

WOODWARD, RAYCHL SMITH, Ph.D. Shaping Perceptions of Musical Identity: An Ethnography of Non-Music Majors' Experiences in an Undergraduate Music Course Focused on Cultivating Creativity. (2013)
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The purpose of this study was to investigate what “being a musician” means in an innovative, improvisation-based music course. Participants in this study were non-music majors enrolled in the course, *MUS 2022: Cultivating Creativity through Music*.

Instructor and creator of the course, Dr. Liz Rose, Associate Professor of Music Education and Music Therapy at Appalachian State University in North Carolina, was also a study participant. By studying the classroom culture as it evolved throughout the semester, and by reflecting on the experiences of students enrolled in the course, I was able to gain an understanding of how students make meaning of their experiences with creativity and improvisation. By focusing on regularly recurring classroom practices, teacher and student behaviors, and socially constructed meanings of musicianship in the classroom, I present an idea of what ‘being a musician’ means in this particular classroom of students who have varying degrees of formal training in music.

Several forms of data were collected, including participant observation, analysis of video-recorded class sessions, individual interviews with student and teacher participants, focus group interviews with students, analysis of student assignments and reflections, and examination of course documents. To find emergent patterns and themes relating to participants’ acquisition of meaning throughout course experiences, field notes, observations, and interview texts were reviewed multiple times. Students enrolled in *MUS 2022* felt that being a musician in this particular classroom community meant

expressing themselves, taking risks, and recognizing the musician within self and others, regardless of the extent of previous musical experiences or formal musical training.

SHAPING PERCEPTIONS OF MUSICAL IDENTITY: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF
NON-MUSIC MAJORS' EXPERIENCES IN AN UNDERGRADUATE
MUSIC COURSE FOCUSED ON CULTIVATING CREATIVITY

by

Raychl Smith Woodward

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Constance McKoy
Committee Chair

For Liz and the students of *MUS* 2022

Lasting
by “Pat”

I know that y’all think, I just did this to get an A.
But it’s rude to assume there’s no point I’m trying to make.
It’s not the kind of thing you can do every day-
It’s harder than you think to write a poem that’s fake.

The appeal of a pen’s what it allows you to say.
But the ink doesn’t stick when you don’t have a page.
Not the gold in the handle, or the forge that it’s made,
It’s the blood on the sword, that’s the worth of the blade.

When Sandy had trashed the great Appalachians.
And all I can read are your Facebook statuses,
A picture of snow with a date and the caption,
Hashtag# blizzard, Lord please cancel classes!

Try to take a step back and think about what you’re asking,
If this is your God then I’ll make my own fraction.
Try to look through the lens of a poor man’s glasses,
With no warm place to stay, they just freeze off their asses.

One point the teachers never taught in their classes -
You’re a smart business man when you don’t pay your taxes,
But a mooch when it’s used to provide you with rations.
Where’s all the passion? This thinking is backwards.

In chemistry we coin this term as the rate of reaction,
The fear that justifies all the hate in their actions,
To distance all the instances they have from compassion,
The need to prove that they deserve this fate as it happens.

May my words be the pen and your paper not lacking,
May my sword draw the blood that can end your inaction.
Take note not to miss the opportunities passing,
Get off your Facebook, take a stand, and make a statement that’s lasting.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation, written by Raychl Smith Woodward, has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair Constance McKoy

Committee Members Sandra Teglas

Patricia Sink

David Teachout

May 9, 2013
Date of Acceptance by Committee

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Date of Final Oral Examination

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem

In recent years, the concept of identity has become a topic of interest across all disciplines including the field of music education, which has experienced an increase in research on how musical identities are formed (Brothwick & Davidson, 2002; Lamont, 2002; MacDonald, Hargreaves, & Miell, 2002). With the widespread availability of new technologies, ways in which people experience music as listeners, performers, and creators have reached almost infinite possibilities. As a result, music researchers have hypothesized that now more than ever, music is being used as a means by which humans shape and express their individual identities (MacDonald, Hargreaves, & Miell, 2002).

What does “being a musician” mean and how is musical identity formed? What are the experiences that shape our perceptions of musical identity? Lamont (2002) suggests that musical identity is shaped at a very early age, and divides identity into what she calls *self-understanding*, the many ways in which individuals understand and define themselves, and *self-other understanding*, or how individuals understand and define themselves in relation to others. Because children’s development of *self-understanding* and development of *self-other understanding* seem to progress simultaneously, as children enter the social world of schooling they begin to identify and de-identify with characteristics they see in themselves and those that they see in others. As a result, the

typical elementary school student quickly learns to classify self and others into categories such as short and tall, good readers and bad readers, and the “high” group and the “low” group with regard to academic achievement. In much the same way, musical identity is formed at an early age. For example, students who engage in music outside of the school instructional day begin to self-identify as musicians, and students who rarely engage in music making outside of school quickly begin to distance themselves from this label (Lamont, 2002).

Why some students naturally begin to self-identify as musicians, artists, or athletes, while others may distance themselves from the idea that they possess an innate sense of musicianship, artistic ability, or athleticism may seem obvious. After all, teachers and parents actively encourage children to pursue a wide range of interests in hopes that these children may ultimately find an activity about which they are passionate. While every child does not have the potential to become a professional athlete, our society encourages life-long exercise to promote a healthy lifestyle. We do not simply allow children to give up on physical activity and exercise the moment that they realize they do not have the requisite skills to qualify for an elite athletic team. In Western society, however, many people have been socialized to believe that musicianship is not their birthright, but rather something that they ultimately discover they either do or do not possess (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2010).

Christopher Small (1998) claims that somehow along the way human beings have lost the idea of music as an inclusive participatory experience. By coining the term “musicking” to refer to the act of making music, Small argues that the fundamental

nature and meaning of music lies not in any musical product, but rather in the experience of making the music itself. Small (1998) explains:

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. Whatever that function may be, I am certain, first, that to take part in a music act is of central importance to our very humanness, as important as taking part in the act of speech, which it so resembles (but from which it also differs in important ways), and second, that everyone, every normally endowed human being, is born with the gift of music no less than with the gift of speech. If that is so, our present-day concert life, whether “classical” or “popular,” in which the “talented” few are empowered to produce music for the “untalented” majority is based on a falsehood. It means that our powers of making music for ourselves have been hijacked and the majority of people robbed of the musicality that is theirs by right of birth, while a few stars, and their handlers, grow rich and famous through selling us what we have been led to believe we lack. (p. 8)

Do music educators do enough to broaden perceptions of musical identity so that musicianship is seen as an innate part of the human experience?

Obviously there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ definition of musicianship. The guitarist in a rock band has a definite idea of what being musical means, as does the concertmaster in an orchestra; yet these two ideas of musicianship are likely very different. What can music educators do to validate the multifaceted musical identities that they encounter in their students? How do music educators encourage students to develop a sense of musical identity? Research in the area of musical identity formation could be a key step in helping music educators design effective instruction focused on meeting the multifaceted musical identities of students.

Need for the Study

Critical theorists are beginning to examine ways in which music education has been grounded in assumptions about who is recognized as a musician, and what music should look like in a school setting (Bradley, 2007, 2011; Elliot, 2007; Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2010; Gould, 2007; Kratus, 2007; Mantie, 2008; McLaren, 2011; Regelski & Gates, 2010; Silverman, 2009). While the National Association for Music Education (2012) states that its mission is to promote music education by encouraging the study and making of music by *all people*, many critical theorists have identified what they believe to be the ways in which this right of identity is being denied to those on the socio-cultural margins of society (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2010; Gould, 2007; Mantie, 2008). Moreover, researchers examining identity in music education have focused primarily on the development of teacher identity in undergraduate music majors and in practicing teachers, (Conway et al., 2010; Haston & Russell, 2011; Isbell, 2008; Teachout & McKoy, 2010; Wagoner, 2011) with little written on the development of musical identity in people who have not received extensive musical training.

At the university level, classes for non-music majors are often taught by graduate students and in many cases a lack of time, funding, and research limits the examination of the quality of instruction that goes into these courses (Abril & Gault, 2005; Stein, 2002). A relatively unexamined area is how people with limited formal training in music understand and make meaning of their experiences with music. Why might the study of the development of musical identity in people who have not received extensive formal training in music be important? Music educators should be looking for ways to help

others discover their innate sense of musicianship. Studying the development of musical identity in people who have not had extensive formal training in music may bring music teachers closer to discovering more effective ways to encourage participation in music as a life-long experience. Gaining a deeper understanding of how musical identity develops could also encourage the music education profession to re-assess its goals and objectives regarding the value and purpose of music study.

A Rich Environment for Ethnographic Study

Undergraduate courses in schools of music across the country have typically served as rich environments for studying the development of teacher identity among trained musicians. It seems that courses designed for non-music majors could offer similarly rich environments for the ethnographic study of musical identity development among people who have received limited formal training in music. The site of my research, Appalachian State University, was chosen because of its innovative course offerings for non-music majors.

In recent years, Dr. Liz Rose and her colleagues at Appalachian State University have been working to re-conceptualize the music curriculum for elementary education majors. The primary objective of most music courses for elementary education majors is to prepare pre-service teachers to enrich the elementary curriculum through experiences with music. To meet this objective, pre-service elementary educators have traditionally learned skills such as teaching a song to a group of children, learning to play recorder and other classroom instruments, and learning to read music notation (Abril & Gault, 2005; Stein, 2002).

Working with a team of arts educators at Appalachian State University, Rose and her colleagues developed a series of courses in drama, visual art, music, poetry, and dance that focuses on cultivating creativity through engaged experiences in the arts. Rose's experimental course entitled *MUS 2022: Cultivating Creativity through Music* includes active experiences in improvisation as the foundation of all music learning. Originally, the course was created to take the place of a previous course offering for elementary education majors entitled, *Fundamental Music Skills*. However, since the inception of *MUS 2022*, an increasing number of undergraduates from departments outside of elementary education have been registering for the course to meet general education elective credits.

By utilizing a humanistic approach to teaching, Rose strives to create a learning environment where all students are validated as musicians through experiences in improvisation. While many of the students enrolled in *MUS 2022* did not consider themselves to be musicians at the beginning of the semester, they were able to begin creating music from the first days of class by actively engaging in the creative process of improvisation. Rose's approach to teaching differs dramatically from the typical elementary music methods course which focuses on teaching performance skills on classroom instruments, singing, integrating music into the elementary curriculum, and teaching beginning music reading skills (Propst, 2003). As a part of *MUS 2022*, students are able to engage in music making while actively constructing their own ideas of what being a musician and a creative thinker means.

This *process of becoming* is what Gould (2007) advocates in her discussion of democracy in music education. While Gould and others fail to articulate praxial ways in which this process can be incorporated into teacher education programs, Rose seems to be one of the few practitioners working to implement this process into teacher education on a regular basis. Her approach to teaching has the power to affect the music education profession by challenging music educators to think critically about the traditional course offerings and curricula that have been in place in schools of music and music departments for the better part of a century (Kratus, 2007). My examination of the regularly-occurring classroom practices that make up the culture of Rose's classroom yielded rich descriptions of what being a musician means in this innovative classroom environment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate what being a musician means in an innovative improvisation-based music course for non-music majors. By studying the classroom culture as it evolved throughout the course of the semester, and reflecting on the experiences of students enrolled in the course, I was able to gain an understanding of how students make meaning of their experiences with music. By focusing on the regularly recurring classroom practices, teacher and student behaviors, and socially constructed meanings of musicianship in the classroom, I present an idea of what being a musician means in this particular classroom of students who possess varying degrees of formal training in music.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in the study:

1. What does being a musician mean in *MUS 2022*, a course for non-music majors, in which improvisation is the primary strategy for developing creative thinking?
2. What meanings do students in *MUS 2022* make of their experiences with music?

CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I introduce the reader to the conceptual framework which grounds this particular study. In particular, I focus on the idea that all learning is socially constructed, and therefore perceptions of musical identity are influenced heavily by society, culture, and personal experiences. Within this chapter I explore how ethnography has been used to uncover different perceptions of musical identity and how these perceptions function within other societies, groups, schools, and cultures. I introduce open systems theory and several of the methodological approaches that have influenced the course content of *MUS 2022: Cultivating Creativity through Music*. Finally, I introduce the conceptual model that I have used in structuring my observations of the course as a means to study classroom culture.

Research on Identity

As I explore the concept of identity as a musician in the present study, let me begin by defining identity as it will be used for the purposes of the study. Gee (2000) recognizes the complexity of defining identity, stating:

The “kind of person” one is recognized as “being” at a given time and place, can change from moment to moment in the interaction, can change from context to context, and, of course, can be ambiguous or unstable. Being recognized as a certain “kind of person,” in a given context, is what I mean here by “identity.” In this sense of the term, all people have multiple identities connected not to their internal states, but to their performances in society. (p. 99)

For the purposes of the present study I will rely on Gee's definition of identity as "the kind of person one is recognized as being" by self and others at any given moment.

Crucial to this definition is the belief that identity development is tied closely to historical, institutional, and sociocultural forces. Gee (2000) recognizes the following four distinct ways of viewing identity development: (a) Nature-identity development, which arises from a state developed from forces in nature; (b) Institution-identity development, which arises from a position authorized by authorities within institutions; (c) Discourse-identity development, which arises from an individual trait recognized in discourse or dialogue with others; and (d) Affinity-identity development, which arises from experiences shared in the practice of affinity groups. Each of these four distinct ways of viewing identity development incorporates both self-identification and identification by others.

To differentiate between and among these four ways of viewing identity development, I will provide examples of what "being musical" means in relationship to each. Nature-identity development relies heavily on genetic predispositions, or forces outside of the control of the individual or society. For example, few individuals are born with absolute or perfect pitch, which allows the individual to produce any identified pitch accurately on demand without reference to any contextualizing pitches. The world's population born with this innate ability has been estimated to be less than 1% (Takeuchi & Hulse, 1993). While musical training, especially before the age of six, can contribute to a person's ability to achieve a sense of relative pitch, Levetin and Rogers (2005) have suggested that absolute pitch is a trait that is present from birth. In this way, absolute

pitch could be considered an example of Nature-identity development; a musical trait that is either absent or present at birth. Nature-identity development can become relevant only if it is recognized as a meaningful contribution to “the kind of person” someone is (Gee, 2000). People with absolute pitch who do not consider themselves musicians would probably not consider such a trait to be a relevant part of their identity, but when this trait is recognized and celebrated by others, it could transform an individual’s self-identification as a musician.

Institutional-identity development is authored by the laws, rules, traditions, and principles established by the culture that developed the institution granting this authority. For example, I am seen as a musician by those around me because of the formal training and degrees I have received from the universities that I have attended and the schools that have employed me as a music teacher. While my husband actively engages in music making on a daily basis, he is not identified as a musician by those around him because he has not been granted this Institutional-identity through his role in society. Similarly, many students on college campuses are involved in creating music, but because they are not affiliated with an institutionally recognized group of musicians, they are often assumed to be “non-musicians.” Is a student who has picked up the guitar and learned to play from watching YouTube videos any less of a musician than the classically trained guitarist? When defining roles of “musician” and “non-musician,” an institutionally-constructed perspective of identity development could become problematic if self-identification and identification by others are in conflict.

A third perspective on identity development is what Gee (2000) labels the Discursive-identity, or examining “who a person is” by virtue of the individual traits that he or she possesses in discourse or dialogue with others. An individual might gain a Discursive-identity as a musician by the ways in which that individual is recognized by his or her family as being musical. As an elementary music educator, I saw Discursive-identity development at work each time I met with my students’ parents. When I was introduced as the music teacher, the first comment I heard from parents was almost always a reference to their child’s Discursive-identity as a musician. These comments came in many forms, from “Sally loves to sing. She has always been so musical,” to “Johnny cannot carry a tune in a bucket.” The Discursive-identity seems to develop even before the child enters kindergarten. Informal observations and judgments of a child’s level of musicality influence this Discursive-identity development even before formal music instruction begins.

Affinity-identity is a fourth perspective on identity development and is defined by a distinct set of practices that tie a person to others in a specific affinity group. For example, followers of the rock music group the *Grateful Dead* often refer to their affinity group as “dead heads.” While this group of individuals may or may not share common characteristics outside of their appreciation of the music of the *Grateful Dead*, it is this one commonality that links these individuals with a collective identity. Opera lovers share a similar affinity-identity because of the music that they listen to and the cultural practices that surround an opera performance. While these groups are both united by a love of music, what being musical means to a “dead head” and what being musical means

to an opera lover are two drastically different ideas. Music educators should consider musicality in all of its forms rather than settling on a single idea of what music making should look like in the classroom.

Gee's four perspectives on identity were useful in conceptualizing the present study because they allowed me to examine the complex and multifaceted identities of students enrolled in Rose's course. Rather than simply focusing on one aspect of the students' identities as musicians, Gee's multiple perspectives allowed me to gather a deeper understanding of how the students' natural abilities, reinforcement from others, larger social structures, and peer groups have shaped their identities as musicians.

The labels of musician and non-musician have been used consistently by music education researchers for the past fifty years (Coggiola, 2004; Fung, 1996; Geringer, 1991; Madsen & Madsen, 2002; Seeger, 1960). For the purposes of quantitative research these labels have served as logical terms to distinguish between research participants enrolled in music degree programs and research participants not majoring in music. For instance, Geringer (1991) describes musician participants as "students enrolled in graduate and undergraduate degree programs in music" and non-musician participants as "college students not enrolled in music degree programs or participating in a music ensemble organization who had fewer than three years of private or school music study" (p. 114). While most quantitative researchers typically define the labels of musician and non-musician, their prominent use in music education literature seems to imply that not all people have an innate sense of musicality. Because of convenience sampling, many researchers examining this musician/non-musician dichotomy have relied on student

participants enrolled in university music courses for non-music majors as the non-musician sample (Radvansky, Fleming, & Simmons, 1995; Rammsayer & Altenmuller, 2006).

While non-music majors enrolled in music courses have served as the sample for the non-musician population in countless quantitative studies, research into how non-music majors understand and make meaning of their experiences with music is a relatively unexamined area. Rather than using the non-musician population as a control group, there is a need for research that legitimizes the musical experiences of non-music majors in the university setting. By examining non-music majors' experiences with music through a qualitative lens, researchers are likely to uncover a richer description of musical identity which takes into account the meanings that the participants themselves make of their own experiences with music. Ethnographic research allows researchers the opportunity to join in community with a group of people before assigning a label that may or may not reflect the understanding of participants regarding their own musical experiences.

Music Making as a Human Phenomenon

All people in all places and in all times have engaged in musical behaviors (Hodges & Sebald, 2011). Although some researchers disagree that music making is a species-specific (Gray et al., 2001), many ethnomusicologists have argued that, in addition to music making being specific to human beings, all people are musicians by birthright (Blacking, 1973; Merriam, 1964; Small, 1998). Blacking wrote:

Man makes music as a patterned event in a system of social interaction, as a part of a process of conscious decision-making; but there is also a sense in which music makes man, releasing creative energy, expanding consciousness and influencing subsequent decision-making and cultural invention. [...] If an understanding of music and music-making is to provide clues to further knowledge in the science of man, it must be assumed that, as in language, the power of musical intention is possessed as much by the receivers of music as by its creators and performers, and that if certain 'musical' capabilities are innate, they are innate for all members of the species and not only a tiny minority. (1973, pp. 4–5)

By comparing music to language, Blacking suggested that all people possess the potential to be musical, just as all people are capable of communicating through various forms of language. Blacking argued, “musical ability is genetically inherited, but in the same way as the biological potentialities necessary for speech” (Bohlman, 1995, pp. 302–303).

Blacking suggested that a primary reason that some individuals may never develop a propensity for music or dance is that these individuals have been deprived of the social experience of participating in these art forms. Blacking has compared this deprivation of musical experience to “the atrophy of speech in children who have been isolated from the human intercourse necessary to develop their language potential” (as cited in Bohlman, 1995, p. 303).

According to Turino (2008), societies such as the Aymara of Peru and the Venda of South Africa do not have a concept of musical talent. Rather, many societies outside of the Western European classical tradition think of musical ability as being available to anyone who invests time and interest into participating in the experience. Small (1998) wrote extensively on the subject of participatory music making or “musicking,” arguing, “To take part in a music act is of central importance to our humanness, [...] and

everyone, every normally endowed human being is born with the gift of music” (p. 8). By exploring how people make music in particular settings, perhaps music educators will gain an understanding of why music making has been such an important part of the human experience.

Ethnography in Schools of Music

While many ethnomusicologists have studied music in other cultures, few have studied the cultural dynamics that operate within conservatories and Schools of Music within the United States. Because I intend to provide insight into the classroom culture in a course for non-music majors in a university School of Music, readers’ understanding of the cultural dynamics that have traditionally grounded university music departments would be helpful. Kingsbury (1988) provided the first ethnographic look into conservatory culture in the United States. Kingsbury spent a semester attending classes and rehearsals at a conservatory of music on the east coast of the United States to gain an understanding of the established codes of behavior and norms operating within the conservatory system. The researcher found a reciprocal relationship operating within the conservatory system where students draw status from studying with a prestigious studio teacher, and the studio teacher’s success is dependent on the success of his or her students. Kingsbury cited the conservatory bulletin as evidence of the power of the studio teacher within the conservatory where over 50% of the bulletin is devoted to lengthy biographical sketches of the performing careers of studio teachers.

Kingsbury (1988) also found that within the conservatory system the assessment of student talent was a constant concern, and the conservatory model seemed to thrive on

the success of a few students at the expense of the failure of most. Throughout his study, Kingsbury describes the celebration of the individual within the conservatory system. Nowhere is this tradition more apparent than in the solo recital. Kingsbury described the solo recital as a ritual where there is a definite boundary separating the performer and the audience. The successful performer is one who is able to hide his or her insecurities behind a mask of confidence and perform the role of the solo performer.

Kingsbury (1988) has argued that his research deals with music not as a “nicely bounded cultural unit but rather with an open-ended framework of cultural concepts and social configurations” (p. 14). Kingsbury’s clearly defined thesis, that there is a definite code of behavior and established norms operating within the conservatory system, is supported by specific patterns of behavior organized into chapters that clearly support his argument. Throughout the text, Kingsbury used the theories of anthropologists such as Merriam, Evans-Pritchard, and Geertz to support his claim that the conservatory operates as a cultural system. While many people use the field of anthropology to study cultures in distant places, as a former administrator in a School of Music, Kingsbury used the theories of anthropologists to study a culture similar to the one in which he has participated himself. The author’s methodology was taken from the ethnographic tradition in which the anthropologist becomes a part of the community that is being studied. To support and illustrate this approach, Kingsbury referenced Clifford Geertz, who stated, “Anthropologists don’t study villages, they study *in* villages” (Geertz, as cited in Kingsbury, 1988, p. 13). Additionally, Kingsbury (1988) stated that the research he conducted was “based on ethnographic research not so much *of* a conservatory as *in* a

conservatory” (p. 13). All data collected for Kingsbury’s research were based on participant observation and interviews with students and faculty. In this sense, as a guest participating in the daily events of conservatory life, Kingsbury presents the reader with a simultaneous insider/outsider look into the culture of this particular school.

Kingsbury does an excellent job of describing the impact of his presence as a researcher upon the students and faculty with whom he is interacting. Kingsbury described the response he received from one of the conservatory secretaries when he explained the purpose of his study and his reason for attending classes. The secretary’s response, “Oh, so *we’ve* become the savages now” (1988, p. 12) clearly describes the trepidation that some members of the conservatory community felt when they realized that they had become the subjects of an ethnographic study. To ensure that he was not viewing conservatory musicians as a distinct “other” in the way that this secretary had feared, Kingsbury clearly stated his background as a conservatory trained musician at the outset, assuring the reader that he was not trying to present this group of people in an “exotic” light (1988). Kingsbury later reflected on the impact of his presence on the environment by describing what being a participant observer in a freshmen level sight-singing course was like. The author found himself in a difficult situation as a researcher, faced with whether he should sing out confidently during sight-singing exercises while the rest of the class was struggling, or whether he should listen and silently observe how the students reacted during these exercises. Because Kingsbury shared this dilemma and others similar to it throughout the text, the reader is able to appreciate the researcher’s attention to issues of subjectivity and reflexivity. Kingsbury presented himself honestly

and openly, both to the reader and to the members of the community in which he was participating as a researcher.

Kingsbury presented a unique look into the culture of the conservatory from a simultaneous insider and outsider perspective. While the author identified himself as a native of conservatory culture, he had no problem identifying the weaknesses or possible problems stemming from the conservatory model. Kingsbury's research contributes to the body of literature on identity in music by asking musicians to take a critical look at the way their own identities were shaped by the institutions of higher education that they attended.

Learning as a Social Construct

A key component of my theoretical framework lies in the assumption that all learning is socially constructed (Bruner, 1960; Carlone, 2011; Holland, et al., 1998; Shapiro, 2010; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). When examined through the lens of social practice theory, identity development in the classroom takes on a particularly situated meaning. According to Carlone (2011):

Social practice theory emphasizes the notion of cultural production, the ways cultural meanings are produced in everyday practice in ways that reflect and/or counter larger social structures. One assumption about identity, then, is that people are formed in practice. (p. 2)

Therefore, what being musical means in one classroom could be completely different from what it means in another. For example, in many classrooms “good music readers” are recognized as “good musicians;” however, in classrooms where the focus is on learning through an aural/oral tradition, the emphasis on music reading may not be as

strong. In a gospel choir, a good musician may be recognized as a confident singer who is able to sing melodic lines back with embellished vocalizations. In a jazz band, a good musician may be recognized as a talented improviser who is able to hear and respond accurately to chord changes.

Research in the area of socially constructed learning in music education has increased substantially over the past ten years (Bradley, 2007, 2011; Dunbar-Hall, 2005; Elliot, 2007; Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2010; Gould, 2007; Greene, 2005, 2008; Mantie, 2008; McLaren, 2011; Silverman, 2009; Wright & Kanellopoulos, 2010). Shapiro (2010) warned educators of the danger in ignoring assumptions of socially constructed realities when he wrote, “education and schooling do little more than re-inscribe and perpetuate the unexamined values, beliefs, and assumptions of the world that surrounds us” (p. 17). According to Carlone (2011), the structure of these normative practices occurs at both the micro level, evident in small group or classroom experiences, and at the macro level, through meanings implied in economics, politics, history, and social structures.

Musicality at the Macro Level

The rise in popularity of reality television shows such as *American Idol*, *The Voice*, and *America’s Got Talent*, is an example of how socially constructed assumptions of what being musical means are created at the macro level. These television programs serve to create, shape, and reinforce the image of the musician for American society. Many reality television shows focusing on music performance create a hyper-competitive construction of what being a musician means that reinforces the idea that one either “has

what it takes” to make music, or one does not. Shapiro (2010) explained how this culture of competition has infected the American education system.

Competition is typically sustained by a “narrative” of scarcity that tells us life is a race, and that in order to get what we believe we should have we must compete aggressively against others who are after the same thing. As a result, invidious comparison rules all of our lives. Envy for what others have controls much of how we think and feel. We consider ourselves to be in a state of constant lack and inadequacy and are always threatened by what others have or are. The relentless propaganda of competition (found in every part of our lives, but nowhere with greater influence than in our schools) is a catalyst for always seeing other people as our enemies. “They” are people who want to harm us, exploit or manipulate us, deprive us of what is ours, demean us. And always for their benefit. In a world permeated by this competitive worldview it is very difficult to see or imagine a planet in which compassion and connection, rather than fear and suspicion, shape human relationships. (p. 13)

When competitive reality television is based upon the idea of exposing people’s musical insecurities, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities, it is easy to see how the general public could develop a way of thinking that suggests that music making should be left to those who are tough enough to handle intense criticism. In this socially constructed reality, music making becomes something in which only talented people participate. Mistakes come under harsh criticism, and the second best performance is quickly discounted as the first loser.

Musicality at the Micro Level

Through classroom ethnographies, researchers have been able to study the culture of individual classrooms at a micro level. Rather than examining larger societal structures, classroom ethnographers seek to understand culture through a rich description of the classroom environment (Carspecken, 1996). Music educators are beginning to

explore how the normative practices that guide instruction in the classroom influence learning outcomes of students (Green, 2005, 2008; Mantie, 2008; Saunders & Baker, 1991; Wright & Kanellopoulos, 2010). Mantie (2008) examined the everyday classroom practices of the *One World Youth Arts Project*, an alternative music education program focused on developing composition techniques of inner-city high school students in Toronto, Canada. Many of the students involved in this program came from families who were homeless, living in extreme poverty, or victims of domestic violence. The students that Mantie followed over the course of the year-long ethnography repeatedly mentioned that traditional large ensemble course offerings at their high school were not appealing. One participant in Mantie's study stated:

The other high schools I've been to, the only thing that pertains to music that they do is band. You know, every school has a band. And not everybody could read music—like myself. So you're not given the opportunity to play in the band 'cause you can't read the notes. But our studio program is different. There's a lot of different things you can do to contribute. If you write poetry, you can write songs. You could come up with a different arrangement, something that's, you know, something that doesn't deal with band (laughs). (2008, p. 477)

The teacher who created the *One World Youth Arts Project*, identified by Mantie as “Mr. Stevens,” explained how the program was able to show students what being musical means in a way that was different from the meaning that confronted them in the traditional large ensemble setting.

The difference is in a traditional program we have music and we're going to make you “wear it”; we're going to apply these musical skills and concepts onto you, and then you will suddenly be able to wear this music and be musical; where the approach here is different. You are so musical already; let's get it out. Let's draw

on your talent and your goals and your dreams, let's bring the music out of you. (Mantie, 2008, p. 478)

Throughout this study, Mantie (2008) sought to find what was unique about the normative, regularly occurring classroom practices in this particular environment. In the *One World Youth Arts Project*, music education went beyond serving as a way to introduce students to Western art music through performance. Mantie (2008) found that students involved in this program were actively engaged in a process of “authoring themselves” through creating their own music individually and in small groups. Mantie (2008) concluded:

These students did not need music for its intrinsic aesthetic beauty. “Music education as aesthetic education,” the “education of feeling,” “enlightened cherishing,” and other such appreciation-based notions of value for art and music do not relate to the real, lived experiences of these students. Music was a powerful force in these students’ lives because it allowed each student the opportunity to become the protagonist in his or her own learning. The power of music for these students was not to be found in discovering the beauty of music, but in discovering, through music, things about themselves. (p. 478)

Green (2008) provided insight on how this specific process of creating music brings new meanings and experiences into existence that listening and performing often fail to elicit.

In making music, students have a direct effect upon inherent meanings, indeed bring them into being, and are thus able to imbue the music with a delineated content of their own. The potential freedom or autonomy of such content from previously taken-for-granted assumptions and definitions is thus potentially exposed. It is precisely by acknowledging music’s logical moment of autonomy from social contexts, that we reveal how readily music becomes filled with social content and significance. (p. 91)

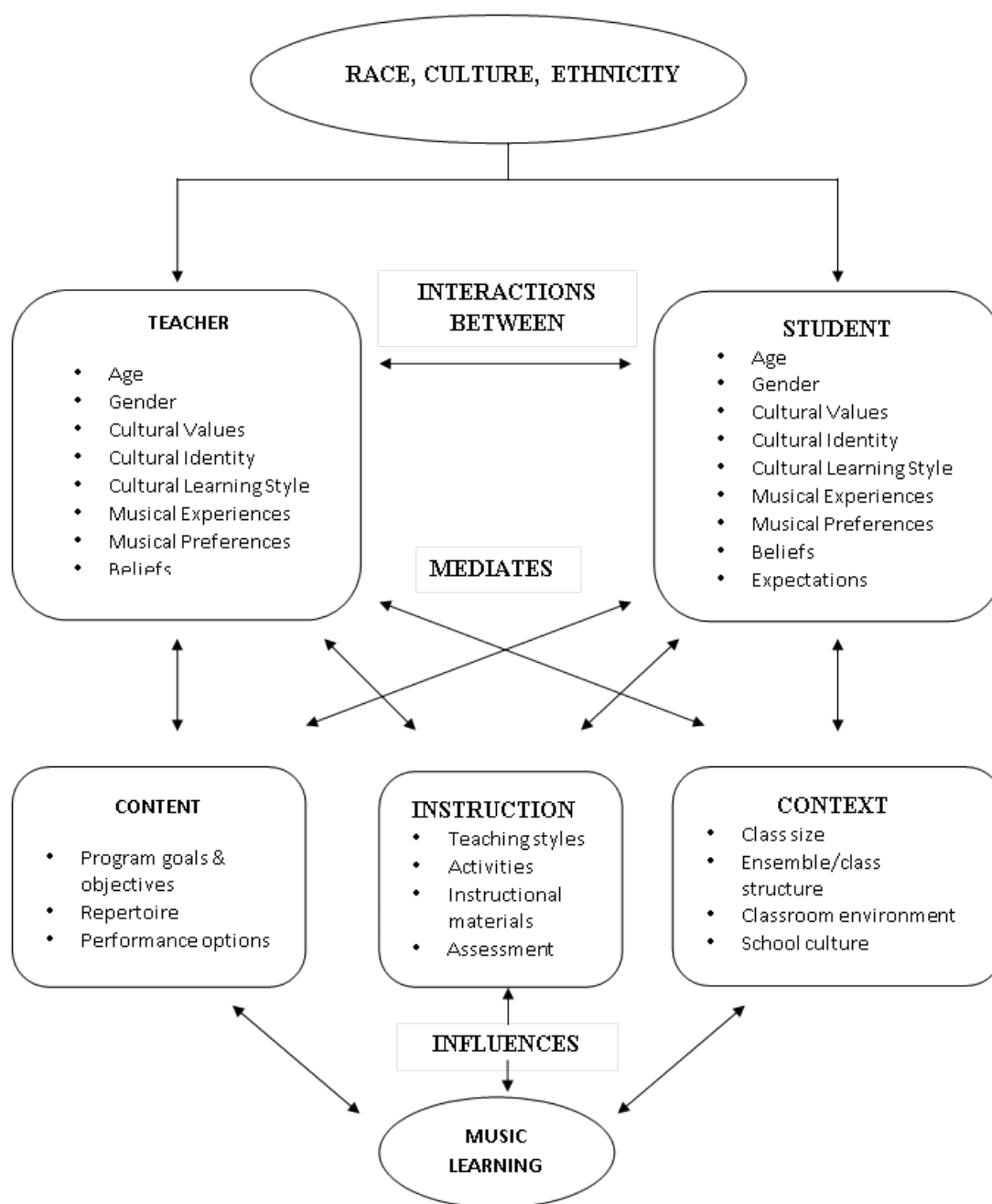
Green's statement emphasizes the importance of freedom and autonomy that are present as students engage in the process of creating. Green (2008) challenged educators to examine critically the assumptions that are present in their music classrooms. The classroom environment that music educators create has a direct impact on how students interpret what being a "good" student means in that environment (Carlone, Haun-Frank, & Webb, 2011).

Carlone (2011) offered a similar perspective on how normative classroom practices contribute to students' identity formation. Rather than asking "what are students learning" or "who are students becoming," Carlone (2011) suggested that educators first examine the critical question, "Who are students obligated to be?" By viewing this question through an anthropological lens, educators are able to look past questions that often separate students into groups of "good" or "bad," or, for the purposes of the present study, "musicians" and "non-musicians," to a richer description of what being successful in a given environment means. By asking this question, Carlone (2011) insisted that students' identities are formed through normative classroom practices. For example, is there normally one right answer to a teacher's question, or are multiple perspectives celebrated and validated? How do students interpret and understand what being a "good" musician means? Are students encouraged to work together, or is success achieved individually? How do leaders emerge in the classroom? How do struggling students fit in with the rest of the group? Carlone (2011) maintained that these meanings are socially constructed and reinforced through everyday classroom practices. By examining the

answers to these questions, teachers are able to achieve a richer understanding of “who students are obligated to be” (p. 4).

A Conceptual Model for Studying Classroom Culture

In the context of studying the development of musical identity, Carlone’s theoretical framework implied that music educators must examine how classroom culture is able to develop, affirm, or disaffirm students’ understandings of their own musicianship. Butler, Lind, and McKoy (2007) developed a conceptual model to illustrate dimensions of the music learning process mediated by race, ethnicity, and culture (see Figure 1). This conceptual model was created to serve three distinct purposes. At its most basic level the model is capable of operating as an organizational structure with the possibility of integrating and categorizing information relating to the influence of culture on the music learning process. Second, the model can be used to “suggest specific research problems and questions, thereby facilitating the formulation of hypotheses and theories that can guide research” (2007, p. 242). Third, the model provides researchers with a tool for examining possible relationships among and between the teacher, students, content, instruction, and context dimensions of the music learning process. Thus, the conceptual model may serve as a tool for mapping regularly occurring classroom practices. While this model could be used in myriad ways, for the purposes of the present study it was adapted as an organizational structure for understanding and observing the culture of Rose’s classroom through tracking regularly occurring classroom practices.



Adapted from "Equity and Access in Music Education: Conceptualizing Culture as Barriers to and Supports for Music Learning," by A. Butler, V. R. Lind, and C. L. McKoy, 2007. *Music Education Research*, 9, pp. 241-253.

Figure 1. Conceptual model illustrating dimensions of the music learning process mediated by race, ethnicity, and culture.

Philosophies that Ground the Curriculum of *MUS 2022*

To present the reader with a sense of context when reading the remaining chapters, I would like to describe briefly the philosophy which grounds Rose's approach to teaching the course, *MUS 2022: Cultivating Creativity through Music*. In a philosophy statement that was included as a part of her *Board of Governor's Excellence in Teaching Portfolio*, Rose (2012) wrote:

When thinking about the future of our planet I often ask, how do we move through this unpredictable time with resilience, ease, and trust? When this fear emerges, I do not underestimate the influence that my students and I have had on each other through hours of art making and honoring the mystery of imagination. Grounded in the diversity of each other's gifts, a vibrant and living organism has emerged, co-created and guided by shared imagination. By coming together through artistic community, we can face our inner and outer dragons with greater resilience and move forward to explore this beautiful and challenging time we find ourselves in, gathering strength from what we truly know, the power of shared imagination. For it is imagination within community that ultimately allows resilience and integrity to emerge within our humanity. (pp. 7–8)

One way that Rose encourages the development of imagination in community is by having students participate in small improvisation groups throughout the semester. Through engaging in active experiences with group improvisation, students seem to broaden their perceptions of musicianship and begin to value their own innate sense of musicality. By working in small improvisation groups, the students begin to see themselves as a community of learners, and begin to value the contributions of each individual to the overall success of the group.

Improvisation in Art and Life

The philosophies of Stephen Nachmanovitch (1990) served as the foundation for many of the improvisation experiences in which students participated as a part of *MUS 2022*. Nachmanovitch (1990) has written extensively about the idea of improvisation as a form of free play.

The heart of improvisation is the free play of consciousness as it draws, writes, paints, and plays the raw material emerging from the unconscious. Such play entails a certain degree of risk. [...] When people ask me how to improvise, only a little of what I can say is about music. The real story is about spontaneous expression, and it is therefore a spiritual and a psychological story rather than a story about the technique of one art form or another. (p. 9)

The idea of improvisation as a form of play, as a return to an uninhibited child-like way of viewing the world with a sense of awe and wonder, resonated throughout the course of the semester in *MUS 2022*. In fact, the organization *Music for People*, where Rose received training in facilitating improvisation, outlines its philosophies in a textbook entitled, *Return to Child* (Oshinsky, 2008). The idea that musicianship is a part of our humanity, a quality that all people possess as their birthright, is echoed throughout the philosophies which ground Rose's approach to teaching.

Nachmanovitch's idea of improvisation as a way of living in a state of spontaneous expression was echoed throughout the course of the semester in *MUS 2022*. Most students enrolled in the course seemed to believe that while the ideas that were covered in class were helpful in musical situations, they could also transfer and apply these ideas to their lives outside of class. In Chapter IV, I will discuss the importance of

risk-taking and exploring the unfamiliar as ideas which students felt they were able to apply both in their group improvisations and in their lives outside of class.

Open Systems Theory

In an interview with Rose, I learned that open systems theory (sometimes referred to as living systems theory or general systems theory) was one of the major philosophies shaping the curriculum of *MUS 2022: Cultivating Creativity through Music*. Austrian born biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy, known as the father of open systems theory, referred to his interdisciplinary practice as a “way of seeing” the world (Macy & Brown, 1998). Open systems theory has been applied in the physical sciences, social sciences, anthropology, political sciences, and psychology. Noted anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1972) referred to open systems theory as “the biggest bite out of the tree of knowledge in two thousand years” (Bateson, as cited in Macy & Brown, 1998, p. 41).

Rose has used the idea of open systems theory to inform the way she encourages relationships between students in her classroom as a community of learners. Macy and Brown (1998) described open systems theory as a process of shifting the focus of attention from separate entities to relationships between and among entities. By studying life in the natural world, open systems theorists have discovered four principles around which all life seems to self-organize. Rose has used these four open systems principles as a foundation for encouraging student learning in small improvisation groups. Macy and Brown (1998) summarize these four principles as follows:

1. Each system, from atom to galaxy, is a whole. That means that it is not reducible to its components. Its distinctive nature and capacities derive from the interactive relationships between its parts. This interplay is synergistic, generating

emergent properties and new possibilities, which are not predictable from the character of the separate parts [...]

2. Despite continual flow-through of matter-energy and information, and indeed thanks to that flow-through, open systems are able to maintain their balance; they self-stabilize. By virtue of this capacity, which von Bertalanffy called *fliessgleichgewicht* (flux-equilibrium), systems can self-regulate to compensate for changing conditions in their environment. This homeostatic function is performed by registering/monitoring the effects of their own behavior and matching it with their norms, like a thermostat. It is understood as a function of feedback [...] This is how we maintain our body temperature, heal from a cut, or ride a bicycle.

3. Open systems not only maintain their balance amidst the flux, but also evolve in complexity. When challenges from their environment persist, they can fall apart or adapt by reorganizing themselves around new, more responsive norms. This too is a function of feedback. It is how we learn and how we evolved from the amoeba. [...]

4. Every system is a “holon,” that is, it is both a whole in its own right, comprised of subsystems, *and* simultaneously an integral part of a larger system. Thus holons form “nested hierarchies,” systems within systems, circuits within circuits, fields within fields. Each new holonic level, say from atom to molecule, cell to organ, person to family, generates emergent properties that are not reducible to the capacities of the separate components. Far different than the hierarchies of control familiar to societies where rule is imposed from above, in nested hierarchies, order tends to arise from the bottom up; the system self-generates from spontaneously adaptive cooperation between the parts, in mutual benefit. [...] (pp. 40–41)

Upon first reading these principals, one might find recognizing how open systems theory could be applied in a music classroom difficult. The way that Rose has used open systems principals as the foundation for building community in *MUS 2022* is quite innovative.

While students work in small improvisation groups throughout the semester, these groups function as a smaller system within the larger system of the classroom community as a whole. In Chapter V, I will discuss how the idea of community functions from an open systems approach.

CHAPTER III

METHOD AND CONTEXT

Site of Research

The site of research, Appalachian State University, was chosen because of its innovative course offerings for elementary education majors and other non-music majors seeking general education elective credits. Dr. Liz Rose and her colleagues at Appalachian State University have developed a series of courses in drama, visual art, music, poetry, and dance that focus on cultivating creativity through engaged experiences in the arts. *MUS 2022: Cultivating Creativity through Music* was designed as a course to meet an arts requirement for elementary education majors, but in recent years many students from other disciplines have enrolled in the course to fulfill general education elective credits. According to Rose, at the beginning of the semester many of the students enrolled in *MUS 2022* seem to distance themselves from their own innate sense of musicality, but through actively engaging in the creative process of improvisation, students are able to begin creating music from the first days of class.

Rose's approach to teaching *MUS 2022* differs dramatically from what might be encountered in a typical music methods course for elementary education majors. Most music methods courses for elementary education majors offered at colleges and universities around the United States hold integrating music into the elementary curriculum as the primary objective for student learning (Propst, 2003). While these

courses may introduce students to improvisation through introductory experiences, improvisation is not considered the primary skill for integrating music into the curriculum. Unlike traditional music methods courses for elementary education majors, the goal of *MUS 2022* is to “explore the creative process and the connection it has to cognitive, psychological, emotional, bodily-kinesthetic, aesthetic, and social development” (Rose, 2012, p. 1). Rose’s course at Appalachian State University was chosen through purposeful extreme case sampling. According to Patton (2002), extreme case sampling is “a strategy which involves selecting cases that are information rich because they are unusual or special in some way” (p. 230). Patton (2002) suggested using extreme case sampling in qualitative research, stating: “the logic of extreme case sampling is that lessons may be learned about unusual conditions or extreme outcomes that are relevant to improving more typical programs” (p. 232). Describing an example of extreme case sampling, Patton wrote:

The sample was purposefully “biased,” not to make the program look good, but rather to learn from those who were exemplars of good practice. In many instances, more can be learned from intensively studying exemplary, information-rich cases than can be learned from statistical depictions of what the average case is like. In statistical terms, extreme case sampling focuses on outliers that are often ignored in aggregate data reporting. Ethnomethodologists are interested in everyday experiences of routine living that depend on deeply understood, shared understandings among people in a setting. One way of exposing these implicit associations and norms on which everyday life is based is to create disturbances that deviate greatly from the norm. (pp. 233–234)

Extreme cases provide interesting environments worthy of study, and because of their uniqueness, they are able to illuminate both the unusual and the typical (Patton, 2002).

Description of Participants

Student participants in this study were undergraduate non-music majors ($N=26$) enrolled in Rose's methods course, *MUS 2022: Cultivating Creativity through Music*. While all students enrolled in *MUS 2022* were non-music majors, the students' musical backgrounds were varied and diverse. On the first day of the course, Rose asked each student to describe his or her previous experiences with music. The students' self-described previous experiences with music seemed to fit into three categories: (a) 15% of students indicated that they still actively participated in music making, (b) 70% of students indicated that at one time they had participated in music making as a member of their school band, chorus, or orchestra, but were no longer actively participating in music, and (c) 15% of students indicated that they had never been active participants in music making. Figure 2 presents a graph of students' prior experiences with music within these three categories.

Of the 26 students enrolled in *MUS 2022*, 17 students were elementary education majors taking the course to meet an arts requirement, and 9 students were from other departments, taking the course as a general education elective. Figure 3 presents a graph of student majors represented in *MUS 2022*. As the instructor and creator of the course, Rose also served as a participant in the study.

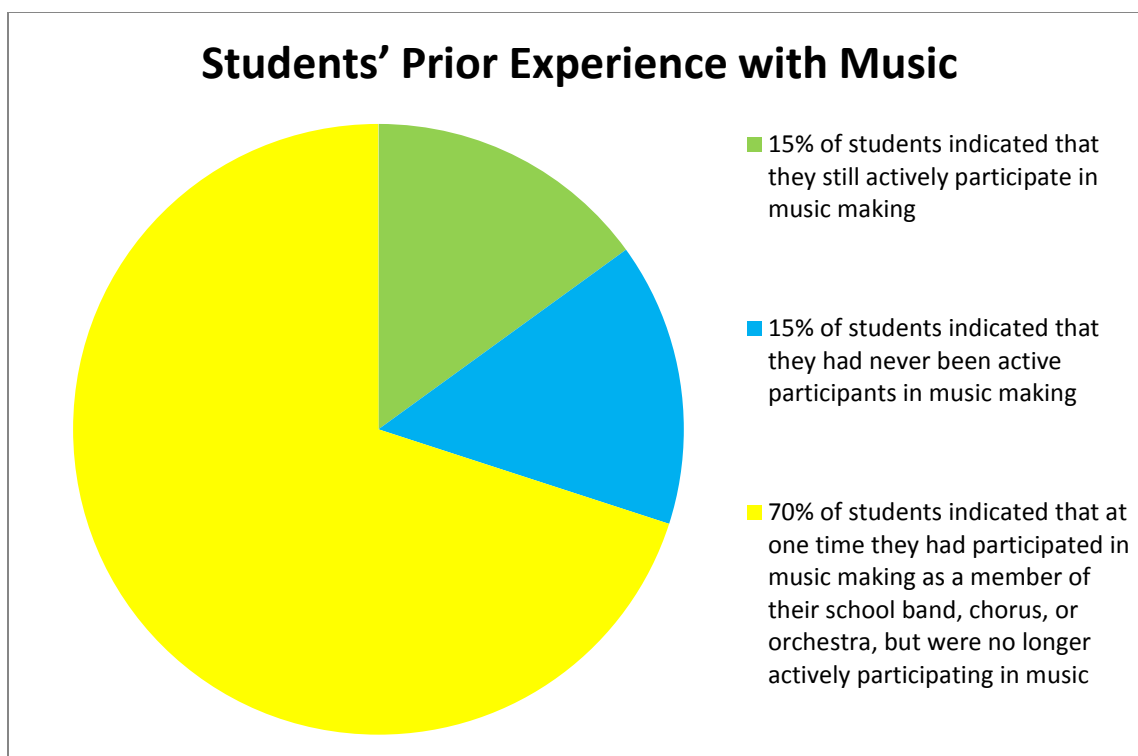


Figure 2. Students' prior experience with music.

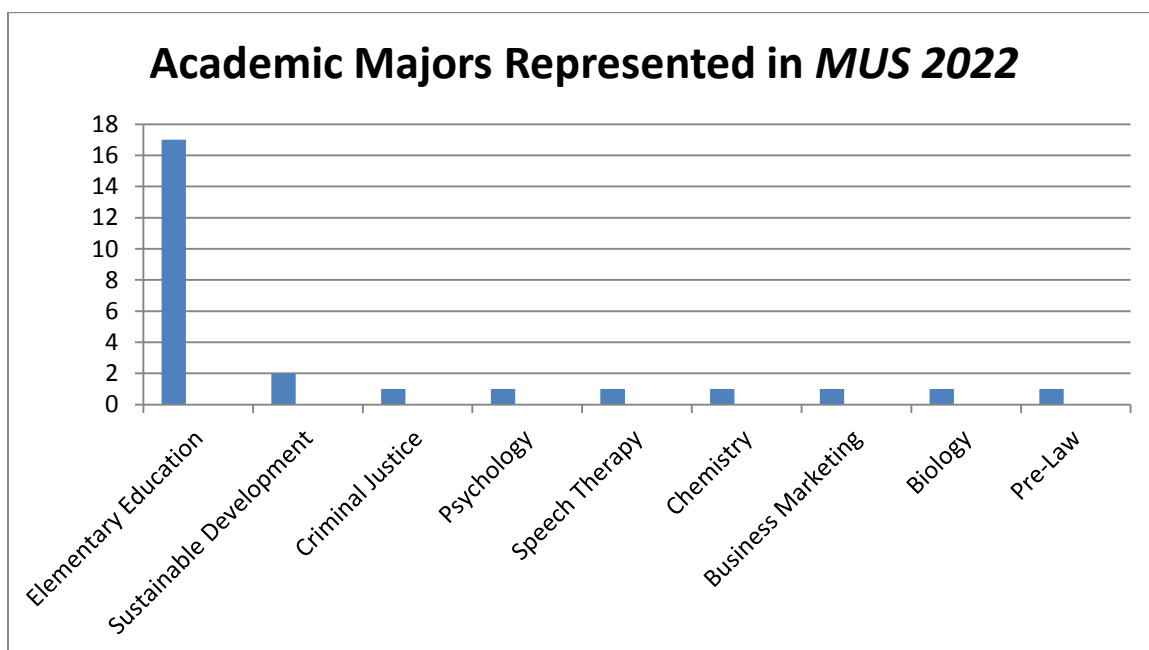


Figure 3. Academic majors represented in *MUS* 2022.

Methodology

The term “ethnography” came from the Greek word “ethnos,” meaning a cultural group, and “graphic,” meaning to describe (Glesne, 2011). Regarding the ethnographic process, Glesne wrote, “Through long-term immersion in the field, collecting data primarily by participant observation and interviewing, the researcher develops the thick description needed for getting at how people within a cultural group construct and share meaning” (2011, p. 17). Glesne used the term “ethnographic” somewhat interchangeably with the term “qualitative” to refer to practices that “seek to interpret people’s constructions of reality and identify uniqueness and patterns in their perspectives and behaviors” (2011, p. 19).

Adhering to an ethnographic tradition, I employed methods of asking and answering questions that investigated meanings students made of their experiences with music in *MUS 2022*. Many of the passages in Chapter Four are primarily descriptive in nature. Throughout these chapters I use vocabulary that is “close to, rather than far away from, the realm of everyday experience” (Friesen, 2011). I strive to write in a style that is as accessible as possible, and that avoids unnecessary methodological specialization and complexity. As Friesen (2011) and Van Manen (1990) suggest, I rely on terms as simple as the pronouns *I*, *you*, and *we* in order to write in a style that connects the reader to the action that occurs in the classroom.

Merleau-Ponty (2002) described why the voice of the human science researcher is a key component of qualitative study.

I cannot shut myself up within the realm of science. All my knowledge of the world, even my scientific knowledge, is gained from my own particular point of view, or from some experience of the world without which the symbols of science would be meaningless. The whole universe of science is built upon the world as directly experienced. [...] We must [therefore] begin by reawakening the basic experience of the world of which science is the second-order expression. (p. ix)

While empirical experimental research is necessary to sustain scientific understanding, the role of the researcher in ethnographic research is not one of objective, unbiased, observation. Rather, through actively participating in the regularly occurring activities of the classroom, I am able to present one understanding of what being a musician means in this particular classroom.

Data Collection

As a participant observer in *MUS 2022*, I have used culture and its role in the social construction of learning as a theoretical framework for studying and describing the everyday recurring practices between students, teacher, content, instruction, and context (Butler, Lind, & McKoy, 2007). Data were collected through participant observation, analysis of video-recorded class sessions, individual interviews with student and teacher participants, focus group interviews with students, analysis of student assignments and reflections, and examination of course documents. Glesne (2011) described participant observation as one of the foundations of ethnographic work, writing:

Participant observation provides the opportunity for acquiring the status of “trusted person.” Through being a part of a social setting you learn firsthand how the actions of research participants correspond to their words; see patterns of behavior; experience the unexpected as well as the expected; and develop a quality of trust, relationship, and obligation with others in the setting. Interview questions that develop through observations can therefore be better interpreted. (p. 63)

Participant observation in this study began from the first day of class and extended through the final day of exams, constituting 32.6 hours of observation. Observations were conducted according to a pre-structured observation protocol designed for studying music classroom culture in terms of interactions between teacher, student, context, content, and instruction (see Appendix B). The observation protocol was adapted from a conceptual model developed by Butler, Lind, and McKoy (2007).

Raw field notes were recorded throughout class observations, and were processed into detailed field write-ups within a twenty-four-hour-window following each observation. Miles and Huberman (1994) described field write-ups as crucial data from observation that can be “read, edited for accuracy, commented on, coded, and analyzed” (p. 51).

Individual interviews with participants were conducted during the third week of classes. Interviews were conducted according to a pre-structured interview protocol (see Appendix C) developed to address research questions one and two. The following advice from Maxwell (2005) was used in developing the pre-structured interview protocol:

The methods you use to collect your data (including your interview questions) do not necessarily resemble, or follow by logical deduction from, the research questions; the two are distinct and separate parts of your design. This can be a source of confusion, because researchers often talk about ‘operationalizing’ their research questions, or of ‘translating’ the research questions into interview questions. Such language is a vestige of logical positivist views of the relationship between theory and data, views that have been almost completely abandoned by philosophers. There is no way to mechanically ‘convert’ research questions into methods; your methods are the means to answering your research questions, not a logical transformation of the latter. Your research questions formulate what you want to understand; your interview questions are what you ask people in order to gain that understanding. (pp. 91–92)

In addition to individual interviews, a focus group interview was conducted with student participants on the last day of classes. Conducting the focus group interview with students allowed me to collect rich data concerning the way students interacted together in groups and made musical decisions. Questions for focus group interviews were developed according to an early analysis of existing data. Miles and Huberman (1994) strongly recommended early interweaving of data collection and analysis in order to aid the researcher in collecting informed data.

Data Analysis

All interviews and observations were recorded and transcribed, resulting in text data that were coded and analyzed according to qualitative research procedures (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). As suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), field notes from observations were finalized within 24 hours of each observation in order to assist in identifying patterns through early data analysis. Field notes, observations, and interview texts were reviewed repeatedly to find emergent patterns and themes relating to the meanings participants made of their experiences throughout the course. Once these patterns and themes were identified, I began a detailed analysis of data through a process of coding (Creswell, 2008). Creswell defines coding as:

The process of organizing material into chunks or segments of text before bringing meaning to information. It involves taking text data or pictures gathered during data collection, segmenting sentences (or paragraphs) or images into categories, and labeling those categories with a term, often a term based in the actual language of the participant (called an *in vivo* term). (2008, p. 186)

By observing Rose's course throughout the semester previous to the semester in which the research study began, a list of start codes or general patterns of behavior was generated prior to collecting data. As suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), this list of start codes was applied to the first sets of field notes and then checked to see if these patterns of behavior seem to fit in the present study. (See Appendix F for a list of start codes.)

Data were analyzed through coding, organization, and filing using the qualitative research software package NVivo 10 (NVivo 10, 2013). Triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) was achieved through comparisons of interview transcriptions, focus group transcriptions, observation transcriptions, and analysis of student reflections and assignments. Issues of validity were addressed through a systematic process of member checking all data sources (Merriam, 1995). Member checking was achieved as I was in constant communication with participants, sharing patterns of behavior that emerged through the examination of field notes and interview texts. Throughout the data analysis process, I asked for feedback from participants on patterns that emerged from the data.

Validity

Maxwell (2005) defined validity in qualitative research as "the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account" (p. 106). Maxwell (2005) stressed that validity should be a goal rather than a product, and qualitative researchers should not be concerned with seeking an objective truth. Validity was assessed in relationship to the purposes and circumstances of the study, rather than being taken out of context. A crucial component to strengthening the

validity of qualitative research is identifying validity threats, or alternative explanations for the phenomenon that is being observed. As suggested by Creswell (2008), Maxwell (2005), and Schram (2003), in the section that follows, specific threats to the validity of the present study were identified and addressed, and strategies used to rule out particular threats were described and outlined.

Researcher Subjectivity

Miles and Huberman (1994) identified researcher subjectivity as an important threat to the validity of qualitative research. Because I believe improvisation is an important tool for teaching musicianship at all levels, a potential threat to the validity of this study would occur if only data from participants who supported improvisation as an effective teaching tool for all students were collected and analyzed. To guard against this validity threat, rich and detailed data were collected from *all* student participants, regardless of their feelings about improvisation or the course in general. Maxwell (2005) and Creswell (2008) suggested searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases, which I implemented into my data collection methods by searching for examples of behavior that contradicted my initial conclusions. Long-term involvement in the classroom as well as repeated observations and interviews provided data that were detailed and varied enough to provide a clear representation of the culture of Rose's classroom (Maxwell, 2005).

Reactivity

Reactivity, or the influence of the researcher on the setting or individuals studied, is another validity threat often associated with qualitative studies. Maxwell (2005) argues:

Trying to control for the effect of the researcher is appropriate to a quantitative, variance theory approach, in which the goal is to prevent researcher variability from being an unwanted cause of variability in the outcome variables. However, eliminating the actual influence of the researcher is impossible, and the goal in a qualitative study is not to eliminate this influence, but to understand it and to use it productively. (pp. 108–109)

Maxwell (2005) suggests that while there are some steps the researcher can take to prevent undue influence, such as refraining from asking leading questions in an interview, trying to minimize the researcher's effect is not a meaningful goal in qualitative research.

To ensure that I interpreted the words and actions of my participants genuinely, I used member checks as a way to address any threats to the validity of my research. According to Merriam (1995), member checks involves the process of “taking data collected from study participants, and the tentative interpretations of these data back to the people from whom they were derived and asking if the interpretations are plausible, or if they ring true” (p. 54). Following focus group interviews at the end of the semester, I sent my preliminary interpretations to participants via email in order to encourage participants to question, critique, give feedback, affirm, or collaborate with me before final interpretations of the data were made (Tracy, 2010).

Ethics

Employing ethical research practices is one of the eight “big-tent” criteria of qualitative research, constituting a “universal end goal of qualitative quality” (Tracy, 2010, p. 846). For the purposes of this study, I adhered to the procedural ethics encompassed by the Institutional Review Boards of The University of North Carolina at Greensboro and Appalachian State University, including mandates such as those requiring me to do no harm, avoid deception, and negotiate informed consent. I ensured that the students enrolled in *MUS 2022* understood that their participation in the study was voluntary, and their decision as to whether to participate in the study had no impact on their grade in the course. I informed students that I would refrain from collecting video, observation or interview data from any student who did not wish to give informed consent to participate in the study.

Names and identifying information of student participants were kept confidential, and pseudonyms have been used throughout Chapter Four and Five in the place of students’ actual first names. As the instructor of the course, Rose agreed to be identified in the study, and is the only participant who is not identified by a pseudonym. Throughout the course of the study I valued the trust of my participants, and adhered to a high standard of relational ethics, described by Ellis (2007) as an ethic of care that “recognizes and values mutual respect, dignity, and connectedness between the researcher and researched, and between researchers and the communities in which they live and work” (p. 847). Adhering to the tradition of a feminist communitarian ethical model, I viewed my participants as co-researchers, actively assisting me in telling their

own stories and giving voice to their meanings and interpretations of their experiences with improvisation (Schram, 2003).

Presentation of Major Findings and Themes

In Chapters IV and V, I present the major themes that contributed to what being a musician means in *MUS 2022*. By presenting the voices of students from individual interviews, focus group interviews, class transcripts, and final papers I present a unified idea of what being a musician means in *MUS 2022*. This unified idea centered on risk-taking and developing musicianship within small improvisation groups. To illustrate the primary themes that emerged from the data, I utilized Van Maanen's (1988) technique of presenting vignettes to vividly portray the meanings of themes that emerged from data analysis.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS: EMERGENT THEMES

Three primary themes emerged from the data: (a) the idea that taking risks was central to the development of musicianship in *MUS 2022*, (b) the importance of creating a community of care where students felt safe to express themselves musically, and (c) students felt that this particular classroom community allowed them to recognize the musician within themselves and within others, regardless of the extent of previous musical experiences or formal musical training. In the first section of this chapter I explore the theme of taking risks. I begin with a vignette taken from my first day of field notes that illustrates some of the fear and hesitancy that I observed on the first day of the course.

Musicians Take Risks

Vignette 4.1: Getting Past Fear and Judgment

The energy in the classroom was very familiar to me as I gathered in a circle along with the students enrolled in MUS 2022 to listen for further instructions from Rose. The ‘first day of school jitters’ seem to be a persistent and ever-present part of every first day of classes. The students were overtly attentive and seemed eager to please as they gathered in a circle around Rose who stood to one side of the room at the piano. I could almost sense the thoughts of the students who stood in the circle with me: “Oh please, not another silly ice breaker. What will I say if I have to introduce myself?”

Rose instructed students to walk to the pulse of the music that she improvised at the piano. Before taking the first step around the circle I could sense the slight hesitancy of several students. I heard a few students whisper nervously to each other and groan. I saw several other students roll their eyes at the idea that they were being asked to physically participate on the first day of classes. The students nervously took the first few steps to the steady pulse of the music as they stared down at the floor. "Look up! Smile at each other! Greet each other!" Rose called out over the pulsing rhythm of the piano. Sly grins began to appear on the faces of the students who were walking this circle together. "This is not serious folks!" shouted Rose, who shook her entire body and beamed at students with a silly and contagious grin.

When the pulse stopped, the students were instructed to find someone close by and introduce themselves. Most students shared their name and their major, and many students began to spontaneously share their prior experiences with music in the past. The first student who introduced herself to me quickly told me that she had "no experience with music at all." "I sing along with the radio in the car, but that is about it. Don't expect me to be auditioning for American Idol anytime soon," she said. (Field notes, 8/21/13)

As the example above illustrates, many of the students enrolled in *MUS 2022: Cultivating Creativity through Music* came into the course with a distinct idea of what it meant to be a musician and whether they possessed those qualities themselves. (see Figure 1 which outlines students' self-described previous experiences with music on the first day of class.) As Rose reviewed the syllabus with students on the first day of class,

she mentioned several times that she was going to “meet students where they were,” and that students did not have to have any formal musical training to be successful in the course; however, getting over their preconceived notions of what constitutes musicality was an ongoing journey for many students throughout the semester. Self-judgment was particularly a problem for students who came into the course with previous formal training in music. In an individual interview during the third week of classes, Jasmine, a student who had participated in seven years of her middle and high schools’ chorus programs mentioned that she was still uncomfortable playing percussion instruments alone in class.

Jasmine: [Laughing] I don’t like it! I don’t like being put on the spot.

Raychl: Tell me more about that. What goes through your mind when Dr. Rose asks you to play a solo? What is going on in your head?

Jasmine: I am trying to think about what I am going to play and then I can’t focus on what the people before me are playing. Like what we are doing in class now is trio playing. One person plays the steady beat, one person plays an ostinato, and one person is soloing.

Raychl: So you get a chance to play each role?

Jasmine: Yes.

Raychl: Which role are you most comfortable with? The ostinato, the steady beat, or the solo?

Jasmine: I am really comfortable with the steady beat, and the ostinato is ok, I just don’t like playing the solo.

Raychl: So tell me more about that. Not liking the solo. What do you think that is all about?

Jasmine: I am just afraid to be wrong. I know Dr. Rose says that there are no wrong notes, but that doesn’t mean that to me there are no wrong

notes. It is acceptable to play a wrong note in the class, but for me, I just don't want to play a wrong note. I just don't want to make a mistake.

Raychl: So what do you think might help you to feel differently about playing solos? Or is there anything that would help you with that?

Jasmine: No. I don't think so. This has just been the way I have felt since elementary school. There is always a right answer, and when I find that right answer I can move on. If I get the wrong answer, then I go back and re-work it until I get the right answer. There is always a right and a wrong. Even when I was in chorus and I was learning to read music, I was learning the right notes. If a pitch wasn't quite right we would fix it to get it where it needed to be, either lower or higher. When we were competing for solos we were competing with other people to see who would sing it the best, to see who would sing all of the right notes. That is just the way I have been taught, the way I have learned since I was eleven. And now I am twenty. So that is nine years of programming. That is just the way I have always learned. When I mess up I can't really play it off. I know I messed up. I am trying to be more confident and change my mindset, but it is hard.

Raychl: Yeah, yeah! I hear you. Do you think that is something that can be learned? Can that confidence and that ability to just put yourself out there and go for it be learned, or is that just something you either have or you don't?

Jasmine: I think it can be learned. In a way I think it might be like learning a new language. The earlier you learn it the better, and the older you are, the harder it is to learn.

Raychl: Do you think there are situations that discourage us from learning that way? Situations that make us feel like we can't be open?

Jasmine: Oh yeah. My seventh grade music teacher was like that. My sixth grade music teacher was awesome, but she left, and I missed her a lot. And then I got this new music teacher in seventh grade and she was definitely one of those people who would say, "You! You have the wrong note." She would single you out. Can you imagine how that felt as a seventh grader? That was terrifying as a little kid. That was only my second year in chorus, and having someone single me out like that made me not even want to try. That made me want to just mouth the words and hope no one would notice. I think when you embarrass students like that in front of everyone it is awful. You want everyone

to sing the right notes, so you have to correct your students, but you can do it in a way where it's not like, [Jasmine points at me] "YOU. YOU are doing it wrong." It is important to cradle people's confidence that way. I think that is very important especially when you are working with younger people. (Jasmine, Interview, 9/13/12)

This portion of the interview indicates that Jasmine's previous musical training contributed to her hesitancy in taking risks as a student in *MUS 2022*. In another individual interview that took place at approximately the same point in the semester, Ariana, one of Jasmine's classmates who had also participated in a high school chorus, shared similar fears.

Raychl: So when you looked at the syllabus on the first day and you saw what this class was all about, what was going through your head?

Ariana: Eh, I figured I could do it. When Dr. Rose said we had this final project performance I was a little bit nervous though.

Raychl: Tell me about that.

Ariana: I love performing. I was a cheerleader, dancer, all of that, but this isn't something I am very comfortable with, so it made me nervous. Just the fact that I have to get up in front of my peers made me nervous. Dr. Rose has been really good about easing us into it, so it is not like the final project will be the first time we are up in front of everyone making music, so now it is less haunting and daunting than it was at first.

Raychl: So I really want to dig into that feeling of nervousness. What exactly were you afraid of when you saw that performance listed on the syllabus? What made you scared?

Ariana: I don't like being judged by my peers. It is weird. I am an education major and I have a couple of classes where you have to get up and teach in front of your peers, and it is always awkward teaching in front of my peers. I feel like I could get up and teach a bunch of kindergarteners how to add 2+2, but if you tell me to teach that to my peers I am just going to laugh the entire time. And then there is the

fear of doing it wrong, or not sounding good, and all of that mixed together is just scary.

Raychl: So that fear of doing it wrong . . . where do you think that comes from?

Ariana: Well I think that we have always been taught that there is a certain way to do things, and so when we get to this class and Dr. Rose says that there are no wrong notes it makes me think, wait a minute... are you kidding me? All of my life I have been told that there are wrong notes!

Raychl: Do you believe Dr. Rose when she says there are no wrong notes?

Ariana: I want to believe her, but part of me still thinks, are you sure? I mean sometimes when I play it just sounds weird, and Dr. Rose is like, “No, no, that’s not wrong.” And I am just like, are you sure? I am trying to believe you... but... are you sure this doesn’t sound really weird?

Raychl: So there is still distrust there, right?

Ariana: I don’t know if I would call it distrust, I am just not used to it. I mean I am used to someone telling me this is the note you are supposed to be singing, or this is the note you are supposed to be on and if you are not hitting that note, you are wrong! So coming into this class and being told I am not wrong is totally counteracting everything I have ever learned. (Ariana, Interview, 9/27/12)

Fear that stemmed from previous experiences in school where there was “always a right and wrong answer” was a theme that emerged throughout student interviews.

Nachmanovitch (1990) wrote extensively about a similar problem which he observed in the lives of artists, a dilemma he labeled the “judging spectre,” that occurs when the creative person can be seen as embodying or acting as two inner characters, a simultaneous muse and critical editor.

The muse proposes, the editor disposes. The editor criticizes, shapes, and organizes the raw material that the free play of the muse has generated. If,

however, the editor precedes rather than follows the muse, we have trouble. The artist judges his work before there is yet anything to judge, and this produces a blockage or paralysis. The muse gets edited right out of existence. If he gets out of control, the inner critic can be experienced as a harsh and punishing father figure. This is the inhibiting spectre who haunts the lives of many artists, an invisible, critical, bullying force that seems to stand in our way. [...] But there are two kinds of judgment: *constructive* and *obstructive*. Constructive judgment moves right along with the time of creation as a continuous feedback, a kind of parallel track of consciousness that facilitates the action. Obstructive judgment runs, as it were, perpendicular to the line of action, interposing itself before creation. The trick for the creative person is to be able to tell the difference between the two kinds of judgment and cultivate constructive judgment. (pp. 133–134)

I asked Rose how she dealt with students' judgments, fears and anxieties in an interview that took place during the third week of classes.

Raychl: Do you see a lot of fear in your students during the first weeks of class?

Rose: Yes. I see it all throughout the semester.

Raychl: How does that manifest in class? What ways do you see this fear come out in class?

Rose: Students that choose to play the same instrument every class period, students who look down when I ask for a volunteer to play a solo, in students who are physically shaking when they are asked to play a solo. I used to ask my students to write a paper about their fears associated with improvisation, and I would get the most amazing things. Things I have heard in the past are: will I be good enough, will I make a fool of myself, nobody will listen to my ideas. And these are just conditioned pieces that come from their own personal experiences. Particularly for those who have had a music background, I always hear, I am playing wrong notes. All of those old, old, hard, conditioned pieces come out in this class. I see it their eyes, I see it in the tenseness of their bodies, and I see it in their responses.

Raychl: So can you tell me a little bit about your thought process, about how you go about alleviating those fears?

Rose: Yeah. That is a great question. Stating up front in the classroom that there are no wrong notes. When a student plays something quirky I always try to take that idea and use it somehow. I always try to demonstrate my own ability to improvise when something sounds crazy or is not quite fitting. Honoring the fact that when something sounds messy it is ok. When I start coaching the small improvisation groups it is always hard to know when to push a student. I might say, “I notice that you have been playing the drum in the same pattern for a while, is there another pattern that you can find?” And even getting into deeper conversations with students about what is going on. So that is the therapist in me, the artistic fine line. It takes going with your instinct and knowing when to go in. And sometimes it works and sometimes it is just like, WHOOSH. [Dr. Rose laughs as she makes a sweeping gesture as if the idea is going right over her students’ heads.]

Raychl: [Laughs] Yes! So when I talk to the students and I ask them what makes a good improviser, many of them tell me that it takes someone who is fearless- someone who has a lot of courage. So is that something that you can teach? Is that a quality that they have to already have coming into the course? Or is it a combination?

Rose: I see most of the students coming in without that, to be honest. When you have a student like we have in our class now that can model that so freely.... And they see me modeling that, but they expect that, because I am teaching the course. So when they see their peers modeling it, that is a whole different sense. And I think sometimes the students see that and say, there is something in that person that I can own, but sometimes they see that and say, ‘that is not me... and that will never be me.’ So not all of the students leave with those new skills. One thing I always try to teach is can you just be aware of where your fear is.... and you know, I think that is enough. We only have 15 weeks, and I don’t have the delusion that my students are going to come out fearless. I just talk a lot about where that tension and fear is coming from. (Rose, Interview, 9/17/12)

Through observing Rose’s interactions with students throughout the semester I found that one way she seemed to alleviate her students’ fears of making mistakes was through storytelling. In the following vignette, adapted from field notes taken on the third day of

classes, Rose shared a story from her childhood that seemed to stick with her students throughout the course of the semester.

Vignette 4.2: From Accidents to Artwork: Stories that Shape Teaching

Rose: *I want to share a story with you about something that happened to me when I was just in Kindergarten. Can you imagine the year 1965 in Eastern North Carolina. Eastern North Carolina was poor, full of tobacco fields; life was very structured and conditioned. There were so many rules and you had to conform to those rules and norms to survive. Imagine you are in a kindergarten class in the basement of a church, you are five years old and you know you do not quite fit into this world you were born into. You are sprawled out on the floor and you are doing your favorite thing in the world, painting with tempera paint that is mixed together in old juice containers. And as you are painting you accidentally knock over one of the containers of paint and it spills all over the floor. Now remember, you are a five year old growing up in a very structured, conform or die environment, and you just spilled paint all over the floor and it is soaking through your brand new dress. What do you do? You start sobbing! You cry! And now can you imagine the moment when your kindergarten teacher comes up to you and says, “Sarah Elizabeth! There is a rainbow on the floor! Can you help me make a big arc on the floor with your hands? Let’s turn this spilled paint into a rainbow!” And we got down on the floor and made an arc in that spilled paint. Mrs. Lipscomb and I smeared that paint all over the floor, and at the age of five I truly connected with that woman and she connected with me. I will never forget that moment. That was how Mrs. Lipscomb lived, and that is what creativity and imagination are all about. She was so bold and so creative. She was a really unique woman and I recognized right then and there that there was something special in that moment. I recognized that possibility of jumping out into life. My teacher had this thing called imagination and she wasn’t afraid to live it! She had NO FEAR. And you know, that is what the artist does. The artist says, wait a minute, there is something beautiful here in this mess and I am going to bring it to life and I am not going to be afraid. It is such a gift! What does the world say? The world says clean it up! It is a mess! Look at all of this paint you have spilled all over the floor and all over your clothes! But imagination says, this is beautiful! (Field notes, 8/28/12)*

Rose's students obviously saw beauty in this story as well, because several students mentioned this story in their final papers at the end of the semester. During the last week of the semester I asked students to respond to several essay questions. In response to the question, "What is the essence of this course?" several students recounted the story that Rose told on the third day of class. Tara wrote:

I would say that this course is about trying new things, and being able to see the world as a play room rather than a set of rules that we are to live by. Looking back on the semester, one of the things that I will remember the most is the story that you told to us about being in preschool when your teacher made a beautiful rainbow out of paint spilled on the floor. This teacher took something that most saw as messy or a hassle and turned in it into art and beauty. I believe that this course was about just that point. This course was about taking our past experiences or musical history and what parts of those that we might consider to be messy or a hassle and turning them in to something beautiful that we could appreciate. On the first day of this course when we introduced ourselves we also shared any history in music that we might have, and many students made comments such as, "but I was never very good at music." These are the comments that we worked on altering all semester by learning to accept things as being unfamiliar rather than judging our level of talent in the subject. I feel that the essence of this course is what I will take with me into my life in the future. The same story about turning a mess of paint into art is the memory that I will take with me. I think that the point of the story is something that we are meant to take with us into our futures and share with other people that we come into contact with. We should always try to see the beauty in every situation and the art in every piece that someone creates. (Tara, Final Essay, 12/9/12)

When asked to write about how she might take what she learned from this class and use it in the future, Jamie wrote:

When I become a teacher, there are many things from this course that I will always keep in mind. I loved the story about Dr. Rose in Kindergarten, using the paint, and being scared and embarrassed when she spilled it all over the floor. Instead of the teacher being angry or upset, or even just tolerant of the accident, her teacher inspired Dr. Rose's creativity by saying that the paint on the floor created a rainbow. This is the type of support and love I want to give to my future

students. To make them feel ok when they stumble, and help them see the beauty in all things. (Jamie, Final Essay, 12/9/12)

Similarly, Marie wrote:

I think I will take a lot that I have learned during this class into the future. I want to be an elementary school teacher, and at that time in school it is so important to emphasize creativity. It is good to tell students that “there are no wrong notes” or there are no mistakes. It is good to tell students to look at each other and themselves and say “I am (or you are) great.” Dr. Rose told us a story about when she was in preschool and she was painting and spilt the paint all over the floor. Instead of yelling at her the teacher got on the floor and put her hands all in the paint making an arc shape and said, “Look, you made a rainbow!” Dr. Rose said that is something that has changed her life forever. Instead of making the child feel like they made a mess she showed the child that you could make something beautiful out of anything, you don’t always have to stay inside the lines. I will take that story and that philosophy with me all throughout my teaching career because I feel that it is very important for students to understand that just because something is not perfect or exactly right, this does not mean that it is completely wrong. (Marie, Final Essay, 12/9/12)

The story that Rose shared on the third day of the semester was powerful enough to root itself into the minds of her students. The idea of overcoming self-judgment, accepting mistakes, and recognizing fear as a place for growth were all major themes found throughout the students’ final essays. Many of the students enrolled in the course wrote that they wished to incorporate these ideas into their future classrooms. In fact, in response to the essay question regarding how students would incorporate the material they learned in *MUS 2022* into their lives in the future, students were more likely to write about non-musical ideas than musical ideas. Elementary education majors often commented on Rose’s patience, positive energy, and ability to create a community in the classroom where all students felt that they were able to take risks, step out of their

comfort zone, and express themselves as a valued member of the classroom community. These were all seen as qualities that students wanted to incorporate into their own classrooms one day.

Vignette 4.3: There Are No Wrong Notes

*It is the fourth day of the semester. The students in MUS 2022 are getting to know each other, the atmosphere in the classroom begins to feel a bit more relaxed, and students talk and joke with each other as they enter the classroom. Rose begins class today by showing students a video that she and several of her colleagues have created to raise awareness for the upcoming performance of *Dragons in the Mountains*, a community art piece which will be featured on October 26th and 27th as a part of the *Appalachian Performing Arts Series*.*

*Dragons in the Mountains has a cast of 85 amateur performers who will come together to create a performance that features song, dance, poetry, puppetry, and intricate costumes that call attention to the environmental issues facing the Southern Appalachians. Each student enrolled in MUS 2022 has been instructed to attend a performance of *Dragons in the Mountains*, create an art piece inspired by the show, and write a reflective paper that details how their art piece serves as a metaphor for some aspect of the performance. (Field notes, 8/30/12)*

In an interview conducted during the third week of classes, Rose described the idea behind *Dragons in the Mountains* and how the project came together.

We are intentionally creating this little open ecosystem where anyone can be a part of the performance. And that feels good, honoring the fact that diversity in itself creates something much more vital than a homogeneous event. In the natural

world, if everyone is the same, and we are all at the same level, everything will eventually die. We are inviting a cast of 85 amateur performers to come in and sing the voice of the Southern Appalachians; to move, to dance, to create poetry, and to create puppets. It is really an experiment. The fact that it is now a part of our university's performing arts series is now a stressful thing for me. It has really allowed me to see how vulnerable I am in the midst of the pressure to create a great performance. I am faced right here [Rose points to her eyes] with that pressure. At a really deep level I come from a community arts basis, so for me to be fully engaged with this and be aware of that pressure, that tension that exists within the moment has been such a process of growth for me. I am really grateful for it. What we are saying is that there are concerns within our community; there is mountaintop removal going on here, fracking is coming in to our state, and there is this voice of the Southern Appalachians that wants to be heard now. We are trying to take this environmental concern within our community and empower our community to give it a voice. We are trying to empower the community to feel like they are doing something about it. We are attempting to draw in these artistic metaphors that will touch our performers and our audience at a deeper level so that they might leave with a deeper sense of 'we are all intertwined here.' How rich that is that we can take care of what is going on in our community. How empowering that is and how vital that is. Can we be more aware of each other in our community and recognize who is in need? Can we as a result of this give voice to those who do not have a voice? Can we find vitality and community in that? That is going to mean a choir that sings out of tune is being featured on the university's Performing Arts Series. That is going to mean that people who buy tickets to this event are going to leave and say to each other, "You know... that choir was really not in tune." [Rose laughs as she holds up the flyer for *Dragons in the Mountains* on the Appalachian Performing Arts Series.] But we are having this ritual here celebrating open systems theory. I don't know if it is going to work or not. I am going to be watching faces from behind the stage. I think for me personally, to have the guts to do this, it is a great model for my students. It is a risk, it is scary. I feel that it is the right thing to do, it is totally an improvisation, and it is going to be quirky and messy. There is no clear outcome for this. Typically when there is a show on a performing arts series, there is a *very clear outcome*. When you have a recital here in the School of Music there is a very clear outcome. That is very different from pulling 85 people together for two rehearsals and seeing what emerges. I really feel the need to talk to my students about the importance of this. I am trying to instill in my students the fact that *you are good enough*. What you bring to the table is *good enough*. We have to trust in that. (Rose, Interview, 9/18/12)

After Rose talked with her students about the importance of bringing the community together to create *Dragons in the Mountains*, several of her students from *MUS 2022*

volunteered to be a part of the cast. Students who were not music majors, not theatre majors, but elementary education majors were participating in a performance that was being featured on the university's Performing Arts Series. Rose's encouragement allowed these students to "trust that they were good enough" to be a part of the performance.

Nachmanovitch (1990) suggested that perhaps what keeps people from taking risks and participating in creative processes like the one students encountered in the performance of *Dragons in the Mountains*, is the fear of being overwhelmed by teachers, authorities, or "idealized others." Nachmonovitch wrote:

Deviation from the true self often arises from comparison with or envy of the idealized other. [...] Geniuses or stars are set up as unattainable goals we cannot possibly match. [...] We may fear the ghosts of our parental or teacher figures, but also the great creators of the past. Brahms feared that he could not measure up to the ghost of Beethoven; so may a contemporary symphonic composer fear the ghost of Brahms. [...] There may also be multiple ghosts of ourselves hanging around; all the people we might have been if the past had taken a different turn; we should have, could have, would have done *x*. We all indulge in this sort of self-torture from time to time. What can save us is our knowledge that true creativity arises from *bricolage*, from working with whatever odd assortment of funny-shaped materials we have at hand, including our odd assortment of funny-shaped selves. (pp. 135–137)

The creative bricolage that was assembled by amateur performers through the performance of *Dragons in the Mountains*, allowed students to see that creative performance was not reserved for those who had formal musical, theatrical, or artistic training. By seeing peers and community members perform openly and vulnerably, students were beginning to trust that musicality and creativity may be an essential part of the human experience.

Vignette 4.4: Exploring the Unfamiliar

One way that Rose allowed her students to trust in themselves was to set up the classroom environment so that students could automatically be successful with improvisation. On the fourth day of class, using a process similar to the Orff Schulwerk approach, Rose had her students improvising on barred instruments using the notes of the C pentatonic scale. Rose allowed students to choose barred instruments from the instrument storage room, and the students arranged themselves in a circle on the floor ready to play on their soprano, alto, and tenor xylophones and metallophones. What follows is a portion of the class transcript from the initial lesson in melodic improvisation on the fourth day of class:

Rose: *Can we arrange ourselves so we can really see each other? That is always so important when we are making music! Alright, now there is a way that we can set up these xylophones so that no matter what we play it will sound fabulous. What we are using is a pentatonic scale, or a five-note scale. No matter what notes we use in this scale it will sound very consonant or easy on the ear. For example, if I play a C and a D together they sound pretty harsh. [Rose modeled by playing C and D at the same time.] Do you hear that dissonance? But if I play a C and a G together, those two pitches sound very consonant to our ear. They sound really nice together. [Rose removes the F and the B bars from her xylophone.] For now I want everyone to remove the F and the B bar. Pentatonic scales are used all the time in folk songs. The pentatonic scale is a beautiful scale, but it can also be very limiting, so I don't want you to use it all semester. So now I am going to give you some basic technique on how to hold your mallets. Pretend you are riding a bike or a motorcycle. Your arms are really relaxed. You pull the sound out of the bar in a way that is similar to how we played on the drum in our last class. Alright, let's begin by just exploring what this sounds like.*

[Before Rose even finished her last sentence the students are busy creating melodic improvisations on their instruments. I see smiles on the students' faces as they realize that these notes do sound good together, no matter

what they play. Rose allows the students to improvise freely for a few minutes before she interrupts them to give more instructions.]

Rose: *In order to create a piece of music that has structure, and therefore has meaning, we need to give our music some sort of form. I am going to improvise for eight beats, and then I am going to land on C. Would you count those eight beats for me as I play? [Rose creates a melody using the notes of the pentatonic scale as her students keep a steady beat, counting aloud together. Rose lands on C at the exact moment that her students reach count eight.] That sounds final doesn't it? Let's all try that together. See if you can count those eight beats aloud as you play, and we will all land together on C when we reach count eight. [The students improvise on their xylophones for eight beats and land on C when they reach count eight.] Great, now let's try that same process, but this time we will land on G instead of C when we get to count eight. [The students repeat the improvisation process, but this time they land on G when they get to count eight.] That has a different sort of feel to it, doesn't it? It doesn't quite feel as final as it did when we landed on the C. Let's see what happens when we put those two phrases together. Who feels comfortable playing xylophone with me? [Marie, a student who is sitting beside Rose in the circle, volunteers to model a duet.] Marie and I are going to create a duet using the simplest form known to man. [Rose brings out a single bass xylophone resonator bar pitched in C.] We are going to call C our home tone. I am going to use this bass bar to play a drone on C to a steady beat, and while I am playing the steady beat, Marie is going to improvise for eight counts. When we get to count eight, Marie you are going to land on G. Then we are going to trade roles. I will pick up where Marie left off and improvise on the xylophone, and Marie you will keep the steady beat for me on the bass bar for eight more counts, but this time when we get to count eight I will land on C. You got that, Marie?*

Marie: *I don't know. I am really nervous.*

Rose: *OK, so this is unfamiliar. That's ok. Marie needs some good vibes, folks! Let's send Marie some really good vibes here!*

[Rose and Marie perform a simple call and response duet for 16 beats. Marie improvises the call as Rose plays a drone on the steady beat, and then Rose improvises a response as Marie plays the steady beat. The class cheers and applauds at the end of the 16 beat improvisation. Rose smiles a big, goofy grin at Marie who beams back at her.]

Rose: *So it is really simple, isn't it? Now it is your turn! Find a partner and create a duet just like Marie and I did. When you get to count eight make*

sure you are passing the melody to your partner with your eyes. Look at your partner. I want you to really see that you are passing the melody off to someone new.

[Rose circulates around the room as the students begin to create their own improvised duets. I notice that several students have started to play more than one note at a time, creating harmonies in their own improvisations. The students look at each other with animated faces and make eye contact as they pass the melody back and forth.]

Rose: *Great! Let's try something new. Who would feel comfortable singing today?*

[No one volunteers to sing. Even the students who have participated in chorus throughout middle and high school stare down at their feet in silence.]

Rose: *Oh, it won't be so bad! Who told me on the first day of class that they have had some experience singing before? I need those people to come and help me out.*

[Several students reluctantly stand up, leave the circle, and cluster around Rose who is standing by the piano.]

Rose: *OK, now I need a few people who are comfortable playing piano.*

[Rose does not have to wait long for a volunteer. Brody immediately stands up and walks over to the piano. Brody mentioned on the first day of classes that he had never taken piano lessons before, but that he had a piano at home, and loved to play around on it. Another student, Andy, also stands and walks over to the piano. Andy and Brody have demonstrated over the first four class days that they are both extroverted, eager to learn new things, take risks, and serve as a model for the rest of the class. These two young men have quickly begun to emerge as leaders in the class.]

Rose: *Great! Thank you, Andy. Thank you, Brody. Everyone else will be playing on the xylophones. Let me give these folks on the piano some quick instructions.*

[Rose leans in to whisper instructions to Brody and Andy who are sitting at the piano. Brody and Andy listen intently, nodding their heads in agreement. Rose then motions for the group of singers to huddle around her. She whispers more instructions and sporadic giggles erupt from within the huddle. From across the room the other half of the class and I

wonder what instructions Rose is giving to this group that is causing so many giggles. After 30-40 seconds the huddle of singers around the piano breaks up. The students look at each other with hesitant grins and then look sheepishly down at their feet.]

Rose: *Alright, let's try a little experiment here. Brody and Andy are going to start us out at the piano, you folks playing the xylophones are going to come in next, and then we have a little surprise that we are going to add in with this group.*

[Rose turns to the group of singers and gives them a reassuring grin.]

Rose: *Alright Brody, you start us off.*

[Brody begins by playing an open fifth bourdon on C and G at the piano. I quickly realize that Rose has intended for Brody to play a steady beat, but Brody is struggling with keeping the pulse consistent. Rose walks over to the piano and whispers something in Andy's ear. Andy joins in by playing the steady beat on the piano along with Brody an octave above. With Andy's help, the bourdon pattern quickly locks into place. Rose motions to the students seated at the xylophones that they should begin to improvise. The room is filled with the sound of pentatonic improvisations. Rose turns toward the group of singers who are standing in a tight group around the piano. She gives a big grin and motions for the students to begin singing. Although there is a large group gathered around the piano I hear only one voice. It is Andy's voice. It rings out over the sound of the piano and the xylophones. Andy croons away, improvising vocally using the notes of the pentatonic scale as he continues to play the bourdon with Brody at the piano. Andy's body sways back and forth to the sound of his own voice. Nervous giggles emerge from the group of singers huddled around the piano, but this only causes Andy to sing even louder. He scoops up to a high note as he closes his eyes and tilts back his head, hamming up the performance as much as possible. Suddenly there is a powerful moment of recognition that rings true in the room. There is spontaneous music making happening here, in the moment, in a room full of students who barely know each other. Slowly more voices begin to sound throughout the room. The group of singers, huddled around the piano, has been given the permission they needed to sing. Pentatonic vocal improvisations mix with the sound of improvised melodies on the xylophone. Crouching low to the ground, with one finger pressed over her lips, Dr. Rose motions for the students playing the piano and xylophones to drop out. All that is left is the sound of singing; the sound of hesitant, weak, imperfect voices singing beautiful pentatonic melodies. Rose does not motion for the group to stop singing, but slowly voices begin to fade away into a hush. There is a

moment of silence that lingers in the room. The students remain still with their mouths open in surprise. Something powerful has just happened in this moment that we have all shared together.] (Field notes, 8/30/12)

For me, as a researcher, that moment of silence in the classroom after the students' voices faded away was every bit as powerful as the pause that happens in a concert hall filled with professional musicians who have just performed the last chord of a major symphony. The moment just before the conductor lowers her baton, the moment just before the applause where the orchestral musician's heart is racing from the adrenaline of a well-articulated performance. For a split second, that was the feeling that permeated the room, and just as that feeling in the concert hall quickly subsides into applause, smiles and giggles broke out from around the classroom.

What was striking to me about this class was how quickly the atmosphere in the room changed from being hesitant and judgmental to open and embracing of the unfamiliar. It was similar to the feeling you might have when you are finally awakened to your own consciousness in the midst of a beautiful day after being bogged down by worries and anxious thoughts. In everyday life it may take something as simple as a sunset, a cool breeze upon your back, or the sound of wind rustling through the leaves to awaken you to this moment of beauty in your own consciousness. In Rose's classroom that moment of awakening came when Andy took the initial risk to break into the unfamiliar and sing out loud and strong. Andy, who had taken piano lessons as an elementary school student but who had not been enrolled in any type of formal music training since the fifth grade, created what seemed to be a tipping point in class that day.

As I interviewed several students later in the week, it was obvious that others recognized this moment as well.

In individual interviews, when I asked students who in the class seemed to model the characteristics of a good improviser, Andy's name was mentioned in every single interview. For example, Ariana, who sang with the group at the piano in class that day, explained what she was feeling throughout the experience.

Ariana: We had this one day in class where everyone was playing xylophones and Dr. Rose had all of the singers get up and sing. We all just kind of looked at each other and were really confused. We didn't know what we were supposed to sing! So we all just sat there in silence staring at each other like, 'what are we supposed to do now?' I am used to having it all laid out there on the page in front of me. I am very plan oriented, you know? I just didn't know what to do. So it was really strange to be able to let that all go. I felt like it was wrong because of what I had been taught before. You know in chorus class we had to each be on a certain note. This was counteracting everything I knew about singing. There were a couple of us who were just barely humming, and then all of a sudden one or two people just started belting it out. I didn't know what to do so I just started singing louder. It was really interesting to not have that music in front of me. It was a totally different experience.

Raychl: Yeah, I noticed when you all were gathered around the piano you started out singing really softly and then one person started singing really loud.

Ariana: Yeah! Andy! I feel like we just followed his lead.

Raychl: Yeah! What was that all about? Why did everyone else start singing louder then?

Ariana: I think that was what it took for all of us to get on our feet and realize that maybe we could do it. It just takes one person to jump in for the rest of the class to follow. That was really what was going on there. We started thinking maybe we could just go for it.

Raychl: So think of someone in your class who is a really good improviser. Someone who . . .

Ariana: Andy! Definitely Andy. He is always dancing around and having so much fun with all of this. Sometimes I look at him and really wish I could do that. But I am just not as comfortable with all of this as he is. I look at Andy and I just think, “Yeah, you go dude!” He is hilarious! He is always singing and dancing. The other day when Pat did his rap Andy just started beat boxing. I look at him and I think, “Oh my gosh, I wish I could do that!” (Ariana, Interview, 9/27/12)

Similarly, Kristy responded to the same question by immediately mentioning Andy.

Raychl: If you think about your entire class, is there anyone that sticks out in your mind as a really good improviser?

Kristy: Yeah! I think his name is Andy. I was partners with him on Tuesday and I told him I really had no idea how to do any of this and he told me not to worry, we would figure it out. And you know, we both got really into it! He is always the first person to volunteer to show off what we have been working on, and I think that is really cool. I don’t know if he is a musician or not, but he always seems really confident.

Raychl: Do you see any of those qualities that Andy has in yourself?

Kristy: When it comes to music I wouldn’t say that I am shy, but I definitely don’t want people to think that I don’t know what I am doing. I would like to be more open, but I am still a little reserved. I think that as the semester goes on I will start to be more open. (Kristy, Interview, 9/11/13)

Pat’s reasoning for why Andy came to mind as a great improviser seemed particularly unique.

Pat: Andy is a really good improviser. He has really impressed me. He is a really good dancer. He has some pretty suave dance moves. [laughs]

Raychl: I think that is really interesting. I asked you who in your class was really good at improvisation, and you mentioned Andy because he is a

really good dancer. I think that is pretty cool that your answer didn't really have as much to do with music as it did with dance. What do you think that is all about?

Pat: Well that is just it. I think it is all about expression. Music is a type of art, dance is a type of art, painting and sculpting, all of these are art forms. All of these art forms are just ways that people have of expressing themselves. I think Andy is just really comfortable expressing himself through dance. (Pat, Interview, 9/13/12)

In an individual interview with Andy I learned that he had grown up in Kenya and moved to the United States when he was in middle school. While Andy had participated in music classes as a student in Kenya, he did not enroll in music classes as a student in the United States because music classes were not required.

Andy: I would say that the values this class is trying to instill in us are similar to the values I learned in my music classes in Kenya. In the music class I took in Kenya you were not required to know anything about music when you came into the class. You were required to take the course, but you did not have to already know how to play an instrument to participate. This class reminds me of the music classes I took back in Kenya.

Raychl: Were music classes in the United States different from the ones you saw offered in Kenya?

Andy: If music was what you were focusing on, if that is really what you wanted to go into as a college student, I feel like that is who those music classes at my high school were for. I almost felt like if you did not want to play in the school band you were just left behind. Band was not really an inviting class. As opposed to this class, where anyone can walk in and feel an appreciation for music, not feel pressured at all, and still be able to come out of their shell and try new things.

Raychl: If you were to think about what it meant to be a musician in this class, what might that mean?

Andy: Dr. Rose emphasizes that there is nothing that you could do in this class that could be wrong. She emphasizes that we should just break out, and feel good, and do what comes naturally. I would say that being musical in this class is about breaking out of your norm and putting yourself out there and just having fun with the instruments. If Dr. Rose calls you out to play a solo you can just play what feels right. She really emphasizes that there are no wrong notes, which is good, because it allows people to come out of their comfort zones and feel comfortable playing new instruments. This kind of thing is able to untap something that you might have on the inside and not even know it. This class allows your creativity to grow.

Raychl: When I ask other students in your class who they think is really good at improvisation, do you know whose name always comes up?

Andy: Who?

Raychl: Andy! Andy is a good improviser. They all mention you! Tell me why you think when I ask this question I always get the same answer. What do you think these students see in you that makes you such a great improviser?

Andy: From my perspective this is just one of those classes that you can really let yourself go and do what feels right. With most other classes you are either right or wrong. You are correct or incorrect. But in this class, the way that Dr. Rose has it structured, it is so open and I can just do what feels right when I am sitting down at an instrument. I can do my own thing. I mean honestly, that is all that I am doing. I just feel really comfortable in the classroom and I guess that is what is pushing my boundaries to be open and try new things. After taking music in elementary school I just sort of pushed music to the side, but coming into this class I feel like I am learning new things that I can definitely use in my own classroom. I really feel like I am learning again, seeing things anew, and discovering how to use the things we learn in class in my everyday life. I love being able to do that. (Andy, Interview, 9/13/12)

Interestingly, Andy did not have more formal musical training than others in the class; yet most students identified him as the best improviser in the class. According to Andy, being a good musician in *MUS 2022* seemed to be more about being open, thinking

creatively, and having fun doing what comes naturally. I was also intrigued that Andy had compared *MUS 2022* to the music courses he took as a student in Kenya, stating that the music courses he remembered in Kenya were more inviting and welcoming of students who did not have previous experience playing instruments. In the final section of Chapter Four, I will explore the ways that the philosophies which ground *MUS 2022* may take a broader, more global perspective on musical identity than is typically experienced by many people in the United States.

Artistic Metaphor and Self-Expression

During the semester, students enrolled in *MUS 2022* were required to attend three music performances and reflect on these performances by creating an artistic response. Rose devoted three class days to having students share their photography, paintings, sketches, poetry, electronic music pieces, and even baked goods that reflected their understanding of the performances that they attended throughout the semester. In addition to creating and sharing their art pieces, the students were required to submit an arts integration paper that demonstrated the relationship that existed between their art pieces and the music that inspired their work. Rose used a rubric to evaluate how well the students articulated the relationship between the music that they heard and the art form that they created as a response to the performance. The rubric that Rose used for grading the artistic response papers can be found in Appendix I.

Here is an excerpt from an arts integration paper written by Pat who chose to compose what he called “urban poetry” in response to the performances that he attended throughout the semester.

Journey

I remember how it felt as I was standing there in silence before the first note was sounded, the twang of a guitar string, the hum of a bow, the beat of a bass drum deep in my chest and soul. I remember feeling the tension that always accompanies the beginning, the steady murmur of dwindling conversations, the hush that followed, and the scrutinizing eyes of the crowd fixed firmly on the stage before them. But above all else I remember thinking to myself “Why the attention? What is it about music that draws so many people in? What do they expect to find?” My road to obtaining a better understanding of music this past semester has been less of a project and more of a journey. Between travelling to concerts, writing “urban poems” and even composing a bit of music for myself, this class has been a musical experience that has broadened my horizons and opened me up to new art forms that have forever changed the way that I view music. [...]

The day we had been waiting for since the beginning of the semester finally arrived with *Dragons in the Mountains*. Immediately I could sense a difference in the musical style from what I was used to – Instead of having a single lead singer there was often a choir harmonizing vocals for the melody. The music was free and lively, the tempo would quicken and slow, accent on important beats, crescendo during powerful parts and fall to represent emotion. The music was tied at the center, and all flowed together as one rather than being separated into individual songs and parts. I also noticed a key idea within the entire program, an essence of nature represented through every musical piece. With the “Superstorm Sandy” nearing the coast I thought I had a set topic, but once again the music told a different story. The more I started to write, the more I wanted to write a poem instead of a rap, and images of my Uncle Leon began to emerge in my mind, who had recently passed. It was then that I realized – I didn’t need music to make my poem flow all together, just as the concert had done. Sometimes, the power of silence holds more authority than any magnitude of crescendo can ever have. My poem quickly turned into a sonnet and the focus switched from the hurricane to my Uncle. Just as in the concert I used imagery of nature to represent feeling and I built crescendos with my words rather than in the music every time. I talked of death as a cycle, just as all of the music flowed together in the cycle with nature in the performance.

Over the course of the semester, and through the concerts and my own project experiences, I was lucky enough to finally come to a simple realization: The reason why music draws so much attention, why music brings so many people in, is that music is in all of us. What people are expecting to find when they attend a concert is really just as simple as themselves. Music is astounding because of how similar it can be at the core, based around a steady beat, ostinato, and melody, yet how differently it can be expressed, how it can convey such unique emotions to

different people. Music has an effect on all of us, never in the same way, and never without speaking to us as an individual. (Pat, Arts Integration Paper, 11/5/12)

Pat titled his arts integration paper, *Journey*, which aptly described the process of transformation that he went through over the course of the semester. When Pat shared his last poem, *Uncle Leon*, during one of the last weeks of the course, he talked about how the performance of *Dragons in the Mountains* had allowed him to come to terms with the recent death of his uncle.

Uncle Leon

These fall winds fostered the tremors of your death
The sound twisted, turned the mountainous peaks
I stepped forth to gaze at all that was left
But only viewed your cadaverous cheeks

And the birds all screamed at the tops of their lungs
About the shallow irony of life
They spoke in strange words and dissonant tongues
That pierced my heart like a jagged knife

And all the hills rolled, lethargically sleeping
The brooks babbled slow as though filled with mud
I fell to my knees, wretchedly weeping
But out of my eyes welled not tears but blood

A drop then cascaded down to the ground
Where a rose bloom sprouted; new life was found
(Pat, Poetry, 10/25/12)

It is clear in this example that Pat had fully embraced the idea of artistic metaphor and how it can be used as tool for self-expression. In an interview with Rose during the third week of the course she explained to me that using artistic metaphor was one of the

essential ideas that she wanted students to come away with as a result of taking *MUS* 2022.

I spent the last class teaching metaphor as another way of showing the students how to deepen their life experiences. If you see everything from a literal perspective, goals and objectives, literal and concrete, music does not have nearly the depth as it does if you take it into the artistic metaphor that we know exists as musicians and artists. Teaching that to the students and hopefully having them experience that at some point is really important. That is what this arts integration project that the students are working on will do. It is all about taking music that you love and finding a metaphor to illustrate that experience. That is all I am asking for. The students turn their first art project in this Thursday. On Thursday we will have a full studio class of looking at the students' art pieces and finding those metaphors. So what I will do in class on Thursday is listen as the students describe the metaphors they have used in their art pieces, and believe me they will describe these quite literally and concretely. I will listen and try to extrapolate some of these metaphors they have used and see how they might be found in life. That is sort of how I facilitate that. They will be quite successful in the literal interpretation of their art pieces, and then I will be there to help facilitate the process of having them think deeper about these metaphors. (Rose, Interview, 9/18/12)

Three times throughout the semester the students shared their artwork with their peers in class. When I asked students to reflect on the essence of this course at the end of the semester, many students mentioned this process of creating and sharing their artwork with their peers. Jamie wrote:

The essence of this course is appreciating music as more than just sound, but also as beauty, art, and expression. I think that Dr. Rose sees music in this way, because it seems to be the thought behind the arts integration project. We had to create another art form based on musical concepts and the feelings we heard in music; we created tangible productions such as paintings, food, photographs, and jewelry to represent something that we could not see or touch. The reason music has been around so long, and will continue to be present as long as mankind exists, is because it is such a personal way of expression. I think Dr. Rose, through this course, was helping us to find that expression and put it into musical form. When we would present our art projects to the class, I noticed that Dr. Rose

always pointed out something that was special about each piece; for every project, every person, and every time. I felt such support and appreciation from her that it made me more comfortable and it made me want to learn what she had to teach. She transformed our class into a community where it was easier to learn. Dr. Rose also showed me that it's ok to look silly; sometimes it's necessary to when learning something new. (Jamie, Final Paper, 12/9/12)

Carlee also mentioned the arts integration project when writing about the essence of the course.

For me, this course has been about trying new things. It teaches us about music, which is all around us in the world that we live in. More than that, it has shown how this music can be used as a medium of expression. Dr. Rose has shown how music is connected with other art forms like theatre and visual art through the three concert responses. It supports the idea that music, and art in general, is woven into and a part of our everyday life. This course works to make that a reality for all students regardless of their musical backgrounds. (Carlee, Final Paper, 12/9/12)

Allie wrote about how the process of sharing her artwork with her peers helped her feel more comfortable expressing her ideas.

I have grown more in my confidence as an artist through sharing my paintings with the class throughout the semester. After this class, I will feel more comfortable expressing myself creatively, which will greatly improve my creativity as a teacher as well. This course focused on bringing out the artist in each of us through appealing to different mediums that interested us. For some of us, we could express music through paint, or through spoken word, or through creating a song of our own. No matter how we chose to express ourselves, our ideas were always seen as beautiful and artistic. (Allie, Final Paper, 12/9/12)

Brody summed up how he will take the ideas he learned in *MUS 2022* and carry them into his life in the future.

I will most definitely continue to use the creative process that I have learned to allow myself to be influenced by the beauty of other things. This class helped to show me the beauty not only in art, but in people and in community, and that is something that I will value for the rest of my life. (Brody, Final Paper, 12/9/12)

In reading the final papers at the end of the semester I found that students overwhelmingly mentioned self-expression, risk-taking, exploring the unfamiliar, and getting past fear and judgment as pieces that contribute to the essence of *MUS 2022*. While students rarely mentioned musical skills or incorporating music into the curriculum, much of the students' writing focused on the philosophies which grounded the course. From reading the final papers, I found that students were obviously beginning to transfer the ideas of risk-taking, self-expression, and exploring the unfamiliar into situations outside of the realm of music and into everyday life.

Throughout the semester, when Rose stressed to her students the importance of accepting mistakes, she was not simply speaking from a musical perspective; she was encouraging her students to celebrate the growth that comes from accepting and learning from the weakest parts of themselves. When Rose spoke with enthusiasm about exploring the unfamiliar, she was not only giving her students permission to take chances in their improvisations, but in their lives outside of class as well. Teachers strive to teach for transfer and hope that students will learn to apply knowledge and skills that were learned in one context to other situations. Listening to the voices of students enrolled in *MUS 2022* clarified that this transfer of ideas was taking place.

Creating a Community of Care

One aspect of the course *MUS 2022* that quickly became apparent was the importance of establishing a community of care. The Oxford Dictionary defines community as, “a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals” (“Community,” 2013, para. 2). By observing the way that Rose structured the first several weeks of the course I was able to see how she intentionally created a community that centered on mutual care and support of the students enrolled in the class. Rose’s decision to spend a lot of time early in the semester on building community within the class and within small improvisation groups was important for students to feel comfortable taking risks and making music together.

Rose used a particular approach to aide students in creating small improvisation groups of five to six students each. During the third week of classes Rose asked for volunteers who felt comfortable with their own musicianship. Five students in the class came forward and served as the basis for the formation of five different small improvisation groups. Next, Rose had the remainder of the students in the class who were not as comfortable with their own musicianship choose which group they would like to join. Rose stressed to the students that the five initial volunteers who formed the basis of these improvisation groups were *not necessarily group leaders*. Just because these five volunteers felt that they were comfortable with their own musicianship did not make them “boss” or “leader” of their group. Rather, the volunteers were there to support their respective groups and to provide the necessary balance of confidence that would serve to strengthen the group as a whole.

In an interview with Rose during the third week of class I asked her what qualities she thought a group needed to have to be successful in creating a good improvisation.

The best improvisers can lay down a track for the weaker players. That is what it is really all about. In each group there are always one or two more experienced players, and what really makes a group work is if those experienced players can shift into a place of, “Yes, I can support you.” What makes a group work is when everybody can rise to the occasion. Not just having three people play a steady beat the whole time while two people play amazing solos. But rather, can I play a duet with the weakest person and lay down a track that enables the weakest player to emerge. When that system of support emerges we have a life experience that will keep us resilient as humans forever. This idea is the key: *it is not about me, it is about us.* (Rose, Interview, 9/18/12)

When asked about the essence of the course at the end of the semester, many students recognized the sense of community that was established both within small improvisation groups and the class as a whole as an essential piece of what tied the course together. In her final paper, Kary wrote:

The essence of this course is all about creating bonds. There is no individual component of this class; it is all about making deep connections, and being able to create relationships with the use of musical components. These relationships are created between the individual and classmates, society, art forms, and the environment. In order to find balance and sync when performing with other classmates, it is crucial to connect by listening to others, making eye contact, and relaying other visual cues. I came into this course pretty much thinking: “Great, I signed up for a music class, and yet I have absolutely no music ability.” It was intimidating, but over the course of this class I have learned that I am a musician; everyone has the potential to be a musician. The trick is to stop focusing on you, and focus on creating a balance between group members; listen to what is being played. (Kary, Final Paper, 12/9/12)

Reba wrote about how this sense of community helped her break out of her shell and try new things in class.

I have always been afraid of change or putting myself out there, and this class has helped me to break out of that shell. I feel like we have all grown as a community in our class, we all had to get past the awkwardness and accept that everyone is learning. This can be a very important skill later on in life, and especially in the work place. If you don't get along or you can't work together with your coworkers, how can anything get accomplished? I want to become an elementary school teacher and if I don't form a relationship with my fellow teachers and most importantly my students, no one will feel comfortable enough to break out and be different. (Reba, Final Paper, 12/9/12)

Carlee wrote about how Rose established a positive learning environment in the classroom.

The biggest thing that I will take away from this class is the mindset that Dr. Rose taught it with. Her attitude from the very beginning was one of encouragement and excitement for the subject. Dr. Rose created a learning environment that was accepting to all levels of musical skill, which is essential for the type of class this was. As an education major, this is the thing I found most valuable and applicable to my future. Though I won't be teaching music, I want to create this same kind of environment in my classroom for the benefit of my students. Such a strong sense of community was established through the practice of positivity and the idea that "there are no wrong notes." Everyone was made to feel comfortable and at home. I would like to bring these elements into my future classroom. (Carlee, Final Paper, 12/9/12)

Even Veronica, who in her small group often seemed hesitant to try new ideas or fully embrace the idea that "there are no wrong notes," seemed to recognize that *MUS 2022* was a safe place where it was okay to be yourself. Veronica wrote:

If someone asked me to describe this course, I would definitely say it is a place in which you can be yourself. This course isn't only about music. It is about learning to express yourself, stepping outside of your comfort zone, and building confidence in everything that you do. It is also about having an environment where you can be comfortable around your peers and know that they will support you in everything that you do. It is definitely a little family where we all have fun together, grow as individuals, and learn about each other and ourselves. (Veronica, Final Paper, 12/9/12)

Brody credited his experiences as a part of *MUS 2022* not only with helping him form friendships within the class, but in his life outside of class as well. Brody wrote:

This class helped to show me the beauty not only in art, but in people and in community, and that is something that I will value for the rest of my life. As a freshman I came onto this campus not knowing anyone and really longing for that sense of community that I had back home. This class helped me to be stitched into a new community not only within the classroom but into the family-like community that has been created on the floor that I live on within my residence hall. (Brody, Final Paper, 12/9/12)

The idea of community came up again in a focus group interview that I held with students on the last day of the semester. The purpose of the focus group interview was to allow me to collect rich data concerning the way students interacted together in groups.

Brody: This was one of my favorite classes because it was not as structured. It was different than any other class I have taken in the past.

Andy: It wasn't the typical 'easy class' that you sign up for. It was not like that at all. It was more like Dr. Rose made a community out of the class. Going into class you wanted to put in your own contribution to the classroom. Even if you did not have to put as much time into this course, you still did not want to disappoint your peers.

Raychl: So Andy used the word community. Most communities have something that unites them, right? What unites this community?

Brody: I think it is Dr. Rose.

Andy: Yeah.

[Students nod their heads.]

Brody: She is kind of like a mother figure. You do not want to disappoint her. Even though you know that she grades pretty easily, she is just so sweet, you know that it would hurt *you* if you disappointed her.

- Pat:** I think it is the attitude that Dr. Rose set at the beginning of the class. It is definitely Dr. Rose and her personality in general [that unites the community], but I think it is also the way that she set everything up from the very beginning; the way that she encouraged everyone to be involved. At the beginning of the semester she almost forced everyone to be involved, but as you go through the semester you get more caught up in everything, and you get more personally involved in the class, and it starts to mean something to you. And before you know it you are going in to class each day wanting to do something great.
- Charleene:** I think if I would have had a different teacher then I would not have done as well. If this class was not set up the way it was I think I would have dreaded coming to class every day, sat in the back of the room, and prayed I would not be noticed. [Other students laugh and nod in agreement.] Just because I wouldn't want to be called on to play something by myself. But the way that Dr. Rose approached the class, I really wanted to be involved.
[Students nod in agreement]
- Mara:** She is just so warm. She has been one of those professors that I really feel like I could talk to if I was having any kind of problem. I could go to her and I could talk to her. So feeling that way about her translates into how I feel about the class. Because I care about her, I want to do well in the class.
- Brody:** This class was great for me especially as a freshmen coming into this whole university and not knowing anyone. [Asks his peers] I mean, did any of you know each other before this class? [Students shake their heads, no.] Well that was kind of how I was, but I didn't know anyone on the entire *campus*. So the fact that Dr. Rose made this a community and I was able to make friends in this class was perfect for me. Because in most of my classes.... well for example, my state and local government class, it is a great class, but there is no community in there. The teacher is great, but there is no connection between the students there. This class really helped me learn how to make friends. Not just in this class, but it helped me open up and make friends in my dorm and in some of my other classes too. I guess because this class taught you to get out there and take that risk.
(Focus Group Interview, 12/7/12)

In this final thought, Brody seemed to make a convincing argument. Just as his peers before him articulated, Brody stressed that being a part of a supportive community of learners, where risk-taking was encouraged and nurtured, allowed students the opportunity to transfer this ability to connect with others outside of the classroom environment. In the next section, I will further explore how students were able to learn and grow in community with each other.

“Power Over” versus “Power With”

Early in the semester Rose assigned several short reading assignments that sparked interesting class discussions. Often, Rose would assign short poems by Rene Karl Wilhelm Johann Josef Maria Rilke or Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Balkhi Rumi that complemented the ideas presented in course readings. While the course did not have an assigned textbook, several course readings came from Matheou’s, *The Listening Book* (1991). Rose also composed several short pieces that outlined key concepts that she wanted to discuss in class. What follows is a piece that was written by Rose and posted online for her students to read and discuss in class.

“Power Over” versus “Power With”

We live in a world of measurement where most feel a desire to get ahead based on the Western idea that it is the autonomous individuation that is all important – we strive to be free, individualists. In creative music, this power over model does not work. In fact, in the natural world—the universe is alive only due to diversity and a “power with” model. In other words, in a healthy eco system, if there is too much homogeneity, it will collapse. For example, in a healthy and vital plant community there is always a diversity of plant species and plant functions – each helps to regulate the health of the eco-system. So for example, if a plant becomes threatened by a disease or pest, it is typically located near another plant that may have the necessary chemistries to fight the disease or pest. If this particular plant was planted in a monoculture, one would have to use pesticides to fight the

infestation or disease. Eco systems naturally maintain their health through diversity and so do we as humans.

So what does this have to do with creativity and music? Within an ensemble, each individual is necessary to add to the vitality of the group. Everyone in the group works to bring forth the potential in each member – therefore, creativity and musicality can thrive. If one person is in charge, telling others what to do based on a desire to “get ahead”, then these individual potentials may not be recognized or brought forth. Essentially an open system is created here in a healthy ensemble and the model changes from power over to power with.

Open Systems as Related to Creative Process:

1. Every living system is a whole, cannot reduce to parts – nothing can be predicted from the separate parts of this system – it’s all integrated and reciprocal.
2. Open systems can self-regulate and compensate for changing conditions.
3. Open systems evolve through complexity – when challenges emerge or threaten the system, they either adapt by reorganizing into an entirely new entity or fall apart.
4. In an open system order tends to rise from the bottom up.
5. Open systems are creative because they are in constant movement and relationship. Within an open system, you and your art form bring each other into being.

Open systems are non-linear and reciprocal—it is about relationship between the parts—that is where the life is. It is about energy running through a system—all parts are reciprocal and generate life from each other. What makes this way of thinking tricky is that you cannot observe what is happening between the parts the way you can in a more closed system. In more traditional thought, we are engaged more with the product and not the relationships that exist between the varying aspects of the pattern. Closed systems involve hierarchy, are linear and analytical, and everything can be understood by analyzing the parts – in a closed system we are separate from the object we are analyzing or engaging with.

Train Yourself to This from A Year with Rilke

“You carry within you the capacity to imagine and give the shape to your world. It is a pure and blessed way of living. Train yourself to this, but also trust whatever comes. If it comes from your desire, from some inner need, accept that and hate nothing.”

Vignette 4.5: A Lesson in Open Systems Theory

Rose used the “Power Over” versus “Power With” reading assignment as the basis for a discussion on how students could work more effectively in their small improvisation groups and start working toward an idea that would serve as the basis for their final group projects. In the following class vignette Rose explained to her students how they should begin work on their final group projects.

Rose: *We are going to jump in and I am going to introduce you to your final projects, we will discuss the reading for today, and then you are going to start working in your groups to discuss your topic for your final project. So let's take a look together and see what is coming up.*

[Rose walks over to reference and point to the final project description which is projected on the screen.]

Rose: *In your improvisation groups you are going to create a 5-10 minute multimedia presentation. When I say multimedia that means there has to be some visuals accompanying it. It can be a movie, an iMovie presentation, a PowerPoint, a slide show, however your group decides to create it. You are going to choose a social justice issue, create some sort of visual presentation to raise awareness for your topic, and in your groups you will compose a musical piece to accompany your visual presentation. So this is not a free improv; this piece will have a lot of structure, and you will have practiced this piece a lot, but it will use the same techniques that we have been working on in class. Your musical piece will be performed live while the visual piece is being presented. Do we start to get a sense of what that is going to look like?*

[The classroom is silent. The energy in the room seems very familiar to me. It is the same energy I feel in most college classrooms whenever a big assignment is being presented for the first time. What is this energy? Anxiety? Fear? Dread? Confusion? It is so familiar, and yet it is hard to pinpoint or put a label on this feeling that is present in the room.]

Rose: *How are you going to be graded? Well, there is a rubric. I like using rubrics. I will grade you on content and several other aspects, but you will be graded by your peers on participation. In your group of five or six you will give each person a grade and you will justify that. For example, "I give this person a C because they missed two rehearsals. That was a real pain." "I give this person an A, this is what they contributed." There is a form that you will use at the end of the semester to grade your group members. You will carefully evaluate each other and you will also be graded by another peer group on your content. As the semester goes on I will show you how you will be evaluated in each of these areas so you can be sure about how your participation plays into your final grade. Here is what you need to start working on right away: each group is going to start narrowing down their final project topics today. Hopefully after fall break you are going to know exactly what your topic is and you can begin researching that topic. At that point, on November 1st, each group is going to turn in an annotated bibliography with five references related to your topic. So you should include about five sentences to explain each of those sources and how it relates to your topic. You've done those before, right?*

Ariana: *Five references per person?*

Rose: *Nope. Five references total, per group. So you could just have each person in your group do one source, turn it in to one person in your group to compile it, and then turn it in to me.*

[The anxious energy in the room is getting thicker. It is the same energy I feel in my own classes when I announce a new assignment or explain the details of a grading rubric.]

Brody: *I am a freshmen, I have never done an annotated bibliography. What is that?*

Rose: *You find a reference, you read it, and you write a five-sentence summary.*

Brody: *So do you just paste the URL address onto the file?*

Rose: *That could work. Absolutely.*

Pat: *Is there a format we need to use for the bibliography?*

Rose: *I could not care less what format you use. You may use whatever format you wish. It does not matter as long as it is clear. Those are great questions. Any other questions about that? [Rose pauses here.] No? Okay, so what we are doing right now is trying to narrow down and figure out what this social justice thing is all about. You are going to present a first draft of your composition on November twenty-second. That is the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. This is just a draft, but there will have to be some big pieces in place. This draft will help your group stay motivated during the next couple of weeks to really start working on this. The good thing about presenting these drafts is that each group can really start to steal ideas from each other. "That worked, let's borrow that idea!" There is no grade on your first draft performance. The final performance will be on the exam day. So that is just a tiny overview, and we are going to spend a lot more time making sure you are really clear on this. Based on this information do you have any questions?*

Tara: *When you say draft do you mean we are going to play or are we going to turn something in to you?*

Rose: *You are going to have the media piece finished and you are going to play.*

Tara: *But we are not writing out our musical composition in any way?*

Rose: *NO, no. You don't have to notate it. So in that way it does have some components of free improvisation. You know how each group created something fantastic on Tuesday? That could have been the A section for your piece. In your groups you will continue to develop what we have been working on in class. Your group might have some sort of roadmap to follow, but you do not need to notate it. Because we don't know how to do that, do we? Great question. Any other questions? These are really good questions.*

Veronica: *So we create the multimedia presentation and then the music we play over top of that is the 7-10 minute performance? So this all goes with our final composition?*

Rose: *Yes, so the music will reflect the images in your presentation. For example, if you were to show really intense images, the music should reflect what is seen on the screen. And we will talk more about how to do that.*

Mara: *Do you have a list of social justice issues or are we supposed to choose our own?*

Rose: *We are going to get in groups in a minute and I will give you some guidelines to get your juices flowing on that. Great questions. Any more questions?*

Charleene: *Are we going to go on a hike today?*

Rose: *We are going to go outside in about 20 minutes. I wanted us to be able to go on a hike today, but I popped out there this morning and it was too muddy. There is just too much mud and someone might get hurt. But we are going to go outside in the grass where it is really sunny so we can still get our vitamin D and decenter a bit while we enjoy being outside together. That is when you are going to work in your groups and talk about your topics. Now, let's move on to this piece that you read for today and that should take us right into our social justice topics. This crazy idea about open systems, what is this stuff all about? Before I get into all of this craziness, any broad comments about what you read? Any broad comments about this open systems theory that emerged in the 1980's? [There is a long period of silence while Dr. Rose waits for a student to volunteer a response.] These ideas probably feel pretty new, don't they? This all may be feeling a little unfamiliar. OK, well let's break it down a little bit together. In the 1980's some scientists developed what we call open systems theory, and it got the attention of a lot of artists, ecologists, and philosophers. So basically these scientists were studying the natural world and evolution and they figured out the ways that the natural world worked. And these scientists came up with several points about how the natural world works. And again, I am trying to get you all to think broader and wider about these points. How could these points be related to social justice and to your final projects? So we are deepening and widening today. So open up your brains here a little bit. If you consider the natural world and how it has evolved over the past billion years what you begin to see is that everything is a whole and it really cannot be reduced to its parts. Now in Western thought, when did the idea that something can be reduced to its parts move in? Who introduced that idea? Who said the most famous statement that got us thinking along these lines? [Silence in the classroom.] It starts with a "D." [Silence again as Rose patiently waits for someone to respond.]*

Ethan: *Descartes?*

Rose: *YES! And what did he say, Ethan?*

Ethan: *Uh...*

Rose: *I think...*

Ethan: *Therefore I am.*

Rose: *Oh my gosh! That idea just blew the socks off of Western civilization. And people started to think, man that is really cool. And what that really means is.... [Rose walks over to the board to draw a visual example on the board] I think things... [Rose draws an individual circle on one corner of the white board] Here is me over here in this corner, and here is "it," what I am thinking. [Rose draws several dots over on the other corner of the board.] And because I can think things, and break ideas up into all these separate parts, that means that I am human. I can see things apart from myself, apart from myself, break it down, and know it. That is how the brain works. The linear brain. I see it, I break it down, I know it. And this idea has helped us a great deal in Western culture. Many wonderful systems work around this idea. Medicine works on this model. But at the same time, the natural world is going, "wait, wait, wait!" This is good, humans need to separate the world into pieces to understand what is going on, but there is this other idea that is getting left out. The natural world says, "NO, NO, NO, NO, nothing can be broken down into its parts!" Everything is related! [Rose connects the dots that she has previously drawn on the board. She draws a line connecting the circle representing "self" or "I" with dots representing the separate ideas.] The natural world looks like this. [Rose draws more separate dots scattered around the board.] There are all of these different things that are a part of the natural world; mountains, rocks, humans. But the same energy runs throughout all of these things. [Dr. Rose connects all of these dots together into one larger picture.] Everything is connected, and everything affects everything else. That is how we have survived as a species, and that is how we have evolved. We have been able to survive by being able to change and relate to our environment as it changes. This other way of thinking, this Cartesian model says, "NO, NO, NO, I have power over it." [Rose points to the picture on the board that represents Descartes' idea of I think, therefore I am.] "I am separate from it. I break it down into parts." But the natural world says, "NO, NO, NO! Everything is related. Everything has to be related."*

[Rose turns her attention back to the open systems outline that is projected on the screen. She reads aloud the second point from the outline.]

Rose: *Open systems can self-regulate and compensate for changing conditions. If they didn't we would have never evolved as a species. So let me give you an example of how this works. Open systems theory is so cool because it works the same way as our improvisation groups should. Say we have a system that is broken, maybe it has a hole in it. Say this system is a family or even better, a classroom. Say something crazy happens in this classroom. Maybe there is one student in this class that is so completely unique, and maybe this student even rubs people the wrong way. Say this student has a lot of energy. So here is this student who is what we call a perturbation. Sometimes people think that I am a perturbation. [Rose laughs to herself.] So what happens in this open system is that this student's energy is brought into the classroom and suddenly a new norm is created right on the spot. This student is brought into the classroom and is integrated, the systems changes, it compensates. And as a result all kinds of new behaviors emerge. And the system keeps thriving until all of a sudden something new comes in. The system is fluid. It is constantly changing, always reciprocal, always fluid, always integrating, and always changing. Norms are changing all the time. A closed system works like this: Here is the class that I have created, and here are my rules. If you don't follow the rules, then you can leave. And I will defend this no matter who you are, because I am the boss. That's how the closed system works. You adhere to my rules or you don't have a chance in here. In a closed system you have to constantly be on defense. In a closed system my energy is like this all the time. [Rose draws X's through all of the dots meant to represent other ideas that she has previously drawn on the board.] "I am right, I am right, I am right!" In a closed system I don't care what YOU think. You and I are not reciprocal in this closed system. But in an open system we bring each other into being. In an open system I teach because I need students. You are in this course because you need something from this course. And no matter what happens in this environment, no matter who walks into this classroom, that person gets integrated. That person becomes a part of this system, even if that means changing a norm on my part. It is dangerous to come from a defensive system. In the natural world when a seed comes into being it is surrounded by this wonderful protective coating. But until that coating breaks free, until that protective coating is gone, the plant cannot emerge. And as an artist, as someone who creates, I really believe that this open system has a*

lot of room for looking at things in a new way. Whenever I come across another human being that is operating in a closed system, I recognize that, but I don't want that person on my team because it is just too hard. I don't work well in those situations. I will bring that person in, but I would rather not. I would rather operate in this open system. Open systems are always changing, open systems are not afraid of change. Open systems reciprocate with whatever comes in, knowing that change is what makes growth. Open systems evolve through complexity. When challenges emerge that threaten the system, open systems adapt by re-organizing into something entirely new, and sometimes open systems even fall apart. For example let's look at our environment. We may, as a species, be able to maintain climate change and evolve. But if our ecosystem gets too complex through having so many threats, it is called a run-away and the system just collapses. And we may be faced with that as a species with climate change. So there is always a possibility that through this complexity and evolution the system could just fall apart. [Rose points to the next bullet in the reading that is projected on the screen.]

Rose: *This one is so important. In an open system, order tends to rise from the bottom up. In other words, every component affects everything else, and the order is made not from the top down. The boss doesn't say, YOU DO THIS, but instead order happens from watching what is going on, letting it be, and trusting that order will emerge. That creates something new. It is not hierarchical.*

[Rose points to the next bullet in the reading that is projected on the screen.]

Rose: *I like this fifth point. Open systems are creative because they are in constant movement and relationship. With an open system, you and your art form bring each other into being. OK, so where am I going with that? When I look at my harp, and I sit down with it, and I bring it to my chest, the first thing I think is, "I am going to play you, and you are going to play me." We have a very open relationship, and I see that energy in the music I play. Not as an "it," but as a relationship. Think about how different that idea is than the idea that I make music on this. Those two ideas are radically different. I approach this, or we are in this together.*

[Rose points to a list of words at the bottom of the reading projected on the screen.]

Rose: *Words to describe open systems: non-linear, fractal patterns, layered, reciprocity, relationships. Relationships! That is where the life is in an open system, not in all the individual finite pieces or points, but in the relationships that exist between them. You know the hardest part about all of this? In a closed system it is so easy to see the final product. It is so easy to see the final outcome in a closed system. But in an open system, these relationships are often invisible. That makes this tricky. In a closed system I do something to produce a product. In a closed system I do something to an "it." A closed system is the more traditional approach where we are engaged with the final product not with the relationships that exist along the way. Words that describe a closed system: hierarchical, linear. Do we need analytical thinking? Yes! We are humans and analytical thinking has been so important to our evolution, but many artists and environmentalists are now saying that we can no longer separate ourselves from the objects that we are analyzing or engaging with. [Rose walks to the computer and changes the window that is being projected onto the screen. She projects a poem by Rilke that the students have also read for homework.]*

Rose: *Now, Rilke's poem. Who would like to read this in their most poetic voice?*

[Rose waits for a response.]

Rose: *Who will read this poem for us?*

[Silence in the classroom. No one volunteers. Rose waits for an uncomfortable period of time before asking for a volunteer to read again. Brody and Pat point to each other, each volunteering the other student. Liz smiles at them both.]

Rose: *[to Brody and Pat] Oh no! I am not going to get either one of you two because you are playing! Who can read this in their most poetic voice?*

[Silence in the classroom. No one volunteers to read.]

Rose: *Who wants to read this out loud? It is simple!*

[Another uncomfortable period of silence in the classroom. Still no one volunteers to read the poem.]

Rose: *OK, let's read it aloud together. Here we go:*

[The students all read the poem aloud together.]

Students: *You carry within you the capacity to imagine and give shape to your world. It is a pure and blessed way of living. Train yourself to this, but also trust whatever comes.*

[Rose stops the students midway through the poem.]

Rose: *Stop. This is that open system. Trust whatever comes and bring it in. Ok, let's keep reading.*

[The students read aloud together.]

Students: *If it comes from your desire, from some inner need, accept that and hate nothing.*

Rose: *So in an open system, you are open. OK, no more on that. Let's switch gears now and relate this to something broader with our final projects and social justice. What is one big word that you might associate with social justice? It starts with an "E."*

Brody: *Equality?*

Rose: *Equality! In a nutshell, social justice is about equality. Everyone has an equal opportunity to be in relationship with one another. That is what social justice is all about. So when you are deciding on your topic today in your group I would like for you to connect with a topic that you are aware of that is a social justice or inequality issue. For example, we are choosing to make *Dragons in the Mountains* a social justice piece. We are doing that through our artist statement by saying, we humans who live here are not giving our southern Appalachia an equal voice in policy making. If the mountains could speak, what would they say about mountaintop removal and other environmental problems that are happening? So that is a social justice topic because there is an inequity there because these mountains cannot really be heard. We are living in a closed system! I am going to rip apart this beautiful land and take advantage of it, because the mountains are a resource. I don't want to be in a relationship with the mountains, I just need the money and the fossil fuel. So that is our artist statement. That is not your statement. All of your groups will have a different statement, don't copy mine. Everybody wants to be an individual here. So when you get in your groups I want you to think about something that just does not seem right, something that seems like it has some inequities. I want this*

topic to be something that you can relate to. There are so many possibilities. It could be something happening on campus here that you feel is inequitable. It could be something happening in the state of North Carolina. It could be something political. Something that you are in direct contact with. Last year one group wanted to do the problem of rape in the Congo, but not everyone in that group had a direct experience with rape. That topic was not something that everyone in the group could relate to. It was hard to relate to a problem that existed in a place that was so very far removed from where they lived. So the group decided that topic was probably not going to work. So try to think of a topic that everyone in your group could relate to, a topic that everyone in your group has had some sort of experience with. Alright? So what we are going to do is get our groups together and then go outside, because it is gorgeous, and pull together three potential topics that your group can start to agree on. Let these topics emerge, you have thirty minutes, so come back in here at noon and I want to hear about them. Go find yourselves a place under a tree, there is that really nice grassy area outside of the School of Music. Let that fresh air clear your brain, think, play around with some topics, and I want to hear what you have come up with. (Field notes, 10/4/12)

As I observed Rose teaching this lesson midway through the semester my ideas about the essence of *MUS 2022* began to evolve. Of all the lessons I observed throughout the semester, this lesson seemed to best articulate the philosophy of *MUS 2022*. In a conversation following this class, both Rose and I agreed that many of the ideas about open systems theory and “power over” versus “power with” may not have been thoroughly understood by all students during class that day. However, the ideas articulated in this lesson seemed to stick with students throughout the semester. By putting this philosophy into practice as a part of their small improvisation groups, the students’ understanding of these principles seemed to solidify throughout the semester. A comment from Kary’s final paper seemed to indicate that she was able to transfer what she learned about working in groups as a part of *MUS 2022* to her life outside of class.

A lot of what I learned from this course actually came from the readings that were chosen. There were a few, such as “Protect Your Ears,” and the “Power With” versus “Power Over” explanation, which helped me understand the purpose of this class, and how it relates to other aspects of life. The part in “Protect Your Ears” that describes the old joke of the Guru and student is inspirational, in that, good judgment arises from experiences with bad judgment. I can relate this to any challenge I may encounter in years to come, as I specialize my employment, or simply go about daily life. This story sends a powerful message that essentially all people we consider experts have gone through their share of bad judgments.

The “Power With” versus “Power Over” piece accentuates the importance of using the idea of “power with” to bring about the best in everyone. It recognizes that every individual has a special talent or idea that can be brought forth, whether it relates to music, or any other aspect of life. To me, this was one of the most beneficial reading assignments, because I am the kind of person who heavily displays “power over.” This has taught me to accept people and find ways to emphasize unique skills that can benefit the group as a whole. I have always hated working in groups, and this article made me realize that I only hated this because I was not accepting of what other individuals had to bring forth. I really feel that I have grown to be much more accepting from this, which is something everyone needs to learn. In today’s society, people are becoming more concentrated on the individual, and in return, problems that arise cease to be resolved. (Kary, Final Paper, 12/9/12)

Kary’s response to this reading, articulated two months after reading the “Power Over” versus “Power With” assignment indicated that she had found a way to connect the ideas that she was practicing as a member of her improvisation group with her life outside of class. This transfer of ideas, from musical encounter to life experiences and back again, was a powerful way to understand and develop the type of philosophical ideas that Rose was presenting in her class.

Vignette 4.6: How the Creative Process Evolves in Groups

Over the course of the semester, I spent many days observing and interacting with the students in their small improvisation groups as they prepared for their final project presentations. Through talking with students about how ideas emerged and were

incorporated into their final compositions, I was able to understand how the creative process evolved over the course of the semester. I was able to gain a better understanding of what being a musician meant in the course by observing how musical decisions were made in small improvisation groups. The following transcript from an in-class small improvisation group rehearsal in early October illustrates how ideas typically emerged from within the group and were incorporated into the final group project. While I observed each group many times throughout the course of the semester, I chose to incorporate this particular transcript because it seemed to illustrate how ideas emerged organically and evolved from a sense of shared leadership.

[The class breaks up into separate rooms to work on their final projects. I stay in the classroom to observe and record one particular group of five students. This transcript begins as the students are deciding what instruments they will play for the day. Brody sits at the piano, Pam settles herself in a chair with a djembe nestled between her legs, and Don is playing with a large set of chimes in the corner. Pat and Nancy are rummaging through the instrument storage closet trying to decide what instruments they will use for the day.]

Pam: *[to Don] Don't use that!*

Don: *Don't use the chimes?*

Pam: *That is going to make this too confusing.*

[Don ignores Pam and begins playing the chimes with his back to her. Brody picks out the melody of a church hymn at the piano as the rest of his group is still situating themselves around the piano. Pam begins playing a syncopated pattern on the djembe. She smiles at Brody as she knows the sound of her djembe is competing with his church hymn for sonic space. Brody gives up and allows Pam to play.]

Pam: *[to Brody] You want me to go slower? Meter of three or meter of four?*

[Brody shrugs his shoulders]

Pam: *Four? Four is easiest.*

Brody: *Yeah, probably. Especially since this is going to be such a long piece. I think we are supposed to create something that is 2-3 minutes long today.*

[Brody and Pam each play with separate musical ideas while they wait for the rest of the group to get settled. Nancy sits in a chair beside Pam. She smiles at Pam as she shakes the tambourine she is carrying with her. Pat carries a soprano xylophone over to his group and places it on the table near the piano.]

Pat: *We only have two melody instruments. Piano and xylophone.*

[Don walks over to the group carrying a pair of maracas. He looks at Pam for approval, who smiles at him and nods her head.]

Pam: *[to Don] OK, sure. That works.*

[Pat is playing an ascending scale in thirds on the xylophone.]

Brody: *[to Pat] What notes were you playing?*

[Pam begins playing a rhythmic ostinato on the djembe. She counts aloud as she plays, 1, 2 and 3, 4. 1, 2 and 3, 4. Don picks up on the ostinato and joins her, playing the same rhythmic pattern on the maracas. Nancy smiles and begins playing the steady beat on the tambourine. Brody incorporates a one measure melodic ostinato into the mix, starting with an ascending major sixth as a pick up note on beat four. Don, Nancy, Pam, and Brody all make eye contact as they try to get their initial groove to lock in.]

Pam: *Want me to go slower?*

[Pam slows down the tempo of the rhythmic ostinato. Still the groove does not seem to lock in. Pam looks mildly frustrated as she looks over to Brody at the piano and laughs. When Don realizes that the groove has not locked in he begins shaking the maracas frantically, closing his eyes and wrinkling his nose sarcastically, as if he is really “feeling” his maraca solo. This is a pattern that has emerged as I have observed Don in this group. It seems that anytime Don feels self-conscious he becomes sarcastic, makes jokes, or finds another way to “play-off” the fact that something is not working.]

Brody: *OK, we need to create something that is 2-3 minutes long today.*

Don: *[laughing] OK, so let's just throw a lot of repeat sections in there. Someone play something, someone else repeat it, we play around with that, and we are done.*

Brody: *We can use that call and response idea we heard in that recording today.*

[Before the students broke into their small groups Dr. Rose played a recording of her own improvisation group, Gypsy Harvest, and had the students listen to the musicians passing the melody back and forth in a call and response form.]

Don: *I feel like we never really know what we are doing. We are just playing around.*

Brody: *[to Pat] Let's do that call back idea where you play something, and then I play something back to you.*

Pat: *OK, I'll play something and you respond.*

Brody: *[picks up his pencil to write down a series of letter names representing pitches] Tell me what notes you are going to hit though.*

Pat: *[laughs] I have no idea what I am going to hit!*

Brody: *[puts down his pencil] OK, well go ahead and start.*

[Pam, Don, and Nancy have been setting up a simple, two beat, rhythmic ostinato groove as Pat and Brody have been discussing the melodic call and response idea.]

Pat: *[speaking to Brody over the sound of the rhythmic ostinato] OK, ignore F and B. Let's don't use those pitches at all.*

Brody: *No F or B. Got it.*

Pat: *Do you know which ones F and B are on the piano?*

Brody: *Yep!*

Pat: *[Looking over and laughing sarcastically at Don] Yeah man, when you feel a solo just stand up and go with it! Make those maracas intense!*

Pam: *OK, so are we going with this call and response idea?*

Brody: *Yeah, that will give it some sort of structure.*

Pat: *Ok, so I am going to stick with C D and E for a while.*

[Pat begins playing around with a melodic idea on the xylophone. Brody picks up on his idea and plays the same melody back to him.]

Pat: *[Making eye contact with Brody at the piano, and then with the rest of his group as he counts aloud the meter in three.] 1, 2, 3. 1, 2, 3. 1, 2, 3. 1, 2, 3.*

[Pam begins counting quietly: 1, 2, 3. 1, 2, 3. All of the group members make eye contact and lock into a groove. Brody is playing a melodic ostinato on C, E, and D as Pam, Don, and Nancy provide rhythmic support. Pat begins to create a pentatonic melody on top of the ostinato.]

Brody: *[To Pat] I have no idea what you just did. What pitches were you playing?*

Pat: *It doesn't matter. Just keep playing that ostinato for now.*

[The group continues to provide rhythmic and melodic support as Pat plays a solo along with the ostinato for a while. Pam and Pat make eye contact, indicate nonverbally with their body language that they are going to slow the tempo, and slowly bring the improvisation to a close.]

Pam: *I like it! That is the best we have sounded together. That was good! [to Brody] So you were just repeating that section?*

Brody: *This is what I was doing most of the time. [Brody demonstrates the C, E, D melodic ostinato that he was repeating throughout the improvisation.]*

Pam: *Yeah! That was good. It sounded really good the way you were doing that. So do you guys think we should start out that way again? Because*

I think that worked, the way that Pat and Brody started together and the rest of us came in a few beats later.

Pat: *OK, yeah. That did work.*

[Brody nods his head yes in agreement. Don and Nancy give no input.]

Brody: *[to Pat] You want to write down all the notes you are hitting so I can see them later?*

Pam: *No, I think improvising is fine.*

Pat: *Yeah, I was totally improvising that. I couldn't write it down now if I wanted to. But, I am going to eventually come back down to a place where I join you on that one part [Pat sings the melodic ostinato that Brody was playing] and that is where you can answer me.*

Brody: *OK, that sounds good.*

Pat: *And I will make eye contact with you when I am coming to the end of that section.*

Brody: *OK, I need to think of something to do then. You think I should still do something similar to what I was doing last time?*

Pat: *Yeah, just don't use any of the black keys.*

Brody: *[plays a few ideas on the piano] Should I just use any three notes in a similar way that I was doing before?*

Pam: *Yeah, whatever you feel comfortable doing. This is improv so you can do whatever you want.*

[Pat spontaneously begins playing the melodic ostinato again on the xylophone and Brody joins him on the piano. Several beats later Pam, Don, and Nancy enter using the same rhythmic groove that they set up before. Pat solos over the groove. After 30-40 seconds, Pat and Brody make eye contact, Pat takes over the melodic ostinato that Brody had been playing, and Brody begins to solo over the groove that has been set up by the rest of the group. There is a nice moment where Pam drops out and the texture changes. Brody and Pat make eye contact again and pass the solo back and forth between them. The tempo slows and Pam tries to bring the piece to an end non-verbally. When Brody

and Pat continue playing, Pam motions with her hands for them to stop. The piece ends abruptly.]

Pam: *Okay, that's where we are going to cut it off.*

Don: *Let's end it whenever I play my solo. [Don closes his eyes, scrunches his nose, and again sarcastically pretends to be really "feeling" his maraca solo.]*

Pam: *Yeah, that sounds good. Let's end it that way.*

Brody: *So you want to just do one time through the call and response?*

Pat: *Well whenever I really make a point of slowing the tempo down, we will all know that the piece is ending. [Pat demonstrates with his body how he will exaggerate his movements to let his group members know he is slowing the tempo.]*

Pam: *And then that's how we end it?*

Pat: *Yeah, Don will shake the maracas and that's the end.*

Pam: *Yeah, I started doing this when I saw you slowing down. [Pam demonstrates a slower pattern she was playing on the djembe toward the end of the piece.]*

Nancy: *[referring to Don] He's chickening out!*

Don: *Yeah, I'm chickening out.*

Pat: *[to Don] No you're not!*

Don: *You guys won't triple dog dare me! You won't make me!*

Pat: *[sarcastically opens his arms wide like he is egging on a school yard fight] You won't make me triple dog dare you!*

Pam: *Come on Don, you can do this. You too, Nancy. You get a solo with Don at the end. Just shake the tambourine.*

Nancy: *I don't know if I can do that. That's really hard.*

[Pat and Pam both demonstrate how Nancy should shake the tambourine.]

Pam: *Just shake it like this. Really hard! You can use both hands.*

[Nancy shakes the tambourine like Pam instructed her.]

Pat: *That's it! There you go! Okay, let's do this.*

Pam: *Wait, so how many call and responses are you guys going to do? Just one? Like Pat plays melody, Brody plays melody, and then we're done? Or are we going to make it longer than that? What do you guys feel comfortable with?*

Brody: *Either way is fine with me.*

Pat: *Haven't we been doing these call and responses for a while? Are we supposed to be doing something different?*

Brody: *No, Dr. Rose wants us to do the call and response.*

Don: *She said Bach, or Beethoven, or Mozart... I can't remember which one. She said that's what they did.*

Brody: *She did say that. Remember? They just played back and forth to each other?*

Pat: *Yeah, but that's really hard to do.*

Pam: *You mean to repeat the same exact thing to each other?*

Pat: *Yeah, I mean because I don't know what Brody is going to be playing. I can't read his mind.*

Brody: *Yeah, you wouldn't be able to tell what notes I was hitting.*

Don: *I'm not even worried about it really. There are no wrong notes, right?*

Pam: *I'll go ask her. Just to double check. [Pam goes to find Dr. Rose]*

Brody: *That's why I was saying we could write it down.*

[Pam returns to the group]

Brody: *What did she say?*

Pam: *She said all we have to do is find a form that we like and play with it to create a two minute piece.*

Brody: *Okay, cool!*

Pam: *Whatever you feel comfortable with.*

Brody: *You can even make voices if you want. You can even make those vocal sounds. [to Don] You could vocalize.*

Pat: *[to Don] Yeah! Sing!*

Don: *I can't actually sing.*

Pat: *No! That would work!*

Pam: *[to Nancy] Can we time this using your phone? Yeah, let's use the timer. Brody, you start playing and then Nancy will start the timer.*

[The group rehearses their improvisation one more time. This time Brody's solo is more rhythmically complex. He adds more variation and the end result is a more interesting piece. Rose enters the room to check on the group.]

Rose: *Okay, show me what you've got!*

Pat: *Are you ready for this?*

Don: *You are going to be crying like a baby. Are you ready to get your mind blown?*

Pat: *No really, are you ready for this? Sit down, please, sit down.*

Rose: *I am going to sit down for this! [Rose laughs.] I am really sensing that something is going to move through here.*

[The group begins to rehearse their improvisation one more time. It has really come together into a nice, cohesive piece.]

Rose: *Yeah! There are a lot of things that are working here! Brody you are changing octaves on the piano, which is nice. That last phrase where you all slowed the tempo to close it out together... that was really intuitive.*

[Pam and Pat give each other a high five.]

Rose: *Let's work on the balance here. Brody, you might not be able to hear this, but the soundboard on that piano brings your sound way out. So in order to hear the xylophone let's bring your volume down just a bit.*

Brody: *You want me to use the softening pedal?*

Rose: *You could do that. Just be really aware of that balance. Here is what I would say about your piece. Continue to play with it. I would consider that to be a really beautiful A section. The melodies wove in and out beautifully. Brody and Pat, you two were playing off of each other so intuitively, and the rest of you were supporting them. That could be the A section of a piece. If that were the A section, how could you move into a B section? What would a B section sound like?*

Pam: *We could change parts. Change instruments.*

Rose: *You could change parts! And then suddenly you could have a duet between Nancy and Don. Or a trio could come forward featuring Don, Nancy, and Pam. So you could use the A section that you have, create a B section where these three folks are featured, and then go back to your A section to close out your piece. Does that make sense? You could create your piece so that it is ABA. So what could happen is that once Nancy, Don, and Pam move into the spotlight with their trio, you two could provide them with support. A supportive part on the piano might be quiet, it might have a lot of space. You all don't always have to be playing at the same time. That is another way to really bring in some variation. Think about how you might want to weave in different people in different places. Those are just some ideas that you can use to expand this. Keep playing with it! This is great! You did blow me away! You are using all of these techniques that we just talked about. Weaving and interplay! It is going to happen! I love it! (Field notes, 11/8/12)*

I chose to incorporate this vignette because it exemplified a typical small improvisation group rehearsal in *MUS 2022*. Ideas emerged organically from the group with a sense of shared leadership. Through my observation of this rehearsal, and similar rehearsals in other groups, an obvious pattern became clear: I noticed that while there was not an

assigned group leader, one or two students usually took the lead in each group while other students were content with contributing background support. In this group Pat, Brody, and Pam typically contributed the most while Don and Nancy were content with following instructions.

One way that Rose encouraged her students to work through the creative process in their small improvisation groups was by sharing “what worked” and “what didn’t work” following each improvisation. In the transcript above, Pam points out, “I think that worked, the way that Pat and Brody started together and the rest of us came in a few beats later.” Similarly, Rose models this process in her own coaching when she advises the group following the final run-through of their improvisation.

Rose: There are a lot of things that are working here! Brody you are changing octaves on the piano, which is nice. That last phrase where you all slowed the tempo to close it out together . . . that was really intuitive. (Field notes, 11/8/12)

Rose goes on to give her students more constructive feedback. She suggests ideas for getting Nancy and Don more involved in making musical decisions by featuring the two of them in a B section of the piece. By sharing “what worked” and “what didn’t work,” the students are able to contribute ideas to the creative process of group improvisation using an open systems approach. By supporting and honoring the ideas of each member of the group, a healthy group dynamic is able to evolve throughout the semester.

Recognizing the Musician Within

One of the most interesting patterns that began to emerge throughout the course of the semester was the idea that there was a musician in everyone waiting to be recognized

and valued. This idea was articulated throughout the semester by students in individual interviews, focus groups, and final papers. Many students shared that they had a definite idea of what being a musician meant coming into the course at beginning of the semester; yet this idea shifted and became broader as the semester progressed. For example, during a focus group interview with students on the last day of the semester I asked the students what they thought being a musician meant in *MUS 2022*.

Andy: Well, coming into this class I definitely had a solid idea of what I thought a musician was, but coming out of the class I honestly don't know. I feel like what we did in this class, with all of us participating, I definitely felt that at that moment we were *all* musicians. And that was definitely not a perspective that I held before this class.

Raychl: Is that word "musician" a word that you can define?

Pat: I think in this class being a musician is about expressing yourself. I think that you have to be in touch with yourself and how music is making you feel. You have to be open to letting music affect you and you have to be open to trying new things. I think this class is really just about exploring. That is what being a musician is in this class. Of course none of us are professional musicians and none of us will be. But you don't have to be a professional to be a musician. If you are enjoying what you are doing and you are letting music speak through you and you are doing your own thing that is perfectly fine. That *is* being a musician. People will express themselves in different ways. It is about allowing yourself to put yourself out there.

Raychl: When I did individual interviews and I asked your classmates what it meant to be a musician, people thought that word was really hard to define. Why do you think that is?

Andy: I think Matt put it well. In this class it all came down to just participating and letting yourself go. In the context of the rest of the world... well. In the college perspective, if you are going to study music you are probably going to graduate and get paid for making music. That's a whole different mindset. Professional musicians, they are getting paid. There is almost a set value to their music because they are getting paid for it, as opposed to what we are doing, where I feel

like we are still musicians in a sense, but society obviously would not put much value on our music because no one would be willing to pay to hear us play.

Pat: I think there is a difference between professional and amateur, but I don't think there is a difference between what it means to be a musician in either sense. I think what they (professionals) are doing is finding their own way to express themselves through music, which is the exact same thing that we are doing in this class. They (professionals) are just hoping to find something that is more appealing to others and use that in their lives. They may study it more or explore the ideas behind it in order to become a professional. We (in this class) are doing essentially the exact same thing, but of course we are just not experts at this. So I don't think the difference is in whether we are musicians or not, I think the difference really is what we are using music for. Whether we are using music to try to get a job later, or whether we are just using it for ourselves. (Focus Group Interview, 12/7/12)

After listening to students describe what being musical meant, I realized that many students' perspectives on musicianship had shifted over the course of the semester. Instead of simply placing value on formal musical training, most students began to see self-expression, risk-taking, and a willingness to participate as characteristics that described what being a musical person means. When Pat stated in the focus group interview, "I think there is a difference between professional and amateur, but I don't think there is a difference in what it means to be a musician in either sense," he was essentially echoing John Blacking who said, "I can see no useful distinction between the terms 'folk' and 'art' music, except as commercial labels" (1973, p. x). In Blacking's (1973) groundbreaking ethnographic text *How Musical is Man*, his thesis was that musicality is an innately human characteristic, and that all people are born with the capacity to make music. This perspective stands in stark contrast to the commonly held

view that the capacity to make music relies on talent and formal training. What happened as a result of participating in *MUS 2022* is a broadening of the perception of what being a musical person means that is absolutely essential for elementary educators to embrace if they are going to create classrooms that encourage *all* students to participate in music.

The idea that *anyone* can be a musician was echoed repeatedly in students' final papers. For example, Allie wrote:

No matter what type of music you create, you are a musician simply by giving your sound to the world. Through this course I learned that there is beauty in all melodies, and anyone who thoughtfully considers music and creates a sound they find beautiful is a musician. You do not need to be formally prepared or educated to be a musician. Anyone who produces sound can be a musician. Through making mistakes and learning from them, we can only become better artists. (Allie, Final Paper, 12/9/12)

Jamie stated:

There were many people in our class that did not have any experience with playing instruments, yet everyone was able to contribute to the music. I think the biggest part of being a musician is having the courage to try; to perform in front of others without being intimidated by the fear of failure. Dr. Rose and my classmates provided a safe space to branch out, create, and experiment with music. "You're great" and "there are no wrong notes" may be said often, but they still are effective mantras to encourage that safe place. At the end of the day being a musician simply means to be bold and put yourself out there as you create sound in the world; put a little bit of who you are and what you believe out into the world for others to experience. Being a musician is about being perceptive. It's about being brave and stepping out into the spotlight when it's time to shine. It's about supporting the group and not overpowering them when it's your time to provide the steady beat. Music is about emotion; it invokes it, inspires it, and interprets it. In this right, everyone is a musician. (Jamie, Final Paper, 12/9/12)

Tara observed:

Not everyone in this class has a background in music, not everyone is good at counting a beat, and some people may know nothing at all about music. However, music is about creativity which can be found in all of us. Music, like any other form of art, is what we choose to make it and how we choose to see it. So for me, being a musician in this course is about being open to your own creativity. It is about being willing to take something that you are unfamiliar with and accepting any creativity that may come from your experience with it. Being a musician in this course was about being open to any and all possibilities. Realistically the world sees musicianship as being talented at playing a certain instrument or being a singer and being able to read and/or write music. I would say that for many years this was probably the definition that I believed in as well. I played the viola in orchestra for many years and because of that I would consider myself to be a musician. I have been able to read and play music and this makes me a musician in one sense. But, I think that to be a musician all you really have to do is be able to hear and appreciate the different notes and different sounds that are created. This in itself, makes one a musician. (Tara, Final Paper, 12/9/12)

Veronica wrote:

When I first signed up for this course, I was nervous because in my mind, being a musician meant being able to read, create, and play music pieces that sounded great straight from your head; none of which I had any idea how to do. However, since I have been in this course, my definition of what it means to be a musician has changed drastically. I now feel like the definition of being a musician is having the courage to express your thoughts through music, play the notes that come to your head, and being confident in whatever music you produce. To be a musician, you don't even have to be able to read music, which sounds ironic. Music is something that is felt and learned through experience. (Veronica, Final Paper, 12/9/12)

The definitions that these students provided for what being a musician means seem to be much closer to Blacking's idea of innate human musicality and further away from the Westernized idea of musicianship being dependent on talent. Interestingly, many students mentioned that this idea of what being a musician meant was one that evolved over the

course of the semester, rather than one that they held at the beginning of the course.

Students' experiences as a part of *MUS 2022*, contributed to broadening their understanding of what being a musician means.

By establishing a community of care where power was shared and all voices were heard, Rose created an environment where the creative process was nurtured and developed throughout the semester. Students felt that this community allowed them to recognize the musician within themselves and within others, regardless of previous experience or formal musical training. Because the students enrolled in *MUS 2022* had such definite ideas about what constituted musicality at the beginning of the semester, Rose broke down barriers of judgment and fear to establish a community of care where all voices were valued.

The open systems approach that grounds Rose's philosophy values the identity of the individual within the classroom, but also recognizes that the individual is a part of a larger community of learners. In this way, students are able to explore their own musicianship while contributing to a larger community which is constantly evolving over the course of the semester. This open systems approach to facilitating the creative process has the power to transform the way faculty envision courses for non-music majors at colleges and universities. By providing students with the opportunity to broaden their perspectives of "who counts as a musician" and allowing students to explore their musicianship in an open systems community, music courses for non-majors ultimately could become more inviting.

Discrepant Information Contradictory to Prevalent Themes

To contribute to the validity of qualitative research, Creswell (2008) suggested that researchers should include negative or discrepant information that may contradict the major themes that emerged in data analysis.

Because real life is composed of different perspectives that do not always coalesce, discussing contrary information adds to the credibility of an account. A researcher can accomplish this in discussing evidence about a theme. Most evidence will build a case for the theme; researchers can also present information that contradicts the general perspective of the theme. By presenting this contradictory evidence, the account becomes more realistic and hence valid. (2008, p. 192)

As stated in Vignette 4.6, both Don and Nancy seemed hesitant to contribute their input toward musical decisions that were made within their small improvisation group.

Throughout the semester I was able to sense some hesitancy emanating not only from Don and Nancy, but from several other students as well. While most students seemed to embrace taking risks and contributing ideas, several members of the class indicated that they were uncomfortable contributing to group improvisations.

During an individual interview with Don during the third week of classes I asked him how musical decisions were made in his small improvisation group. What follows is a portion of my interview with Don that seems to indicate that he does not believe that he is qualified to make musical decisions as a member of his group.

Raychl: So when you make decisions in your group how does that happen?
How does that process work?

Don: Well we have one person, Pam, who kind of took over. It's fine by me. She's musically talented and stuff so she has a good feel for the beats

and all that. Within our group we have a few people who have musical talent and background, so they throw out ideas which really end up helping our group move forward.

Raychl: Cool. So do you throw out any of your ideas?

Don: Occasionally. But really I'm there just to say things like, "Good job guys!" I do more of the motivating. I'm not really good at some of this. Because I stopped [music lessons] at a young age I don't really feel I'm like where I need to be.

Raychl: Tell me more about that.

Don: When you see other people playing music and they have a better feel for it than you do . . . If I see someone who is better [at music] than me or I think someone is better [at music] than I am, I just kind of . . . you know . . . if they want to take over for me I'll let them. I don't see the need to get in the way. I'm more laid back on things I guess.

Raychl: Okay. What do you think makes some people better than you? You mentioned Pam. You said that she is a really good musician. What makes her a good musician?

Don: I'm not sure of her experience but maybe it is just what she has done in the past. When you have an ear for music, I guess you can just kind of pick up on things. All the ideas she has had in our group have been really good. She doesn't try to make things too complex because she realizes that some of us can't play certain instruments. (Don, Interview, 9/27/12)

In this portion of the interview, Don's perspective on who can contribute musical ideas to the group was dependent on talent and previous experience with music. Even in the final week of the semester, Don's perspective of his own musical identity remained unchanged. In his final paper, Don wrote:

I do not consider myself to be a musician. It is not fair to those who are true musicians to claim that title. I, along with everyone in the world, have the potential to be a musician. But to me, a musician is one who is able to play

instruments and clearly express a deeper emotion or feeling in music. (Don, Final Paper, 12/9/12)

Don's writing indicated that his perception of musical identity remained unchanged over the course of the semester. While most students in *MUS 2022* seemed to indicate that their perceptions of musical identity had shifted over the course of the semester, a few students offered contradictory perspectives. Like Don, Reba seemed to indicate in her final paper that the label of "musician" should be reserved for professionals.

To be a musician means mastering a certain instrument or way of making music. The dictionary.com definition says a musician is "a person who makes music a profession, especially as a performer of music." I don't feel like I am a musician, but I feel like everyone can be creative through music if they try. (Reba, Final Paper, 12/9/12)

While Reba did not identify as a musician, she did recognize that anyone can participate in music.

Now that we have explored student responses that run contradictory to the major theme of expanding perceptions of musical identity, in the following chapter I will discuss how participation in *MUS 2022* ultimately led to students' experiencing an increased understanding of what being musical means.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

An Increased Understanding of Musical Identity

After spending the semester actively involved with the students in *MUS 2022: Cultivating Creativity through Music*, I realized that instead of students' going through a shift in musical identity as a result of participating in the course, they began to re-envision what being a musician might mean in a broad or general sense. Students entered the course with a definite perception of what being a musician meant, a perception that typically involved formal musical training or recognition from others of a sense of innate talent. Over the course of the semester, however, this perception of what being a musician meant became somewhat elusive and open-ended. By allowing students to step out of their comfort zones and into an environment where risk-taking and play were encouraged, Rose challenged the students' preconceived ideas of what being a musician meant, and how one might begin to embrace musicianship as a birthright.

As previously stated in Chapter I, Lamont (2002) found that children begin to develop a sense of musical identity around the age of seven. As children observe their peers' musical abilities, they quickly begin to identify or de-identify with their own sense of musicianship, both in and out of the music classroom. While most children receive formal music education as a part of the school curriculum, Lamont suggested that our schools operate under a hidden curriculum, assuming that not all children benefit from

the same set of musical opportunities. Lamont wrote: “There seems to be a disconnect between the expectations of children engaged in curriculum school music activities and the definition of “musician” in adult life” (2002, p. 45). This disconnect seems to become apparent as children progress through school.

In a research study conducted with 1800 children aged between 5 and 16 years, Lamont (2002) found that primary school students were twice as likely to have a positive musical identity as secondary students, even though secondary students were more likely to be enrolled in music lessons outside of school. Lamont suggested that as human beings age, they are more likely to think of musicianship as a quality that belongs to someone else rather than themselves. Children are socialized to believe that they are either musical or not musical people. In a sense, the philosophies that Rose used to ground her curriculum seemed to counteract the dichotomous socialization process described by Lamont as occurring in early childhood. As students were encouraged to look within themselves for an innate sense of musicality, many students began to realize that musical identity is an essential component of the human experience.

The humanistic philosophy of the organization, *Music for People*, where Rose received training in facilitating improvisation, stressed the idea that all humans are musical. This idea echoes the writings of social anthropologist and ethnomusicologist John Blacking who wrote extensively about music as an innate human experience. Blacking wrote:

The function of music is to enhance in some way the quality of individual experience and human relationships; its structures are reflections of patterns of

human relations, and the value of a piece of music as music is inseparable from its value as an expression of human experience. (as cited in Bohlman, 1995, p. 31)

By approaching the function of music from a global perspective, one might begin to see how the current system of formal music education in the United States is permitting many students to slip through the cracks. Perhaps, if music educators examine the structures that ground traditional music education course offerings, they may find that they are allowing many students to deny their own innate sense of musicality. The notion that one could somehow be an unmusical person is the result of a particular Western mentality that is not found in many other areas of the world (Turino, 2008). To truly practice what the National Association for Music Education states is its mission of advancing music education by encouraging the study of music making by all, members of the music education profession need to re-examine how the content of traditional school music programs and traditional teacher education courses may be unconsciously denying ownership of musicianship to students who may not fit traditional ideas of what constitutes a musical person.

Implications for Practice

When asked how they might incorporate the ideas presented in *MUS 2022* into their future classrooms, most of the interviewed elementary education majors rarely mentioned music. Instead, the students focused on the idea of encouraging future students to be creative thinkers who were not afraid to make mistakes when in search of alternate solutions to problems. For example, during the third week of classes, when Ariana was asked why she had not mentioned music in her answer to a question about how she might

incorporate the ideas that she was learning in *MUS 2022* into her own classroom one day, she told me that *MUS 2022* was about “more than just music.” While Rose used improvisation as a medium to encourage students to engage in creative thinking, students often mentioned ideas such as allowing themselves to take risks and make mistakes and become comfortable expressing themselves around their peers. In a sense, the students of *MUS 2022* were allowing themselves to embody a more child-like and accepting spirit of free play, similar to the philosophy that Nachmonovitch (1990) recommends when approaching any type of improvisation.

MUS 2022 was about more than learning musical skills; rather, music was being used as vehicle to allow students to engage in the creative process in community with others. While many music methods courses for elementary education majors strive to incorporate music into the elementary curriculum in direct ways, students enrolled in *MUS 2022* considered strategies to incorporate the creative process that they experienced in music making into teaching higher-order thinking skills. While learning to play the recorder or autoharp may be useful skills in music classrooms, engaging in the creative process and approaching problems from new perspectives are ideas that students may incorporate into all parts of life.

MUS 2022: Cultivating Creativity through Music may serve as a model course that goes beyond teaching music performance skills. Through engaging in active improvisation experiences, students were able to make connections between creative thinking in music and how the creative process may be applied to all aspects of daily life. Rather than focusing on musical skills alone, Rose encouraged students to consider

alternative approaches to problem solving and successful practices for working, playing, and generating ideas in community with others. Rose's open systems approach to facilitating group improvisation encouraged elementary educators to consider how they may successfully create a similar environment where students understand that there is more than one possible solution to any given problem. Throughout the semester, Rose was able to build a community of learners who were united by a commitment to broadening their understanding of what being a musician means.

The philosophies that ground Rose's particular approach to teaching improvisation and creative processes could be helpful not only for pre-service elementary educators, but also for pre-service music educators. By stressing the idea that all students, regardless of age or ability, come into classrooms with innate senses of musicality, pre-service music teachers could learn the importance of meeting students where they are. Through accepting all forms of musicianship, not just those that meet the needs of large ensembles, pre-service music teachers could realize how transformative an open-systems approach to teaching music could be for the music education profession. By encouraging pre-service music teachers to broaden their perspectives of musicality, they ultimately focus on and work toward creating an equitable community of practice.

Recommendations for Future Research

Methodologists have compared the process of engaging in qualitative research to the process of quilt making (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Through immersion in the culture of a community, the ethnographer is able to tell a story that emphasizes the essence of what being a part of a particular group of people means. In many ways, the creative

process which Rose encouraged in *MUS 2022*, was the same process that I used to weave together the voices of the students who participated in the course. Rather than looking at the students of *MUS 2022* as participants in a research study, these students instead became co-researchers and co-creators who contributed to the story of this dissertation experience and product. As a part of *MUS 2022*, Rose stressed the importance of working with others from a “power with” rather than a “power over” approach (Macy & Brown, 1998). My decision to approach my research with students from a “power with” philosophy was important because it empowered students to be active participants in research that looks at how they make meaning of their classroom experiences. By listening intently to what students say about their own experiences, researchers may be able to acquire insight into what it is like for students to be a part of music courses. While surveys and end-of-the-semester teacher evaluations provide valuable insight into the skill and knowledge developed throughout a course, there is no substitute for personal conversations with students that ask the following questions: ‘What worked? What would you like to change?’ These questions are the exact questions that students in *MUS 2022* asked each other after each new attempt at improvising in their groups. By asking questions developed through a qualitative approach to music education research, music educators are able to acquire rich descriptions of what it is like to be in another’s position.

Several qualitative approaches to music education research could be helpful in considering what being a musician means from the perspectives of people with varying degrees of formal training in music. For example, researchers could use a narrative

approach to examine the life stories and musical experiences of students who may label themselves, “non-musicians.” By collecting stories from people who consider themselves to be “non-musicians,” music educators could gain insight into how students may begin to de-identify with their own innate sense of musicianship. Similarly, case studies that examine the experiences of students who have decided not to enroll in music courses after elementary school could provide insight into why students may begin to think of themselves as “non-musicians.” Case study or narrative research could be used to answer the following questions: What experiences contribute to people de-identifying with an innate sense musical identity? In what ways are students who are not enrolled in music during the school day participating in music experiences outside of school? How do music experiences during the school day compare to music experiences outside of school? By examining the narratives of students who typically have been labeled “non-musicians,” music educators may find that they are applying labels that do not exist in order to meet their own research or music-making needs.

Phenomenological research, which studies the nature and essence of human experience, could be particularly helpful in answering questions such as, “what does being a musical person mean?” Through exploring the essence of musical identity, phenomenologists may be able to provide educators with a deeper understanding of human musicality that goes beyond whether or not an individual has formal training in music. Similarly, music teacher educators could utilize auto-ethnography assignments in their music education courses to allow future music educators the opportunity to reflect on the meaning and development of musical identity in their own lives. Perhaps as pre-

service music educators become aware of their own musical identity development, they may be more apt to recognize the importance of musical identity development in their future students.

Each of these qualitative methodologies has the potential to allow music education researchers to approach the idea of musical identity development from a slightly different angle. Engaging in music education research from a qualitative approach requires a considerable amount of courage and trust. Just as the students in *MUS 2022* struggled with issues of fear and judgment associated with “this is how it has always been done” or “this is the only way I know,” qualitative approaches to research in music education require examining and considering old paradigms from fresh and new perspectives. Many music education professionals are beginning to see value in envisioning new approaches to music education research. For two decades, the MayDay Group, founded by Regelski and Gates in 1993, has worked to critically re-examine the field of music education and research. The organization serves a dual purpose: “applying critical theory and critical thinking to the purposes and practices of music education, and affirming the central importance of musical participation in human life, and thus, the value of music in the general education of all people” (Regelski & Gates, 1993, p. 1). Perhaps through international ‘think tanks,’ such as the MayDay Group, music educators may be able to push the boundaries of empirical research paradigms and explore other creative ways of engaging in human science research.

The philosophy that grounded *MUS 2022* was powerful; it allowed students to become comfortable exploring the unfamiliar. Scientific thought and research in general

is built upon the idea of exploring the unfamiliar, taking risks, and examining problems with insatiable curiosity. By approaching education and research from a qualitative perspective, music educators may find that traditional perceptions of “who counts” as a musician may not be as standardized or measurable as once thought to be true.

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APPENDIX A

OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Cultivating Creativity through Music

The following areas of the observation protocol were based on a conceptual model (Butler, Lind, & McKoy, 2007) of how culture influences music learning and music learning influences culture.

Setting: Appalachian State University

Teacher: Dr. Liz Rose

Date:

Context:

- 1) Describe the organization of the classroom.
- 2) Did students spend time in improvisation groups?
 - A) How many students were in each group?
 - B) Describe the organization of small groups.
 - C) List all the instruments that students used in improvisation groups.
 - D) Did the students choose their instruments, or were they chosen by the instructor?

Content:

- 1) According to the teacher, what was the objective of today's lesson?
- 2) According to the students, what was the objective of today's lesson?

Student _____ mentioned that the objective of today's lesson was.....

Student _____ mentioned that the objective of today's lesson was.....

Student _____ mentioned that the objective of today's lesson was.....
- 3) According to the participant-observer, what was the objective of today's lesson?

- 4) Describe the content of today's lesson.
- 5) Describe the ways in which students interact with music in today's lesson.

Teacher and Instruction:

- 1) Did the teacher devote time in class to discussion?
 - A) If so, how much class time was devoted to discussion?
 - B) How did the teacher interact with students during discussion?
 - C) Describe the discussions observed in class.
- 2) Did the teacher devote class time to lecture?
 - A) If so, how much time was devoted to lecture?
 - B) How did the teacher interact with students during lecture?
 - C) Describe the lecture observed in class.
- 3) Did the teacher devote class time to small group improvisation?
 - A) If so, how much time was devoted to small group improvisation?
 - B) How did the teacher interact with students during small group improvisations?
 - C) Describe the small group improvisations observed in class.
- 4) Did the teacher devote class time to small group performances of improvisations?
 - A) If so, how much time was devoted to small group performances of improvisations?
 - B) How did the teacher interact with students during small group improvisations?
 - C) Describe the small group performances of improvisations observed in class.

Student and Instruction:

- 1) Describe student interactions with each other before the start of class.
- 2) Describe student interactions with the teacher before the start of class.

- 3) Describe student interactions with each other during class discussions.
- 4) Describe student interactions with each other during small group improvisations.
- 5) Describe student interactions with each other during improvisation group performances.
- 6) Describe student interactions with each other as class is dismissing.
- 7) Describe student interactions with the teacher as class is dismissing.

Additional Comments or Observations:

APPENDIX B
SEMI-STRUCTURED STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Tell me about your experiences with music in school before you entered this class.

Tell me about your experiences with music outside of school.

When you think about what it means to be a musician, what qualities come to mind?

Do you see any of these qualities in yourself?

Tell me about your experiences in this course.

What does it mean to be musical in this class?

Do you see any differences between what it means to be musical in this class, and what it means to be musical outside of this class?

Tell me all of the ways that you experience music in this class.

Are there ways that the music you engage in as a part of this class is relevant to your life outside of school?

Do you have any fears or anxieties associated with improvisation? If so, could you tell me about this?

Tell me all of the things that need to happen in order for you to create a good improvisation in your group.

You mentioned that you needed _____ in order to create a good improvisation. Why is it so important for you to have _____?

Tell me all of the ways you communicate musical ideas within your group.

Tell me about one of your most successful group improvisations. Why did you think it was so successful?

Who is one of the best improvisers in your class.

You mentioned that _____ was one of the best improvisers in your class. Why did you mention this person?

Do you see any of the attributes that you mentioned that _____ had in yourself?

Do you share responsibility within your group? If so how do you do this?

Does anyone in your group ever take a leadership role? If so how does this work?

Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

APPENDIX C

SEMI-STRUCTURED PROFESSOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Tell me about how the course *Cultivating Creativity through Music* was developed and implemented into the teacher education program at Appalachian State University.

Does this course differ from the previous music methods course that was offered to elementary education majors? If so, how?

Why were you initially interested in teaching this course? What has surprised you about teaching this course?

What is the most challenging aspect of teaching this course?

Do students typically struggle in any particular areas in this class?

Is there anything you would like to change about this course?

Do students typically bring any fears or hesitations into their initial experiences with improvisation? If so, how do these manifest? If so, how do you do to try to alleviate these fears?

Are there any particular ways that you see students grow over the course of the class?

What does it take to create a great student improvisation?

What does it mean to be a musician in this class?

Why do you think students from departments outside of elementary education are attracted to this course?

What experiences, books, mentors, or philosophies have shaped your teaching?

Tell me about Dragons in the Mountains. How does this community art project contribute to the content of your class? What will students learn from the performance?

APPENDIX D

SEMI-STRUCTURED FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

If you had to describe the ESSENCE of this course, what would that be?

Could the ideas presented in this course be transferred into an elementary classroom?

If so, how? If not, why do you think these ideas would not transfer?

When I presented initial patterns I was finding from this research, one question I received from my peers was, “Is this really a music class?” What are your thoughts on this?

Have you grown any over the course of this semester as a result of taking this course?

What has been the most challenging aspect of this course for you?

Over the course of the semester have you experienced any anxiety associated with improvisation?

If so, what was that like for you?

If so, how did you deal with that anxiety?

If not, did you sense any anxiety from your classmates?

What does it take to create a successful improvisation in your group?

How were musical decisions made in your group?

Did you feel like power was shared equally in your group?

Did anyone in your group contribute more than others?

If you had to define what it means to be a musician, what would that be?

What does it mean to be a musician in this course?

Are you a musician?

Has there been anything that has surprised you about this course?

What will you remember about this course?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experiences in this course?

APPENDIX E

START CODES FOR DATA ANALYSIS

(CP) Classroom Practices – Addresses Research Question 1

(CPT) Regularly occurring classroom practices- teacher

(CPS) Regularly occurring classroom practices- student

(CPCO) Celebrated ways of being musical outside of the course

(CPCI) Celebrated ways of being musical as a part of this course

(I) Identity – Addresses Research Question 2

(SDI) Self-Described Identity

(IP) Self-described identity as a musician before enrolled in this course

(IC) Self-described identity as a musician while enrolled in this course

(RO) Recognition from Others

(ROP) Reasons/ways for being recognized by others for musical ability before enrolled in this course

(ROC) Reasons/ways for being recognized by others for musical ability while enrolled in this course

(R) Reinforcement- Addresses Research Question 1

(RRT) Reasons to show praise or appreciation for musicality- teacher

(RRS) Reasons to show praise or appreciation for musicality- student

(RWT) Ways to show praise or appreciation for musicality- teacher

(RWS) Ways to show praise or appreciation for musicality- student

(RDT) Reasons to show disapproval- teacher

(RDS) Reasons to show disapproval- student

(RDWT) Ways to show disapproval- teacher

(RDWS) Ways to show disapproval- student

(RRTT) Ways to encourage musical risk taking- teacher

(RRTS) Ways to encourage musical risk-taking- student

(RBRTT) Barriers to musical risk-taking- teacher

(RBRTS) Barriers to musical risk-taking- student

(RL) Relevancy – Addresses Research Question 2

(RLOC) Reasons this course is relevant to the student's life outside of the class

(RLNOC) Reasons this course is not relevant to the student's life outside of class

(E) Emotions- Addresses Research Questions 1 and 2

(EFSS) Ways students show fears of improvisation

(EFDS) Ways students describe fears of improvisation

(EFRT) Ways teacher reacts to student fear of improvisation

(EFDT) Ways teacher describes students fear of improvisation

(EEWS) Ways students show excitement

(EEWT) Ways teacher shows excitement

(EERS) Reasons students show excitement

(EERT) Reasons teacher shows excitement

(C) Communication- Addresses Research Question 2

(CSI) Ways student ideas get communicated and incorporated into improvisation

(CSIG) Ways student ideas are ignored or left out of improvisation

(CTI) Ways teacher ideas are incorporated into improvisation

(CTIG) Ways teacher ideas are ignored or left out of improvisation

APPENDIX F**FINAL CODES FOR DATA ANALYSIS**

Working with weaker players
Working in groups
Unfamiliar
Talent
Support
Social justice
Silly
Safe
Risk Taking
Researcher subjectivity
Research
Relationship
Readings
Previous experience with music
Power over vs. power with
Play
Performances
Patience
Parody
Own musicianship
Open systems theory
Not about music
Not there yet
Not about grades
No wrong notes
Mistakes
Metaphor
Measurement goals
Liz kindergarten story
Liz behaviors
Listening perceptive
Growth
Good in everyone
General Ed credit
Future
Fresh perspective
Freedom
Final project
Fear

Eye contact
Expanding ideas of what it means to be a musician
Evolution of course
Essence
Enjoyment
Emotion
Ego
Dragons
Doesn't get it
Disown musicianship
Culture
Creativity
Creating
Course goals
Constructive criticism
Connection
Confidence
Concert attendance
Community
Comfortable in Class
Clarity
Body
Beauty
Attendance
Art pieces
Anyone can be musical
Acceptance
2022 Musician
Being yourself
Courage
Experimenting
Individuality
Learning from peers
Making mistakes
Musician world
No fear
No judgment
Not about perfection
Open mind
Play what you feel
Qualities of great improviser

APPENDIX G

COURSE SYLLABUS

Welcome to Music 2022: Cultivating Creativity through Music Aesthetics Perspectives General Education Course

Lecture and studio: 3 hours

Dr. Liz Rose

Office 211 Broyhill

phone: 262-6448 or 262-3020

e-mail: rosese@Appstate.edu

Office hours: M-12-3, W-12-3

If you need to see me during office hours, it's best to set up an appointment. I am available other times as well, but please make an appointment

Course Goals

Explore the creative process and the connection it has with cognitive, psychological, emotional, bodily-kinesthetic, aesthetic and social development.

Successfully integrate disparate concepts and information when interpreting, solving problems, evaluating, creating, and making decisions.

Objectives

1. To develop a unique understanding of the style and form of music as perceived by each student.
2. To develop an understanding of the historical context of music as a result of the ethnic and folk literature which will be utilized in class. This leads to an understanding of the development of man, society, and music as interrelated with humanities.
3. To develop functional musical skills through continued exploration of improvisation.
4. To compose musical compositions as a reflective/expressive response to other art forms; i.e., visual art, dance, photography, etc.
5. To explore the underlying principles of creativity and how they apply to the individual student's life as well as transferred into their understanding of their role in the larger community.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Read and critique several articles on creative process

- Become involved in a cooperative arts project that will result in a final media composition and performance.
- Read, critique and write a final paper summarizing weekly readings
- Attend 3 concerts this semester and create artistic reflections for each (additional information forthcoming). One of these concerts, Dragons in the Mountains will be required. The performance will occur on two evenings, Oct. 26 or Oct. 27. In order to successfully complete this assignment, your attendance is required for this concert. There will also be a \$10.00 admission for the concert. For a list of free concert offerings this semester, visit the Hayes School of Music website at <http://www.music.appstate.edu>

Final Grading

Readings and Written Reflections - 20%

Concert Attendance and art reflections 30%

Final Cooperative Project – 40%

Class participation – 10%

Project Due Dates and Reading Assignments

All assignments are due on the date and time requested. Any assignment turned in after the date requested will result in 20 points off the final grade for that assignment. See the ASU Learn site for assignments/due dates.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Each student is expected to attend class, regardless of the amount of previous musical learning. Each student is allowed 3 absences with no penalty. There are no excused or unexcused absences. Each absence after 3 absences will lower the final grade by one complete letter grade. It is advised that you keep a record of your absences. An attendance sheet will be made available for each class period. It is your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet.

APPENDIX H

ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES AND GRADING RUBRICS

Concert Attendance Assignment and Writing Expectations Dr. Rose's Music 2022 Class

General Education Outcome: 1B

Students will successfully integrate disparate concepts and information when interpreting, solving problems, evaluating, creating, and making decisions.

Aesthetics Perspectives Theme of Cultivating Creativity Outcome:

Students will analyze the structural components of various forms of creative expression.

Course Outcomes:

Students will develop a unique understanding of the style and form of music as perceived by each student.

This semester, I want you to hear live music at least 3 times. Choose any 2 concerts – each must last a minimum of 1 ½ hours. The more varied here, the better – that is the expectation. If you go to 2 rock and roll concerts, that is not varied. If you attend one Steel Band and one blue grass, – that is varied. Examples of other options – gospel, jazz, marching band – the list goes on and on.

After you attend each concert, I want you to express what you experienced. In the past, I have asked for a written concert critique. But, this semester, to better keep in line with our goal of the artist process, I am asking for a different type of artistic response. Choose an artistic medium that you like – painting, drawing, sketching, photography, poetry, storytelling/writing, dancing, composing, cooking. Whichever medium you choose, stay with the same art form for all three reflections. For each art piece, play with your medium to express what you experienced at the concert. For example, I am looking for relationships that you discover between the music and your art form. Your final project will include 3 pieces with the same medium – 3 drawings, 3 poems, etc. Include a concert program with each piece, date the piece and sign it somewhere.

You will be graded on originality, clarity in expression, artistic presentation, and the ability to integrate your art medium with music – you will not be graded on how well you managed the medium – how well you draw, paint, etc. The expectation for this project is quite high – I want you to try something new with an open mind. Good luck and have fun. The first concert and art piece are due on Sept. 20; the second on Oct. 9. The final art piece and paper will be due on Oct. 30. Your written paper is due on Oct. 30 at midnight (upload onto ASU site). As one of these concerts, you will be required to attend the Oct. 26 OR Oct. 27 performance of Dragons in the Mountains (see syllabus). Failure to attend this concert will result in 25 points off of the final grade for this project.

Final Reflection Paper to accompany the 3 art pieces

You will write one summary reflection paper for this project. Length – 2 pages, double-spaced. Include the following points:

Clearly articulate the relationships you found that existed between the music you heard and the art piece that you created. For example, if you heard a musical piece with the form of ABA – state it and write about how that form was reflected in your art piece. If you heard a dynamic level of loud in the music, then how would the art form express that. I want you to move beyond images that music evoked and images you expressed. For example, the piece made me feel happy and I drew a sun-rise. Although that may have been your experience, this is not the place to articulate that. Again, I need multiple examples of the formal relationships between the music and art form you use. I will give you some examples in class of this.

See Rubric for grading this assignment

Rubric for Grading Reflection Paper on the Integration of Art and Music responses/artifacts

Relationship between pieces of music and art forms created

No achievement

Observations are made regarding individual art-forms, but no attempt is made to articulate the relationships that exist between the art forms

Partially achieved

There are one or two observations articulated that clarify the relationship between the art forms

Fully achieved

Multiple observations are articulated that clarify systematic relationships between the two art forms

Clarity in writing

No achievement

Sentence structure is incomplete. There are multiple grammatical and spelling errors

Partially achieved

Grammar and spelling are correct; however, sentence structure is unclear

Fully achieved

Grammar /spelling are all correct and sentences are crafted with clarity.

Guidelines for Multi-media music and social justice project, Music 2022

Annotated Bibliography is due on Nov. 1st – hard copy in class – one copy from each group.

1st draft is due on Nov. 27 – in class presentation where each group will receive feedback regarding edits

Final draft due on exam day– in class presentation

Create a 5-10 minute multi-media presentation on a social justice issue

Prepare to compose a musical piece to accompany this presentation – your musical composition will be played live while the visual piece is being presented.

See Grading Rubric for more information regarding this project.

You will be graded by a your peers on participation

You will be graded by another peer group on content

You will be graded by me on content

Please see rubrics for all three

A short annotated reference list is required for each presentation.

Cite each reference and include a 3-5 sentence summary of how that reference relates to your social justice topic.

Rubric for grading the final project

Students present a clear position on a social justice issue.

3 – Students present a clear position on the subject and state this position clearly. This position does not merely state the obvious, but shows a creative mind at work

2- Students present a clear position on the subject and state this position clearly, but the position may state the obvious or simply paraphrase one of the readings/resources.

1 – Students do not clearly state a position or the position is irrelevant to the social justice issue.

Students supports the position taken

3 – Support for the position is imaginative, thorough, relevant, and clearly stated. Shows a thorough knowledge of the readings and ability to use material from readings as evidence.

2 – Support for the position is adequate. Shows a thorough knowledge of the readings. Evidence is substantially accurate, though some distortion may be present.

1 – Support is absent and references are inaccurate or not related to the social justice issue.

Students acknowledge alternative points of view

3 – Acknowledges all alternative points of view found in the readings. Accurately summarizes these points of view. Responds to alternative points of view creatively, showing why the students have chosen their position for the issue

2 – Acknowledges at least one reasonable alternative position found in readings and summarizes this position accurately

1 – Acknowledges no alternative points of view

Music presented is sensitive and integrated with the visual presentation

3 – Expressive qualities in the music are obvious and correlate to the expressive qualities in the visual presentation

2 – Expressive qualities in the music are present, but irrelevant to the visual material

1 – Expressive qualities do not exist in the music

Expressive qualities may be defined as changes in dynamics, tempo, phrases

Music presented is crafted in relationship to form

3 – A clear form is present throughout the entire performance and transitions between music sections are clear.

2 - Form is present within sections of the piece, but not always clear. Transitions between sections are unclear.

1 – There is no clear form present.

APPENDIX I

IRB APPROVAL AND LETTER OF CONSENT

Approval Date: 7/17/2012

Expiration Date of Approval: 7/16/2013

RE: Notice of IRB Approval by Expedited Review (under 45 CFR 46.110)

Submission Type: Initial

Expedited Category: 7.Surveys/interviews/focus groups

Study #: 12-0233

Study Title: Cultivating Creativity Through Music: An Ethnography of Elementary Education Majors' Experiences in a Unique Methods Course

This submission has been approved by the IRB for the period indicated. It has been determined that the risk involved in this research is no more than minimal.

Study Description:

The purpose of this study is to understand what it means to "be musical" in a unique improvisation based music methods course for elementary education majors at Appalachian State.

Investigator's Responsibilities

Federal regulations require that all research be reviewed at least annually. It is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to submit for renewal and obtain approval before the expiration date. You may not continue any research activity beyond the expiration date without IRB approval. Failure to receive approval for continuation before the expiration date will result in automatic termination of the approval for this study on the expiration date.

Signed letters, along with stamped copies of consent forms and other recruitment materials will be scanned to you in a separate email. These consent forms must be used unless the IRB has given you approval to waive this requirement.

You are required to obtain IRB approval for any changes to any aspect of this study before they can be implemented (use the modification application available at <http://www.uncg.edu/orc/irb.htm>). Should any adverse event or unanticipated problem involving risks to subjects or others occur it must be reported immediately to the IRB using the "Unanticipated Problem/Event" form at the same website.

CC:

Raychl Woodward, Music

ORC, (ORC), Non-IRB Review Contact

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO

Project Title: Cultivating Creativity through Music: An Ethnography of Elementary Education Majors' Experiences in a Unique Methods Course

Project Director: Dr. Constance McKoy, principal investigator
Raychl Woodward, student researcher

Participant's Name: _____

What is the study about?

This is a research project. The purpose this ethnographic study is to understand what it means to 'be musical' in a unique improvisation based music methods course for elementary education majors at Appalachian State University. The researchers hope to discover how elementary education majors enrolled in the course *Cultivating Creativity through Music* make meaning out of their experiences with improvisation. Through emersion in the culture of the classroom environment and through focusing on the regularly occurring classroom practices, teacher and student behaviors, and socially constructed meanings of learning in this particular environment, the researchers plan to present an understanding of what it means to be musical in a classroom of untrained musicians.

Why are you asking me?

All students enrolled in the course *Cultivating Creativity through Music* at Appalachian State University are invited to participate in this study. Participants were selected for this study because of the unique classroom environment in which students and teacher come together to create a distinct classroom culture worthy of ethnographic study.

What will you ask me to do if I agree to be in the study?

If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to allow the researcher to observe and interact with you during class activities. Fieldnotes will be collected by the researcher who will attend all class sessions and actively participate in group improvisations and class activities. If you agree to participate in this study you are giving consent for the researcher to read your written class assignments. If you agree to participate in this study you are also giving consent for your image and voice to be video and audio recorded during class sessions. The researcher will analyze video-recorded class sessions in order to document regularly occurring classroom practices in the form of written fieldnotes. If you agree to participate in this study you may be asked to participate in individual and focus group interviews. The time involvement outside of class for study participants will be minimal. You may be asked to devote approximately 30 minutes to an individual interview which will be scheduled at your own convenience. All other participation in this study will take place during your regularly scheduled class time. If you have any questions regarding participation in this study you may contact Dr. Connie McKoy, principal investigator, at clmckoy@uncg.edu, or Raychl Woodward, student researcher, at resmith5@uncg.edu.

Is there any audio/video recording?

Video and audio recordings of class sessions will be made only of those who agree to participate in this study. If you choose not to participate in this study, your image and voice will not appear on video or audio recordings. For those who choose to participate, because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the tape, your confidentiality for things you say on the tape cannot be guaranteed although the researcher will try to limit access to the tape as described below. Video and audio of participants will be used for educational research purposes only. Video and audio recordings may be used in research presentations, but names will not be used to identify participants.

What are the dangers to me?

The Institutional Review Board at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro has determined that participation in this study poses minimal risk to participants. If you have any concerns about your rights, how you are being treated or if you have questions, want more information or have suggestions, please contact Eric Allen in the Office of Research Compliance at UNCG toll-free at (855)-251-2351.

Questions, concerns or complaints about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this study can be answered by Dr. Constance McKoy who may be contacted at (336) 334-5478 or clmckoy@uncg.edu.

Are there any benefits to society as a result of me taking part in this research?

The findings from this study could help instructors of music methods courses implement effective strategies for teaching improvisation to elementary education majors. By understanding the meanings students make of their experiences with improvisation, instructors can identify ways to encourage students' musicality and self-expression while addressing students' fears or concerns associated with improvisation.

Are there any benefits to me for taking part in this research study?

Those who participate in this study may possibly benefit from a richer understanding of their own innate sense of musicality. Through reflecting on their own experiences with music and improvisation, participants may find a deeper connection to their musical selves.

Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?

There are no costs to you or payments made for participating in this study.

How will you keep my information confidential?

All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. All data will be secured on the researcher's password protected computer. All electronic files containing identified information will eventually be deleted, and any hard copies of identified data or consent forms will eventually be shredded. Names and identifying information of student participants will be kept confidential, and pseudonyms will be used in the place of participants' first names.

What if I want to leave the study?

You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time, without penalty. If you do withdraw, it will not affect you in any way. If you choose to withdraw, you may request that any of your data which has been collected be destroyed unless it is in a de-identifiable state.

What about new information/changes in the study?

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available which may relate to your willingness to continue to participate, this information will be provided to you.

Voluntary Consent by Participant:

By signing this consent form you are agreeing that you read, or it has been read to you, and you fully understand the contents of this document and are openly willing consent to take part in this study. All of your questions concerning this study have been answered. By signing this form, you are agreeing that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate, or have the individual specified above as a participant participate, in this study described to you by Raychl Woodward.

Signature: _____ Date: _____