SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCES IN THE LIVES OF SENIOR CITIZENS: REFLECTIONS ON MUSIC EXPERIENCES DURING SCHOOL YEARS AND BEYOND

A dissertation submitted to the Kent State University College and Graduate School of Education, Health, and Human Services in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

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SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCES IN THE LIVES OF SENIOR CITIZENS: REFLECTIONS ON MUSIC EXPERIENCES DURING SCHOOL YEARS AND BEYOND (147 pp.)

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The purpose of this study was to explore the influences of school music experiences on senior citizens’ musical sensibilities, tastes, or abilities by examining their recollected stories about music experiences from their school years. The author employed a multiple-case study design to enable contextual insights into personal interactions with music. With the convenience sampling method, six research participants were recruited, all of whom were age 55 or older, lived in northeastern Ohio, attended U.S. schools for their K–12 education, and had never had any professional experience in the field of music. Data were collected through participant interviews with open-ended questions, journal writings, and researcher field notes, all of which provided evidence for coherence, reliability, and validity. The collected raw data were analyzed in two ways: summarized documentation and code analysis with the cross-case method.
The research findings revealed the importance of school music experiences in the development of musical sensibilities, tastes, or abilities. In particular, human interaction between students, teachers, and family members is clearly a significant factor in defining personal music experiences and that school music education does not meet musical needs. School music educators are, therefore, recommended to create learning opportunities for students by developing a feasible curriculum to meet a variety of students’ musical
interests, provide a professional development program for music teachers and preservice teachers, and establish a collaborative music program with family and local communities.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my father,

who played the old organ for me in my childhood.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This research was an exploratory study designed to provide a contextual understanding of the influences of school music experiences on people’s musical sensibilities, tastes, and abilities by examining senior citizens’ recollected stories of music from their school years and afterward. It explored music experiences in and out of school by drawing upon Dewey’s (1938/1998) concept of experience as an individual’s continuous transaction with objective conditions at every stage of the learning process: The transaction assumes changes, which promote a continuous reconstruction of experience. Dewey described experience as “transactional” practice between the individual and whatever constituted his or her situation at that time.

According to Dewey, however, not all experiences educate: Those that educate must have a sense of continuity and transaction. As Dewey put it, “Every experience both takes up from those which has gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after” (p. 27). Dewey’s philosophy on the relation between experience and education was based on these principles of continuity and transaction: “What he has learned in the way of knowledge and skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with the situations which follow” (p. 42). He suggested that in education learning must be based on the individual’s life experiences in order to meet personal needs or to accomplish personal goals. In this sense, this research linked senior citizens’ music experiences to school music education in order to see the
relation between their personal experiences and music learning.

The researcher used the multiple-case study, a qualitative research approach that provides textual representations of participants’ experiences in their real-life contexts in order to comprehend effects of school music education throughout their entire lives. Each participant was treated as an independent case in a particular situation. Then each case was viewed through a retrospective lens in order to trace memories that may have continued to influence the participant’s life.

This research reflected two primary understandings of music experience and school education. First, music experience is a continuous process through which one develops musical sensibilities, tastes, or abilities throughout a lifetime (Arasi, 2006; Busch, 2005). Second, school education requires lived activities instead of fixed curricular pursuits because education requires continuous development of people’s capabilities and potential for self-realization in a society (Shusterman, 2009). To facilitate this connection, during a critical period of human development from kindergarten to the 12th grade, music education must offer students concentrated learning opportunities that expose children to diverse musical experiences to promote their basic understanding and knowledge of music and their future music achievement.

In addition, many approaches to K–12 music education have sought music experiences in the view of contextual lifelong development. School music education during K–12 forms a fundamental basis to understand music throughout one’s entire life (Rohwer, 2002). It also continuously reacts with personal and social situations in specific and general ways (Cohen, Bailey, & Nilsson, 2002); therefore, the study of music
experience requires reviews not only of individual subjective change but also the objective conditions at every stage of life and human development through contextual approaches to education and curriculum studies.

**Purpose of the Study**

Designed to provide a contextual understanding of the influences of school music experiences on people’s musical sensibilities, tastes, and abilities throughout their lives, this research relied primarily upon senior citizens’ personal memories of music experiences during school years and afterward and their own reflections on those experiences. To achieve these aims, the researcher used multiple-case study methodology to produce cross-case findings for the main research inquiry and narrative interview techniques to collect individual stories about music in real-life contexts. Specially, interview protocols were designed to evoke senior citizens’ memories of personal music experiences that occurred in and out of school during the K–12 years. The researcher intended to produce valuable understanding that education professionals can use to develop effective school music curricula that can facilitate the application of school music education to everyday lives.

**Statement of the Problem**

The primary objectives of school music education are to offer students a basic understanding of music and to promote the continuous development of their musical skills and abilities. To achieve those objectives, music curriculum researchers should examine both music experiences in school and out of school as well as music experiences that occur both during school years and in postschool years. School music educators
should consider music experiences in the view of continuous changes throughout students’ lives. In this sense, music curriculum development requires practical consideration, not only of the subject matter but also of the influences of school music education throughout students’ lives.

Most music curriculum and instruction researchers have ignored the influences of school music education on music experiences out of school and the relationship between in-school and out-of-school musical activities. They tend to examine educational components in school years and concentrate on designing and analyzing music curricula, teaching strategies, and lesson plans. Only a few researchers have attempted to listen to people’s voices in order to trace aesthetic or emotional memories of music in their lives. Even those scholars who have incorporated memories of music into their design have considered those memories as independent, separated, or fixed incidents happening in different times and places.

For these reasons, this researcher attempted to construct a contextual understanding of music experiences in people’s lifetimes, focusing on their narrative stories about how music experiences have been remembered and reflected later in life. Such a methodology has the potential to reveal the importance of school music experiences and their influences on the role of music in people’s lives.

**Significance of the Study**

This exploratory research of senior citizens’ narrative stories about music shows how school music experiences influence the development of musical sensibilities, tastes, and abilities and how people internalize and externalize those experiences in their
everyday lives. It may contribute to music curriculum studies in two ways. First, this research offers a contextual understanding of music experiences by locating participants’ descriptive stories about music in real-life contexts. Because music is one of the dynamic art forms that require a specific time and place to be experienced, music experiences have to be contextualized in real life. Second, this study provides a practical teaching philosophy and methodology for school music education. This retrospective exploration of senior citizens’ music experiences during K–12 offers information about school music education and its influence on musical sensibilities, tastes, and abilities.

Research Questions

Three main research questions frame this study:

1. Do senior citizens recall specific in-school and out-of-school music experiences during school years and afterward?

2. Do senior citizens recall in-school music experiences that have influenced their musical sensibilities, tastes, and abilities during their school years and beyond?

3. Do senior citizens recall other significant out-of-school music experiences during school years that they feel continued to influence their musical sensibilities, tastes, and abilities throughout their lifetimes?

Limitations of the Study

This research was limited by the probable inaccuracy of oral data, the exclusion of early childhood music experiences, inattention to curriculum changes and to research participants’ personal and cultural backgrounds, and insufficient explanation of the
interrelation between a stated experience and its importance to a participant’s musical sensibility.

The first limitation of this study involves the qualitative methodology used, which relied mainly on participants’ statements about memories. The details included in those statements might be filtered, affected, and even distorted by recollection capabilities, selective recollection retrieval, or linguistic abilities. This investigation was based on the assumption that if participants recalled their memories as meaningful and significant, then the memories could be considered accurate data (Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000); however, this research cannot verify the objective reality of participants’ oral statements through video records or observation data.

The second limitation stems from focus of this research on school music experiences. According to Sloboda (1990), some people are able to access specific experiences that took place at the age of three or four, when they are asked to remember events that involved music during the first 10 years of their lives. Because this research focused on music experiences that occurred during and after school years, the researcher might have overlooked other aspects of music learning and experiences that occurred in early childhood before formal school learning.

Inattention to formal school music curricula is the third limitation of this study. Numerous changes in educational policies have occurred in recent decades, such as curriculum reformation and shifts in teaching and learning practices. Participants experienced different class activities and types of music learning depending on the music curricula used by their schools. This researcher did not intend to examine such changes
but instead looked at the process behind individuals’ music experiences.

The fourth limitation is that this study does not fully attend to participants’ personal backgrounds, such as gender, ethnicity, economic condition, or local circumstance, even though those backgrounds might be of great importance to the development of musical sensibilities, tastes, or abilities. The musical sensibilities and capabilities of study participants were almost certainly influenced not only by diverse experiences during school but also by their personal and cultural backgrounds. Those personal or cultural factors were considered only as supporting information to understand their music experiences and perceptions.

The fifth limitation of this research is related to the researcher’s lack of familiarity with the stories about school experiences the participants narrated in the research interviews. Because her school years were spent in South Korea, the researcher never had firsthand K–12 experiences in the United States. This difference in backgrounds made the researcher cautious about interpreting or translating the participants’ stories into a real context. To make up for the lack of personal K–12 experience in the US, the researcher held several casual meetings with the participants before obtaining background information about their schooling. Based on information from these meetings, the researcher developed interview questions designed to ascertain critical factors in the participants’ music experiences in and out of school. During the course of this project, the researcher came to realize that the lack of school experience in the US enabled her to see the participants’ stories from an outsider’s perspective. This allowed the researcher to concentrate on their stated stories without any deep-seated biases.
Finally, this research does not convey a clear, logical explanation about the correlation between the quantitative amount of stated recollection and the qualitative degree of its influence on musical sensibilities. In other word, the degree of its influence was not proportionate to the number of times such a recollection was recounted. In order to compensate for this design weakness, in individual interviews all the participants were first asked to state any music-related incident from their own experience in and after school years and then to reflect on whether that incident had had an influence on their musical sensibilities, tastes, or abilities.

**Definitions of Key Terms**

The term *experience* is crucial to this research. The discussion of music experience was developed by drawing significantly upon Dewey’s conception of experience used in his theory of education. In *Experience and Education*, Dewey (1938/1998) delineated the transactional dynamics of experiences by arguing that “every genuine experience has an active side which changes in some degree the objective conditions under which the experiences are had” (p. 34). He described the objective conditions as those that interact with personal needs, desires, purposes, and capacities to create the experience. His empirical constructivist base, combined with his belief in the contribution of experience to learning, was clearly revealed in his description of education.
He emphasized the “organic” relation between experience and education. According to Dewey (1938/1998), however, not all experience is educative—experience can be educative only when opening up the possibility of having better experiences in the future or providing students with better preparation for lifelong development. If schools fail to give students the right kind experience, then students may lose the motivation to learn; therefore, genuine education depends on “the quality of subsequent experience” (Dewey, 1938/1998, p. 27), which is a beneficial influence on later experiences.

In order for experience to be educative, teaching and learning must be viewed as a continuous process of reconstruction of experience. The fundamental idea in Dewey’s (1938/1998) education theory is that when education is based on experience, it can be seen as a cultural process. Following his idea, the term experience in this study not only refers to the base for but also the result of education in the lifelong process of human development. For this reason, senior citizens’ music experiences were placed both into school educational contexts and into their lifelong development.

The following paragraphs define other major terms in this study. First, the term music experience had two overlapping basic boundaries: time and space. It covers two main categories of time: K–12 school years and postschool years. The period of school years was divided into two main spatial categories: in-school and out-of-school. Postschool refers to any time after graduation from the K–12 school education system up to the time of data collection. The in-school music experiences included any musical activities done both in curricular music classes and in extracurricular pursuits during the K–12 school years, such as singing, performance, composition, improvisation, integrative
learning, creative activities, field trips, music concerts, and music club activities. Out-of-school music experiences include any musical training or endeavors outside the institutional school system, for example, with family, with friends, private music club activities, private music lessons, or any other personal activities.

In this study, the term *senior citizen* signifies persons who are older than age 55, have lived in the United States for most of their lives, and have had K–12 education experiences. More specifically, it indicates volunteers living in northeastern Ohio who participated in this research. To be eligible to participate in this study, the volunteers could not have had a professional job experience in the field of music. Although senior citizens who participated in this research did not attend kindergarten, the term *K–12* represents the whole period of education in general.

The term *recollection* means a self-tracing, self-puzzling, and self-presenting process of personal retrieval. Because this research project relied fundamentally upon senior citizens’ subjective memories and reflections of music, the term refers to what they experienced in their personal lives, how they interpreted those experiences subjectively, and how they made connections with other experiences in their everyday lives.

In this research the term *reflection* refers to participants’ personal evaluation and creative adaptation of past music experiences into the present. It indicates the critical thinking processes of recollecting, revising, comparing music experiences from their own point of view. That critical thinking allows participants to articulate their own understandings, interpretations, and judgments of past music experiences and to express their own view of music itself. In this process of reflection, participants can also realize
the influences of past music experiences on the development of their musical sensibilities, tastes, and abilities.

In this research, the term *musical sensibility* denotes the capacity of musical emotion excited by any musical activities such as singing, playing, listening, performing, and so on. The term *musical taste* means any musical inclination to select specific genres over other possible choices. The term *musical ability* refers to having musical performance skills, either real or potential, that comprehensively involve singing, moving, listening, performing, composing/improvising, or reading/writing music.

The term *contextual understanding* refers to the fact that a human being is not apart from social and cultural environments. It emphasizes the importance of context when referencing personal, economic, educational, religious, physical, institutional, and social situations with which a human being connects. It places individuals in the related situations and analyzes their experiences under the positioned conditions. Contextual understanding leads to very particular interpretations of context.

**Conclusion**

This research was designed to explore senior citizens’ music experiences that occurred during school years in order to understand how those experiences influenced the study participants’ musical sensibilities, tastes, and abilities throughout their lives. Another aim of the study was to provide a contextual understanding of senior citizens’ music experiences by contextualizing specific events or issues within real-life situations. The data and findings generated through this exploratory research provide the basis for valuable recommendations for the development of effective music curricula that can
facilitate practical applications of school music experiences in everyday lives.

To investigate the reality of the participants’ music experiences, the researcher used the multiple-case study method to collect qualitative verbal data. Participants’ personal stories were traced through narrative interviews, and then individual stories were placed in the real-life contexts. Those stories were also treated as independent cases within a cross-case analysis in order to produce cross-case findings.

The following chapters present this research project, including a literature review, a description of the research methodology and data collection techniques, the data analysis, and discussion of the research findings. Specifically, Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature to provide background information that supports this research. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology, theoretical framework, and data collection techniques, and Chapter 4 provides contextual descriptions of each case. Chapter 5 presents the data analysis and its results. Finally, Chapter 6 includes findings and themes, conclusions from this research, and suggestions with regard to implications for future study.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature on music experience in order to provide the theoretical foundation upon which this research was based. It outlines previous research on music experience, music education, and the autobiographical method.

Music Experience

Experiencing Music in Everyday Life

A basic understanding of music experience stems from Dewey’s conception of the term *experience* as an individual’s continuous interaction with objective conditions at every stage of the learning process (Dewey, 1938/1998). Sloboda and O’Neill (2001) defined *music experience* as the construction of feelings embedded in a social context—an interaction between cultural values of a society and the individual’s personal experiences. The authors investigated quotidian emotional responses to music by employing a method known as the experience sampling method (ESM) in which the actual moments of music experiences were studied as they unfolded in everyday life. They concluded that people were exposed to diverse musical environments in their everyday lives both individually and socially and that the process and motivation of their musical activities were varied depending on their individual situations. The most interesting result in their research result was that musical activity accounted for only a small proportion (2%) of all daily activities.
Music Experienced in the Past

Several researchers have studied music experience as emotional recollection in the view of psychology. An important work in this area has come from Gabrielsson and Wik’s (2003) study about strong experiences of music (SEM). In the 1990s the authors explored the diverse personal emotions and the conditions associated with the musical environment in SEM moments, such as the music, the person, and the situation. A decade later Gabrielsson (2002) conducted further research on SEM, focusing on the emotional musical experiences of a sample of 78 participants older than the age of 70 in Sweden. The participants were asked to describe their feelings before and after musical experiences and the meanings of their memories.

The most interesting result was that more than half of all SEM occurred in the earliest three decades of life. Although the ages of the respondents when their SEM occurred varied widely, the highest frequency of SEM occurred for participants between 10 and 19 years of age, 28.5% during school years. Gabrielsson’s (2002) study shows that music experiences in the school years strongly impact one’s recollection and experience as related to music. The author pointed out, however, that he could not confirm the truthfulness of the responses of the participants in the sample. The study neither investigated the realities of these strong experiences of music nor collected secondary data as documentation to support the finding of SEM.

A decade earlier, Baumgartner (1992) empirically explored how a piece of music stimulates associative memories from past experiences. He recruited 73 undergraduate participants, not majoring in music, for a 45-minute session. They were asked to recall
and describe a notable instance related to music from their past experience. They then rated the music on two scales: pleasantness and whether it was their favorite kind of music. Research results showed that the participants’ recollected music effectively triggered their personal memories; they were able to provide vivid and emotional descriptions of the remembrance. Interestingly, most participants described memories that involved relationships with someone, such as a lover, family, or friends.

**Influence of Music Experiences**

In recent decades, researchers have focused on the importance of music acquisition at an early age and its lifelong influence. Many of these studies have supported the idea that early music experiences can influence musical tastes and activities later in life. For example, Cohen and Clyburn (1996) compared younger and older adults on musical tasks and found that the acquisition of musical knowledge gained early in life provides a framework for encoding music throughout the rest of a person’s life. Whereas people tend to remember musical styles that they became familiar with in early years, a new music style that clashes with a previous one is less easily retained or embraced.

Cohen and Clyburn (1996) concluded that youthful mental plasticity is associated with acquisition of musicality and permits the encoding of music, but the decline of mental plasticity for music in the elderly causes them to resist new musical styles because they do not fit into early acquired frames of reference. Therefore, the earlier acquisitions of music form a basic musical schema in the brain that might influence their lifelong music learning.
Cohen and Bailey (2002) built on previous research by comparing the acquisition rules of vernacular music with language among children in the critical early childhood period and in the adolescent period. They started with the theory that the processes for learning music and language may have similarities. The results showed young children more easily acquire music of different styles than do preadolescents. In addition, diverse experiences of many styles of music early on may provide a broad basis for the understanding of multiple musical idioms throughout life.

In a different study, Cohen et al. (2002) sought to determine the significance of music to senior citizens through surveys and interviews as the second phase of the Canadian Study of Health and Aging (CSHA2). Results of this study also revealed that recognition of the importance of music to senior citizens correlates significantly with listening frequency and other past and present musical activities. In addition, the authors found that the participants’ musical tastes were formed early on instead of later in life.

Rohwer (2002) surveyed people to determine why they wanted to take part in musical activities after graduating from high school. She interviewed 16 senior citizens, aged 55 to 82, who had been active learners in beginning band, about their motivations for learning music and their favorite music genres. Survey results showed that these seniors shared the common goals of learning to play music, to socialize with others, and to be active. The most common favorite musical genres among this sample were swing, polka, jazz, and 1950s popular music. Of particular importance here, all of the senior participants had positive memories of their school music experiences as performers or listeners, and they agreed that music experiences in school may have potentially led them
to become lifelong learners and may have established the fundamental base of their musical tastes.

Arasi (2006) examined the influence of high school choral programs on lifelong musical activities. The researcher interviewed eight participants between the ages of 23 and 35 who had participated in choral programs for at least three years and who had careers in fields other than music after high school graduation. The results showed that high school choral programs had a lifelong influence on the participants’ social development by prompting their critical thinking and self-confidence as well as enhancing the development of lifelong learning skills. Arasi also indicated that teachers who serve as choral conductors can exert lifelong influence on students’ perceptions of music by exposing their personalities and attitudes toward music during choir instruction.

The studies about music experience detailed here imply that music experiences early in life can have a lifelong impact on the development of a person’s musical understanding, assimilation, and capabilities. These studies, however, examined music experiences as only part of larger research projects. In addition, data collection in these projects relied solely on abstract oral statements and participants’ subjective memories without consideration of contextual understanding and realities.

**Music Education**

**Historical Approach to Music Education**

In the field of music education, general history research has long been used to analyze document data, instead of for close research of all historical events and facts in each historical period. Mark and Gary (2007), for example, studied the history of
American music education from the roots of western music in ancient Greece and Rome to recent trends. In attempting to produce a macrohistorical documentation of American music education, the authors examined changes taking place within educational, philosophical, and sociological spheres and connected these changes to music education. The authors showed that historical research has an important place in understanding the evolution of music education in the United States.

**Autobiographical Approach to Music Education**

Autobiographical research on music education has focused on the personal experiences of individuals who are engaged in musical activities in school. For example, Jones (2008) employed the autobiographical method in his dissertation research about music curricular development in public school systems. The author recollected and reviewed his own music experiences from preschool to the present as a student as well as a teacher in order to determine problems in music curricula, learning, and teaching and to construct a more enriched music curriculum. His research showed that music could be heard in natural and social contexts in spontaneous moments or one may intentionally experience music in particular places and at certain times.

His findings implied that people experienced music consciously or unconsciously in unstructured ways, and reacted constantly to any musical stimulation in everyday life. In this sense, the author suggested that music curricula in public schools must support students’ musical diversities through varied lesson plans, the use of sufficient aesthetic sources, and the consideration of diverse opinions about different types of music.
Jones’ (2008) study, however, cited only the author’s life experiences chronologically without any evidence such as personal documents to support his recollections. For this reason, his research fails to make contextual understanding of his personal music experiences. Thus, when using the autobiographical approach to music experience, a researcher needs to construct contextual understanding by focusing on the process of music experiences through the use of supplementary research data to review the experiences in their real context.

**Integration of Historical and Autobiographical Approaches to Music Education**

Historical approaches suffer from weaknesses in the truthfulness of documented data; not all documented data reflect objective truth or reality. Because historical approaches, on one hand, focus on the analysis of documented data, they also fail to capture the details of music education—a live description of a specific incident or event related to music education. The autobiographical approach, on the other hand, may not portray the reality of music experiences because incidents in the past can easily become emotional memories with selected cognition and understanding of the situation. In other words, the stated facts in retrospective research may be forgotten or filtered out by time and each participant’s ability to remember specific experiences accurately.

To overcome the weaknesses inherent in both approaches, McCarthy (2003) integrated the autobiographical narrative approach into her exploration of historiography in music education. From an ethnographic and historical perspective, McCarthy maintained that history contains two different issues: (a) history and narrative and (b) history and recollection. Her overview of historical research in music education was
followed by an examination of metaphors that illuminated a historical process and reflected a postmodern approach to “doing history,” realized in the narrative, personal diary, and interview. She proposed a “new” historical research methodology in music education.

Retrospective Research

Autobiographical Memory

Autobiographical memory has been critically discussed in the diverse fields of psychology, education, and cultural studies. Brewer (1996) defined autobiographical memory as “the type of memory that occurs when an individual recalls a specific episode from their past experience” (p. 19). Conway and Pleydell-Pearce (2000) argued that “autobiographical memory is of fundamental significance of the self, for emotions, and for the experience of personhood, that is, for the experience of enduring as an individual, in a culture, over time” (p. 261). According to the authors, memory creates transitory mental constructions on three levels: across a lifetime, general events, and event-specific knowledge.

Conway and Pleydell-Pearce (2000) also specified three separate temporal components of memories based on the way memory changes with age: (a) the childhood or infantile amnesia of early childhood before age 6, (b) the retention function in the first 20 to 30 years, and (c) the reminiscence bump around age 40 to the present. In their research on the construction of autobiographical memory, Conway and Pleydell-Pearce provided a model of the self-memory system (SMS), which reveals how people construct
their memories through interacting with other formed memories. The authors concluded that people have accurate memories of instances that hold personal significance.

**Autobiographical Method**

Researchers using life history and narrative methods have discussed autobiography or autobiographical memory at length. For example, Hatch and Wisniewski (1995) attempted to make theoretical and methodological connections and segmentations between life history and the narrative method in qualitative research.

Dhunpath (2000) considered narrative life history as a counterculture of the present, promoting methodological pluralism in education research. He proposed the term *narradigm*—as opposed to *paradigm*, which he found more suited to the so-called hard sciences—to emphasize that lived experiences are intrinsically narrative in quality.

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) suggested the utility of a life history case study that focuses on how history appears from the viewpoint of a common person. Their study of sociological life history focused on the construction of the evolution of the subjects’ self and on their perspectives on life.

Other researchers have pointed out the limits of the life history method, arguing against the methodological and epistemological assumption underlying it that life history is an ethical representation responding to the crisis of representation. Although life history research offers an open-ended research process, analysis, and interpretation, some scholars believe that it leaves some methodological ambiguities in data accuracy and interpretation. Traditional survey questionnaires in life history research cannot fully capture related aspects of autobiographical memories and thus cannot examine
interrelatedness within the structure of recalled memories. To address the weaknesses of autobiographical research, Belli (1998) suggested the event history calendar method, which provides sequential and parallel retrieval within the structure of the autobiographical memory network.

Cary (1999), by contrast, problematized the linear nature and normalizing tendencies of life history research. She pointed out that in the life history method the possibilities of hearing anything other than “normal” or “normalized” stories—that is, “unexpected” stories—are not fully considered. She argued that life historians have made a foundational error by assuming that triangulation of data and the sociocultural contextualizing of stories will consolidate the totality of life history research. She suggested instead that the life historian should listen for unexpected stories that highlight the authorizing fictions and myths and also provide counterpoint stories to disrupt the desire for total narratives in social research. Her account of unexpected stories raises the question of a researcher’s representation and interpretation of truth and reality in life history.

Labaree (2006), using his research experience as a practical example, created a conceptual framework to enrich and broaden understanding of the life history research method. He synthesized the life history research process and divided it into four sections: (a) brief and conceptual introduction; (b) process research design consisting of five steps: sampling and identifying data sources, negotiating participation and scheduling interviews, designing techniques and tactics, managing and analyzing data, and presenting the data; (c) methodological and interpretative considerations of the research
dilemma between insiderness and outsiderness and their validity and position within the text; and (d) the conclusion, which included a review of the potential benefit of the life history method in the present situation. The author concluded that life history research could be an effective research method to review respondents’ remembered instances with contextual understanding.

**Autobiographical Research in Education and Curriculum Studies**

Many education researchers have attempted to apply autobiographical methods to retrospective research, seeking to make connections among historical research, self-reflection, process-centered understanding, and curriculum study.

Pinar (2004) explored diverse historical and social topics involving academic freedom to solve contemporary educational problems in the United States. The author developed his curriculum theory based on the concept of *currere*, from the Latin word meaning “the running of the course.” For his study of *currere*, Pinar devised four steps: regressive, progressive, analytical, and synthetic moments. He emphasized the autobiographical method to reflect on historical curriculum problems and reexamined American education and curriculum history through autobiographical study, psychoanalysis, and social theory. This time-linear work stands side by side with his previous historical book, *Understanding Curriculum* (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995).

Marshall, Sears, Allen, Roberts, and Schubert (2007) also wove autobiographical narratives of various scholars who have played important roles in American curriculum history into their book in order to reveal their scholarly professions and motivations in a
historical context. The autobiographical narratives showed their personal enthusiasm and dilemmas regarding curriculum study and are, thus, helpful in the contextual understanding of American curriculum history.

Ted Aoki successfully applied the autobiographical approach to curriculum studies through his scholarly struggles in the quest for his own Japanese-Canadian identity (Aoki, Pinar, & Irvin, 2005). He reinterpreted his personal life stories and history into curriculum studies. In these autobiographical writings, the author commented on cultural differences between Japan and Canada that influenced his professional perspective and personal life.

Conclusion

In this chapter the literature review of music experience, music education, and autobiographical memory has provided the theoretical and methodological background for this research. Many studies on music experience have shown that school music education and experiences have an important impact on musical sensibility and fulfillment throughout a person’s lifetime. This review of the literature has indicated that music experience intentionally recalled from autobiographical memory contains information about a specific musical incident itself as well as contextual information. Hence research on music experience and education needs to integrate autobiographical memory into contextual situations in order to increase the accuracy of the data and subsequent interpretation. In addition, research data based mainly on recollections from autobiographical memory is more reliable when supported by other data sources, such as diaries, journals, or field notes.
This literature review also established a need to present more personal and historical information about the music experiences of the elderly when delving into their education histories. To date, this approach has not been used to examine the music experiences of senior citizens in the context of school education. Qualitative research using the autobiographical narrative has taken root but has not yet fully developed in the field of music education and curriculum studies.

In this sense, this research project contributes to the study of curriculum and music education in three ways. First, it applies the life history as one method in the study of school music curricula. Second, the researcher has attempted to understand real experiences and educational influences on music learners as lived and living human activities beyond the published and fixed curriculum text. Third, the researcher sought to achieve an active understanding of music curriculum in personal and social contexts.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This research was planned to provide a contextual understanding of the influences of school music experiences on people’s musical sensibilities, tastes, and abilities throughout one’s entire life. It was based on the constructivist assumption that the reality of human experience is empirically constructed. I used the qualitative paradigm through case study design in order to make sense of musical experiences in real-life context, choosing six senior citizens in northeastern Ohio who attended K-12 schools in the United States and collecting and interpreting descriptive data of their music experiences. This chapter delineates the theoretical framework and the qualitative methods used in this research. Details included research design, interview questions, participant descriptions, data collection, data analysis, researcher role and research ethics, and issues of validity and reliability.

Theoretical Approaches for Research Methodology

Constructivist Paradigm

Based on the idea that the reality of human experience is constructed empirically, the constructivist paradigm is defined as relativist, transactional, subjectivist, hermeneutical, and dialectical (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This paradigm proposes the epistemological relativism that people make sense of reality by recalling prior experiences or knowledge and that the reality of human experience is an intangible mental construction open to continuous alteration. Researchers using the constructivist
paradigm seek to find the true constructions of human experiences, which can be elicited and refined through the interaction between researcher and participant.

Aligning my research with the basic theoretical paradigm of constructivism, I made the assumptions that senior citizens’ music experiences are constructed empirically and that the reality of their experiences continuously changes throughout their lives. Using the lens of constructivism, I considered the truth of the participants’ music experiences at a certain moment in time. For this reason, my research required descriptive data of accumulated memories of participants’ music experiences.

**Qualitative Methodology**

I chose qualitative methodology for this study because my objective was to understand senior citizens’ school music experiences and how these experiences went on to influence their musical lives after the school years. Qualitative methods allow for an in-depth understanding of human behaviors and experiences. Qualitative research accommodates the researcher interested in the process by which people make sense of their experiences in order to interpret human phenomena in their real-life context.

Qualitative methodology has been described as naturalistic because a researcher frequents places where the events being studied naturally occur (Guba, 1978). It allows for descriptive data collection through conversations, observations, and investigations. This method is also appropriate for developing detailed descriptions and learning how events are interpreted by participants (Weiss, 1994). It defines human experience as a holistic construct of the human mind, shaped in diverse ways by perceiving, interacting, and making meaning of the environment. As such, a qualitative method that focuses on
thorough descriptive data provided by the participants and interpreted by the researcher is an appropriate methodology for this study.

**Case Study Method**

The case study method was employed in this research project in order to examine music experiences of real people within real-life contexts. Because it places a particular subject, issue, or problem in real-life situations, the case study method focuses primarily on the questions of how or why, on the contemporary phenomenon within real-life contexts, and on the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real events (Yin, 2009).

The case study method encompasses two research designs: single case study and multiple-case study. On one hand the former treats a case in its totality and typically involves critical, unusual, rare, or revelatory cases. It is well justifiable under certain conditions when a case represents a critical test of existing theory and longitudinal purpose (Yin, 2009). On the other hand the latter is an assortment of cases used to understand a phenomenon, positioning cases in an incorporated organism composed of unique events and distinctive situations and providing a contextual understanding of each case based on a common research inquiry.

I used story-telling multiple case studies, which produce “predominantly a narrative account of the exploration and analysis of the case, with a strong sense of a time line” (Bassey, 1999, p. 62). Using participants’ stories, I attempted to view music experiences in their real-life contexts and to understand them as a contemporary phenomenon. This research also treats each individual story as a dependent case, which then provides relevant data for the cross-case analysis of their stories. Because each story
is unique to a participant’s personal situation, it needs to be contextualized in his or her real life in order to understand the music experience as a contemporary phenomenon. In addition, I focused on the participants’ personal memories about particular music incidents instead of on trying to provide a general understanding of a coherent life history.

**Research Design**

**Preliminary Research**

I recruited four volunteers to participate in an informal meeting at which I briefed them on the research design and evaluated the potential of this study before full-scale implementation. I was already acquainted with the participants, who were senior citizens in northeastern Ohio. At the meeting, the volunteers were asked first to share a music experience from the past and then to reflect on what it has meant in their lives. They also described their own perspective on music. Based on the preliminary meeting, I then designed the research process, participant requirements, questions, and methods.

**Research Procedure**

This research began on July 16, 2010, when the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Kent State University approved the study. The procedures and time line followed throughout this research study are detailed in Table 1.

**Interview Questions**

I developed open-ended interview questions to allow the participants to narrate personal stories about music and used bumper-to-bumper interview questions to trace how music experiences in the past have influenced the participants’ lives. Based on the
Table 1

Steps in the Research Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IRB Approval</td>
<td>July 16, 2010</td>
<td>Getting approval for research from IRB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Recruitment</td>
<td>July 16–23, 2010</td>
<td>Recruiting research participants qualified for this research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Participant Meeting</td>
<td>July 26, 2010</td>
<td>Conducting the first meeting with all the participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Interviews</td>
<td>July 28–August 17, 2010</td>
<td>Conducting two individual interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Interviews</td>
<td>August 19–20, 2010</td>
<td>Conducting small group interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Participant Meeting</td>
<td>August 22, 2010</td>
<td>Conducting the second meeting with all the participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Collection</td>
<td>July 28–September 10, 2010</td>
<td>Collecting journals participants had written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed Letter</td>
<td>November 19, 2010</td>
<td>Sending out letters about the research procedure to the participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Checking</td>
<td>February 4–13, 2011</td>
<td>Member checking with participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability Test</td>
<td>February 12–28, 2011</td>
<td>Conducting interreliability test of the results of code analysis with two doctoral students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

preliminary research, I developed the interview questionnaire to allow participants to articulate their musical environments and music experiences as much as possible; to narrate their music sensibilities, tastes, or capabilities; and to express their memories of music or music experiences.
The interview questionnaire was divided into two main categories: school years and postschool years. The questions about music experiences during school years were then classified into two subcategories: in-school experiences and out-of-school experiences. Both of these sections of the interview protocol were deliberately designed to be approximately equal in length in order to capture the participants’ music experiences across their lives and not to weight a specific period more heavily than another. (See Appendix D for individual interview questions.) At the end of the interview, the participants were asked to review their music experiences as a whole. (See Appendix C for the framework of the interview questions.)

Participants were interviewed twice: at the beginning and at the end of the study. In the first interview, they were asked to narrate any music-related incident from their own experiences in and after school years and then to reflect on if the incident had influenced their musical sensibilities, tastes, or abilities. After that they were asked to narrate another incident related to the previous one. After the initial interview was completed, the researcher modified the questionnaire in order to include participant personalities and/or musical interests. No specific questionnaire format was used during the group interview; instead, each participant was asked to share a significant music experience with the other group members.

**Participant Descriptions**

**Participant Recruitment**

I recruited as participants senior citizens who were older than 55, who had completed K–12 education at U.S. schools, and who had never worked as music
professionals. I selected senior citizens as research participants in order to explore music experience across ordinary peoples’ entire lives; furthermore, because I focused on school music experience and its influence on the development of musical sensibilities, tastes, and abilities, I needed participants who had K–12 school experiences. The age range of research participants was not specifically defined initially in the recruitment process; instead, seniors was roughly defined as those who were 50 years or older. After the recruitment process, I determined the age range of participants to be 55 or older because all participants were older than that age.

This research initially recruited nine seniors, including two reserves in case any participant had to withdraw from the research due to a health problem or any other reason. The nine research participants were selected through convenience sampling, a method in which participants are selected based on easy accessibility. This method is often used when investigating participants who are willing and able to discuss their experiences (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006). I contacted a number of senior citizens who lived in the researcher’s neighborhood and selected nine who were willing to take part in this study as research participants.

In the first meeting with the volunteers, I distributed an introduction sheet about this research that included information about the researcher, the research topic, the research questions, the research purposes, the research procedure, and a description of ideal participants. (See Appendix B for a copy of the introduction sheet.) Then I conducted an initial interview, which included some questions designed to determine whether the volunteer met the research participant criteria: where they lived, how old
they were, whether they had K–12 school experience, whether they had ever had any professional job related to music, and whether they had adequate time to participate in the individual and group interviews.

After that initial interview, if they indicated their willingness to take part in this research, I asked them to sign the IRB research consent form. After recruiting the first participant, that person recommended another potential volunteer. The same recruiting process was repeated until enough participants were recruited—nine volunteers in all.

**Group Participant Meetings**

I conducted two meetings with the whole group of volunteers: one before data collection and another after. My intent in the first meeting was to let participants meet one another, to provide an overview of this research, and to arrange interview schedules. At this meeting all participants were given a copy of the IRB consent form and provided with a notebook and pens for journal writing. The second meeting was scheduled after all the individual and group interviews were completed. In the second meeting the participants were informed about the next research steps: journal collection and member checking. They were asked to write in a journal about their own music experiences and to review the contextual summary of their stories, written by me, as a form of member checking.

**Data Collection**

Study data included narrative interviews, participants’ journals, and my field notes. I formulated an open-ended questionnaire to facilitate free descriptive interviews. Narrated stories can reflect considerable accumulated experiences and memories and
provide information about personal realizations about music experiences in an interviewee’s life. Stories also can reveal personal memories and understandings of music that are realized in practical realities.

I also asked the participants to write in personal journals in which they could add other music-related incidents to the descriptive interview contents. In addition, I kept field notes in which I wrote on-the-spot ideas or other background information about the participants and their music experiences. All these data sources contributed to the coherence, reliability, and validity of this multiple-case study.

Table 2 lists the nine participants and their interview dates. The interview schedule was flexible and open to last-minute changes if needed because the participants were seniors who might be unavailable at any time as a result of health issues or other inevitable difficulties. I assigned the participants pseudonyms to preserve confidentiality. Each participant took part in two individual interviews and one group interview, all of which were recorded via digital audio recorder and then transcribed into text documents.

**Individual Interviews**

The protocol for the individual interviews was designed to encourage the participants to narrate openly their personal stories related to music. All participants took part in two individual interviews for 60–90 minutes at a convenient date and time. All of the interviews were recorded via audio recorder for research purposes. During the first interview, each participant was asked, through open-ended questions, to state any music-related incident in and after school years and then to reflect on that experience. After reviewing notes from this first round of interviews, I designed a second follow-up
Table 2

List of Participants and Interview Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Individual Interview Date</th>
<th>Group Interview Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bella</td>
<td>July 28, 2010</td>
<td>August 4, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>August 3, 2010</td>
<td>August 17, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erick</td>
<td>July 30, 2010</td>
<td>August 5, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>July 29, 2010</td>
<td>August 6, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>July 28, 2010</td>
<td>August 4, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>August 10, 2010</td>
<td>August 13, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>August 3, 2010</td>
<td>August 10, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearl</td>
<td>August 13, 2010</td>
<td>August 16, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peggy</td>
<td>August 6, 2010</td>
<td>August 11, 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

interview protocol. The second round of individual interviews focused more on the participants’ specific music experiences. After both rounds of individual interviews were completed, all audio recordings from the interviews were transcribed into text documents.

**Group Interviews**

The group interviews were designed to collect more coherent data about each case. In the first group meeting, I divided the participants into two groups, depending on their availability to meet. During group interviews, participants were encouraged to share their personal music experiences with other group members and then to talk about school music experiences, for example, “Jack, would you share the story of your elementary music teacher with the others?” or “Betty, would you introduce your experience in church choir to the others?” I played a minimal role in guiding the group interviews and
promoted dynamic group discussions to gather more data. One participant (Peggy) was unable to attend either group interview because of health issues.

**Journals**

All participants were asked to write in a journal during the interview period in order to capture supplementary data about the experiences and recollections discussed during the interviews. During the group meetings, all the participants were offered notebooks and pens for journal writing. The participants were asked to write personal music-related stories that either were missed during the interviews or that could supplement the data collected during the verbal interviews. To clarify what was expected of the participants, I provided a journal writing sample and basic guidelines for journal writing; however, no specific format, page limit, or literary style for journal writing was required.

All journals were collected in person after the last group meeting. The handwritten contents were transcribed into MS Word documents. This process was necessary so that journal contents could be compared with interview contents and analyzed using data codes via *NVivo* software. Additionally, the journal contents provided data that was used to double-check interview responses.

**Field Notes**

I kept field notes to record on-the-spot ideas or background information about the participants and their music experiences throughout the data collection period. The field notes were used to “create texture and variation avoiding the flatness that comes from generality” (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). The notes were also a somewhat effective
Table 3

*Simple Guide for Journal Writing*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Contents</th>
<th>Simple Example of Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When</td>
<td><em>When I was in the fifth grade of elementary school...</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who</td>
<td><em>My friend</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What</td>
<td><em>Played the small organ</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
<td><em>In the classroom</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How</td>
<td><em>In the first music class, the teacher asked students whether they ever had played the piano.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why</td>
<td><em>Because the teacher could not play the piano</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection</td>
<td><em>It was a moment that sparked my interest in music.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

resource for interview design and data analysis.

**Case Selection**

After reviewing all interview transcriptions thoroughly, I selected the six cases out of the nine participants who seemed best able to provide substantial, relevant data about the research questions. Three excluded participants were Bella, Erick, and Pearl. Bella’s case was excluded because during individual interviews she could not recall any music experiences in school even though she had been fully informed about the research questions and the scope of the study during the initial interview. Erick’s case was also dropped because he had only fragmentary recollections of incidents related to music, such as an open-air concert in elementary school and band activities in high school, and could not narrate those incidents in detail. In addition, Pearl’s case was omitted because of her extremely critical stance toward school music education and toward her education
experiences in general. Because she believed that she experienced racism during school, she continuously made hostile responses to most interview questions without recalling her specific music experiences; therefore, the researcher could not collect enough narrative data from Pearl.

**Data Analysis**

In this case study research project I explored senior citizens’ music experiences that occurred during school years and the way in which these experiences influenced their musical sensibilities, tastes, and abilities. The research sample included six cases that provided substantial data relevant to the research questions. Raw data for the research were collected via interviews, journal writings, and field notes. After data collection, all the raw data were then processed through two different examination procedures: summarized documentation and code analysis.

**Summarized Documentation**

Each of the participant’s stories about their music experiences were contextually summarized in a document. This description, which was generated from interview data, journal writings, and field notes, provided all-inclusive information about the participant’s music experiences and thus promoted the contextual understandings of the experiences. Because it included and detailed all significant recollected music experiences in the participants’ lives, most of its contents were encoded for data analysis. Thus, the summarized document worked as a fundamental base from which to analyze the music experiences.
The descriptions were arranged in the following order: personal identification and background, school music experiences (both in-school and out-of-school), music experiences in post-school years, self-reflection on music or music experiences, and codes (and their values) of each participant’s music experiences. In order to check data accuracy, a draft version of the summarized document was reviewed with and approved by each participant along with his or her group interview statements and journal contents.

**Code Analysis**

In this study I used the cross-case method, which treats each case as an independent one and also as a part of the whole. In this method, a single case is cross-related to others in order to construct the incorporated organism of a multiple-case study. Thus, cross-case analysis can reveal not only each case’s particular situation but also common relations and factors across the entire set of cases.

Cross-case analysis requires systematic scaffolding to support data interpretation and data analysis. Stake (2006) explained the relation between themes and findings across cases in cross-case analysis: “The themes preserve the main research questions for the overall study, and the findings preserve certain activity found in the special circumstances of the cases” (p. 40).

This research employed code classification in order to evaluate how much certain music experiences influenced the participant’s musical sensibility, taste, or ability. Three steps were taken during data analysis: First, raw data of a case were inputted into the qualitative analysis software, which allowed incorporation of audio and text data all together. This software also helped to organize the data into a more informed structure
and to examine the complex relations among them. From the close reading of interview transcripts, I identified significant music experiences in each case and developed those experiences as initial codes in an inductive method by repeating encoding and decoding processes.

The initial codes were reviewed with reference to the descriptive system for SEM (Gabrielsson & Wik, 2003) and compared with raw data of another case in order to develop more refined and pertinent codes. This process continued until it covered all six cases. During this process, some codes were added and others eliminated; some were corrected and others altered. The codes developed from the interview data were then used to analyze group interview and journal data in order to provide coherent links among the data.

Finally, the developed codes were classified into two major categories and several subcategories based on where and when the incidents occurred (see Table 4.) Two main categories of music experiences emerged: during school years and during postschool years. Codes during school years were classified into two subcategories: in-school and out-of-school. (See Appendix F for descriptions of codes).

After code development, the cross-case analysis revealed not only the particulars of each case but also common factors and relations across all the cases. Through the code analysis, the classified interview contents were compared to one another in order to trace the changes in musical sensibilities, tastes, or capabilities. All music incidents were encoded into given categories in order to produce themes and concepts, which determined commonalities, differences, patterns, and structures of music experiences.
Table 4

*Classification and Development of Codes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Main Codes</th>
<th>Subcodes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Troubles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-School</td>
<td>In Music Class</td>
<td>Music class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Out of Music Class</td>
<td>Music club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reason for joining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field trip</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-School</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Siblings and relatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private Music Lesson</td>
<td>Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reason for taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reason for discontinuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religious music activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-music training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music concert going</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical environments</td>
<td>Music instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-School Years</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal music activities</td>
<td>Personal music activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reason for discontinuation</td>
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A value for each code was calculated by the frequency and amount of stated musical incidents relevant to it. The code analysis presented two separate sets of code values: code values in each individual case and code values of all six cases in total.

**Researcher Role and Research Ethics**

**Position of Researcher**

I worked as a leader to guide the research process, a coordinator to manage meetings and schedule interviews, an organizer to collect and arrange research sources, and an analyst to investigate the research data. Initially, I posed questions about seniors’ memories of music experiences that occurred during their school years and conducted a literature review, preliminary research, and theoretical inquiries to answer the research question. After recruiting voluntary participants for this study, I arranged meetings and scheduled interviews. My role during the meetings and interviews was to manage the whole process and to encourage participants to answer in depth and at length. After completing data collection, I conducted qualitative analysis of the data and then tested the validity and reliability of the research results.

**Ethical Concerns**

Ethical issues were very important in this research because the target sample revealed very personal information. For this reason, researchers who employ case studies need to develop research methods and questions from an ethical standpoint (Bassey, 1999). This research followed the ethical guidelines approved by the IRB at Kent State University.
The participants were well informed at the initial interview about the researcher, the research purpose, the research structure, the research process, the privacy protection policy, and their rights as participants (see Appendix B). They also were informed that they could ask to protect their personal information and that they could withdraw from the research at any time. At the first group meeting, all participants were given a copy of the IRB consent form, and they were asked to sign it after the initial interview.

I was responsible for protecting the participants’ privacy throughout this research project, using pseudonyms instead of real names to identify participants in all data transcriptions and descriptions. Any information regarding participant identification was not exposed in audio data or in textual documents. All data were kept in a secure place at Kent State University and accessible only to me.

**Issues of Validity and Reliability**

Validity refers to the accuracy of an assessment, and reliability refers to the stability, accuracy, and precision of measurement. Validity testing is needed to check the consistency of a data source. Reliability testing is required “to minimize the errors and biases in a study” (Yin, 2009, p. 45). Although both validity and reliability are strongly emphasized in quantitative research, the implications of both concepts have changed from a qualitative research perspective because qualitative research “provides a means to interpret multiple and complex life variables in ways that numbers cannot” (Heely, 2005, p. 91).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested alternative techniques to increase trustworthiness, such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.
That a researcher develop relevant concepts to research in order to reduce biases and increase truthfulness is essential (Golafshani, 2003). In this research, I used triangulation and member checking to test validity and employed peer review to test reliability.

**Triangulation**

The notion of triangulation requires that all findings and interpretations need to have at least three confirmations and assurances in order to prevent mistreatment and misinterpretation of data findings. Stake (2006) defined triangulation as the process of making assurances between findings and interpretations. For triangulation I conducted individual interviews and group interviews and asked the participants to write in journals; I then compared all of these data sources with one another in order to check the validity of data contents.

**Member Checking**

Member checking is a vital technique to enhance data interpretation by adding new data or eliminating any latent bias on the part of a researcher. In this study, after completing data collection, I wrote every participant a letter to inform them of the next steps in the research process, which included possible follow-up interviews and member checking. For member checking, I asked all six participants to read and review a draft of the summarized document containing their stories. All participants gave their feedback: five in person and one via mail. During this process, some corrected some interpretation errors and commented on research questions; others clarified what they wanted to say.
Peer Review

I used peer reviews to test the reliability of code development, then modified code categories, based on the results of this peer-review code testing. I chose two doctoral students in music education at Kent State who were well-versed in code analysis methodology and qualitative interviewing techniques and analysis. I contacted them in person when the code development process was completed. They were given a summary of each code definition and its development as well as transcripts of each case. After two weeks they returned the results of their code reviews, which facilitated code modification. Their reviews and comments on the original codes were used to define and develop some codes in more appropriate ways.

Conclusion

In this research I aimed to understand senior citizens’ music experiences within real-life situations by contextualizing specific music incidents or events, aligning it with the constructivist paradigm, arguing that the reality of their music experiences is continuously constructed socially and changed throughout their lives. To investigate the reality of music experiences, I used the case study method and collected interview data.

I used convenience sampling method to recruit research participants. Research data were collected through individual and group interviews, participants’ journal writings, and researcher field notes. Cross-cases analysis was used to reveal not only particular situations of each case but also common factors and relations across cases.
Both data collection and data analysis were based primarily on an open-ended process in order to enable research participants to correct data contents or interpretations and to provide any memory or event missed. All research methods and processes were designed in compliance with the IRB research ethical guidelines at Kent State University. The validity and reliability of this study were tested via triangulation, member checking, and peer reviews.
CHAPTER IV
REPOSITIONING THE PIECES OF MEMORIES

Introduction

Chapter 4 provides summarized documentation of each individual case. The researcher selected the six cases from the nine interviewees that seemed most likely to provide substantial data appropriate to the research questions. This chapter summarizes the important music experiences in the selected participants’ lives and their reflections on them, determined by the results of code analysis of the interview contents.

The contents of these six case studies were drawn for the most part from each participant’s individual interviews and then considered as a whole in context. They were also supplemented with other available data, such as case journals and the researcher’s field notes. In order to check data accuracy, every case was reviewed against the participants’ statements in group interviews.

The descriptions are arranged in the following order: personal information and background, music experiences in school years (both in-school and out-of-school activities), music experiences in postschool years, self-reflection on music and music experiences, and the data codes and their values of his or her music experiences.

Betty

“Primarily where I learned about music was at church. . . . I think music is an enrichment to life. It’s a broadening, it’s also a calming, and an energizing influence” (Betty, personal communication, August 17, 2010)

Betty, a 71-year-old female living in northeastern Ohio, attended Catholic schools from elementary through high school. During her school years, she was an obedient and
average student who was well-educated in religious disciplines. Her taste for church music was based on her growing up in a Catholic family environment immersed in religious music activities in school.

Betty remembered her parents as eager to educate their children in music and willing to invest money in their children’s music education. In particular, her mother was enthusiastic and encouraged the children to engage in music, but she herself had not studied music. She tried to offer the children practical opportunities for learning music.

With her parents’ encouragement, Betty’s two sisters became deeply involved in music. Her older sister sang as a member of the Canton City Opera, and her younger sister played the organ at church during morning services. Through her extraordinary playing skills, this sister earned a scholarship for high school. They practiced classical music at home, so Betty naturally became familiar with classical piano pieces and opera from an early age.

Betty’s elementary school had very strict rules in line with the Catholic Church, including that no class began before students had attended a morning service. Music and church songs were part of every church service she attended. The pieces she sang in the morning service remained on her mind throughout the day, the week, and throughout her entire life. She recalled the following about church music:

You know, it’s a funny thing about church songs. When you go to church and you hear the songs, they go through your head the whole day. . . . That’s my favorite music is church songs. I don’t know why—they’re just comforting. They’re comforting to me. Yeah, I find myself humming the songs. It really is,
[and] it sticks in there . . . all week. (Betty, personal communication, August 3, 2010)

Betty also voluntarily joined the girls’ church choir as an extracurricular activity. As a member of the choir, she performed songs during morning services. This was a positive experience for her because she enjoyed learning spiritual songs and also trained herself by listening to and singing songs. She remembered the choir director—a nun—as not only a generous person but also a good musician who was very knowledgeable and able to teach her how to read music and how to arrange musical pieces for choral singing.

After school, Betty took private piano lessons from a nun; she enjoyed walking to the nun’s residence for her lessons. From the piano teacher she learned how to read and appreciate music. Although she appreciated the valuable opportunity to learn from private lessons, she was never very good at reading music or playing the piano; yet for her the music experiences in the choir and the private piano lessons were enjoyable and also enhanced her understanding of music. Although her primary taste was for church music, she also enjoyed various other music genres. In high school she enjoyed dance music, which she danced to with her friends. She also liked to listen to country and western music as well as to mellow music like Nat King Cole’s love songs, but she was not overly enthusiastic about jazz and rock and roll.

After completing high school, Betty was unable to continue her musical activities because she had a job and had to take care of her children; furthermore, her husband did not like attending crowded concerts. She had some alternative ways to enjoy music, such as singing songs, taking part in seasonal programs with her children, and attending her
grandchildren’s music concerts. In addition, she and her husband attended several concerts at Blossom Music Center.

As she grew older, she began to appreciate mostly soothing music that she could enjoy with her husband. Currently she listens to music only on the radio, on television, and at church. She would still like to attend music concerts and wants to be a choir member again someday, but she has taken on duties at church other than choir. Betty said she holds good memories of church music from her school years that have positively affected her attitude toward music and also have enriched her life in her post-school years. She regrets, however, that she cannot read music now even she had chances to learn in school years. She still wishes to learn this skill in order to enrich and deepen her musical enjoyment.

Figure 1. The codes and values of Betty’s music experiences across her lifetime.
George

*When you say, can you play guitar, I cannot play guitar. I cannot play, I cannot read music. But if I hear it two or three times . . . , that is the normal time it takes, I can very well pick it up from a guitar.* (George, personal communication, August 4, 2010)

George, a 61-year-old male living in northeastern Ohio, completed his K–12 education at public schools in Tennessee. Very shy as a child, he became social through high school choir activities. Through music experiences at church, he enjoyed the instrumental sounds he heard in band music. He became interested in guitar through musical interactions with friends and practiced the guitar by himself.

Every Sunday throughout his childhood, George’s mother took him to church, where he was naturally exposed to church music. Bored during the sermons, he liked to go to church because he enjoyed listening to his cousin singing and playing piano at church. In jam sessions he also experienced the sound of various musical instruments, such as drums, piano, guitar, trumpet, and flute.

George said that at home he used to hear his mother humming songs while she completed chores around the house. He also recalled playing musical games with his sister—he sang a song, and his sister guessed its title. Occasionally, he went to his uncle’s home in order to listen to the radio because his family did not have any medium to hear music. A few years later, he was able to listen to some classical pieces by Beethoven or Chopin after the family acquired a television set.

The most important person outside the family who influenced his musical sensibility was “Uncle Joe,” whom he met at the age of 10. People enjoyed singing and dancing at night to the sound of Uncle Joe’s fiddle; George also loved its old-fashioned
sound. George shared no biological kinship with Uncle Joe, yet he maintained a close relationship with him. George recalled that every time Uncle Joe finished a performance, he always polished the fiddle and kept it looking brand new. This was the reason George became interested in stringed instruments and was drawn to their sound in particular. George thought that he learned how to enjoy music and how to share it from Uncle Joe.

In regard to music experiences during his school years, George most remembered the choir activities in high school. Music classes at the high school consisted of two sections: choir activity and composition work. Because of his shyness, he chose the composition section, during which time he used to write musical notes in a composition book. One day he sat in the corner of the classroom and wrote musical notes while humming a song that the choir in the music class had recently rehearsed. His music teacher, interested by the humming sound, came to his table and then encouraged him to join the choir. And thus, his choir activities commenced.

In the choir he performed first tenor and practiced five times a week. He experimented with other various vocal parts as well as part of his vocal exercises. Through these choir activities, he developed his musical sensibility and appreciation for choral music. The main choir activities were participating in choir competitions and performing with other high school bands. George traveled to other areas and stayed overnight with other students when taking part in local music competitions. His choir practiced performances with the marching band of the other high school in his school district. He said that he loved music itself, regardless of whether he or the choir won the competition.
In the choir George had a good friend who shared his musical interests and favorite scores. The friend played various instruments that George could not play, such as trombone and saxophone. Through this friend, he was able to listen to a variety of music, and this stimulated his musical curiosity and his commitment to music activities.

He was initially too shy to take part in other types of group activities, but the choir increased his confidence and social ability. George said:

After I started singing, I guess it began to kind of put out of my shyness. It made me a man I would soon become. After that, I was the president of music class, about freshman, sophomore class. I played Wednesdays at football. I did all after that. I overcame my shyness whatever. (George, personal communication, July 29, 2010)

Through the choir he gained an appreciation for blues and jazz music, which led him to new musical challenges. He still misses the choir activities at high school—those memories have remained with him over the decades.

After school hours, George remembered two vital music activities: practicing the guitar and going to concerts. He had no opportunity to take private music lessons, but he tried to practice every musical instrument that he could get his hands on. For example, his cousin performed in a band, and George was able to experiment with several of his instruments. From his cousin, George learned to play the piano, the guitar, the harmonica, and several other instruments. From this experience, he became fascinated with the sound of the guitar.
One day at age 13, George saw a guitar displayed in a local shop window. Because it was $13, quite expensive at that time, he could not ask his parents to buy it. Instead, he saved up enough money for it and finally bought it for himself. He could not afford to take private lessons, so he had to train himself to play the guitar, which was not easy because he could neither read music nor play chords. He kept listening carefully to notes or chords, trying them out on the guitar for his own enjoyment.

George also enjoyed attending music concerts after school hours. Because his mother did not allow him to stay out at late at night, he had to sneak out of the house to go to a pop concert with his friends and cousins. At the age of 13, he attended a pop concert for the first time, where he was fascinated with the aura of live music. The next year he traveled 40 miles to attend an opera, where he was attracted to the bodily movements and soprano voice of a female singer on the stage.

After graduating from high school, his musical interests changed. Smoking and drinking took a toll on his lungs and voice, and George had to stop singing. In addition, he did not have much time to play the guitar because he had to support his family. However, he still loved to listen to most kinds of music; sometimes he listened to blues and jazz when driving, and other times he listened to soothing music when relaxing after work. He also played guitar in his basement whenever he had free time.

Because George thought music was beneficial for their emotional growth, he urged his children to take part in various musical activities and was willing to spend time and money supporting their music education. He bought a piano for his children for $50 in a moving sale and sometimes invited his friends over to teach them piano. When two
of his children expressed an interest in learning to play the guitar and the saxophone, he was happy to support them financially. He was disappointed when they soon lost interest in playing them and quit the lessons about two years later, but he did not insist that they continue.

During this time, he met a friend who communicated in and by music. According to George, one day he sat down on the back porch, and by chance heard the sound of a guitar coming from next door. He saw that a neighbor was playing the instrument. After approaching the neighbor, George realized that he had a speech impediment. Thus, they began to communicate through music and body language. They soon became close friends in the harmony of music; the neighbor played chords with the rhythm, to which George attuned individual guitar strings. The neighbor taught him some very useful guitar skills and tips.

Currently, George still lives with music—enjoying a variety of music on TV and playing his favorite melodies on his old guitar. For him, music is a true soul mate that helps him find courage during difficult times. Sometimes it keeps him from doing wrong: George recalled that when he was about to do wrong in his teenage years, he sometimes heard music on the radio; and the melodies and lyrics made him rethink his plans. At other times, music has evoked beloved memories. For example, when he fought as a Marine in the Vietnam War, he heard some songs on the radio that reminded him of cherished times in his hometown. Music has also acted as a therapist that has helped him overcome his debilitating shyness in his teenage years and that later helped relieve severe pain in his hip. George has had diverse music experiences from Music
Club activities in school to musical communications with relatives or friends to religious music practice at church—all of which have inspired him to pursue new ways to enjoy and appreciate music throughout his life. His musical taste is for jazz and blues because he experienced these genres during church choir activities.

![Figure 2](image)

*Figure 2.* The codes and values of George’s music experience across his lifetime.

**Henry**

*I think she [music teacher] had a very good attitude toward us [students] and the music. She loved what she was doing, you know, you could tell she loved it and I think that was a good influence on us.*  
(Henry, personal communication, August 4, 2010)

A 64-year-old male living in northeastern Ohio, Henry attended a school in Germany through second grade and then moved to the United States. He was educated in schools in northeastern Ohio from third through the 10th grade and then attended a high school in New York for his last two years of schooling. His intercultural (or
multicultural) sensitivity to music is most likely cultivated by his experiences as an immigrant and his exposure to German music at home from an early age.

Once in the United States, Henry was urged to listen to German music by his parents, who played records. Thus, he was familiar with German melodies that his parents played or sang over and over. He later became a big fan of American Christmas music, which he thought was more amusing than the German songs. He used to play American folk music, which also interested his mother. The musical interchange between him and his parents was mutually beneficial as they adjusted to life as a bicultural family.

In school music classes, Henry faced the challenge of managing the differences between German and American cultures, not only in music but also in educational cultures, methods, manners, and even ethics. The drastic changes in living and educational environments made him extremely shy during his school years. Because of his German accent, he was hesitant to speak in class. When he was in the sixth grade, the elementary school held a talent show. Many students took part in the show: Some played musical instruments and others sang songs. His sisters also sang and participated in the show, yet Henry did not participate because he did not have any musical talent at that time. One of his classmates recommended that he host the show, but the teacher in charge of the show refused to let him do so because of his German accent. As a result, musical activities and music classes at school did not interest him. He sat still without asking any questions or providing any responses during music classes.
In middle school he became interested in orchestras and their musical instruments. He saw a full symphony orchestra on television, the first time he was able to see it in pictures. He was very impressed by the orchestra presentation, but he soon lost interest because the teacher presented it in only one way. His view of music and his attitude toward musical activities changed after he met a skilled and engaging music teacher in high school. Most of all, he liked the teacher’s teaching style and structure, which increased his interest in music. At that time he also could sense her love and passion for music and education. In her music class he was introduced to various genres of music, including opera and American folk music. The teacher was particularly enthusiastic about opera, playing records of opera music and showing several pictures of the opera’s scenes. These positive experiences with music during high school changed his view of music—it was no longer boring but was something enjoyable.

He had been attracted to opera music ever since he had taken a field trip during middle school to a performance of Rigoletto at Severance Hall in Cleveland. It was the first time he experienced live opera. Henry said:

It was an interesting, very interesting experience. . . . It made me actually want to see an opera again. I don’t want to come off as being just a huge opera fan because I’d like all kinds of music and opera. (Henry, personal communication, July 28, 2010)

His parents, who enjoyed listening to operas such as Madame Butterfly and Carmen, encouraged him to attend the opera. Decades later, he still remembered some details of the performance: the dark stage, the gloomy setting, and the sad atmosphere.
Very impressed with *Rigoletto*, he went on to attend other operas as frequently as possible. When he was 15, Henry went to a performance of *La Bohème* in Germany on his first trip to Europe with his mother after moving to the United States. Those experiences with operas significantly influenced the formation of his musical tastes.

He also was able to attend various kinds of musical performances, such as pops and musicals during his school years. One memorable performance he still cherished was the concert of a French singer. He first saw the singer on a late night television program—The Jack Parr Show. After hearing her songs on the show, he became a big fan. Soon after he got the unexpected news that the singer would have a concert in Warren, Ohio. He went to the concert with his father and had a wonderful time there enjoying her music and the performance.

In Warren, Ohio, in the 1950s Henry attended summer stock performances by the popular Kenley Players. With his father Henry saw a number of musicals and traveling theater troupe performances. He became particularly interested in musicals because they merged music and dramatic stories.

His enthusiasm for musical performances on the stage continued when his family moved to New York City. He became an avid theatergoer, enjoying musicals and other performances. With his mother he saw *My Fair Lady* and felt lucky to see Barbra Streisand in her first Broadway musical, *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*. In order to enjoy musical scores at home, he worked hard as a part-timer after school so the he could eventually buy a new stereo record player and large speakers to replace the old record player that his mother has given him as a Christmas gift.
After graduating from high school, he became a big fan of film scores. He loved in particular the theme of *The Third Man* (1949), composed by Anton Karras, and had a memorable experience related to the film score when he attended a concert by a zither orchestra in Europe. During the intermission in the concert, he met one of the orchestra musicians and asked him to play his favorite film score. It was not listed on the concert program, so he did not expect that the orchestra would actually play it. Much to his surprise the orchestra played the film score at the end of the concert—it was, he said, an unforgettable moment in his life.

Henry was eager to play his favorite music on the piano because he truly loved piano music. He said:

I like the sound of it. It makes me feel better. And it’s—if I listen to a professional piano player, I can really lose myself in the music. I really go with what I’m hearing. And it’s very, very good music for me. That’s why I like piano concertos, for instance Tchaikovsky’s first piano concerto. I love that. The piano—you know, it takes me to another world. (Henry, personal communication, August 4, 2010)

When Henry was in his 50s, he bought an electronic keyboard. He practiced and played the keyboard by listening and by experimenting by himself because he could not read music and had never had the opportunity to learn the piano. He was happy despite his ability to play only five or six notes from Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony and other favorites. Sometime he tried to play his own music when a melody came to mind. He confessed that as he grows older, he prefers classical music. He loves to hear it and has
continued to collect records of world-renowned orchestras: Berlin, New York, and London. He once enjoyed attending music concerts in Cleveland, but he is no longer able to drive and has no transportation to the city; instead he attends music performances at Kent State University and also listens to music on his favorite radio stations.

In his youth, Henry experienced various live music performances—trips to the summer stock theatre, field trips, and family excursions to musicals and theaters—all of which contributed to building his music taste for live music in genres, such as classical, jazz, opera, musicals, and theater. Because of shyness, he has always preferred to enjoy music by himself instead of with others. He still wishes to learn to read music and to play the keyboard for his own musical enjoyment.

Figure 3. The codes and values of Henry’s music experience across his lifetime.
Jack

“Music has really motivated me and music is just like eating or sleeping. Sometimes music is like a medicine to me. It influences me and infuses the stress off me, and it helps me live longer” (Jack, personal communication, August 10, 2010).

Jack, a 57-year-old male living in northeastern Ohio, attended area public schools through high school. In school, he was outgoing and sociable, actively participating in various cultural activities and enjoying companionable relationships with friends. He has strong and positive memories of musical experiences, including school music activities, music teachers, and music activities with his family, in particular his mother, grandmother, and uncle.

Jack remembered his mother as a music enthusiastic; she collected music records so diverse in genre and musician that everybody who visited his house could listen to any kind of music they wanted. She also liked to sing her favorite songs, mostly romantic or joyful songs, while doing chores around the house. Consequently, Jack grew up enjoying his mother’s favorite songs and music, gradually leading to an interest in romantic music.

From his grandmother, Jack learned how to read music and how to play the piano during middle school. He loved to hear and play a variety of music that she played—from gospel to popular music—and asked her many questions about music. Since then he always wanted to be good at playing the piano. At age 10 or so, he used to go with his uncle to Leo’s Casino, a jazz and blues club in Cleveland. The music he experienced in the club was entirely different from what he knew and had heard.

His elementary school was well equipped with music facilities and education programs, which benefitted his early musical development. The music classroom was
furnished with various musical instruments including percussion, stringed, wind, and other types of instruments. In music class, teachers introduced him to a diverse array of music such as classical, contemporary, and various types of national music from Germany, Russia, and other nations. He was also encouraged to sing his favorite songs in front of the class. This positive and nurturing musical environment in elementary school helped to cultivate his musical tastes in his early years.

At the elementary school Jack met an important teacher who greatly influenced his musical knowledge and sensitivity. During the very first class, the teacher asked him to name his favorite instrument and encouraged him to pursue it. At first he learned to play his favorite instruments like drum, guitar, and piano. After training him to play these instruments, the teacher urged Jack to try other instruments—she wanted him (and other students as well) to experience all the instruments in the music classroom. He also learned to read music, and the teacher was very patient as he learned little by little.

In addition to classroom activities, Jack was motivated by all the musical performances he attended during field trips. Every year from elementary to high school, he attended classical music concerts at Severance Hall in Cleveland, Ohio. During the first field trip, he was overwhelmed by its magnificent architecture and the high-quality orchestra sound. He was fascinated by the diverse musical instruments and their different sounds, which he had never heard before.

He also had meaningful experiences with music at church. During school years he attended a church on Sundays that had a recording studio. He worked as the studio operator to record the pastor’s sermons or to produce Bible studies on tape that were
distributed to church members. Keenly interested in the studio’s technical system, in particular the audio board and amplifiers, and very excited to learn how to operate them, he was put in charge of operations at the studio.

After graduation from high school, Jack entered Kent State University to study theatre. During his theatre training at the university, he continued to be exposed to music, composed scores for theatre performances, and also learned about music artists involved actively in theatre. While participating in theatre productions, he met a number of artists specializing in various fields, including the arts, music, dance, and theatre. With his friends, he continued to practice playing the drums, and he played music, contemporary as well as classical, throughout his college years.

Because he worked as a security guard at Kent State University in the 1970s, he was able to attend various concerts by world-famous bands. He escorted the famous singers from the stage and to the dressing rooms and was fortunate to see and hear them at close range during the performances. He has vivid memories from this time period.

After marriage Jack thought that music activities at church would play an important role in the cultivation of his children’s initial musical pursuits. For this reason, he took his three children to church every Sunday during their early years. He eagerly encouraged his two sons to join the church choir and to take part in any musical activities at church. As a result, one of his sons was actively involved in church music and now serves as a minister.
Although Jack has an inclination toward classical music, he said that he still enjoys jazz, blues, and pop music. He enjoys his library of classical music and listening to various recordings when he rests at home or as he falls asleep. He listens to his favorite radio stations and still has a special passion for stage productions; thus, he takes theatre classes at Kent State University as part of the Senior Guest Program.

Jack remembers music as always having been with him. He loves any kind of music and thus enjoys any rhythm or type of music. Because of his family experiences, music activities in school, and musical communication with friends, he is open to any genre of music. These positive early experiences made it possible for him to have a wide range of music experiences later in life. He believes that these early experiences have made him open-minded and optimistic as well.

![Figure 4. The codes and values of Jack’s music experience across his lifetime.](image-url)
Julia

“Music cheers me up. It gets me through depressions, sad times, difficult times in life.... You never know when you might need music to help get you through” (Julia, personal communication, August 10, 2010).

Julia is a 63-year-old female who lives in northeastern Ohio. For most of her education, she attended rural public schools, except for seventh and the eighth grades. Her musical enthusiasm was cultivated by both her father, who was a musician, and her mother, who was eager to support her musical activities. Shy in her school years because of a learning disability, she overcame her serious timidity when she won a music competition during middle school.

Julia grew up in a large family with grandparents, parents, and many siblings, all of whom exposed her to various types of music in her early years. Most of the family could play musical instruments: Her grandfather played the fiddle, her grandmother occasionally played the piano, her father played the guitar, her step-father played the saxophone, and her sisters and brothers also had a little experience playing musical instruments.

In particular, Julia learned to play the guitar from her father, who played in music part-time in clubs at night to make extra money for the family, yet she said that she could not get her hand comfortably around the instrument. She heard the sounds of various instruments, such as contrabass, the fiddle, and other kinds of guitars, when band members visited their home to practice with her father. Sometimes she accompanied her father to open-air country–western concerts, where she enjoyed all kinds of sounds.
Julia remembered moments when her mother sang songs with the children as she combed their hair; she also remembered listening to music on the radio as her mother drove the car. Julia felt indebted to her mother for allowing her to learn to play musical instruments. Although her father did not earn enough income to support music education, most of her siblings could play musical instruments because her mother worked at a small factory in order to pay for private music lessons. One of her younger sisters played the piano well; another younger sister played the flute in the school band; and her youngest brother played the drums a little.

Julia remembered that the elementary school she attended had no dedicated music classroom. Instead, she took music class in a room with a piano. No matter the classroom, she loved to sing patriotic marching songs and other types of nationalistic music while accompanied by the piano.

During her school years, she was inspired by her first field trip to a classical music concert in Akron, Ohio. Before the trip, her music teacher had designed a lesson to prepare the students for the concert. The teacher played classical music records and showed several pictures of instruments in order to familiarize students with the different music culture of orchestral performance. Because of the preparatory lesson, Julia was able to appreciate the orchestra music and felt informed.

Julia was deeply impressed by the architecture of the concert hall, which had beautiful details she had never seen before. Fascinated by the harmonic music the orchestra played, she liked the sounds of drum sessions in particular, which made tones
and rhythms somewhat distinctive. After that experience, the drums became one of her favorite instruments, and she leapt at any chance to learn to play them.

During junior high school, Julia had the unforgettable experience of winning a music competition, which helped her gain self-confidence and overcome her shyness. The music competition encouraged students to improve their musical talents and skills. At first she was unwilling to try out for the competition because she could not play a musical instrument and could not read music; however, Julia was continually encouraged by her music teacher and by her mother to take part in the competition, which she eventually chose to do. For the competition she decided to write an original song; she tried to create some melodies and words, then put them together little by little, and play the song in her mind. Throughout this process, her music teacher helped her to compose her song. As Julia told her the melodies and words, the teacher put them together and played them on the keyboard several times.

The teacher also helped her write lyrics and write down the music notes. After Julia had finished composing the song, her teacher introduced her to a girl who could accompany her on the piano during the competition. For the competition, her mother prepared a black velvet dress and encouraged her to complete both the lyrics and the music. Julia practiced hard with her friend and eventually won the competition. She never forgot the moment when her name was announced as the winner of the competition. This musical achievement gave her confidence both in herself and as a musician.
During her school years, Julia took private accordion and clarinet lessons. At the age of 6, she took an accordion lesson with the support of her parents. Unfortunately, she could not continue with the instrument because her parents could not afford to buy a larger accordion as she grew older and they could not afford the lessons. A few years later, in the seventh grade, she received an accordion as a Christmas present from her parents. Even though it was not the proper size for her age, she really loved to play it.

She also was able to take clarinet lessons during middle school. To join the school band, students were required to have competitive playing ability. For this reason, the school lent instruments and offered free music lessons to all students who wanted to join the band. After taking lessons and practicing, they were tested to determine whether their playing skills were strong enough to qualify to join the band. Julia took advantage of this opportunity to learn the clarinet. She learned how to play the clarinet at school and practiced it hard at home. In spite of the clarinet lessons and her relentless practice for half a year, she failed to become a band member; the experience, however, gave her the valuable chance to learn to play the clarinet.

After high school graduation, Julia married and although busy taking care of her children, she wanted to have her own time for enjoying music. She attended concerts, in particular drum performances because of the enjoyable memory of the lively sounds of drums at her first field trip in her middle-school years. One of the unforgettable concerts she still remembered was an Asian drum performance at the E. J. Thomas Hall in Akron, Ohio, where she experienced exotic sounds and rhythms of a type of drum that was entirely new to her.
During her second marriage, Julia had to spend most of her time and energy taking care of a son with a learning disability. Because school teachers suggested that musical activities might help him to overcome the disability, she tried to expose him to a variety of therapeutic music and dance programs. She sang with him as her husband played the organ. Julia became deeply involved in musical activities, and from these experiences she was increasingly aware of the importance of music in healing as well as learning.

Later in life, Julia had another chance to pursue music when she returned to college in her fifties. To satisfy course requirements, she took two music classes: world music and music performance. In the music performance class, she experienced a whole different sound of modern music when she attended a classical music concert by an American composer. Although it was not her favorite type of music, she felt very lucky to have had such a new experience during late middle age.

Currently, Julia always enjoys music on the radio, which brings back the memory of her mother who enjoyed happy and romantic music at home. Her most cherished possession is a little black box that holds 33 records that she got at a garage sale, yet she has no record player. She still hopes to learn how to read music and how to play those instruments she was interested in long ago—the accordion, clarinet, flute, contrabass, drums, and electric keyboard.

Music has played an essential role in Julia’s life. At times it has alleviated her anxieties, and at other times it has helped her overcome shyness. Whenever she listens to
music, she feels free without bothering anybody else. She still believes in the therapeutic power of music.

**Figure 5.** The codes and values of Julia’s music experience across her lifetime.

**Peggy**

“Music was just an enjoyment. I just enjoyed music. It was kind of a comfort a lot of times. Music was always around me, so I’ve got music and I was happy” (Peggy, personal communication, August 6, 2010).

A 75-year-old female living in northeastern Ohio, Peggy studied at small public schools from the first to the sixth grade in West Virginia and from the seventh to 12th grade in Edinburgh, Ohio. Peggy recalled that she was a somewhat shy and obedient student in school years. She grew up in a family who supported her musically and allowed her to take private lessons, during which she learned to read music. Her ability to read music made her confident in music and enriched her musical activities both in school and out.
Peggy’s parents were involved in music as church choir members before they were married. Because they had to make a living for their large family, however, they could not attend church services every Sunday. Instead of attending the church, they spent more time listening to music on the radio and singing all together at home. Peggy’s father taught her a lot of songs that had been passed down orally from his grandparents. She enjoyed hearing nursery songs, which her mother sang in a beautiful voice with her humming harmony.

During school years, Peggy was active in various musical activities at school because she was very confident in her ability to read music and sing. In the first grade her homeroom teacher taught music. Every week the teacher taught her a new song, and she enjoyed the different types of rhymes and lyrics. Later, from the seventh to 10th grade, Peggy joined a glee club as an extracurricular activity.

In the glee club she was able to sing other kinds of songs than those in her textbooks, such as outdated old English songs. The club members regularly practiced special songs for a performance in the spring and fall every year. She remembered the glee club’s special uniform, which was prepared for performances outside the school in the Gibson Girl style of black skirts, white blouses, and bow ties. She thought that the glee activities enhanced her interest in music, advanced her musical awareness, and also developed her musical self-confidence.

After the glee activities, Peggy joined a school band at her high school. To be band members, the students were required to bring their own instruments; if not possible, the band assigned the students the instruments. Because she could not afford her favorite
instruments, such as clarinet or flute, the band assigned her the slide trombone. She had trouble carrying it every day. Soon she lost her interest in the instrument and discontinued band activities. In addition to these school music activities, she also took part in the church choir and loved it because she could experience religious songs, somewhat different from those she learned during her school music education.

Peggy took private piano lessons from fifth to sixth grade, from which she gained musical confidence and motivation for her later music activities. She remembered walking almost a mile to the teacher’s house for a 30-minute lesson followed by a one-hour practice. She remembered the tutor as a good teacher who paid true attention to her pursuit of music. The teacher introduced her to new classical music pieces and incorporated the cultural background of the piece and the personal histories of prominent composers into every lesson. After a year of lessons, Peggy had a piano recital in the school auditorium. For the recital she rigorously practiced several classical pieces and played them in front of her family and classmates. She still remembers wearing the dotted Swiss dress her aunt had prepared for the recital. Peggy enjoyed sharing her musical accomplishment with family and close friends.

Unfortunately, when the family moved to Ohio when she was in seventh grade, she had to discontinue the piano lessons. Her experience in learning to play the piano, however, helped her to learn to read music, and it gave her confidence to pursue musical activities in school as well as in life. Peggy said:

I like my music class. I really enjoyed it and I enjoyed learning new songs. And because of having played piano I could read music. And so I could learn a new
song fairly easily and I liked it when the teacher introduced a new song to the class. (Peggy, personal communication, August 6, 2010)

After graduation from high school, Peggy was attracted to pop music and attended pop concerts. In her 20s, she attended a Jerry Lee Lewis concert at the Civic Auditorium in Akron, Ohio. In her 50s, she took a trip with cousins to Nashville, Tennessee, in order to attend a concert of various musicians, including a country–western band Alabama.

Because she became a single parent with two children, Peggy did not have time and money for music. The only regular musical activity she engaged in during her 30s was the choir at Edinburgh Church, but she had to stop because she needed to stay home with her children. She used to sing songs at home for the children, however, because she believed it was a way to show love for the children.

Only after her children grew up could she take private classic guitar lessons at Kent State. Six months later, however, she had to stop the lessons because she was laid off from her job. Despite this, she said that she was always fascinated by musical instruments, such as the guitar, piano, and organ. As she got older, she found that she was more inclined toward familiar classical music, though she still enjoyed popular music. She listened to PBS TV classical music programs and enjoyed classical pop music of the 1970s and 1980s. Now she enjoys listening to any kind of music except hard, noisy rap or heavy metal.

For Peggy, music is a medium for enjoyment and for expressing herself. She gained self-confidence through her music experiences in the school glee club and band, the church choir, and private music lessons. The ability to read music, in particular,
increased her confidence in herself as well as in her musical ability. With this skill, she could take part in any kind of music activity and also could express a feeling through music. Music is a natural environment for her and is one of the most important elements in her life. She said:

I don’t know what life would have been like without music. I always had music and was around music. I don’t know—I can’t imagine not hearing a nice song or a beautiful song, you know. And I can’t imagine having no music in my life.

(Peggy, personal communication, August 11, 2010)

Figure 6. The codes and values of Peggy’s music experience across her lifetime.
CHAPTER V

ILLUMINATING THE PUZZLE OF RECOLLECTIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents contextual interpretations of the interview data collected during the course of this research project and an analysis of the codes of interview data, revises code contents, and offers findings from the data analysis. The results of this analysis revealed the music experiences that have been most influential on the participants’ lives and how these seniors perceive those experiences. For this analysis, every interview was reviewed to develop a set of practicable codes that were then used to encode all interview contents. All of the information in the six cases was arranged into two main categories: school years and postschool years. The data concerning in-school years was divided into two subcategories: in-school experiences and out-of-school experiences. This chapter includes charts of code analysis, interpretations of code values, and a summary of the research findings.

Codes for Music Experiences

In individual interviews, all participants were first asked to discuss a music-related incident from their own past experience that had occurred since their school years. Then they were asked to reflect on whether that experience had an influence on their musical taste, sensibility, or ability; for example, “Do you think your choir activity helped you to understand music better than you had before?” or “Do you think attending such concerts influenced your musical tastes?” To those questions the participants answered, by and large, in positive ways, responding with such words as “definitely,”
“yes,” or “probably.” The stated experiences were therefore considered relevant sources that helped to build their musical taste, sensibility, or ability.

In order to analyze how much specific music experiences influenced musical taste or ability, all music-related incidents recounted by the participants were put together as a whole, then arranged by major categories based on where and when the incidents occurred. Each category was then assigned a value based on the number of incidents it contained. Figure 7 presents the values assigned to each category, based on the number of incidents discussed by all six participants as a whole. The values show the percentage of recounted musical incidents in each category. (See Appendix F for description of the codes.) Figure 7 shows the vast majority of recounted incidents occurred during school years (79.5%) compared to postschool years (20.5%); in addition, a higher percentage of incidents fall under the out-of-school category (47.2%) as opposed to the in-school category (32.3%).

![Figure 7. The values of major coding categories across all case studies.](image)

School Years 79.5%

Postschool Years 20.5%

Out-of-School 47.2%

In-School 32.3%
To analyze further the influence of specific music experiences on musical taste or ability, several codes were developed to classify different types of experiences by thematic categories. Each stated incident was assigned a code, which has a value in accordance with its frequency across the entire set of music experiences. Figure 8 presents the codes, percentage values, and the rank of each code over the entire sample. (The value is calculated to one decimal place with a totality of 100%.)

**Figure 8.** Codes of music experiences and their values across the six cases.

The codes in Figure 8 were then divided in terms of music experiences taking place during school years (Figure 9) and those occurring in postschool years (Figure 10). In Figure 9 the music experiences during school years include any incident related to music in and out of school; in-school experiences include music class activities, school teachers, music club activities, field trips, and musical events at school. Out-of-school
Figure 9. Codes of music experiences occurring during school years and their values.

Figure 10. Codes of music experiences occurring during postschool years and their values.
experiences include family, friends, tutors, private lessons, self-training of music, concert goings, religious activities, or physical environments. Figure 10 lists the codes for music experiences occurring during postschool years: family, personal music activities, concert going, physical environment, self-training of music, musical activities at church, and private lessons.

In order to investigate how school music education influenced musical taste or ability, the major codes from the school years are the primary focus of this analysis; other minor codes are mentioned if needed. The categories derived from recollections taking place during postschool years are reviewed in brief with further detail given when interesting features emerged in the course of analysis.

**Analysis of the Major Codes**

**Family**

Family was the most prevalent code in all categories. The code of family includes family members—the participants’ parents, siblings, and relatives—and recollections of any musical experiences that involved family members, such as going to concerts, listening to music, and singing songs. In individual interviews, all the participants said that in earlier years, they often enjoyed participating in musical experiences with family members.

All participants stated in individual interviews that they were strongly influenced by their family’s musical environment and that it provided a foundation upon which their musical tastes or sensibilities were built. Betty, for example, preferred opera to other music genres because she had been exposed to opera music from early childhood at home.
She was encouraged to listen to opera and classical music, and her mother taught her and her siblings about music education. She was also influenced by her sisters, who practiced classical music and opera songs at home. Betty said:

My older sister, she introduced me like to opera because she used to sing opera music. . . . If she was singing, it was seven o’clock in the morning. . . . When I went to hear her sing, I was always very proud of her. She had a great voice.

(Betty, personal communication, August 3, 2010)

Jack, in contrast, liked ethnic music because his mother often enjoyed listening to diverse ethnic music at home. He enjoyed any kind of ethnic music because his family had a large collection of ethnic records and a nice record player at home. Exposed to music from diverse peoples and nationalities from his early childhood, Jack grew up open-minded about different cultures.

In other cases, the musical environment within the family also played an important role in building the participants’ musical tastes and in enhancing their musical abilities. Family worked as a source to rouse their musical interests or to allow them to tackle musical challenges later. This implies that the code of family is the most important factor affecting the participants’ musical sensitivities and activities; however, the value of the family code decreased dramatically during postschool years.

**Music Class Activities**

The code of music class activities includes any kind of music experience that took place in the music classroom during K–12. The participants recalled music class activities as the second most influential experiences occurring during their school years.
Most of the interviewees had fond memories of music class activities, which primarily revolved around incidents with music teachers. Those activities, described typically with such words as “like,” “enjoy,” “love,” “fun,” or “good,” were encoded as positive memories. Table 5 shows that participants remembered music class activities as much more positive (9.0%) than negative (0.7%).

Table 5

*Music Class Activities in School Years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
<th>Subcodes</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music class activities</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>music class activities in elementary school</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>music class activities in middle school</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>music class activities in high school</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>troubles in music class activities</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants also remembered some troubles in class music activities at school, which were encoded as negative memories. The inability to read music, for example, was one of the most serious troubles encountered in music class activities. Five out of the six participants mentioned musical illiteracy, not only as a big problem in school music classes, but also as a major obstacle for their later musical pursuits. Most of them experienced great difficulty over a long period of time in attempting to learn to read music.

The positive memories of class music activities were mostly concentrated in the subcode of elementary school (6.8%), which earned a higher value than the other subcodes of middle school (1.1%) and high school (1.0%). This value gap may have
resulted from the difference in the number of music education hours the participants took from elementary to high school. Most participants mentioned that they had taken music at least one or two class hours a week in elementary school but only one class hour a week in middle school, and music class was an optional course in high school.

Most participants remembered more of elementary school music class activities than of middle school or high school. For example, Julia still remembered many details from incidents that occurred in her elementary school music class:

I enjoyed marching songs, and they would let us march sometimes. We could get out of our seats sometimes and march. . . . Songs that had activity, songs that had a good beat to them. . . . And then, some of the other songs were with our history, with our American history. They were patriotic. Some songs are taken out of our school books, any, you know, for God. There were also some songs from other countries, and that made me very curious. There was one about gypsies. I had no idea what a gypsy was. I still remember some of it: “A gypsy’s life is gay and free.” (Julia, personal communication, August 3, 2010)

Julia’s description of middle-school music class was much more succinct: “I do remember in the music classes they were teaching the notes to us, and I’d forgotten that” (personal communication, August 3, 2010).

In Julia’s case as well as with others, elementary-school music-class activities were more vividly remembered and more clearly described than incidents that occurred during middle school or high school, despite the experiences having occurred much earlier. In other words, the participants experienced music in a more active way in the
earlier phase of schooling. This finding implies that music class activities in elementary school have a greater impact on students’ musical tastes or sensibilities. The participants also acknowledged that their fond memories of music class activities helped them develop a positive attitude toward music.

**Music Field Trips and Concerts**

As shown in Figure 9, the codes of music field trips taken as part of school and concerts as out-of-school activities have a fairly high value (9.8% in total). Though participants had few memories of school-initiated music field trips (3.4%), many of the participants mentioned field trips as a motivating experience that exposed them to various genres beyond that which they learned in school or extraordinary sounds not explored in the classroom. They were excited not only by diverse instrumental sounds or amazing orchestra symphonies but also by the magnificent architecture of concert halls. Jack recalled his first trip to Severance Hall in Cleveland:

> When I first went in, there was this big theater, all important people, and the orchestra. It was really exciting. . . . You can’t get the players, and you can’t have seen anything like this before. . . . I got to remember one of these things, yeah. It was a war song, about the man. I get that, I got to play this all the time. And I’m trying to do like you do. (Jack, personal communication, August 10, 2010)

Peggy remembered a trip she took to hear the symphony for the first time, which was a type of music she had not been exposed to at home. She said:
I didn’t hear symphony [before]. Radio you could get some of the classical but we could not have a record player. . . . Family didn’t care that much for classical. So we didn’t have a lot of classical music [at home]. (Peggy, personal communication, August 6, 2010)

From this experience, she came to be more familiar with symphony works and the brilliant corresponding sounds of the drums and cellos. Field trips such as these offered valuable opportunities for the participants to become acquainted with other music genres or instruments and therefore stimulated them to look for other musical experiences outside of their everyday favorites.

**Music Teachers**

As shown in Figure 9, memories of teachers make up the fourth highest value (8.5%) across all participants’ musical recollections. The code of music teachers comprises two subcodes: in-school music teachers (8.0%) and out-of-school music teachers (0.5%). The code for in-school music teachers includes both music teachers who instructed students in class and other teachers who led student during extracurricular music activities, such as club activities, school events, or concert going related to music. The code for out-of-school teachers includes instructors for private music lessons, the staff who led religious music activities at churches, or any other personnel who engaged in furthering the participants’ musical education.

Most participants recalled teachers as much more positive (6.9%) than negative (1.6%); in their memories, most music teachers expressed favorable concerns about students’ musical pursuits and encouraged their musical activities in class. Jack had a
Table 6

*Code Values of Teachers During School Years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Main Codes</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
<th>Subcodes</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-school</td>
<td>Teachers in music classes</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>positive music class</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>negative music class</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers in extracurricular</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>positive music club activities</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-school</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>positive private music lesson</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>religious activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

good memory of his elementary school music teacher who encouraged his music activities in music class. He said:

She [the teacher] was friendly. . . . She was really patient with us. There was a lot of us. We had problems with our music notes, and she wanted to make us to read the notes. . . . If a man was playing the guitars, and you are playing the drums, she said, “No read the notes.” She wanted us to learn how to play by reading the notes, and she was very patient with us so. I was like a friend, I always asked about her. (Jack, personal communication, August 10, 2010)

Julia also had good memories of the music teacher who encouraged her to take part in a music competition in eighth grade. Julia overcame her severe shyness through music, possibly because the teacher’s reactions to her music activities, such as “You try, just whatever you can do” and “You can do more.” Through participation in the music competition, Julia became more confident in herself as well as in music.

Henry’s story is a good example of how effectively teachers can influence a student’s musical interests and activities. Henry emigrated from Germany to America
when he was in second grade. As a result, he still had a little trouble speaking English when he was in sixth grade. That year, the school was preparing a talent show, but he could not take part in the show because he thought he did not have any musical talents. One of his classmates asked the teacher why she would not allow Henry to host the talent show. According to Henry, the teacher answered, “People may not understand him because of his accent.” Thus, he was unable to participate in the music talent show, and the memory stayed with him throughout his life as his most negative experience with music and music teachers.

Fortunately, Henry’s high school music teacher was far more nurturing, and he became interested in music. In music classes, the teacher introduced him to various genres of music, including opera and American folk music. Most important for Henry, the teacher showed respect for students, enthusiasm toward music, and a desire to teach the students by playing diverse types of music records and by showing the class several pictures of scenes from operas. During this time, Henry could sense that the teacher loved music and that she was passionate about her educational goals. He liked her teaching style and the structure she used renewed his interest in music.

Teachers imparted musical knowledge and skills to students and also shared their own musical appreciation and enjoyment with them. Teachers not only made students hear or play music but also showed their passion for music in various ways, such as facial expression, body movement, or eye contact. In individual interviews, almost all the participants mentioned one or two unforgettable experiences they had with their music teachers even though they could not remember every detail of what they did in music
Interestingly, when they recalled music class activities in school, they usually started their story by describing something about the teacher. Four out of the six participants remembered clearly the name of at least one music teacher. Most participants acknowledged that their musical tastes and desire to participate in music activities had been profoundly influenced by a music teacher.

**Music Club Activities and Religious Music Activities**

Most participants took part in music club activities during their school years as an extracurricular activity in school or as a religious activity outside school. The combined value of in-school music club activities (8.0%) and out-of-school religious music activities (2.6%) is a large part of the total number of music experiences that participants recalled from their school years (10.6%) (see Figure 9).

More than half the participants were involved in music club activities at school, such as school choirs, bands, or orchestras. Betty attended Catholic schools from elementary to high school and gladly joined a choir at school. She enjoyed taking part in choir activities because she could learn a lot of spiritual songs and also train herself to sing and to appreciate music.

George joined a school choir in high school as a first tenor. He practiced songs every weekday in order to take part in competitions on the weekends. He liked the choir activities because he was able to obtain voice training and to learn to appreciate other kinds of music, such as blues or jazz.

In fewer cases, participants took lessons as a prerequisite to joining a music club. Julia, for example, took clarinet lessons in order to take a qualifying test to become a
school band member. Although she failed to join the school band, she appreciated the valuable chance to learn a musical instrument.

In most cases the participants took part in club music activities at church as well as at school. They often said that they were happy to sing religious songs and to experience the various sounds of a church band. Peggy, among others, took part in various music club activities both at school and at church. She joined a glee club from the seventh to 10th grade and then was a member of the school band in high school. She also participated in a church choir, which allowed her to experience religious songs that differed somewhat from the music education she received at school.

According to the participants’ reflections, club activities at school offered a challenge or opportunity not only to learn a variety of songs beyond textbooks but also to enhance their musical interests and to build their confidence in music. For George, choir activities as a first tenor and winning in song competitions at high school encouraged him to take on musical challenges and allowed him to overcome his shyness. Peggy commented the following about music activities:

Well, I think being a part of a group helps you gain confidence. And I mean if you like to sing you were well received so. And if you followed the teacher’s instructions, without any kind of a problem with her or him, it was fine. So I think it probably allowed you to. It was different than performing by yourself. (personal communication, August 6, 2010)

Through music club activities, the participants enhanced their musical interests, advanced their musical awareness, and even developed their self-confidence in music.
Private Music Lessons

Some of the participants learned to play instruments beyond regular school music education. Others, however, had no chance to take private lessons because of their parents’ financial situations or their lack of musical enthusiasm. The code of private music lesson accounts for 6.7% of all recollected music experiences in the school years; however, that percentage dropped to 0.1% in postschool years.

Four of the six participants—Betty, Jack, Peggy, and Julia—took music lessons during their school years, but only Peggy took lessons (classical guitar) during postschool years. Betty took piano lessons from a nun, who also taught her how to read music. Although she did not master reading music at that time, she thought that the lessons fostered her skills and musical knowledge.

During piano lessons, Peggy learned to read music, practiced classical music pieces, and even acquired some cultural background on those pieces. Like Betty, Peggy also felt that private music lessons allowed her to gain musical knowledge that she could not have learned in regular school education. From private music lessons, the women gained better playing skills and musical knowledge, which helped them feel musically fulfilled and increased their self-confidence in their musical abilities.

Other Noteworthy Codes in the Postschool Years

After school years the participants encountered somewhat different musical environments than they had during their school years. Some of the codes of music experiences that were quite prevalent in the school years were still strong in postschool years; others dropped off precipitously (see Figure 11). Personal music activities, a new
code of music experiences, was added in the post-school years. Although still present after school years, the values of the codes decreased for the most part—except for self-training of music. The codes of family, physical environments, and concert going were still prevalent in the postschool years. According to the participants’ interview responses, the code of family was still common after school years because after marriage in particular, they had to manage their children’s music education and experiences. The value of the family code sharply decreased from 22.0% in school years to 7.9% in postschool years, but it remained the highest value of all postschool music experience codes.

Self-training of music was the only code that increased in value in the postschool years from 1.1% in school years to 1.5% in postschool years. Participants were still eager to improve their musical skills and attain musical fulfillment even though they were no
longer enrolled in regular music education programs or curricula after school graduation. Henry tried to play classical music pieces that he liked on his electronic keyboard. He said:

I started fooling around with that by myself. . . . I couldn't come up with a real song that I could create. But I thought, “Okay, if I press these keys twice and this one three times and do it very quickly, it doesn't sound too bad, you know.” Just trying it. I just went by my hearing. . . . If I thought it sounded good, okay, then I would play it again and again. . . . It wasn’t the whole song or anything. Like the first five or six notes of Beethoven’s 5th Symphony. I kept repeating. And I liked it. I liked it. (Henry, personal communication, August 4, 2010)

Similarly, George worked hard to play the guitar in spite of the fact that he could not read music. He said:

I cannot read music. But if I hear it two or three times sitting on, that is the normal time it takes, I can very well pick it up from a guitar. . . . I tried to play by ear. I remember the sound, and I have that acoustic guitar in my apartment. . . . I just play for my own enjoyment. . . . I mean, I wish I could read music. I cannot. Like I cannot chord either. (George, personal communication, August 6, 2010)

In the postschool years, these men, through self-training, transitioned from passive music listeners to active music players and fulfilled their musical desires in their own ways.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This chapter concludes this research by providing an overview of the research, results of the code analysis, implications for music curriculum development and school music education, recommendations for future research, and the researcher’s reflections.

An Overview of the Study

This research was designed to explore the influences of school music experiences on the development of musical sensibilities, tastes, and abilities throughout one’s entire life. It focused both on six senior citizens’ narrative stories of music experiences during their school years and afterward and on their own reflections upon those experiences in real-life contexts. This study aimed not only to comprehend the effects of school music education on music experiences throughout the participants’ entire lives but also to use research data to develop a practical music curriculum for public education.

Three critical questions about school music experiences were developed based on the fact that people attended schools during a critical period of human development in order to promote their individual achievements and latent possibilities. First, does school music education have an influence on the development of people’s fundamental music sensibilities, tastes, and abilities? Second, does school music education offer them an effective and sufficient learning opportunity to satisfy their musical needs? Third, are school music experiences practically understood, internalized, or utilized by people throughout their entire lives?
In an attempt to view music experiences in their real-life contexts and to understand them as contemporary phenomena for the research questions, the researcher used the multiple-case study and qualitative research approach, which treats each participant as an independent case in a particular situation. The six cases were reviewed through a retrospective lens in order to trace important memories that may have influenced a participant’s life. The research data were primarily collected in northeastern Ohio from two individual interviews and one group interview with nine research volunteers over 55 years old.

Interview questions were designed to prompt participants to remember as many of their experiences related to music from their school years and postschool years as possible in order to find how they perceived the way those experiences had influenced their musical sensibilities, tastes, or abilities. In addition to interview data, extra research sources included journals written by participants and field notes recorded by the researcher, all of which were used to help data interpretation and to test intervalidity of the research data.

Six of the nine participants were selected as research cases for this study. Oral interviews were transcribed, and the transcriptions were analyzed to develop the coding scheme used in this research. Codes were then classified into two main categories: school years and postschool years. The category “school years” was divided into two subcategories: in-school and out-of-school. Each research participants’ recollected stories about music experiences were reviewed with a focus on their continuous reconstructions of music experiences at every stage of the learning process. The
results of data analysis were presented in two ways: a summarized documentation of each individual case (Chapter 4) and the code analysis of data across all interviews (Chapter 5).

This research produced two basic understandings about school music education and music experience: first, school education is all about lived and living human activities in a continuous self-realization instead of merely formal curricular pursuits; second, music experience is a continuous process in the development of people’s musical sensibilities, tastes, or abilities throughout their entire lives. This study may also contribute to school music education in two practical ways: first, the research offers a contextual understanding of music experiences by locating participants’ descriptive stories about music in real-life contexts; second, it provides a practical teaching philosophy and methodology for school music education.

Results of the Data Analysis

The analysis of data and codes shows that the period of school years was an important stage in which the participants had significant experiences that influenced the development of their musical sensibilities or tastes. This results confirm previous research that showed that school music education during K–12 forms a fundamental base from which to understand music for the rest of a person’s life (Rohwer, 2002) and that school music education interacts continuously with students’ personal and social situations in specific and general ways (Cohen et al., 2002). The code analysis showed a sizable difference in the percentage of memorable music experiences between school years and postschool years. As shown in Figure 7, the total number of remembered
music experiences in school years (79.5%) is much larger than that of postschool years (20.5%).

Another noteworthy result that emerged from the data analysis is the high value of the human-related codes, such as family members, school teachers, private tutors, or friends. Figure 8 shows that such human codes make up almost half the total number of recalled music experiences (49.1%): family (29.9%), teachers (8.5%), private tutors (6.8%), and friends (3.9%). In other words, when recalling musical incidents in the past, the participants usually remembered musical experiences that they shared with other people. When musical activities involved other people, emotional interactions with them, or human contact during the activities, they seemed to make a deeper impression on the participants. This implies that human interaction was an important factor in defining the participants’ music experiences. In other words, music experiences are defined in terms of who is involved or how they share the music experience with other people.

Third, beyond music classes, extracurricular music activities enhance students’ musical interest, advance their musical awareness, and develop their self-confidence in music. For instance, such musical activities as school bands or music competitions provided a great challenge or opportunity for the participants to learn other genres of music beyond what they could learn in textbooks. Participation in music competitions helped some participants overcome shyness; winning experiences in particular made them more confident in themselves as well as in music. This finding implies that school music educators should consider whether the music curriculum makes students feel
a sense of accomplishment in music class activities and also how the curriculum motivates students’ musical desires and needs.

Moreover, the code analysis implies that music experiences out of school are as important as music education in school. Figure 8 shows that the participants remembered fewer music activities in school than those out of school: Within the category of school years, the value of music experiences in school (23.2%) is lower than that of out of school (47.2%). It is also interesting that in the group interviews the participants talked about the difference between what they learned in the music classroom and the music they enjoyed in everyday life. They generally agreed that school curricular music education did not satisfy their musical needs, partly because most received only one or two hours per week of musical instruction at school. Participants also mentioned that music textbooks did not include their favorite music genres and that music class was designed only to practice instead of appreciate the music.

Out of school, the participants were able to experience music in their own ways: listening to their favorite music, dancing in little cafés, or doing whatever they wanted. Music activities out of school offered them the freedom to enjoy music in a way different from the formal school music education and the opportunity to pursue their own musical interests that suited their individual tastes. For this reason, the participants generally preferred out-of-school music activities to in-school activities.

The code analysis also shows that memorable music experiences sharply decreased after school graduation. As shown in Figure 7, remembered music experiences in school years (79.5%) far outweigh those of post-school years (20.5%). Why did this
gap in memorable music experiences between the two periods occur? In response to this question, many participants mentioned that the changes in their living environments after high school graduation were major obstacles to their musical pursuits. The participants referred to their financial situations as one of the most serious obstacles to engaging in musical activities: Because of financial shortages, they could not afford to go to concerts, take music lessons, or buy instruments. In particular, most of the female participants talked about the lack of time to enjoy music after marriage—they had to work, do housework, and take care of children. In short, the participants had comparatively less time and money and fewer musical resources in the postschool years.

Finally, the inability to read music was one of the most serious troubles that the participants remembered encountering in music class activities. Most participants remembered their music experiences in a positive (97.7%); a few remembered them negatively (2.3%). They also mentioned some troubles in music classes or music activities (see Tables 5 and 6). Five of the six participants mentioned musical illiteracy as a big problem in school music classes and also as a major obstacle for their later musical pursuits. At the time of the interviews, they still wanted to learn to read music. This finding indicates that school music education should offer students enough instruction and diverse opportunities to achieve fundamental music literacy.

**Implications for Music Education**

Data analysis and interpretations of this research can generate constructive ideas both for school music education to develop effective music curricula and teaching strategies and for lifelong learning to involve in music after school years. This research
suggests that school music education should involve flexible music curricula and open class activities and also that school music education should occur during the critical period in lifelong human development.

**Music Curriculum Development**

School music educators should develop open and feasible curricula to motivate students’ musical desires and to meet their various musical needs. The analysis results revealed that the right motivation stimulates students’ desires for musical expression, lays the groundwork for their later musical pursuits, and builds a solid foundation for students’ self-confidence. The results also showed that participants became motivated not only within music class but also outside it. Hence, school music education is most effective when it combines the use of educational resources both in and out of school.

In this sense, school music educators should develop open curricula that cross the borders between music and other fields, between school and other educational institutions, and between teachers and other human resources. Music curricula transcend the boundaries of music as a subject in order to promote opportunities for music experiences in and out of schools. The aim of such open curricula is to develop music programs that involve diverse music genres, that are integrated with other subject areas, and that collaborate with other community institutions or musicians. This open music curricula can impact students in various ways by promoting their musical desires.

Before open curricula for music education can be developed, a change in attitude toward school music education is needed: from a school-centered perspective to a combination of in-school and out-of-school education. School, of course, is a central
place for educating students, but teachers should expand their educational terrain beyond the classroom. Music and education can occur out of school as well as in school. Some research participants said that they benefited from music activities at church; others enjoyed music concerts at local music venues or were impressed by stories of musicians’ experiences.

School personnel can therefore take advantage of community educational resources and human resources, such as churches, private institutes, music clubs, theaters, and local musicians. To connect schools to local educational communities, school music educators should design collaborative music programs, not only with other formal education institutions (local colleges or universities) but also with resources in their local communities (local bands, musicians, cafés, theaters, concert halls, or churches).

In addition, school music education should also take advantage of other human resources, such as local musicians who have various experiences with folk music, ethnic music, classical music, musical performance, or street theater. Such musicians can share their living music experiences with students in class. This kind of collaborative program can encourage students to participate in everyday music activities in and out of school and can also allow students to sense music in their everyday lives. In addition, such a program might attract local community attention to school education.

Another way to develop open curricula for music education is to devise feasible music textbooks that can offer a wide range of music genres, musical activities, and other cultural experiences. Such textbooks may include diverse music genres, such as hip-hop, rap, electronic, techno, or any other contemporary genres, and also encompass other arts
genres such as theater, musicals, or dance that are an integral part of music history and culture. School music curricula must satisfy students’ musical appetites and excite their musical interests, which will impact their musical journey both in and out of school.

To accomplish this, writers of school music curricula need to perceive out-of-school and extracurricular activities as an opportunity to expose students to various genres of music. Many of the participants mentioned these activities as motivating experiences that allowed them to enjoy various genres and sounds beyond what they learned in textbooks and beyond what they were exposed to in music classes at school. They were eager to participate in out-of-school and extracurricular activities.

Moreover, the participants felt that private music lessons allowed them to practice instruments and increased their musical knowledge. In private lessons, participants said that they learned to read music, performed classical music pieces, or learned some cultural background information about the music. Thus, fixed music curricula alone did not satisfy all of their musical needs. Open music curricula can offer students diverse music experiences to guide them to appreciate the many music cultures within our society.

**Music Class Activities and Teachers**

Results from this research led to four constructive implications for music class activities in schools: making use of family music experiences in the classroom, developing effective teaching methods for experiencing music, improving musical literacy, and developing professional programs for music teachers.

First, school music classes should promote students’ music experiences by bringing into classrooms human resources in addition to school music teachers. As
detailed earlier, study results showed that more than half of the participants’ memorable music experiences involved other people, such as family members, friends, or private tutors. This result implies that human factors play an important role in building people’s musical sensibilities, tastes, and abilities. As such, music classes can involve people other than music teachers. In particular, because the code of family had the highest value across all music experiences, it is very important to incorporate family music experiences into music education.

For example, music teachers can have students sing a song or play a musical piece that they have enjoyed with family members or ask students to share their stories about a song or piece of music. Teachers can also give students homework assignments in which they must share a song or a musical piece with family members at home. Students can write a simple essay about their music experiences with family members and then share it with classmates. These music activities can also work to expand music class to everyday life and to bridge the divide between school and home.

Second, school music educators should develop teaching methods that allow students to feel music instead of merely to know music. The interviews in this study showed that participants learned music using all five of their senses instead of solely storing up musical knowledge. They remembered that they felt music more effectively when a teacher used musical resources such as listening to audios, watching films, showing pictures, or visiting theatres instead of solely playing music on the piano. Class activities such as talking with musicians, viewing music instruments and performances, or going on field trips to instrument factories, stores, or musical events allow and
encourage students to experience music. Thus, music classes should make use of various music media and field trip programs in order for students to feel music in the context of everyday life.

Third, school music educators must be concerned with developing basic musical literacy and reading music. In the research interviews, most participants lamented their inability to read music. Some had learned to play music by ear, but they did not learn to read music during school years. They wished that they had learned how to read music in school music classes. Musical illiteracy can make it impossible for some people to take on musical challenges in their lives.

School music curricula are recommended to include a program to improve students’ musical literacy in order to kindle their musical interests and encourage their musical participation. If they read music, then they can write music, too. This allows them to create their own music, which means that they can express themselves in music and that they can share music with others. Musical literacy will help students remain motivated when they practice music and also provide them with confidence in their musical abilities.

Finally, teacher professional development is an important element in the successful use of a new curriculum because the music teacher is responsible for implementing the music curricula and is also primary effective element for students in the classroom. The code analysis revealed that students’ lifelong attitudes toward music depend mostly on their experiences in school music classes, in particular their interactions with music teachers.
Moreover, interestingly, when remembering music teachers, the participants in this research talked about their teaching styles, methods, or attitudes instead of what they taught. They seemed more likely to remember music teachers who were eager to communicate with them and encouraged them to participate in music activities, not those who had considerable musical knowledge or skills; thus, students may be influenced primarily by teachers’ instructional methods and communication styles and by the classroom atmosphere. Students learn music by accumulating musical knowledge or practicing musical skills, but more importantly, they can become involved with music by adopting a teachers’ attitude toward music.

In this connection, music teachers are one of the key factors in defining music experiences in school years, and they can foster and help develop students’ musical sensibilities; therefore, school music teachers must keep in mind that showing a positive attitude toward music is far more important than imparting musical knowledge or skills. School music educators must also develop training programs to improve music teachers’ communication skills and ability to impart positive attitudes toward music. In music class, teachers should also show students how they can enjoy various music genres in diverse ways in their daily lives. Through such activities, students can acquire a more nuanced understanding of music and incorporate it more fully into everyday life.

**School Music Education for Lifelong Learning**

A final implication stemming from this research involves the importance of school education in the lifelong learning of music. As shown in the data analysis above, the total number of memorable music experiences sharply decreased in postschool years
because of the lack of time, money, and musical resources. Although still wishing to learn musical skills, to take part in musical activities, and to enjoy music in their everyday lives, the participants said that they could not find appropriate learning opportunities within their local communities to fulfill their musical needs. Certainly, school is an essential social institution that provides students concentrated learning opportunities during the critical human development period of K–12. Hence, school music educators should nurture students’ musical potential so that they can be involved in lifelong music learning and enjoyment after they have completed their school years.

In order to nurture students’ lifelong musical involvement, school music education should first of all prepare students to become not only passive music consumers but also active music players in the future. It should aim to help students maintain their musical taste and enjoyment in the midst of the social and cultural dynamics and changes that occur after school graduation. Above all, music teachers need to be aware of new trends and genres of music as well as a broader range of music usage that students will encounter in the future.

After that, in music classes, teachers need to show students how pieces and songs that they know well by ear can be used in different art genres, can be varied in diverse music genres, and can be changed by various technologies. Taking part in such classroom music activities as listeners, performers, and creators, students might expand their music tastes, sensibilities, and abilities to be able to adapt to the dynamic music culture they will encounter in the future in their everyday lives.
Second, school music education should offer students diverse opportunities of music performance in order to encourage their self-confidence. The results of data analysis also showed earlier that students with low confidence in their own musical ability are less likely to value music. This finding implies that school music educators should consider whether the music curriculum makes students feel a sense of accomplishment in music class activities and also how the curriculum motivates students’ musical desires and needs.

In particular, participants enhanced their musical interest, advanced their musical awareness, and developed their self-confidence in music through school band or music competition experiences. These activities provided great challenges for the participants to learn other genres of music beyond what they could learn in textbooks and also helped some participants overcome shyness; winning experiences in particular made them more confident in themselves as well as in music.

Finally, school music education should develop collaborative programs with other educational resources out of school. Such collaborative music programs can connect students with local resources appropriate to their musical needs that they can use after their school years. As noted above, music educators should keep in mind that music learning is a continuous process in the development of one’s musical sensibilities, tastes, and abilities throughout one’s entire life.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This research was designed to examine the influences of school music experiences on one’s musical sensibilities, tastes, or abilities through a series of
interviews with six senior citizens age 55 or older in northeastern Ohio. The study sample was limited both demographically and geographically. No attention was paid to other age groups or to other regions outside of northeastern Ohio.

This study could be extended by targeting age groups other than seniors, regions other than northeastern Ohio, or countries other than the United States. Participant education level, income level, and occupation were not considered in this study. Other studies could recruit participants based on these factors to investigate whether they might affect the impact of school music experiences on musical tastes, sensibilities, or abilities later in life. The study could also be expanded to target learning places other than school, such as churches, out-of-school music clubs or communities, or private lessons.

The methodology employed in this study emphasized the senior citizens’ memories of music experiences. Because music experiences encompass a wide range of questions and issues, investigating all aspects of music experiences and their connections with music education was impossible. Little attention was paid to the school systems in which students built their musical sensibility and knowledge and to music teachers, who were another important subject in school music experiences. A future line of research could shift emphasis from personal perspectives to systemic exploration of music education. Such a study could also be expanded to incorporate music teachers’ memories and how they believed they influenced students’ musical sensibilities and knowledge.

A Researcher’s Reflections

This research project began with a basic consideration of music education and the following questions: Why should music be taught in school as a regular subject? Is
school music education truly an effective way to acquire musical knowledge or to develop musical sensibilities and abilities? Does the school music class offer a worthwhile educational opportunity that encourages people’s music enjoyment and activities throughout their lives? These questions seemed an important starting point for forming theoretical and philosophical foundations for music education. The answers to these questions gained importance in the wake of a recent trend toward weakening or even eliminating school music education as a way to trim school budgets.

As a music educator, I reflected upon similar questions in an effort to articulate the reasons that I teach music and the ways in which music education benefits students through musical development and appreciation: What is the purpose of teaching music in class? Is music class truly important to students? Does it help students to enhance their music activities and their enjoyment of music in school and afterward? By contemplating these questions, I found that I was missing some important aspects as to how music education affects students’ music learning or experiences. I realized that I needed to understand students’ responses to or reflections on music classes and to view music education as an experience. For these reasons, I developed this research study to examine music education and music experience as a whole by exploring the influence of school music education on students’ musical pursuits throughout their entire lives.

For this research, I conducted narrative interviews with six senior citizens who had experienced school music in education systems. The case studies focused on their personal memories of music and the influences of music experiences in and out of school on the development of their musical sensibilities and abilities. To me, the most important
finding beyond the research conclusions is that all six participants regarded music as a real, basic element in their lives, not as an extraordinary, special pursuit. They used everyday words such as “like,” “fun,” “good,” or “love”—not musical terms—when expressing emotions and feelings related to their music experiences. Obviously, they might have significant differences in their degree and manner of musical enjoyment, depending on their education levels, music abilities, and professional careers; however, it is clear to me that music curriculum and teacher development need to meet the practical needs of people’s lives.

Participants’ stories reminded me of what I had done in music classes as a teacher for 10 years in South Korea. I believed then that the role of a teacher should be to facilitate the music curriculum, to organize classroom activities, and to guide students toward understanding music better. In this belief, I concentrated only on the contents of the music curriculum, the music in textbooks, the musical activities in the classroom, the educational effects stemming from proposed musical activities, and students’ responses to those activities.

I believed that the most important part of my job as a music teacher was to support students in diverse ways to help their achievement toward the class objectives. I thought that students should achieve the contents and objectives proposed in the music curriculum, for it had been developed by music education experts to reflect the level of musical development of the students. At that time, I felt that my most important role during class was to complete the national curriculum. Hence, I felt a sense of
accomplishment as a teacher when I saw students achieving the contents and objectives proposed in the music curriculum.

However, I have found from this research that I was missing a vital part of music education—the students. I saw music education solely from my perspective as a teacher, not from their perspective as students. In fact, I did not care about how students formed a relationship with me, how they felt about the class, what they really wanted to learn from music class, what kind of music they were interested in, what kind of experiences they had had out of school—in their families or in the community—or how much class activities influenced the development of their musical sensibilities. I have also learned from this research that the most important role of a music teacher is not to transmit curriculum and textbooks to students but to share musical interests, enjoyment, or challenges with them. Music class is successful when both a teacher and the students eagerly take part in class activities and enjoy them. Music educators should review their music class from the students’ perspective in addition to their own viewpoint as a teacher. Music curricula should be developed to reflect the ways in which students enjoy music and learn or feel music in class.

This research also showed that music is ultimately about people—their human development or self-realization through music. Before conducting this research project, I had thought that one of the important objectives of music education was to develop students’ musical abilities to perform or enjoy music in their daily lives. After hearing about the participants’ music experiences, however, I have come to realize that music is not only about improving musical skills or knowledge but also about facilitating human
development. In the interviews, many of the participants mentioned particular music experiences that changed them in (mostly) positive ways: Some gained self-confidence through the experience of winning a music competition; others overcame their shyness by taking part in a musical event. Such music experiences helped these seniors develop a positive attitude toward life as well as toward music. These stories tell me that a music experience is in fact a human experience that occurs through or in music. In this sense, music education should not be limited to improving students’ musical skills or knowledge but should also be seen as a type of human development.

Through this research, I have also found that in the present era, music education is separated from musical practice. Many of the research participants talked about the large gap between what they learned in music class and what they really wanted to enjoy. They were interested less in music learned in class than in contemporary pop music. Thus, music curricula that continue to rely on outdated genres and modes of music are not likely to capture students’ attention during school music classes. This finding leads me to believe that when music classes fail to reflect the times, they will neither inspire nor interest the students. Following this logic, music curriculum development should be designed with the goal of balancing classically verified music, diverse cultural music, and current popular music. In addition, because music experience is a part of cultural practice, music educators need to open their minds to cultural changes and trends occurring in the current music scene.

For me, the most important finding in this research is the facts that human factors—personalities of teachers, students, or family members and the relationship
among them—have a great influence on students’ music experiences. As a music educator in South Korea, I believed that a well-prepared curriculum and a well-trained teacher were the best ways to develop students’ musical sensibilities, tastes, and abilities. I had never considered the influence of family culture or the teacher’s attitude on students’ music experiences and their musical development. In addition, this study has inspired me to conduct research on senior citizens’ music experience in South Korea.

Finally, this research presented the enormous challenge of tracing old memories and configuring them into a grand frame of music experience. This process, however, offered a wonderful opportunity for me to learn about how school music education transforms people’s lives and allowed me to understand school music in new ways. This research process also challenged me to delve more deeply into the meaning of music in terms of human development and cultural practice as well as school education and curriculum development. The six participants represented the heart of this research; I stood on the periphery, indirectly experiencing the participants’ stories and considering my perspective as they presented their personal recollections. In the process, I was able to reflect on my own experience as a music teacher.
APPENDIX A

LETTER OF CONSENT
Appendix A

Letter of Consent

You are invited to participate in a doctoral dissertation research project entitled “A LIFE HISTORY OF SENIOR CITIZENS: THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL MUSIC EDUCATION IN THEIR MUSICAL EXPERIENCE” conducted by Eun-Jung Lim, a doctoral student studying in the curriculum and instruction program of Kent State University.

This consent form will provide you with information on the research project, what you will need to do, and the associated risks and benefits of the research. Your participation is voluntary. Please read this form carefully. It is important that you ask questions and fully understand the research in order to make an informed decision. You will receive a copy of this document to take with you.

This research is designed to understand how school music experiences have influenced musical tastes and capabilities throughout senior citizens’ lives and how they are realized and amplified in everyday life. The results of the research will be disseminated in a doctoral dissertation and may suggest valuable understanding for developing effective music curricula that can facilitate applications of music to everyday lives.

You will participate in three individual interviews, one group interview, and one optional follow-up interview. The interviews will be about 30 minutes to an hour with questions regarding your in-school and out-of-school music experiences since your school years. The interviews will be conducted at a mutually agreeable place and time.

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with you and the researcher and will be audiotaped by the researcher and later transcribed for the purpose of data analysis. During the interviews, if you may feel uncomfortable answering an interview question, you may skip it and go on to the next question.

In addition to interviews, you will be offered a notebook at the first meeting and encouraged to keep a personal journal in which you can write other stories relevant to your music experiences that are not mentioned in interviews or stories that support the verbal data narrated in interviews. Journal entries require no specific format or writing style, but the researcher will give you an informal rubric to guide your writing. The journal will be collected at the last meeting.

The information gathered will be maintained in a secure locked drawer during this project. Only the researcher will have access to the research data and information. No identifying name will appear on the data, and your name will be available to no one. The data will be destroyed at the completion of this research. The researcher will replace your real name with a pseudonym in the dissertation.

No risk or discomfort is anticipated from participation in this research, but if you feel any discomfort during this project, you can make withdrawal from the research at any time during the process. If you have any question or concern about this research, you may contact Eun-Jung Lim at (330) 672-2707, Dr. James Henderson at (330) 672-2580, or Dr. Craig Resta at (330) 672-4803.

This project has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have any question about your rights as a research participant or any complaint about the research, you may call the IRB at (330) 672-2704.
I have read this consent form and have had the opportunity to have my questions answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand that a copy of this consent will be provided to me for future reference.

________________________________  _____________________
Participant Signature    Date
APPENDIX B

INTRODUCTION SHEET
Appendix B

Introduction Sheet
Dear Senior Citizens,

I am Lim, Eun-Jung, a doctoral student in the Curriculum and Instruction Program of Kent State University. I am recruiting participants for a doctoral dissertation research project entitled “A Life History of Senior Citizens: the Influence of School Music Education in Their Musical Experience.”

The research will explore senior citizens’ memories of school music experiences during their K-12 years and their out-of-school music experiences during the post-school years. It will proceed through data collection with narrative interviews in agreement with the participants.

Please read these pages of brief research contents and procedures. If you have any questions, please contact me via phone or e-mail (see reverse side). Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Eun-Jung Lim

This researcher will pursue a comprehensive understanding of how school music experiences have influenced musical tastes and capabilities throughout senior citizens’ lives and how these interests have been realized and amplified in everyday life.

I aim to explore the effect of school music experiences on everyday lives through tracing individual experiences in and out of school. The results may provide valuable understanding for developing effective music curricula and facilitate application of music to everyday lives in the future.

Those who are over sixty years old, living in and around Kent, Ohio; who have public education experience, K-12; who do not have professional job experience in the music field such as music performers, music teachers, or music therapists; and who have memories of music experiences in their school years.

All participants will have three individual interviews, one group interview, and one follow-up interview. The interviews will be about thirty minutes to an hour long with questions regarding in-school and out-of-school music experiences.

The interviews will be conducted in a setting that is mutually agreeable in place and time. They will be unscripted by the researcher and later transcribed for the purpose of data analysis. All collected data will be used only for this research and will be stored in secured sites.

During the interviews, if a participant feels uncomfortable answering an interview question, the participant may skip it and go on to the next question. A participant may ask questions or express concerns and may withdraw from the study at any time in the process of the research.

This research is based on the guiding principles of the Kent State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for utilizing human research subjects.
APPENDIX C

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW FRAMEWORK
Appendix C

Individual Interview Framework

1 Personal background of schooling

2 K–12 Music Experiences

2.1 In-School Music Experiences

2.1.1 Curricular Music Experiences

2.1.1.1 Personal Perception of Music Classes

2.1.1.2 Musical Taste in Music Classes

2.1.1.3 Musical Activities in Music Classes

2.1.1.4 Musical Environments in Music Classes

1.1.1.4.1. Human Environments: Teachers and classmates

1.1.1.4.2. Physical Environments: Classroom, textbooks, and instruments

2.1.2 Extracurricular Music Experiences: field trips, club activities, and school events

2.1.2.1 Personal Perception of Extracurricular

2.1.2.2 Musical Taste of Extracurricular

2.1.2.3 Musical Activities of Extracurricular

2.1.2.4 Musical Environments of Extracurricular

2.1.2.4.1 Human Environments: Directors and club members

2.1.2.4.2 Physical Environments: Instruments

2.2 Out-of-School Music Experiences
2.2.1 Personal Perception

2.2.2 Musical Taste

2.2.3 Musical Activities

2.2.3.1 Personal Activities: Private lessons, self-training, and concert going

2.2.3.2 Group Activities: Music clubs and church music activities

2.2.4 Musical Environments

2.2.4.1 Human Environments: Family, relatives, private tutors, and friends

2.2.4.2 Physical Environments: Media, instruments, and concert halls

3 Post K–12 Music Experiences

3.1 Adult Music Experiences

3.1.1 Personal Perception

3.1.2 Musical Taste

3.1.3 Musical Activities

3.1.3.1 Personal Activities: Private lessons, self-training, and concert going

3.1.3.2 Group Activities: Music clubs, church, and communities

3.1.4 Musical Environments

3.1.4.1 Human Environments: Family, private tutors, and friends

3.1.4.2 Physical Environments: Media and instruments

3.2 Current Music Experiences
3.2.1 Personal Perception

3.2.2 Musical Taste

3.2.3 Musical Activities
   3.2.3.1 Personal Activities
   3.2.3.2 Group Activities: Family, music clubs, church, and communities

3.2.4 Musical Environments
   3.2.4.1 Human Environments: Family, friends, and private tutors
   3.2.4.2 Physical Environments: Media, instruments, church, and concert halls

4 Revising one’s whole music experiences by oneself
APPENDIX D

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Appendix D

Individual Interview Questions

1 Personal background of schooling

1.1 What was your age in first grade in elementary school?

1.2 Were your schools (elementary, middle, and high school) in the country, rural town, big town, or city?

1.3 Were your schools private, public, or religious?

2 K–12 Music Experiences

2.1 In-School Music Experiences

2.1.1 Curricular Music Experiences

2.1.1.1 Personal Perception of Music Classes

1) What is your first image when you recall your school music classes?

2) What kind of student were you in music classes?

2.1.1.2 Musical Taste in Music Classes

1) Did you have any favorite song, instrument, or performance you learned in music classes?

   If so, were you familiar with them before attending school?

2) What features of those attracted you?

2.1.1.3 Musical Activities in Music Classes: Singing, listening, performance, composition, improvisation, integrative learning, and playing instruments
1) Did you ever have opportunities in music class to learn how to play instruments or how to sing songs you were interested in?

2) Did you have any good experience of music class activities?

3) Did you have any difficult experience in learning music or any trouble in music classes?

4) Do you think those memories, either positive or negative, influenced your musical taste?

2.1.1.4 Musical Environments in Music Classes

1.1.1.4.1. Human Environments: Teachers and classmates

1) Could you remember any impressive music teacher in your school years?

2) Did you have any classmate who shared your music preferences or interests?

3) Do you think that your music teacher(s)/classmate(s) influenced your musical taste and interests?

1.1.1.4.2. Physical Environments: Classroom, textbooks, and instruments

1) Do you have any memory of your music classroom or music textbooks?

If so, was there any musically attractive thing to you?

2.1.2 Extracurricular Music Experiences: Field trips, club activities, and school events
2.1.2.1 Personal Perception of Extracurricular

1) Do you think your extracurricular music experiences exert an influence on your musical taste?

2.1.2.2 Musical Taste in Extracurricular

1) Did you have any favorite song, instrument, or performance in your extracurricular activities?

2.1.2.3 Musical Activities in Extracurricular

1) Did you ever take any field trips to music concerts or other musical activities with teachers?
   What was most musically attractive feature of the music concert?
   Did the trips acquaint you with a new musical interest?

2) Were you a member of music clubs at school?
   Choral club, music listening club, music band or marching band, and orchestra
   Did you join the music club for any particular reason?
   Did the activities reflect your favorite music?

3) Do you have any memory of school events?
   Sports events, festivals, or celebrations

4) Did extracurricular music activities help you to improve in-class music activities or out-of-school music activities?

5) Did you continue any similar musical activities after school or during your postschool years?
2.1.2.4 Musical Environments of Extracurricular

2.1.2.4.1 Human Environments: Directors and club members

1) Can you remember any particular music director of a music club?

2) Were you friends with any music club members?
   If so, did you pursue any musical activities together, even after school hours?

2.1.2.4.2 Physical Environments: Instruments

1) Did you have any opportunity to appreciate other instruments that you had not encountered in curricular music classes?

2.2 Out-of-School Music Experiences

2.2.1 Personal Perceptions

1) Do you think your in-school music experiences were helpful for music activities after school hours?

2) Did out-of-school experiences give you any opportunities to develop different musical interests than in-school experiences?

2.2.2 Musical Taste

1) Did you have any favorite song, instrument, or performance outside school music experiences?

   TV program song, kids’ song, movie song, and song from a cartoon show or film
If so, did they have any particular feature similar to or different from what you experienced in school?

2.2.3 Musical Activities

2.2.3.1 Personal Activities: Private lessons, self-training, and concert going

1) Did you ever take any private music lessons? If so, did they improve your musical capabilities? Did they influence your musical interests? If not, did you have any particular music lesson you wanted to take?

2) Did you ever teach yourself to play musical instruments?

3) Did you have any favorite music records or books?

4) Did you have any experience attending music concerts? If so, what was the most favorite thing about attending music concerts?

5) Were those personal music activities helpful for your school music learning? Or was school music class helpful for them?

2.2.3.2 Group Activities: Music clubs and church music activities

1) Did you participate in any organized musical club or religious music group? If so, did the music activities reflect your favorite music?
2) Did the group activities have any interesting features different from in-school music experience?

2.2.4 Musical Environments

2.2.4.1 Human Environments: Family, relatives, private tutors, and friends

1) Do you have memories of singing a song or playing an instrument with your family?
Did anyone in your family have musical talent or interest in music?

2) Did your mother or father sing at home while she or he was doing house work?

3) Did you have any friend who shared your interest in music?

4) Do you have any memory of a private music tutor?

5) Do you think that their musical attitude or activities influenced your musical taste?

2.2.4.2 Physical Environments: Media, instruments, and concert halls

1) What kind of media did you have at home when you were a student? : Radio, TV, cassette, and record player
Did you have any favorite music stations or music programs?

2) Did you have any musical instruments at your home?

3) Do you have an impressive memory of churches or concert halls relating to your musical experiences?
3 Post K–12 Music Experiences

3.1 Adulthood Music Experiences

3.1.1 Personal Perception

1) Do you think your in-school or out-of-school music experiences were related to the post music experiences?

3.1.2 Musical Taste

1) Has your musical taste changed since your school years?

   If so, was there any special reason for your musical taste?

3.1.3 Musical Activities

1) Did you continue musical activities similar to those of your school years?

2) Did you have new experiences that differed from your school years?

3.1.3.1 Personal Activities: Private lessons, self-training, and Concert going

   1) Did you ever have private music lessons or self-training after your school years?

      If so, were your music experiences of school years helpful for you to continue personal music activities after school years?

   2) Did you ever attend music concerts or performances after school years?

   3) Did you collect music records or books?

3.1.3.2 Group Activities: Music clubs, church, and communities
1) Did you participate in any organized music club, religious music group, or community?

2) Did you ever take part in any special family ceremony or community festival in which any musical activity took place?

3.1.4 Musical Environments

3.1.4.1 Human Environments: Family, private tutors, and friends

1) If you had children, did you sing nursery rhymes or Mother Goose songs when you raised them?

2) Did you share your favorite music with your family member?

3) Did you encourage your children to engage in music learning opportunities like private music lesson or music club?

If so, why?

3.1.4.2 Physical Environments: Media and instruments

1) Did you have a stereo or TV in your home?

2) Did you have any new musical instrument after your school years?

3.2 Current Music Experiences

3.2.1 Personal Perceptions

1) Do you think your music experience since school years has influenced your current music taste?

3.2.2 Musical Taste

1) Has there been any change in your music taste?
If so, is there any specific reason for the change?

3.2.3 Musical Activities

3.2.3.1 Personal Activities

1) Do you enjoy listening to music on the radio or TV now?
   Do you have favorite music stations or channels?

2) Did you attend any music concert or local event related to music recently?

3.2.3.2 Group Activities: Family, music clubs, church, and communities

1) Are you involved in any music club or religious music group now?

2) Do you enjoy singing songs, playing music instruments, or listening to music with your grandchildren when they come to your home?

3.2.4 Musical Environments

3.2.4.1 Human Environments: Family, friends, and private tutors

1) Do your children or grandchildren take part in any music activities like private music lesson or music club?

3.2.4.2 Physical Environments: Media, instruments, church, and concert halls

1) Do you have any music instrument in your home now?
   If so, do you play the instrument?
4 Revising One’s Whole Music Experiences

4.1 If you could go back to your school years, what kind of music class would you want to take? (comprehensive learning, singing, listening, performance, composition, improvisation, integrative learning, and playing instruments)

4.2 If you could go back to your school years, who would be a good music teacher for you?

4.3 If you had the chance to take a music class or lesson now, what kind of class or lesson would you take? (senior guest program of KSU or lifelong learning)

4.4 Do you think our children (the next generation) need to take music classes in school?

4.5 What meaning does (did) music have in your life?
APPENDIX E

LETTER FOR INFORMING PARTICIPANTS
Appendix E

Letter for Informing Participants

Dear (Participant name),

First of all, I would like to thank you for your participating in my research entitled “Significant Influences in The Lives of Senior Citizens: Reflections on Music Experiences during School Years and Beyond.” I appreciate your contributions to this research through sharing your personal experiences.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you the next step in my research.

I have been reviewing and summarizing your interview transcriptions and journals. When I finish date review and summary, I would like to contact you individually to make an appointment to show you the data summary in order to check the viability of my data interpretation: the narrative accuracy, credibility, and interpretive validity. After that, I will precede with the next steps in my research: data analysis, writing findings, and discussion.

I would be pleased to get from you any question, idea, or comment about the research and its process. Please feel free to contact me at (330) 592-6272.

Many thanks for your helps and support.

Sincerely,

Eun-Jung Lim

November 19, 2010
APPENDIX F

DESCRIPTION OF CODES
## Appendix F

### Description of Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Main Codes</th>
<th>Subcodes</th>
<th>Descriptions of Codes</th>
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REFERENCES
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(Original work published 1938)


