of how participants in this study learn music could give music educators deeper insight into how people learn music and therefore inform the approaches to music teaching and learning that are employed in music classrooms. In addition, gaining a better understanding about why people participate in a community

ukulele group could help music educators make decisions about what type of music making opportunities are offered in schools and communities.

Context for the Study

The focus of this study was a group called UNCG Ukes, which met in the Spring semester of 2015. UNCG Ukes was an intergenerational community group of people who came together to learn to sing and play ukulele. The group met once a week for approximately one hour in the music building on the campus of The University of North Carolina Greensboro. The university recognized the group as a club, which means it was listed in the club register that all students, staff and faculty could access. Attendance was voluntary and participants came and went as their schedules allowed. Depending on availability each week, the group participants changed. However, several participants were ongoing members of the group who had been participating since its inception in Fall 2013.

UNCG Ukes was a group whose members participated in music making. Turino (2008) described participatory performance as a way of making music where the audience and artist are not distinct. People who engage are either participants or people who could be participants. Performance is not necessarily a goal of participating. The goal is to include as many people as possible into the act of making music. The primary goal of participating in UNCG Ukes was to sing and play ukulele where all members are performing the act of music making.

In recent years, the ukulele has emerged as a popular instrument around the world. Participants in ukulele groups have expressed positive music making experiences

(Dent-Robinson, 2013; Meagher & Coleman, 2011). Even though ukulele clubs and jam groups have been appearing around the world, there is little scholarly research that investigates the experiences of the participants in these groups.

Significance of the Study

Gaining a better understanding of how students learn music is an important part of being a music educator. This understanding can inform how music educators design classroom instruction in order to better connect to students, motivate them to learn, and help them develop musical skills. Gaining a better understanding of how informal music learning components as outlined by Lucy Green (2002, 2008) are experienced by participants of UNCG Ukes, an intergenerational community ukulele group, could have important implications for how music educators approach teaching music in a variety of settings, including the school classroom. The current case study was designed to gain a better understanding of Green's informal music learning components by asking participants of UNCG Ukes about their experiences. This case provided a rich source of perspectives. The participants ranged in age from 15 to 73, and had a variety of musical backgrounds and life experiences. By hearing the experiences of these participants, music educators may be able to make transfers to their own students and situations that could inform how music education is delivered within and beyond school.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

People have always seemed to find ways to make music together, whether it is for a ceremony, a celebration, to tell a story, or entertainment. Hodges and Sebald (2011) stated, "Human beings in every place and at all times have participated in musical activities" (p. 2). Much of the importance of music activities lies in the act of music making. Small argued, "It is only by understanding what people do as they take part in a musical act that we can hope to understand its nature and the function it fulfills in human life" (1998, p. 8). A key component of making music includes learning how to make music which can be done formally, informally, or a combination of both.

Jenkins (2011) asserted, "Informal learning is nothing new; it is almost certainly older than formal learning" (p. 180). Jenkins compared informal learning to language acquisition where we learn from those around us in our immediate environment and then in the larger community. Because it is a practice of trial and error until the skill is learned, there is an element of struggle associated with informal learning,.

Research exists that focuses on informal music making and learning (Folkestad, 2006; Green 2002, 2008, 2011; Jaffurs, 2004; Jenkins 2011) in a variety of settings, such as Celtic music sessions (Waldron & Veblen, 2009) or entire towns such as Milton Keynes in England (Finnegan, 1989). In recent years the field of music education has become open to the ways in which music is learned outside of the formal school setting

(Karlsen, 2009). My personal and professional musical training and experiences have largely taken place in the formal education setting, which is one reason I am interested in learning more about informal music learning, or music learning that takes place outside of a formal setting.

My review of literature will begin with a discussion of research related to informal, formal, and non-formal music learning. Next, I will focus on Lucy Green's research with popular musicians in England (2002), how her research was implemented into public schools in England (2008) and then developed into a program known as Musical Futures. Green's research forms the conceptual framework for this study. Finally, I will discuss the scholarly research that has been published to date in relation to ukulele groups.

Informal, Formal, and Non-Formal Music Learning

In my discussion of informal and formal music learning I will focus on two definitions of the term *informal* that appear in the Merriam-Webster dictionary: (a) "conducted or carried out without formality or ceremony" and (b) "characteristic of or appropriate to ordinary, casual or familiar use" (2006, p. 557). Informal learning takes places all around us all of the time, such as someone showing us how to tie our shoes or young children learning how to speak the language of their environment. It also occurs when people learn to make music. Green (2002) noted that music learning goes on in all cultures around and parallel to formal music learning. She calls music learning outside of the formal music setting "informal music learning." These practices include watching and

imitating musicians and using recordings or performances to learn music. As Jaffurs (2004) has suggested:

> Informal music learning exists in any community in which there is music. At their most basic level, informal music practices are natural and spontaneous responses to music. There is no evaluation, formal or otherwise, and no teacher irection or guidance. (p. 192-193)

This statement points to a type of music learning that is not preplanned or organized ahead of the moment of learning. Folkestad (2006) further described an informal learning situation as not being planned before it occurs and the activity and participants within the activity drive the learning process. Price (2005) defined informal learning situations as those that students organize and lead themselves. Students are in charge of their own learning and teacher direction is not present, wanted, or necessary.

Leadership, or the absence thereof, is an important component of informal music learning. In her research with popular musicians in England, Green (2002) found

> there is no teacher in the informal practices of popular musicians . . . a great deal is learnt from watching professionals or more experienced players from a distance, and perhaps more so from watching peers in close collaboration (Chapter 3, Watching, para. 1).

Higgins (2012) described leaders in the community music setting as "facilitators" who "offer routes toward suggested destinations and are ready to assist if the group journey becomes lost or confused, but they are always open to the possibility of the unexpected" (p. 149). This role can be contrasted to the role of the teacher in a music classroom, who

is responsible for preparing lessons, choosing music, creating and upholding classroom rules and assessing and evaluating the students.

According to Jenkins (2011), informal music learning is advantageous because it (a) comes from a relaxed, playful attitude, (b) is missing definable goals which opens up the possibility for the learners to take control, and (c) the environment of experimentation and exploration can empower the learners. The sense of control and exploration can create a situation for musicians to make musical decisions on their own, without the guidance of a leader. On the other hand, Jenkins points out that a disadvantage of informal learning might be that without a structured lesson and the direction of a formal leader, the learners may have a limited educational journey. Learners may not be motivated or feel comfortable branching out into unfamiliar topics and therefore may remain in areas they already know. This does not expand their knowledge base. Without a leader to push them beyond their comfort zone, musicians who are learning informally may focus only on what they already know and are comfortable with playing.

Merriam-Webster's dictionary (2006) defines *formal* in two ways: (a) "according to conventional forms, and rules" and (b) "done in due or lawful form" (p. 427). Schools in the United States fall within this parameter. Davis (2013) noted that, "generally, formal learning is characterized as taking place inside institutions such as schools and informal learning as occurring outside school" (p. 25). Schools have conventional forms, such as structured schedules and teacher-directed learning. A formal learning setting is one where the activity is pre-planned by a teacher who is in charge of creating and implementing the activity (Folkestad, 2006). Schools function on rules, from dress codes to codes of

conduct to classroom specific rules. Schools operate under specific laws that administrators and educators must follow.

Researchers (O'Neill & Bespflug, 2011; Jaffurs, 2004) have identified informal and formal learning by the context in which is occurs, such as in or out of school. Informal music learning is often defined as work that takes place out of school and formal learning work takes place in school. To further frame a school setting, Strauss (1984) observed:

> The paradigm of formal education is the style of schooling developed in the industrialized West. It has been defined as any form of education that is deliberate, carried on "out of context" in a special setting outside of the routines of daily life, and made the responsibility of the larger social group. (p. 195)

Green (2002) concurs with Strauss that formal music education has derived from "the conventions of Western classical music pedagogy" (Chapter 1, para. 6). This means the focus of most public school music education programs is on formalized learning of Western classical music, the composers of that music, and learning how to read and perform the music notation associated with that style of music. The learning is planned, organized, and directed by a teacher or conductor and is the dominant style of music learning in schools today.

Although informal and formal music learning may seem to take place separately, they can occur at the same time. Price (2007) recognized that there are not clear distinctions between where informal and formal learning processes occur. Informal learning can take place in a formal context and vice versa. Green (2002) used examples such as youth employment training courses, brass bands, gospel choirs, or samba schools

as traditions that blend informal and formal music learning in the same activity.

It is important to mention that another concept often used in the informal and formal music learning discussion is *non-formal*. Mok (2011) defined non-formal learning as "an out-of-institution, voluntary type of learning" (p. 12). Mok goes on to explain that non-formal learning is "relatively systematic and (but not necessarily) pre-planned with an explicit intention on the part of both learner and mentor to accomplish a/some specific learning task(s)" (2011, p. 13). This suggests that there is a preconceived idea on the part of the mentor and participant of what should be learned or gained from the activity, but those ideas may not be specifically outlined or expressed beforehand. In regards to leadership, non-formal learning does include a mentor, which is different from the description of informal music learning where no leader is necessarily needed or present during the activity. However, non-formal learning is voluntary and can take place in or out of a school setting, such as in extra-curricular school activities. This is similar to informal learning, where participants often choose to be involved in the learning as opposed to formal learning where the participants may not have the choice to participate, as in compulsory schooling. Although, philosophies and elements of non-formal, informal, and formal learning will be discussed, the focus of this study is on how Green's (2002; 2008) informal music learning components function and are experienced by the participants in UNCG Ukes ukulele group.

Researchers have studied informal and formal music learning by focusing on the intent of the learner. Folkestad (2006) offered the following perspective:

> . . . towards what is the mind directed during the process of the activity? In theformal 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). (p. 138)

In this statement, Folkestad suggested that the intent of a musician who participates in informal music practice is to participate in the act of music making, rather than entering with an intent to *learn* to make music. Although the musicians might be learning as they make music, the goal is not necessary to learn, but rather to participate in the act of making music.

Strauss (1984) also focused on learner intent and described intent as *incidental* or *intentional*. Intentional learning is when the learner sets out to learn something specific. In contrast, Strauss gave the following example of incidental learning:

> a two-year-old girl's familiarity with certain pieces of music, developed because her parents deliberately played these pieces to train her ‘ear,’ would be considered an instance of incidental rather than intentional learning (p. 201).

By comparing a mathematics class in the United States and one in Japan, Strauss offered an example of learner intent.

> Typically, [US] students become proficient at performing the algorithms before they are able to apply them comfortably to 'story problems.' In Japan, on the other hand, children are presented with challenging story problems before they learn the most efficient techniques for solving them. (p. 206)

This scenario places an emphasis on how information is presented to students in a classroom, with the one in the United States taking a systematic, step-by-step, skill-

building approach compared to a problem-centered, critical thinking approach in the Japanese setting.

Although learner intent may play a role in the current study, the conceptual framework I am using focuses on how informal music learning components (Green, 2002, 2008) are experienced by participants in UNCG Ukes. This group was somewhat new, having only been formed in the Fall semester of 2013, and the current study took place in the group's fourth semester. Boundaries, focus, and function of the group had been defined and redefined each semester that the group met, based on long-term and new members who participate in the group.

Lucy Green's Research on Informal Music Learning

In 2002, Green published the book *How Popular Musicians Learn: A Way Ahead for Music Education,* which described her research with how popular musicians in England learned about music. Being a classically trained musician and music educator, Green was curious about how popular musicians learned about music because it was different from her experience (UCL Institute of Education IOE, 2011). One goal of her research was to "explore some of the possibilities which informal popular music learning practices might offer formal education" (Green, 2002, Chapter 1, para 14).

Green defined informal music learning as "a variety of approaches to acquiring musical skills and knowledge outside formal educational settings" (2002, Chapter 1, Terminology, para 3). Green further observed:

> . . . learning practices may be both conscious and unconscious. They include encountering unsought learning experiences through enculturation in the musical environment; learning through interaction with others such as peers, family members or other musicians who are not acting as teachers in formal capacities; and developing independent learning. (2002, Chapter 1, Terminology, para 3)

In Green's (2002) research, informal music learning was often contrasted with formal music learning, which was largely defined by the formal setting of a school. She referred to formal music education as

> instrumental and classroom music teachers' practices of teaching, training and education and to pupils' and students' experiences of learning and of being taught, educated or trained in a formal education setting (Chapter 1, Terminology, para. 4)

and that it included being introduced to new skills and knowledge that learners may not encounter through day-to-day activities. She recognized, however, that formal and informal music learning were not completely separate from each other but were two points that could exist on a continuum of learning. Some key findings from Green's work with popular musicians (2002) were: (a) popular musicians rarely use music notation and favor aural/oral learning such as copying recordings by ear to learn a song, (b) teachers are not involved but rather learning takes place through observing other musicians or peers and (c) peers and friendships were an important part of learning for the popular musicians and it influenced how the musicians learned music.

Green questioned whether the informal music learning practices she observed in her study of popular musicians could be adapted for use in a formal music classroom setting. She identified five key components of informal music learning:

1. Informal music learning always starts with music which the learners choose for themselves.
2. The main method of skill-acquisition . . . involves copying recordings by ear.
3. Takes place alone as well as alongside friends, through self-directed learning, peer-directed learning and group learning.
4. Skills and knowledge in the informal realm . . . tend to be assimilated in haphazard, idiosyncratic and holistic ways, starting with 'whole,' 'real-world' pieces of music.
5. Usually involve a deep integration of listening, performing, improvising and composing throughout the learning process, with an emphasis on personal creativity. (Green, 2008, Chapter 1, Underlying Principles of the Project, para. 2-6)

Green investigated whether the five components could be implemented into a formal public school music classroom. In her book *Music, Informal Learning and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy*, Green (2008) documented how the informal learning approach was implemented in 21 secondary schools in London, England and surrounding areas. There were seven stages to the project that were seen as an approach to teaching and learning instead of units of instruction. Stage 1 focused the most on the five components and set the role for the teacher throughout the stages. In this stage, students were tasked with bringing music of their choice to school, listening to the recordings, working with friends/classmates to learn the music and make musical decisions (arrangement, musical instrument choice, etc.), and eventually performing the song for

others in the class. Stage 2 incorporated pre-selected and prepared music curriculum materials. Stage 3 was a repeat of Stage 1. In Stage 4 students composed an original piece of music. In Stage 5 the music teacher invited a "musical model" or professional musician to come in and work with the class. In stages 6 and 7, students were asked to apply the approaches they had learned throughout the project to the process of learning a piece of classical music.

Teachers were asked to perform their role differently and act as a guide or facilitator to the students rather than provide direct instruction. Teachers organized resources, set group rules for instrument use and care, observed students, and offered help, guidance and support (Musical Futures, Section 3 Implementing Formal Music Learning). Teachers were concerned at the beginning of the project that students would not stay on task. However, at the end of both Stage 1 and 2, teachers found that students' "levels of enjoyment and motivation appeared to be extremely high, and the pupils' responsible behaviour was impressive" (Green, 2008, Chapter 8, para. 7). Teachers continued to see a rise in enjoyment and motivation throughout the project.

Students responded in positive ways to this approach. A theme that emerged from many participant interviews revealed that "it was the approach to learning that made the tasks more meaningful and the musical experiences more positive" (Green, 2008, Chapter 7, The 'normal curriculum', classical music and 'other' music, para. 4). Participants were able to differentiate that the approach music educators used to deliver instruction, as opposed to the content that was taught or the sequence that was used, had a positive impact on their musical experiences.

Green's work in outlining informal music learning approaches and applying them to a formal music school setting is the framework within which I am basing my case study. I have chosen this approach not only because Green's research is thorough and rigorous, but because she went on to create *Musical Futures,* a project developed in association with the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, which implemented informal music learning approaches into the formal music setting of school music classes. During my participation in UNCG Ukes, I observed that informal music learning approaches, as outlined by Green, were present in UNCG Ukes. There also were formal aspects to the case, however, such as the formal school classroom setting and the use of music notation.

Musical Futures

Musical Futures is a project developed and funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. It is an action research project that focuses on engaging students aged 11-19 in new and creative musical ways (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, 2006). The program is based on Lucy Green's research related to how popular musicians learn music informally (Green, 2002) and the five main components of informal music learning.

Two aspects form the foundation of *Musical Futures*: non-formal teaching and informal music learning. The learning situation involves engaging in listening, performing, composing, and improvising activities within an inclusive, group-based approach. The setting is one where exploration is encouraged. The teacher plays the role of musical model who provides little verbal explanation. Peers help each other learn through skill sharing. Teachers and students work collaboratively to develop content.

Non-musical skills are developed, such as responsibility, empathy, support for others, creativity, and improvising to find solutions to problems (Musical Futures, Section 2: Non formal teaching 2015).

Musical Futures is seen as an approach rather than a prescribed methodology. All resources and teaching materials are available for free to download through the website; however, resources can only be accessed by creating a free user account (musicalfutures.org, 2015). Teachers are encouraged to download materials and fit them into their teaching situations in the most appropriate way. This flexibility makes the approach useful in a variety of school environments and classrooms.

Although the materials are available for people to use at will, professional development opportunities exist as well. Free one-day introductory courses are offered throughout the year, where teachers can sign up, learn about the approach and network with others. Conferences and online communities have been established to provide ongoing support and to facilitate discussions about successes and challenges throughout the program (Musical Futures: Training 2015).

Teacher Role in Non-Formal Teaching and Informal Music Learning Approaches

Non-formal teaching and informal music learning approaches require teachers to take a different perspective on their role in the classroom, which can be difficult for teachers to do (Green, 2008). Typically, music classrooms are teacher-directed. This means the teacher makes most of the decisions regarding what and how students learn. In non-formal teaching,

> the role of the teacher . . . was to establish ground rules for behaviour, set the task going at the start of each stage, then stand back and observe what pupils were doing . . . they were to act as 'musical models' (Green, 2008, Chapter 2, The role of the teacher in brief, para. 1).

Music teachers often act as models within the classroom by showing or sharing good techniques, information, knowledge, and so on. Therefore, that part of the teacher role would probably feel familiar to most music teachers. However, standing back and observing rather than intervening and fixing problems would be difficult for many teachers. The *Musical Futures* program asked teachers to take what they might perceive as more risks than the students by giving up some control of the classroom environment. This release of control helped to foster independent, self-motivated, autonomous work (Price & D'Amore, 2007).

The issue of teacher control within a classroom is of primary concern to music teachers and administrators. There are many legal restrictions and professional requirements that all teachers who work in public schools must follow. A teacher's employment may be threatened if he or she is perceived as not abiding by the rules and requirements set out by the school (Green, 2008). One teacher who used the *Musical Futures* approach in his classroom reflected:

> In the past, I have always been wary of the opinions of other staff, especially of Senior Management. I would worry about them making judgments about learning outcomes, especially if the work seemed noisy and chaotic, but because *Musical Futures* is backed up by proven trials and evidence about learning outcomes it has given me the confidence to be proactive in educating the rest of the school staff . . . Other staff need to be warned about the noise levels and the freedom of choice concerning musical style. (Price & D'Amore, 2007, pp. 5-6)

In non-formal instruction, the teacher is asked to offer more choices to the students, especially in relation to the music that is chosen, how it is learned and how it is arranged. Watching students choose music that may seem too difficult and seeing students struggle may be challenging for teachers. Campbell and colleagues (2014) suggested, "when students are provided options, they immediately engage in heightened critical thinking about who they are as individuals, as aspiring artists, and as learners" (p. 19). The struggle to learn a song is part of the learning process. The student must make decisions on how to solve problems such as what instruments should be used, who plays the melody, how to arrange the music, and so on. Instead of the teacher seeing these struggles and trying to "fix" them, the teacher instead acts as a guide or facilitator to encourage them through the process.

One of the findings of the *Musical Futures* project was that "teachers were invigorated by the opportunity to think again about teaching music" (An evaluation of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's Musical Futures Project, 2006, p. 2) and Price and D'Amore found that "89% of teachers questioned are either adopting, or are planning to adopt, the Musical Futures models in their own practice" (2007, p. 18). This suggests that the teachers in the study found that the benefits of the approach outweighed the challenges they faced in using it.

Aural Learning and Music Notation

Learning music aurally is a key factor in informal music learning and in the *Musical Futures* program. We first experience music through hearing it. We receive sounds into our ears and then we perceive and come to understand it as music. Music is

firstly an aural/oral art form and being able to understand what is being heard is part of being musically literate.

Researchers have discussed the issue of over emphasis of learning music through music notation over aural learning in academic settings (Campbell et al., 2014; McLucas, 2011; Green, 2008; Kidula, 2006; Solis; 2004). Aural skills are part of the larger whole of music literacy. For various reasons, including the dominance of Western Classical music, aural skills in the academy have come to mean being able to read music notation and turn what is read into music. The focus is on seeing rather than hearing. This has created an imbalance in academic situations that lean towards reading music as being the most common way of understanding it. At all points in history and in all cultures people have been making music without notation. Many musical traditions still make music through aural/oral transmission with little if any notation, such as in Celtic Music, Old Time, and Balinese gamelan (Tenzer, 1991; Waldron, 2008; Williams, 2010).

To date in U. S. music education, music notation has been relied on heavily to teach children about music at the expense of developing their aural learning skills. The authors of *Transforming Music Study from its Foundations: A Manifesto for Progressive Change in the Undergraduate Preparation of Music Majors* (2014) called for music education to emphasize aural musicianship as much as visual music processing. Trained music educators learn how to teach with an emphasis on Western Classical music, including an overemphasis on music notation. There are some musicians and music educators through focused study or life experiences who incorporate music outside of this canon. For many music teachers, however, engaging with music outside of their

knowledge, training, or comfort zone can be a struggle. Informal music learning could be a way to shift the focus of learning music from learning through music notation to aural/oral learning.

In her research with popular musicians, Green found that "copying recordings appeared to be so much a part of their enculturation that it had always been virtually unconscious" (2002, Chapter 3, The overriding learning practice: listening and copying, para. 2). Listening to a recording or performance of a song and trying to play it seems to be a large part of informal music making.

Music notation plays a role in informal music learning, but it is more of a supportive or temporary role (Green 2002, 2008, Musical Futures, Section 3, Informal learning: Implementing informal learning). It can be used throughout the informal music learning process but it is not usually where the learning starts. Music notation is sometimes used as a way of remembering what has been created or decided so that it can be recalled during the next playing session. In this way, music notation serves to support learning the music at later stages in the process. It is used as a tool to help students remember what was learned from session to session, not to preserve what has been created. The music is passed on through aural practices that can convey aspects of the music that cannot be written. Music notation is depended upon heavily to teach children about music in the school setting. Rather than relying on music notation to keep the song the same over time or standardize the music, in informal music learning, music notation seems to function as a placeholder or supplement.

It is important that students are introduced to different tools that will help them access music in the world around them, which includes both written and aural learning. *Musical Futures* is a program that has been able to incorporate aural learning in a relevant way for students.

Musical Futures Applied in Other Countries

Musical Futures started in England, and it has spread to multiple places around the world. On the Musical Futures website the "International" section lists collaborators around the world. There are locations that have documented how *Musical Futures* functioned in music classrooms, such as Southridge School in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada where teachers implemented *Musical Futures* in 2011 (O'Neill & Bespflug). Findings related to how the students responded to learning music aurally. For example, they discovered that playing by ear was different from reading music, but both were valuable to musicians. Some students found that learning music aurally was freeing while others felt it was scary. Students discovered that they were able to figure out musical ideas, such as melodies, aurally/orally through recordings and working with other students.

In Ontario, Canada, *Musical Futures* was incorporated into an elementary and secondary school (Wright, Younker, Beynon, Hutchinson, Linton, Beynon, Davidson & Duarte, 2012). In this case, findings were related to motivation, networking and continued learning outside of the school day.

> The students stated that they talk about the project at recess and teach each other what they have learned on each instrument. They give advice on how to find notes on the bass guitar for example or tricks for playing the keyboard chords. They also stated that multiple listening opportunities to the songs, at school and home, increase their familiarity. While listening at home, they try to work out what each part is doing. (p. 17)

In addition, researchers found that the students were excited at the beginning of the project as could be observed through noisy and distracted behavior. However, the noise subsided as the project got under way when students began listening to the recordings. This speaks to the concerns mentioned earlier by music educators in relation to students being on task and focused during the project.

The New Core Music Standards is a document that was released by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) in June 2014. The standards set forth in this document are an update of the 1994 National Music Education Standards and include three main areas: creating, performing and responding. These areas are further divided into benchmarks and for seventh- and eighth-grade students the focus is on creating harmony, melody and rhythm in basic and expanded forms, organizing music ideas into forms of musical notation or audio/video recordings, and evaluating their own and other people's work with selected criteria (www.nationalartsstandards.org 2014). Giving students options about how musical ideas are communicated, whether through musical notation and/or video audio recordings, suggests that music educators are becoming more willing to include avenues for aural learning to flourish.

Veblen noted, “Perhaps the largest issue facing the field of music education today - in all countries and at all levels - is the challenge to connect with every student” (2008,

p. 127). We often discuss this problem in music education and there are many ideas as to how to address it. Price asserted, "if we want to widen participation and progression, changing the curriculum (what is taught) is not as crucial as changing the pedagogy (how it is taught/learned)" (2006, p. 4). Informal music learning, as implemented in the *Musical Futures* programs, has shown promise in this area.

Ukulele Jam Groups

Ukulele jam groups have been cropping up around the world in recent years (Meagher & Coleman, 2011). Because they are just beginning to be studied, minimal research has been published about these groups. One ethnographic study has been conducted by Kruse (2013) in which he worked with Dallas Ukulele Headquarters (DUH), an intergenerational ukulele group in the Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas area. This group started in 1995 with three members and at the time of the study (2013) there were 700 members. People were able to connect through the Internet, with websites such as Meetup.com in order to find the session. Because so many people were involved, members formed smaller groups based on skill level or musical interest.

When asked why they participated in DUH members cited the Hawaiian concept of *ohana*, or family, was suggested. *Ohana* reflects a broader concept of family to include people that are not necessarily blood relatives but rather family by choice, such as friends and acquaintances. Participants of DUH referred to the group as a "family of strangers" (Kruse, 2013, p. 158). Participants enjoyed being able to connect with different generations of musicians by playing tunes from different time periods. The music played in the group came from lead sheets that people brought to the group, or from ukulele

books, such as the *Daily Ukulele* by Liz and Jim Beloff (2010). People found tunes they enjoyed, generally pop, folk, or show tunes from various eras, to play with the group. The simple joys of playing music were of importance to participants. Being an amateur musician was accepted and even celebrated.

In DUH, the social aspects of playing music with others seemed to be most discussed and most important. Beginners felt accepted as family and as amateur musicians in ways they had not experienced in other settings. This feeling of acceptance points to the strong social aspects of this ukulele jam group.

DUH was a group where all members participated in music making. Turino (2008) has described participatory performance as

> a special type of artistic practice in which there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants performing different roles, and the primary goal is to involve the maximum number of people in some performance role (p. 26).

The primary goal of participating in UNCG Ukes was to sing and play ukulele where all members were performing the act of music making. In recent years, the ukulele has emerged as a popular instrument around the world. Participants in ukulele groups are expressing positive music making experiences. For example, Lynne Butler, a participant and parent in a ukulele club in England shared,

> My son George who is 12 wanted to learn the uke so we both joined Sam's club. It's big fun. Of course the uke is fashionable now and I think schools should teach the ukulele instead of recorders. It is also the perfect instrument to compose songs (Dent-Robinson, 2013, p. 40).

An ensemble at the University of Illinois, Matthew Thibeault created the Homebrew Ukulele Union (HUU), a college level ensemble whose participants make ukuleles, compose music, perform and record together. Thibeault & Evoy (2011) stated the ukulele "invites playing melody and harmony, singing, and improvising, in solo or ensemble settings. Unlike the guitar, it is associated almost entirely with a wonderful amateur culture that celebrates the simple joys of music" (p. 44). As mentioned in the study of the Dallas Ukulele Headquarters, the amateur aspect of the ukulele is favored and is part of why people are drawn to it. Evoy, a music education student in the HUU, stated that one of her favorite things about participating in the group was that "it was nice to just sing and not worry about singing perfectly" (p. 48). She went on to say, "Throughout my music education, I did not have very many opportunities to separate stress from music" (p. 48). This insight is interesting to me as a music educator. Is it common for music majors to feel stress when participating in music? As music educators, can we offer musical opportunities that result in less stress and more joy? This issue of feeling stress while making music makes me curious about whether the music majors in UNCG Ukes experience similar feelings about their music making experiences.

At present, other than Kruse's study of DUH, no other scholarly research that investigates the experiences of the participants in the ukulele groups has been published. Because of this and the unique aspects of UNCG Ukes, which include informal and formal music learning aspects, a variety of participants including music majors and non-music majors, staff and community members, this group offers opportunities for unique insights into experiences in a participatory music group using ukulele.

Research and Issue Questions

The following research and issue questions were addressed in the study. The two research questions are numbered. Issue questions are listed below each research question and are used to help clarify research questions.

1. Why are people motivated to participate in UNCG Ukes?

    (a) Why do people participate in UNCG Ukes?

    (b) Is it important to music learning for the members to be friends?

    (c) Does meeting in the music building influence music learning?

2. How are participants of UNCG Ukes learning to make music?

    (a) What are participants learning about music?

    (b) Is it important to participants' music learning for the songs to be of their preference?

    (c) How is music learned?

        i. Is it learned aurally, with music notation, or both?

        ii. Do members find learning aurally and through music notation conflicting, problematic or mutually reinforcing?

    (d) How do music majors experience informal music learning in UNCG Ukes?

        i. How do these experiences compare to their other musical experiences?

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

Data Collection: Rationale

This qualitative study was a single, unique case study (Yin, 2009). The unit of analysis for this case study was UNCG Ukes, which was a ukulele community group affiliated with the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). Yin (2009) noted that case study is appropriate when a "'how' or 'why' question is being asked about a contemporary set of events" (p. 13). The two research questions I asked were: (a) *why* are people motivated to participate in UNCG Ukes, and (b) *how* are participants of UNCG Ukes learning to make music?

Ukulele community groups have been emerging all over the world. They often meet in public spaces, such as music stores and coffee shops (Kruse, 2013; Meagher & Coleman, 2011). UNCG Ukes met on the UNCG campus in three locations: (a) room 154 of the music building, (b) room 217 of the music building, and (c) the Moran Commons, which is at the entrance of the Dining Hall and has a large open space with casual seating (see Appendix A). Yin noted that case study methodology is appropriate when trying to "understand a real-life phenomenon in depth" (2009, p. 18) where context is a key component to the phenomenon. The context of the group, which met on the campus of a university for one hour, once a week, and only during the semester, provided important and unique boundaries to this particular case.

The propositions of this study were to examine how informal music learning components as described by Lucy Green (2002, 2008) functioned in UNCG Ukes and how participants experienced informal music learning in UNCG Ukes. I collected and analyzed data based on Lucy Green's five components of informal music learning: (a) learners choose the music themselves, (b) the main way of learning music is by ear and not by music notation, (c) learning takes place alone, with peers, or in groups, (d) musical knowledge and skills are learned in a haphazard, non-sequential way, and (e) listening, performing, composing, improvising often happen simultaneously with an emphasis on creativity (Green, 2008).

Case Selection Process

During the summer of 2014, I had the opportunity to conduct research with a group called the Durham Ukulele Jam (DUJ). At the time of my participation, the DUJ had been meeting twice a month since 2008. This group met at a coffee shop affiliated with a church in Durham, North Carolina. The DUJ met twice a month for two hours each time and I was able to observe and participate in the group for four meetings over a two-month time span.

Using Qualtrics online survey software, I created and conducted a survey that was the pilot for the survey that I used for the current study. I considered a survey to be more appropriate than conducting interviews for three reasons. First, the meeting time of the group was from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and people tended to leave immediately after the session was over, which did not offer an opportunity for participants to be interviewed. Second, because the space that was used to gather (the coffee shop at a church) was

locked directly after the meeting time ended, there was no convenient place to talk. Third, I lived about an hour away from Durham and the only time I was there was to participate in the ukulele session. Using a survey allowed me to gain information from people in the group at their leisure. Ten out of approximately 20 participants (attendance varied from meeting to meeting) responded to the survey and their responses helped me to understand better how to develop the survey for the current study with UNCG Ukes. Also, I saw the benefit of using a survey for the current study, as participants did not come to sessions consistently. The survey allowed me to connect with people who could not attend the sessions regularly or did not have time to be interviewed.

During my participation with the DUJ, I noticed differences between that group and UNCG Ukes that helped me to choose UNCG Ukes as the focus of my current study. First, the DUJ was not a group that met in a classroom or institution. This in-school and out-of-school difference seemed to make the meetings less formal than UNCG Ukes meetings, which were held in a classroom of a school of music on a university campus. In the current study, I was interested in how informal music learning functioned in a formal setting and the setting of UNCG Ukes supported this line of inquiry. Second, the DUJ was an intergenerational music group and comprised of people with a variety of musical skills. Although this is a similarity between both groups, UNCG Ukes had a large presence of music education majors, who were of interest to me in the current study. I was especially interested in the perspectives of the music education majors in UNCG Ukes: how they experienced music learning in the context of the ukulele group, and how these experiences compared to their other musical experiences. I thought this information

would be informative to other music educators working with a similar population. I did not feel that I would get the same perspectives from participants in the DUJ. Although I learned a great deal from participating in the DUJ group, I felt that UNCG Ukes offered an interesting perspective on informal music learning because of the presence of some formal aspects that were not present in DUJ.

Another reason I chose UNCG Ukes as the focus of this case study was because I had access to the group. I had built relationships with the people who participated in the group because I had been participating in it since its inception in Fall Semester of 2013. I had also interviewed several participants for class assignments during my doctoral studies and thought those same participants might be willing to be interviewed again.

The combination of participants, from music education undergraduate students, UNCG faculty, non-music major undergraduate students, and community members from a large range of ages (15-73 years old) offered a unique sample of people from which to learn about informal music learning. By focusing on UNCG Ukes as the case study for this project, I was able to gain insight about informal music learning from people who had a variety of musical and life experiences.

Background of Context

In the Spring Semester of 2013, Dr. Sandra Teglas and I taught a class called Ukulele for Two, which was a class for parent-child pairs that taught music literacy through ukulele. The one-hour class met once a week for 13 weeks with the final meeting being an "informance," which was a performance where Sandra and I shared with the audience what students told us they learned during the class. The first informance, which

was open to the public, was mentioned in an article in the *Greensboro News & Record*, a local newspaper (Essenfeld, 2013). After the completion of the class and publication of the article, Sandra received a call from a community member who was interested in a ukulele class. Because of lack of time and staffing, we were unable to offer another class for adults only. However, we decided to start a ukulele community group instead. A community group is not a class, but a gathering of people who are interested in singing and playing ukulele together. It is more informal than a class, because of the absence of a curriculum, assignments, and a teacher. A group like this did not require Sandra and me to do things we normally would do for a class, such as develop lesson plans or a curriculum and give specific instruction. A community group allows participants to be more involved in decision-making as compared to a formal class. We called the group UNCG Ukes because it was affiliated with the university and the group focused on playing ukuleles.

In a ukulele community session, there may be a leader or leaders who guide the jam along and those leaders could change throughout the session and from session to session. Sandra and I acted as the leaders up to the time of the current study. We performed the actions of organizing the time and space of the meetings. We made the decision to use the book *The Daily Ukulele* by Liz and Jim Beloff (2010) as the source of learning tunes. This book is a collection of 365 songs from a variety of musical genres that are written in standard music notation, with chords letters and chord charts. We started binders of lead sheets, and organized performances for the group. However,

during the data collection period of the current study (March 16-May 14, 2015) I withdrew from my roles as leader and participant.

UNCG Ukes offered a unique context to examine informal music learning because of the presence of formal and informal elements. The physical space was formal in that the group met on the UNCG campus in a classroom of the music building. At the time of the current study, the leader of the group Dr. Sandra Teglas, was a part-time professor within the UNCG music education department and a full-time public school music educator. I was a PhD student in music education, and a former public school music teacher. The group was not a class, so Dr. Teglas and I worked toward giving guidance rather than direct instruction.

Description of the Case

At the time of the current study, UNCG Ukes was a recognized club at the University of North Carolina Greensboro (UNCG). Any UNCG student, staff or faculty member was welcome to participate in the club. University-recognized clubs had access to showcases where there were opportunities for recruitment as well as access to performance venues on campus. UNCG Ukes was open to community members as well. Any adult who had a ukulele and wanted to learn to sing and play ukulele with others was welcome to participate. Participants had different levels of prior musical experience or musical skills. Some participants had little to no prior experience, while others had advanced training, education and experience with music. There was no cost to participate and participants were not required to commit to the group for any length of time. Participants could come and go as interest or scheduling allowed.

Ten people participated in the current study. Some people attended only once, others came sporadically, some missed one or two sessions because of scheduling conflicts, and some came to every meeting. The majority of participants were female with only one male attending the club on a regular basis. This case study took place from March 16th - May 14th, 2015. During this period there were seven sessions of UNCG Ukes. The club met once a week on Monday evening from 7:30p.m. - 8:45 p.m. All sessions took place on the UNCG campus. Six sessions took place in the music building and one session at the Moran Commons.

UNCG Ukes was not a class. It could not be taken for credit and there were no formal assignments. However, all participants were required to have a ukulele and were encouraged to have the book *The Daily Ukulele* by Liz and Jim Beloff (2010). A set of ten binders was used that held a collection of lead sheets. Minimally, lead sheets contained the lyrics to a song and chord letters were marked where chords changed in the music. Some lead sheets also included chord charts, which are diagrams on how to finger the chord (see Appendix B). If a participant wanted to learn a particular song that was not included in *The Daily Ukulele* (2010), he or she was asked to find or create a lead sheet and copies were made for each binder.

Although there was no teacher of UNCG Ukes, Sandra was the coordinator of the group. It is important to mention that prior to the data collection period of the current study, I had also been a coordinator of this group. Sandra and I created the group together in fall of 2013. However, during the data collection period of this study (March 16 - May

14, 2015) I did not participate in the group sessions. I will discuss further the issue of my choice not to participate in the Researcher Role section of this chapter.

Physical Description of the Context

All seven sessions of UNCG Ukes took place on the UNCG campus. Five sessions occurred in the music building in room 154. This room was located on the first floor and was a secluded setting. It did not have windows. The walls were painted white, with sound panels located around the walls of the room. The room was furnished with music stands, chairs, a rolling whiteboard, and a piano (see Appendix A, Setting 1). Other equipment and supplies, such as music books and instruments, were brought in by participants.

One session took place in the Lecture hall, room 217, of the music building. This session followed the informance of the parent-child ukulele class, Ukulele for Two, which occurred during the hour preceding UNCG Ukes session. Because Sandra was at the informance it was more convenient for her to hold UNCG Ukes session in the same room. This room was large, with auditorium seating, such that the chairs were in tiered levels and fixed to the floor. The room was equipped with a technology workstation, which included a desktop computer, projector and sounds system. The room also included a few music stands, and piano (see Appendix A, Setting 2). The final session took place at the Moran Commons, which is on the entry level of the building that houses the main dining hall on the UNCG campus. This space had tables and chairs, which had been re-arranged to create a semi-circle for the participants of the group. It was busy at the time of the session, with people going in and out of the building, and up and down the

stairs to the dining hall. It had a large row of windows, tile floors and low ceilings (see Appendix A, Setting 3). This session followed the final exam performance of MUP 183: Beginning Ukulele, of which I was the instructor. UNCG Ukes group decided to play in this public space. It made sense to the group members to have their performance after the final exam of MUP 184 because I had already reserved the space for my class and had already moved the equipment UNCG Ukes group would need, such as music stands, ukulele bass, and amplifier.

Protocol for Participant Selection

During the first half of the spring semester of 2015 (January 12th-March 2nd, 2015), I participated in the group as I normally would. During that time, I explained that after Spring Break, I would be collecting data for my study on how the members of UNCG Ukes learned to make music. I encouraged questions about the project so that the participants might feel free to talk to me about it. I also mentioned that I would not be participating in the group beginning March 16 and through the remainder of the semester because I would be collecting data for the current study. I did this to be as transparent about my study as possible as well as to ease myself out of participating in the group. On March 16th, I asked people who were at the session if they would like to participate in the study. Each member I asked agreed and signed the IRB consent or assent forms. At each subsequent session, if a new person attended, I asked if he or she would be willing to participate in the study.

Sampling within the Case

The group being investigated for this case study was UNCG Ukes. The current study is an intrinsic case study (Stake 1995), in which I wanted to gain a deep understanding of a specific and unique case. In order to delve further into the case and gain a more detailed picture of the individuals who participated in UNCG Ukes, I sampled within the case by choosing specific participants to interview and survey. I did what Miles and Huberman (1994) referred to as "reputational case selection," in which participants were chosen based on the recommendation of an expert or "key informant" (p. 28). In this instance I was the key informant, having previously participated in the group and built connections with the participants before conducting the current study. By sampling within the case, I was able to narrow the focus of study, which add to the in-depth nature of the research.

I interviewed a total of six participants. Five of the participants, Dr. Sandra Teglas, Qanyu Phang, Sandy O'Briant, Shannon Neu, and Stephanie Sherrill had all participated in the group in previous semesters (before Spring 2015). These participants were able to give a historical account as well as a current account of their experiences within UNCG Ukes. I picked each person because I had some knowledge of his or her prior musical experiences and thought each person would offer a unique point of view. Sandra, who was considered the leader of the group, had a great deal of formal music experience, having completed degrees in music education, taught at the collegiate level for many years, and was an elementary public school music educator. Qanyu and Shannon were both music majors. They both had formal music experience, such as

participating in orchestra or band, and might be able to compare and contrast those experiences to UNCG Ukes. Stephanie was an undergraduate student who was majoring in nursing. Her perspective as a non-music major would be important, as she was not pursuing music as a career. Sandy was a retired elementary school teacher who had participated in music throughout her life, but minimally so. The sixth participant, Erin Hight, was a high school student who had previously participated in the Ukulele for Two class that Sandra and I had taught. Her insights were informative because she was also participating in a band class at her school. She gave unique insights on her perceptions of informal and formal music learning from the viewpoint of an adolescent. This group of people offered a diverse sample of perspectives because of age span (from age 15 to age 73), musical, and life experiences. Table 1 is a summary of participant demographics and background.

Table 1. Participant Demographics and Background

Participant	Gender	Age	Background
Jeri Donnelly	female	62	community member
Sarah Gribbin	female	not shared	community member
Erin Haley	female	not shared	undergraduate music education major
Erin Hight	female	15	high school student
Andy McGeagh	androgynous	20	undergraduate double major in music education and psychology
Shannon Neu	female	21	undergraduate music education major
Sandy O'Briant	female	73	community member; retired elementary school teacher
Qanyu Phang	male	21	undergraduate music studies major
Stephanie Sherrill	female	21	undergraduate nursing major
Sandra Teglas	female	49	group leader; elementary music educator; employed by UNCG in music research department

The second way in which I sampled within the case was by using the Qualtrics survey. The survey allowed me to connect with people who either did not have time for an interview or who may not have returned frequently. In this way, I sampled from people who were inconsistent or transient participants. The survey subsequently served another purpose that I had not anticipated at the start of the study. Everyone who

participated in the study was welcomed to complete the survey, even if they were interviewed, which several of the participants did. For participants who were interviewed, the survey responses gave me another way to cross-reference what was said in interviews and observations, which added to the rigor of the study.

Researcher Role/Position

Researcher role/position is something I have thought about a great deal during the planning, implementing, and analysis phases of the current study. While I was taking a case study methodology course, my instructor mentioned that when conducting case study research, the researcher cannot participate in the case. The researcher should interfere as little as possible with what is happening in the case study. Because I had been so deeply embedded in UNCG Ukes, I had to think creatively about how I would solve the problem of not being able to participate in the group while collecting data. As I mentioned earlier in the chapter, I solved this problem by talking with the members of UNCG Ukes weeks before I began collecting data to let them know that I would not be participating in the group for the second half of the semester. This gave them time to ask questions about the study as well as get used to the idea that I would be switching into an observation role, not a participation role. I also did this to mentally prepare myself to shift both my focus and my role within the group.

I had three researcher roles during this study: (a) teacher, (b) evaluator and (c) interpreter (Stake, 1995). I had the teacher role because I was interested in informing the music education community about informal music learning within a ukulele jam group. I had the role of the evaluator because I was evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the

case. Finally, I had the role of interpreter because I recognized a puzzlement in informal music learning in the context of UNCG Ukes which had not be investigated by anyone else. I was the primary researcher interpreting the study data. After interpreting it, I had to find a way to explain what I observed to others.

Role of Dr. Sandra Teglas

Dr. Sandra Teglas has played two roles in the current study, and at this point, it is important to discuss those roles. Sandra acted as a participant in the current study and a member of the dissertation committee. Sandra and I co-created UNCG Ukes in the Fall of 2013 and both acted as organizers and leaders within the group. For several reasons, Sandra took a more prominent role in the group. First, she had an outgoing and charismatic personality, whereas mine tended to be more reserved and quiet. During sessions, Sandra would freely tell stories and share ideas, whereas I did so less often. Second, Sandra was employed by the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and had greater privilege and access to facilities and resources. Thirdly, she had worked at UNCG for 12 years, had contact with nearly all undergraduate and graduate students, and was able to encourage many to participate in UNCG Ukes. Finally, Sandra was a key informant to this case study because she knew the history of how the group was formed, how it developed, and the people who participated. To get a full picture of what motivated participants to be a part of UNCG Ukes, and how they learned in relationship to informal music learning, it was imperative that Sandra participate in the current study.

When UNCG Ukes was formed (fall of 2013), we had known each other for one year. She was the Program Coordinator for the Music Research Institute, and I was a

graduate student within the music education department. My relationship with her was one of mentor and student. Along with music education faculty at UNCG, she helped me in my coursework and helped me learn about becoming a researcher. When the time came for me to pick my committee members for this dissertation, I had come to value her feedback and insights regarding research and music education. Due to her knowledge of research and music education, I felt that her involvement with the current study would be an asset. In addition, Sandra was an expert in ukulele music education as well as ukulele in popular culture, and I knew her skills and knowledge would be of great benefit to me in the current study.

Data Collection: Methods

Between January 12th and March 2nd, I participated in the group as I had in the past and informed the group of the study I was planning. During this period, I decreased my leadership role in order to remove myself gradually from being an active member of the group. I thought this process caused less of a disruption to the relationships within the group and in how the group functioned than if I had stopped participating abruptly. During this time period, I gained approval from the UNCG Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the current study.

From March 16th, 2015 to May 14th, 2015 data were collected. I collected data in five ways: (a) observations (b) interviews, (c) Qualtrics survey, (d) field notes and (e) artifacts (i.e., photos, lead sheets). I developed an observation protocol (see Appendix B) that I used for each observation. I created the protocol as an assignment for the course TED 730: Qualitative Research Methods, which I took in the Spring of 2014. I piloted

the Observation Protocol during my observations of the Durham Ukulele Jam (DUJ). After using it with the DUJ, I edited it and used it for the current study.

I observed UNCG Ukes during seven sessions on March 16th, 23rd, 30th, April 13th, 20th, 27th, and May 1st of 2015. I took field notes and video recorded each session with a Zoom Q2 HD Handy Video Recorder. During observation #1, I observed the group in a general way, and while observing I asked myself the broad question "What is going on here?" Using this broad question allowed me the opportunity to observe without intent and with an open-mind, which could provide interesting insights. In observations #2 through #6, I focused on a one of the five components of informal music learning. In the final observation, I filled in any gaps from previous observations. I looked at the group as a whole, returning to the question from the first observation: "What is going on here?" I adjusted observations and field notes based on preceding observations, field notes, interviews and responses to any Qualtrics surveys I had read during data collection. Table 2 shows the observation timeline and focus of each observation.

Table 2. Timeline and Focus of UNCG Ukes Observations

Observation	Date	Observation Focus
1	March 16, 2015	Ask the general question: "What is going on?"
2	March 23, 2015	Green Informal Music Learning Component #1: Informal learning always starts with music which the learners choose for themselves
3	March 30, 2015	Green Informal Music Learning Component #2: The main method of skill acquisition in the informal realm involves copying recordings by ear
4	April 13, 2015	Green Informal Music Learning Component #3: Informal learning takes place alone as well as alongside friends, through self-directed learning, peer-directed learning and group learning
5	April 20, 2015	Green Informal Music Learning Component #4: Skills and knowledge in the informal realm---tend to be assimilated in haphazard, idiosyncratic and holistic ways
6	April 27, 2015	Green Informal Music Learning Component # 5: Informal approaches usually involve a deep integration of listening, performing, improvising and composing through the learning process, with an emphasis on personal creativity
7	May 1, 2015	Revisiting a general overview of the group and filling in missing details from previous observations

I developed an Interview protocol (see Appendix C) for Interview #1. The protocol for Interview #1 went through a development and refining process. I first developed it in the course TED 730: Qualitative Research Methods, where it was reviewed by peers and the instructor of the course. I further developed and piloted the interview protocol in ERM 750: Case Study Methods in Educational Research, a second course I took in the fall of 2014. I conducted the interview with two people: an undergraduate music major and a music education faculty member. Each question

focused on a research question, issue question, or demographic information. I noted how each participant responded to each question. I also asked them for their feedback to each question. I asked: Was the question clear? Did you know what I was asking? How would you change the question to make it clearer? The protocol was also reviewed by the instructor of the course. Based on the feedback from the participants and course instructor, I finalized the questions for Interview Protocol #1 and used it for the current study.

Between March 23rd, 2015 and April 10th, 2015, I conducted the first round of interviews with six participants of UNCG Ukes. Between April 13th and May 14th, I conducted the second round of interviews with the same six participants. For the purposes of transcription, I audio recorded all of the interviews with the Zoom camera (using the audio only feature), as well as the iPhone (as a back up device). I also took notes during the interview as needed.

The interview protocol for Interview #2 was based on the information I gathered in my observations and responses to questions from Interview #1. After I conducted the first round of interviews, I listened to the interview and took notes about what the participant said. I developed follow-up questions I wanted to ask that person or the entire group of people I was interviewing. This allowed me to ask similar questions in each interview to see if the person gave the same or a different answer each time. This is a process of member checking, which helps to clarify what the person means. I also revisited my research questions to make sure that I had asked everything that I could

think of that was relevant to the study. If I felt something was missing, I included an interview question about it in the second interview round.

On March 16th, I activated the Qualtrics Survey (see Appendix D) and at each session, announced its availability. I sent out an e-mail and link to the Qualtrics Survey to anyone who had given me their e-mail address and was part of UNCG Ukes during Fall semester 2014 or Spring semester 2015. Some participants had indicated through verbal or e-mail correspondence that they wanted to be notified about group announcements as they were still interested in returning to the sessions. Some people who completed the survey were unable attend any sessions but had participated during Fall 2014 and had shown interest in returning during the Spring semester 2015. I created the survey based on the interview protocol and the survey I had created for the Durham Ukulele Jam participants. The survey was a way to connect to participants who did not want to be interviewed, but wanted to participate, or that I did not have time to interview. Table 3 shows the Interview and Survey timeline for the study.

Table 3. Interview and Survey Timeline

Data Collection Type	Date of Collection
Interview Round 1	March 23- April 10th, 2015
Interview Round 2	April 13th - May 14, 2015
Qualtrics Survey	Active between March 16-May 14, 2015

Before and after sessions, I created memos. Memoing is described by Maxwell (2013) as "writing that a researcher does in relationship to the research other than actual field notes transcription, or coding" and it "facilitates reflection and analytic insight" (p. 19-20). Memoing gave me a chance to prepare for observations and reflect on them after they were completed.

On a periodic basis, I memoed and collected artifacts throughout the data collection time period. Using an iPhone 5c, I took pictures of three of the sessions. I collected lead sheets (Appendix E) from the binder and the *Daily Ukulele* book that were used during the session. I made drawings of the space in which the sessions took place. At the beginning of the study, I did not think I needed to take photos because I was video recording all of the sessions and could refer to the video to remember the setting. However, as the study commenced, I realized that photos would be useful when presenting information to others, such as on a poster or in an article. Therefore, I took photos during three sessions (see Appendix A).

Analysis

To analyze data from the observations, interviews, Qualtrics survey, and memos, I used the NVivo software program for qualitative data analyses (2014). This helped me organize the information into themes and look across data points for connections, patterns, and divergent or emergent themes. I coded the data by using *a priori* and emergent themes. The *a priori* themes were based on Lucy Green's five components of informal music learning (2002, 2008).

Validity

To help ensure validity, I conducted member checks with participants. This is most evident during the interview process. Asking participants to review or re-state their answer to a question helped me to ensure that I was representing what they wanted to say correctly. I used triangulation between three or more data points to support any conclusions or findings I made. For example, I checked as to whether a theme was represented in an interview, survey, and observation. I was involved in long-term data collection (nine weeks) which gave me ample to time to "find good moments to reveal the unique complexity of the case" (Stake, 1995, p. 63) and to gain a comprehensive picture of the case.

Strengths and Limitations

Being an insider to the group was a strength and limitation of this study. It was a strength because I had access to the group and had already built relationships with many of the participants. Being an insider gave me access to information about the group such as how it was formed, the philosophy on which it was established, and how it has developed over time. This is also a weakness because my long-term involvement and influence may have caused me to have biases, some that I may have been aware of and some I may not have been conscious of. Throughout the study, I worked toward being transparent about any bias I may have uncovered through my own reflections, memos, and through the member check process.

Being a unique case study is both a strength and limitation of the case. Because the case was unique, readers of the report may have difficulty identifying or extract

meaning from it to apply to their own situations. If the case were more common, readers might be able to connect to the information more easily. Being a unique case study is also a strength because this case study gives readers a unique view into informal music learning in a ukulele group in a formal setting. Should readers want to create such a group, they could create it based upon this model.

Another strength of the study is that the findings might give insight to music educators regarding informal music learning and specifically how music education majors experience informal music learning. This could give music teacher educators some ideas on how they can incorporate the findings or procedures of this case into their own teaching situations.

Case study research is not generalizable to the larger population. I mention it here because some readers might feel that this is a limitation. However, Stake states that "the real business of case study is particularization, not generalization" and "the emphasis is on uniqueness" (1995, p. 8). The purpose of this project was to reach a better understanding of the experiences of UNCG Ukes participants, particularly because of the unique context. I hope that readers of the current study are able to find a degree of transferability that may apply to their context. Transferability is the extent to which findings of one study or context can be applicable to another setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As the researcher of the current study, I can only describe the setting I studied, but readers will know their unique contexts. Thus, transferability of the current study must be determined by the readers.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The findings from the current study are organized into three sections: (a) themes related to the research questions of the current study: formal and informal music learning and motivations to attend UNCG Ukes, (b) *a priori* themes based on the five components of informal music learning as outlined by Lucy Green (2002, 2008), and (c) emergent themes, which are themes that have risen out of this case study. For the sake of clarity, I would like to mention that I refer to myself in the following chapter as "Jackie", as that is the nickname I use in my daily life.

Themes Based on Research Questions

This section focuses on themes that directly relate to the research questions of this study, which were: (a) what motivates people to participate in UNCG Ukes? and (b) how are participants learning to make music, formally or informally, in UNCG Ukes?

Motivation to Participate

In the current study, I was interested in what motivated people to participate in UNCG Ukes. Firstly, I was interested in why people initially wanted to attend. What motivated them to start coming to the ukulele group? When I asked Sandra, the organizer and recognized leader of the group, why she started the group she said that after the newspaper article was published in the local newspaper, she got requests from community members for a group for adults. Sandy was one of the community members

that responded to the article and called Sandra to inquire about a class for adults. Those inquiries were what initially sparked the idea to start UNCG Ukes:

> **Sandra:** I felt that there were people in the community and students in the UNCG community who wanted to have a group with which to play. I just wanted to start it and have it open to ages, basically, 13-ish, teenager through older adults. I wanted it to be a place that anybody felt like they could come regardless, anywhere in that age group. So, teenager to 80 years old and they would feel like they could come and they could learn.

Participants were motivated to attend and to continue to attend because they felt the group would help motivate them to improve their musical skills and to keep playing:

> **Jackie:** Why do you think you'll come back?
>
> **Erin Hight:** Cause I learn more every time I come and I don't want to stop playing the ukulele because I love it so much.
>
> **Stephanie:** I think it's nice to have the club because it kind of makes sure I don't fall out of music all together. Cause I don't really want to do that.

The fun participants had while they were with the group in a session was motivation to return, as can be seen by these statements from Sandra and Shannon:

> **Sandra:** I continue because of the group. I do like being a part of a group that enjoys each other. And, to have fun that's extra-musical. We're here because of the music, because of the musical aspects, because it's a musical group. But, we have fun and talk and tell stories and enjoy each other that are extra-musical parts of it that are very enjoyable.
>
> **Shannon:** It's really fun. And it's rewarding, too. I feel like I learn a lot. And it's fun because it doesn't have the added pressure of being in a band or chamber group. I feel like it's also helped me develop my aural skills, actually. Like sight singing especally and hearing different chord progressions.

Participants expressed being motivated to return because they felt that other participants in the group had more musical experience, specifically with the ukulele. They felt inspired by others to make musical progress of their own:

> **Sandy:** It's kind of like being a civilian in a group of actors or something. You're learning to act and they're all professionals. Although I know these are kids and they may not think of themselves in that respect, but I did. I do.

The factors that motivated participants to attend the group were to continue to develop their musical skills and to socialize with other people who are doing the same. Some felt a responsibility to the group to continue to attend, others felt they were learning and making musical progress, and finally some came for the fun and relaxation they experienced during sessions.

How Do Participants Learn Music, Formally or Informally, in UNCG Ukes?

Because UNCG Ukes was a unique group and setting, I was interested in how the participants defined the overall structure of UNCG Ukes in terms of formal, informal, or some blend of the two. I was curious about how participants perceived the concepts of formal and informal and how they described them. During data collection, I asked participants whether they thought UNCG Ukes group was formal, informal, or some combination of those two concepts. I did not define or explain what I thought those terms meant. I asked them to tell me why they thought what they did. The participants in this study had a wide variety of musical experiences with which to think about and compare their experience in UNCG Ukes. Shannon, Sandra, Erin Hight, Erin Haley, Andy, Qanyu, and Stephanie had participated in an orchestra or band at some point in their lives.

Stephanie had also been involved in creating music with a group of friends, which she referred to as the "Gamer Orchestra," outside of UNCG Ukes. Sandy had participated in a hand bell choir, took piano lessons as a child, and her mother enjoyed listening to and playing music in the home. The variety of musical and personal backgrounds of the participants in the group had the potential to provide important insights on how formal and informal music learning are defined and what qualities make a context formal or informal. Sometimes these two concepts were described in relationship to other music experiences they had in their past.

Participants described the setting of the sessions as being formal. The group met on the campus of UNCG in the music building, which participants expressed was a formal place. The space of the session had items that were typically associated with a formal classroom, such as chairs and music stands. The chairs and stands were always arranged in a semi-circle shape and because they were always set up in the same way, participants felt that was an indication of a formalized setting. That there was a set time to meet, from 7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., added another level of formality to the sessions. The sessions were described as having a set routine which was that the songs were chosen, participants had some time to talk about and learn or review how to play the tune, and then play through the song together as a group. A similar process was repeated for each tune that was played in a session. Sessions often, but not always, ended with the song "Don't Worry, Be Happy" by Bobby McFerrin, which was viewed as a formalized tradition by participants.

Participants stated that UNCG Ukes was informal because, as Stephanie described it, they had freedom of choice. Participants felt they had control over what was played and how they played it. They felt they had the opportunity to choose the songs that were played, rather than a director or conductor. They also expressed being able to play those songs in a way they preferred, such as choosing a strumming pattern they thought sounded good, or create a harmony that they felt fit the tune.

Another aspect that added to the informal nature of the group was how people felt they could behave in the setting. Erin Hight expressed how she felt she, and others in the group, had the freedom to be themselves:

> **Erin Hight:** I think we can just come and act how we are and be yourself.
>
> **Jackie:** Is that different in a formal setting?
>
> **Erin Hight:** Yeah . . . you're more judged.

Sandy described her ability to speak at-will in sessions:

> **Sandy:** We can speak our mind. Voice an opinion and talk. Not like at bridge! You can't say a word if someone's playing! [In UNCG Ukes] If you have something that reminds you of something, you want to speak your mind about it. Or we just talk in general about music. You don't feel like you are in a formal classroom, where you'd have to take turns.

Participants expressed that UNCG Ukes was informal, because the environment felt relaxed. Here are some ways in which participants expressed that the environment was relaxed:

Andy: Making mistakes in this group is not looked down upon, but is rather somewhat embraced.

Shannon: It is informal because the atmosphere is relaxed as we aren't on any kind of strict schedule. We also don't worry about anything being perfect. No one is expected to be able to play on the same level, either. We are encouraged to play what we can and learn from our mistakes.

Jeri: Informal! That is what I love about them. It is a drag to be around people who take themselves seriously. Dr. Teglas did not judge anyone and was great fun to be around and brought out the fun loving side of even the shy people in the group.

Sarah: Definitely informal. Very relaxed but group leader does provide guidance to keep players focused.

The participants of UNCG Ukes indicated that this group had formal and informal aspects. The formal aspects related to the physical space, such as the availability of chairs and the meeting space within the music building. The informal aspects of the group related to the group expectations of enjoying music making rather than creating a polished, finished, perfect product. Members also emphasized freedom of musical and personal choice, which added to the informal nature of the group.

A Priori Themes

In this section, I will present the findings that align with the *a priori* themes I identified using the five components of informal music learning that were outlined by Lucy Green (2002, 2008). Each subheading states the informal music learning component and is followed by a discussion of how that component functioned within the context of UNCG Ukes.

Informal Learning Always Starts with Music the Learners Choose for Themselves

UNCG Ukes did not have a set curriculum or teacher that chose music to be learned beforehand. The people who attended the session chose the songs that were played. The pool of song choices was limited by what was in the *Daily Ukulele* and lead sheet binder, or a new tune that someone brought to the session. Stephanie, an undergraduate nursing major, explained it in the following way:

> We get to pick what we want to play. With orchestras they are always like, this is what we're going to practice. And then we're going to practice this specific part over and over again. But, you know we play through a song and if we want to play through it again we can. But, if we don't, then we don't. So, I guess freedom of choice.

Sandra Teglas, the organizer of the group and an elementary music teacher, was the person who most often picked tunes. She encouraged others to pick songs and sometimes asked them directly what they would like to play. Some participants were reluctant to choose, others chose but it took some time to reach a decision, and others did not choose at all during a session. The reasoning behind how a participant chose a song was based on two main factors. One factor was that choosers picked a tune that they liked but also thought the group would be successful at playing based on the difficulty level of the song and the abilities of the people who attended the session. Shannon, an undergraduate music education major, described her process of choosing songs:

> I think about songs that I like, that I know, but also that are not too hard, especially if we have new people. It [playing hard songs] can be frustrating for new people and discouraging.

Another reason participants chose tunes was based on learning or teaching others about a new tune. Some participants expressed that a benefit of attending the group was to learn new tunes, as Shannon explained:

> **Jackie:** If they [songs] are not familiar to you, does that matter? Does it take away from your experience in any way?
>
> **Shannon:** No, it kind of adds to it, cause I learn a new song.

Participants expressed an easygoing attitude towards the songs that were chosen by others in the group. Qanyu, an undergraduate music studies major who was interested in a profession in musical instrument repair, described it as "going with the flow with anything." Participants expressed a willingness to learn new tunes and were willing to try any tune, as long as they felt it was within the playing abilities of the group. This component of informal music learning, that musicians choose songs based on their preference, happens in UNCG Ukes. However, it was not the most important reason to choose a song. Participants were sensitive and aware of the needs and abilities of others within the group and ultimately chose songs based on that information.

The Main Method of Skill-Acquisition in the Informal Realm Involves Copying Recordings by Ear

The participants in this study stressed that the most important way to learn a tune was learning aurally, or by ear. This was done by using an audio recording, a YouTube video, or by listening to someone else during a session or some combination of all of these avenues. Sandra expressed her views of the importance of aural learning in the context of UNCG Ukes:

Sandra: Being in this group has made available a more aural form of learning music than anything else I've done in music studies. Well, this group and Old Time [music of the Old Time tradition]. Because everything else I've done in music studies is really focused on music notation and reading music notation. So, this opens doors to aural learning which is what music really is.
Jackie: So how important is listening to recordings in how you learn music?

Sandra: Extremely

Qanyu explained the importance of learning music by ear and how doing that in UNCG Ukes is different from other music learning contexts he has experienced:

Qanyu: I think it's way easier to listen.

Jackie: Rather than looking at anything?

Qanyu: Yea. I think it's just because I pick it up fairly quickly.

Jackie: Do you do that in any other context?

Qanyu: [long pause] Less so in the School of Music (laughs)

Jackie: But more outside of it?

Qanyu: Yeah.

Qanyu was referring to how he had learned music within the music courses at the UNCG School of Music and that learning music aurally was not as common in that context. Erin Hight, a high school student who played clarinet in her band program, conveyed why learning music aurally was most beneficial to her within the context of the ukulele group:

I think it [listening] is very important because sometimes I have trouble catching on the beat if I just look at a piece of music. But, it helps me more to hear it first than to play it. But, sometimes a lot of people in the group know how to play it so I kinda catch on with the beat.

Stephanie described her sophisticated process of learning music by ear in the context of the ukulele group:

> **Stephanie:** I like to put 7th chords in stuff because it's like a transition to another chord. Like from C7 to F or G7 to C. Those are 5th. I don't know how to describe that. When I feel like the chords I am coming up with sound too boring, I can figure out what to put in between them to sound more interesting. You know something other than a major or minor, like a 7th or diminished.
>
> **Jackie:** Yeah. And you do that by ear mainly? Without a lead sheet of any kind?
>
> **Stephanie:** Yeah, I do that by ear. Sometimes I use my piano to help.

Recordings served to inform participants about strumming, harmony, arranging and style. Sandy, a retired elementary school teacher and community member, described an experience she had using different recordings to help her find the style of a tune she preferred:

> **Sandy:** Last night, I couldn't sleep. I spent a long time listening to An AffairtoRemember, from the movie with Cary Grant and Debra Kerr. I listened to Josh Grobin, which I didn't particularly - it didn't thrill me. The pianist that played it originally on the soundtrack - wonderful. And Vic Damone sang it in there. Well, I've decided the piano, just the piano was my favorite. Nat King Cole, I listened to him, I liked him the best as far as the singing in the ones I listened to.
>
> **Jackie:** You think that helps you learn about the music? Those recordings?
>
> **Sandy:** Right, it really did.

While in a session, the most common way of learning aurally was listening to others within the group and doing what they did. Occasionally, participants used smartphones to retrieve a recording or video of the song to share with the group. This was not done often because the room in which the session most often took place did not have

a computer or sound system. In addition, wireless reception was minimal in the space so retrieving a recording was slow and time consuming.

Although aural learning was the most important way participants expressed learning a tune, lead sheets and music notation were also important and often used in conjunction with aural methods, as described by Sandy and another participant, Andy, an undergraduate music education major:

> **Sandy:** I'd have to have both. I probably would like to hear it first. I actually prefer a lot of different ways.
>
> **Andy:** I prefer using a combination. Listening to recordings makes it easier to know if I am playing chords correctly and the lead sheets typically have the chords spelled out for me so I can visualize what is supposed to be played.

In UNCG Ukes, lead sheets and traditional music notation were both used along with aural learning. Those that already read music, such as music students, were comfortable learning new tunes using traditional music notation. However, a combination approach to learning songs in this group was preferred. The combination approach was to listen to the song, either through a recording, video, or listening to someone in the group, while using some sort of visual representation of the music, such as a lead sheet or traditional music notation.

Informal Learning Takes Place Alone as well as Alongside Friends, through Self-Directed Peer Learning, Peer-Directed Learning and Group Learning

The participants of the current study stated that they preferred to learn as part of the group. One reason was to gain new ideas, insights or perspectives on how to play a tune, as explained by Shannon and Erin Hight:

> **Shannon:** I think learning the songs, just in general, is better with the group because we can bounce ideas off each one other about the musicality of it. Like, "do you want to repeat this part or go back to this?"
>
> **Erin Hight:** I just think it's better if you learn with others. I think I learn more and getting to know what everybody else knows also. So, you kind of associate with them.

Sandra, who had previous musical experience as a trumpet player and held three degrees in music education, shared how her experiences in UNCG Ukes influenced her views on learning music alone and in a group:

> You know what? Before this group, I would tell you I would be fine to just play and sing on my own. But after experiencing this group, and especially the harmony and the different ideas for accompaniments or strums, I really do prefer to learn songs with the group so I can hear what others' ideas are. But other people are better at it than I, so it's more fun to learn from somebody that's better than I at the whatever.

The sentiment of preferring to learn from others rather than alone was echoed by Sarah, a community member, and Andy:

> **Sarah:** Yes, I prefer to learn with the group. I learn better that way and it is lots more fun.
>
> **Andy:** I love being a part of this group and I really love that it isn't mandatory. Having a group of people with which to play music in a relaxed setting reminds me why I chose music as my future career. It is often hard and stressful to be a music student and it can sometimes become more of a chore than something enjoyable. However, having this group is very fun and enjoyable, regardless of the level of music studies one may have had in the past or is receiving at the present time.

As much as learning and playing with the group was important to participants and generally their preference, playing alone was still something they mentioned doing,

whether it was to practice a difficult tune, prepare a tune before bringing it to the group, or working on basic playing skills. Sandra explained how playing alone could also be an important and fun part of learning:

> **Sandra:** I just say, look, I'm going to learn this song and I take my ukulele down to the park while the dog runs around and I just practice my song over and over and over and sing to the birds and the squirrels.

Shannon expressed how playing in the group setting could be a motivator to play alone or with a smaller group:

> **Shannon:** Yeah, I mean, playing in a group of people encourages individuals to learn stuff on their own, I would think. At least it does for me.
>
> **Jackie:** How so?
>
> **Shannon:** Well, if I get frustrated with playing a song in ukulele club, I'll go back and practice it with Stephanie.

Stephanie shared that she is happy to play alone, but that the group setting offered more fun:

> I'm fine doing it on my own cause that's what I've mostly been doing. But, with people can be fun. More fun than just by myself. And then I can get more perspective on how we should play it.

Participants felt they held different levels of friendships within the group. For example, Shannon and Stephanie were roommates, while others did not socialize outside of the ukulele sessions. During observations, I noticed group members often told stories, joked, and laughed between playing tunes. The following dialogue that I observed at a

session between Sandra and Qanyu is an example of the sense of fellowship between participants. It is also an example of how mistakes and fumbling were embraced as part of the learning experience:

> **Sandra:** All right. "Help!" [by The Beatles]. They start again.
> They try again, but fumble along.
>
> **Qanyu:** We can do a different song!
>
> **Sandra:** I think we need to practice this one ourselves.
>
> **Qanyu:** I was just throwing it out there. I just wanted to see if you guys knew it.
>
> **Sandra:** We threw it out all right!

Group and peer learning happened constantly during UNCG Ukes sessions. Whether someone was watching another person play a chord, was directly asking a question to someone in the group, or listening to a strumming pattern, participants learned by observing each other. Music learning was made more enjoyable due to the feeling of fellowship between participants during sessions.

Skills and Knowledge in the Informal Realm. . . .Tend to be Assimilated in Haphazard, Idiosyncratic and Holistic Ways

During my fifth observation of the group, I witnessed the following exchange that exemplifies the way the group interacted when trying to learn how a song should be played:

> They each strum and play through it on their own at the same time.
>
> **Sandra:** What's that strum pattern?

> No one speaks, but Sandy and Sandra play through it.
>
> Sandra says to Erin Haley [who wasn't playing]: You see that strum pattern there
>
> **Erin Haley:** “Yeah” and picks up her uke and starts to play. “I have no idea” But, she tries to play.
>
> **Sandra:** The ups and downs don't match. Oh well. Play the intro and start. About that tempo? Is that good?

This scenario showed how the group members were comfortable trying something new while in the setting of the ukulele session. It also showed an "in-the-moment" approach to figuring out how to learn to play a tune, specifically the strumming pattern and the tempo. They had not rehearsed it previously and each person was at a different point of understanding how to play it. This was a common occurrence in sessions, as instruction was not planned and people are learning as they participate.

When I asked participants whether they thought the way learning happened in the group was haphazard and holistic or linear and sequenced or some combination of both, the majority response was that it was haphazard and holistic. Here is an example of how Sandra described learning a tune on her own for the group:

> I listen to a YouTube, something on YouTube of somebody singing this song or playing this song. In one case, it came from a movie first. And then I just looked it up on YouTube to listen to it. Multiple times. And then, I look it up on any kind of tabs, although they’re not really tabs they're just lyric-lead sheets. And I look that up, import it and then clean it up so we can have something that's accurate. And then I take it a step further than just learning the song to making sure it's in some kind of format, usually Word, that's presentable to everybody. And accurate so that we can play it and it sounds good and sounds like it's supposed to.

Erin Hight described her perspective of how learning occurs in UNCG Ukes as compared to her band class in school:

> It's not a sequence. You learn and catch on [referring to UNCG Ukes]. I think in band class he [band director] more attacks the problem and then he focuses on different sections and the ukulele class its more just all around.

This viewpoint was shared among other participants, as can be read in Shannon's description of learning at her own pace:

> We kind of get thrown into it, but we're also encouraged to learn songs at our own pace. So if someone comes in on a random day in the middle of the semester and we have a song that has 10 different chords. I know Dr. Teglas [Sandra] always mentions that they can just play whichever chords they're comfortable with and it doesn't have to be perfect. So, it's kind of up to us, I guess, how fast we learn . . . we can play it at our comfort level. And push ourselves when we're ready.

Sandy expressed the same idea and that this approach had developed over time:

> **Jackie:** Do you feel like when you come to the group, ok, we do this thing and it's step by step, or is it-
>
> **Sandy:** No, it's not that way at all. It was that way more in the beginning. But, no, I would say it just kind of pick what you like and we'll just try to get through it[laughs].

Sandra explained learning in the context of UNCG Ukes as follows:

> Well, I do not think it's orderly unless someone asks a direct question and they receive direct instruction. Other than that it is, it is, at the time that the learner needs it. Yes, it's when the learner needs it. And sometimes they don't ask the question. They look around and watch. Sometimes they're, they don't really ask so they look around and watch and I think they get answers to some of their questions.

Sandra mentioned that there could be direct instruction, where someone specifically showed another person how to do something, at some points such as how to play a chord or do a strum pattern. But most of the time people looked to each other for what was needed when they need it and it was not planned ahead of time. Learning in a haphazard way was seen as an enjoyable and useful approach:

> **Sandy:** Because you are throwing things out but it may not necessarily be what you need to work on. It might be what you need to work on for that song. I don't know it's worked for me!
>
> **Stephanie:** It's not very linear at all, which is fine with me. I kind of like disorder.

Overall, participants express that learning took place in a haphazard, non-linear way and that this approach was enjoyable and functioned for learning to play music within the context of UNCG Ukes. Because participants were learning together in a group setting over multiple sessions, it added to the overall camaraderie and feeling of fellowship between group participants.

Informal Approaches Usually Involve a Deep Integration of Listening, Performing, Improvising and Composing through the Learning Process with an Emphasis on Personal Creativity

The deep integration of listening, performing, improvising, and composing through the learning process was apparent in UNCG Ukes and was referred to most often by using the umbrella term “creativity”. Creativity was used interchangeably to describe improvisation, composition, and arranging and was described by Qanyu:

Jackie: Do you ever feel like when you participate in the group that you either are composing something, arranging something, or creating something?

Qanyu: I think we're constantly creating something.

Jackie: How so?

Qanyu: Music, and just like a comfortable environment for everyone.

Qanyu's response implies that in addition to the process of musical creativity, the social environment within UNCG Ukes was accepting of the creative process. The social environment of UNCG Ukes was one were the participants felt comfortable expressing their musical and non-musical thoughts and ideas. Participants felt less negative judgments in UNCG Ukes as compared to other musical experiences they had, which encouraged them to voice their creative musical ideas. The comfortable social environment helped to promote the process of creativity through music.

An example of how the group worked collaboratively to create can be seen in the following dialogue with Shannon in relation to arranging an intro to a song:

Shannon: When we pick and choose what parts we play, how we want it in the piece. Like, do we want to fade out or do we want to repeat this section again? Definitely, and also how we started.

Jackie: The intro?

Shannon: Yeah, intro.

Jackie: Do you ever feel like there is any creating that happens?

Shannon: Yeah. My answer is still kind of the same as the composition one.

Harmony was the most mentioned way of creating within UNCG Ukes. Creating harmony in the singing parts or creating a strumming pattern was the way participants viewed improvising and composing:

> **Sandra:** Yes. Any time I do harmony with my voice I am. Yes, any time I decide, well every time you decide on a strum that you think fits the song, you're making a musical decision and you're being creative. Because for one, nobody says this is the way you have to do it. Nobody says you have to do this particular strum pattern this way. You just kind of get close to it or somebody asks and they copy or they don't ask and they copy. It eventually comes together. Composing . . . no. Arranging, yes. Now, by arranging I don't necessarily mean get in there and work with "you do this pitch and you do the other pitch and change it," you know. But arranging the structure and form of the tune. Every once in a while we say, "Well, I don't like that chord, we're going to change this chord." We do that.

The following was a scenario I observed in a session that represents how the group often discussed arranging and made musical decisions together in the moment. The participants were working on a song called "La Vie en Rose" by Édith Piaf, which was originally brought to the group by Stephanie. The group members often refered to the song as "Stephanie's Song" because she brought it to the group, but also because she performed the song in a style that the group members tried to duplicate.

> **Sandra:** "Ok, what's the arrangement for this? Let's just say Stephanie's not here [referring to the upcoming performance]." She looks at Sandy when she says this.
>
> **Sandy:** [laughs] We could all sing it.
>
> **Sandra:** Two times through?
>
> **Sandy:** Ok.
>
> **Sandra:** Ok
>
> **Sandy:** It's too bad we don't know French. That would be so pretty.

Sandra: I know.

Erin Haley tries to say some of the French words

Sandra: "Sounds like Spanish/French to me."

Everyone laughs. Sandy starts singing and laughing in "French" and Erin does too.

Sandra tries to sing and says "If I listen to it enough. Ok, lets' stick to English, we won't butcher that too badly."

In this situation, the song was being discussed and members were making musical decisions on how the song would be played. These decisions may have only lasted as long as one play-through of the tune and might have been changed later in the same session or in a different session, but the discussion gave members a set of shared guidelines to play the tune. During the same session, I observed another example of creativity and musical decisions in relation to strumming:

> I can see from this angle that Sandy strums the beat and Erin Haley strums a different pattern [can't see Erin Hight or Qanyu]. But it works out to sound fine.

Even though Sandy and Erin chose different ways to strum, they were able to play together and create a musical product that they both enjoyed, while still having the ability to create something of their own. This type of musical negotiation was not something that was necessarily experienced by participants in other musical situations, as Shannon shared:

> **Jackie**: And, you hadn't really had that [making musical decisions] experience before?

> **Shannon:** Not really. Sometimes, yeah, I feel like my experience in music school has been a lot of like "you have to do it this way" and be perfect. And it kind of stifled my creativity a little bit. So, I think ukulele club helped.

The musical processes of listening, compositing, improvising, and listening occured in UNCG Ukes and were seen by participants as part of the larger concept of creativity. Creativity was deeply engrained into each session of UNCG Ukes, specifically in the forms of arranging, harmonizing, and strumming.

Emergent Themes Unique to UNCG Ukes

As I analyzed the data for the current study, I looked for themes that emerged from the data and were unique to the case study of UNCG Ukes. Emergent themes are those that arise from the uniqueness of the case study, which may not be included in the initial research agenda. Some of these themes emerged based on questions I asked in interviews or in the survey or because of questions I asked based on background knowledge of participants. Sometimes themes emerged because of comments that participants made throughout the study. In the following section, I will discuss the four themes that emerged which were: (a) setting and generational influence, (b) future influence, (c) meaningful learning experiences, and (d) ukulele. I will also discuss the theme of leadership within the current study. The role of a leader within a group can have an impact on the formal and informal aspects of music learning (Green, 2002; Higgins, 2012). Although defining leadership and its role within UNCG Ukes was not part of the initial research agenda, I thought it was important to ask participants about their perspectives on leadership within UNCG Ukes and explore how leadership functioned within this group.

Setting and Intergenerationality

I asked participants about their perception of the setting with which UNCG Ukes took place. I asked them if they felt their experience would be different if the setting were changed to a public space, such as a coffee shop. Their responses centered around three aspects of the setting: physical space, group dynamic, and ages that were represented within the group.

The majority of responses focused on the physical space of the room. Some felt the seclusion of the room in which UNCG Ukes took place was advantageous because there were fewer distractions than there would be in a public space. This made the environment better to focus on learning. Meeting on the campus of UNCG in the music building, which is an academic institution, indicated to participants that learning would occur. It also added an element of prestige to the learning environment, as can be read in these comments by Andy and Sandy:

> **Andy:** Yes, meeting in the School of Music promotes the idea of music learning.
>
> **Sandy:** And I like the formality of a school. I'm really impressed I'm in the music building at UNCG. If I were in a venue, coffeehouse something like that, that may be too relaxed.

The physical space had features that were supportive of learning music, such as music stands, chairs, and it was quiet, which made it easier to listen. The space had perceived limitations due to the seclusion of the room, such that people were not typically walking by. The location limited the opportunity for passersby to hear the group's activities and

possibly take interest. Also, if the group met in public, they would have the possibility of an audience that could hear their music making.

A second aspect of the setting that participants felt was important and positive was the group dynamics. Dynamics were described as the general feeling of inclusion, support, acceptance, and welcome, no matter the person's age or skill level. Qanyu described it as follows:

> **Qanyu:** It's all different age groups and it's completely fine. And it's random people I've never seen before all across campus and we're all just making music together.

As Qanyu mentioned, age was mentioned by participants in relation to the setting. The ages of the participants ranged from 15 through 73 years old, with most participants being college age students around age 20. Participants expressed that the range of ages was an asset of the setting:

> **Qanyu:** I think it's good that we have a fairly good mixture of college kids and we even have a high school kid and older people. So, it's good to hear everyone enjoying music together. Through the enjoyment we're learning new music.
>
> **Sandy:** It's fun to be with young people and since I'm not in the school set up any more, you know. My father is going be 101 and 'course everybody's dead that's his age. So, two of his best friends are younger than I am. I think that's an important thing for all of us maybe. But, young people don't realize that as much as old people.

Participants in sessions would often refer to being familiar with a tune because it was popular when they were younger or that they learned it from a parent when they were younger. The intergenerationality of the group opened up the possibility of being exposed

to music that was popular at different points in history. Participants found this as a way to connect with each other:

> **Qanyu:** It gives us a connection. We can try whatever and everyone's fine with it. No matter what age you are.

Sandy, who was the oldest member of the group at age 73, enjoyed playing music from the book the *Daily Ukulele* that she was familiar with from her past. She also enjoyed learning music that was popular with the college-aged participants:

> **Sandy:** I do like the idea of playing something that is popular music. Or, current, I guess is a better word. Something more current. I don't know. I think I might have a misconception that they don't like the older songs cause it seems like they do also.

Erin Hight, the youngest member of the group at age 15, enjoyed how people of different ages could enjoy playing music together:

> **Erin Hight:** We just joke around a lot. And there's a lot of age range so it's kind of . . . it's fun to experience how different ages can get along playing music.

Sandra expressed the experience of playing music in an intergenerational setting as being a satisfying one:

> **Sandra:** It's a very fun and satisfying experience when you play a tune that does not belong to the generation that is also playing it with you. And they say, “no I've never heard that song” but within one or two tries of the tune they've got it. And they understand it. So then they learn at least a tune or two of what was my generation. So, that's really satisfying.

Participants enjoyed the fact that a wide variety of ages and generations were present in the group. Participants expressed that having people of different ages added to the experience and never impeded their learning or enjoyment of the group. On the contrary, it added to it by exposing them to songs they may not have been introduced to otherwise.

Future Influence

I was interested to know whether the experiences participants had in UNCG Ukes would influence them in their future musical lives and/or careers. Everyone who answered indicated that it would have some sort of impact. Erin Hight, who was interested in becoming a speech pathologist, said this in relation to how her experiences in UNCG Ukes might influence her in that career path and also how it would influence her musical life:

> **Erin Hight:** I guess the music, like you could learn, cause you are teaching syllables and how to pronounce things, so I guess you could do it in a musical way.
>
> -You don't wanna be too stern with yourself when you're playing music. This class really helps that, cause you're just laid back and if you don't get it you'll learn it eventually. So, if you're real stern you're not going to get it.

Qanyu, who is interested in a career of musical instrument repair, said:

> **Qanyu:** I feel logical, especially if I'm doing something for a living or something. The group helps [me]. . . chill.

Shannon, whose major instrument was oboe and has had many previous experiences playing in school band settings said:

Jackie: Does this experience in this group, does that influence how you view playing music for yourself?

Shannon: I guess it's opened me up to learning from other people.

Jackie: Like other people who are not the director?

Shannon: Yeah, yeah. From anyone in the group.

Stephanie, who was in the nursing program at UNCG said:

Jackie: Do you think you would use ukulele in your nursing career?

Stephanie: If I ever ended up in geriatrics, yeah probably.

Jackie: Why geriatrics?

Stephanie: Or pediatrics, too. Pediatric hospice, they have that too. Like for activities. I definitely see myself doing that.

I asked Shannon, who was interested in becoming an elementary music educator, whether the experiences she had in UNCG Ukes would influence how she approached teaching she expressed the following:

Jackie: Do you think that will influence, maybe, approach it in the classroom?

Shannon: Yeah, I think I'll be more confident with it. I imagine I will use ukulele a lot. It's kind of leading kids to making decisions in songs. It depends on their age, I guess.

Sandra, who had just returned to teaching elementary general music after 15 years of working in higher education, explained how her experiences in UNCG Ukes had influenced her teaching approach in the elementary music classroom:

> **Sandra:** The informal has influenced my formal teaching. I'm letting some things go instead of right here everybody playing this note at the same time, everybody learning this one thing at the same time. We all learn at different rates. It's not easy to do, but it's best. And I take a few people off and pair - I've paired up students who were one of the five that said "yeah I could play the whole thing". Well, then you go with him or her and teach each other. Cause I know it's going to happen - and it does.

Participating in UNCG Ukes made an impression on participants in such a way that it would influence their lives in some way beyond their participation in the group, whether in relation to their musical, personal, or work lives.

Meaningful Music Experiences

I was curious about what, if any, peak or meaningful, experiences participants had in relation to participating in UNCG Ukes. This section includes some of the participant responses to this inquiry. Qanyu indicated that the experiences he had influenced his personal confidence:

> **Qanyu:** I know it's made me a little more confident in, I don't know. Not being, not caring about what other people think or something. And just go for it.
>
> **Jackie:** Especially in relation to music, or singing, or playing, or. . . ?
>
> **Qanyu:** Yeah, and just being myself.

Sandy expressed that she had several especially meaningful experiences through participating in UNCG Ukes in relationship to intergenerationality, playing technique, and individuality in playing:

- It's inspirational and motivational and just fun. To be with young people and if they only knew! [laughs]

- This was one of the 'ah-ha's: you didn't have to play the entire chord. That's when I realized that, oh yea!, that's just like this chord, except it's minus this, or has an extra two frets, or whatever.

- I guess you have to be in a group sometimes to realize with the instrument, realize we don't all play the same instrument the same way. And we can still have a pleasant sound.

Shannon shared that participating in UNCG Ukes helped her feel more brave about performing music in front of others as well as encouraging her to make her own musical decisions:

Jackie: Does this group help you in any way with that?

Shannon: I think it does, yeah.

Jackie: How do you think so?

Shannon: Encouraging me to play and sing in front of others. Been getting a lot of practice with that. I feel like I am becoming braver. I guess that music is, that making music can be about collaboration and it doesn't have to be, again, like I said, one person in charge. Making all the decisions and it doesn't have to be exactly how it's written in the book either. It's an art and you can do what you want with it.

Sandra conveyed that meaningful experiences for her within this context related to creating harmony as well as the experience of playing "La Vie en rose":

Making up a harmony part to "Wagon Wheel" felt like a peak for me. Since I just don't do that very much and don't feel real comfortable doing that. And when I was successful doing that, it was peak and it made me think. Hey! You can do this! You should do it more often!. . .

> -I think a peak musical experience is listening to Stephanie sing her song [La Vie en Rose]. And everybody playing under her. And then everybody joining and still singing it the way she did. Doing our best to sing it the way she did.

Participants shared a variety of meaningful experiences associated with participating in this ukulele group. Some had to do with learning or making music, but some were related to extra-musical elements, such as personal character development.

Ukulele

UNCG Ukes was a group that focuses on learning to sing, and play the ukulele. I was interested in why participants would want to learn the ukulele and what about it interested them. Participants mentioned the physical attributes were appealing, such as the small size of the instrument, it was easily portable, had only four strings, and it was cute. They liked the sound of the instrument in that it wasn't too loud or abrasive. It was an easy instrument to learn, a good instrument to use for singing accompaniment, and it wasn't intimidating. Andy and Sandy shared:

> **Andy:** It isn't a frustrating instrument, making it more enjoyable and relaxing.
>
> **Sandy:** I will have to say that for some reason I'm not as afraid. And having not been a musician I just thought, what am I doing? I'm not a musician. I am not going to be able to. . . why am I doing this? I almost backed out, you know. But maybe it's because it's the ukulele. Now maybe if we were coming in there and we were going to be playing the saxophone [laughs]. Maybe it's just a four string instrument and I've always associated it with fun.

Participants mentioned being motivated by friends and family to learn the ukulele. Stephanie shared that Shannon was an initial influence on her to learn to play ukulele:

Stephanie: That was my roommate Shannon. She had a ukulele and I think it was Freshman year and she let me play with it. And I really, I had fun with it. So, the next year, I wanted a ukulele, so I got one for Christmas.

Sandy mentioned her desire to do something she felt was fun and her mother's love of music that drew her to playing the ukulele:

Jackie: You have told me this before too, that what motivated you to play ukulele was your mother?

Sandy: Yeah, she had a ukulele. I always remember Mother saying "I wish one of you had been called into music."

Participants made references to the stereotype of a person that played ukulele. When I asked for more detail on what that stereotype was, here were some of the things they said:

Qanyu: I like the people associated with it, too.

Jackie: What do you mean by that?

Qanyu: I don't know. There's almost like a stereotype of people.

Jackie: Who play it?

Qanyu: Yeah.

Jackie: What do you think that stereotype is?

Qanyu: I don't know. Like, nice people.

Jackie: Yeah? (laughs)

Qanyu: Friendly people. Cause I don't think I know any people who play the ukulele and are just like, angry.

Sandy: I can't imagine it being formal. With the ukulele. The WORD ukulele.

Jeri: It is happy music that is easy to play for the most part. All of it is positive for promoting the ukulele. Uke players are the salt of the earth.

These comments paint a picture of a stereotype of ukulele players, from the perception of ukulele players that is one of fun, friendly, and nice people.

Participants mentioned that it was an instrument that helped them learn about music, especially chord progressions and building singing skills. Shannon conveyed:

> It helps me understand a variety of musical concepts. The first is that it has deepened my understanding of how chord progressions work. Another is that it is the first time I have experienced playing an instrument and singing at the same time. This has helped me understand how melodic vocal lines and instrument accompaniment fit together. It has also helped me practice my improvisation skills.

Finally, participants expressed that playing the ukulele was fun. That was a reason they were drawn to the instrument and continued to play it:

Sandy: A lot of people don't pay attention to you. You know like, my friends that say "I'm a master gardener" or "I'm a painter". They get attention. But if you say ukulele, "oh, you did? Well. . . " [dismissive expression]. (laughs)

Jackie: They don't take it seriously, maybe?

Sandy: Yeah! (laughs). And they don't realize it's really a lot of fun, more than anything. It's a fun thing.

Participants expressed an overall view of the ukulele that described it as fun to play, easy to learn, and not intimidating. The people who were drawn to playing it seem

to have an easy going, accepting viewpoint on making music which adds to the inclusiveness of playing the instrument and participating in the group.

Leadership

Leadership within the group adds to both the formal and informal aspect of the group. Participants identified Sandra as the main leader of the group. I asked them to tell me what she did that made them think she was a leader. Sandy shared:

> She smiles. She's confident. She's very confident in what she does. And she's honestly, she's good at it. She can sing, that's for sure. She just has it all, I think. She just has a lot of personality. I think it's catching, what Sandra has.

Jeri and Sarah, two community members, explained their viewpoints on Sandra's influence and importance in the group:

> **Jeri:** A good teacher always makes the class and I think Dr. Teglas was one reason the uke group had so much to offer everyone there.
>
> **Sarah:** I hope it continues, but without Dr. Teglas's driving force, I fear it will wither away and die.

Participants stated that Sandra sang the loudest and had the most knowledge in relation to strumming and playing the ukulele, so they tended to follow her lead much of the time. She also facilitated the flow of the session by either selecting tunes and/or asking others to select tunes. Sandra often initiated discussions within the group by sharing personal stories or giving suggestions about the musical choices of each tune that was being played at the time. Even though participants felt they had the freedom to pick songs they liked and had a say in how they were played, they also looked to Sandra to

make final decisions on what was played and how it was played.

I asked Sandra whether she felt she was the leader of the group and to explain her perspective of her role as leader. She explained her perspective as follows:

> Yes. But, not at all like the wind band director. It's more of organizer. It's just not the same as a band director or someone who makes the musical decision. Because everybody in there [UNCG Ukes session] knows that they can make musical decisions.
>
> -I think that I feel like a "teacher." I know that we have only an hour or so, so I want to make as much music as possible. I probably move the group too fast, and don't allow enough time for social talk.

Sandra expressed that she responded to suggestions from others in the group, especially if that person had more knowledge of a song. She felt leadership could shift based on that knowledge:

> **Sandra:** I think it was "We are Young" and Qanyu just said, "Well now, on this particular one, your voice can just go down". So, I knew he knew the song. And so I listened to him and I made a little note to remember to make the voice go down.
>
> **Jackie:** So, would you say it's maybe dependent on the song or musical knowledge at that point as to who might be a leader? Does the leader shift and change?
>
> **Sandra:** Everybody gets to be a leader. Same thing as I said everybody can be a teacher. Everybody is a teacher; everybody is a learner. That's what happens. Everybody has their teaching. We don't always go to one person for one particular idea or set of knowledge.

When I asked participants whether they felt there were other leaders than Sandra in the group none were mentioned. When I asked whether they learned things from other

people in the group, they were often unable to pinpoint one person or specific moment at first. Later in an interview or survey, they remembered they had learned a strum pattern or chord by watching another person without consciously realizing it at the time.

Leadership exists in UNCG Ukes and is mainly given and received from Sandra. Although Sandra does not have a set lesson plan or curriculum, she does act as a guide, coach, organizer, and moderator for the group.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

A goal Lucy Green had while researching informal music learning with popular musicians was to explore how informal music learning could inform formal music learning practices (2002) and it is a goal I share with her. I see a need for change in how music educators approach teaching music to students in schools. Although the traditional model that offers band, choir, orchestra and general music classes works for some students, there are more students who are not interested in what is offered at school and are showing this by not participating in music classes as they matriculate through school. This suggests to me that music educators must take a careful look at what musical experiences we are offering students in schools, why we chose and continue to choose those offerings, and whether we should continue to offer them.

After working with the participants in UNCG Ukes during the current study, I learned how informal music learning intertwined with formal music learning. The two concepts were not separate and equal entities, but rather two components that existed alongside each other. There was a sense of formality to the sessions, in that the group met at the same day and time of the week in the music building on the campus of a university, the group always sat in a semi-circle, and the flow of the sessions followed a similar pattern each time. Participants expressed that the approach to learning in UNCG Ukes was informal in the following ways: (a) they had freedom of choice in the songs that were

played during sessions, (b) learning took place in the group as well as outside of it alongside friends or alone, (c) as Green stated

> (2002, 2008) the learning felt haphazard and non-sequential, and (d) participants were able to be creative through arranging, harmonizing, and strumming patterns. Although learning by ear took place, participants used visual representations as much as aural learning, in the form of lead sheets and music notation. A blend of aural and visual methods of learning were used by participants in a pragmatic "whatever works" approach to learning music. The members of UNCG Ukes welcomed new ideas and did not discriminate against one method of learning over another. This opened avenues for multiple approaches to learning music, whether aurally, visually or a combination of both. While some participants were able to read traditional music notation, some were not. The variety of musical skill levels present created a need for several methods of learning music to be used, to allow everyone to play together.

The stereotype of ukulele players that was described by Qanyu as "nice, friendly and not-angry" aligned with what Kruse (2013) found in his work with the Dallas Ukulele Headquarters (DUH) where the members were described as "informal, accepting, and inclusive. . . happy, affirming and non-judgmental" (p. 163). The members of DUH attributed the characteristics to the leaders of the group who fostered these attributes. This can be seen in UNCG Ukes with Sandra's style of leadership as a guide and moderator who fostered an environment of safety to express ideas and thoughts that were musical or extra-musical. People of a variety of musical skill levels, ages, interests, and backgrounds were welcomed and the combination lead to a general feeling of inclusion, support, and acceptance by participants of the study. In UNCG Ukes, Sandra's approach to leadership coupled with the individual attributes of the participants created a welcoming environment in which to make music.

Participants were willing to try almost any tune that was suggested in a session, even if they were not familiar with it. During my observations of UNCG Ukes, if a tune was suggested, it was always attempted, even if no one knew the tune well or at all, as with the example of the song "Help" by The Beatles. In that situation, the participants were trying to figure out the tune by reading traditional music notation, having had little or no experience with the tune aurally. Although the participants decided to move on and perhaps practice it on their own, their lack of prior experience with the tune did not stop they from trying it. That situation was an example of Folkestad's (2006) description of informal learning where the activity and participants were driving the learning process. This open-minded approach to learning music in UNCG Ukes was favored and embraced by all participants. I suggest that attempts at learning the song together created a unifying experience with which participants could connect. The act of moving through the learning process together and in the moment, regardless of the outcome, helped to strengthen the social connections of the group.

Motivation to Participate

I was interested in learning what made people want to participate in UNCG Ukes and why they continued to return to the group. Participant responses indicated the reasons included a combination of learning about music, learning how to play the ukulele, learning to sing in harmony while accompanying themselves on ukulele, and while simultaneously having fun with others who were doing the same. All participants in the study had other musical experiences in their lives, from participating in orchestras to taking piano lessons; however, they chose to come to and return to UNCG Ukes because

they felt they were learning something new while enjoying musical and extra-musical experiences with others.

Another reason people continued to participate was because of the leadership provided by Sandra. She acted as a guide and moderator for participants during sessions by helping to move the session forward. For example, participants might suggest songs but they looked to Sandra to make the final decision or announcement about which song was played. If time passed and no one in the group suggested a tune, Sandra would ask someone directly what they wanted to play. If they were not able to decide, she would ultimately pick another tune and sometimes her choices were based on her preference but often based on what she knew the participants preferred from previous sessions. Her approach to leadership created an atmosphere that embraced musical creativity and experimentation and promoted participants' ability to have freedom of choice. She also held musical expertise that the participants respected and learned from to help them become better at singing and playing the ukulele.

Implications for Practice

The challenges I experienced while teaching general music classes at the middle school level formed the impetus for embarking on the current study. During one year in particular, I struggled to connect with and see growth in the students I was teaching because I felt I was not reaching them musically or personally. Through the current study, I had the opportunity to take a step back from my own formal training as a conservatory musician and music educator and think about approaches to learning music that were out of my comfort zone. To gain new and altered perspectives on something I thought I knew

well was deeply eye-opening and nourishing for my own personal development, if for no other reason than there is value in conducting research that can make us reflect on, evaluate, and question our own teaching and musical practice to improve ourselves as musicians, educators, and human beings.

UNCG Ukes was an intergenerational community ukulele group. At the beginning of the study, I wondered whether the wide range of ages present, from 15- years-old to 73-years-old, might inhibit the experience of participants. For example, I thought the presence of a 15-year-old high school student might lead to guarded behavior by the older participants which might make the music making and learning process less enjoyable and effective to the older participants. However, the opposite was true in that participants expressed that the presence of people from different generations was a benefit of the group. They were able to learn about music from different points in history because it was familiar to someone in the group who was of a different generation. Sharing occurred from older to younger participants and vice versa and gave everyone the opportunity to learn something new. The positive experiences participants in UNCG Ukes had with people of other generations suggest that music educators should consider the benefits of creating intergenerational groups in their contexts. Although having intergenerational groups during the school day might present a challenge in terms of scheduling, music educators often teach multiple ages of students (i.e., kindergarten through 5th grade or 9th through 12th grade). Music educators have access to students from a multitude of ages and could create interesting combinations of ukulele groups. How would music learning look if high school and middle school students participated in a ukulele group

together? Or, what if undergraduate music education majors were part of a ukulele group with middle school students in the community? How might both the developing music educator and the 14-year-old middle school student learn about music from one another? Beyond the boundaries of the school day, UNCG Ukes might serve as an example to others of how to build an intergenerational community ukulele group in their community. For example, an elementary music teacher might create a group that consisted not only of elementary students in a school, but the adults of the school (i.e. faculty, staff, parents) and the surrounding community which could lead to a rich musical experience for the entire community.

UNCG Ukes included participants with different kinds of previous musical experience. Each participant came with his or her unique set of experiences, ideas and skills. As with the presence of different generations, this resulted in a benefit for participants. Participants were able to learn from each other, whether it was by watching someone with more strumming or singing experience, discussing ideas for song arrangements, or learning from someone's unique singing style. This is in agreement with Green's (2002) research with popular musicians where much of the learning comes from watching and interacting with peers. Participants were able to gain knowledge about the components of music from others' experience and ideas. I observed this sharing of knowledge throughout the sessions. One example is when participants tried to replicate Stephanie's singing style on the song "La Vie en Rose," which came to be known by the members of the group as "Stephanie's Song." This suggests that in the context of UNCG Ukes, different levels of musical experience did not diminish learning opportunities or

impede learning, but rather enhanced opportunities for musical learning. Music teachers might consider creating musical opportunities that include students of different musical abilities as this can be an enriching experience for all participants.

Gaining a better understanding of how students learn music is an important part of being a music educator. This understanding can inform how music educators design classroom instruction, motivate students to learn, and help students develop musical skills. Gaining a better understanding of how informal music learning components as outlined by Lucy Green (2002, 2008) were experienced by participants of UNCG Ukes, an intergenerational community ukulele group, could have strong implications for how music educators approach teaching music within and beyond the school classroom. The participants of the current study provided a rich source of perspectives due the diverse range of ages, variety of musical backgrounds, and life experiences. By hearing the voices of these participants, music educators may be able to reflect on them and consider the perspectives of their own students in the contexts they teach. This type of transfer could impact how music is taught within school and in other types of instructional settings.

The ukulele was an essential component of how members of UNCG Ukes approached making music. Participants viewed the ukulele as approachable, easy to learn, and not intimidating. Participants expressed that the ukulele helped them learn about music because it could be used to accompany their own singing. The same would not be true with other instruments, such as recorder or trumpet, because they require the player to blow into the instrument and singing and playing at the same time is not a possibility.

The ability to sing and play at the same time promoted music learning related to singing harmonies. The ability to accompany their own singing gave participants the opportunity to learn about chord progressions by playing them as they sang, or as others in the group sang. There are certainly other instruments that a musician can use to accompany their own singing, such as piano or guitar. However, developing the technique and skills required to play the piano or guitar may take more time and energy before a comfort level can be reached where the musician can sing and play at the same time. Ukulele provided a faster doorway in to making music with others and experiencing music in a relaxed way without having to focus a great deal of time or energy on learning to play the instrument. After learning to strum a few chords, participants could be a part of the group and have a musical experience without much initial effort.

Members of UNCG Ukes all participated voluntarily and that fact may have played a large part in the findings of this study. The group did not meet for class credit or pay a fee to participate. Members could come when they wanted and there were no consequences for not attending. This model would not work in a general music classroom, where all students are required to attend and participate. Because UNCG Ukes participants chose to attend and wanted to learn how to play the ukulele, they may have been more invested and interested in what happened during the session than a student who didn't have a choice. For example, if a sixth-grade student were placed into a ukulele group without being given a choice, the student may have a negative attitude toward participating, which could influence motivation and learning. Freedom of choice was an important component of why participants in the current study enjoyed participating and is

a foundational element of the Musical Futures program which is based on Lucy Green's research on informal music learning (2002). Should music educators want to create a group similar to UNCG Ukes, it would be important to take into account and honor the personal choices of the participants.

Suggestions for Future Research

Because ukulele groups are a somewhat new phenomenon and are just beginning to be studied in an academic sense, there is much that can still be learned from what occurs in these contexts. Additional studies investigating how participants learn to make music in ukulele groups and comparing those approaches across groups would be informative to the music education profession. Studies could focus on such questions as: (a) How are participants learning music? (b) Why are they participating in ukulele groups? (c) What makes each ukulele group different, similar, or unique? (d) Can any of the approaches observed in ukulele groups be used in a music classroom setting? or (e) What type of setting would be most appropriate to implement the music learning approaches that are taken by ukulele groups? Gaining answers to these questions could mold new approaches to teaching music within and beyond schools that result in greater teacher-student connection, student motivation, and student participation.

Further research needs to be conducted on the styles of leadership within ukulele groups. Through the current study, I was able to see how important the leadership that Sandra offered was to how the group learned music and functioned as a whole. Sandra's leadership style in this group was similar to what Higgins (2012) called a facilitator, or someone who offers routes to learning. Sandra acted as a facilitator or guide, with no

specific learning goals or curriculum. I am curious about how leadership looks in other ukulele groups, how it impacts what is learned and experienced by participants of the group, and how it impacts how the group functions as a unique whole.

UNCG Ukes lent itself to case study methodology because some clear boundaries were in place. There was a start and end date to the case which was bounded by the 15-week semester schedule of the University of North Carolina Greensboro. The group met at a set time each week and usually in the same room. Some participants had been coming for several semesters and were well established within the social landscape of the group. Case study methodology was attractive to me as a new student of qualitative research because of the use of boundaries that create the case, which I felt were naturally present in UNCG Ukes. The fact that I could take on the role of researcher, as opposed to participant-researcher, for my first independent research project gave me freedom to focus on conducting the research. This ability to have a singular purpose helped me to focus on the participants of the study, develop specific and focused questions, and develop my skills in conducting qualitative research. Initially, I considered an ethnographic approach, which is when the researcher immerses herself into a culture, learning about the shared experience of the participants over an extended period of time. The researcher acts as a participant-observer by interacting with participants, as well as observing and interviewing participants (Creswell 2013). Ultimately, however, I decided against it, because I thought that the time needed to immerse myself in the study would be beyond the scope of time I had available for this doctoral dissertation project. Nevertheless, an ethnographic approach would be a beneficial approach to take when

examining ukulele groups. Ukulele groups are participatory in nature, where the meaning comes from interacting with others through making music together and the researcher could glean much about the personal experience of participants by interacting with them rather than just observing. The complete immersion in the group might lead to other unique insights that I could not obtain as a non-participant.

Another beneficial approach would be a narrative approach. Narrative research consists of the stories of a few participants, either told by them or about them, that relate to a topic or phenomenon being studied. Narratives are often organized in a chronological order by the researcher (Creswell 2013). A narrative study would give the researcher an opportunity to focus on the lived experience of two or three participants to gain a more in-depth understanding of their personal stories and experiences pertaining to learning music in a ukulele group.

Before I conducted the current study, I thought I had observed informal music learning within UNCG Ukes and wanted to investigate that further to determine whether my observation was accurate. I discovered that the components of informal music learning were present as I had originally thought, but they were not all functioning in the same way that they had occurred in Lucy Green's research with popular musicians (2002, 2008). This can be seen in how popular musicians learned music almost exclusively by ear, whereas the participants of UNCG Ukes used visual and aural methods of learning music.

My hope was that the current study would give music educators ideas about what motivates people to learn music. Just as I did with my middle school music classes, many

music educators struggle with trying to motivate students, especially in general music classes at the middle and high school levels. Gaining a deeper understanding of why participants in this study engaged in a community ukulele group and what they gleaned from the experience could give music educators a way to reflect on their own students' motivations. I hope that the investigation of the current study of informal music learning in the context of UNCG Ukes can spark ideas for music educators about how they might use informal music learning in their own contexts, within and beyond the school setting, to better facilitate music learning for their students in ways that are enjoyable, meaningful, and enriching.

Personal Reflection

Now that I have completed the current study, I have reflected about what I have learned and how I have changed as a musician and music educator through the process. I made the decision to design and conduct the current study because I had been frustrated by some of the challenges I had faced teaching general music at the middle school level. Even with nine years of public school teaching experience, I struggled to motivate and connect with some of my middle school students, no matter what I tried. I remember spending many evenings and weekends reflecting deeply on the struggles I faced in my classes and trying to think of new approaches to motivate and engage my students. Many of my ideas failed, which was emotionally, mentally and physically exhausting. I was frustrated and felt defeated by my situation. I knew I did not have the skills or knowledge that I needed to be the music educator I wanted to be. My only choice was to keep looking.

When I began learning about informal music learning, I began to see how this approach could help me answer some of the questions I faced about teaching music. As it turned out, it required me to first look deeply into my own musical experiences and personal biases. I realized that my music making experiences had largely been in formal settings, such as school music classes and lessons. In the moments in my life that I now identify as learning informally, I felt uncomfortable and resisted it. Informal music learning felt scary and unclear to me and so I avoided those types of music making experiences. At the same time, I knew that many of the students I taught in middle school general music classes were drawn to what I had resisted, which was learning informally. I began to realize that to become the teacher I wanted to be and connect with the students who were interested in learning informally, I had to learn about it and begin experiencing it myself.

Before conducting the current study, I participated in UNCG Ukes and realized it was one of the most informal music making experiences with which I had ever been involved. Through participating, I became a stronger singer, musician, and my self-confidence grew. If I, someone who had devoted her life to learning to play and teach music, had such an impactful experience, how was it for others with a similar background? What about those people with a completely different musical backgrounds? I was able to investigate those questions with the participants of UNCG Ukes as can be seen in the current study.

After being a part of UNCG Ukes and then getting the chance to withdraw and observe the group through the current study, I have come to see that this group had a

balance of formal and informal components that acted as a bridge for me to experience informal music learning. The formality of the sessions and the classroom setting were familiar, but the learning style was new and the combination made a new experience more comfortable. After participating in UNCG Ukes for three semesters and UNCG Old Time Ensemble for one semester, I began attending a bi-weekly Old Time jam in the Greensboro community. The Piedmont Old Time Jam was one of the first music making experience that I voluntarily attended that took place outside of school parameters. I suggest that groups such as UNCG Ukes, that combine formal and informal music learning components, act as bridges between music making in classrooms and music making beyond school classrooms.

Informal music learning takes time and it often looks and sounds chaotic. Musicians who learn informally embrace the multitude of mistakes they make before figuring out what works. Mistakes are not seen as failures, but rather as experiments to finding what sounds best. It is through that creative process that they discover what musical choices they want to make. As I discovered through the current study and my research on informal music learning, it is worth taking the time to encourage students through this process. It gives students a sense of personal freedom and ownership that leads to motivation and engagement that they do not get in formalized music instruction.

I have learned through my study of informal music learning that my role as a music teacher does not necessarily mean I have complete control over what my students learn. I can offer musical experiences, ideas, and knowledge, but a student may not learn what I planned to teach them, in the way I thought was best or as fast as I wanted them to

learn. Instead, a student may learn something different than I offer that serves them in that moment. Instead of focusing on getting students to learn exactly what I planned and how I planned it, I now focus on giving students opportunities to make musical decisions to help them develop trust and confidence in themselves. I have come to view myself as a facilitator and guide for students, offering them information, support, and guidance through their learning process.

Through this study I have grown as a musician and music educator. I have had the opportunity to question my own beliefs about making music and music teaching. I have come to a better understanding of informal music learning and what motivates people to participate in the act of making music. It is a path of growth and understanding that I plan to continue throughout my life as a musician and music educator.

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APPENDIX A

SETTINGS OF UNCG UKES

Setting 1: UNCG Ukes Session (observation #5) in room 154 of UNCG School of Music. This is the room where the group met most often.

Setting 2: UNCG Ukes session in room 217 (lecture hall) in the School of Music on the campus of UNCG. The group met in this room on one occasion during the current study.

Setting 3: UNCG Ukes playing in the Moran Commons on the lower level of the Dining Hall on the UNCG Campus. This is the final session the group held during the Spring semester 2015. I have included several perspectives of this to give multiple perspectives of this busy space.

APPENDIX B

OBSERVATION PROTOCOL FOR OBSERVING UNCG UKES SESSIONS

Observer: Jacqueline Secoy	**Location:**
Day: Date: / /	**Address:**
Subject:	
Time range: : am/pm	**Contact Person:**
: am/pm	**Phone:**
Length of Observation: hrs min	**E-mail**

Time	Observation (see, hear, touch, smell, taste)	Thoughts	Key Terms

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL-INFORMAL MUSIC LEARNING IN UNCG UKES

Oral Script for Interview:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. The purpose of this interview is to gain an understanding of your experience within UNCG Ukes, especially how you learn music in this setting.

The interview will last approximately 30 minutes. With your permission I am audio recording this interview in order to help me remember accurately what you said and transcribe it later. This will also help me focus more on what you are saying in the interview, rather than taking a lot of notes. If you prefer not to be recorded, please say so and I will turn it off now.

Your participation in this project will help me learn more about your personal experience in UNCG Ukes. If you would like me to create a pseudonym for you, rather than using your real name, please let me know now.

Do you have any questions before we begin the interview: Let's begin.

Interviewer: Jacqueline Secoy	**Location:**
Day: **Date: / /**	**Address:**
Participant:	
Pseudonym: Yes/No Name:	
Interview Start time : am/pm	
Interview End Time : am/pm	**Phone:**
Gender:	**E-mail:**
Age:	
Circle One:	
Community Member Music Student Non music student Faculty Staff Graduate Student	

Question	Response	Non-Verbal Communication	Key Terms	Suggestions for Improvements
#1: What motivated you to come to UNCG Ukes			Motivation to participate; Opening question (not related to research questions)	

#2: How do you go about learning a song? ***Prompts: Do you use recordings, videos, music notation, tab, lead sheets, other people?***			**Aural learning, visual, music notation**	
#3 Do you prefer learning a song by listening to it, such as by watching a video or listening to a recording, or visually, such as with a lead sheet. Or both? Why?			aural learning and music notation learning.	
#4: Do you choose the songs based on your preference or based on others' interest?			Preference of musical choice	
#5: Is it important to you to learn the songs with others? Do you also work on the songs by yourself or in a smaller group outside of the sessions?			Friendship groups	

#6: Do you think the sessions are informal or formal? ***Prompt: What makes you think one or the other?***			Informal/Formal Setting	
#7: Is there anything about UNCG Ukes that promotes music learning? ***Prompts: Such as context, setting, people in the group, music learned, etc.***			Informal/Formal setting; Friendship group	
#8: What do you think about having the meetings at the music building versus a more public meeting place?			Informal learning in a formal institution/classroom setting	
#9: Is there anything else about being a part of UNCG Ukes that you would like to tell me?			Open ended question for anything else participant might want to say	

Thank you for your time and insights. Your thoughts will help me to understand more about what you experience as you participate in UNCG Ukes.

In a few weeks, I would like to interview you again if you are available. The questions will be very similar to the ones I asked you today. This will help give me a picture of how your experience in UNCG Ukes over time. Would you be available for an interview on:

Day_____Date:_____ Time:_____Location: _____

APPENDIX D

SURVEY - INFORMAL MUSIC LEARNING IN UNCG UKES

Q1 Uncg ukes adult consent form Please read through the above consent form. If you consent to complete this survey, please click "Yes." to continue. If you do not wish to participate, please close this window.

- ❍ Yes (1)

Q2 Please type your first and last name.

Q3 Please indicate if you would like to use a psuedonym

- ❍ Yes, I would like to use a psuedonym for this study (1)
- ❍ No, you can use my real name in this study (2)

Q4 What is your age?

Q5 What is your gender?

- ❍ Female (1)
- ❍ Male (2)

Q6 Please select which one applies to you most:

- ❍ I am an undergraduate music major student (1)
- ❍ I am a non music major undergraduate student (2)
- ❍ I am a member of the community (3)
- ❍ I am a graduate music major (4)
- ❍ I am music department faculty member (5)

Q7 If you are a student, please describe your major course of study. If you are a community member, please describe your vocation.

Q8 What interests you about playing the ukulele?

Q9 Do you think there is something specific about the ukulele that influences how you learn music? Please explain your thoughts.

Q10 What motivated you to come to UNCG Ukes?

Q11 How do you go about learning a song? For example, do you use recordings, videos, music notation, tab, lead sheets, etc. or combinations of these?

Q12 Do you prefer learning a song by listening to it, such as by watching a video or listening to a recording, or visually, such as with a lead sheet. Or a combination? Please explain your process.

Q13 Do you choose the songs based on your preference or based on other group members' interest? Or maybe both? Please explain your thoughts on this.

Q14 Is it important to you to learn the songs with the other people? Why?

Q15 Do you also work on the songs by yourself or in a smaller group outside of the sessions?

Q16 Do you think UNCG Ukes sessions are formal or informal, or both? Please describe your thoughts in as much detail as possible.

Q17 Is there anything about UNCG Ukes that promotes music learning? For example the place we meet, the people in the group, the music the group plays, etc.

Q18 What do you think about having the meetings at the music building versus a more public meeting place? Do you think your music learning experience would be different if sessions were held in more public setting?

Q19 Is there anything else about being a part of UNCG Ukes that you would like to tell me? Please express you thoughts generously.

Q20 Thank you for your participation in this survey! I appreciate your thoughts and insight

APPENDIX E

UNCG UKES LEAD SHEET

Leaving Eden – Laurelyn Dossett

```
C                          Am
Hush now, don't you wake up
          C                    Am
We'll be leaving at first light
        Dm              C
Mama's buying you a mockingbird
   Em      F
To lull you through the night

       C                       Am
We'll cross the Dan by morning
          C                         Am
Here's a blanket for you to share
        Dm                    C
They're building down in Georgia
        Em          Dm        F
Daddy hears he'll find work there
```

```
CHORUS
          Dm                    C
And the mockingbird can't sing
           Em          F
Like the crying of a dove
      Dm              C
And I can't tell my daughters
         Am
All the things that I'm scared of
    F           C                        Em          Am
But I am not afraid of that bright glory up above
Dm              Am              Em          Dm          F
Dying's just another way to leave the ones you love
```

```
     C                    Am
No work for the working man
      C                        Am
Just one more empty mill
Dm                C
Hard times in Rockingham
Em             Dm       F
Hard times harder still
       C                       Am
The crows are in the kitchen
        C                    Am
The wolves at the door
       Dm                   C           Em   Dm       F
Our fathers' land of Eden is paradise no more
```

[CHORUS]
[Optional Instrumental]

```
      C                       Am
My sister stayed in Eden
       C                              Am
Her husband's got some land
     Dm                C
An agent for the county
                  Em              Dm       F
thinks that they might make a stand
   C                Am
A hard life of working
         C                        Am
With nothing much to show
   Dm            C                    Em              F
A long life of leaving with nowhere to go
```

[CHORUS]