INVESTIGATING THE MOTIVATIONS, MUSICAL GOALS, AND PREFERENCES OF ADULTS LEARNING ORCHESTRAL STRING INSTRUMENTS IN COMMUNITY MUSIC CLASSES

Elizabeth A. Williams

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate College of Bowling Green State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

December 2017

Committee:
Lisa M. Gruenhagen, Advisor
Elaine Colprit
Katherine Meizel
ABSTRACT

Lisa M. Gruenhagen, Advisor

This research explored the motivations, musical goals, and preferences of adults learning orchestral string instruments at two separate community music school programs in the Midwest region of the United States. A total of six participant interviews (three from each program) were transcribed and analyzed, and common themes emerged. Motivations of these participants included: (a) a general desire to be involved in music-making, (b) music learning for personal fulfillment and/or keeping their brains active, (c) a love of a string instrument since childhood, (d) involvement of family members in music. Musical goals held by these participants included: (a) producing a quality sound/tone, (b) gaining the ability to read music fluently, (c) gaining the ability to play familiar tunes, (d) learning more advanced techniques such as shifting and vibrato. Preferences of these participants included: (a) a welcoming classroom environment with the ability to ask questions during class, (b) an instructor with good classroom management skills, (c) group-based learning over individual learning, (d) a desire to play a variety of musical genres. Many of the motivations, musical goals, and preferences of the participants in this study reflect the findings of previous research on adult music learning. Implications for the field of music education in relation to program availability and teacher education are discussed, and suggestions are made for future research.
I would like to dedicate this thesis to my former professors, Dr. Holly Attar and Dr. Amy Gillingham, who were the first ones to suggest I go to graduate school, the first to encourage me in my passion for teaching adults, and without whom none of this would have happened. They have been a constant source of support and encouragement over the years, and I am incredibly thankful to have them in my life.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Lisa Gruenhagen, for her tireless work with me on this project. From intense days hammering out the initial proposal, to her patient explanations, readings, and attention to detail, this work could not have been completed without her passion and guidance. I would also like to thank the rest of my committee, Dr. Elaine Colprit and Dr. Katherine Meizel, who were willing to step in and provide additional support and feedback.

I am greatly indebted to all the wonderful people who gave up their valuable time and allowed me to interview them for this project! They are the ones who continually inspire me to learn more about the field of andragogy, and fuel my passion for teaching people of all ages to play stringed instruments.

Many thanks to my friend and colleague Sophia Jarrell, who was willing to drop everything to have lunch with me when I was stressed out, and picked up a lot of my slack at work while I was writing this thesis. And of course, I am so thankful for my amazing, supportive family, who have cheered me on every step of the way! Thanks to my older siblings David, Mark, Daniel, Sarah, and Gex, who put up with so many squeaks and squawks from the various instruments I learned throughout childhood, yet believed in me enough to support my pursuit of music in college, emotionally and sometimes financially. I couldn’t have done it without them. And Dale, my unofficial second sister who, despite being stationed in Germany and working night shift, managed to regularly tell me to quit procrastinating and work on my paper.

Most important of all, my parents, who taught me to love learning, seek truth, and re-examine everything that is taken for granted. Beyond all that, they taught me to love Jesus, instilling in me a faith that has sustained me through all the hardships and victories of life so far.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION…………………………………………………………….. 1
    Statement of the Problem…………………………………………………………… 1
    Need for the Study………………………………………………………………….. 2
    Purpose and Research Questions………………………………………………….. 2

CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE……………………………………………. 4
    Community Music.......................................................................................... . 4
    Adult Learning Theory................................................................................... 5
    Motivations of Adult Music Learners........................................................... 8
    Goals of Adult Music Learners....................................................................... 9
    Preferences of Adult Music Learners.......................................................... 9
    Impact of Musical Involvement....................................................................... 10

CHAPTER III. METHOD.................................................................................... 12
    Setting.......................................................................................................... 12
        Community Music School Program 1....................................................... 12
        Community Music School Program 2....................................................... 13
    Participants.................................................................................................. 14
        Sam (Community Music School Program 1).......................................... 14
        Richard (Community Music School Program 1).................................... 15
        Lily (Community Music School Program 1).......................................... 16
        Carol (Community Music School Program 2)....................................... 16
        Jenna (Community Music School Program 2)....................................... 16
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Becky (Community Music School Program 2)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Sources and Collection</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER IV. RESULTS</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivations of These Participants</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals of These Participants</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferences of These Participants</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Music Education</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Adult Programs</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Education</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions for Future Research</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A. RECRUITMENT LETTER</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B. CONSENT FORM</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX C: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Participant Data</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Abbreviations of Codes from Data Analysis</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Summary of Themes</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, music teacher education programs have focused on teaching school-age children, but in recent years there has been interest in the teaching and learning of the very young and older adults. While many universities have begun including pre-kindergarten music teaching strategies in the standard teacher education curriculum, adult learners are rarely part of the music education curriculum (Hallam, Creech, McQueen, Varvarigou, & Gaunt, 2016; Myers, 1992; Rohwer, 2011). Nevertheless, music practitioners around the world are researching adult music learning and teaching, discovering the rewards and challenges of teaching adult students, and documenting differences between adult and child music instruction (Bowles, 2010; Kruse, 2009; Reifinger, 2016; Sattler, 2013; Turton & Durrant, 2002). Throughout this discussion, the term “adult learners” will be used to refer to students aged 18 and older, who have little or no prior experience on the instrument they are learning to play.

Statement of the Problem

Several studies have examined the motivations and goals of adult music learners in various ensembles (Bugos, 2014; Jutras, & Kim, 2015; Kruse, 2009; Perkins, & Williamon, 2014; Rohwer, 2012; Taylor, 2011; Varvarigou, Hallam, Creech, & McQueen, 2013), but few, if any, have examined adults choosing to learn orchestral string instruments; arguably one the most physically demanding family of instruments to begin learning later in life. In addition, most teacher education programs focus on preparing string teachers to instruct children in grades K-12, therefore many teachers may be unfamiliar with how adult learners learn and prefer to learn.

Need for the Study

This study is important and benefits the field of music education by providing further insight into music learners who choose to learn an orchestral string instrument as an adult. Many
studies have documented the benefits of music learning as an adult in band and choral settings. Positive interaction and socialization with others in the community, personal fulfillment, and increased musical ability, knowledge, and/or appreciation have all been reported by adult music learners (Bugos, 2014; Habron, Butterfly, Gordon, & Roebuck, 2013; Perkins & Williamon, 2014; Varvarigou, Hallam, Creech, & McQueen, 2013). Little research has been done to discover if these findings would be replicated in adults learning an orchestral string instrument for the first time.

This study also seeks to go beyond investigating adult music learner motivations, goals, and benefits, and probe the ways that these participants perceive the instruction in their community music classes. Many researchers have called for the music education community to provide specific training for teachers of adult music learners (Bowles, 2010; Creech, Varvarigou, Hallam, McQueen, & Gaunt, 2014; Hallam, Creech, McQueen, Varvarigou, & Gaunt, 2016; Myers, 1992; Perkins, Aufegger, & Williamon, 2015). Research into the ways adult music learners perceive instruction, and the preferences they hold regarding instructional approach and learning environment, is crucial to providing a greater understanding of how instruction should be planned and implemented for adult learners.

**Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the motivations, musical goals, and preferences of adults learning orchestral string instruments in community music classes. The research questions that guided this study are:

1. Why do adults decide to learn to play an instrument?
   a. Do adults have end goals for their learning? If so, what are those goals?
b. More specifically, what motivates adults to begin playing an orchestral string instrument?

2. How does participating in community music education impact adults’ lives?

3. How do adults perceive the instruction in their community music classes?
   a. Do adults have a preference regarding instructional approach?
   b. Do adults prefer group-based, individual learning, or both? For what reasons?
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Community Music

Adult music learning does not usually take place in a traditional school setting, and programs for beginning adult learners typically fall under the broad term “community music” (Koopman, 2007). Community music is an umbrella term that encompasses a host of music-making activities. Leglar and Smith (2010) describe three general categories of community music in the United States today: (a) community music activities with specific educational objectives, (b) community music activities with performance as the primary objective, (c) community music activities which exist only for cultural transmission or social/entertainment purposes. The first category is exemplified in the many community music schools spread throughout the country; some are connected to universities, others are independent schools, but all offer music instruction for youth and adults. Community choirs, orchestras, and bands, with the objective of performance over education, fall under the second category. The third category is comprised of groups who seek to present traditional ethnic or folk music, and groups who seek to revive music no longer part of the “living” culture (Leglar & Smith, 2010). Educational music programs for adult learners typically fall under the first category of community music.

Myers (2008) stated there is a separation in the professional world of music education between school music and community music: “the profession has often managed…to bifurcate the topics of adult and community music from school music” (p. 54). He argues this may discourage school music participation, as many students consider school music irrelevant to their own lives and communities. Myers also contends music educators should have a lifespan perspective of music education, seeking to provide adults with entry points to musical experiences as well as children. However, simply providing these opportunities may not be
enough to recruit and maintain adult involvement in musical experiences. Hallam, Creech, McQueen, Varvarigou, & Gaunt (2016) found that the skill and ability of the facilitator to provide an engaging experience and appropriate activities is crucial to the success of musical programs for adults. Yet they note that despite a growing demand for music teachers to instruct adults, most teachers are only educated to teach children (Hallam et al., 2016). The idea of educating teachers to work specifically with adults and music programs outside the traditional school setting is not new; several researchers in the United States have called for collegiate music teacher education programs to include such experiences for future teachers (Bowles 2010; Myers, 1992; Rohwer, 2011). Rohwer (2011) contends that educating future music teachers in adult instruction is not yet standard in the United States: “While university programs have expanded ‘down’ with many addressing the instructional needs of Pre-K, the trend toward expanding ‘up’ has been slower in coming” (p. 123). Many researchers report that facilitators of adult music learning, both in the United States and abroad, have found working with adult learners sometimes requires different strategies than working with children (Bowles, 2010; Hallam et al., 2016; Perkins, Aufegger, & Williamon, 2015). Before discussing those specific strategies, I will examine the principles of andragogy and adult learning theory.

**Adult Learning Theory**

Malcolm Knowles popularized the term “andragogy” in the United States, defining it as “the art and science of helping adults learn” (Knowles, 1972). Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005) identified six specific aspects of andragogy (p. 64-68):

1. The need to know; why something should be learned, or learned in a certain way.
2. The learners’ self-concept; adults want to be responsible for their own decisions.
3. The role of the learners’ experience; adults come to learning with prior experience which may help or hinder learning.

4. Readiness to learn; especially tasks which apply to life.

5. Orientation to learning; particularly problem-solving.

6. Motivation; the most powerful motivation for adults is intrinsic motivation.

There is still debate as to whether andragogy and pedagogy are different, or simply describe a continuum of ‘teacher-directed’ to ‘student-directed’ teaching and learning (Roulston, 2010). Coffman (2009) writes “andragogy is not so much a learning theory as it is a set of assumptions about adult learners” (p. 229). After analyzing the results of a survey given to directors of New Horizons groups – an international organization providing beginning and continuing music education for adults, Coffman concluded that four of Knowles’ six aspects of andragogy were present: (a) the influence of prior experience; (b) responsibility for self-learning; (c) developing problem-solving strategies; (d) self-directed learning.

Several researchers have noted specific ways in which teaching music to adults is different than teaching children (Hallam et al., 2016; Reifinger, 2016; Rohwer, 2005; Roulston, 2010). While both children and adults need regular feedback and guidance, teachers need to be aware of the need to mitigate self-evaluation by adult learners that is overly critical, as adult learners are more aware of the gap between the way they want to sound, and how they actually sound (Reifinger, 2016). Practical accommodations, such as providing individual music stands for vision-impaired learners, or accommodating playing technique for students with arthritis or other age-related conditions, are a common consideration for teachers working with adult learners (Roulston, 2010). Adults typically need more repetition than children to learn something involving fine-motor skills, in addition to an overall slower pace of activities (Hallam et al.,
Sight-reading can be affected by age, as the aging brain takes longer to respond to stimuli (Reifinger, 2016), and some teachers have reported only choosing simple music for sight-reading activities with adult learners (Rohwer, 2005). Many teachers have also noted that adult music learners can concentrate for long periods of time, desire in-depth discussions of concepts, and can work independently from the teacher (Bowles, 2010; Coffman, 2009).

Researchers have also found there is a need for teachers of adult learners to be extremely flexible in their lessons plans, readily adapting instruction and materials for multiple levels (Creech, Varvarigou, Hallam, & McQueen, 2014). Rohwer (2004) found that adult learners in a band setting did not have a preference when it came to method books designed and commonly used to teach children, as opposed to a method book specifically designed for adults (using popular and Broadway tunes to teach musical concepts). However, other researchers have reported that teachers of adult music learners often design their own instructional materials, suggesting there may be a need for materials to be published specifically geared toward teaching adults (Bowles, 2010; Hallam et al., 2016).

Several research studies have found certain teacher characteristics to be crucial to successful teaching of adult students. These include humor, classroom management, appropriate pacing (generally slower), clear communication, encouragement, flexibility, and understanding of responsibilities adult learners hold outside the music-making experience (Bowles, 2010; Hallam et al., 2016; Roulston & Jutras, 2015; Rohwer, 2012). While many of these characteristics may be true of any good teacher (instructing children or adults), certain teacher qualities may be more important when teaching adults than when teaching children. Many teachers and facilitators of adult music learning have expressed a desire for specific training
and/or professional development opportunities focused on teaching adults (Bowles, 2010; Coffman, 2009; Hallam et al., 2016; Rohwer, 2005).

**Motivations of Adult Music Learners**

Several studies have examined the motivations of adult learners pursuing music learning. Desire to learn a particular piece on an instrument/and through singing, pursuing music learning because of the influence of children and/or other family members learning music, or simply specific events (such as acquiring a piano) have all been mentioned by adult learners as motivation to begin musical learning (Roulston & Jutras, 2015). Other adult learners have spoken of the ability to choose music learning as a motivator; they are choosing to learn, in contrast to being forced to practice, as they may have been when they were children (Freiberg, 2006; Taylor, 2011). Having control over their own learning is an important motivator, and relates to adult learning theory and the importance of intrinsic motivation and learners’ self-concept of learning (Knowles et al., 2005). Music learning as a hobby during retirement is another common motivation mentioned by adults (Perkins & Williamon, 2014; Rohwer, 2017; Taylor, 2011).

It is important to consider not only the motivation for adults to begin music learning, but the motivation for them to continue in music learning. Social interaction and the sense of community built during involvement in group music-making is mentioned by many adults as a motivation to continue learning (Hallam, Creech, Varvarigou, & McQueen, 2012; Roulston & Jutras, 2015; Perkins & Williamon, 2014). The satisfaction of pursuing a skill abandoned prematurely in childhood is another motivator adult learners have mentioned in continuing music learning as an adult (Perkins & Williamon, 2014). Support from family and friends has also been mentioned as key to continuing music learning as an adult (Taylor, 2011). Adult learners also
mentioned barriers they faced when starting and/or continuing music learning; these include access to programs for adult learners, financial cost, and issues such as location and scheduling (Hallam et al., 2012).

**Goals of Adult Music Learners**

While many studies have focused on the motivations of adults participating in music learning, only a few studies have examined the goals adults wish to achieve in their music learning. Music-specific goals mentioned by adults include becoming proficient on an instrument, being able to play or sing a particular piece, and developing the ability to read music fluently (Roulston & Jutras, 2015). Extra-musical goals include improving cognition, performing for family members, playing to relieve stress, and having something structured to do on a regular basis (Hallam et al., 2012; Perkins & Williamon, 2014; Roulston & Jutras, 2015; Taylor, 2011).

**Preferences of Adult Music Learners**

While the principles of andragogy and adult learning suggest that adults prefer a more student-directed learning environment, this is not always the case in musical ensembles. Several research studies have found that many adults prefer a more authoritarian, teacher-directed style of learning in the ensemble (Kruse, 2009; Rohwer, 2012). Kruse theorizes this is due to the adult band model that has remained unchanged and encourages a reliance upon the conductor. Rohwer (2012) found adult learners emphasized the importance of teachers treating them differently than children; one participant also emphasized the need for instructors to be encouraging, but not condescending. Interviews with adult learners have also shown there to be a delicate balance between providing appropriate challenges to encourage increased musical skills, and maintaining a relaxed, non-threatening instructional atmosphere (Bugos, 2014; Kruse, 2009; Rohwer, 2012; Roulston & Jutras, 2015).
Adult music learners also provide different answers in their preference for group instruction vs. individual instruction; Bugos (2014) found 50% of her participants preferred group instruction, while 43% preferred individual instruction, and 7% wrote in an additional preference (not originally part of the question) for participating in both types of instruction. On the other hand, older adults often prefer group instruction to individual instruction (Bugos, 2014). However, adult learners do not disagree on everything; several studies have found similar preferences in regard to desired personality traits of teachers. Encouragement, humor, knowledge of craft, patience, and positivity have been mentioned as desirable teacher/facilitator traits by adult music learners in the United States and abroad (Bowles, 2010; Bugos, 2014; Hallam et al., 2016; Kruse, 2009; Roulston & Jutras, 2015; Rohwer, 2012).

Impact of Musical Involvement

The positive impact of adults participating in music learning is seen in a myriad of ways. The social benefits of participating in music-making for adult learners have been well documented (Habron, Butterfly, Gordon, & Roebuck, 2013; Hallam et al., 2012; Rohwer, 2017; Roulston & Jutras, 2015; Perkins & Williamon, 2014). Improvements in cognition, motor skills, and emotional health have also been documented in adult music learners (Bugos, 2014). Separate music composition projects with older people in the United Kingdom encouraged personal creativity and the re-establishment of identity for participants (Habron et al., 2013; Varvarigou, Hallam, Creech, & McQueen, 2013).

In addition to the many positive personal benefits adult music learning provides participants, several research studies have examined the intergenerational impact of adult music learning. Perkins, Aufegger, & Williamon (2015) document the positive impact working with adult learners had on the teaching skills of conservatoire students in the United Kingdom; Sattler
(2013) found similar positive improvements in the teaching skills of post-graduate students working with a New Horizons program in the United States. Adults involved in music learning are often advocates of music education in the schools, personally encourage younger generations to be involved in music, support local music programs and ensembles, and act as mentors for young musicians (De Vries, 2012; Sattler, 2013).
CHAPTER III. METHOD

Setting

By interviewing adult participants learning orchestral string instruments in two separate community music schools, this research study explores the first category of community music (community music focused on education) Leglar and Smith (2010) described. One of the community music schools where participants in this research study learned to play an orchestral string instrument is partnered with the fine arts department at a mid-sized public university in the Midwestern part of the United States. The current string orchestra program for adult learners at this community music school was started in the fall of 2012. The other community music school where participants in this research learned to play an orchestral string instrument is not partnered with a university, but independently offers music, dance, and visual art classes to community members of all ages in a small Midwestern city in the United States. The current string orchestra program for adult learners at this community music school was started in January of 2017.

Community Music School Program 1. The first community music school from which participants in this study were drawn has been partnered with a fine arts department at a mid-sized public university in the Midwestern part of the United States for decades; however, the current string orchestra program for adults did not begin until the fall of 2012. That year the university became a String Project site, one of over 40 universities at the time who were part of the National String Project Consortium, a program that seeks to provide paid, hands-on training for future string orchestra teachers at the undergraduate level, and provide the community with affordable instruction. In addition to offering affordable beginning and intermediate level string classes for youth, this community music school decided to offer a beginning class for adults.
Currently, the program has several options for adult music learners. First, there is a beginning strings class with no prior experience required; participants can choose to learn the violin, viola, cello, or string bass, and must be age 15 and older. Second, there is a multi-level string orchestra for participants aged 18 and older. Completion of the beginning class, or equivalent experience, is required to join the multi-level orchestra. And finally, there is a mixed-level community orchestra offered during the summer, which is open to ages 14 and above with over 3 years of playing experience; this orchestra draws students from area high schools, participants from the multi-level adult string orchestra, and undergraduate students from the university ensembles.

While the Master Teachers and basic schedule for the youth string classes have remained constant since the start of the program in 2012, the adult string orchestra program has seen several teacher turnovers, and several schedule fluctuations between Saturday mornings and Tuesday evenings. Both academic year adult classes took place on Saturday mornings when the program started in 2012; this was partially to accommodate parents who were bringing their children for the youth class on Saturday mornings. Currently, only the multi-level adult orchestra meets on Saturday mornings, and the beginning adult orchestra meets on Tuesday evenings. All the participants from this community music school program interviewed for this study had different instructors for the beginning class and the multi-level class, and several of the participants have had as many as three different class instructors (including the principal investigator) during their time in the program.

**Community Music School Program 2.** The second community music school from which participants in this study were drawn is an independent, privately-owned fine arts school that offers instruction in music, dance, and visual arts to community members of all ages in a
small Midwestern city in the United States. The school officially opened in January of 2016, originally offering only dance classes and private music lessons; the string orchestra program (separate classes for both youth and adults) began in January of 2017. Originally the adult string orchestra class was for beginners, age 18 and older only; participants could choose to learn the violin, viola, cello, or string bass. However, exceptions were made for two teenage students to join the adult class; one with a parent and the other with a grandparent. During the summer of 2017, the class transitioned to its current form as an adult/teen mixed-level orchestra. Currently, there is no beginning adult string class offered, although plans to start another adult/teen beginning class in January of 2018 are in place. Participants in this program have only had one class instructor, who is also the principal investigator of this research study.

**Participants**

Three participants from Community Music School Program 1 (CMSP1) and three participants from Community Music School Program 2 (CMSP2) were interviewed for this study. The six participants were diverse in age, background, and had a variety of music experiences throughout childhood and during adulthood (see Table 1). A description of each of the six participants follows; all names have been changed to maintain the privacy of the participants.

**Sam (Community Music School Program 1).** Sam has been playing violin for two years through the adult string orchestra classes at CMSP1, and has been taking private violin lessons for the past year. A few years prior to joining the adult string program, he learned to play guitar, first attempting to teach himself and then taking private lessons. Other than guitar, Sam was never involved in any other formal music making or instruction, beyond a few piano lessons as a child. He reported there was very little music in his childhood home.
### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Data</th>
<th>Sam</th>
<th>Richard</th>
<th>Lily</th>
<th>Carol</th>
<th>Jenna</th>
<th>Becky</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profession</td>
<td>Retired pilot and former engineer</td>
<td>Retired physics professor</td>
<td>University librarian</td>
<td>High school math teacher</td>
<td>Music teacher, stay-at-home parent</td>
<td>Homeschool parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrument</td>
<td>Violin</td>
<td>Cello</td>
<td>Violin</td>
<td>Viola</td>
<td>Cello</td>
<td>Violin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in group class</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of private instruction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5-6 non-consecutive years</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently receiving private instruction</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other instruments/involvement in music as an adult</td>
<td>Guitar</td>
<td>Choir</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Piano, clarinet, choir</td>
<td>Piano, voice</td>
<td>Flute, baritone, choir</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Richard (Community Music School Program 1)**. Richard has been playing cello for four years through the adult string orchestra classes at CMSP1, and has been taking private cello
lessons for the past three and a half years. While Richard did start in the beginning adult string orchestra class, he had some prior experience on violin and cello in his elementary and middle school orchestras as a child. He also mentioned having a year or two of piano lessons when he was six or seven years old. Richard spoke of being involved in choirs (church and community) for most of his life, and has been a member of a local community chorus since it began over three decades ago. He reported his mother played piano and both parents sang regularly during his childhood.

**Lily (Community Music School Program 1).** Lily has been playing violin for five years through the adult string orchestra classes at CMSP1, and has been taking private violin lessons for the past year. During her childhood Lily played percussion in middle and high school band, but reported she only learned to read rhythm, not pitch. She reported her dad plays piano well enough to earn him acceptance to Juilliard, although he did not go there for financial reasons, and her sister played flute in band as a child.

**Carol (Community Music School Program 2).** Carol has been playing viola for five or six (non-consecutive) years as an adult. She started learning viola through private lessons from the music teacher at the school where she works, but had not played for over eight years when she joined the adult beginning strings class at CMSP2. As a child she took piano lessons and learned clarinet in school band; she has maintained her ability to play both those instruments throughout adulthood, in addition to singing in formal and informal settings (church choirs and with family).

**Jenna (Community Music School Program 2).** Jenna is a high school choir director, current piano teacher, and stay-at-home parent. She has been playing cello for three years, taking private cello lessons from a friend for six months when she first got started. Jenna continued to
teach herself cello until she took a few private lessons from the principal investigator in the past year, and decided to join the adult/teen mixed-level string orchestra at CMSP2 a few months after it began. Growing up, Jenna was surrounded by music; her parents and siblings sang, and her aunt was her first and primary piano teacher during childhood. She also played French horn in middle and high school band, and holds a degree in music education with an emphasis in voice and piano. Throughout adulthood Jenna has sung, played the piano, and in recent years occasionally played the cello with various church worship teams.

**Becky (Community Music School Program 2).** Becky has been playing violin for eight months through the adult string orchestra class at CMSP2. She played flute in middle and high school band, baritone in high school and university marching band, and continued playing flute in a community band for several years after finishing her graduate degree. Becky has been singing her entire life in church and school choirs, although she is not currently in a choir. She also spoke of growing up with parents who sang and a brother who was also in band.

**Data Sources and Collection**

Through email, I (the principal investigator) contacted the director of the String Project program at Community Music School Program 1. The director received the recruitment letter as an attachment to the email. The letter introduced the principal investigator, project advisor, and research study. The email explained that I wanted to conduct individual interviews with adults over the age of 18 who were learning to play an orchestral string instrument in the community music classes the director oversaw. The community music program director and I determined the best way to contact potential participants to give them the recruitment letter was for the community music program director to email the entire adult class information about the study with the recruitment letter attached to the email. I followed the same procedure and emailed the
recruitment letter to members of my orchestral string class for adult learners at Community Music School Program 2.

The recruitment letter (see Appendix A) provided information on why the study was being conducted, explained activities in which they would participate, explained that participation was voluntary, and provided information on how to contact me and the project advisor if they had any questions. I was available by email and phone to discuss any questions from prospective participants in both locations. Potential participants were assured their choice to participate or not to participate would have no impact on their class membership, relationship to the principal investigator, or relationship to Bowling Green State University.

Throughout July and August of 2017, I conducted one individual, semi-structured interview with each participant, ranging from 20-70 minutes in length. Interviews were scheduled individually with each participant. Four of the interviews occurred in the same location where participants attended their string orchestra classes, and two interviews occurred at the participant’s place of residence.

**Data Analysis**

I audio-taped and transcribed all six interviews. Using my research questions as a guide, data analysis included line-by-line coding of each transcript to generate initial categories and search for relationships among them. The coded transcripts were then analyzed for themes and patterns (see Table 2). Throughout this process, I re-visited the related literature. Examining these existing findings supported the generation of themes and patterns emerging from my data analysis.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code and Theme</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desire for involvement</td>
<td>DI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children as catalysts for music involvement</td>
<td>CHD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoys music aesthetically</td>
<td>AEST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobby during retirement</td>
<td>HOBBY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music for self</td>
<td>SELF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort to self-teach</td>
<td>SELF-TEA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of outreach programs</td>
<td>OUTREACH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child encourages parental involvement in</td>
<td>CHD-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>music</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for systematic music instruction</td>
<td>MI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal to improve tone</td>
<td>TONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal to improve shifting</td>
<td>SHIFT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal to play by ear</td>
<td>EAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading music</td>
<td>READ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for musical understanding</td>
<td>LEARN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to play familiar music</td>
<td>FAM. MUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal to play with others</td>
<td>GROUP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspires to intermediate skill level</td>
<td>SKILL BLDG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private lessons to improve tone</td>
<td>PRIV-L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group sound over individual</td>
<td>GRP/I SOUND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislikes being taught like youth ensemble</td>
<td>DIS-YOUTH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values immediate feedback/answers</td>
<td>FEEDBK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislikes off-topic or vague questions</td>
<td>FOCUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefers group instruction over private</td>
<td>GRP/PI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoys playing classical music</td>
<td>CLASSICAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed atmosphere</td>
<td>RELAX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive atmosphere</td>
<td>POS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustrated by poor teacher time management</td>
<td>T-PREP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER IV. RESULTS

Themes

While many themes emerged after analyzing the interview transcripts, in this report I will focus on the themes directly related to my research questions: the motivations, goals, and preferences of these participants. “Motivations of These Participants” refers to the factors these participants discussed as motivating them to learn an orchestral string instrument as an adult. “Goals of These Participants” refers to the self-described musical goals these participants discussed, and “Preferences of These Participants” refers to the preferences these participants discussed regarding classroom environment, instructional approach, group-based vs. individual learning, and class repertoire. See Table 3 for a summary of these themes.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Preferences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General desire to be involved in music-making</td>
<td>Producing a quality sound/tone</td>
<td>Classroom environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music learning for personal fulfillment and/or keeping their brains active</td>
<td>Gaining the ability to read music fluently</td>
<td>Instructional approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for choosing a specific instrument</td>
<td>Gaining the ability to play familiar tunes</td>
<td>Group-based vs. individual learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of child(ren) in music</td>
<td>Learning more advanced techniques such as shifting and vibrato</td>
<td>Repertoire played in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efforts participants made to teach themselves how to play an instrument</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Motivations of These Participants” refers to the factors these participants discussed as motivating them to learn an orchestral string instrument as an adult. “Goals of These Participants” refers to the self-described musical goals these participants discussed, and “Preferences of These Participants” refers to the preferences these participants discussed regarding classroom environment, instructional approach, group-based vs. individual learning, and class repertoire. See Table 3 for a summary of these themes.
Motivations of These Participants

The participants in this study discussed many different motivations for learning an orchestral string instrument as an adult; these included: (a) a general desire to be involved in music-making, (b) music learning for personal fulfillment and/or keeping their brains active, (c) their reasons for choosing a specific instrument, (d) the involvement of their children in music, and (e) efforts several of the participants made to teach themselves how to play an instrument.

Sam had a very strong desire to be involved in making music with a group; while he took private guitar lessons for several years before joining the adult string class, he said: “what I really wanted, what I really thought I needed, was some kind of ensemble program” (S. Jenkins, personal communication, July 8th, 2017). Expressing a desire to make music in new and different ways, Jenna said:

I was also just musically hungry, if that makes sense. Like, I just, I love music so much, and yet found myself kind of bored. And, thinking, "okay, I know the piano now, I sing all the time." Not to say I couldn't get better at both of those, 'cause you always can get better. Um, but I found myself kind of bored, and just hungry to learn something new. (J. Newton, personal communication, August 11th, 2017)

Several of the participants mentioned learning a new instrument to keep their brains active. Carol said: “I think it's a good thing to do when your brain is getting along in years, is just to try something you've never tried before" (C. Smith, personal communication, July 27th, 2017). Jenna echoed that sentiment, saying: “I was ready to challenge myself. I knew that it would be really good for my brain, and just for me as a musician in general" (Newton, 2017). Learning an instrument for personal fulfillment was a strong motivator for other participants. Becky said:
I feel like it's something that I'm doing for myself. I'm not, um, you know, working on teaching the kids, or, you know - I do a lot of things for other people. So it's kind of the thing that I do that gives me a little bit of life; that fills my cup with something good. (B. Wilson, personal communication, August 12th, 2017)

Richard said: “I was thinking…how are you going to spend your time in retirement? And it just hit me - you know, that cello thing is now or never” (R. Jones, personal communication, July 8th, 2017). Lily said:

Just personally, being able to play. Like I think, you know, no I'm not great - wouldn't even really say I'm very good - but, five years ago I couldn't play at all, and now I can. So, you know. That is enough, right now. (L. Ross, personal communication, July 22nd, 2017)

Sam echoed these sentiments of personal fulfillment when talking about how he chose the violin: “And the violin's probably a good instrument, if I just want to play a solo piece for myself…” (Jenkins, 2017).

Reasons for choosing their specific instrument varied among participants. Lily and Jenna both expressed a love for the sound of the instruments they chose. Lily said: “I have always loved the violin. It's, like, one of my favorite instruments to listen to” (Ross, 2017). Jenna said: “I have always, always, always, loved the sound of a cello, what it can add to music” (Newton, 2017). Richard and Becky spoke of simply liking their instrument since childhood. Richard said: “I liked the cello when I did it back in Junior High School, and I always wanted to go back to it” (Jones, 2017). Becky said: “I always wanted to learn a string instrument, but it was not offered. My school was really small, so that wasn't an option” (Wilson, 2017). Sam and Carol mentioned practical motivations for choosing their instruments. Describing his thought process in choosing
violin, Sam said: “why violin vs. a viola or a cello…well, I can kind of read the notes on the treble clef...there's probably more pieces written for the violin…it's easier to carry someplace, and um, and it's the cheapest” (Jenkins, 2017). Carol said: “My favorite is the cello, but cellos are big and expensive! So, I figured I'd do violin or viola. And my husband is a woodworker. And…he just thought the viola was prettier…so I ended up with viola” (Smith, 2017).

Sam, Lily, and Becky all mentioned the involvement of their children in music as a catalyst for their own musical involvement. Sam said:

When I saw my son in this middle school program, and how the group participation really helped the individual progress. And I don't know any better way to say it than as a group, you can do more than you can individually, especially early on. You can play, even if you stumble a lot, and are playing bad notes or whatever, as a group you can get out there and actually perform something. And I thought, well that's a really great way to learn. If there was something out there for adults, I would do that. (Jenkins, 2017)

Lily said:

It was actually 'cause the girls got involved with the String Project…The girls came home [after an outreach program at school] and they said "we want to play stringed instruments," so [Daughter 1] played violin and [Daughter 2] played viola…they did that for a year in school…the following year is when the classes shifted to here, to them actually coming to campus. And, when I was signing them up online for their fall class, I saw it said adult beginner class. It was one of the options…and I was like "Oh! What is that?" And so, it was really funny, I signed up two days before it started. I had to convince myself - it took me like a month. And I was - I kept thinking about it. I signed
the girls up in like July....and I kept thinking about it I was like, oh, should I do that? It was like Saturday mornings, and I was like, well I'm taking them anyway! (Ross, 2017)

Becky had a similar experience:

Well, my kids have always wanted to do it. Um, and I always wanted to learn a string instrument, but it was not offered. My school was really small, so that wasn't an option...[private] music lessons...weren't really something my parents encouraged or thought about. But I'd always wanted to do it! So when a friend of mine must have posted it on Facebook - or shared it - that you were starting this class that I thought "oh! that sounds like a lot of fun!" And doing it in a class was so much more affordable for our family. And so when the kids decided they really wanted to do it, I said, well I'm gonna’ do it too! (Wilson, 2017)

Sam, Richard, and Jenna had previously all attempted to teach themselves. Sam said: “I tried to teach myself whatever I could without any prior music background” (Jenkins, 2017). Richard said: “I had wanted to go back to the cello. I even tried it for a while when I was teaching in [a different state], but I didn't have any lessons, I wasn't in any group” (Jones, 2017). Jenna had lessons first, but continued learning cello on her own: “So she [a friend who played cello] gave me six months of lessons, and then I kind of continued on my own since then. Until I met you [the principal investigator]” (Newton, 2017).

Goals of These Participants

While participants had varying personal goals for what they hoped to achieve on their instruments, several goals were mentioned in multiple interviews: (a) producing a quality sound/tone, (b) gaining the ability to read music fluently, (c) gaining the ability to play familiar tunes, and (d) learning more advanced techniques such as shifting and vibrato. The ability to play
by ear and/or improvise was the main goal held by one of the participants. Sam expressed his desire to make a quality sound on his instrument at all times:

   It doesn't matter if you can make a beautiful sound under perfect conditions. But if you can make a good sound in the moment of having to deal with everything else that's going on around you, then you're starting to learn how to play. (Jenkins, 2017)

Richard was even more direct: “well, I would like to be able to play the cello and have it sound nice” (Jones, 2017). Regarding her musical goals, Carol said: “being more accurate [in reading music] than I am now, and having a nicer sound.” (Smith, 2017)

Becky summed up her goals to play familiar tunes, perform in public, and produce a quality tone with the following comment:

   Well, yeah, I think I would like to get good enough that I could play, you know, at church. Some, along with some hymns. Or maybe some easier solos here or there. That would be great. To just feel like I could do - to sound good enough to play in public would be great! (Wilson, 2017)

While some participants in this study had extensive prior musical experience and already possessed proficient music reading skills, other participants expressed a desire to become more fluent in reading music. Lily said: “I'd like to be able to look at a piece of music and just be able to figure it out on my own, from start to finish” (Ross, 2017). While Carol knew how to read music from previous experience with instrumental music, she expressed difficulty learning to read in alto clef, and her desire to improve: “I'm still working on that. [laughs] I'm going over in my mind on the way here [to the interview], that note that I asked you about. I'm going, okay, that's the D string, it's on the third finger, that would be [mimes placing third finger on the viola],
'cause I can't picture it on the staff” (Smith, 2017). While Sam expressed the difficulty of learning to read music, he also talked about enjoying the challenge and sense of discovery:

What's really fun about it, is discovering music that I've never heard before. I really like - sometimes it's fun to play a piece that you already recognize. But it's really neat to just - it's like a book that's you've never read. I wonder what this is about? And then you read, and ah, this is fantastic, what a complicated story, this is fantastic - for me, that's how I feel sometimes with music. Especially early on when it takes me a while to decipher what the music is. I can't look at a sheet of music and hear in my head what this is going to be. Um, and as I start to learn and start to play it, it's discovering in some cases something that's really beautiful…And that, I don't know, it's satisfying in the way that reading a book is, you know, that you really enjoy, is satisfying. (Jenkins, 2017)

While Sam expressed his enjoyment of discovering and playing unfamiliar music, other participants (like Becky) specifically mentioned the ability to play familiar tunes as a musical goal. Lily spoke of an experience she had when her private lesson teacher assisted her in learning to play a familiar piece from a soundtrack without written music:

Um, so I don't know if you've seen the movie Brooklyn, I don't know if that even rings a bell. But, it came out a few years ago, and it has an absolutely gorgeous score, it's just beautiful. And it's all violin and string. And I had gotten the CD, and now I have it on Spotify…And, um, there was a particular song on the soundtrack that I, sometime - I don't know, around Christmas - and I thought, "I wonder if I could figure out how to play that?" And I looked everywhere for the sheet music, and could not find it. And I even got [her private teacher] to look for me, like, I thought maybe she has other sources. And she said, "I don't think it exists." You know, but she said, "but that's doesn't mean you can't
play it. We can figure it out." And so, she - I brought it in on my phone one of my private lesson weeks. And she listened to the whole thing. And she said, "you could totally play this." And of course, there was like a solo violin over the orchestra. And she was like, "you could totally play this." And I was like, okay, how do we do that? And it took a couple months. Um, so she went through and - there's two key changes. So she told me what those are. She said, "these are the three keys you're in." And she gave me the - wrote out the scale for those three. And then she said, um, - and there were some notes I hadn't played before, and she showed me those - and I said to her, I said, "okay, what note does it start on? Tell me how to start." And she told me like the first, I don't know like, eight notes or something. Like, this phrase is this. And so then - I took, it probably took me about a month…And it was a back and forth; I would bring it to [her private teacher], and there were like some mushy parts where I just couldn't figure it out. I was like, I have no idea what these 20 seconds are. She totally helped me figure it out. Then, I took that and figured out the, like, duration and length - all that kind of stuff.

Interviewer: All the notes.

Lily: Put it on to actual staff music. 'Cause I had literally just written out "A" "B" or "D" whatever, "F#" whatever, and then. So then I created the actual notes, and then I put it on, you know staff. And um, got her to help me fine tune it, because there was some stuff I was still way off on. And uh, and then now I have it. And now I can play it. And I loved that experience! I was like, "Oh my God, this is so cool!" So um, now I have it, I can play it. So, I think just being able to do stuff like that. Um.

Interviewer: To be able to listen, and then play?
Lily: To be able to listen, and then play it, um, to be able to play a piece that's in a movie - probably sound ridiculous, but, I love to listen to movie scores. And so, I was like, oh, well I can do that! (Ross, 2017)

Richard and Jenna both mentioned shifting (moving the left hand to play notes in different positions on the fingerboard) as a goal. For Richard, it was part of a larger goal of playing in tune:

You know, you know my goals right now are to get the intonation down so that I put my fingers in the right place all the time - which, I don't do often very well. And I include in that the shifting. I'm working pretty hard on shifting right now, and some pieces I like to play, but, I get the shifting right maybe half the time, and half the time get it way off. But those are just some kind of skills that I want to master. (Jones, 2017)

Jenna also spoke of shifting – or, as she put it, playing in different positions:

I want to be more advanced for sure. I just want to be comfortable on the instrument. Like right now I don't know all of the positions. Um, so I want to get better at knowing, you know, those. Yes I can play in first position pretty decently now. But, stretching myself to be more advanced, and be able to move around on the cello more is where I want to be. (Newton, 2017)

Jenna also expressed a goal of being able to improvise and play by ear, so she could play with her church worship team:

Jenna: I do want to get better so that I can play independently in the worship team.

Interviewer: Okay. And, what kind of playing - in the worship team would it be primarily reading music, or improvising?

Jenna: Definitely improvising.
Interviewer: Okay. So you want to be comfortable improvising?

Jenna: Yes! So since they play just by chord charts, knowing how to play it by ear a little bit and improvise on my own is gonna’ be important. So, that's definitely something I am working towards. (Newton, 2017)

Preferences of These Participants

The participants in this study mentioned preferences concerning: (a) classroom environment, (b) instructional approach, (c) group-based vs. individual learning, and (d) repertoire played in class. Regarding classroom environment, Carol spoke of how important it was to her that it was not intimidating: “It's not the least bit intimidating… I feel perfectly accepted, I just never feel on the spot. I can learn in kind of an un-intimidating situation” (Smith, 2017). Becky expressed similar feelings about the classroom environment:

I don't feel pressured to be, um - like it's relaxed in the sense of like, I don't feel like I need to be at a certain level, and that you're really understanding like, when we're making mistakes. Just, you know, trying to learn something new. And, um, I never feel nervous in there, which is great. Even when I was playing with the community band, sometimes I would feel like - some of the pieces were really hard! And so I would feel a little nervous about playing in front of people. In this class I don't ever feel that way. I always feel pretty confident, and like, we're moving at a good pace where we're learning new things that are challenging, but not to the point where I feel like I can't keep up. So the pace has been really good. Um, and just the atmosphere of the class is really welcoming and understanding. And, um, and it's not that it's not challenging, 'cause it is. Um, but just, I don't - I feel really comfortable. (Wilson, 2017)

Other participants spoke of the importance of being able to ask questions during class. Lily said:
I actually appreciate that - I mean you [the principal investigator, a former class instructor] did this, and certainly [the current class instructor] does this now - that we can ask questions. And so when I do have a question, I'll ask it. And one of the things I think that makes our class good is there's a lot of give and take. So everyone feels free to ask questions. (Ross, 2017)

Carol mentioned appreciating the questions fellow students asked:

I…like to have people ask questions. 'Cause sometimes, I may not even realize I have that question until somebody else brings it up. And I - you know, I might think: "you know, that's a really great question," and I hadn't thought of it, and that helps me too. (Smith, 2017)

While Sam also preferred a classroom environment open to questions from students, he warned of the danger of too many questions:

Sometimes there are some really good questions that get asked, and when it's the sort of question that there can be a fairly - either a concise answer, or one that has a very definite answer to it - it's really, like, "hey! that's a good point, we need to do this because of A B and C," and you get that nugget of music knowledge, and it's like really great. The problem is, it quickly degrades into just - for lack of words, just shoot the [expletive] kind of thing. And, especially with adults [laughs]. It gets that way very quickly. And then you're not accomplishing anything. (Jenkins, 2017)

Jenna also expressed a desire for less student talk during class:

My personal preference is to let the teacher do all the talking, and us play. So that there's more playing time during the lesson! On the flip side of that, I do see the benefit of students being able to talk in class. (Newton, 2017)
Preferences regarding instructional approach varied across participants, but several attributes came up in multiple interviews. Lily and Becky both mentioned appreciating the performing skills of their classroom instructors. Lily expressed it this way:

Well first of all, she's so good. She is just so talented, like, she blows me away. So when she's just playing something or she'll be trying to figure something out, she'll say "well how does that go?" And she'll play it like - Oh my God! [laughs]. Um, I just love to hear her play. So I love the fact that she will never - she always has her violin with her, she never hesitates to play it for us. She'll borrow one of ours if she doesn't have hers out. Um, so I like that. (Ross, 2017)

Becky expressed her appreciation for the way the instructor’s skill impacted instruction:

You [the principal investigator, Becky’s string class instructor] have obviously good knowledge of how to play. So I feel like we're also getting really good quality instruction. Not just that it's a fun place to go, but that we're also really learning good techniques and things. (Wilson, 2017)

Several participants also appreciated the relaxed environment set by their instructors. Speaking of his instructor, Sam said: “In terms of personality and everything, you know, great personalities, very inclusive, very relaxed atmosphere...” (Jenkins, 2017). Speaking of her instructor, Becky said:

I find it really helpful that, um, I don't feel pressured to be, um - like it's relaxed in the sense of like, I don't feel like I need to be at a certain level, and that you're [the principal investigator, Becky’s string class instructor] really understanding like, when we're making mistakes. Just, you know, trying to learn something new. And, um, I never feel nervous in there, which is great. (Wilson, 2017)
The ability of instructors to differentiate instruction was also very important to participants.

Speaking of the adult string class, Jenna said:

So, there are some more beginners, and some more advanced. But I feel like there's a very good overall - like, no matter what level you're at you're gonna’ learn something there. Um, and so I feel like - I don't know the word I'm looking for, but it's very all round, like she [the instructor] meets everyone kind of where they are as a player. But also allows us, um, even though we're on different levels, the opportunity to come together and be on the same playing field for part of the class, because we're all playing a piece together. (Newton, 2017)

Speaking of his current class instructor, Richard put it this way:

There's a pretty wide range of skills in the group too. So you know you have to, you have to kind of bring the slower ones along, at the same time you don't want to leave them out in the snow either [both laugh]. I guess to summarize that I would say I sense a strong, attempt at any rate, to match the capabilities of the group. (Jones, 2017)

Carol spoke positively about the mechanical details and reasons for them her instructor brings up during class:

I do appreciate that - the hints, just things about, you know, how to put your fingers on the strings, and how to raise and lower your elbow to make sure the bow's in the right place, which I'm still working on. (Smith, 2017)

Becky expressed similar appreciation for being told why she should do things a certain way: “I really appreciate that. Because if I understand why I need to do it a certain way, I will work harder to make sure I do it that way.” (Wilson, 2017)
Several participants stressed the importance of the instructor having good time management skills. Speaking of his current classroom instructor, Sam said:

I think she does a good job of staying on focus...there are the potential for numerous distractions, um, but, to keep the focus for that days work - you know, she'll start "okay, we're gonna’ do this this and this." You can tell whatever, we get started in some piece or some particular passage of a piece, you can tell if we don't watch out, this is going to take the whole first half of the class. And she's good at getting what you can out of that, and then using the time and moving on. So, it sounds really boring, but I think it's kind of important for a group like that. Keep it controlled, and, um, really trying to make the best use of the time. (Jenkins, 2017)

Richard and Lily both spoke of their frustration with an instructor they perceived as having poor time management. Richard said:

My least favorite thing the first year, uh, we seemed to spend a lot of time twiddling around. Um, rather than focusing on, on a playing and learning music. Um, and I was somewhat frustrated that first year, feeling like we weren't spending enough time on the music. That was probably my least favorite thing. (Jones, 2017)

Lily elaborated on the situation: “It was rambling about this person or this band, or this improvisation or whatever. Um, and that was so frustrating, that I was like, I thought we were gonna’ like, learn how to play” (Ross, 2017). Lily also spoke of another negative experience in the adult strings class, this time with a substitute teacher:

“She taught our class as if we were a class of like third graders. I mean, she had her wand out, she was tapping the stand, and like "alright, we're gonna’ start..." Um, she didn't really want a lot of chitchat or back and forth, it was like, alright. And she would yell at
us as we were playing. Not angrily, but like, "louder!" Or, you know, "slow down!" And it was like - as if we were kids. And everyone was just like whoa, when is [the regular instructor] coming back? Um, you know, she was - she got us through our stuff. She clearly knows what she's talking about. I think she had high expectations for us, and I don't think we disappointed her. I think she expected us to know how to do stuff, and for the most part we did. But it was just so intimidating. It was just like, don't yell at us. We're just doing this for fun, we're not performing, you know we're not in a class. It was like, um, I didn't feel like we needed that as adults. Like, I don't think you need to treat us like kids. (Ross, 2017) When asked if they preferred learning in a group, private lessons, or both, Sam, Richard, and Jenna all responded that they preferred learning in both settings. Becky had never taken private violin lessons, but agreed with the others that both settings would be ideal. All four talked about learning in the group as a chance to listen and play with others, while private lessons were for focusing on personal technique. Becky summed it up this way:

Both is probably ideal. I think playing with other people helps…’Cause it forces you to listen to what other people are doing, and how does it all sound together?...But I think um, you know, one-on-one is probably ideal for getting your own technique, you know, learning to fix little things that need to be fixed. That's probably the ideal. (Wilson, 2017) Lily and Carol each said they preferred learning in a group over private lessons. While Lily spoke highly of her private lessons and plans to continue with them, she had this to say about playing with the group:

I really like playing with other people. I feel like if I can hear other people playing that I'm better. Um, I actually really liked the private lessons, I feel like they moved me
forward tremendously…If I had to pick one or the other, I would pick the class, hands down. Um, I just feel like the community feel, the fact that we're all trying to learn it, the fact that nobody has to be there, like we chose this. It's really - and I think everyone's that's there chose it because they enjoy it…And when we would be playing a particularly hard part, and we would nail it, we'd be like "Yeah, we did it!" [laughs] Just like, "we can do this!" I just like that atmosphere. Yeah, so I would pick the class. (Ross, 2017)

In addition to explaining that she felt less pressure in a group environment than private lessons, Carol also discussed the benefits of learning alongside others:

Um, I think you can be helped by other people. Even when the teacher addresses another person - that's maybe something that they could be doing better, that probably will help me too. Like how to finger, and how to hold the bow, and stuff like that. Even if it's not like me personally that's being addressed, I think I can still learn from that. (Smith, 2017)

When asked about their preferences regarding repertoire played in class, many of these participants expressed a preference for playing classical music. Carol put it this way:

Well, my favorite kind of music is classical and spiritual. I love not only hymns, but worship songs, and stuff like that. I also love the classical - especially the romantic and baroque, I even like that too. So, those are my two favorite kinds of music. To play. To sing. To hear. (Smith, 2017)

Sam specified that he prefers music written for orchestra, regardless of the genre. He put it this way:

I like the stuff that's originally written for orchestras. Probably the best way I can say it. Not necessarily classical. Cause I'm thinking like in the, in the summer group I'm in now, it's all movie themes. But it's some fantastic music. (Jenkins, 2017)
Lily expressed a preference for playing music of any genre with which she is familiar:

Well I like folk music a lot. Um, and - I just, I'm not necessarily sure it's genres I would like to play. I actually like playing songs I've heard before. So it's hard for me sometimes to even practice or feel like I'm getting good at a song if I just can't figure it out, or haven't heard it before. (Ross, 2017)

Richard, Jenna, Becky, and Carol all expressed a preference for playing classical music in class, although Carol and Becky also mentioned enjoying spiritual music and folk music.
CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION

Many of the motivations, musical goals, and preferences of the six participants in this study reflect the findings of previous research on adult music learning. Motivations such as: (a) the desire to learn a particular instrument, (b) music learning for personal fulfillment, (c) keeping the brain active, (d) the influence of family members’ involvement in music, (e) music learning as a hobby in retirement have all been recorded in previous research studies with adult learners (Freiberg, 2006; Perkins & Williamon, 2014; Rohwer, 2017; Roulston & Jutras, 2015; Taylor, 2011). Each one of these motivations were mentioned by at least two participants in this study, suggesting that while every adult music learner is different, there are common motivations across many different settings.

Roulston and Jutras (2015) found that goals held by adult music learners included becoming proficient on an instrument, being able to play or sing a particular piece, and developing the ability to read music fluently. While none of these participants mentioned learning a particular piece as a goal, several did express a desire to be able to play music that was familiar to them. Other participants also discussed their instrument proficiency goals; the most common goal was simply to produce a nice sound, or tone, on the instrument; other proficiency goals included learning more advanced techniques such as shifting and vibrato. The ability to read music fluently was a goal held by several participants, including Carol, a participant who already knew how to read music, but still struggled to read alto clef to play viola. Jenna’s primary goal in learning cello was to be able to improvise and play by ear; this was a unique goal not mentioned in the findings of Roulston and Jutras.

Preferences regarding: (a) classroom environment, (b) instructional approach, (c) group vs. individual learning, (d) repertoire played in class varied among participants, but had many
things in common with results reported in previous research. The principles of andragogy and adult learning suggest that adult learners prefer a student-directed learning environment – an environment where the student’s interests, questions, suggestions, and self-evaluations guide instruction. Yet, several researchers found that many adult music learners prefer a more teacher-directed environment in an ensemble – an environment where the teacher’s questions, suggestions, and evaluations guide instruction (Knowles, 2005; Kruse, 2009; & Rohwer, 2012).

Many of the participants in this study preferred a relaxed classroom environment, with the ability to freely ask questions as needed; this is to be expected based on the principles of andragogy and the propensity for self-directed learning outlined by Knowles. However, Sam and Jenna both expressed concerns about too many questions asked in class, especially if they veered off-topic.

Jenna, especially, had a strong preference for teacher-directed learning, stating that it led to the most playing time in the class. Kruse (2009) theorized that preferences for teacher-directed learning stems from a traditional band model that relies upon the conductor, and has remained unchanged for over a century. It is interesting to note that Jenna had extensive ensemble experience prior to her involvement in the adult string class at CMSP2, including a degree in music education. Her preference for teacher-directed learning may have been influenced by her prior experience in ensembles; but this does not negate her observation that teacher-directed instruction is the most efficient way to achieve the most playing time in class. This may be particularly desirable for more advanced students and ensembles, who have moved past the initial stage of music learning and are focused on mastering new music in addition to working on the basic technique of their instrument.

All the participants in this study preferred either group instruction to individual instruction, or both group and individual instruction. Bugos (2014) found that 50% of her...
participants preferred group instruction, 43% preferred individual, and 7% wrote in the option (not originally provided in her study) of having both group and individual music instruction. The results of this study suggest that given the option of both group and individual lessons, a far larger majority may choose both, instead of one over the other.

Participating in community music education has had a significant impact upon these participants’ lives. First, several participants commented on how much they enjoy the social aspect of the class. Lily explained:

> We get to class, we’re all like "Oh, how are you?" And people like know, each other, um, sort of know where everybody's at with playing. You know, like I could tell you who is really good in our class, stuff like that. Um, and, I just feel like it is such a positive, um, friendly place to be. Like, I look forward to it every week. (Ross, 2017)

Richard also expressed how important the social aspect was to him: “You know I'm living by myself now, my kids are all grown up and I'm divorced, and I need some motivation to get out of the house and meet new people. And that's an important part of it” (Jones, 2017). Carol and Sam also mentioned enjoying the social aspects of their classes; these reported social benefits were not surprising considering the findings of prior research (Habron, Butterly, Gordon, & Roebuck, 2013; Hallam et al., 2012; Rohwer, 2017; Roulston & Jutras, 2015; Perkins & Williamon, 2014.)

Another fascinating impact mentioned by three of the participants in this study was how music learning in the class became a catalyst for bonding with family members through intergenerational music-making. Carol attends the class with her 12-year-old granddaughter. Speaking about that experience, she said:

> It gives us some time together. Something in common, something else in common…it takes us a good twenty, twenty-five minutes to get here. So yeah, we always chat on the
way here and the way back, and sometimes we stop to get something to eat. So it's a really neat bonding experience for us too. (Smith, 2017)

Becky attends the adult/teen string class at CMSP2 with her teenage son, and has two other children enrolled in the youth classes. Speaking about that experience, she says:

You know, it's been enjoyable for them to be like "hey mom, you want to play this song real quick? Let's see if we can do that." And [the older daughter]'s also learning the flute at the same time. And so, every once in a while, she'll ask me to pull my flute out too, which is, you know, a totally different thing cause I'm on a totally different level of playing than she is. So I can help teach her that. But with violin, like we're both learning at the same time. Particularly [her older daughter] - so she's almost twelve - and uh, it's been fun that we're all doing it together. You know [the younger daughter] looks to me more for help. "Mom can you help me with this?" And you know, 'cause she's still learning to read music, and the other kids already know that. So, um, she needs more assistance. But, you know, it's one more thing that we do together, and spend some time. That's great. (Wilson, 2017)

Lily also had daughters in the youth class at CMSP1 when she was first learning violin. She explained how that experience had a positive impact on their relationship:

There were a couple years - they got so far past me pretty quickly - but like, maybe that first year, we could actually play together. And that was really nice. It was like, wow, this is really cool. And then they got enough ahead of me that they were showing me stuff, and they really liked that. And I did too. It was like, how do you - show me how to figure this out! (Ross, 2017)
In addition to playing with her daughters, Lily commented that learning the violin has given her another way to connect with her father, who plays piano:

We both learned Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring, and played it at Christmas. 'Cause my sister has a piano. So, um, he played the piano part and I played a very simplified violin part [laughs]. Um, it was so fun. And then we did, like some Christmas carols and stuff together. So, um, we're actually working on another piece together right now - like, long distance. (Ross, 2017)

The connection and encouragement these participants describe receiving and giving through intergenerational music-making is similar to findings in studies by Sattler (2013) and Vries (2012).

**Implications for Music Education**

The findings in this study have numerous implications for the field of music education regarding youth outreach programs, availability of adult programs, and teacher education. Several participants mentioned school or university youth outreach programs as being the catalyst for their own involvement in music learning as adults. Sam first became interested in music learning as an adult after attending his son’s middle school band concerts. Lily first considered learning the violin after her daughters started playing in elementary school through a university outreach program. And Becky started playing violin in the adult class after hearing about the youth classes at CMSP2 from a friend.

Music educators should be encouraged to know that outreach programs can be effective in involving the whole family in music. However, as Myers (2008) argues, entry points for older learners must be provided in order to truly involve everyone. While Sam was first interested in learning an instrument in an ensemble after attending his son’s middle school band concert, he
spent years searching for a beginning ensemble for adults before finding the string class at CMSP1. Even including a simple referral to another program that provides music instruction for adults can go a long way to involving the entire family in making music.

**Availability of Adult Programs.** While recent decades have seen the rise of programs for adult music education such as New Horizons in the United States and the Music for Life program in the United Kingdom, there is still an assumption among many adults that music learning is for children. Sam put it this way:

I guess I had always figured that - like, a lot of people, if you hadn't started really early, you'll never learn to play…it just seems like it's out of reach. And, when I saw in middle school how truly beginning players could actually play some nice music. You know, I listened to some of these pieces that, you know, after two years or three years, and thought "well that's really pretty, that's really good - I'd love to be part of that." And geez, it only took two years for my son - who himself, he had a little bit of guitar lessons, I got him some when he was younger, so he could kind of read music, he understood some basics - but I thought, you know, that's - I wish there was something like that as an adult. You know, there just - it seems like you have this one opportunity to participate in something like that, and if you don't, then you've missed your chance for the rest of your life. Which is kind of dumb. (Jenkins, 2017)

Sam is implying a general perception that entry-level ensembles are only available to children. Meyers (2008) argued that changing this perception will require music educators to provide greater access to entry-level music instruction:

How many more adults might harbor a closeted desire for music that they would act on if we took seriously the obligation to provide ready access to music learning across a
lifetime? Nevertheless, rather than emphasizing multiple and continuous entry points for music learning, we suggest that unless one begins music before the age of nine, the attempt is largely useless. (p. 53-54)

Still, the limited availability of entry-level string ensembles for adults is evidenced in the lack of published research involving adults learning orchestral string instruments. While many private string teachers may be willing to take on adult students, access to private instruction alone may not be sufficient to engage many adult learners. Four of the six participants interviewed for this study said they would not have pursued private lessons if the strings class had not been available to them. Perhaps this is not surprising, as Bugos (2014) found that adult learners often prefer group instruction to individual instruction. Affordability is also an important factor; string instruments can be expensive, and private lessons are often a significant investment. Group classes cost less than private lessons, and may make music learning more available to adults with budgets already spread thin.

**Teacher Education.** Even if entry-level music programs for adults become more common, Hallam, Creech, McQueen, Varvarigou, & Gaunt (2016) found that the skill and ability of the facilitator to instruct adults is crucial to the success of the program. However, they found that most facilitators of adult music learning were only educated to teach children, an issue that has also been raised by Myers (1992) and Rohwer (2011) in the United States. This is reflected in the frustration Lily felt when she perceived the substitute teacher as treating the class like they were children. Richard also expressed frustration with what he perceived to be wasted class time when his first string teacher did not stay focused on the task at hand. Specific education in andragogy and adult learning theory may have positively impacted the teaching of both Lily’s
substitute teacher and Richard’s first string class teacher, enabling the instructors to provide a more engaging and enjoyable experience.

In addition to specific education in andragogy and adult learning theory, prospective teachers of adult music learners should also be encouraged to find out the goals and preferences of their own adult students. The majority of these participants mentioned producing a quality sound, and playing simple music they could recognize, as their main goals in learning to play. Prospective teachers should be prepared to accommodate multiple playing levels in an adult ensemble, and design their own teaching materials if needed (Bowles, 2010; Creech, Varvarigou, Hallam, & McQueen, 2014) that are appropriate for adult learners.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

While there is a growing body of research related to adult learners and community music programs, there are few published studies examining adult learners of orchestral string instruments. Specifically, more research is needed with a larger sample group on the goals adult learners have for their own playing, and the preferences they hold regarding instructional approach. Future researchers may also consider exploring the specific goals of adult music learners regarding music reading, playing by ear, improvisation, and how prevalent the desire to learn each skill is among adult learners. As music educators and researchers, we must, together, explore how to best engage learners of all ages in music. Indeed, the participants in this study indicated a preference for working together in groups and ensembles rather than only taking private lessons. As Sam said about performing with a group: “I think it's neat to be able to get together and actually make something that you can't do on your own. You can't get that sound on your own” (Jenkins, 2017).
REFERENCES


Hallam, S., Creech, A., Varvarigou, M., & McQueen, H. (2012). The characteristics of older people who engage in community music making, their reasons for participation and the
barriers they face. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education, 18*(2), 21-43.
doi:10.7227/JACE.18.2.3

doi:10.1177/0255761415617039

doi:10.1080/00220612.1972.10671913


doi:10.1177/0255761407079951

doi:10.1386/ijcm.2.2-3.215_1

doi:10.1386/ijcm.3.3.343_1

doi:10.2307


APPENDIX A. RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear Prospective Participant,

My name is Betsy Williams, and I am a graduate student in the department of Music Education at Bowling Green State University. I am contacting you because I am conducting a qualitative research study for my master’s thesis to investigate the motivations, musical goals, and preferences of adults learning orchestral string instruments in community music classes. You are invited to participate in this research study because you are over the age of 18 and are learning an orchestral string instrument as an adult in a community music class.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the motivations, musical goals, and preferences of adults learning orchestral string instruments in community music classes. This study is important and benefits the field of music education by providing further insight into music learners who choose to learn an orchestral string instrument as an adult. Many studies have documented the benefits of music learning as an adult. This study seeks to go beyond investigating adult music learner motivations, goals, and benefits, and probe the ways they perceive the instruction in their community music classes. Participants in this study may benefit from the opportunity to reflect upon their involvement in music, and the impact playing music has had on their lives. Society as a whole may also benefit from having members who consider, reflect, and analyze their own motivations, goals, and preferences when learning a new skill. Research into the ways adult music learners perceive instruction, and the preferences they hold regarding instructional approach and learning environment, is crucial to providing a greater understanding of how adult learners should be taught.

Your involvement in this study would include: one individual semi-structured interview (approximately 45-60 minutes in length) conducted in-person by me at a pre-arranged time outside of your community music class, and a review of the written final report (to ensure validity). The interviews will be audio taped and transcribed by me.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The decision to participate or to not participate will have no impact on your class membership, your relationship to me, or your relationship to Bowling Green State University. Participant responses will remain confidential, and all names will be changed. The only people with access to the data will be me (the principal investigator), and my project advisor, Dr. Lisa M. Gruenhagen.

I hope you will consider taking part in this research and I encourage you to contact me or my project advisor with any initial questions or concerns you may have. If you decide that you would like to participate in this study, please contact me at the phone number or email address listed below to indicate your interest.

Sincerely,

Betsy Williams, Graduate Student
Department of Music Education
Bowling Green State University
Telephone: 859-941-6461
Email: williea@bgusu.edu

Dr. Lisa M. Gruenhagen, Project Advisor
Associate Professor of Music Education
Bowling Green State University
Telephone: 419-372-2005
Email: lgruenh@bgusu.edu
APPENDIX B. CONSENT FORM

Consent Document

Introduction

My name is Betsy Williams, and I am a graduate student in the department of Music Education at Bowling Green State University. I am contacting you because I am conducting a qualitative research study for my master's thesis to investigate the motivations, musical goals, and preferences of adults learning orchestral string instruments in community music classes. You are invited to participate in this research study because you are over the age of 18 and are learning an orchestral string instrument as an adult in a community music class.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate the motivations, musical goals, and preferences of adults learning orchestral string instruments in community music classes. This study is important and benefits the field of music education by providing further insight into music learners who choose to learn an orchestral string instrument as an adult. Many studies have documented the benefits of music learning as an adult. This study seeks to go beyond investigating adult music learner motivations, goals, and benefits, and probe the ways they perceive the instruction in their community music classes. Participants in this study may benefit from the opportunity to reflect upon their involvement in music, and the impact playing music has had on their lives. Society as a whole may also benefit from having members who consider, reflect, and analyze their own motivations, goals, and preferences when learning a new skill. Research into the ways adult music learners perceive instruction, and the preferences they hold regarding instructional approach and learning environment, is crucial to providing a greater understanding of how adult learners should be taught.

Procedure

Your involvement in this study would include: one individual semi-structured interview (approximately 45-60 minutes in length) conducted in-person by me at a pre-arranged time outside of your community music class, and a review of the written final report (to ensure validity). The interviews will be audio taped and transcribed by me.

Voluntary Nature

Participation in this research is completely voluntary and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The decision to participate or to not participate will have no impact on your class membership, your relationship to me, or your relationship to Bowling Green State University.

Confidentiality Protection

Participant responses will remain confidential, and all names will be changed. The only people with access to the data include myself (the principal investigator), and my project advisor, Dr. Lisa Gruenhegen. Audiobites of interviews will be directly downloaded from the digital recording device onto the principal investigator's password-protected computer and will be destroyed at the end of the study. All transcripts of audiobites will be stored in password-protected files on the principal investigator's computer. To further protect the identity of participants, each file will be given a codename and the files will be destroyed at the end of the study. All signed consent forms will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the project advisor's BGSU office and will be destroyed at the end of the study. You have the right to have all questions concerning the study, answered by
me and/or my project advisor. To ensure validity of the study, you will have the opportunity to review and comment on the written report, and you may also request a summary or copy of the results of the study. You will be provided with a copy of this written consent form for your records.

Risk

The risk of participation in this study is no greater than that experienced in daily life.

Contact Information

If you have questions about the study or the procedure, requirements, or time commitment, you may contact me at willies@bgsu.edu or Dr. Lisa Gruenhagen at 2157 Moore Musical Arts Center, 419-372-2005, lgruenh@bgsu.edu. If you have questions about this study or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (419) 372-7716 or orc@bgsu.edu. Thank you for your consideration.

I have been informed of the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits of this study. I have had the opportunity to have all my questions answered and I have been informed that my participation is completely voluntary. I agree to participate in this research study.

Participant Signature ____________________________ Date __________________

Participant Name (printed) __________________________________________
APPENDIX C. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Demographics

1. What is your age?
2. What orchestral string instrument do you play? How long have you played your instrument? In addition to the group class, do you also take private lessons?
   a. Do you play any other instruments, and when did you learn them? How did you learn these instruments? Where did you learn them?
3. Have you ever participated in any other music making? If so, in what context?
4. Do any of your family members participate in music?
5. What is your current or past occupation?

Motivation, Goals, Preferences

1. Why did you decide to learn to play an instrument?
   a. Do you have end goals for your learning? If so, what are those goals?
      i. What level of playing would you like to achieve?
   b. What motivated you to learn the violin/viola/cello/string bass?
2. How does participating in community music education impact your life?
3. How do you perceive the instruction in your community music classes? In other words, how would you describe the instruction in your class? How would you describe the teaching style of your instructor(s)?
   a. Do you have a preference regarding instructional approach?
      i. Does your teacher explain the “why” behind things (such as the reason for holding the bow a particular way)? If no, do you wish s/he did?
      ii. Do you like to talk and ask questions of the teacher and/or other students about the music during class? Or, do you prefer to focus on playing, with the teacher doing most, or all, of the talking?
      iii. What is your favorite thing about how your teacher instructs and runs the class?
      iv. What is your least favorite thing about how your teacher (or other string teachers you have had) instructs and runs the class?
   b. What genres of music (classical, jazz, folk, etc.) do you play in class? Are there genres you would like to play? If so, what are they?
4. Do you prefer learning in a group, individually, or both? For what reasons?
5. If there had been no adult string class available to learn or continue learning, would you have pursued taking private lessons?